The Pennsylvania State University
The Graduate School
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DISCOURSES OF MILITARISATION IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation in
Applied Linguistics

by

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ABSTRACT

This project is a study of the discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan academia. Since 2010, Sri Lankan universities have been the site of turbulent events, including a state-initiated military-led undergraduate orientation programme; appointments of allegedly unsuitable individuals to higher administrative positions in universities; infringements of student rights and unions. In parallel, a dynamic trade union campaign has generated discussions on the role of state universities and the functions of higher education. I study the discourses of academics on militarisation in this environment, in its public and individual aspects. The research questions are: a) What are the discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan academia, as formulated publicly and individually? b) What changes are evident in individual discourses of militarisation amongst Sri Lankan academia over a long duration of time? The study uses a methodological framework that includes an ethnographic approach and discourse analysis. It uses interviews as instances of individual voice, and texts produced by FUTA, the academic trade union, as the public (and collective) voice of academics. These texts include policy documents and press releases by FUTA as well as posters and pamphlets. Conversation analytic methods are adapted for transcription of the interviews, and discursive strategies of stance, narrative and voice for analysis. Even though literature on militarisation of higher education continues to grow, few locally specific studies exist outside North America and Europe. In addition, research from a person-oriented or discourse analytic approach is rare, as is research focusing on academic institutions. This dissertation contributes to multiple disciplines investigating militarisation, including education and discourse studies.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations .................................................................................. vi
List of Tables .................................................................................................... vii
List of Maps ..................................................................................................... viii
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................ ix

Chapter 1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 1
  Part 1 ............................................................................................................. 1
  Part 2 Contextual background ....................................................................... 5
    1. Higher education in 20th century Sri Lanka .......................................... 7
    2. Militarisation of society and education in Sri Lanka ............................. 19
    3. Universities, politics and violence .......................................................... 35
    4. Events and organisations of relevance to the study ............................... 40
  Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 45

Chapter 2 Literature Review ........................................................................... 47
  1. Militarism, militarisation and securitisation ............................................ 47
    1.1. Militarism ............................................................................................ 48
    1.2. Militarisation ....................................................................................... 49
    1.3. Militarisation versus securitisation ..................................................... 51
  2. Militarisation in Sri Lanka ........................................................................ 52
  3. Discourses of militarisation ...................................................................... 54
  4. Militarisation of education ....................................................................... 55
    4.1. The militarising project in schools ...................................................... 55
    4.2. Militarisation in higher education ...................................................... 58
    4.3 Militarisation and language education ................................................ 61
  5. Evolutions and gaps ................................................................................... 63
  Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 65

Chapter 3 Research Methodology .................................................................. 66
  1. Research design ....................................................................................... 66
  2. Research Questions ................................................................................... 67
  3. Ethics ........................................................................................................ 68
  4. Setting ...................................................................................................... 69
  5. Research Process ...................................................................................... 73
  6. Data sources and data collection techniques .......................................... 74
    6.1. Participant interviews ....................................................................... 74
    6.2. Texts produced by FUTA ................................................................. 76
    6.3. Fieldnotes ......................................................................................... 78
  7. Data preparation ....................................................................................... 79
  8. Data Analysis ............................................................................................ 80
8.1. Stance .........................................................................................................................81
8.2. Narrative ......................................................................................................................82
8.3. Voice ............................................................................................................................82
9. Commentary on ethical considerations .................................................................83
Conclusion .......................................................................................................................86

Chapter 4 Public and individual discourses on militarisation ...........................................87

Section 1 ...............................................................................................................................88
Permitted speech and foreclosures: FUTA’s responses to militaristic state policies in universities .................................................................88
Section 2 ...............................................................................................................................94
Individual discourses in confluence – defining militarisation ........................................94
Section 3 ..............................................................................................................................102
Individual discourses in dissonance: Tensions and ambivalence ..................................102
Section 4 ..............................................................................................................................112
A discursive transition - Inner speech externalised ......................................................112
Conclusion .......................................................................................................................118

Chapter 5 Temporal changes in discourses of militarisation ............................................121

Section 1 ...............................................................................................................................122
Temporal changes in discursive style in individual discourses .....................................122
Section 2 ...............................................................................................................................134
Temporal changes in positionality in discourses of militarisation ................................134
Conclusion .......................................................................................................................145

Chapter 6 Concluding remarks and future directions ....................................................147

Appendix A Detailed list of events related to universities (2011-2015) ......................160
Appendix B Interview Protocols (2012-2014) .................................................................163
Appendix C Key to transcription conventions ...............................................................165
References .......................................................................................................................166

Primary Sources .............................................................................................................166
Secondary Sources – Scholarly References .................................................................171
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A/L</td>
<td>Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Code switching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPRLF</td>
<td>Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLL</td>
<td>Foreign Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTA</td>
<td>Federation of University Teachers’ Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPKF</td>
<td>Indian Peace Keeping Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUSF</td>
<td>Inter-University Student Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JROTC</td>
<td>Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVP</td>
<td>Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDU</td>
<td>Kotelawala Defence University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Language education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUSL</td>
<td>Open University of Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOTE</td>
<td>People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROTC</td>
<td>Reserve Officer Training Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJP</td>
<td>University of Sri Jayewardenepura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELO</td>
<td>Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>University Grants Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTHR</td>
<td>University Teachers for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPA</td>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1. Ethnic and religious populations (2014) ...............................7
Table 1-2. Ethnic identity of undergraduate students (1942-1944) ..........17
Table 1-3. University student enrolment by ethnicity (2012) ...............18
Table 3-1. Time schedule of research process.....................................72
Table 3-2. FUTA texts categorised by genre.....................................76
LIST OF MAPS

Map 1 State universities under UGC governance ........................................... 12

Map 2 Four universities used for individual discourses (Colombo district).........69
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Part 1

May 2011, Sri Lanka Air Force station at Diyatalawa

A group of about a hundred young men and women are arranged equidistant to each other, dressed in rows of white short sleeved t-shirts and dark track pants. On each t-shirt is a black and red logo with the words “FUTURE LEADERS”. In coordinated precision, to the accompaniment of a piercing whistle and staccato commands, they perform a series of movements. Bend down, touch toes, straighten up, raise hands, bend down, touch toes. Again and again.

This dissertation is a discourse analytic study of militarisation as constructed by Sri Lankan academia, who are ‘living the change’ of recent conflict in higher education (Pratt, 2004). My aim is not to analyse the educational or security apparatus of the state but to explore the lived realities of individuals in sites of education, a neglected focus in studies of militarisation. To this end, I concentrate on how militarisation is constructed and contested by academics both as individuals and as a public body.

The young people in the description above have been chosen to enter Sri Lankan universities. The video was uploaded to Youtube in July 2011 by the Sri Lanka Air Force station at Diyatalawa, a town in central Sri Lanka, as a record of their “contribution” to the cultivation of “the great brains” of the national educational system (Sri Lanka Air Force video, 2011). This scene is one of the most visible symbols of militarisation of Sri Lankan higher education in recent history. By militarisation, I mean the inclusion of militaristic actors (e.g., the military in educational programmes) and militaristic ideology (e.g., regimentation in education) in spheres that were hitherto considered civilian.
Academics were outraged that it would be conducted by the military in military spaces for incoming undergraduates. Tones of shock and disbelief accompanied conversations when academics met in the tea room or walked to meetings together. Strangely, these conversations never made it to the public sphere via their collective voices, the trade unions. Predictably perhaps, the shock has given way to ennui three years later, and attenuant issues are hardly discussed in universities.

Inspired by events in the past few years in Sri Lankan universities and by the awareness of growing militarisation globally in educational spaces, this dissertation examines discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan universities. The research questions are:

1. What are the discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan academia, as formulated publicly and individually?
2. What changes are evident in individual discourses of militarisation amongst Sri Lankan academia from a temporal perspective?

By placing the ‘individual’ in opposition to the ‘public’, I promote a disjuncture of two binary opposites, ‘public/private’ and ‘collective/individual’. Weintraub (1997) reviewing the use of the public/private binary in Western political and philosophical thought, argues that the “public/private distinction…is not unitary, but protean. It comprises, not a single paired opposition, but a complex family of them, neither mutually reducible nor wholly unrelated” (p.2). This same argument can be extended to the use of the ‘collective/individual’ binary as well. These multiple meanings rely on two fundamental distinctions that are indispensable to the use of ‘public’ and ‘private’ in this dissertation: a) what is hidden or withdrawn versus what is open or accessible; b) what is related to the individual and that of the collective (Weintraub, 1997). In modern scholarship, research on ‘public’ spheres entails studies of the social or political arenas; while research on the ‘private’ sphere generates work on intimate and informal relationships, such as the family. This common distinction can be seen in both militarisation and discourse studies (Aguirre Jr & Johnson, 2005; Bowman, 2001; Fairclough, 1992; Johnstone, 1998). It is also present in a majority
(but not all) of scholarship informed by feminist theory and identity politics (see critiques by Butler, 1990; Cameron & Kulick, 2003).

I rupture the binary of ‘public’ versus ‘private’ by inserting a third term, the ‘individual’. I use the term ‘public’ in a dual sense: to mean 1) the sphere of activity that is “open, visible and audible” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.123); and 2) to mean a collective body. In this dual use of the ‘public’, the Federation of University Teachers’ Association (FUTA) is both the collective and the public voice of academics. I am aware that this definition of the ‘public’ generates a set of new questions (e.g., to whom must a discourse be visible for it to become ‘public’?). Nevertheless, I choose this distinction as the most suitable for a discussion of the public voice of academics as it stands now.

I use the terms ‘private’ and ‘individual’ to capture voices that are unexpressed through the collective voice of academics. At the same time, I understand the individual to be part of the collective, and therefore, included in the collective response. It is possible that an individual can also be a public voice, as illustrated by public intellectuals who are published in the media. In this dissertation, however, I consider only individual discourse from the private sphere. Unlike other research mentioned previously, ‘private’ here is not considered to be the signifier of intimate, domestic or familial spheres. It consists of interactions that are not visible or audible to the external publics. Everyday examples of this in universities are whispered asides before meetings or conversations over cups of tea amongst academics. Interviews with academics are the primary source of individual discourses in this study. The methodological constraints of considering interviews as an index of the ‘private’ are discussed in Chapter 3.6.1.

My understanding of discourse is coloured by Foucauldian and linguistic work on discourses. On discursive practices, Foucault states that they are “characterized by the delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories” (Bouchard, 1977, p.199). I assume that a discourse of militarisation is constructed by groups that are considered legitimate agents of knowledge on Sri Lankan higher education, and that discussions of militarisation are fixed by a set of norms that constitute and sustain the process. I also assume that a close linguistic
analysis of advocacy documents or interviews allows us to examine the varied ways in which militarisation is constituted or denied, and the power relations that produce or erase knowledge of militarisation in universities. Studied over a period of time, changes in individual discourses could illustrate different subject positionings available as a result of this multiplicity of discourses.

Finally, a note on the distinctions between securitisation and militarisation is necessary. The distinction between my understanding of militarisation and that of my participants needs to be clarified, since a focal point of the study is the movability of the meaning of this term. As previously mentioned, I count militaristic actors and militaristic ideology in spheres outside national security (e.g., regimentation in education) to be characteristics of militarisation. Even when the military is not physically present or directly involved, their invocation in a community’s psyche is assumed to be a dimension of militarisation. An example of this form of militarisation in Sri Lankan universities is the suspicion of the possibility of state surveillance.

Securitisation is a concept akin to militarisation, and in Western scholarship, it has started to increasingly replace militarisation. As defined succinctly by Matt McDonald (2008), securitisation is “the discursive construction of particular issues as security threats” (p.563), such as migrants or Muslims in North America or Europe. For the purposes of this study, I theorise militarisation and securitisation as distinct concepts, with militarisation being a component of securitisation, i.e., the military is used for securitising manoeuvres. In Foucauldian terms, these combined processes show the deployment of the security apparatus(es) in the service of governmentality, i.e., the control of the conduct of the population (Foucault, 2003). In the context of Sri Lankan universities, the apparatuses of security are not only the armed forces, but the educational apparatus as well. The disciplinary pressure to monitor one’s conduct in a manner appropriate to the need of the state materializes from multiple directions. A scholarly distinction of the two concepts is made in Chapter 2.1.3, and a detailed description of their effects with particular relevance to Sri Lanka appears in section 2 of this chapter.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I delineate the research questions and key concepts used in the dissertation. In the second part, I provide the
contextual background necessary for an analysis of discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan universities.

Chapter 2 follows with a survey of the literature on militarisation. This includes a summary review of militarisation globally, and more specific and detailed surveys of research on militarisation in education, in language studies, and in Sri Lanka.

In Chapter 3, the research methodology used in this study is described, with attention to the collection and preparation of data, the analytical concepts used and a section on ethical considerations arising during the study.

Chapter 4 is a survey of the discursive formations of militarisation in Sri Lankan universities. First, I present an analysis of FUTA’s discourse of militarisation as an example of the public discourse of militarisation by academics. Then, I present multiple definitions of militarisation present in the private sphere of academia. This is followed by an analysis of the internal contradictions on militarisation in individual discourse trajectories. Chapter 4 ends with the analysis of reflexivity within an interview that leads to a change in position.

Chapter 5 presents changes in individual discourse trajectories over a period of three years. Here, I track the changes in discourses of militarisation taking place in terms of positionality as well as discourse style. A series of excerpts illustrate that shifts in discursive style are not congruous with positionality on militarisation.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion of this dissertation, and includes an examination of the theoretical and methodological implications of research on discourses of militarisation. Additionally, the chapter details a number of issues that can be productively pursued in future research in education, discourse and militarisation.

Part 2 Contextual background

I begin the contextual background to this dissertation by introducing the evolution of Sri Lankan higher education, after which comes an explanation of the current structure of the state university system. This is followed by a summary of three key armed conflicts in the last four decades, through which I trace the history of
militarisation in education in the country. The fourth section is an explication of politics in the universities, focusing on violence in student politics, and political organising amongst undergraduates and academics. The final section is a description of key events and actors discussed in this dissertation. I use ‘Ceylon’ to refer to Sri Lanka’s pre-1972 history, reflecting the transition at this time from being a British dominion to a republic.

Sri Lanka is a South Asian country, with a population of approximately 20 million people. Most recently, it has been colonised by the Dutch, Portuguese and the British. The majority of the country’s ethnic population is Sinhala (75%), with a significant population of Sri Lankan Tamils (11%) (see Table 1-1). Other minority ethnic groups include the Moors, Malays, Burghers (i.e., people of Eurasian descent) and the Malaiyaha Tamils. The Malays and Moors are increasingly grouped together as Muslims in census descriptions, even though the Malays consider themselves as culturally separate due to their historical origin (the Indonesian archipelago) and language (Malay).

The Malaiyaha Tamils (previously known as upcountry Tamils) differ in their history and political status from other Tamil communities in the country. Brought over as indentured slave labour by the British colonial government to work in coffee and tea plantations in the central region, they were denied citizenship in Sri Lanka until the 1980s (Bass, 2000). The distinction made between the Malaiyaha Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils has meant that they were considered divorced from involvement in the civil war that other Tamils have had to face. For this reason, I consider them a separate community for the discussions in this dissertation, especially in sections dealing with war and securitisation (section 2.3). Nevertheless, I note that while they may have been spared the military aspect of war, they have still been impacted by the legal and ideological aspects, facing the daily discrimination and harassment similar to other Tamils.

The religion of the majority of the population in Sri Lanka is Buddhism (70%), which is granted Constitutional precedence over other religions. The second largest religious group in the country are the Hindus (12.5%), with comparable populations of Christians and Muslims (see Table 1-1 for population statistics). It is important to note with regard to the post-independence political context of the country
that most (but not all) Sinhalese are Buddhists, that most (but not all) Tamils are Hindus, and that the nationalist rhetoric of both sides have contributed to making these ethno-religious identities more rigorous and bounded.

Table 1-1. Ethnic and religious populations (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic groups</th>
<th>Religious communities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinhala (75%)</td>
<td>Buddhists (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lankan Tamils (11%)</td>
<td>Hindus (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moors (9%)</td>
<td>Christians (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malays (0.2%)</td>
<td>Muslims (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burghers (0.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaiyaha Tamils (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Sri Lanka has two national and official languages, Sinhala and Tamil. English is a post-colonial legacy acting as a marker of social class, similar to other countries across the British Commonwealth (Gunasekera, 2005). At 95.6%, the country’s literacy rate is the highest in South Asia.

1. Higher education in 20th century Sri Lanka

1.1. The history of higher education during the colonial & independence period

This section begins with the educational efforts of European colonial powers in Ceylon, primarily the British colonial times. The educational systems prior to that period are not discussed here, since they are not directly relevant to this study.

The Portuguese, the Dutch and the British held the coastal areas of the island consecutively until the British managed to secure the whole island for themselves in 1815. During the next 133 years of British occupation of Ceylon, colonial education policies were shaped by Britain’s economic agenda for its colonies as well as the
educational philosophies of individual colonial officials. At the time of independence in 1948, there were several types of primary and secondary schools in the country: state-sponsored schools, privately-funded schools, and denominational schools founded by Christian and Buddhist denominations. Even though the official language of Ceylon was English, only a small percentage of English-medium schools existed in comparison to the Sinhala and Tamil medium schools. The comparatively limited number of English-medium schools parallels British educational policy in other British colonies (see Andradi, 2011; Jebanesan, 2013; Jennings, 2005 for in-depth investigations). A significant historical moment in the evolution of Ceylon’s education is its free education policy upon Independence in 1948, implemented along with compulsory education for children. The free education scheme was accompanied by debates on the viability and even the necessity of mass education. Key concerns in these debates were issues of social class, privilege and accessibility to education (Jennings, 1944; Perera, 2000). These arguments appear to be the antecedents of current discourses that inform state interventions on universities and the discourses of academics regarding such measures.

In the late 1940s, roughly 5% of the student population of Ceylon attended university. In terms of actual individuals, this was a small number since the free education system had just started and was still a privilege of wealthy families. Similar to other British colonies of the time, a small number of Ceylonese were admitted to British universities. The early institutions of tertiary education located in the colony were professional academies, the Medical College (founded in 1870) and the Law College (founded in 1895). The British appeared reluctant to start tertiary educational institutions in Ceylon, mostly due to reasons of finance and governance (Corea, 1969; Gamage, 1983). With advocacy for a Ceylonese university gathering momentum from the late 19th c., however, a University College granting external degrees from the University of London was established in 1921. Subsequent lobbying led to the founding of the University of Ceylon in 1942. It functioned in English, was free to all entrants, and enrolled 904 undergraduates in the first year, the 5% referred to above (Jennings, 1944; Wickramasinghe, 2005).

Two issues dominated debates on higher education in the years 1906-1942, the period leading up to the establishment of the University. One was the medium of
education. The British wavered between English medium and *swabhasha* (local languages), in this case Sinhala- and Tamil-medium education. With Independence, however, came the free education scheme, bringing with it an urgent need for large numbers of teachers. This eliminated the possibility of wide-spread education in English. Discourses of nationalist revival and anti-Westernisation spreading across the British Commonwealth were also present in Ceylon and supported *swabhasha* education (Pieris, 1964).

The second consideration was the nature of higher education suitable for the country, once again tied up with discourses of nationalist revival. In pre-Independence Ceylon, English-educated intellectuals of the time argued for a university that would “give education and not merely estimate the amount of knowledge possessed by examinees” (Pieris, 1964, p.443, emphases added). Education in Western countries (such as Britain and the United States) lacked the authenticity provided by a ‘real university education’ in the local environment. The pro-*swabhasha* discourses and discourses of nationalist revival together contributed to a push for locally-educated employees, albeit with a top layer of employees educated in English (Gunesekera, 2005). Nearly a century later, access to higher education and the efficacy of university education remain contentious issues, resurfacing in debates over privatisation of education and graduate (un)employability.

1.2. The proliferation of state universities (post-1950s)

By the 1960s, the large number of students who started schooling under the free education scheme was approaching the end of secondary school. Even though the call for *swabhasha* education supposedly meant that education was available in both Sinhala and Tamil medium, the primacy of Sinhala was ensured by the nationalist discourses favouring Sinhala as the dominant language. The Sinhala Only Act that was passed in 1956 created further changes in education as I will demonstrate in this section.

After the Sinhala Only Act (1956), with the need for mass higher education looming as students from the free education system completed secondary education,
the then government requested the University of Ceylon to enrol a larger number of students than usual. The University refused this request citing a lack of resources. The government also asked for university instruction in Sinhala (and later Tamil) for these students, a demand resentfully complied with by academics whose working language was English (Corea, 1969). The state interventions in education in the 1960s were unsympathetic to the University’s problems. A senior academic of the times, Ralph Pieris (1964), articulated the mood of the 1960s:

It is no easy task, however, to control and transform a secondary and higher educational system which has been shaped by the insistent belief that every citizen has a right to free education and to the enjoyment of its rewards, which include administrative, managerial and professional employment (p.448)

In response to the mass appeal for university education, the government came up with a number of swift responses. It forced the University of Ceylon’s Peradeniya campus to enrol more students and upgraded the University’s Colombo campus to university status, making it the University of Colombo. Two Buddhist pirivenas (i.e., seminaries) were converted into universities as well. There was an increased production of graduates, but little was done to develop the economy in parallel, resulting in high percentages of under- and unemployment by the 1970s (Attanayake, 2001; Corea, 1969). The multiple armed conflicts present in Sri Lanka since the 1970s are as much a result of the imbalance between education and employment as of other political factors (see section 2.1 for the armed conflicts).

Coupled with the lack of economic development was an over-reliance on universities to provide higher education. Attempts to expand and develop technical education (as opposed to academic education) have been unsuccessful in the post-colonial period. J. C. A. Corea (1969) states that the public had a “distrust of any but academic education which was for them the only road to the more remunerative forms of employment” and that “it was not possible to make the diversification of education appear respectable in developing countries until …wages for trades and skilled labour permitted a sufficiently high standard of living” (p.171). The prestige attached to university education as a path to upward mobility and the under-development of
technical and professional education have resulted in tertiary education becoming equivalent to university education.

After 1978, with a new government bringing in a new constitution, the national economic plan changed from a closed economy to an open economy. The university system saw another series of expansions, resulting in the present 19 state universities. Writing of the rapid increase of universities in the 1980s and 1990s, Nira Wickramasinghe (2005) says that “public pressure for creating universities in all the provinces was answered by the overnight transformation of colleges into universities” with no regard to “the meaning of a university education” (p.43). Once again, the debate on the ‘real’ functions of universities had emerged. Wickramasinghe’s comment hints at the state’s disregard for infrastructural and human resource requirements necessary to adequately equip universities. Significantly, even with this rapid expansion of state universities, the percentage of student enrolment remains a mere 10% of the students exiting secondary education in the country. Students who are not admitted to state universities have the options of enrolling in technical institutions, external degree programs, private higher education institutions (section 1.3.4) or leaving the country for higher education. The University Grants Commission reports that about 15,000-20,000 students leave the country for higher education annually (Senaratne & Sivasegaram, 2012) roughly the same number that enter state universities.

Critiques of the government in power during the period under study tend to focus on “unprecedented politicization and deterioration of autonomy” in Sri Lanka (FUTA, 2013, May 07, emphasis added). However, as seen even in this compact version of the history of Sri Lankan universities, undue government interventions are not unprecedented phenomena in Sri Lankan education. What follows in particular highlights state interventions in relation to university autonomy.

During the past 70 years, successive Sri Lankan governments have changed the organisational structure of universities frequently. In addition, the right to choose undergraduates was taken from individual universities and invested in the University Grants Commission (UGC), the institution that has administrative authority over universities. Governments have also interfered in procedures relating to the appointments of higher administrative officers, such as Vice Chancellors (see
Gamage, 1983; Kumara, 2012; Pieris, 1964). For the most part, governments of old, as of the present, have consistently provided short-term solutions to problems of education rather than well-planned long term solutions (K. de Silva, 1978; Kumara, 2012; Wickramasinghe, 2005). The ongoing debates on university autonomy and state interference, cited in the previous quote from FUTA should not be considered in isolation from this historical context.

1.3. University structure and culture in present-day Sri Lanka

Map 1 – State universities under UGC governance

1.3.1 State universities

Sri Lanka has 19 state universities and no private universities legally recognised as such (for private education see section 1.3.4). Contrary to the commonly held belief that all universities function under the UGC, only 15 of the 19 state universities do so. The description that I provide in this section relates to the 15 universities under UGC governance. A brief description of the four universities outside UGC governance will be provided separately (section 1.3.3).

A cursory glance at Map 1 shows that the majority of universities are clustered in the western and central parts of the island, closer to the economic and political nerve centres of the country. Six of the 15 state universities are located in and around the capital city of Colombo. Only three universities are located in the Northern and Eastern provinces, where Tamil and Muslim communities make up of most of the population. At the southern-most edge of Sri Lanka is the University of Ruhuna, founded in 1978, in what was considered a placatory gesture to the southern population in response to the 1971 insurrection (Wickramasinghe, 2005). The better established and well-resourced universities are located in urban areas of the Western Province, including the four universities discussed in this dissertation: the Open University and the Universities of Colombo, Kelaniya and Sri Jayewardenepura (universities described in detail in Chapter 3.4).

The Universities Act No. 6 of 1978 invests the UGC with final authority on all matters related to universities in Sri Lanka. This includes final approval on recruitment of staff, distribution and transfer of undergraduates to universities, and major administrative decisions. With this said, each university is traditionally invested with discretionary powers on their own behalf, with minimal interference from the UGC in internal matters. For instance, the general procedure for the recruitment of faculty is as follows: the department of study shortlists applicants; these applicants are interviewed by a panel comprising UGC officials and academics of the university in their administrative capacities; the chosen candidate is approved by the UGC. The same procedure is maintained for promotions of academic staff. Similar procedures pertain to university decisions on approval of degree programmes and course curricula. Even though conflicting legislative changes have been made with regard to the administration of universities and UGC powers, functions within universities
themselves rarely faced direct intervention by the state or political figures. This situation has changed in the past decade, with the interventions of the most recent government and is described in more detail in section 4.

The academic hierarchy of Sri Lankan academics follows a model familiar to the British Commonwealth: in ascending order of seniority, these positions are Lecturer (Probationary or confirmed), Senior Lecturer (Grades I and II), Professor and Senior Professor. As the lowest rank in the academic hierarchy, probationary lecturers can be recruited with a Bachelor’s degree (and university teaching experience). Confirmation of the position follows with completion of graduate study. Graduate study in research universities in Europe, United States, UK or Australia is accorded high value in the university setting, and junior staff is encouraged to obtain higher degrees from such universities. Their participation in this system is ensured by the provision of salaried study leave and legal contracts binding them, ensuring return to the home university on completion of graduate study. However, a marked decrease in graduate study in these countries is evident in recent years, due to a reduction in graduate student funding in North American and European higher education sectors (fieldnotes, 2011-2014). Additionally, many promising individuals reject academic positions or choose not to return to their academic positions due to unsavoury work conditions (FUTA, 2012, August 07; Usvate-aratchi, 2012). The lack of full-time graduate programmes within the country is also frustrating for academics, leading some critics to argue that giving priority to undergraduate study in universities has contributed to the deterioration of research and academic culture in Sri Lanka (Kumara, 2012; Pieris, 1964).

Of the 15 state universities discussed here, all but one provides education free of charge to undergraduates. Students are selected from their performance at the Advanced Level examinations (A/Ls), a competitive national examination. In 2013, the total number of undergraduates admitted to 14 state universities (excluding the Open University) was 24,198, a mere 10.5% of the 229,737 students who sat for the A/Ls in 2012 (University Grants Commission, 2013, p.11). These numbers do not include students registering for external degree programmes from these same
universities, a problematic issue that is outside the purview of this study.\footnote{The problems of external degrees – such as inadequate teaching and learning resources and little regulations on testing and evaluation – have received little scholarly attention till recently (Karnasuriya, 2011; Kaye, 2002 are exceptions). The issue has gained some visibility due to the debate on this generated by FUTA in 2013. However, universities are yet to take these concerns seriously since external degree registration is a major source of income.} Neither do these numbers include students of the Open University nor the four universities that lie outside UGC authority (section 1.3.3). Data on completion and dropout rates of undergraduates are not officially available which would have enabled a more complete picture of actual undergraduate statistics.

1.3.2 The Open University of Sri Lanka

The Open University of Sri Lanka (hereinafter referred to as the OUSL or Open University) is one of the universities studied in this dissertation. Academic staff of the OUSL has been prominent in the trade union campaigns of FUTA during the past few years, taking the initiative in debates on free education and university autonomy. Academics outside the OUSL include it in their discussions of ‘free’ state universities until reminded that OUSL does not offer free education (fieldnotes, 2012-2014). Of the state universities governed by the UGC, the OUSL is unique in that it provides distance education for a heavily subsidised fee. As a staff member of the OUSL said, the OUSL can be considered a state and public university because it is largely funded by the state and comes under UGC authority (interviews, 2011-2014). In contrast to the other 14 universities which receive their student body via the UGC, the OUSL selects applicants from a student pool that could not gain admittance to other state universities. Ideally, the number of students it can accommodate is unlimited. However, this number is limited by the amount of resources available to the OUSL (interviews, 2012-2014). Currently, there are 35,000 students registered at the OUSL (OUSL website, 2015) but no data is publicly available on drop-outs. Even though the OUSL is included in discussions of free education and state universities in the country, this number, which exceeds the annual enrolment of other universities, is not considered in higher education debates.

1.3.3 State universities outside UGC governance

As stated previously, four state universities remain outside the UGC’s domain of administration, and thus, are not considered in this dissertation. Nevertheless, a
note on their differences is necessary to complete the review of state universities. Two of these four universities provide education mainly for Buddhist priests and function under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education: the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka (est. 1996) and the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka (est. 1982). The third is the University of Vocational Technology, formally a technical institute upgraded in 2008 to university status, which functions under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development. The last university in this category is the Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), functioning under the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The KDU started as an academy producing officer cadets, and was granted university status in 1986. As a defence institution with degree programmes, the KDU has parallels in countries such as the United States, China, UK, and Taiwan. Unlike many of these institutions, however, the KDU is not subject to monitoring or certification by any educational institution (UGC website, 2014). Of special interest to a discussion of the connections between neoliberal education projects and militarisation are the KDU’s fee-levying undergraduate programmes for civilians (on Engineering, Law, Management, Social Sciences and Information Technology) (KDU website, 2014; KDU Prospectus, 2013). The KDU is not part of this dissertation project, since its instructors are military personnel, but their educational programmes would be a productive area of future study.

Academics of these four universities are yet to take part in any of the advocacy campaigns emerging from other universities, and are not part of FUTA. Academics of universities governed by the UGC are generally unaware of the inner workings and issues of these four universities (fieldnotes, 2012-2014). Due to these reasons, these universities are not included in current discussions and debates on higher education and university autonomy in the country.

1.3.4 Private higher education

Since colonial times the discourses dominating Sri Lankan thought on education (section 1.1) have ensured that the state is held responsible for providing education to its people. This also includes discourses against privatised higher education. Globally, privatised higher education refers to a variety of tertiary
education options funded mainly by sources other than the state. These could be in the form of donors who are individuals, charity organisations, or corporate entities. In Sri Lanka, private higher education has a more restricted meaning. Since all state universities (other than OUSL) provide education free of cost, privatised higher education has come to mean ‘non-state owned, fee-levying universities’, commonly called ‘private universities’. Private degree granting institutions in Sri Lanka include professional institutions or private companies with affiliations to foreign universities. The UGC recognises a few of these institutions that are rapidly gaining purchase locally (UGC website, 2014; Duncan, 2014). No reliable statistics of student populations enrolling in the private higher education sector is available due to a lack of publicly available data by these institutions.

1.4. Changing demographics in higher education

The demographics of Sri Lankan university life have changed drastically since its inception. In the 1940s, minority ethnic and religious groups were the majority in educational institutions. The Sinhalese accounted for a little over half the undergraduates of the University of Ceylon (see Table 1-2); and, Buddhists were approximately one third of the student population (Jennings, 1944, p.3). The reasons for this peculiar demographic characteristic in early university education lie in the colonial government’s favourable treatment of minorities, the supremacy of English as the official language, and political identities of ethnic and religious minorities during this time (for more detailed expositions see Andradi, 2011; Jayawardena, 2007; Jebanesan, 2013).

Table 1-2. Ethnic identity of undergraduate students (1942-1944)³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Island %</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1943</th>
<th>1944 (% of total*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinhalese</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>575 (57.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamils</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>325 (32.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ Census data of this time as well as Jennings (1944) use ‘race’ instead of ‘ethnic’ identity, which I prefer since ‘race’ is not a commonly used category at present.
Moors & Malays 6.6 25 21 29 (2.9)
Burghers 0.7 54 52 55 (5.5)
Others 0.3 17 15 12 (1.2)

Source: Jennings (1944)

*This column has been added to the original table.

These numbers changed radically in the 1960s for two reasons. One was the Sinhala Only Act (1956), which privileged the majority ethnic group through Sinhala medium education. The second was the entry of *swabhasha* or Sinhala/Tamil medium educated students to universities (section 1.2). Even though the government brought in Tamil as a provisional measure in 1958 (later giving it parity with Sinhalese in the 1978 Constitution), the Sinhala Only Act and ensuing educational policies ensured that Sinhala became the dominant language of the country. These political changes radically increased the number of Sinhalese students in university while simultaneously dramatically reducing the number of ethnic and religious minorities in state universities (see Table 1-3).

Table 1-3 University student enrolment by ethnicity (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2012 intake</th>
<th>% of total intake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinhalese</td>
<td>22381</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamils</td>
<td>4187</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moors</td>
<td>2292</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28908</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Statistics taken from UGC website, 2014)

In contrast to the 1944 student demographics (Table 1-2), 77% of the incoming undergraduates by 2012 were Sinhalese while the number of Tamil students
had dropped to 14% (Table 1-2). Another important change is signalled by the descriptors of ethnic groups in Table 1-3. Malays and Burghers, who were included separately in the 1944 statistics, have been collated under ‘others’ in recent statistical tables.

The nationalist language policy of 1956 and subsequent privileges accrued to the Sinhalese are considered a precursor to the civil war of later years (DeVotta, 2004; Tambiah, 1986, 1992). The homogeneity of the student and staff populations of state universities (some universities more so than others), facilitates the conformist ideologies prevalent in university communities (Kumara, 2012). Two of the universities discussed in this dissertation, the Universities of Kelaniya and Sri Jayewardenepura, are comparatively more homogeneous than universities such as Peradeniya and Colombo, due to their antecedents as pirivenas and the reluctance to enrol students of ethnic minorities (section 1.2). Participants in this study frequently refer to racist attitudes of academics in their universities, usually cited as Sinhala-Buddhist ideologies (section 2.3). The politics of student unions reflects this as well (section 3). The inability to accept differences, both ideological and cultural, is a fundamental problem underlying discussions of militarisation and autonomy of universities.

2. Militarisation of society and education in Sri Lanka

Educational institutions in Sri Lanka are militarised by state and non-state actors that were party to armed conflicts. This section provides an overview of three key episodes of armed conflict in the post-Independence era, their impact on education and the characteristics of militarisation in education, and a survey of the post-2009 (or ‘post-war’) securitised environment of Sri Lanka. The terms ‘securitisation’ versus ‘militarisation’ were explained in part 1 of this chapter. Here, I disambiguate the three terms I use that are related to armed conflict: ‘civil war’, ‘insurrection’ and ‘insurgency’.

Agreement on definitions of these terms is hampered by disagreements over defining characteristics. Sambanis (2004) argues that definitions are necessarily ad
hoc given the empirical ambiguities of the defining characteristics. Two coding factors are especially problematic: the threshold of violence (how many deaths are necessary for a conflict to be a civil war? Does this include civilian deaths?) and the time period (when does a civil war begin and end? Are periods of reduced violence included, e.g., ceasefires?). Of the host of characteristics that scholars use to code ‘civil war’ as opposed to ‘insurrection’ or ‘insurgency’, the following are of particular relevance to Sri Lanka: a) all parties to the conflict must be organised politically and militarily, b) all parties must have a publicly stated political objective, c) the government must be a principal agent in the conflict, d) the insurgents must recruit locally and operate from a local base. These characteristics are true to all three armed conflicts discussed in this section. The coding factors of the threshold of violence and time period remain contested (Blattman & Miguel, 2010; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Sambanis, 2004; Staniland, 2012). Considering the difficulty of separating these terms theoretically or empirically, I follow the practice of other scholars on these events: ‘civil war’ for the armed conflict between the Sri Lankan state and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the years 1983-2009, ‘insurrection’ and ‘insurgency’ interchangeably for the 1971 and 1987-1989 armed conflicts between the state and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

The three armed conflicts, and especially the civil war, are complex events which I reduce to an artificial simplicity for the purposes of providing a compact description necessary to contextualise the discussions in this study. In the interests of brevity, I refrain from a lengthy exposition on the impact of these conflicts on other minorities such as the Muslim and Malaiyaha Tamil communities. However, it must be stressed that armed conflicts are lived experiences for people of all these communities, who have felt the brunt of it in varied ways.
2.1. Armed conflicts in post-Independence Sri Lanka


In April 1971, a number of government institutions, particularly police stations (except in the North and East) of Sri Lanka came under attack by a group of young people. The attacks organised by what would become the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), (meaning the People’s Liberation Front) took most people by surprise, though the government had by then gained information of their activities. At the time, this group was a small militant self-proclaimed Marxist group, primarily made up of youth (i.e., late adolescence to late twenties), predominantly male, from rural, lower-middle class, Sinhalese, Buddhist social backgrounds (Ivan, 1979; Jayatunga, 2011). The education reforms of the 1940s and changes to university education in the 1960s had resulted in a high percentage of educated youth who were unemployed as economic expansion did not parallel education in the country (section 1.2). Rohana Wijeweera, the founder of the group, tapped into these frustrations and started organising surreptitiously from the late 1960s. The induction of members was based on their attendance at the ‘five lectures’, generally given by Wijeweera himself. These were a series of classes based on socialism and nationalism. Over time, some members graduated from the five lectures to ‘military’ training, rudimentary in nature, encompassing physical exercises and basic weapons training. In readiness for an armed uprising, the JVP had produced large numbers of hand grenades and bombs by 1971. Despite their preparations, the April 1971 insurrection was controlled within two weeks by the government. More than 18,000 young people were arrested; 3104 of them were put on trial. The number of JVP members allegedly killed is unclear, and estimates range from 1200 confirmed by the state to 5000 and even 12,000 deaths estimated by others (Ivan, 1979; Jayatunga, 2011).

An examination of the state’s treatment of the 1971 insurgents and the post-insurgency analyses provided by former-insurgents are vital to our understanding of changes in the state’s response to political prisoners in later years. The insurgents of 1971 faced torture, death and inhumane remand conditions (Jayatunga, 2011). Of the several thousands who were arrested, only about 400 individuals were given prison
sentences. However, during their time in prison, these individuals were given educational facilities, and some completed undergraduate studies. In 1977, when the new government came into power, the imprisoned insurgents were released. Some of these young men later became prominent journalists, academics and human rights activists. In a collection of close to 105 biographical narratives, members of the 1971 insurgents recounted their realisation of Wijeweera’s autocratic decision-making and extremist political ideology. They also stressed their disillusionment of armed struggle as a means of political change (Jayatunga, 2011).

By the JVP’s second insurrection in 1987, the political and economic environment of Sri Lanka had been through several drastic shifts which I recount here. The new constitution of 1978 brought in an executive presidency with sweeping powers and immunities (e.g., no legal proceedings are possible against the President on private or official matters while in office). The civil war that started in 1983 was unresolved by 1987. As a result of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord, the North and East were under the control of the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF), and it remained so for two years. Ostensibly a ‘protective’ force battling the LTTE, the IPKF was an agent of terror for North-Eastern residents (Shanmugaratnam, 1989; Somasundaram, 2010). They were also a focal point for anti-government patriotic nationalist fervour for Southern groups such as the JVP (Matthews, 1989; Tambiah, 1992).

It was in this atmosphere that the JVP launched their second “armed struggle” as they called it, or ‘terrorism’ as others named it, in 1987 (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, 2013, p.119; Matthews, 1989). Unfortunately, reflexive personal narratives by members of the second JVP insurrection are unavailable, making it difficult to gain an understanding of the internal dynamics during the second JVP insurrection. Nevertheless, it is clear that even though the majority of the JVP’s inner circle of 1971 defected from the party, and with some of them working actively against him, Wijeweera was able to build the JVP into an even larger group by the late 1980s. Possibly due to Wijeweera’s autocratic leadership and the new recruits to the group in the 1980s, the Sinhala nationalist ideology of the JVP remained unchanged (Ivan, 1979, 2012; Matthews, 1989). Victor Ivan estimates that less than 2% of the 1971 insurgents participated in the 1987-89 insurrection, perhaps leading to the lack of
evolution in the JVP’s political philosophy (quoted in Jayatunga, 2011). Nevertheless, the membership of the 1987 insurrection was of the same demographic as 1971: rural, lower-middle class, Sinhala, Buddhist youth. In 1987, the JVP added the removal of the IPKF to their demands and rejected the need for a devolution process for the Tamil people.

In its 1987 incarnation the JVP insurgency was more ruthless than during the 1971 insurgency. Initially winning populist support due to their Sinhala nationalist ideology (in 1987), the JVP’s popularity waned over the next two years due to their brutality. Whereas, in the 1971 insurrection, the total death toll of civilians, armed forces and the police was about a 100 people, mostly from combat-related deaths, the situation in 1987-89 was very different (Jayatunga, 2011; Matthews, 1990; Uyangoda, 1989). As in any major armed conflict, the number of fatalities is hard to calculate, with numbers cited being in the range of 20,000 and 60,000 (T. H. J. Hill, 2013). The state armed forces, paramilitary death squads and the JVP were all agents of abductions and extra-judicial killings during this second insurrection. Nevertheless, the JVP alone is said to be responsible for “thousands” of killings during 1987-89 (Mariño, 1989, p.xx). In addition, they claimed responsibility for a number of high-profile killings which included politicians, journalists, human rights activists, and two Vice Chancellors. People were killed or tortured for dissenting with the JVP’s ideology. Members of other political parties, government officials and ministers, as well as defected members of the 1971 JVP insurrection were targeted for assassination (Jayatunga, 2011; Mariño, 1989). People faced violence for noncompliance with JVP demands for action that was designed to create upheaval in the civil and political life of the country (e.g., orders for the closure of shops, offices, schools, universities or the voter boycott of the presidential elections). The swift and arbitrary killings by the JVP, the armed forces and paramilitary groups created a pervasive atmosphere of fear in the country. The end of the insurrection came in 1989 when the state armed forces arrested the core leadership of the JVP who had been in hiding, resulting in the ‘accidental’ death of Wijeweera while in custody. The remaining members of the JVP entered parliamentary politics in 1994 (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, 2013). They are yet to apologise for their killings in 1987-89,
and despite disavowals of a belief in armed struggle, have connections with militant youth groups (see section 3.1).

2.1.2. The civil war (1983-2009)

The longest episode of armed conflict in Sri Lanka in the past century is the civil war. It has generated vast amounts of research and writing in disciplines varying from political science and security studies to psychology and gender studies. Even though most accounts of the war state 1983 as the starting point, Tamil youth groups in the North and East began militant activities in the 1970s. Their struggles, like the JVP’s, were linked to problems of education and employment. The Sinhala Only Act and attendant changes in education had reduced education and employment opportunities for Tamil youth (sections 1.2 & 2.1). Several Tamil groups took up arms in the 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., TELO, PLOTE, EPRLF) but by 1990, the LTTE had become the most powerful group, consolidating its power largely by annihilating the leadership of other Tamil militant groups and absorbing their membership to the LTTE (K. M. de Silva, 2000).

The leader of the LTTE, Velupillai Prabhakaran, was a figure of mythic proportions, valorised and accorded divinity by the LTTE membership and partisan groups. The LTTE’s demand was for a separate Tamil nation –Tamil Eelam – encompassing the North and East of Sri Lanka, areas that hold large populations of Tamil and Muslim communities. A parallel ‘government’ operated in the geographical areas held by the LTTE, termed ‘uncleared areas’ by the Sri Lankan state (Cheran & Aiken, 2005; Somasundaram, 2010). By the late 1990s, the LTTE had built up a dubious reputation as one of the world’s most successful terrorist organisations, financing themselves through fund-raising campaigns amongst the Tamil diaspora, extortion, smuggling, trafficking and investments in large business ventures such as shipping and arms (Hutchinson & O’malley, 2007; Weiss, 2011). The LTTE’s military power was heightened by its well-trained cadre, including a sea tiger wing, air tiger wing and the use of (female) suicide bombers (N. de Mel, 2004; K. M. de Silva, 2012; Weiss, 2011).

Armed conflicts are experienced differently by the different communities. Direct engagement between the state armed forces and the LTTE took place in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country, where civilians suffered severe trauma due
to the effects of war (for in-depth treatments see Samarasinghe, 2015; Somasundaram, 1998, 2014). The numbers of dead, tortured, and exiled due to the actions of both parties to the war include academics, political activists, journalists and other professionals. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1978) and the emergency regulations (now lifted after three decades) the state could and did circumvent the rule of law, resulting in thousands of “arbitrary detentions, torture, and enforced disappearances” (“Sri Lanka: ‘Bait,” 2011). These security measures were of particular use to the state in its intimidation of civilians in general, and political activists, journalists and Tamil civilians in particular. Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideologies and parallel anti-Tamil sentiments were (and still are) nurtured by the state, resulting in the suppression of dissent and a pervasive atmosphere of racism and discrimination towards minority communities (Wickramasinghe, 2014; also see Tambiah, 1992). The increased militarisation of the entire country was an inevitable effect of the civil war.

Nearly three decades of war and several failed ceasefires later, the state armed forces defeated the LTTE in 2009 in what the state called a ‘humanitarian operation’ (Sri Lanka Army website, 2014). Large numbers of civilian casualties were reported during the last year of the war, with the UN estimating that over 40,000 civilians were killed4 (United Nations, 2011, pp.39-41; Weiss, 2011). In March 2014, the UN Human Rights Council voted for an inquiry into war crimes allegations by both parties to the armed conflict, the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. The Sri Lankan government of the time refused to cooperate with the inquiry (Radhakrishnan, 2014).

It is arguable whether the end of war, as declared by the then President of Sri Lanka on 19th May, 2009, has meant peace for Sri Lanka. Peace itself is a contested concept defined mainly by the absence of armed conflict (see Atack, 2009; Galtung & Hoivik, 1971). The situation post-2009 in Sri Lanka has been interpreted as a “negative peace”, i.e., lacking in direct violence, and a “victor’s peace” (Byrne & Klem, 2014; Uyangoda, 2003). Considering the increased militarisation and

4 By the UN’s own estimates this is a conservative estimate, since they admit that during the last week of the war, “it became too difficult to count” (United Nations, 2011, p.40)
securitisation of Sri Lanka during the past five years, I refrain from using ‘peace’ as a descriptor. The post-2009 securitised situation is discussed at length in section 2.3.

2.2. Education and conflict in post-Independence Sri Lanka

The militarisation of education takes different forms globally. In this analysis of the militarisation of education, I leave out the destruction of educational infrastructure and the displacement of population resulting from armed conflict. Such accounts are found in many accounts of the civil war, even if they do not specifically focus on education (Brun, 2008; N. de Mel, 2007; Mariño, 1989). Instead, I focus on the conscious use of the apparatus of education by state and non-state agents of political violence in order to trace linkages between institutions of education and militarisation as a process. In the context of Sri Lanka, these agents are identified as state institutions, state armed forces, and non-state armed groups such as the LTTE and the JVP.

One aspect of militarisation has been the use of educational institutions for political violence, directly and indirectly. The JVP’s use of school children and teachers is rarely discussed in writings on education and armed conflict, while parallel behaviour by the LTTE has garnered much attention. It is important to highlight, therefore, the JVP’s culpability as well. As far as back as the 1960s, Wijeweera and his associates (not formed as the JVP then) recruited adolescents in A/L classes, using fellow students, teachers or outsiders as intermediaries (Jayatunga, 2011). As described in section 2.1.1, these students participated in political classes and (basic) military training by Wijeweera and his inner circle (Jayatunga, 2011). At this time, they also used schools as operations bases in areas under their control (Ivan, 1979, 2012; Jayatunga, 2011). The same modus operandi for recruitments continued during the 1987-89 insurgency. In addition, in this second insurrection, the JVP incited pupils in schools to demonstrate against the government, killed principals who did not cooperate, and induced young people to leave school and become insurgents ((Mariño, 1989). Their use of schools as bases for recruitment resulted in large
numbers of school children being the target of torture and killing by the state armed forces.

Even so, the JVP’s use of children and youth for armed conflict is overshadowed by the actions of the LTTE. The LTTE visited kindergartens and schools in the Northern and Eastern areas regularly, where they gave lessons on the group’s history and Tamil Eelam, forcibly recruited or induced children to enlist, and in some instances, abducted teachers. In addition to the establishment of their own pre-schools and “militaristic” schools, the LTTE also encouraged enlistment through student groups that supported them in schools (Somasundaram, 2002; Stokke, 2006; UTHR(J), 1998, 2000).

With regard to universities too, the JVP and LTTE have acted similarly, gaining support for their movement and at the same time annihilating people they perceived as threats. A large percentage of the JVP membership, and especially its leadership for the 1971 insurrection were drawn from universities. They were recruited through an undergraduate front organisation, the Samajawadi Shishya Sangamaya (Socialist Student Society) (Ivan, 1979, 2012; Jayatunga, 2011). In preparation for the attacks in 1971, the University of Peradeniya was used as a storage space for the JVP’s explosive devices, weapons and uniforms (Ivan, 1979, 2012; Jayatunga, 2011). During 1987-89, the JVP controlled the more powerful student unions in universities through which they enforced the closure of universities (except in the North and East) for most of the two year period. They also killed a number of undergraduate student leaders who opposed them, and is the only group to have assassinated Vice Chancellors in Sri Lanka (during 1987-89) (Matthews, 1995; Uyangoda, 1989).

For the LTTE, visible undergraduate support came in the form of the Pongu Thamil celebrations. It is probable that they received support from academics in the North and East much as the JVP received support in the rest of the island. At the same time, the LTTE also posed a threat to individuals in the University of Jaffna and Eastern University who were perceived as threats or critics. Students who were engaged in human rights work were killed, as well as a founder academic of the University Teachers for Human Rights-Jaffna, Rajini Thiranagama (UTHR(J), 1998).
The Sri Lankan state is not known to use educational spaces for training and recruitment, unlike for example the officer training programmes (JROTC, ROTC) in the United States. The state has a larger recruitment base than do insurgent groups and has not needed to recruit in schools. At the same time, control of the educational apparatus gives the state the opportunity, even the authority, to disseminate a majoritarian version of history that fosters extreme forms of patriotism. As early as 1984, in the early period of the civil war, Regi Siriwardene pointed to discourses in state-produced textbooks that reinforced Sinhala Buddhist superiority and polarised ethnic groups (in Canagaratna, 2006; also see de Alwis, 1998). As evident in the discussions of the JVP and the LTTE above, the state is also responsible for killing and torturing students in schools and universities during the past five decades. State authority has been used to convert educational spaces to military spaces. For example, some universities were used as detention centres during the JVP insurrections, in 1971 and 1987-89 (Jayatunga, 2011). In the Northern and Eastern areas, schools were used as recently as 2012 as military operations bases, detention centres and interrogation centres (Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2012).

In addition to the loss of student and staff due to death and affiliation to insurgent groups, militarisation affects the psyche of educational spaces in other ways. The fear of death and physical harm, displacement, and damages to infrastructure are debilitating to communities as a whole. With regard to educational institutions, such an atmosphere is debilitating, sapping creativity and repressing critique. Few instances of resistance towards state or insurgents have been recorded by civil society. These have been isolated cases of resistance largely by individuals, such as school principals refusing entry to the LTTE or teachers aiding students in trouble during 1987-89 JVP insurrection. The one case of organised resistance from academics to armed conflict is the University Teacher’ for Human Rights-Jaffna, which continued to record human rights violations from all parties during the civil war in the face of the death of one founder member and the exile of several others. Other than in this one instance, organised political mobilisation amongst academics appeared only recently with FUTA’s campaigns at the end of war.
2.3. Securitisation and militarisation in post-2009 Sri Lanka

By the end of the war in 2009, Sri Lankans had lived with continuous violence for nearly three decades. Regardless of whether one lived within or outside areas of combat no one escaped the effects of war. Bombs were a constant threat in public transport and in urban areas, while attacks took place in border villages. People living and travelling to Colombo, for instance, became accustomed to the presence of heavily armed military personnel in various locations. Parts of urban spaces were demarcated as ‘high security zones’, only allowing entry to designated people. Taking photographs in public spaces led to security checks or even arrests. Military checkpoints were built as permanent structures within easy proximity to each other. The constant expectations of bomb explosions became normalised, as was news of arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial killings. Random and constant security checks of person and baggage were factored into travel times. Long term exposure to armed conflict leaches into the materiality of everyday life and desensitises us to conditions that are strange to the uninitiated. At the same time, it produces a permanent undertone of insecurity.

In 2009, when the war ended, it was logical to expect these tensions in everyday life to disappear. On the contrary, however, overt signifiers of armed conflict have been replaced with a more opaque apparatus of security. Three main inter-connected phenomena are characteristic of post-war securitisation of Sri Lanka: the concentration of power in former President Mahinda Rajapaksa’s family; war triumphalism and Sinhala-Buddhist fundamentalism; and the expansion of defence involvement and interests.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected in 2005, re-elected in 2010 and was defeated in Presidential Elections in January 2015 while seeking a third term. Upon taking office in 2005, the former President centralized power within his family, appointing family members and loyalists to high positions in the state and even corporate sectors. As of August 2014, the former President alone was responsible for nearly 80 state institutions, including the portfolios of Defence, Urban Development,  

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5 Former President Rajapaksa’s government passed a constitutional amendment in 2010 to allow a third consecutive term for a President. Previously, the head of state was allowed only two consecutive terms.
Public Security, Law and Order, Finance and Planning as well as Ports and Highways. His three brothers hold the positions of the Speaker of Parliament, Minister of Economic Development, and Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and Urban Planning. Other members of the former President’s family (sons, nieces, nephews, cousins) were in the Parliament, diplomatic corps and state ministries (Presidential website, 2014; GOSL website, 2014). The powers of the former President’s family members exceeded their official duties. For example, Basil Rajapaksa, the Minister of Economic Development, took part in the 2012 discussions between the government and FUTA. Though his presence was explained as necessary due to the financial nature of FUTA demands, there was an unspoken understanding that his presence was proxy to the former President (fieldnotes, 2011-2014). The Rajapaksa family had authority over a large portion of the national budgetary allocations; and the government faced charges of ‘unprecedented’ financial corruption due to crony capitalism (Goodhand, 2013). The Joint Opposition, an alliance formed by opposition parties in November 2014 to contest the 2015 Presidential Elections against former President Rajapaksa, used nepotism and corruption as their main rallying points. Current President Maithripala Sirisena’s victory at the Presidential Elections on 8th January 2015 is a measure of widespread dissatisfaction during these post-war years.

War triumphalism and Sinhala-Buddhist fundamentalism are integral to the securitisation of post-war Sri Lanka. Buddhism’s links with war and armed conflict are neither modern nor unique to Sri Lanka. Buddhism is linked to Japanese militarism during World War II and more recently with ethnic violence against minorities in Thailand and Myanmar (see Adolphson, 2007; Jerryson & Juergensmeyer, 2009). In relation to Sri Lanka, Sinhala-Buddhism is a hyphenated form of the religion, fulfilling a political function in contemporary Sri Lanka. It conflates Sinhala ethnic identity with Buddhist religious identity and has received state patronage. As a nationalist ideology it has supported the use of military solutions during the war and advocates an aggressive stance towards minorities (DeVotta, 2007; Tambiah, 1992; Uyangoda, 1996).

6 Government websites listing the President’s portfolios contradict each other: the official website of the President includes Religious Affairs as a portfolio but not the Ports & Highways. I have chosen to use the official website of the Govt of Sri Lanka for the listing of portfolios instead.
Since the end of the war, Sinhala-Buddhism has become an integral part of war triumphalism. Rather than move towards the diffusion of tension between the polarised Sinhalese and Tamil communities, the Sri Lankan government pursued the uninhibited use of Sinhala-Buddhist policies. New Buddhist temples dot the landscape in the ‘liberated’ Vanni area in the Northern Province, annexed to shiny renovated military bases (fieldnotes, 2014). Buddhist statues and altars have become a common sight, and are placed on public property ranging from the main airport to public roads. Buddhist archaeological sites in the North and East have become Sinhalised, for example the signage at the Kantharodai site of ancient stupa-like structures contains only the Sinhala name ‘Kadurugoda Temple’, and lacks any information on the importance of this site to Tamil Buddhists of the time (fieldnotes, 2014). Violent groups of Buddhist monks (e.g., Bodu Bala Sena (BBS)) gained ascendance during the last two years, publicly supported by state officials such as Gotabaya Rajapaksa, brother to the former President, and the former Secretary to the Ministry of Defence (Gunasekara, 2013; Wickramasinghe, 2014).

The most recent example of state-supported Sinhala-Buddhist violence is the anti-Muslim discourses that construct Muslims in Sri Lanka as a threat to the existence of Sinhala-Buddhists, and consequently to Sri Lanka itself. Mosques and Muslim-owned businesses have been attacked as have the predominantly Muslim towns Aluthgama and Beruwala in Southern Sri Lanka. Many of the attacks have been carried out by Buddhist monks in the presence of security forces and the police (Amnesty International, 2014). These events make it clear that sanctioned violence on Muslims is encouraged as part of a military solution this is also evident when the state decides to use the military to rebuild these towns that had been destroyed in the presence of security personnel themselves (“Troops to immediately,” 2014). In these myriad ways, minorities in the country are securitised, militaristic solutions are proposed.

In the education sector, this discourse is evident as a narrow form of moralism. The two universities that originated as Buddhist monasteries, the Universities of Kelaniya and Sri Jayewardenepura, have until recently enrolled mostly Sinhala (and Buddhist) students. Administrative work in both these universities is conducted mostly in Sinhala, and a conservative dress code is (unofficially) imposed on female
academics and students (interviews, 2012-2014). Other universities have seen a similar increase in conservatism, with ritualistic enactments of Buddhist (e.g., Buddhist holiday celebrations) or pseudo-Buddhist events inappropriate to higher educational spaces (e.g., teacher appreciation ceremonies by undergraduates for academics) (Young Asia Television, 2011). The imposition of Sinhala-Buddhist disciplinary strategies is not a new phenomenon, appearing in the education sector during previous governments. My aim in this section is to record the steep rise in militant Buddhist discourses and state-sanctioned violence in the name of Buddhism as a component of militarisation in the country at the time this study took place.

The third, and arguably the most important, characteristic of post-war securitisation in the country is the expansion of the defence sector. Contrary to expectations at the end of the war, national allocations for defence rose from approx. 12% in 2009 to 17% in 2013 (see Figure 1). In comparison, the total allocations for education were about 10% (or Rs 163,400 million) (Ratnayake & Mel, 2012, p.11).

Figure 1: Expenditure Trends in Ministry of Defence and Urban Development (2009-2013)

Source: Ratnayake & de Mel (2012)

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7 During the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, the sari was imposed as the appropriate dress for mothers visiting their children’s school and mothers wearing other types of clothing were being refused entry (Liyanage, 2003, February 09)
According to economic analysts, roughly half the defence allocations are spent on wages and other employment benefits to security personnel (Ratnayake & de Mel, 2012). Rather than systematic demobilisation and re-skilling programmes that would have reduced the size of the armed forces, the government has been using military personnel during the past five years as labour in sectors such as urban development, tourism and reconstruction. This deployment has been justified by the government as a productive use of personnel and a form of patriotism on the part of the soldiers (Kumarasinghe, 2011, October 09; “The role of,” 2014). In the North and East, where post-war reconstruction and development is taking place, the military presence is visibly higher and their authority overrules civilian administration at times. The armed forces manage several tourist resorts and hotels in the area and are present in historical sites (fieldnotes, 2014; Goodhand, 2013; International Crisis Group, 2012).

In urban areas closer to the capital city, a less visible securitisation process is in progress. A description of urban development projects focusing on Colombo will serve as the best review of securitisation in the capital. Beautification projects have been part of urban design and development in different parts of the world, such as Philadelphia, Oklahoma, Cairo, Kampala, Durban and Rio de Janeiro. In Sri Lanka, this form of urban gentrification started after the war, and accompanied the absorption of the Urban Development Authority into the MOD. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, as the former Secretary to the MOD, was in charge of the entire defence sector as well as the police (“Countries at the,” 2012) and is the person most identified with Colombo’s beautification project. Funded by the World Bank, the beautification project has wrought changes in the city in the form of planned walking paths, beach front development projects, the transformation of previously neglected colonial era buildings into upmarket malls and open air markets (“Beautifying Colombo,” 2014). In central areas of Colombo city, roads are kept scrupulously clean, replanted with trees that are culturally appropriate, and the boundary walls of state departments have been knocked down overnight to present a more pleasant appearance.

The aesthetic of a beautified city, in Sri Lanka as in other countries, is produced through a number of disciplinary strategies (Ghannam, 2013; Phadke, Ranade, & Khan, 2009; Smith, 2002). The beautification of Colombo is literally a
project of military labour, since military personnel are used for the construction and maintenance of streets, gardens, parks, malls and other such urban spaces. Urban spaces that are demarcated as part of the beautified city are over-policed, the target of this policing being loitering men, young couples, and other such ‘undesirables’ (for a similar project in Cairo, see Ghannam, 2013). In addition to state land already available, more land is sourced through the unscrupulous use of urban and land reclamation laws. Groups of low-income communities that use urban land for commercial and residential purposes have been evicted and relocated, with such moves enforced by the military (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2014). Beautification is in essence a classed project, providing sanitised spaces for the middle-classes to inhabit, segregated from lower-class infiltration. Media coverage of evictions, displacement and unlawful use of urban land has been hampered by the military and state censorship. The beautification project in Colombo, similar to land reclamation and development projects in the North and East, is an example of securitisation. In its use of the military as labour in and surveillance of the city, it is also an illustration of post-war militarisation.

In addition to the security apparatus at work in different parts of the country, there have been routine infringements of human and civil rights. Journalists and political activists have been killed, intimidated, arbitrarily arrested, and made to ‘disappear’ (“Sri Lanka: Halt,” 2012; International Federation of Human Rights, 2013; Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2014). Media institutions work under state- and self-imposed censorship, institutions critical of the government have been raided and some news websites have been blocked during these years 8 (World Report: Sri Lanka, 2014). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international NGOs, and civil rights organisations have found it increasingly difficult to operate due to arbitrarily enacted regulations, and their employees have been harassed (International Federation of Human Rights, 2013). Constitutional amendments and government regulations, including those extending Presidential authority and educational policy, have been effected with little debate or advance notice. Former or current military personnel have been appointed to administrative and diplomatic positions (Goodhand, 2013).

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8 Since January 2015, most websites have been unblocked by the new government, the exception being TamilNet.
The education sector has not escaped such interference. In addition to the leadership course held at military institutions for university entrants and organised by the Ministries of Defence (MOD) and Higher Education (section 4), the MOD has also provided fitness training and conferred military ranks to school principals (fieldnotes, 2012). Universities have been forced to hire personnel from Rakna Lanka security services, a company affiliated with the MOD (see section 4.3). Trade union action by academics has been hindered by threats and harassment (FUTA website, 2014); protest marches and rallies by undergraduates have been met with tear gas and police violence; and student leaders arbitrarily arrested and jailed (FUTA website; fieldnotes 2012-2014). The procedure for the appointments of Vice Chancellors, the highest academic position in a Sri Lankan university, has been misinterpreted and made on the basis of political partisanship rather than academic merit (FUTA website, 2014). Academics in the North and East have reported interference in university staff recruitment by the state as well as state-sponsored militant Tamil organisations (Jaffna University Science Teachers’ Association, 2014). Outside the North and East, particularly in universities considered in this dissertation, academics have faced less overt forms of violence from political and administrative officials in comparison to those in the North and East. With the exclusion of a few academic trade unionists, there are no reports of physical harm or intimidation to academics by the state in the Western province (interviews 2012-2014). Nevertheless, an increase in arbitrary regulations, fears of surveillance and retribution, and rising conservatism have led to a political culture of conformity. It is in this environment that my research takes place, and that the participants of this study speak on topics of university autonomy and militarisation of education.

3. Universities, politics and violence

Given the high levels of violence in Sri Lanka, violence in student politics should not be a surprise. In this section, I discuss two types of direct violence caused by student politics: ragging (i.e., communal hazing) and factional fighting, both linked to the discourses of control and autonomy over universities. I use Galtung’s definition of direct violence here, which is “an immediate relationship between the perpetrator
and the recipient of violence” (Atack, 2009, p.41; also Galtung, 1969), with the acknowledgement that distinct categorisations of ‘perpetrator’ and ‘recipient’ are not as straightforward as given in Galtung’s work. Other forms of direct and structural violence abound in universities. Gender-based violence and sexual harassment such as intimate partner violence is common and under-reported (Ruwanpura, 2011). Structural violence in the form of identity-based discrimination is usually ignored. An example of this is when the University of Peradeniya acceded to requests by state institutions to refrain from sending Tamil students for internships (see Somasundaram, Hoole, & Somasundaram, 2007 for other examples). There is no doubt universities need to address the existence of multiple forms of violence in their space (see Weeramunda, 2008 for a survey). However, in this section, I intend to focus on two forms of violence that are unique to universities. Since detailed studies of university politics are scarce, I use my own experiences as a student and an academic to augment the description in this section.

3.1. Student political violence

To understand these two types of political violence we must also understand student politics in Sri Lankan universities. Student unions in universities are not legally constituted as unions, but as student associations. Only a small percentage of undergraduates are active in student unions, and yet their presence is visible and widely felt. A visitor to a Sri Lankan university would see a large number of banners, posters, and other visual signs of student politics. These visuals contain imperatives and exhortations to the government or university administration to honour student rights, to release arrested or suspended students or at the very least, to increase scholarship stipends. Their rhetoric is anti-establishmentarian, including discourses spurning the state, university authorities, capitalism, and more recently neoliberalism.

Since the 1960s, when political parties such as the Communist Party formed student unions, they have been an integral part of university and national politics. By the late 1990s, unions were less open about their affiliations with national political parties, but continued to do ‘leg-work’ for these parties during elections and other events (Ivan, 1979, 2012; Jayatunga, 2012; Kumara, 2012). Unions are usually faculty based, with the unions of arts, humanities or social sciences generally opposing unions in science or management faculties. The largest conglomeration of these
unions is the Inter-University Student Federation (IUSF), generally said to be affiliated with the JVP (Matthews, 1989; Weeramunda, 2008). The IUSF is the dominant voice of university students in Sri Lanka, with the responsibility of organising student rallies, strikes, sit-ins, pickets and protests that take place around the country, juggling multiple campaigns on behalf of different universities at the same time. For example, during the month of December 2014 alone, several student protests and marches took place in five universities and in the streets of Colombo; and a press conference organised on health issues, with the support of health sector unions, was prevented by the state (IUSF website, 2014). The state regularly deploys a heavy police presence at student protest marches; and at times use water cannon, tear gas, rubber bullets and physical force to control protesters. Over the years, student leaders have been suspended from universities, attacked, arrested, made to ‘disappear’, and killed at the hands of the state and other groups (Wickramasinghe, 2005).

At the same time, student unions themselves are remarkably intolerant of alternative political stances. On the whole, student union discourses are aligned with Sinhala-Buddhist ideology (see section 2.3), and they have proven intolerant of dissent or critique from other student bodies. Student mobilisation for protests is accompanied by coercion (see section 3.2 on ragging). Frequent and violent infighting is common, though at present it has reduced in intensity. Clashes between student unions regularly occur during certain times of the academic year, most notably during union elections. In previous instances of infighting, students have been knifed, beaten and otherwise harassed, resulting in some deaths. Fights amongst groups of students have become such a regular feature of university life that the university communities – staff, non-activist students, academics – have developed their own strategies to deal with it (Schubert, 2012; Uyangoda, 2002, November 18). The frequent outbursts of factional fights may seem random and ad hoc to outsiders. However, within universities, student infighting is a strategic and systematic deployment of violence, used for its ability to signal power and manage the larger student body.

3.2. Ragging

The second form of political violence that I describe here is a form of communal hazing, called ‘ragging’. Like other forms of hazing, it is rule-governed,
with ragging traditions varying according to faculty of study and university. In general, ragging takes place during the first semester of the academic year, and is conducted mostly by second-year undergraduates (‘raggers’) on new undergraduates (‘freshers’). Freshers are usually ragged individually, in small groups or in entire cohorts (of a few hundred students). They face a range of commands by the raggers: requests for personal information on schooling, residence, parental occupation; commands to entertain raggers by singing songs, reciting jokes, enactments; or to repeat swear words, name body parts. All of these can take place in communal spaces on university property (Schubert, 2012; K. T. Silva, Sivayoganathan, & Schensul, 1998). Other acts of ragging take place in locations that are restricted to students and away from the presence of university staff. These include physical activities such as walking on knees or doing squats. Incidents of rape and other forms of torture are cited by researchers but have not been officially reported to my knowledge (Matthews, 1995; Ruwanpura, 2011). Intense ragging has also resulted in deaths and suicides. Students in university hostels are said to undergo higher instances of ragging, and consequently, residential universities, such as the University of Kelaniya, appear to have more intense ragging than urban universities, such as the University of Colombo. Even though hazing is not unique to Sri Lankan universities, the intensity, duration, and the public nature of it make ragging stand out in its terribleness.

A public outcry against ragging subsequent to the death of an Engineering student of the University of Peradeniya resulted in the Prevention of Ragging Act in 1998, which has not reduced ragging yet. While universities officially decry ragging and utilise their security and academic personnel to monitor ragging, they have been unable to eradicate ragging. The reasons for this are complex. Many academics are produced by the same university system, have experienced ragging to some extent, and are desensitised to the phenomenon. There are also academics who propagate a narrative of ragging as a cultural rite functioning as a social equaliser to students from diverse social backgrounds (e.g., Wedage & Gunatilake, 2010). Junior and female academics in particular feel powerless given the violent and collective masculinity with which ragging is associated. Complicating these factors is the lack of support that academics opposing ragging have felt due to the university administration’s

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9 In my own experience, at least one junior female academic has been physically attacked by a male ragger when questioning ragging.
reluctance to address ragging (interviews, 2012-2014). Compounding these factors is the student unions’ involvement in ragging.

The driving force behind ragging are the student unions. Anti-ragging unions, i.e., student unions actively opposing ragging, exist but are less powerful than their pro-ragging counterparts. Ragging is conducted with the backing of the pro-ragging student unions, including the very powerful IUSF (see section 3.1 above). In one of the more infamous incidents of student political violence, a student leader opposing ragging was killed in a fight that broke out during discussions between an anti-ragging group and a student union that controlled ragging (Uyangoda, 2002, November 18). Ragging is entrenched in universities due its function as the most effective technology of power for student unions. New students are expected to fall in line with the racist and gendered conservative norms upheld by the unions, to which they are socialized through ragging. The political philosophy and expectations of new students are explained in lectures to freshers, named the *thela bedeema* in Sinhala (literally ‘distribution of oil’). Requisite behaviour includes attending protest marches, pickets, and rallies on behalf of student unions as well as canister solicitation to collect funds inside forms of public transport. It is ragging that creates and sustains the submission of the larger body of undergraduate communities’ to the will of the political visible student unions (Schubert, 2012; Weeramunda, 2008 for more details).

Scholars who are not Sri Lankan have called ragging “extraordinary” (Spencer, 2002, p.607), “sadistic” and “obscene” (Matthews, 1995, p.87); but research on ragging by Sri Lankan scholars is limited to a few ad hoc small-scale studies, subsections in research on other issues, and letters to the media (Schubert, 2012; Uyangoda, 2002; Wedage & Gunatilake, 2010). Rather than a lack of interest, however, this absence indicates the reluctance of academics to engage with this powerful form of biopolitical management dominating university communities, the media and the public (see Kumara, 2012; Ruwanpura, 2011 for methodological problems in researching ragging). Most recently, it has been the catalyst for a second instance of biopolitical management, when the state gave ragging as the rationale for imposing the leadership course on incoming undergraduates (section 4.2).
4. Events and organisations of relevance to the study

The past few years, especially 2011-2012, have been eventful years for Sri Lankan universities, (a detailed list of events is given in Appendix A). Not only was the academic community engaged in a massive trade union campaign, but the government made at least two arbitrary decisions affecting universities. In this section, I first describe university trade unions, the primary organised voice of academics, and recent trade union action. Then, I describe the leadership course and the imposition of Rakna Lanka security services at some length. These two events, being key episodes of militarisation in higher education in the recent past, were entry points in my discussions on militarisation with participants of this study. Other lesser-known examples of militarisation are part of the discussion in Chapter 4.

4.1. Academic organising

In The Road to Peradeniya, the biography of the first Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, we find a clue to the stature of academic unions in the 1940s. Preparing to lobby for approval to convert the University College to the University of Ceylon, Jennings carefully strategized on approaching the University Teachers’ Association, to the extent that the necessity of gaining approval by the University Council (the governing body of the university) slipped his mind (Jennings, 2005). When I started work at the University of Kelaniya in 2002 as a temporary lecturer, academic trade unions had lost much of this strength. In the previous forty decades or so, the only trade union campaign of significance was the campaign for wage increase in the 1990s, which won its demands (interviews, 2012). Academics of my generation had little idea of what academic organising meant prior to 2010, when the first of the most recent FUTA campaigns was organised. Even though FUTA did not win their demands for salary raises during the 2010-2011 campaign, participants in my study interpreted it as a successful campaign. They valued the opportunities it created to forge stronger relationships with each other, and the resulting sense of their own professional identity (interviews 2012-2014, fieldnotes 2012-2014). The politically
charged atmosphere of this time led to the 2012 FUTA campaign on educational reform. The 2012 campaign consisted of numerous public rallies, a 100 day strike, and cross-country protest marches, becoming one of the most successful trade union actions in the country since the end of the war (in 2009) despite once again not winning any of the demands. An indication of this success, however, came with the adoption of FUTA’s rallying cry for 6% of GDP for education by the Joint Opposition during the lead up to 2015 Presidential Elections. In his election manifesto, President Sirisena promised to honour most of the FUTA demands (Manifesto, n.d.).

The structure and organisation of FUTA differs from other trade unions in the country. FUTA is an umbrella organisation comprising over 40 unions in state universities. In some universities, all academic staff of the university forms a single union (e.g., the Open University Teachers’ Association (OUTA)). In others, such as in the University of Colombo, unions are formed in each faculty of study (e.g., the Arts Faculty Teachers’ Union). These generally form a university-wide federation which then becomes a member of FUTA. In instances where part of the university is geographically separated from the university, the separated Faculty or Campus may organise separately. This is the case with the University Kelaniya, which has two unions, one in the main campus and one in the Faculty of Medicine. FUTA has representatives from each member union, to which they refer as ‘sister unions’ in their texts. The Executive Committee (or the Ex-CO) of FUTA is chosen from these representatives.

This cascading structure makes FUTA’s decision making process different to trade unions of other professions. It is expected that the decision-making process works from the ‘ground up’: that when the FUTA executive committee makes a decision, the representatives take this decision back to their unions, where the membership of the union votes on it, the decision is conveyed to the Ex-Co again, at which point a decision regarding consensus will have to be taken. In reality, however, this process appears to be inconsistently applied. To illustrate, I describe the decision making process on the token strike on 3rd June 2014, the first strike for the year. Two weeks before the date, FUTA held a press conference announcing the upcoming strike, stating that all but two universities (where unions do not exist or are inactive) would participate (Senanayake, 2014, May 31). This implied that the decision had
already been taken by all member unions. However, in many of the unions voting took place after the press conference (fieldnotes, 2014). In light of this timeline, FUTA’s public statement can be interpreted as either a conviction of their members’ overwhelming support or a lack of space for dissent from its members. A further discussion of these tensions is presented in Chapter 4.

4.2. Leadership Qualities and Positive Thinking in undergraduates

In mid-2011, the government of Sri Lanka announced a pre-orientation programme (POP) for new entrants to universities, “A course for developing the leadership abilities and positive thinking through the theoretical and practical training” as it was termed. It was jointly organised by the Ministries of Defence and Higher Education (“Course of Developing,” 2011). This course, usually referred to by the shortened name ‘leadership training course’ outside official documents (Janagan, 2011, June 03), differed sharply from previous POPs for undergraduates. Programmes for incoming undergraduates are within the sole governance of the UGC and universities. In contradiction to these provisions, the leadership training course was announced by the government, set in motion without consultation with universities, and was conducted by military personnel within military spaces. The course was accompanied by World Bank funded English as a Second Language (ESL) and Information Technology (IT) courses taking place outside military spaces. Critics of the leadership training course focused on the dangers of allowing impressionable young people to be trained by military personnel. They also pointed out that the discourses of leadership in the armed forces were different to those of academic institutions, which valued critical thinking over unquestioning subjection to hierarchy. The regimental time schedules, squad drills, and dormitory inspections were highlighted as evidence of a militaristic training program. In addition, training by military personnel in military spaces a mere two years after the civil war had ended was considered an undisguised attempt to intimidate minority communities. Critics pointed to the Sinhala-Buddhist discourse pervading the curriculum, such as “the arrival of the Aryans, foreign invasions…and the development of Sinhalese kingdoms” and the list of ‘role models’ made up of Sinhala-Buddhists such as
President Rajapaksa and Anagarika Dharmapala (Dhanapala & Goonesekere, 2011; Wickramagamage, 2011).

Despite the shock and outrage in politically liberal circles, there was no public outcry against it. Six fundamental rights petitions against the leadership course were disallowed by the Supreme Court without stating reasons but did not gain much publicity (an exception is Janagan, 2011, June 03). The government dominated the print and state media with their narrative of the leadership course, rationalising it as necessary to eradicate ragging in universities and to improve employability of students, two issues that they stated academics had been unable to deal with efficiently. In the words of the Ministry of Higher Education, in three weeks the course would:

ensure that students… are disciplined, physically fit, knowledgeable about the society and the world, aware of modern technologies, capable of conflict resolution by themselves, find solutions and face the challenges facing the country, steer the development of the country and be exemplary to the future generation (Nizam, 2011).

Organised public dissent on this came from two groups. One was the IUSF and other student unions, who conducted protest marches against it (IUSF website, 2014). However, these did not gain much publicity in the media and may have been considered as yet another protest march by university students. The second group to oppose it was the Friday Forum, a group of “concerned citizens” including retired diplomats and legal scholars, who made a public statement detailing the legal and political problems of such a programme. In their statement, they analysed the curriculum as discouraging tolerance of difference and inculcating majoritarian ideology. They also argued that it contradicted values of “freedom of thought, opinion and expression, and the value of dissent” inherent to university education (Dhanapala & Goonesekere, 2011). Even amongst critics of the leadership course, little attention was paid to the accompanying ESL and IT courses, which had effectively stopped the intensive ESL courses usually conducted in universities for new entrants.

On the part of academics, with the exception of a few letters to the press (e.g., Wickramagamage, 2011) there was little public dissent in 2011. Despite the heightened political sensitivity post-2010, there was no statement regarding FUTA’s
position on it in 2011. It was later included as part of the 2012 FUTA demands, where they stated that the government should “immediately suspend” the leadership course (FUTA, 2012, August 07). However, by October 2012, when trade union action ended, FUTA had agreed that universities would play a consultative role in ‘changing the nature’ of the course, though this did not take place (Silva, 2013, October 20). It was then mentioned as a grievance in relation to the FUTA-organised token strike in June 2014 (fieldnotes, 2014). The leadership course continued through these three years, minus the accompanying ESL and IT courses in subsequent years (interviews, 2013-2014), with even less public attention than when first announced. It was included as one of FUTA’s demands to the new government of January 2015, which has agreed to end the programme.

4.3. Government mandated security services (Rakna Lanka)

The Rakna Arakshaka Lanka Limited, or Rakna Lanka as it is generally known, is described as “a Sri Lanka Government owned business undertaking in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence”, which employs over 4000 personnel, “comprising ex-military men and women” (Rakna Arakshaka Lanka Limited website, 2014). Currently, it provides security to a number of state institutions, including offices of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and several ministries. The website’s list of clients consists only one university as of 2014, the University of Sri Jayewardenepura as of 2014.

When the government directed universities to use Rakna Lanka security services in 2011, there was little knowledge of this company in the university communities. The directive, as well as the ensuing employment of the services, is shrouded in mystery. According to media reports, universities received an order to engage the services of this company, overriding the usual procedure for acquiring goods and services through the procurement of tenders (Vice Chancellors object…, 2011). In discussions in universities that I was witness to or took part in over the last three years in universities, references to Rakna Lanka were rare (fieldnotes, 2012-2014). Colleagues seemed confused about the presence of the security company, and
said they did not know if their universities used the services of Rakna Lanka. Some of the interviewees of this study had no knowledge that such an issue had even arisen. Contrary to the Rakna Lanka website, some participants claimed that more than one university was given security by the firm. FUTA members interviewed for the study had no memory of FUTA action against it (interviews & fieldnotes, 2012-2014), though a statement was issued by the then President of FUTA citing it as a violation of tender procedures and misuse of public funding meant for higher education (FUTA, n.d.). The one act of resistance cited by academics was the public letter of appeal, signed by approximately 140 academics organised by a group of academics independent of the trade unions. This letter highlighted the global trend to privatise security and linked the imposition of Rakna Lanka services to what they saw as “an increasing infringement of university autonomy” (“An appeal against,” 2011). The current government has agreed to remove the services of the Rakna Lanka security company from universities.

**Conclusion**

Significant parallels exist in systems of education across countries, but local discourses on both militarisation and higher education are shaped by global trends as well as local specificities. This analysis of the discourses of militarisation in universities in Sri Lanka is intended to reveal the socio-political and historical specificities of militarisation in a situated context. In this chapter, my aim was to provide a condensed but rich description of the complex matters that affect discourses of militarisation in universities. In some instances, I have also commented on historical debates that appear to persist to the present day. This contextual background is necessarily brief and I have ‘erased’ certain aspects of higher education in the twentieth century, highlighting other aspects. Complexities arising from issues of ethnicity, religion, and gender as well as language ideologies are necessary for a deeper understanding of problems in higher education but are beyond the scope of this dissertation. I have attempted, however, to show how colonial and post-colonial education policies as well as language policies underlie the political and educational context of present-day Sri Lanka. This chapter also linked militarisation stemming
from the previous decades to the increased securitisation of universities currently taking place. In Chapter 2, I review the scholarly treatment of militarisation both within and outside the field of education.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

In the 1920s, teachers’ unions in the United States intensified their campaign against state propaganda aimed at student recruitment. In the late 1960s, Senator William J. Fulbright warned the public about a ‘military-industrial-academic complex’, and Saburo Ienaga sued the Japanese Ministry of Education for enforcing changes to his textbook manuscripts describing Japan’s war responsibilities. These events, controversial in their times, are all but forgotten now. Nevertheless, in the past two decades research and activism on the nexus between education and the military has emerged in places as far apart as Eritrea, Thailand, Japan and the United States. In this chapter, I review scholarly work on militarisation (and militarism) in general, emphasise militarisation’s impact on education and higher education, and also discuss relevant literature in the areas of discourse and language education. This review also includes literature on militarisation in Sri Lanka.

1. Militarism, militarisation and securitisation

Given the vast quantity of scholarly literature produced on militarisation since the 1950s, I focus on two aspects of it in this section: first, the definition of key concepts, and second, the chronological linchpins of this research. Unsurprisingly, scholarly attention towards militarisation coincides with major conflicts in history. These episodes are the World Wars I and II, the last stages of the nuclear era (1970s-1980s), and myriad armed conflicts at the turn of this millennium (1990s onwards). The slightly different but overlapping definitions and strands in militarisation can be traced to these time spans.
1.1. Militarism

Militarism is a companion concept to militarisation, understood to be the ideology behind the process of militarisation. Militarism’s meaning is generally considered fixed but scholarly literature illustrates that this is not so. I favour the definition of militarism used by South Asian scholars, that of an ideology advocating hierarchy and control, promoting considerations of the military and security over that of civilian issues (Chenoy, 2002; N. de Mel, 2007; Mazari, 1996). It permeates issues that are not directly related to military matters, such as gender, class, religion, and education. Initially a concept connected directly with the military, due to changes in the global context, it is extended now to encompass security and defence interests of states and other groups. It has also been linked to other oppressive ideologies, chief among these being patriarchy (Armato, Fuller, Matthews, Meiners, & Erica, 2013; Chenoy, 2002; de Mel, 2007, Enloe, 1988) and the economic processes of capitalism and neoliberalism (Chenoy, 2002; Finklehor, 1970; Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2000).

By the late 1970s, scholars had already noted links between capitalist and imperialist foundations of militarism (see “A short bibliography,” 1980). The tendency to connect specific economic systems with militarism has only intensified in recent decades, as increased attention is being paid to international financial agencies (e.g., World Bank, IMF) supporting donee countries with authoritarian state policies (Krech & Maclure, 2003; Luckham, 1994; Tannock, 2009). In education, theoretical framings of militarism in the United States currently treat neoliberalism as intrinsic to the process (Aguirre & Johnson, 2005; Armato et al., 2013; Galaviz, Palafox, Meiners, & Quinn, 2011; Saltman & Gabbard, 2003). Nevertheless, tying militarism to capitalist and neoliberal ideologies, leads us to ignore it in areas with closed economic policies and communist states, despite robust historical evidence to the contrary. Militarist state policies in the USSR and China are cases in point (see Albrecht, 1980 for a review of ‘red’ militarism). Furthermore, the exclusive focus by Western researchers on the state as an agent of militarism, brought about by the consideration of non-state armed groups under the rubric of terrorism, creates an artificial separation between state versus non-state forms of militarism.
1.2. Militarisation

Militarisation is the operational aspect of militarism. As with militarism, definitions of militarisation initially constructed it as the process of increased military involvement in civilian life or national policies. The initial (and Western) definitions specifically focused on the undue primacy of the military itself. For instance, C. B. Otley considers militarisation to be an organisational or structural feature resulting in the “[encroachment] of military forms, personnel and practices upon civilian institutions or social orders” (1978, p.322). This is the most fundamental dimension of militarisation, and is used by some participants of this study as well. I term this the ‘concrete’ version of militarisation.

Even though state or non-state armed groups are agents and constituents of militarisation, the inculcation of militaristic values, ideologies, and patterns of behaviour in other spheres can also be considered militarisation. This definition of militarisation, as a process that permeates the everyday life of citizens, is favoured by feminist scholars in particular (Chenoy, 1998; N. de Mel, 2007; Enloe, 2010; Lorentzen & Turpin, 1998). Extreme conservatism and reification of leaders are other components that accompany militarisation (Ienaga, 1993/1994). These are significant extensions to the initial definition of militarisation.

As mentioned before, feminist scholars have contributed enormously to the theorisation of militarisation. Their work has developed parallel to the fields of peace and conflict studies and international relations, two areas of study that continue to have a largely statist standpoint. Seeking a gendered perspective of war and armed conflict has necessitated methodological differences, explorations of areas and communities that are ignored by areas of study, such as those mentioned above. Feminist scholars have exposed the effect of militarism in spaces such as the police, the market, tourism, and geographically in regions other than the United States and Britain (Chenoy, 1998; N. De Mel, 2007; Enloe, 2014; Lorentzen & Turpin, 1998; Mazurana, Jacobsen, & Gale, 2013). They have consistently worked to move scholarly attention away from states and institutions and towards effects of militarisation (and armed conflict) on everyday life. They have argued that while war
is mainly conceived as the domain of men, women and children continue to be its main victims (Chenoy, 1998; Enloe, 1983; Taber, 2009).

Despite these contributions, feminist scholarship has also been plagued by a tendency to imagine conflict and militarisation as masculine and peace and activism as feminist (for a recent example see Armato et al., 2013). While agreeing with the basic premise that war is mostly a male space with a predominance of women victims, fellow feminist scholars have questioned the acceptance of this simplified understanding of militarisation. Feminist scholars, especially from South Asia, have pointed out the importance of moving outside a binary conceptualisation of women as agents or victims to examine the complex roles women play during armed conflicts (Chenoy, 2002; N. de Mel, 2002; Parashar, 2009).

Studies outside the United States and Britain turned the theorisation of militarisation from a statist process to a social process, exploring state measures but also analysing militant non-state groups. In South and Central Asia in particular, scholars pointed out that non-state groups such as the Taliban and other militant Jihadist groups across the region, the LTTE in Sri Lanka and armed groups in the Kashmir Valley were also militarised entities (Chenoy, 2002; De Alwis, 1998; Riaz, 2008; Staniland, 2012).

Thematically, too, scholarship on militarisation has exploded in the past few decades. Much of it still centres on the United States and Western Europe (Enloe, 2004; Tannock, 2009; Wallensteen, Galtung, & Portales, 1985), but attention is now turning towards militarisation in Africa (Abrahamsen, 2005; Luckham, 1994; Müller, 2008), Asia (Chinwanno, 1985; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002; Visweswaran, 2013) and Latin America (Bowman, 2001; Feldman, 1989). Interestingly, scholars of present times have returned to historical analyses to better understand the causes and changes in present-day militarisation (e.g., Zeiger, 2003). Work on militarisation also includes strands on nuclear warfare (Chilton, 1987; Falk, 1989; Kosek, 2010); as well as language learning, research and development, and education (see section 4).
1.3. Militarisation versus securitisation

The keyword ‘securitisation’ has gained momentum in the past two decades, initially in the field of international relations, but later in other disciplines such as peace studies and critical geography. Significant to this dissertation is the primacy of the speech act in the process of securitisation, as can be seen by this definition by Matt McDonald (2008):

[securitisation is] the positioning through speech acts (usually by a political leader) of a particular issue as a threat to survival, which in turn (with the consent of the relevant constituency) enables emergency measures and the suspension of ‘normal politics’ in dealing with that issue (p.567).

This definition by the Copenhagen School has been critiqued by others (including McDonald cited above) for its limitations, such as its reliance on dominant actors, for example states and institutions, as well as its neglect of context (Balzacq, 2005). An example of this dominant paradigm of securitisation is Thomas Hill (2015)’s study of the favourable impact of defence contractors and transnational investment on real estate in an American county. Other scholars, from the Paris school and Welsh school of securitisation, for instance, have begun to complicate the concept of security, including ‘human security’ to the narrower conceptions of ‘national security’. An example of such scholarship is interdisciplinary research bridging security studies with critical pedagogy discourse (Nelles, 2003).

Given securitisation’s conceptualisation as a means of constructing security through speech acts, discourse analysis is a preferred analytical method in securitisation studies, though not articulated as such. Scholars have studied the discursive construction of a number of issues as security concerns, such as immigrants and asylum-seekers (Ackleson, 2005; Huysmans, 2000), Muslims (Hansen, 2011; Kaya, 2012) and geographical regions (Abrahamsen, 2005). The conceptual framework of these studies appear to be closely aligned with Foucault’s dispositif of security even though rarely cited, i.e., the ensemble of strategies and practices that are used as a governmental strategy in neoliberal states (Foucault, 1980).

My concern here with securitisation is two-fold. First, issues that could previously have been placed in militarisation studies are increasingly being framed as (or subsumed under) securitisation studies. This trend is highlighted by the critical
geographers Richelle Bernazzoli and Colin Flint (2009) who have called for a replacement of the term ‘militarisation’ with ‘securitisation’, arguing that militarisation is inadequate to explain current political phenomena. As a conceptual framework, however, these processes are distinct. Put simply, militarisation is a process involving or giving importance to the military in civil and political life. Securitisation is a broader, more diffuse phenomenon involving varied governing institutions, which may include the military peripherally (an example is the securitisation of illegal immigrants (Ackleson, 2005)).

Secondly, this dissertation shows that participants define militarisation broadly along the axes of militarisation and securitisation. For instance, they interpret militarisation as the explicit involvement of militarisation as well as the increasing regimentation of university life. While this may call for an amalgamation of militarisation with securitisation, as Bernazzoli & Flint (2009) proposed, for the purposes of this dissertation, I use them as distinct phenomena, placed in a hierarchical relationship (securitisation includes militarisation).

2. Militarisation in Sri Lanka

Despite the lengthy period of armed conflict in Sri Lanka, the militarisation of its civilian institutions, and the intense focus on militarisation by sections of the public such as media, human rights organisations and civil rights groups (see Chapter 1.2), significant scholarly work on the issue has been sporadic. The most significant text on the topic up to date is Militarizing Sri Lanka: Popular Culture, Memory and the Narrative in the Armed Conflict by Neloufer de Mel (2007) which examines militarisation using a series of case studies. In this book-length study on “military and peace advertisements, disabled soldiers, children in conflict zones, censorship and feminist work” de Mel (2007, p.49) looks at the practices of militarisation in its most visible yet naturalised forms. Militarisation is considered here as both agent and respondent to various discourses and other effects, actively encouraged and participated in by the state as well as the LTTE. In a later article, de Mel (2009) included militarisation as a component of securitisation, commenting that a “reordering of Sri Lankan society is …under way, pointing to the entanglement of
militarisation, martial virtue, nationalism, transnational capital, and gendered violence as structural features of its social imaginary” (p.41).

Other work on militarisation in Sri Lanka has emerged sporadically, gaining momentum towards the end of the war and the post-war era. Jayadeva Uyangoda (1996) is an exception, providing one of the earliest analyses of militarisation in Sri Lanka. Writing some years after the second JVP insurrection (Chapter 1.2.1.1), he discussed the reproductive nature of political violence and called for democratic civil society politics to counter militarisation. In a review of political and military relations in Sri Lanka, K. M. de Silva (2001) downplays the effects of militarisation, stating that the state retained civilian control over the military for most of Sri Lanka’s post-independence history. In this article, de Silva (2001) distinguishes between political and civilian militarism, arguing that “Sri Lanka has been spared any significant militarisation of its politics” even though “regrettably” civilian militarism has strengthened during the post-2000 era (p.18, emphasis added). Given his citation of the proliferation of security for politicians as an example of civilian militarism this distinction and his arguments are contradictory. Not all scholars have been as optimistic. Nadarajah Shanmugaratnam (1989)’s ethnographic account of a week-long visit to the Jaffna peninsula is a rare account of the “the daily, the hourly struggles of ordinary households” in a time of militarisation (p.1). It is also unique in its portrayal of life during the occupation of the North by the Indian Peace Keeping Force. Anuradha Chenoy (2002) analysed the impact of Sri Lanka’s militarisation in the “public and private lives” of women and identified both the state and the LTTE as agents in the process (p.117). Feminist scholars have paid attention to young working-class women migrating to urban industrial zones as particularly vulnerable in relation to militarisation, highlighting the intersections of gender, sexuality and the political economy of war (N. de Mel, 2009; Hewamanne, 2009, 2013).

While research using a theoretical framework of militarisation is infrequent, a vast body of work engages with the different armed conflicts and their effects in society, uncovering similar issues and studying effects of militarisation in Sri Lanka. This research appears in different disciplines, such as violence (Somasundaram, 2010; Spencer, 2008; Uyangoda, 2008), ethnic and religious identities in conflict (C. P. Davis, 2011; Tambiah, 1992), conflict and post-conflict studies (Brun, 2013; Goodhand, 2013; Kristine Höglund & Orjuela, 2011; J Spencer, 2002), the impact of
war on women and children (de Alwis, 2002; Hewamanne, 2013; Höglund & Orjuela, 2012; de Alwis, 1998; de Mel, 1990), the psychosocial cost of war (Salih & Samarasinghe, 2006; Samarasinghe, 2015; Somasundaram, 1998) and very recently, in linguistic anthropology (C. P. Davis, 2011, 2014). Much of this scholarship looks at the war and its consequences from a statist or policy perspective and makes communities rather than the individual a focus. Exceptions in this area are anthropological work by Jonathan Spencer (2002, 2008) and Catherine Brun (2008; 2013). Daya Somasundaram (1998, 2014) and Gameela Samarasinghe (1998, 1999, 2015) have also worked on conflict-related trauma, frequently providing the effect on individuals as well as the whole community.

Numerous scholars have analysed the linguistic dimensions of the civil war, focusing on discriminatory legislation and policies such as the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 and linguistic practices in society (see Chapter 1.1.2). More recently, a few scholars have turned their attention to discourse analysis as a suitable approach to the analysis of daily practices of life in conflict settings (Brun, 2008; C. P. Davis, 2011, 2014). The next section treats discourses studies of militarisation more fully.

3. Discourses of militarisation

Discourses of militarisation is a comparatively small strand within militarisation studies. In critical analyses of ‘nukespeak’, or discourses of nuclear warfare, Paul Chilton (1987) and Rob Walker (1987) illustrated the use of metaphors and euphemisms by governments that worked to depoliticise militarised state and international relations policies. A few researchers have analysed the use of metaphors that protagonist states of armed conflict, such as Japan and the United States, have used to describe their strategies, finding that the inspiration comes mainly from nature (Hook, 1984; Kosek, 2010). Other studies on discourses of terrorism, spotlighting U.S. and Middle Eastern relations, have emerged recently (Karmani & Pennycook, 2005; Karmani, 2005a, 2005c, 2006; Makoni, 2013). Sohail Karmani in particular has questioned the discourse promoting English as a language that ‘naturally’ imbues qualities of freedom and tolerance and Islam as an inherently militant religion (Karmani, 2005b, 2006).
Even though research exclusively devoted to language in militarisation is uncommon, studies using textual analyses necessarily involve some form of language analysis as well. Contests over textbook production, political rhetoric and resistance inadvertently entail grappling with language (e.g., Kanci & Altinay, 2007; Naseem & Stöber, 2014). Detailed analyses of militarisation, privatisation, corporatisation, and neoliberalism are achieved by referencing discursive correlations (Armato et al., 2013; Galaviz et al., 2011). Extended language-work is evident in a few recent studies, largely from a cultural theoretical or ethnographic framework. Two exemplary studies are Kathy E. Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull's (1999) work on the semiotics of militarisation in Hawai‘i and Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney's (2002) study of tokkōtai pilots\(^\text{10}\) in Japan during World War II. Despite the rich possibilities afforded by linguistic analyses, linguists have largely ignored militarisation, except in the few rare instances discussed above.

4. Militarisation of education

The temporal trajectory of research on militarisation of education has followed, for the most part, that of militarisation research in general. From a narrow focus on military recruitment in educational institutions, academic work in this area has expanded to include issues of curriculum and textbooks, enforcement mechanisms, and impact on research and development.

4.1. The militarising project in schools

The most obvious form of militarisation, as many writers have pointed out, is programmes that are directly linked with the military or the defence sector. Chenoy (2002) states that militarism can precede armed conflict, which was certainly the case historically across the United States, Europe and Japan (J. Gillis, 1989; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002; Zeiger, 2003) and in Asia currently (Chenoy, 2002; Riaz, 2008). In the United States, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programmes

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\(^{10}\) Outside Japan, tokkōtai pilots are generally known as Kamikaze pilots.
originated as military training for students in the 1920s. Despite vigorous resistance to these programs at the time, they have become normalised at present (Aguirre Jr & Johnson, 2005; Bartlett & Lutz, 1998; Galaviz et al., 2011). In the United Kingdom, public schools became aligned with the production of military officers (Best, 1989; Otley, 1978). In a similar trend South and Central Asian madrassas (or religious schools) affiliated with fundamentalist Islamic sects have become more militant in the past few decades (Chenoy, 2002; Rashid, 2001; Riaz, 2008). Since the study of madrassas appears to be limited to the disciplinary boundaries of terrorism (rather than militarisation of education), I stress that madrassas are not inherently linked to militancy. Many madrassas continue to provide religious education devoid of militant ideologies. As Ali Riaz (2008) notes, the link between madrassas and militancy is symptomatic of complex structural issues such as poverty, discrimination of minorities, and inadequate educational resources. Claire-Marie Hefner (2014)’s work on a women’s madrassa in Indonesia and Paul Staniland (2012)’s account of non-violent organising in Kashmir provide much needed counter-discourses on madrassas and militancy.

More widespread than programmes involving the military are educational programmes that are militaristic in nature. Exercise drills, training camps, scout camps, military-like sports training and cadet programmes are normalised in educational institutions. Physical education, which became embedded in school schedules as a consequence of militarisation in the pre-World War era are normalised, functioning as fitness programmes in the current day. It has also become accepted practice to appoint current or retired military personnel as sports coaches, PE masters, scout or cadet trainers (Bartlett & Lutz, 1998; Otley, 1978; Zeiger, 2003). After World War II, scholars noted with trepidation a similar recruitment trend for higher administrative posts in the American and British schools (such as school boards, school principals, and registrars) (Otley, 1978). In South Asia, Pakistan has shown a similar development in higher education institutions (Chenoy, 2002) and in the recent past, Sri Lanka has seen similar occurrences.

Critics of the appointments of retired or current military personnel to educational institutions cited several reasons for their opposition. First, militaristic ideologies are markedly divergent from the enlightenment ideals that education
purportedly encourages. Rather than reason and critical thinking militaristic programmes inculcate uniform thinking, uncritical devotion to duty and leadership, as well as an erasure of diversity (Armato et al, 2013; Zeiger, 2003). Secondly, these programmes encourage war and militarism as a means of conflict resolution rather than pacifism. Drills, scouting camps, cadet clubs and related environments confer the idea that democracy relies on discipline and uniformity rather than critical thinking (Ienaga, 1993/1994; Zeiger, 2003). They also lead to a valorisation of militaristic lifestyles and careers as more important than civilian ones to the community (Bartlett & Lutz, 1998; Enloe, 1988; Ienaga, 1993/1994).

The force of militarisation is especially strong on underprivileged or minority communities. In the United States, research has exposed targeted recruitment of working-class, African-American and, more recently, Hispanic youth. Brian Galaviz and his colleagues in particular have argued that targeting students in difficult economic circumstances is a form of economic coercion (2011; Saltman & Gabbard, 2003/2011). Other examples of cultural and economic incentives that are used as enticements are subsidised educational programmes, specialised educational packages, special quota in schools or colleges for military or related individuals, the creation of ‘family traditions’ of military-affiliated schooling (Otley, 1978; Bartlett & Lutz, 1998). The political economy of militarisation of madrassas is similar, and a few illuminating studies have shown the strong connection between militant ideologies and funding sources that support religious extremism, poverty-stricken states (Chenoy, 2002; Looney, 2003; Riaz, 2008; Rashid, 2000).

A form of militarisation more insidious than that brought about by militaristic programmes is wrought through school curricula and textbooks. Even though only a limited number of these studies use the framework of militarisation per se (Aguirre & Johnson, 2005; Bartlett & Lutz, 1998; Hook, 1984; Ienaga, 1993/1994), existing scholarship is prolific on the use of textbooks for ethno-religious or nationalist agendas. The interpretation of history, especially over issues of conflict and war, is contentious, and feeds into militarisation research. School books are contested artefacts over which control is sought by states, militant groups and at times rights activists. Specific examples are far too numerous to elucidate in this chapter, but a

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11 I use the word ‘purportedly’ intentionally to stress the shift in the educational apparatus that has accompanied militarisation.
few contestations are: Japanese textbook depictions of regional armed conflicts (Hook, 1984, 1996; Ienaga, 1993/1994); representation of their countries’ involvement in the World Wars in Japan, United States, Russia; and similarly biased representations of history in countries with recent armed conflicts, such as Sri Lanka, Turkey, Israel and India (Altinay, 2007; de Alwis, 1998; Chenoy, 2002). The common thread running through this extensive body of work is that states (or other non-state groupings) in post-conflict times present a version of the past that justifies their aggression, minimises their own responsibility to the conflict and instils nationalist and masculinist notions of valour and patriotism in generations of students. In territories with diverse populations, this can lead to further marginalisation of minority communities and the erasure of their histories from official texts.

4.2. Militarisation in higher education

In higher education, researchers on militarisation have tended to focus on two issues: militarist programmes in higher education, and militarist agendas in research funding in universities. The literature on militarist programmes in higher education has been dominated by a focus on the United States, more specifically on the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). The objections raised over militarised programmes in schools (section 4.1) have been made against these as well, with the added concern of imminent recruitment. Recently, however, academics have also stressed the negative implications of overt military presence in educational spaces that have a diverse student body, including international students from countries with which the United States may have political and armed conflicts (Armato et al, 2003; Enloe, 2004; Saltman & Gabbard, 2003/2011). They stress that the military inherently encourages violence and oppression by imposing hierarchies and has historically ignored violence (both sexual and physical) within the armed forces, thereby serving as a visual reminder of aggression in what should be a liberating space.

A characteristic of the recent interest in militarism and security has been the focus on increased control of higher educational institutions by the state. State coercion involving militarised programmes is seen in World War II Japan, and current day Turkey and Eritrea. In all these instances, college students were forced to undergo
military training. In Eritrea this has also led to the disintegration of the university
system (Altinay, 2004; Müller, 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002). In the United States,
scholars have recently started exploring the impact of coercive state policies on
education (e.g., the Solomon’s Amendment blocking federal funds to universities
denying access to ROTC programmes), coercive behaviour by university
administration over contentious issues, and the use of violence against student
resistance (Armato et al., 2013; Clover, 2012; McClennen & McClennen, 2006).
Similar issues have been reported from Britain (see Stavrianakis, 2006). Coercive and
violent state behaviour in education and higher education have long existed,
vigorously studied in the disciplinary areas of education as well as peace and conflict
though it has not been framed as militarisation (N. de Mel, 2007; Ferguson, 2001;
Harber, 2004).

The militarisation of research agendas and funding sources in higher education
still remains opaque, though identified early on by Senator Fulbright as his reference
to the ‘military-industrial-academic complex’ shows. Studies directly confronting
defence involvement in universities are still emergent (Armato et al, 2003;
Stavrianakis, 2006). Like any other types of corporate involvement in research, funds
from defence and security sectors slant the institution’s research agenda towards an
external third-party agenda. These agendas stem from the home state, a foreign state,
or multinational companies, and are at times a collusion of all three. Anna
Stavrianakis (2006), for instance, describes Bristol University’s research partnerships
with the British Ministry of Defence and arms production companies (e.g., Rolls
Royce). Intervention by defence-related parties has taken a myriad forms, including
but not limited to company-funded research projects, research alliances, internships
and training for students and faculty, infrastructural grants, founding of fellowships
and chairs, and scholarships for students (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2003; Gusterson,
1993; Price, 2011; Stavrianakis, 2006; Vitale, 1985). Historically, the focus of such
alliances has been the natural science programs. Subjects such as physics, space and
engineering are given priority in defence-related sectors. Recently, however, these
interests have also manifested themselves in the social sciences, through special
programmes such as the Minerva Consortium (Armato et al., 2013; Gusterson, 1993;
Price, 2011).
An illustration of the trends in research funding over the past century is Pennsylvania State University. Similar to other land grant universities, Penn State also had the compulsory ROTC program mandated by law in 1916. Penn State’s affiliations with the military have been strengthened over the years. In 1945, Applied Research Laboratory (ARL) was established by the U.S. Navy at Penn State, and is currently the “largest research unit within Penn State with more than 1,000 faculty and staff” (ARL Website, 2015). Penn State continues to receive large amounts of project funding from the Department of Defense (DOD), as part of military research projects and through its membership in research consortiums with the DOD. For example, the Systems Engineering Research Center is funded by the DOD and the first such collaboration between the DOD and a university; and a Penn State team received $7.5 billion in 2014 from the Air Force Office of Scientific Research to be part of a multi-university research initiative (Penn State News, 2015). These are a few examples, out of numerous others, that serve as illustrations of liaisons between the defence sector and university research.

Since the mid-20th century, there has been steady discomfort over the ‘military-industrial complex’, i.e., the relationship between the defence establishment and industrial interests. Scholars from a variety of disciplines have explored this connection, but few have drawn attention to the role of the academe (exceptions being Feldman, 1989; Giroux, 2007; Stavrianakis, 2006). A strong relationship between the military and the scientific community in general is hardly possible without implicating academia for two reasons: first, scientists are generally trained in universities; and secondly, scientists usually reside in academia. The direct and indirect forms of academic involvement in security-related research have raised fundamental ethical questions. As Bruno Vitale (1985) and Stavrianakis (2006) stress, links to defence and security-sponsored research creates dependencies in the networks of scientists, prioritizes some forms of research over others, and above all, inserts militaristic values into the research agenda. Activist-scholars have also stated that cooperating with the defence establishment and multinational corporations means that universities actively contribute to death and human rights violations in other parts of the world.

Another area of interest to scholars working on issues of militarism in higher education is that discourses of privatisation, corporatisation and militarisation mirror
each other. Using these discourses as a base, scholars draw parallels and connections between said processes. Discursive practices of these phenomena include tropes of ‘choice’, ‘diversity’, ‘marketplace’, ‘branding’ and ‘modernity’. At the same time, these discourses are accompanied by (at times violent) enforcement of regulatory mechanisms in education such as coercive legislation, financial conditions, and stifling academic environments (Armato et al., 2013; Chomsky, 2003; Clover, 2012; Fairclough, 1993). This is not to say that all instances of militarisation are cloaked in such depoliticised language. Tanja Müller (2008) in her work on Eritrea, and also inadvertently de Mel (2007) in her analysis of children’s lives in areas of conflict, have shown us instances of explicitly enforced militarisation of education that are devoid of the discourses of choice and diversity.

4.3 Militarisation and language education

In this section I discuss the place of language education (LE) in militarisation studies. LE is used in place of applied linguistics or foreign language teaching because language teaching and learning happens across disciplines and programs. For instance, English language programs can be offered in a U.S. university by the departments of Applied Linguistics, English, Business and Law schools. LE also encompasses the work taking place outside these areas of study, as in the training of interpreters and translators in areas of armed conflict or in the development sector.

In 2005, Sohail Karmani stated that the “mainstream literature of applied linguistics” showed an “alarming absence” of interest in terrorism (Karmani, 2005a, p.262). Given the historical association between LE and security apparatuses, the avoidance in LE of issues such as militarisation, securitisation and terrorism, is certainly interesting. The LE projects of the early colonial period were extensive and lasted well into the early 20th century. Two examples of such historical associations are the fluency of young tokkōtai pilots-in-training in English and other European languages (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002) and the U.S. military’s teaching of French in order to facilitate understanding of engineering textbooks of their close ally, France (Myron, 1944). Language programs in the United States have benefited from defence sector funding since the World Wars. The current defence spending on ‘critical’
languages is but another form of it. Nevertheless, it is only recently that applied linguists have discussed the influence of conflict and security on LE in formal disciplinary areas traditionally associated with it (Blake & Kramsch, 2007; Edge, 2006; Goulah, 2004; Kramsch, 2006; Nelson & Appleby, 2014; Pratt, 2004).

Recent publications examining the militarisation of LE are heartening. A recent contribution to the field of ELT is a review of literature on TESOL and militarisation by Cynthia D. Nelson and Roslyn Appleby (2014). In this, they consider its implications to pedagogy, a neglected connection in discussions of pedagogy and material development in LE. Prior to this, the most significant work in this sphere appears in (Re-)Locating TESOL in an Age of Empire (Edge, 2006), which brought together work on TESOL’s connection with American and British national security concerns. This also includes work on peripheral professions such as peace keeping and evangelical Christian missionaries (Johnston & Varghese, 2006; Woods, 2006).

The field of foreign language learning (FLL) in the United States noted these concerns during this same period, i.e., at the turn of the 21st century (Byrnes, 2006; Goulah, 2004, 2010; Kramsch, 2005, 2006; Pratt, 2004). These discussions centred on “the current language crisis” in the post-9/11 era of the United States and highlights the needs of large-scale FLL as well as the danger of being subsumed under security or national defence agendas (MLA Ad Hoc Committee, 2007, p.1; Pratt et al, 2008). As succinctly pointed out by Claire Kramsch (2005), characteristics of a militarised or securitised interest in the FLL agenda are numerous: interest in FL proficiency in targeted groups rather than total population; sources of funding from or in collaboration with the Department of Defense; control of projects by federal government rather than by the educational institute itself. In response to this problematic situation, academics in the FLL field highlight the need to transform curricula and departmental governance protocols in modern languages departments while stressing the need to resist “narrowly” defined language study (Bale, 2008; Blake & Kramsch, 2007; Byrnes, 2006; Kramsch, 2005; Pratt, et al, 2008). In the years immediately after the report by the MLA Ad Hoc Committee (2007), these scholars also stressed the need for Modern Language Departments to be reflexive of their own administrative practices in order to revitalise their programs. Despite this initial burst of work in the early part of the millennium, there seems to be little
consequent research of militarisation of language learning or any changes that have taken place.

5. Evolutions and gaps

As detailed in section 4, the concept of militarisation, especially with regard to education, has evolved over the previous century. Its formulation has also stretched to include coercive governance on the part of state and other groupings. These various permutations of militarisation of education are a result of different areas of research contributing multiple theoretical and analytical frameworks. While there is at present no clearly defined area of study called ‘militarisation studies’, there are still a number of disciplines that contribute to it. Education, peace studies, feminist studies, and anthropology have consistently and continuously kept militarism in education within their view, albeit to differing degrees. International studies and critical geography have also produced relevant work. Unfortunately, there is an absence of critical views on militarism/militarisation in the natural sciences (Afanassieva & Couderc, 1998; Vitale, 1985). Another important gap mentioned previously in this chapter (sections 2.3 & 3.3) is the absence of these issues in linguistics.

The absence of a cohesive area of study, however, has meant that militarisation studies have benefited theoretically and methodologically from the diverse approaches used by scholars. These studies use a miscellany of qualitative methods, employing quantitative methods as necessary (Armato et al, 2013; Müller, 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002; Otley, 1978; Zeiger, 2003). The social sciences and humanities have contributed a number of methods. These include textual analysis for textbooks, curricula, and policies; as well as ethnographic and anthropological methods used to study communities in diverse locations such as Turkey, the United States and Japan. Discourse studies have contributed research on nuclear and terrorist issues as well. Longitudinal statistical studies such as Otley’s review of British public schools (1978) are rare, however, and students of militarisation would benefit more from the incorporation of these methods. In terms of theoretical frameworks, feminism, political economy and post-colonialism are foundational to studies of militarisation of education.
It is important to stress, however, the need for a closer look at the impact of militarisation of and militarism in education on communities and individuals. Case studies, ethnographies and detailed discourse studies are few and far between, despite the profusion of work using qualitative methods. As yet, we have little understanding of the permeation of discourses of militarism in the apparatus of education, and thereby on its effect on people’s daily lives (exceptions are Altinay, 2004; Armato et al, 2013; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002). Detailed scholarly work such as Ayse Gul Altinay’s work on students in a Turkish high-school military course (2004), the semiotics of Hawai’ian militarised daily life (Ferguson & Turnbull, 1999), or the ‘misconnect’ between the actions and thoughts of young tokkōtai pilots in Japan (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002) are even more necessary given the increasingly militarised and securitised environment globally. As necessary are critical inquiries of one’s own disciplines similar to those undertaken on Applied Linguistics, International Studies and Anthropology by academics such as Mary Louise Pratt and her colleagues (Pratt et al, 2008), Keith Krause and Michael Williams (1997) and David Price (2011) respectively.

Through all this, the need for studies of discourse in militarisation cannot be underestimated. Discourse is a methodological entry point, revealing the epistemological boundaries of militarisation and responses that are available to it. With the exception of a handful of studies based on the analysis of semiotics or broad overviews of discourses of nuclear activities and terrorism, there is a dearth of discourse based studies. Given this absence, we have no clear understanding of how militarisation is operationalized and felt at an individual level or at an institutional level. Neither do we comprehend our disciplines, such as education and language teaching, as they proceed in securitised institutions or communities. Little has been done to tease out the silences and resistances towards militarisation or to contribute to an understanding of different formulations of militarisation in different parts of the world.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to craft a cohesive review of the research that contributes to a study of militarisation in education. In section 2, I reviewed the evolution of militarisation from its narrow definition as a military-governed phenomenon to its current concept which includes totalitarian forms of governance and control. Even though a majority of the work has not been explicitly framed as militarisation (or even securitisation), their contribution to knowledge on the impact of peace and conflict enables us to draw from them. A close look at discourses on conflict, war and militarisation followed in section 3. In section 4, I focused exclusively on the impact of militarism in schools and higher education institutions, as well as academia. Scholarship on militarisation of higher education emerges in multiple sub-disciplines with researchers working on aspects such as militaristic educational programmes, research and funding agendas, and the academe’s response and resistance to militarisation. Section 5 presented the many contributions to this field as well as the multiple gaps in literature on militarisation. Drawing connections between these phenomena, and furthermore, exploring the continuities and discontinuities of these discourses enables us to grasp the (in)coherence of working and learning about lives in education. In the next chapter, I explain research methodology and analytical concepts used in this study.
Chapter 3

Research Methodology

In the previous chapters, I discussed the contextual background of Sri Lankan universities and research to date on militarisation in education. The issues faced by universities in Sri Lanka arise from a combination of post-colonial education policies, state governance and political conflicts. The high literacy rate and broad-based education at primary and secondary levels of schooling do not extend to tertiary education, which is available to a minute percentage of the students exiting secondary school. The long civil war, two youth insurgencies and the lack of political will to demilitarise the country in the post-war era has resulted in the military’s involvement in many areas of civilian life. The unrest and state interference in universities currently\(^{12}\) is similar to that seen in other state institutions such as the judiciary.

A review of scholarly literature shows that militarisation in higher education is not limited to Sri Lanka. Securitising manoeuvres have been globally evident in education in recent decades. Other studies have looked at institutional or student perspectives with regard to militarisation in education. In contrast, I make academics the focal point of this dissertation. This chapter describes the research methodology used to study discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan universities.

1. Research design

This is a qualitative study incorporating an ethnographic approach and discourse analysis. The research design takes into account two factors: a) the study explores the public and private aspects of a social process, i.e., militarisation, b) the research site and topic necessitate an unusual amount of ethical consideration. Data from a variety of sources are used. As stated in Chapter 1 (Part 1), I use the concepts of the ‘public’ and the ‘individual’ to conceptualise discourses in academia. The

\(^{12}\) With the recent change of government in Sri Lanka (Jan 2015) and their agreement to FUTA’s demands, there is an expectation that this situation will change in the near future.
public response is also a collective response which is illustrated with texts by the Federation of University Teachers’ Associations (FUTA); and the private response is examined using individual discourses.

2. Research Questions

The research questions of this study are given below. Accompanying each research question is a brief description of the different types of data that will be used (a fuller description follows in section 3.6).

Research Question 1

- What are the discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan academia, as formulated publicly and individually?

Documents produced for the public sphere by FUTA is the main source of public discourses of academics. These include policy documents, press releases and campaign material issued by FUTA. In contrast, individual discourses are primarily examined through interviews with academics, supplemented by fieldnotes and auto-ethnographic journaling.

Research Question 2

- What changes are evident in individual discourses of militarisation amongst Sri Lankan academia from a temporal perspective?

Multiple interviews with individual academics conducted over a period of three years (2012-2014) are used to examine changes in individual discourses during this period. The academics are chosen for their affiliation to different universities and the differences in their affiliations to trade union activism. Similar to research question 1, fieldnotes and auto-ethnographic journaling are supplementary.
3. Ethics

My interest in the close examination of individual meaning-making in a securitized setting beset by continuous turmoil for the past few years made this research process more ‘messy’ than usual. Changes brought about by the current government (since January 2015) are too recent to factor into this study, and will be ignored in this discussion. Due to continuous student and faculty opposition to institutional and state policies of the recent past, universities are a fraught site in Sri Lanka. This is compounded by an awareness of and concern over increased militarisation and surveillance in post-war years (Chapter 1.2.3). The investigation of such a space, where multiple parties engage in cautious negotiations of power, requires attention to ‘safe spaces’ for the researcher as well as the participants (Brun, 2013; Miller, 2012). Forming a safe space is a continuous process, starting with the research idea itself, continuing throughout the research and writing process and affecting dissemination. The specific boundaries of the research focus, for instance, are circumscribed among other things by my concerns for the safety of colleagues and research participants, my familiarity with certain universities above others, and anxieties over the dissemination of my conclusions. Even though my participants (actual and potential) do not work in places where armed conflict takes place, as conflict-areas are defined by Mazurana and her colleagues (2013), many of the concerns are similar. Confidentiality, trust, the nature of disclosure necessary to my participants as well as my obligations as a responsible researcher are important ethical considerations which I extensively discuss in section 9.

At the same time, as an ‘insider’ of Sri Lankan universities, I am particularly well-placed to conduct a study of this nature. The multi-sited research setting - universities in Sri Lanka - is one I have been familiar with for over a decade as an undergraduate student and thereafter as a faculty member. My identity as a member of the ‘known landscape’ legitimizes my participation at events limited to faculty (Mazurana, Gale, & Jacobsen, 2013). While ideally any individual has access to any faculty member of any university in the country, such abstract access does not translate to actual access or entail a frank and open discussion on any and all issues. While I, as faculty, may have more access than an outsider to the university system,
my opportunities and abilities to engage in a rich and complex discussion on issues such as militarisation in higher education rests on ‘trust credits’ I have built over the years. My insider status also creates the opportunity for potential participants to access information about me through their own networks, and allows them the opportunity to refuse being interviewed (as has happened). The use of ethnographic methods such as journaling and participant observation facilitates reflexivity and attention to security concerns and risk factors. A longer commentary on ethical considerations appears at the end of this chapter (section 9).

4. Setting

Due to the nature of the research questions the setting for this study is necessarily multi-sited (Marcus, 1995). To examine the public (and collective) discourses of academics, I use texts produced by FUTA, which is made up of representatives from all the UGC governed state universities (Chapter 1 section 1.3). For the study of individual discourses, I interview academics from four of these universities located in urban settings. This section also includes a discussion of related issues such as urban space and conflict areas.

As stated above, since the public discourses involve a trade union collective, i.e., FUTA, the research setting is the entire system rather than a single university. The documents examined for this study are not produced in one location. One person or a few together may produce a draft of a text, and others may contribute to it with revisions and suggestions. Digital communications factor heavily in the production of such texts, since producers of the text may live geographically distant from each other. In addition to the nature of text production, the community FUTA represents is located in multiple locations. Considered in this way, the setting is the imagined community of Sri Lankan universities (Anderson, 1983). This is not to say that the particularities of each university do not matter, but that to create these texts, individuals of different universities must find commonalities with each other, and in so doing, produce a version of the university system.
In the case of individual discourses, I concentrate on universities of a specific geographical area, the district of Colombo. The city of Colombo, located in the district of Colombo, is the mercantile and administrative capital of the country. As stated in Chapter 1.1.3, a large number of universities cluster in the district of Colombo (9 out of 19). The interviews are from academics in four of these state universities: the Universities of Colombo, Sri Jayewardenepura, Kelaniya, and the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). These universities also have some of the highest student enrolment nationally (University Grants Commission, 2012). The focus on universities away from locations more generally associated with war and militarisation is due to methodological and ethical considerations that are treated at the end of this section (also section 6.1). A brief description of each individual university is given below:

- The University of Colombo is at the heart of Colombo city, in close proximity to commercial and highly residential areas as well as a number of Colombo’s most privileged schools. Its location has high security due to its close proximity to the United Nations compound, the Sri Lanka Air Force Officer’s Mess and other sites of military importance.
The University of Kelaniya is the furthest away from the city of Colombo, the main campus located about 12 km from the main bus terminal of the city. Some miles away lies the Defence Services Staff and Command College, which has close connections with the university. The area of Kelaniya is well-known for the Buddhist temple built on the site said to have been visited by the Lord Buddha in one of his three visits to the country. The university was originally a Buddhist pirivena (seminary) and continues to cultivate its identity as a Sinhala-Buddhist space (see Chapter 1.1.2). It is also a residential university, with hostels located within the university premises.

The University of Sri Jayewardenepura (SJP) is the second pirivena to be made into a university in 1958. As one of the participants described it, “in the University of Sri Jayewardenepura all things are Sinhala-Buddhist”. It is located in a suburban area of Colombo, less than ten miles from the city. It is also the only university to be listed officially as a client of the Rakna Lanka Security company. Similar to the University of Kelaniya, most students of this university live in the surrounding areas; and are well-known for their militant politics, which has led to many clashes with the police and armed forces.

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) is different to other universities in that it provides paid distance education (also see Chapter 1.1.3.2). The main campus at Nawala is considered by some to be in Colombo given its proximity to the city’s main commercial areas and major private hospitals. As a university for distance education, its student culture is different: it has no known tradition of ragging (Chapter 1.3.2), and its students have comparably fewer contacts with each other than students in other universities.

I have described these four universities as located in urban spaces, and indeed, in comparison to some of the other universities this is accurate. For instance, the University of Peradeniya appears self-contained at the outskirts of the city of Kandy, and the Sabaragamuwa University is situated in a largely rural area. Nevertheless, the nature of the university system complicates such a simplistic formulation of the urban versus rural. The urban is characterised by its higher population density, access to industry and amenities, and diversity of population; it is also a place of concentrated commercial, residential, administrative activity (Harvey, 2012). All four universities
cited in this dissertation are within urban space, as defined above. However, the population of these universities is not always urban. Since the UGC designates the university that a student attends, students are not always able to go to a university of their choice. The study programme is another deciding factor. For example, until recently, the University of Colombo housed the sole Law Faculty in the country, and all students chosen to study Law were enrolled there. Due to such factors, the student population of Sri Lankan universities is for the most part from the outer provinces, and a fair proportion of these students have not grown up in cities. On this same basis, faculty who have graduated from Sri Lankan universities can originally be from different parts of the country. For this reason, university communities are particularly fluid and challenge a simple definition of urbanism.

In a study of militarisation, the choice of universities set close to the capital and away from areas that have faced the brunt of the civil war would appear surprising. The Northern and Eastern areas of the country are emblematic of militarisation, resulting in the assumption that an investigation of discourses of militarisation must necessarily take place in those areas. As the detailed description of Colombo’s securitisation shows (Chapter 1.2.3), however, areas outside war zones do not escape war nor does militarisation end when the war ends. The individual discourses within these specific universities may not represent the entire range of discourses of militarisation in the university system in Sri Lanka. However, given the unique characteristics of these universities which set them apart from each other (especially in terms of nationalist rhetoric and diversity of student populations), I argue that it is possible to extrapolate from these individual discourses, making conclusions on the discourses in other universities as well. Additionally, the public discourses of academics, in the form of FUTA’s texts, are official representations of the entire university system. As I hope to expose, significant insights can be gained by an examination of the social processes outside places of conflict.
5. Research Process

Trade union activities that started in 2010 amongst academics intensified in 2011, peaked in 2012, and continues at present. The events discussed in the interviews, and cited in FUTA texts, took place during the years 2012-2014. Table 3-1 summarises the research process during this time:

Table 3-1. Time schedule of research process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2012 May-July</th>
<th>2013 May-July</th>
<th>2014 May-August</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Interviews</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up interviews</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival research</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I spent three months of each year in Sri Lanka during this period, attending selected events in universities (including universities not considered for this study) and conducting interviews with academics from five universities. FUTA started a trade union campaign in June 2012 and continuous strike action in July 2012 (ending in October 2012). During the months June-July 2012, when trade union action was intense, the participants of this study made time for interviews with me and discussed issues they were facing at the time. In summer 2013, I spent a second period of three months in Sri Lanka, when trade unions were not as active as in 2012. During the second (2013) and third (2014) visits, I conducted new and follow-up interviews with academics (for description of interviews see section 6.1).

A key part of the research process is the fieldnotes and journaling I maintained since 2012. During the months I spent in Sri Lanka, I made fieldnotes on my visits to a number of universities and the events I attended (section 6.3). While I was in the United States for the academic year, I continued making journal entries based on news from Sri Lanka and conversations with family, friends and colleagues in Sri Lanka.
6. Data sources and data collection techniques

6.1. Participant interviews

Interviews with academics are the primary resource in this study. The interviews for this dissertation were chosen from a larger set of interviews with academics from five universities, including the four universities chosen for this study. The description that follows is of the larger dataset. For this dissertation, I analyse interviews from 16 academics in four universities (described in section 4). Their interviews account for a total of 39 hours of recorded time. These include 16 first interviews (Time 1) and six follow-up interviews (Time 2 or 3). The majority of interviews of Time 1 were conducted in 2012 when FUTA was engaged in forceful trade union action. This situation encontextualises the interviews (Blommaert, 2005). The research process and consequent analyses are coloured by the intense activity surrounding us at this time.

In the tradition of opportunistic sampling in ethnographic work, I initially approached academics personally known to me. I also interviewed academics outside my circle of acquaintances basing my selection on the nature of their participation in trade union activities (non-members, decision makers or as committed supporters). Some of this information was volunteered by other participants, who informed me of involvements that were not public knowledge. Not all academics I approached for interviews were agreeable, and those who refused an interview include acquaintances.

In all instances, participants chose the date, time and place for the interview. Most participants preferred to be interviewed in their own homes or in the universities they worked in, though not always in their offices. Some participants opted to visit my house and a few participants preferred to be interviewed in public spaces (also see section 9 on this).

I used a semi-structured interview protocol which included four sections: the 2011-2012 trade union action, the privatisation bill of 2011, the leadership training course, and the Rakna Lankan security services (see Appendix B for the interview protocols). The first interview (Time 1) became a space for the discussion of other issues that the participants and I thought pertinent and that came up during the
interview. For this dissertation, I analysed sections in the interview where participants discuss a) any event in higher education that involves the military (including but not limited to the leadership training course and the Rakna Lanka security services) b) discussions of control, surveillance and regimentation within universities.

The interviews typically lasted about 2 hours, the shortest lasting 30 minutes and the longest interviews being 3.30 hours. All the interviews were audio-recorded, and I rarely took notes during the interview, preferring to conduct it as a conversation. A follow up interview (Times 2 and 3) was conducted one or two years later. This was to ask specific questions on some aspect of the first interview, such as a change in circumstance (e.g., membership of trade union) or in their stance on some of the issues (e.g., had they changed their view on militarisation in universities?).

I refrain from presenting disaggregated data on the participants in tabular form in order to maintain anonymity (for other steps taken to this end, see section 7). I also refrain from giving specific information on ethnic and religious affiliations of the participants discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 for this reason. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of the 20 participants are Sinhalese, and 4 participants are from minority ethnic groups. The group also includes 6 participants who are Christian, Muslim, and Hindu. Six of the 20 participants are male academics.

In terms of academic rank, many of the participants are parallel or senior to me: this includes senior lecturers and professors (for a description of academic rank see Chapter 1.1.3.1). Five participants do not have doctoral degrees but have considerable teaching and administrative experience. More than 10 of the participants are officially affiliated to the humanities or social sciences. However, this is a misleading categorisation as many of these academics have travelled through different disciplinary traditions and are currently affiliated to programmes that differ from their original disciplines. For instance, an academic currently affiliated to the natural or medical sciences could have obtained a first-degree from the humanities. All participants are currently members of the university or faculty trade union, though the nature of their participation varies. The quality of their participation in trade union activities has also changed during the last three years, with some becoming more active (as office bearers or organisers of events) in contrast to others who have lost interest or become frustrated with the campaign. As mentioned in sections 3 and 9, I have not interviewed academics from universities in the northern and eastern regions.
of Sri Lanka due to my lack of proficiency in Tamil, the primary language of the area. Additionally, due to restrictions on mobility and access during the war, connections between academics within and outside the North and East of Sri Lanka have been few and far between until recently. This is another important reason for my decision to focus on universities outside the areas of former conflict. Nevertheless, my participants include academics from ethnic and religious minorities.

6.2. Texts produced by FUTA

Texts produced by FUTA are the resources used to examine the public voice of academics. FUTA has disseminated a variety of texts since they started the initial campaign for wages in 2010. For this dissertation, I chose texts produced for public consumption during the period 2011-2014, i.e., texts distributed at events organised by FUTA that were open to the public, and texts available on FUTA’s official digital spaces (website, Facebook page). These texts include reports, press releases, letters, and handbills.

Initially, FUTA generated documents only for their own trade union demands on universities. Over the last two years, however, as FUTA networked and built relationships with other trade unions and political groups, they started responding to topics of national interest outside universities and education. In the past year (2014), FUTA made a statement on the attacks on Muslims in Aluthgama and Beruwala (see Chapter 1.2.3) and on the Presidential Elections of January 2015. For this study, I consider only the texts FUTA produced on education and university matters.

The collection I analyse is a total of 73 texts in English, Sinhala and Tamil (see Table 3-2). Documents produced for specific events such as a press conference were distributed at the location but are also available online. The majority of the documents are distributed electronically. FUTA’s web presence has grown over the years. In 2011, the documents were uploaded sporadically via the University teachers blog site. By 2012, when they established both an official website (FUTA-sl) and an official Facebook page, FUTA’s web presence gained momentum. Since 2013,

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13 The end of armed conflict and events organised by FUTA and member trade unions has led to increased linkages and connections since 2009.
FUTA’s information dissemination and publicity work has mostly been done through their Facebook page, which has over 150,000 members (as of January 31st, 2015).

Table 3-2. FUTA texts categorized by genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Genre</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public statements/press releases</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public letters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign material (e.g., handbills)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal texts (e.g., reports, frameworks for action, etc.)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FUTA texts are usually produced in English. Of the 73 texts, 13 are available in Sinhala and only 5 in Tamil. Since the majority of documents are available in English, I assume the English version of the message to be the source text, and base my analysis on these. However, I have compared the Sinhala and Tamil versions of each text for differences related to the topic of militarisation. The Tamil documents were read on my behalf by a Sri Lankan Tamil graduate student in the United States who had studied in a Sri Lankan university. None of the three Tamil texts use the Tamil term for militarisation (*ra:nuvamayama:kal*), even though the English and Sinhala versions of the texts use the term. In one Tamil text, the term for politicization is used instead of militarisation which is used in the English text. Due to these inconsistencies, I have calculated the English, Sinhala and Tamil texts as separate documents, even when they are translations of the same source text.
6.3. Fieldnotes

As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state most ethnographers have to take covert notes, except in “in a few contexts, of course, [where] writing may be such an unremarkable activity that covert note-taking is possible” (p.142). Fortunately, the culture of literacy in my research setting made it possible for me to do the jottings that are a necessary precursor to fieldnotes and journaling during many of the events I attended: press conferences, meetings, public speeches by academics. This made fieldnote taking and journaling on these events easier. Fieldnotes were essential for this study in order to contextualise the interviews I conducted, changes in participants’ opinions outside the interview setting, to chart the ‘back stage’ activities taking place in relation to trade union activism and as a tool for self-reflexivity.

In addition to fieldnotes on events, I also noted observations of the situation before and after interviews and conversations with colleagues. During the academic year when I was away from Sri Lanka, I made notes on higher education related posts appearing on Facebook, emails by colleagues, news reports on academia, and conversations with colleagues and friends in Sri Lanka. Journaling includes reflexive notes, analytic memos of observations, questions and very often memories from previous events that became significant later on. Partway through the research process, discursive similarities between corporatization and militarisation processes became apparent, and were included in the fieldnotes and journal entries.

Fieldnotes and reflexive journaling are time consuming processes, and due to my desire to include issues not directly related to Sri Lankan university, my fieldnotes and reflexive notes have not had the rich detail that ethnographic fieldnotes of a more rigidly bounded setting could bring. However, it has allowed me to take note of connected social and political phenomena that would be excluded if I had a narrower focus (for the “trade-off between breadth of focus and detail” see Hammerseley and Atkinson, 2007, p.142).

One of the most important, if not the most important, function of fieldnotes and reflexive notes is to contribute to an ethical reflection of the research process. In the three years of this study, I wrote down anxieties and quandaries on the research process and my own decisions regarding it. These notes allowed me to track changes
in my position (e.g., on privatised higher education) and methodology (e.g., amendments to the interview protocol). I draw on these notes for the ethical commentary given in section 9.

7. Data preparation

Official documents produced by FUTA were categorised based on the following: date on document; date disseminated or uploaded to site; animator; genre and type; language(s); available platform or site; dissemination details and content. To express the collective nature of the FUTA documents, I use Goffman's (1981) concept of the ‘animator’, who is the medium through which the collective idea is expressed. In the case of FUTA, regardless of authors of the text, it is presented to the public by the FUTA office bearers (President or Secretary) or a spokesperson. After collection, the texts were coded using a coding scheme generated organically through the FUTA texts. Coding items include sections on militarisation, the leadership course, and autonomy.

The interviews used for analysis were prepared differently. The interviews are identified by a label that includes letters and numbers indicating the affiliated university, gender and identity as academic, student or administrator. However, in the dissertation I refer to the participants by pseudonyms to prevent identification of the participant and ease of reading. A coding scheme for content was used to categorise their answers, which included their stance on militarisation.

With regard to interviews, transcription preceded coding. I approach transcription as an analytic process, and the transcript itself as a subjective representation of the interview (Psathas & Anderson, 1990). Before transcribing, I listened to each interview carefully, making summary notes on the participants’ discussions. During transcription I also made analytic memos (short notes on issues that came up during transcription), adding these later to fieldnotes. The transcription conventions are adapted from the Jefferson (2004) transcription key used in Conversation Analysis. Additional notations were made to the transcription key to indicate Sinhala segments and changes made to the transcription for reasons of confidentiality (the transcription key is provided in Appendix C).
An added complexity of using spoken content from a multilingual setting such as Sri Lanka is the need to represent more than one language in speech segments. The interviews used for this study contain codeswitching (CS), by which I mean alternating segments of languages, in this case Sinhala and English. Scholars have used a variety of procedures to present such data in a reader-friendly manner. Since the interviews contain varying amounts of CS, using a single format to present translated text is impractical. When presenting excerpts with both languages, I have used two formats: 1) in segments mostly in English with only short phrases in Sinhala, the translation to English will be in double parenthesis immediately following it (example 1); 2) longer segments in Sinhala will be given as a paragraph immediately below the original (example 2).

Example 1: Minor code alternation

P And also I I y’know I guess kaushi ithin ((so)) I also did go overseas.

Example 2: Longer code alternation

P: =right? Collared me and said ↓arə arə bilak thiyeŋəwa me:↓=
   (((↓that that there is a bill this↓=)))
K: £°bilak thiyeŋ(h)wa £=
   (((£°there is a bill(h)° £=)))
P : =↓me: ekə apitə hoyə:ɡanna bəridə kiya]la↓
   (((=↓this, can you find it for us (he said)↓))))

8. Data Analysis

As described in data collection (section 6) and preparation (section 7), analysis takes place over the duration of the study, merging with other phases of the research process. The situation in the universities is emergent, and the interviews, archival work, coding, note-taking and transcription all contribute reiteratively to the analysis.

For analysis of individual discourses, I use the discourse strategies stance, narrative and voice. A description of these discourse strategies is provided below.
8.1. Stance

Stance conveys a person’s evaluation or assessments of and feelings towards a specific phenomenon or situation. I follow Douglas Biber’s (2006) framework of stance in discourse analysis, which subsumes the categories formulated by other scholars such as intensity, hedging and evidentiality. A common categorisation of stance markers is in terms of binary categories such as epistemic versus affective stance or positive versus negative stance. The linguistic categories used to mark stance are numerous. Below I list the most salient categories for this dissertation with some examples drawn from the transcripts.

- Pragmatically loaded semantic items – ‘stunned’, ‘scary’, ‘dangerous’
- Deixis markers – ‘there’, ‘those areas’
- Modals – ‘could’, ‘should’
- Metalinguistic features - laughter, intonation changes, emphasis, pauses

Work on Sinhala discourse strategies is rare, with the exception of a handful of studies on deixis (Gair, 1991) and involitives (Zubair, 2008). I use the work on English discourse strategies as a guide to interpret the segments in Sinhala. In particular, Sinhala discourse markers such as E:kiyanne (‘that is’), ithin (‘so’), ne (tag question ‘no?’), me: (‘this’ used as a filler), den (‘now’) are recurrent. A preliminary study of me: (‘this’) and den (‘now’) shows their functions are comparable with English discourse markers. A feature in Sinhala discourse not found in English discourse segments is reduplication (or the repetition of words) for emphasis. For example, the adverbial mehema (‘in this way’) is reduplicated in the phrase mehema mehema wenna yanowa (‘it is going to happen in this way’), drawing the hearer’s focus to the manner.

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14 This conclusion is from a study on these two discourse markers by me and Susan Strauss that is currently being prepared for publication. Their functions are identified thus: me: (‘this’) is a filler and clarification marker, den (‘now’) is a clarification marker, a marker foreshadowing contrast and stages of argumentation, and signifies defensiveness.
8.2. Narrative

Narrative in discourse is story-telling, a recounting of an event in a logical and sequential manner, widely used in linguistics (Blommaert, 2001; Labov, 2006; Pavlenko, 2008) and other disciplines (D. A. Davis, 2013; N. de Mel, 2007; Torres, 2008; Wertsch, 2002). I rely primarily on the approach to narrative that uses linguistic features to understand the message and function of the narrative (Capps & Ochs, 1996; Schiffrin, 2009). Usually, a narrative includes a teller, a recountable story, embeddedness within a larger structure (or frame), a moral stance, and somewhat linear structural organisation (Ochs and Capps, 2001; Schiffrin, 2009). It is this moral stance and the functional possibilities that a narrative offers that make it productive for my analysis. Participants use a variety of features in the telling of the story that include:

- Cohesion – ‘so’, ‘then’, ‘what happened next was’
- Stylization – mimicry of other characters’ speech styles
- Alternating code – bilingual narrators switch to either Sinhala or English to represent the original language of a quote
- Metalinguistic features - laughter, intonation changes, emphasis, pauses

8.3. Voice

Linguistics uses voice to symbolise the representation of distinct identities or representations of individuals (Johnstone, 2000; Tannen, 2007). Voice is used for two related purposes in my analyses. The first is to refer to a specific aspect of the participant’s identity at a particular moment in the interview (Johnstone, 1995). For instance, participants may speak as academics, activists, interview participants or with specific reference to themselves as my colleagues. Switching between these ‘faces’ discloses changing emotions and thought processes on their part. Secondly, I use voice in the Bakhtinian formulation of ventriloquizing, where participants mimic themselves or third parties (Bakhtin, 1981). The linguistic features used for voice are:
9. Commentary on ethical considerations

The treatment of a topic such as militarisation entails ethical considerations that are broader than that contained in the brief overview provided in section 3. I conclude this chapter with this section, where I outline the ethical concerns in researching issues such as militarisation in more detail.

Safety, for instance, is a largely invisible notion in methodology, relegated to research discussing issues of race, conflict and violence (e.g., Miller, 2012; Raley, 2006). These are fields traditionally considered unsafe and therefore, highlight methodological steps to protecting safety of participants. Research on universities in Sri Lanka would not usually be considered unsafe. During this study, I was reminded of this in two separate instances. First, my request for IRB approval for the interviews used for this study was granted expeditiously after a request for minor revisions. This is possibly due to two reasons: a) a lack of concrete knowledge of the conflicts over higher education in Sri Lanka (despite the description provided), and b) the topic of the interviews being ‘the problems’ in the university system rather than ‘militarisation’. One would expect that Sri Lankans with their familiarity with the local universities would have a different perspective. The second incident, however, was even more illuminating. In 2012, with FUTA’s campaign at its most active and despite knowledge of state interference in university matters, a political activist mentioned a study on female garment traders to me and compared that as ‘riskier’ than ‘doing research on universities’ (fieldnotes, 2012-2014). These two incidents illustrate the discursive regimes of safety. The discourse of safety in research constructs certain disciplines such as war and illegal migration as ‘high risk’ by default, and education and linguistics as ‘safe’. Certain communities are also constructed as more vulnerable and worthy of protection, e.g., minors, war victims.
and low-waged female workers in industrial zones. University academics are not considered a vulnerable population in comparison to these categories.

The interviews in this study, contest the discourses of safety that present universities and academics as safe research subjects. Even in instances when academics do not consider universities to be militarised (as Chapter 4 and 5 show), they are conscious of risk as they speak of university issues. This is probably a reflection of the widespread concern over increased militarisation and surveillance in the country (Chapter 1.2). As a young female academic told me during her interview: Although we don’t know, it’s everywhere. We’re always being watched. I get that feeling. I can say this only to you Kaushi because I know you….I don’t think I can be this open with anybody else. Not even my colleagues. They are also like that. They are very careful. None of us talks about the government. We talk about the stock market (Anjula, interview in 2014, emphases in original)

Despite my position as an ‘insider’ which gained me an interview with Anjula, two potential participants in important administrative positions avoided being interviewed for the study. Several participants carefully omitted names of colleagues during the interview, and at times requested that the recording device be turned off before providing specific information. One participant’s post-interview discussion of university politics was nearly as lengthy as the recorded interview itself. Nevertheless, these incidents indicate that contrary to external perceptions and the positions academics take on militarisation (see Chapter 4 sections 2 & 3 for this) they currently engage in cautious negotiations of power in their efforts to create a safe space for work.

Discussing ‘safe’ conversations in classroom dynamics, Jason Raley (2006) said “safety is not a thing” but “a possibility that must get negotiated again and again” (p.163). This is where the discussion of ‘safe spaces’ becomes relevant. As mentioned before, the continuous formation of safe spaces creates the boundaries of the study itself. It also continues throughout the research process. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, I have removed or amended specific information appearing in quoted excerpts (these appear in curly brackets). For instance, names of individuals have been removed as well as references to identifiable landmarks. At the risk of erring on the side of caution, I have refrained from giving certain contextual
information that could identify the person, such as leaving out the programmes of study or areas of expertise. At times, ethnic or religious identity markers have been removed. This impacts the choice of excerpts presented in the dissertation (Chapters 4 and 5) when analytically rich segments of the interview could not be used due to identifiable information in it.

Even so, the familiarity of many participants with each other and myself, as members of a close-knit community makes issues of anonymity complex. Social gatherings or informal work space conversations become an ethical minefield when my dissertation becomes a topic of conversation. For example, I have been frequently advised by academics to interview fellow academics, which makes an honest answer of whether such an interview has already taken place difficult. In other instances, some participants ironically (in light of their anxieties described earlier) see fit to divulge to other academics that he or she has been interviewed already (also see Chapter 5.1). In such events, textbook-prescribed steps for safeguarding confidentiality are ineffectual. In the first example, for instance, I have developed a stock answer of agreeing to the advice without providing further information. These incidents are also examples of strategic manoeuvres by the researched community to have their story told in agreement with their own agendas (D. A. Davis, 2013).

In recent times, several scholars have written of strategic methods used to negotiate safety, confidentiality, and other related issues. Flagg Miller (2012), for example, speaks of ‘graduated disclosure’, or the strategic and gradual disclosure of the specifics of the research goals, in order to enable “productive dialogue rather than to immediate suspicion and a foreclosure of exploratory questions” (p.172). He juxtaposes this with the moral dilemmas of the ‘less is more’ code in anthropology where participants are acquired under false pretences. It is especially true in situations where the researched community may not know enough of the research process to make informed decisions. Since this dissertation topic, discourses of militarisation, is an outcome of the interviews on the current situation in Sri Lanka, I did not face a dilemma during the initial stages of the study. However, as the dissertation progressed (up to summer 2014), I refrained from explicit discussions on the narrowed down dissertation topic. This was primarily due to concerns that I would increase anxieties in potential and actual participants. My study was helped however by the fact that the
participants, being researchers themselves, were aware of the research process and concerns of disclosure and content.

Another important consideration that has arisen in literature is the ethical dilemma of critiquing social movements, considering if such critique will help or hinder their work. A similar consideration also exists in academia, where scholars avoid critiquing their own community (Gill, 2009; Val Gillies & Lucey, 2007; Uzwiak, 2013). As a researcher situated within the community being researched, there is a concrete possibility of self-censorship and interview bias, making the researcher’s self-reflexivity a critically important factor (Mand & Weller, 2007). Despite this blind spot, critiques of both social movements and academic communities are important to achieve a progression in our individual and institutional politics in order to create change (Spindler & Hammond, 2006; Yanos & Hopper, 2008). Davis (2013) calls such research ‘border crossings’, necessary spaces for the translation of knowledge, where such knowledge is consumed in various ways.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have described in some detail the research methodology used for this study. The primary resource in this study is interviews with academics, in addition to which I use texts produced by the academic trade union. I use ethnographic methods for the collection of data and discourse analytic methods for analysis. In the next chapter, I present the discursive formations of militarisation used by academics, publicly and individually. In addition, I will also present a detailed illustration of a reflexive episode resulting in a discursive shift.
Chapter 4

Public and individual discourses on militarisation

This chapter presents an overview of the discursive formations of militarisation amongst academics. Beginning with an examination of the texts produced by FUTA as an instance of public discourses of academics (section 1), I then move to an exploration of the less visible individual discourses of academia through interviews (sections 2-4). In section 2, I study the different dimensions of militarisation of universities as conceptualised by academics. In section 3, I consider dissonances in individual discourses of militarisation, as academics discuss the current situation in their work environment. Finally, in section 4, using a short interactional episode between myself and a participant, I analyse discursive changes taking place in the space of one interview.

In June 2012, when I started interviewing academics, my peers and superiors in Sri Lanka, my conceptualisation of militarisation was straightforward: clearly, any involvement of the military in university matters was a militarisation of university space. The leadership course and the presence of Rakna Lanka security personnel were unambiguous instances of the power that a government with military backing could wield (Chapter 1.4). As I heard, read and discussed it with Sri Lankan colleagues, I assumed that my position and emotion over it would be shared by others, especially those I had deemed like-minded. I was, of course, wrong. Many but not all academics disliked the leadership course as well as many of the state interventions subsequent to that, but not all such interventions were considered examples of militarisation. Indeed, at times the introduction of the term ‘militarisation’ brought on surprise, and probing questions revealed complex differences of opinion. Complex because, as one academic expressed it, the “entire society now is a militarised society” and therefore, as she said and I agreed, the question was “[a] bit of a moot point”. Complex also in relation to the background of growing political awareness within academia and their agitations during the time I was talking to academics.
Section 1

Permitted speech and foreclosures: FUTA’s responses to militaristic state policies in universities

As the umbrella body of academic trade unions, and the largest collective of trade unions in the university system of Sri Lanka, FUTA acts as the representative of all academics. In this, they are the public and collective voice of academics. Nevertheless, a majority of the participants in this study, while being supportive of the demands themselves, were unsure or critical of office bearers and union action. This cynicism and disillusion about union work amongst sections of the academic population was observed during informal conversations as well. These dissonances complicate our understanding that the public voice of a collective is the representative voice as well, a point which I address again later.

Despite the ambivalence shown by academics in the private sphere, FUTA has been able to successfully raise the issue of education reform as a national concern. In the early stage of the recent salary campaigns, this was seen in the invitations FUTA received to be part of trade union alliances in 2012. One sign of success for FUTA was the agreement by President Sirisena and his new government to meet many of the FUTA demands, three weeks after his election to office in January 2015 (FUTA Facebook page, 2015).

By the time the leadership course and the services of Rakna Lanka were announced in 2011, FUTA had become a prominent voice on university issues, making its presence felt in national media. During 2011, FUTA extended the discussion from their initial focus on wages that dominated the 2010 campaign, to education policy and university autonomy. This is borne out by the conviction of some academics that their own discourses were coloured by FUTA’s opposition to both these events. “I’m sure I got this idea from one of the FUTA things” said Shehara, one of the participants. However, analysis of the press material and public documents of FUTA shows that the leadership course and the imposition of a Ministry of Defence (MOD) related security company received minimal attention from FUTA.

These two events were not the only military-related episodes in the university system. Since 2011, these and other securitising manoeuvres (described in Chapter 1.2.3), have been accompanied by multiple events that signal the primacy or use of the military by the state. Of

15 By the end of March 2015, there has been no concrete resolution of these demands.
the three nominations for the University of Colombo’s VC position in 2013, two of the academics were affiliated with the Kothelawala Defence University (“Dr Hirimburegama New,” 2013; Jayasuriya, 2013). In 2011, students and faculty of the University of Ruhuna protested against the use of military personnel for a shramadana (a communal cleaning event) within university premises (Jayaruk, 2011). Retired security forces personnel have been appointed to higher administrative positions such as Registrar and Marshal\textsuperscript{16} in some universities (participant interviews, 2012-2014).

However, of the 73 FUTA texts on education\textsuperscript{17} analysed here, only 18 refer to military-related events in the university system, and only 11 texts (Sinhala and English) use ‘militarisation’ in the text. Of these 18 texts, only three texts are in Tamil (also available in English). None of the Tamil texts use the Tamil term for ‘militarisation’ (ra:nuvamayama:kal), even when it appears in the English language version. What this cursory survey shows is that even in the few instances when FUTA has addressed these issues, they have refrained from indexing these episodes as those of militarisation. This is reflective of the particular discourse of militarisation that FUTA engages in, a discourse in which overt citations of militarisation are avoided. An analysis of their responses to the leadership training course and Rakna Lanka services should allow us an insight to the characteristics of FUTA’s discourse of militarisation.

In 2011, when the leadership course was announced, FUTA made no official comments on it. The wage campaign begun in 2010 was coming to a fraught ending, resulting in internal dissension and frustration. It appeared that the government had timed the announcement of the leadership course well. Reflecting on this in 2012, in the midst of a more vibrant FUTA campaign, active union members were puzzled. They had no memory of FUTA’s actions on the course and in retrospect they thought that FUTA should have expressed overt displeasure. We “should have gone on the streets”, said Bhagya, a participant actively involved in FUTA campaigns. One reason for the lack of union action could have been exhaustion, an issue that is rarely researched but strongly felt in activist communities. As Bhagya said, “we were exhausted also uh kaushi. I mean every day it was like there was something happening to which we had to organise a protest.” Despite campaign fatigue, FUTA’s avoidance of a statement on a programme that caused outrage in the public sphere stands as a sign of their reluctance to take a visible political position on this issue.

\textsuperscript{16} Marshalls are administrative staff overseeing university security.
\textsuperscript{17} The Tamil, Sinhala and English versions are counted as separate texts (reasons for this are given in Chapter 3.6.2)
In interviews conducted in June and July 2012, active members of the trade union stated FUTA’s response to the imposition of Rakna Lanka services on universities was similar to their lack of action on the leadership training course, i.e., there was no protest against it. Contrary to their memories of 2011, however, FUTA did take a public stand against the government’s order to retain Rakna Lanka services. In a press statement released in October 2011, signed by the then President of the Federation, Nirmal Ranjith Dewasiri, FUTA accused the government of misusing public funds set aside for education. The letter itself contained ambiguities that I address later in this section. At this point however, what I want to stress is that FUTA’s official response was not ‘felt’ by academics. The only response that participants remembered was taken by a group of academics who acted independent of unions, formulating and publishing a petition against it with 116 signatures from their colleagues (“Growing concern against,” 2011).

By 2012, FUTA appears willing to address these public omissions. However, the bulk of references to the leadership course and Rakna Lanka services appear in FUTA’s 2012 campaign documents and there is no treatment of it afterwards. More specifically, these references are limited to a few references in the documents drawn up for negotiations with the government and pamphlets produced for distribution at public events during July to August 2012, but do not figure in advocacy documents in general. The first mention of the leadership course and the services of Rakna Lanka at this point appear in two letters in April 2012. The first letter is to Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka at the time, explaining FUTA’s concerns about the university sector. Ten days later, a second letter written to the then Minister of Higher Education notifies him of an impending one-day strike. The strike itself did not focus on militarisation, but was organised to force the government to act on unresolved issues from 2011, including the restitution of university autonomy, the demand for increased government spending on education and the inclusion of academics as stakeholders in education reform. However, the letter to President Mahinda Rajapaksa includes a small section (8 lines in a 3 page letter) where they express concern over “the so called ‘leadership training’ conducted in military camps” and “unfairly suppressing student activism” (Madhujith, 2012, p.2). This is echoed in the letter to the Minister of Higher Education, which is shorter but includes mostly identical content. Surprisingly, in these letters of April 2012 there is no mention of the Rakna Lanka security company. Here again, FUTA’s public discourse lacks a comprehensive and cohesive engagement with events of militarisation.
A change in the framing of concerns appears again in FUTA’s documents during June to August 2012. By this time, Rakna Lanka services and the leadership training course are both included but the suppression of student activism is left out. This is presumably due to the sensitive nature of student activism, fraught as it is with underlying concerns of student violence and indiscipline (Chapter 1.3). Neither the leadership course nor Rakna Lanka is framed within a discourse of militarisation. Privately and publicly, individual academics interpreted the leadership training course as ideologically problematic due to its militaristic understanding of ‘leadership’, which excludes critical thinking and independent decision making (interviews, 2012-2014; Kumar, 2011; Wickramagamage, 2011). They also protested against Rakna Lanka due to suspicions that it was an effort by the state to insert intelligence sources in universities. In contrast to these individual voices, FUTA focuses on the financial aspect using an audit discourse. Rakna Lanka is “ultra expensive”, while the leadership course is an unnecessary expenditure (FUTA, 2012, August 07, p.6). In their declaration of demands prior to the consequent strike action in 2012, FUTA (2012, June 14) restates these arguments, stating that

* A sum of Rs. 200 million was spent on this programme in 2011 and the same program would be offered for the second batch of students *although it is not clear if the program has been successful* in achieving the objective of a university entry level orientation programme accommodating the needs of different faculties that the students would enter. *These millions of rupees could otherwise have been spent toward enhancing the existing orientation programmes* in the different faculties of the universities (p.7, emphases added).

The emphasis here is on the financial viability of a program that has not proven its value in terms of productivity. FUTA’s argument implies that the leadership course would be acceptable if the allocated state funds were neither so extensive nor unsuccessful in achieving its objectives. Consciously or unconsciously, FUTA uses the very discourse of neoliberalism that the state uses in its education policies, a discourse that it critiqued as well (see FUTA, 2012, July 27; FUTA, 2012, August 07). FUTA’s official documentation subsequent to the militarist events of 2011 lacks an in-depth discussion or analysis of militarism in universities. Rather, militarist events are framed through a discourse of finances and audits. In this they follow the global trend of using neoliberalism to frame issues in higher education (Olssen & Peters, 2005).
The framing of both these events as primarily financial concerns, however, does more than sideline a discussion on the problematic ideological components of an undergraduate orientation program “run by the military in military installations” (FUTA, 2012, June 14, p.7). In choosing the discourse of finance to frame these events, FUTA also chooses what is foreclosed from public debate (Butler, 2004, p.xx). Since the main thrust of FUTA’s demands are financial in nature (i.e., demands for higher allocations of public expenditure), the cost-benefit discourse chosen by FUTA for militarised events allows the discussion of these events to be included in their larger campaign of educational reform. The focus on the misuse of public expenditure, in the form of expensive security services and unproductive military-led programs, provides evidence that the state does indeed own the funds required to make universities a better space given political will and proper financial management. It is thus possible for FUTA to portray the government’s actions as a conscious impediment to progress in national education. At the same time, such a framing supports FUTA’s demands for university autonomy and freedom of academics. The problematic aspect of the choice of a financial discourse by FUTA on these issues is that it forecloses the possibility of open debate on militarisation in universities. Through these choices, FUTA participates in creating and sustaining a public sphere in which militarisation of education is not discussed.

The disadvantages in engaging with militarisation for FUTA may have been a reason for avoiding it in public discourse. The FUTA press release against Rakna Lanka mentioned earlier in this section (uploaded on its website in October 2011) is an interesting case in point. As mentioned before, active FUTA members were unaware of this letter (interviews, 2012-2014). Its title reads “Misuse of public funding for higher education, infringement of university autonomy and violation of tender procedures through hiring of government owned commercial private security to Sri Lanka’s state Universities” (n.d., emphases added). Written in 2011, the discourse of finance and autonomy predicts the discourses that FUTA was to use in its letters of 2012. There is no reference to militarisation in the text of the letter, continuing the discourse of finance instead. The letter states that the issue is one of accountability, a necessary concern when using public funds. A second concern is the infringement of university autonomy. However, the 2 page document had been saved as “FUTA-Statement-on-Militarization-of-University-System 2011”, indicating that militarisation was an available discourse for the author of the statement.

While the document has been saved as ‘militarisation’, it has not been used in the text of the document, in the title or text, implying a manipulation of discourse. This discontinuity
between the public title of the document (in the ‘subject’ line) and its private title, flags a number of issues. On the one hand, FUTA’s framing of militarised events maybe a conscious articulation of a rational utilitarian set of arguments produced towards achieving the ends of a trade union campaign. The individual voices that make up the collective voice of FUTA are not cohesive or unitary. Individuals in Sri Lankan academic communities take divergent positions on ragging, student unions, the leadership course and even trade union activism. When negotiating with a government that had shown itself to be intransigent on some of these issues, strategic positionality is necessary. Silence on militarisation in universities is not a lack of a discourse of militarisation, but the use of a specific kind of discourse that obliterates a discussion of militarisation.

On the other hand, this letter brings up the role of the individual in forging a united campaign for a community that has diverse and divergent voices. Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper (2001) ask with regard to social movements, “Is the identity a group projects publicly the same one that its members experience? Are collective identities imposed on groups or invented by them?” (p.285) I will return to the first question at the end of this chapter. The second question can be addressed here. As discussed in Chapter 3.7, the public voice of a collective is effected through authors as well as animators (Goffman, 1981). Participants who were active trade union members spoke of the constraints of time over decision-making when public statements were necessary. Statements are not circulated amongst the members of the 41 member unions prior to being made public. This is primarily due to time constraints, since the urgency accompanying the need for most public statements overrides demands for a lengthy and protracted consultative process. An example is the FUTA statement against the imposition of Rakna Lanka services discussed previously. That even active union members either could not remember or were unaware of FUTA’s response implies that this was an ad hoc and non-consultative reaction against Rakna Lanka services rather than a response emerging from debate and discussion of the underlying issues. In a context such as this, the official and public stance of FUTA cannot reflect that of the entire membership. Read this way, FUTA’s production of public documents is a performative enactment of its identity, one that it imposes on its membership. The question is whether FUTA’s discourse of militarisation, characterised by its avoidance of overt citations of militarisation, reflects the existing discourses of the university community as a whole or that of the more powerful individual discourses. The next three sections examine individual discourses of academics on militarisation.
Section 2

Individual discourses in confluence – defining militarisation

This section is designed to demonstrate the component parts of definitions of militarisation in the discourse of academics in the private sphere. Only a few of the participants conceptualised state and administrative interventions taking place around them as constituting and effected by militarisation. These particular academics were consistent in their interpretation of specific events as militaristic in a way that differed from their colleagues who were more ambivalent about these issues (shown in section 3). The analysis of this section uses solely interviews in which the participant stated universities were militarised.

In general, participants presented formations of militarisation that paralleled theoretical views present in scholarly debates on militarisation (Chapter 2.1). In other words, they theorise militarisation as the direct involvement of the security forces in education (hereafter termed the ‘concrete’ definition) or extend their definition to encompass militaristic discourses in spaces from which the military is physically absent but include militaristic practices (henceforth the ‘diffused’ version). I use episodes from interviews that represent these different dimensions to illustrate the various formations of militarisation discourses amongst individuals. These representative segments are from interviews with three female academics: Umanga, Dimuthu and Anjula. All three participants happen to be Sinhala and Buddhist. This does not reflect stances on militarisation that are specific to majoritarian communities. In Chapter 5, for example, I use representative samples from participants in ethnic and religious minorities who also reflect parallel positions (for a breakdown of ethnic/religious affiliation see Chapter 3.6.1). Umanga, Dimuthu and Anjula are from three universities, with affiliations to programmes in the Arts, Sciences and Business respectively. The responses I quote here are mostly in relation to three main questions of the interview protocol: 1) a request for opinions on the leadership course, 2) a question on whether universities are militarised, 3) a request to define militarisation. Transcription conventions are provided in Appendix C.

Umanga is a mid-career academic, with close to two decades of teaching experience and a number of years in university administration. The segments chosen for this section are
from her interview in 2013. While discussing the Rakna Lanka security services, Umanga had mentioned that some academics were worried about “increased militarisation”, paving the way to a definition of it, which is given in Excerpt 1:

Excerpt 1 ‘The military is supposed to protect the country’

U =yeah. Militarisation to me is is I have a very lay person’s definition. It’s basically the um um (.) inclusion (.) of (.) the military (.) uh into non-military:
areas, institutions, um locales.=
K =ok.=
U =whatever. Uh to do functions which the military is not.=
K =right=
U => required to do becǝ the military’s supposed to protect the country.< =
K =yeah.
U =Right? I mean the military is not supposed to do:: landscape gardening.
K ° (hh) yeah°
U ahm which is what they were doing. (.) ah so that was one very obvious (.) instance of (.) what I(hh)£ call militarisation because we saw the STF-
((Special Task Forces)) >we have seen the STF< uh doing landscape
gardening at {my university}. You know↑↓=
K inside [{your university}?
U [>yeah yeah yeah.<
U wheeling wheelbarrows, cutting trees, sweeping, (.) that sort of stuff.
K ok.=
U =Right? And we have a landscape unit and if the people there are not enough
I’m sure we can get other people on contract to ↑do it. Ah I haven’t seen the military cleaning toilets yet but (.) maybe that will also come= I don’t know.
So ↑that- that has been around for a while:=
K [hm
U =[so: that’s probably what I was thinking of when I said increased (.) militarisation becuz- then- if we had- you know the security as well from:-
becuz >see the thing is this. we have always had security on campus< (h) But these this Rakna Lanka security officers- guards- whatever you like to call
them were supposedly people from the army no? (.) [supposedly.
Umanga’s definition of militarisation is representative of the concrete definition of militarisation, the primary feature being the military’s presence and involvement in non-military spheres (lines 2-7). To distinguish between military and non-military spheres, she first identifies the primary function of the military, national security (line 7). Even though this excerpt does not include her statement that universities are militarised, negative stance is clear in her use of sarcasm and the examples she draws on to make her argument. The express duty of the armed forces is sharply contrasted with their current tasks consisting of landscape gardening and other manual labour, as she juxtaposes what the military is “supposed” and “not supposed” to do (lines 9, 13-14, 17). The reference to cleaning toilets, “I haven’t seen the military cleaning toilets yet but (.) maybe that will also come”, (lines 20-21) is sarcastic precisely because it points to the contradiction in the military’s position: the reification of armed forces during and after the civil war versus the manual labour they are engaged in at present, which is generally considered menial. Umanga’s example also indexes the tension in public discourses on the military’s post-war role. An example of this tension is the manipulation of the role of soldiers by critics of the former government during the recent Presidential Election campaigns when an anonymously-authored story of a bright young Air Force cadet relegated to sweeping pavements near the University of Colombo went viral (“Adunika guwan hamuda,” 2014).

As Umanga points out, it is also an issue of labour displacement. The university employs landscape and security personnel of its own, who are being replaced by a “cheaper” and “more efficient” labour force, thereby making it “very difficult for the university to refuse to use the army” as Umanga says in another section of her interview (emphasis in original). At the same time, this segment typifies the marketization of the military, where the military is construed as being more desirable as labour than civilians employees.

In the next segment, I present another episode where Umanga distinguishes between the military and non-military sphere. Here, Umanga is presenting her opposition to the leadership training course:

**Excerpt 2 ‘Why are students being trained in army camps?’**

1. U becuze why: are these students being trained by the army in army camps. I don’t
2. understand this. (.) If they are to be equipped to handle university life they should be
3. trained (.) by people who know the universities and who are part of the university. I’m
4. not sure- and I don’t mean to be insulting to the army here but I don’t unders- I don’t
5. know what the army knows (.) about what life in the university’s like.
Umanga’s argument against the leadership course uses the concrete definition she formulated: the inclusion of the army in a programme designed to prepare students for university life (in excerpt 1). Her words point to the merging of university and military space. Not only are the armed forces encroaching on the metaphorical space of the university by training university students, but university students have been appropriated by the military when they are trained in “army camps” (line 1). Her frustration is evident throughout this excerpt, in her use of the rhetorical question at the beginning (lines 2-3), and the repeated use of phrases such as “I don’t understand”, “I’m not sure” and “I don’t know” (throughout excerpt, but also in excerpt 1, line 21). Rather than a lack of understanding, these phrases serve as affective stance markers, conveying strong emotion over a frustrating situation, i.e., universities were forced to accept a programme of which the founding principle is inherently irrational (lines 2, 4-5). By stating that the army has no awareness of university life, Umanga is not denigrating all armed forces personnel (she later stated that only officers would have attended university), but using that to create an exaggerated distinction between an undergraduate’s life and a soldier’s life. Her argument echoes that of statements by public intellectuals on the leadership course: “university education is meant to encourage independent learning, discussion and argument ... In contrast, in the military and allied kinds of training, the emphasis is on command and control, action without disputation” (Friday Forum, 2011). Even though Umanga mitigates her definition of militarisation by labelling it as a “lay person’s” definition (line 1 in excerpt 1), it is in essence similar to one formulation of militarisation used in scholarly literature, especially in the United States (Chapter 2.1).

The second representative interview I provide is of Dimuthu, who I interviewed in 2012. Dimuthu too is a mid-career academic with administrative and teaching experience, trained in the humanities and sciences. Her initial citation of militarisation is prompted by her discussion of the leadership training course: “[having] gone through the war and come out of it and feeling tch the whole kind of militarisation. Of ins- of institutions. Particularly academic ones. Is really discomforting” (emphasis added). The implication here is that militarisation is the involvement of the military in institutions other than defence. In this, Dimuthu’s definition is identical to the concrete definition given by Umanga.

Towards the end of her interview (in excerpt 3 below), Dimuthu explicitly theorised militarisation, bringing in features besides military involvement.
Excerpt 3 ‘Militarisation is a scary place’

D (0.5) u:h it means a really scary place really. um like any sort of regime outside of this 
country that’s been (.).£run by the military(h)£=

K =mmhmm?

D “right?“ which is not just the system of government. But then penetrates into (. ) all 

kinds of institutions right? So where (. ) I would envisage uh a (really) tough time of 

not having much say at all in (. ) in how the sys- in in how the university’s run. Or 

what gets talked, and how that’s judged, or what I wear, or how I (. ) present myself or 

who gets to make decisions about (. ) about things um.

Dimuthu’s metaphor of militarisation as a place characterised by fear, “a really scary 

place” (line 1) is thought-provoking, using the geographical spaces that we inhabit as a 

metaphor for the emotional landscape. As a spatial metaphor, it brings with it notions of 

containment and boundaries, the word “scary” working to evoke similar physical locations 

such as prisons. It is an affective space that a state and its people have arrived at, and through 

this she intimates that Sri Lanka, ostensibly headed by a democratic government, is similar to 
a military state. In her reply, militarisation is a governing system that has moved beyond its 
democratic mandate, becoming a “regime…run by the military” (lines 1-2). The results of 
this military “penetration” (line 4), a word connoting the intrusion of the military to other 
institutions, are described in the context of the university (lines 5-8). The militarised 
university is a place where personal and academic freedom is fettered. Dimuthu’s answer 

posits militarisation as a biopolitical strategy in the management of the university population.

Later in the interview, Dimuthu returned to the concept of militarisation, saying “I 
think militarisation also- I suppose I’m using it also in terms of (. ) trying to regularise and 
control in some way.” During the course of her interview, Dimuthu listed several events 
related to universities that she considered to be instances of “big brother” behaviour by the state. 
She recalled that she had recently received numerous forms that were sent by state 
institutions, which lacked a description of the purpose for a mass collection of information. 
She also reported that a regulation had appeared (later rescinded) requiring academics to 
obtain permission from the Ministry of Higher Education before conducting workshops and 
guest lectures outside their universities. In excerpt 4, Dimuthu provides a narrative that 
illustrates this aspect of militarisation to me in more detail.
Excerpt 4 ‘Anybody can go to Jaffna’

D [...] Um actually my memory of it is is that {a colleague} and I were going to take um {foreign} scholar to um to Jaffna. [...] And {my colleague} was quite agitated saying the that (unclear) just heard about it ((the regulation)), and wondering whether we should uh get a letter, saying that this lady was a {foreign} scholar and etcetera etcetera, I’m think- and I said no:: I mean you know any- everybody can go to Jaffna (you) just have to show their passport. U:h but in the end they did get a letter from some {person} saying (.) that she’s been invited to give this talk. Um.

K did you have to show this letter at any point when you went?

D she didn’t have to. In fact she was treated very well [...] but she- but we did take that letter with us right? Um yeah. So I remember that. And it’s that kind of thing you know? It’s that kind of uh (.) the the feeling that you’re being watched. That you at any moment can be asked for certain information about what you’re doing or who you are. Uh which I never felt Kaushi ten years ago.

Dimuthu’s narrative of the security concerns over a visit to northern Sri Lanka with a foreign scholar brings an affective dimension to the discussion of regulation and absence of personal autonomy cited previously (excerpt 3). It conveys the heightened sense of fear and uncertainty that individuals face in a militarised environment where arbitrary rules may apply at any given moment (recall that this circular was later rescinded). Dimuthu remembers that the visitor was in actual fact “treated very well” (line 10), but points to the disciplinary effect such militarisation produces. The logics of law and order (“everybody can go to Jaffna”, line 6) have no bearing on their actions, which are instead governed by a politics of fear (lines 7-8, 12-13) (Hyndman, 2007).

Dimuthu’s narrative exposes interpellation as another feature of the disciplinary regime. In such a situation, the academic is always and already controlled by the expectation of being hailed (Althusser, 1971). As she says, “at any moment [you] can be asked for certain information about what you’re doing or who you are” (lines 13-14; also excerpt 3, line 8). This fear of having to account for oneself produces the required regimented behaviour. The valence of fear provides for the smooth running of the security apparatus, ensuring for example that Dimuthu’s colleague obtained additional documentation to travel to a location that they had every right to visit. The unexplained demands for information received by
Dimuthu (lines 12-14) stand as another metaphor of militarisation, proof for Dimuthu that academics are being surveilled (lines 12-14).

Anjula, the youngest of the three women discussed in section 2, has similar concerns though her reasons are different. Her interview is also the most recent of the three interviews, conducted in 2014. As a junior academic, she has little experience in administration. Her interview contains several references to the oppressive atmosphere at work. When I asked her if she feels surveilled, she confessed that she became conscious of this only recently. She said “[I] didn’t feel it much. E:kiyanne ((that is)) I knew. They- control is everywhere.” Her understanding of the situation changed when she found out that state intelligence personnel were deployed in her university (another participant shared similar information on another university). Since my surprise was evident, she narrated an incident which she witnessed: the VC of her university complained to a group of faculty members that state intelligence personnel stationed in their university were not fulfilling their official duties, and that he was given wrong information when he asked for names of trouble-making students. As further examples of militarisation in universities, she provided the examples of the leadership training course and the use of Rakna Lanka services. Echoing Dimuthu, Anjula cited increasingly strict “rules and regulations”, where “you have to do what other people want you to do basically”. Anjula’s definition of militarisation, in excerpt 5, coheres with her experiences.

Excerpt 5 ‘Militarisation is a subtle form of control’

1 A (. ) it doesn’t have- it’s it’s a very subtle form of ( . ) control a:nd it’s it’s basically you
2 know you are told ( . ) that you are being watched. And uh you have to ( . ) be >you
3 know part-< you have to behave in a particular manner. And it it is not it’s not it’s
4 not- like very subtly told. Very subtly implied =
5 K [ok:]
6 A =[It’s not just right there on your face. And which will: which will actually you know
7 limit your space. As an individual.

Anjula’s definition of militarisation is equivalent to the regulation of behaviour by panoptic surveillance (Foucault, 1977). Restrictions on individual space, and thereby of academic space, are produced through an invisible but unrelenting gaze (lines 2, 4). These regulatory mechanisms have few overt symbols. The military does not figure in this segment or in other places of her interview. She is unable to pin point concrete and visible forms of
regimentation, because it is “subtly implied” and not “on your face” (line 4, 6). This is underscored by the difficulty in articulating her view of militarisation, shown in the pauses (lines 1-3) and disjointed phrases (lines 1, 4) used to reformulate her thoughts. Excerpt 5 also contains several references to ‘subtle’ strategies of regulation, ‘subtle’ being a term that other participants use during 2013-2014 as well. This is an indication of temporal changes in militarisation that will be more closely analysed in Chapter 5.

Anjula’s discourse on militarisation exemplifies a theoretical difference between South Asian scholars of militarisation and their counterparts elsewhere. As stated in Chapter 2.1.2, some South Asian feminist scholars have characterised militarization as the operationalising of militaristic ideology in civil institutions (in particular Chenoy, 2002; de Mel, 2007). This is synonymous with what I term a diffused version of militarisation, where physical occupation by the military is not necessary for the creation of a militarized space. Unlike in Umanga’s definition (excerpt 1), here the security apparatus is more effectively utilised with the panoptic gaze than the presence of the military. The presence of the Rakna Lanka security personnel could be taken as a symbolic military presence. In Anjula’s interview she stated that students resented the deployment of Rakna Lanka services in the university, causing bodily harm to private security personnel when protesting proved ineffective. Military presence in this particular university would have disrupted the smooth efficiency of regulated behaviour.

Umanga, Dimuthu and Anjula present discourses of militarisation that can be placed along a theoretical continuum. From a concrete definition of militarisation featuring the visible involvement of the armed forces in university (and educational) matters, the definition moves to militarisation as a form of efficient population management with the use of disciplinary strategies to an educational setting. The diffused version of militarisation may appear to be identical to securitisation, and does have similar features. Both include a discourse that posits a particular community as a threat and the containment of it through governmental strategies (Chapter 1.2.3; Chapter 2.1.3). However, unlike in securitisation, in the diffused version of militarisation presented by Dimuthu and Anjula the military are present in absentia. The fear that produces regimented behaviour is engendered and enforced by a violent state, known to enforce discipline through military and other extra-legal

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I thank Sinfree Makoni for posing this as a provocative question – ‘is the military necessary for militarization?’ – in the early stage of this study.
measures (Uyangoda, 1996). The military is present as the emissary of a totalitarian civil state, and play an important and visible role in the containment of unregulated behaviour.

In this section, I presented three different definitions of militarisation by academics who found universities to be militarised. In section 3, I present dissonances in individual discourses of militarisation, based on interviews with academics who argued that universities are not militarised.

Section 3

Individual discourses in dissonance: Tensions and ambivalence

During the initial phase of interviewing in June 2012, I was taken aback by the surprise shown by some participants when I asked them about militarisation in universities. “How do you operationalize militarising education?” laughed one participant, Hirusha. When asked if universities are militarised, Bimal, another participant, said “militarisation?” in tones of amazement. Ten out of the 16 participants of this study were either unsure if universities were militarised or rejected the notion outright, despite producing identical definitions of militarisation to the participants in section 2 (ranging from concrete to diffused forms of militarisation). This section examines these dissonances using three representative profiles, Kalyan, Iroshi and Wathsala. They work in three different universities. Kalyan and Wathsala are affiliated to the humanities; Iroshi is a social scientist. All three participants have worked in a number of administrative positions as well as in academic and professional organisations outside their home departments.

Kalyan is a senior academic interviewed during the 2012 FUTA campaign. At this time, he had returned to teaching after a lengthy interval. In his interview he compared present trade union activism with the campaign of the 1990s; and precedents to current political intervention in university matters. He confessed to feelings of ambivalence over the leadership training course, seeing “good things as well as bad things”. Making attendance at the leadership training course a pre-requisite for university admission (stated by the government in 2010) was “undemocratic” and a near equivalent to “forced conscription”. It would, he said, be “like forced conscription… practised in some countries like Israel or Singapore”. In addition, he disapproved of the “military kind of ambiance” undergraduates
experienced in military spaces. On the other hand, he argued, academics had failed in their responsibilities towards their students, neglecting their intellectual development and personal welfare. In the face of such a failure, he felt that the government was justified in presenting alternative programmes. Kalyan’s discourse is a refraction of authoritarian discourse (Bakhtin, 1981), mirroring state discourses of the time that presented the failure of academics to eradicate ragging as the rationale for state intervention (discussed at length in Chapter 1.4).

At the same time, Kalyan’s position is motivated by his frustrating experience in university administration. A rare opponent of ragging in his university (see section 3.2 of Chapter 1), he was frustrated by the apathetic response by many of his colleagues who “just turn their heads down” in the presence of violent ragging. His alignment with state discourses with regard to the leadership training course, despite his objection to its militaristic aspects, is not merely partisan allegiance but a critical response that questions university practice.

Kalyan’s examples of militarisation imply the use of a concrete definition: “people with military training getting in to the university as students, as security guards, as teachers, as workers. The second thing is having connections with the military establishment of the country.” Despite his opposition to the leadership training course, as well as his “mixed feelings” about Rakna Lanka, Kalyan held that universities were not militarised but were politicised. Kalyan also felt that “connections with the military establishment”, the second part of his definition of militarisation, could be fruitful in some instances. Until a few years ago, he was one of many academics from national universities who lectured and supervised theses of military personnel. In his opinion military-university connections help “[improve] the quality of military training”. Excerpt 6 is a continuation of that discussion. English translations follow immediately after each Sinhala segment; Kalyan’s turns are denoted with K and my turns with KP.

Excerpt 6 ‘It could happen but not right now’

1 K uh but (. ) uhm if there is any ( . ) you know ( . ) negative kind of connection between
2 here and the military would mainly to serve kind of disastrous things. Which
3 [I cannot even imagin[e=]
4 KP [°yeah.°] [°right.°]
5 K =yeah but I uh I don’t think uh in a tangible or intangible way:↑ (these) universities
6 have been militarised. [And uh=
7 KP [°ok.°]
It may happen in the future. Now we have our marshal. A ex-military person.

((So like this if we get our security personnel also from the military, and if we get our marshals also from the military, and after that, if they start working in the interests of not the university establishment but in the interests of the military of Sri Lanka of course))

((It could happen))

((It could happen. At the same time, that that in the guise of giving leadership training if disguised military personnel infiltrate the student body- we don’t know if that has happened already. It could happen it could not happen. So if that happens we will be militarised in the future. But right now. Not right now)))

((but at the time I left, such a thing was not noticeable))

This segment shows alternating code signalling shifts in epistemic stance. As stated before, Kalyan has defined militarisation as the insertion of military personnel into the university. He states that universities are not militarised in any way, using complementary antonyms to express this (“tangible or intangible”, line 5) and reiterates it in the closure, using a repeated present time indication to emphasise “right now” (line 22). Using Sinhala to English code alternations, he contrasts the possibility of militarisation in the future with the absence of it at present. He stresses the possible foundations for militarisation using parallelism, for example with the repetition of aragnə (v. “to take”) in conditional form and rising intonation (lines 9/13-14), and with the juxtaposition of military “interests” vis-à-vis
the interests of the university (lines 11-12/15-16). In the latter part of excerpt 6, he again uses the conditional form of *wunoth* (v. ‘happen’) (lines 21-26) to stress the possible outcome of negative military connections. The shift from English to Sinhala taking place in line 9 is significant. At the beginning of the excerpt (lines 1-9) he speaks in English, stating that he militarisation has not taken place. However, when he refers to the recent appointment of an “ex-military person” he shifts to Sinhala, musing on the possibility of militarisation. In the Sinhala section he visualises the militarised university as a place where military personnel infiltrate universities as students, and where institutional agendas are aligned with the defence sector (lines 9-12/13-16). Kalyan’s alternating code, indexing a future world of militarisation (in Sinhala) as opposed to a present world where universities are not militarised (in English), could be a discursive strategy signalling his ambivalence.

Furthermore, Kalyan’s assertion that the problems in universities reflect politicisation rather than militarisation is an illustration of the diffusion of FUTA’s discourses in universities. As mentioned in Chapter 1.1.2, “unprecedented politicization” is a key component of FUTA’s discourse on universities, used to explain many of the problems universities face at present (FUTA, 2013, May 07). Even though Kalyan disputed that politicisation was a new phenomenon, he believed that it was a debilitating feature of university culture at present. His interpretation of these problematic events through a discourse of politicisation and his ambivalence over militarisation illustrates a connection between individual and public discourses. The direction of such a seepage of influence remains a question, as in whether individual discourses affect the collective or vice versa.

Iroshi, another senior academic and the second participant I present in this section, started laughing when I asked her for her response to the leadership course, saying “I screamed”. Laughter was a common response to this question amongst many of the participants, functioning as evidence of shock and dismay rather than amusement. Iroshi described her anger when she heard of this programme, which she felt was “taking over the… responsibilities of the university”, interpreting this step by the state as a loss of autonomy for universities. Her response to the imposition of Rakna Lanka security services was similar: “the fact that y’know? There are mili- military you know inside the university premises, it’s just unacceptable.”

Towards the end of the interview, I asked Iroshi if universities were militarised. Given her anger over the leadership course and the Rakna Lanka security services, I expected her answer would be similar to participants in section 2, that these events were examples of
militarisation. On the contrary, Iroshi stated that to say so would be “an exaggeration”. Her rationale is given in excerpt 7.

**Excerpt 7 ‘Saying it’s militarised is an exaggeration’**

1. I there is a tendency to uh (.) to uh let’s say use the military uh in ways that absolutely
2. not at all necessary and uh in the education system
3. K =right. such as
4. I like uh well through the rakna- like the [rakna lanka
5. K [rakna lanka
6. I (. company. Then uh (clears throat) there’s also well uh through the training-
7. leadership training programme I understand that there were also lots of military
8. people who were conducting lectures and so on. Right what they were teaching I
9. don’t know.=
10. K =£we don’t know£=
11. I =right there might be an attempt to (.uh get the military more- more involved. I
12. understand also: if I am not mistaken: at- there is uh there are some (.uh lecturers
13. (now) in post-graduate courses who are from the military.
14. K in:: which [universities’ (this)
15. I [in (our) university postgradu
16. K =ok=
17. I =one maybe? Right? And like I know that y’know they’re they they will be uh
18. promoted. Like I if you know >if they are- you see< you see (one of) the recent uh
19. development in the university=that all visiting lecturers have to be approved by the
20. vice chancellor↑ (h) right so like if um if a military person is proposed as a lecturer
21. that person I think would be much more acceptable as a lecturer than {name of
22. colleague from another university}.=
23. K =right.=
24. I =Right? So uh like that
25. K hm
26. I ok um but whether whether it’s a trend uh whether it’s actually you know £taking
27. (h)over£ I don’t know. [right?
28. K [ok.
I definitely: it is encouraged right? uh. Still uh there are like no tch like courses I as far as I know you know like (. ) uh that would uh be that would have like uh uh modules and things to do with the military I I don’t I’m not aware of any.

K ok. what would be if you were to give an ad-hoc definition of militarisation. what would you- how would you define it.

I um well (. ) uh (. ) inclusion of uh of um u- well um well maybe like tch uh having a quota for the military: entering the university. Uh uh military personnel encouraged to uh be engaged in in uh uh teaching: g. um tch um military getting involved in uh maintenance of the university which I think was the case at one point. =

K =it was=

I =yeah I think the university […] was told that uh the the garden area was being- the military was being used to uh=

K =gardening? I°gardening°

I [yeah.

I Though I’m not sure ah.

Iroshi’s discussion of militarisation contains several contradictory parts. The excerpt begins with her views that the military is misused by the state, making her stance clear by an emphatic negation (“absolutely not at all”, line 2). She shows her disapproval of military involvement in education with the emphatic stance marker, a stance consistent with her views on other issues. Next is a listing of four events that exemplified militarisation in education for some academics: the leadership course, the Rakna Lanka, the use of military personnel for teaching in post-graduate courses and the preference for military personnel over qualified non-military teachers. Iroshi is explicit about her disapproval of each event. She informs me of other academics who were involved in the leadership course. “I don’t know” (line 9) is not only a stance marker showing her disapproval but functions as a distancing move, disavowing any knowledge of this course. Similar distancing strategies are used when she speaks of her university’s attempts to engage more actively with the military. In this instance (lines 11-13), hedging devices are used more frequently. In addition to the modal ("might"), the emphasis on her lack of awareness on exact details of this situation signals her separation from the university administration. On the preference for military personnel as instructors, however, she appears more assertive ("will be" preferred, lines 17-18, 21-22). However, she then returns to her position that universities are not militarised. Note again her use of “I don’t
know” (line 27), indicating her stance rejecting universities are militarised. She interrupts her list of examples to draw a distinction between the misuse of the military and a “trend” (line 26). Here Iroshi has identified a crucial feature of militarisation, that it is a process rather than an isolated event. However, she makes no connections between the leadership course, the Rakna Lanka services and the preference for military-affiliated instructors which occurred within a period of three years. The dissonance in Iroshi’s discourse arises from the refusal to consider the militarism in each isolated event to be constitutive of a ‘trend’, even as they occur within a short period of time within one university.

My request for a definition of militarisation (line 33) follows upon Iroshi’s assertion that militarised programmes are “still” absent from universities (lines 29-32). In lieu of a definition Iroshi provides a list of characteristics (lines 35-39). The contradictions in Iroshi’s individual discourse becomes particularly conspicuous towards the end of excerpt 7 (lines 35-45). Her earlier description of the preference for military personnel as teaching staff (lines 12-18) is an example that contradicts her statement that universities are not militarised. This contradiction arises due to its exemplification of the second characteristic of militarisation (military personnel as teachers, lines 36-37). The third characteristic of militarisation (line 38), the use of the military as service personnel in university premises, is followed by a disclosure that her university may be using military as labour (lines 38-42). This contradictory example is accompanied by several epistemic stance markers flagging distance from her statement (“I think”, “I’m not sure”, lines 41, 45). Overall, this excerpt is characterised by multiple instances where the participant refrains from taking a single, cohesive position, contradicting herself and aligning herself away from propositional content. Excerpt 7 is thus an illustration of a narrative of militarisation that is contradictory.

It is also possible that the dissonance in Iroshi’s segment is due to being ‘put on the spot’ in the interview, requiring an impromptu answer that is at the same time a logical and articulate response to a complex issue. There are a number of syntactic reformulations pointing to a need to clarify her thought (lines 7-8, 17). We also find the frequent use of discourse markers that serve to mitigate, or dilute the force of the content: “like”, “well” and “uh” occur several times (especially in lines 4, 30-31, 35), as do other phrases such as “I understand”, “as far as I know” and “let’s say” (lines 1, 7, 31-32). This profusion of hedging strategies could be due to multiple factors. If Iroshi assumed that I wished for an affirmative that universities were militarised, it could mark a desire for politeness while disagreeing with me. It could also be, as stated before, related to the difficulty of giving a clearly articulated
answer in such a short space of time. Such mitigation could at the same time be an expression of reluctance on being forced to make visible her position on such a politically sensitive issue. Finally, it is also possible that the public discourse of academics affects her inability to articulate a coherent position on militarisation.

Wathsala, a mid-career academic, is the third person to be presented in this section. She was interviewed in 2013. Excerpt 8 begins with Wathsala’s response to my question: “Do you feel the university system is being militarised?”

**Excerpt 8 ‘Our universities are volatile’**

1. W (0.5) well I *know* that there is a lot of intervention. From the UGC, from the ministry,
2. (. ) in a lot of the decisions. Whether to- I don’t know if the militarisation is very
3. subtle.
4. K ok.
5. W uh but I don’t see it present as such. I don’t know (. ) whether it’s because of our (. )
6. university set up. We’ve always had a (. ) rather volatile (. ) Situation in our
7. universities.=
8. K =right.
9. W so um we *don’t* see it as being openly militarised as such.

It is immediately apparent in this excerpt that Wathsala does not reply directly to my question. Her answer is a fine example of stance taking. After a small pause, she uses a series of hedging devices (line 1), beginning with the adverbial “well”, possibly used both as a delaying device and a face-threat mitigator (if she assumed that I expected an affirmative). Next is a statement contextualising her answer, indicating that she is aware of current discussions of academic autonomy, emphasising her lived experience (lines 1-2) with an additional intensifier, “a lot of” (line 2). She completes her turn with a phrase that consists of a reformulation, the forward-looking stance marker “I don’t know” followed by a conditional phrase (line 2), and focuses on the doubtful existence of militarisation itself, emphasising subtlety (or the invisibility) of militarisation as a reason for doubting the existence of it (lines 2-3). She reiterates this in line 5 with a relatively more forceful statement, “I don’t see it [militarisation] present as such” where unlike in the previous statement, she focuses on her own position. However, her viewpoint is juxtaposed with a possible explanation for her ‘unseeing’, the volatility of Sri Lankan universities (lines 5-7). Her third statement on this, in line 9, is a strong negation (emphasis is on ‘don’t’), which is at the same time framed as a
collective ‘unseeing’, a claim that she is a member of a larger group (“we”) who cannot see militarisation, further confounded by the subtlety of the process. In addition to the numerous epistemic stance markers (“I know,” “I don’t know,” “I don’t see”) showing her reluctance to expose her own position on militarisation, this is another instance of the refraction of state discourses (similar to Kalyan above). She cites the discursive construction of universities as violent spaces in media and state discourses, where the ‘volatility’ of the space prevents academics from perceiving militarisation. As inhabitants of such a violent space, Wathsala implies, academics find themselves unable to sight militarisation.

Our discussion continues in excerpt 9, which contains Wathsala’s definition of militarisation. My emphasis on the conditional in line 9, “if it [militarisation] happened”, is in deference to her position (in excerpt 8) that universities were not militarised.

**Excerpt 9 ‘Different forms of militarisation’**

1. K Right. What is your definition of militarisation.=
2. W =>I I I< think. The way I see it is um (.) a strong (.) involvement of the military↑ uh
3. K in in many of our activities↑
4. W to the extent to which uh the control of most of our activities are done (.) in
5. K conjunction with (.) the laws. And probably even the belief systems of the milita
6. W [ry. How a military would be conducted.
7. K [right.
8. K so what would be examples for you. Of militarisation. If it happened.
9. W well one thing I would say is the student protests being controlled by the military?
10. K mmmhm
11. W Would be one sign of militarisation↑ Ah well the role of- the military has extended
12. K beyond its boundaries↑ to walk into national universities↑
13. W that’s one- that’s probably the way ideologically I I (.). I think one- the other thing
14. K would be this fear of (.). speaking up↑ of having to look over your shoulder↑=
15. W =right.
16. W would be one form of militarisation >u:hh um< the other would be um u:h not- as I
17. K said before not having the space or the freedom to speak up.
18. K right.
19. W would be one. Would be the most (.). [important (to) me.
Wathsala’s theory of militarisation begins with the direct involvement of the military in university matters (lines 2-3), in the same vein as Kalyan and Iroshi. However, a notable difference between their definitions and Wathsala’s conceptualisation of it is that she emphasises regimented behaviour (“control of…activities”) through “laws” and “belief systems” that are militaristic, with the implication that the military need not be physically present (lines 5-7). Other aspects of militarisation named by Wathsala are the curtailment of student activism (lines 10) and limits on dissent (lines 17-18, 21). The conceptualisation of militarisation as a set of governmental strategies is in many ways similar to Dimuthu and Anjula’s theorising of it in section 2.

There are few clues in excerpt 9 that are indicative of Wathsala’s perception of an oppressive environment in universities at the time of the interview. She has already stated that universities are not militarised, or rather that she does not see evidence of it. Likewise, the example of student unions being repressed (line 10) may be hypothetical rather than actual. During the interview, immediately after her statement that “the freedom to speak up” is the most important right (lines 21-23), I asked her if she faced infringements of such rights in her work life. Her response was an emphatic negation - “no. no no.” It is here that I can illustrate the importance context plays in interpretation. During the 18 months preceding our interview, the media continuously highlighted conflicts in her university. Numerous student protests were reported, as well as unscheduled closures of the university during the academic year. Students were evicted from hostels, a disciplinary strategy frequently used by Sri Lankan university administrators to control student activism. Even though Wathsala presents her definition of militarisation as an abstract formulation, given this context the reference to student activism (lines 10-11) and her assertion that the military is acting “beyond its boundaries” (lines 13-14) can be interpreted as references to instances of actual transgressions. Another indication of her lived reality is the use of the proximal demonstrative in “this fear” (line 17), which alludes to the immediate environment of fear and self-censorship present in her environment. Wathsala’s individual discourse appears at first glance to be cohesive in its denial of militarisation, but closer examination shows it to be permeated with contextual intimations of control and surveillance consonant with militarisation.

With the use of these representative interviews (in sections 2 & 3), I do not mean to force discrete categorisations distinguishing academics who are aware of militarisation versus those who are unaware. The interviews in the two preceding sections are discursive episodes
in a particular time (which I call Time 1), and as such, represent a discursive construction frozen in time. As Anjula’s description of a change in perception illustrated in section 2, these discourses are not static. In the next section, I present a discursive shift that takes place within the course of the interview itself.

Section 4

A discursive transition - Inner speech externalised

This section is an in-depth examination of an epistemic shift that occurs during an interview. I present a short excerpt from an interview with Bhagya, a social scientist who is a mid-career academic. Bhagya and I became acquainted with each other through my presence at trade union events. I interviewed her during the 2012 FUTA campaign, on two consecutive afternoons. Excerpt 10 (in 4 parts) is of 04.12 minutes duration from an interview of 02.25 hrs duration. The episode is situated towards the end of the interview. Before this episode, Bhagya and I had discussed the leadership training course and the Rakna Lanka security services at length, events which she constructed as authoritarian state interventions. Excerpt 10a begins with her answer to my question, ‘are universities being militarised?’

Excerpt 10a ‘Control of dissent but not militarisation’

At the time I introduce the discussion of universities, militarisation is not a component of Bhagya’s discourse on universities. This is revealed in both metalinguistic features as well as the propositional content in the excerpt. As Bhagya answers my question, she is marshalling her thoughts, which is indicated in the long pause, and the lengthened beginning of her turn (“u:::m I:::”, line 1). She also reformulates her words at the beginning (“become
mili- becoming”, line 1), and then requests agreement from me (lines 3). As she begins her answer she appears unsure and the content of her answer in this excerpt also illustrates this.

When I introduce the topic, despite being vehemently against the leadership training course and the Rakna Lanka services, Bhagya has not considered these events to be part of militarisation of universities. Her discourse in this segment is similar to Wathsala’s in section 3 (excerpt 8), where militarisation is considered indiscernible. She contrasts this with an outwardly visible phenomenon (for her) such as the control of dissent (lines 2-3, 6). In doing so, Bhagya identifies the discourse of the state (and university administration) where university populations, especially students, come under a disciplinary regime. More than one aspect of the disciplinary regime on students is cited here. Most obviously, it demarcates the limits of dissent (line 2). Using the voice of the state, “in the name of discipline” (line 2), she indexes the authoritarian discourses of the state (and administration) that constructs students as volatile, requiring intervention (as seen in section 3). State discourses on undergraduates produce the grounds for these biopolitical strategies, such as the leadership training course and the employment of a security company that has military-grade training (see Chapter 1.4).

Bhagya had already expressed earlier in the interview her thoughts that resistance is part of a university student identity, “that’s what they’re supposed to do”. Given these views, the invocation of state discourses is also an exhibition of Bhagya’s stance against the repression of student politics. However, at this point, Bhagya is unsure if such disciplinary interventions constitute militarisation (line 4).

In excerpt 10a above, Bhagya’s discourse is similar to the discourses examined in section 3. Her discourse is characterised by a gap in connecting militaristic events to the process of militarisation. She interprets these events through alternate discourses such as repression or autonomy. Bhagya’s affiliations with FUTA and her familiarity with the public discourse of academics (section 1), which avoids explicit citations of militarisation, may have prevented her from making these connections. Excerpt 10b, starts from the place in the interview where excerpt 10a ends, and speaks to the distinction she makes between militarisation and control (line 4, excerpt 10a).

**Excerpt 10b ‘Examples and revisions’**

7 K so would you consider militarisation as different from controlling=
8 B => no that’s what I’m trying to think y’know whether i- that’s part of the same process. Right? > I mean and there are certain things that are- that happened which
many of us didn’t question and I think that is because of the extent to which we are militarised.

like what things. [for example. =

=for for example the fact that just outside the {university} there’s… a camp ((of the armed forces)).

hmm.

so it’s a new thing?

it’s a new thing.

like how old. One year? Two years?

since the end of the war.

ok.

right? (. ) U:m even the whole sort of: (. ) tch >now there are< security cameras around uni. Right? I am appo- I don’t I don’t particularly like that. Right. U:::m most people don’t s- don’t have a problem with it becuz they’re saying that you know now when the students fight they can get it on camera and they can identify the culprits. Right?

(. ) Ok?

hm.

u:::h so tho- tho- those kinds of things are so tch I mean that’s the thing I think it’s it b- it is perhaps I mean militarised i- it it is militarised. To th- in that sense. Tch where you know? we we we see the control and the authoritarianism: as (. ) natural.

Excerpt 10b is a segment rich in reflexivity. When prompted (question in line 7), Bhagya rethinks her distinction between control and militarisation. She begins with two false starts and compressed words (lines 8-9), indicating that she has not finished speaking but is formulating her thoughts. She connects her answer in excerpt 10a to the normalising effects of militarisation in Sri Lanka due to the civil war. The extensive scale of militarisation desensitises people to its signifier (lines 10-12 ). Bhagya reflects on two events that indicate militarisation to her. The first is a building in close proximity to a national university that was
requisitioned by the armed forces (lines 14-22). In the part removed from this excerpt\(^{19}\) (indicated by line 17), Bhagya comments that “nobody said anything”, implying that not only had the academics or staff of the university not protested, but that they may not have noticed the transition either. Her second example is the installation of surveillance cameras (line 24-25), a recent phenomenon in several Sri Lankan universities. \(^{20}\) Her critique of it is explicit, though she reduces the emotive force greatly by truncating what could have been a forceful adjective (“appɔ-”) and reformulating it to convey mild disfavour (“I don’t particularly like it”, line 25). With this example, Bhagya connects normalised militarisation to the deployment of the technology of surveillance (lines 26-28).

This is a significant insight into the discursive changes taking place in the country. As shown previously, the violent and undisciplined undergraduate is part of a dominant discourse on universities that the state has invested in sustaining. This dominant discourse is refracted in the voice of the academics who justify surveillance through security cameras (Bakhtin, 1981). In addition, Bhagya’s voicing of others’ discourse illustrates a shift in the discourses of the role of higher education. The university is no longer a space for inculcating critique and resistance in the face of totalitarian establishments, at least for some academics. Instead, it has become a space where students are “culprits”, their unruly behaviour meriting punitive measures (line 28). She connects these examples to her thesis that militarisation has become invisible (lines 30-33). Initially ambiguous about militarisation in universities (“perhaps”, line 31), she reorients herself more confidently by the end of excerpt 10b (note the emphasis in “it is militarised”, line 31). This reflexive reorientation is not without difficulty as evident in the repeated truncation of words and reformulations in that part (lines 30-31). At the end of excerpt 10b, however, Bhagya’s position on militarisation in universities has started to shift from that in excerpt 10a, as she concludes that “we”, as citizens or academics, inhabit a regimented environment where “control” and “authoritarianism” is “natural” (lines 32-33). This episode of reflexivity becomes an opportunity to delve further into the meaning of militarisation, provided in excerpt 10c.

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\(^{19}\) This section and the one indicated as line 23 contained identifiable information and were removed to protect Bhagya’s identity.

\(^{20}\) The current government has ordered them to be removed as per FUTA demands.
Excerpt 10c ‘Defining militarisation’

K what would be your definition of militarisation.
B (hhhh)
K Off the cuff. Obviously.
B yeah (£heheheh) not according to:
K [£hhhe£
B =who- whoever. Yeah. Um >I mean< I think it’s pretty much stuff that I’ve described actually. Like authorita- growi- the authoritarianism. Control of dissent, and where the military↑ and that’s what is less obvious I think. Where like the military have a huge say in how things are. (.) Right? U::m and the military is sort of like um (.) tch um where the the the the boundary between military and civil life is increas- increasingly blurred. U::h °and° I think that is happening actually.

Bhagya’s attempt at defining militarisation, allows her to locate the incidents she has discussed up to now (excerpts 10a and 10b) in a discourse of militarisation. Her definition is similar to that represented by Dimuthu in section 2, allowing for a combination of disciplinary strategies and the extensive use of the military. By saying the role of the military “is less obvious”, she is not only clarifying this for herself but also providing reasons for not noticing militarisation initially (in excerpt 10a). Bhagya also highlights the blurred boundaries of civilian and military roles as a characteristic of militarisation (lines 43-44). This excerpt ends with a reassessment of her previous stance in excerpt 10a (“actually”, line 45), when she confesses that these characteristics are already in place. With this last statement, she also connects the abstract concept of militarisation to the lived reality of universities. In excerpt 10d, we re-visit the position she held at the beginning of this discussion (excerpt 10a).

Excerpt 10d ‘Repositioning herself’

K ok. So: would you: reflect back on the answer you gave [(to my) first question
B [£Yes. Yes. Yes.£=
B =Yes yes I would(hh)£ and say no we £(hh)have been [(hh)militarised£.=
K [£(hhhehh) £
B =I mean that’s what I am saying. It’s not that- it’s not tch y’know when you initially asked me I was like thinking ok are we having like (.) police posts inside and stuff like that. No we’re not. =
Here, I ask Bhagya to reflect on her initial position that universities are not militarised (line 46), a step that Bhagya anticipates, beginning her turn before I end my request with laughter and affirmatives (lines 47). By asking her to explain her differentiation between a militarised and controlled environment (excerpt 10b, line 7), and then requesting a definition of militarisation (excerpt 10c), I have created an opportunity for Bhagya to reflect on this issue, an opportunity that Bhagya has utilised. That Bhagya has changed her position on militarisation within a very short span of time (approximately 4 minutes) is noted by both interviewer and the participant as they laugh over this (lines 47-49). This leads to Bhagya’s reflection on her initial position on militarisation (lines 50-51). Her initial conception of militarisation included signs of state authority that typically signify militarisation to Sri Lankans, such as “police posts”. This is an instance of shared knowledge between the participant and interviewer, indexing police and military posts as typical of state security during the civil war (see Chapter 1.2). I take this cue to clarify that “police posts” or similar phenomena would be overt signifiers of militarisation for Bhagya (line 55), which results in a collaborative ending to our discussion of Bhagya’s position on militarisation. As excerpt 10d shows, her initial stereotypical vision of militarisation led her to reject militarisation as evident in universities, but a reflexive discussion provides for a change in position (line 58). Our conversation continues for a few minutes more (not presented here) where she reports on a conversation where a colleague shared rumours of military personnel entering universities as “spies” (note that this was a concern for Kalyan in section 3 as well) and a narrative of her own regarding Rakna Lanka security personnel. By the end of excerpt 10d, Bhagya has repositioned herself through a discursive exercise, facilitated by the interviewer’s inquiries. Section 4 is a rare instance of a political transformation effected through reflection, the only such instance in this study.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have surveyed the range of discourses of militarisation as they appear in academia. The first section analysed texts produced by FUTA for public consumption, examining these as instances of public and collective discourses of militarisation in education. As shown in these texts, FUTA’s discourse of militarisation lacks overt citations of militarisation. Phenomena such as military involvement in higher education, increased state surveillance and forceful state intervention in university matters are constructed through a discourse of economy and autonomy rather than as results of militarisation.

In the second and third sections, I presented instances of representative individual discourses of militarisation. The defining characteristics of militarisation in universities are provided in section 2, and can be placed along a spectrum that includes the visible involvement of the armed forces (the concrete definition) and the use of biopolitical disciplinary strategies effected through a culture of fear (diffused version). In some instances, as we saw in this section, the definition of militarisation centres on the control and surveillance of a space rather than the involvement of the military per se.

However, as section 3 revealed, even though the definitions of militarisation by participants offer some unity in terms of their definitions, there is little agreement on the interpretation of an academic’s lived reality through this discourse. In other words, even as they recognise and respond to events that their colleagues consider instances of militarisation, the discourse of some academics do not allow for the existence of militarisation in higher education. A similar discursive strategy of depoliticising discourse was used by academics to hide their ambivalence on the ROTC in a university in the United States (Armato et al., 2013). In the Sri Lankan context, events such as the leadership training course, installation of security cameras, the appointments of military personnel as instructors act as floating signifiers, accrued different meanings by academics (Lévi-Strauss, 1987).

In terms of the linguistic aspects of discourse analysis, the individual discourses do not exhibit discourse markers or strategies that can be categorised as signalling positionality on militarisation. What is evident, however, is the use of certain discourse strategies, such as alignment and mitigation, which are used in individual discourses to show the participant’s stance on the interviewer or the issue. In both sections 2 and 3, for instance, the participants’
alignment with or against my (perceived) position with militarisation impacts the stance they take on militarisation, which is then seen in the discourse markers used. The linguistic correlates of militarisation needs further study, but at this point, it is evident that discursive strategies are influenced by stance on issue and alignment in relation to speaker/listener that directs the use of discourse strategies, rather than the issue itself. As these sections illustrate there is no unified discourse of militarisation in the private sphere of academia even though the public discourse of academics (through FUTA) implies this. Factors that are expected to correlate with positionality on militarisation — such as the participants’ ethnic or religious identities, affiliations with the trade union, or social class, did not appear to be correlates in this study. Neither did the participants’ liberal political views or even a higher level of political consciousness, which I expected to be foundational to the perception of militarisation in universities, predict a uniform position on militarisation. It is possible, however, that the securitised atmosphere of universities at the time I conducted interviews was responsible in some way for the individual discourses. It is a factor that needs further research. The incommensurability of these discourses, within the public and the private sphere, is noteworthy in connection to methods used in discourse studies. Typically, discourse analysis (especially political discourses) involves the examination of isolated segments of discourse, treating them as static episodes of communication. Section 4, the analysis of Bhagya’s change in position during the interview, challenges this by exemplifying the imminent nature of discourse. It is an instance where the subject breaks her ritualised performative of militarisation (Butler, 1997).

The picture that emerges through a comparison of the public and individual discourses of militarisation of higher education is of a static discourse of militarisation in the public sphere and a set of competing and shifting discourses in the private sphere of academia. I have argued in section 1 that FUTA’s refusal to cite militarisation in their public discourse even when member unions engage with it, provides for the discursive construction of university spaces as devoid of militarism. Their discourse of militarisation, unevolved over a period of three years studied here, illustrates that it is strategically deployed rather than organically evolving. Instead of a discourse of militarisation, they use the discourses of audit, neoliberalism and accountability. In doing so, they draw the public’s (and state’s) attention to issues such as the misuse of public funds and the curtailment of academic freedom in recent years. The differences in sections 2 and 3 have shown that FUTA’s discourse of militarisation is not the only discourse of militarisation in universities. I would argue, therefore, that
FUTA’s dominance in university politics leads to a suppression of alternative discourses of militarisation in academia. This is especially so in the public sphere, but more apparent in the ambivalent individual discourses discussed in section 3. A prohibitive public discourse minimises the space for reflexivity in the individual political space, an important part of the academic space. Section 4, in contrast, demonstrates the possibilities afforded by such reflexivity. FUTA’s avoidance of a discussion of militarisation limits the discursive range available for individuals in universities, affecting both the public and individual discourses in academia. It contributes to the lack of discussion on these issues permeating the private sphere of academia. Over a period of time, the limits of discourse produce the limits of what academics see. Discursive transitions over a period of several years are the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter 5

Temporal changes in discourses of militarisation

In this chapter, I analyse temporal shifts in discourses of militarisation. In contrast to changes within the duration of an interview (Chapter 4.4), the changes discussed in this chapter take place over a period of three years. In the first section, I introduce instances where the follow-up interview’s discourse style (i.e., the linguistic and rhetorical features used in discourse) differs from the first interview even when the participant’s position on militarisation remains constant. Thereafter, in the second section, I present instances where the participant’s positionality varies in the second or third interview, also resulting in a discursive shift. I use comparative representational segments from the first interview (Time 1) and follow-up interviews (Times 2 and 3) to discuss these shifts. The representative samples are drawn from participants who belong to the majority and minority ethnic and religious groups. Of the 6 participants interviewed over a period of three years, one participant was male and the others female. I have chosen to give representational segments from female participants in this chapter.

In Chapter 4, I traced the public discourses of academics through a period of three years (2011-2014), and the dissonances between individual discourses of militarisation amongst academics. In this study, academics viewed militarisation of education as the direct involvement of the military (concrete definition) and as a form of governance employing regimentation and surveillance (diffused version). Despite commonalities in their definitions of militarisation, individual discourses of academics are not identical. FUTA’s discourse shows an avoidance of militarisation in their discussions, preferring a discourse of rights and financial management to discuss events that directly involve the military. This is significant given the discourse of militarisation permeating discussions outside the university and the turmoil in Sri Lankan universities at this time. Nor does this public discourse reflect the shifting and competing discourses apparent in the private sphere of academics at the time.

The years under investigation in this study have been particularly eventful for Sri Lankan universities. I provide a brief summary here in preparation for the discussion of discursive shifts, but an extended description of relevant issues is provided in Chapter 1.
Since the end of FUTA’s 2012 campaign, with its 3 month continuous strike and protest campaigns (Time 1 for most interviews here), academic trade unions scaled down their activities. During this period, member unions continued to agitate on issues relevant to their own faculty or university. In addition, FUTA as well as its member unions have separately organised a few one-day token strikes, i.e., refusals to work for a short period of the work day. The former government had not imposed university-wide changes since 2012, but has continued to intervene in administrative matters of specific universities (see Appendix A for a detailed list of events). Individuals alleged to be politically aligned with the government of the time were appointed as heads of the UGC. During this period, new Vice Chancellors were appointed to all four universities discussed in this study, each appointment accompanied by protests over their unsuitability or breach of procedure (Jayasuriya, 2013; interviews, 2014; fieldnotes, 2013). Student unions have seen harsh reprisals, union leaders have been arrested and student activism has been threatened. Meanwhile, the leadership training course continued for consequent cohorts since 2011 and the Rakna Lanka security firm is present in some universities (the current government has agreed to discontinue both of these). The participants interviewed for this study worked amidst this politically charged and tense atmosphere, influencing the temporal shifts in individual discourses presented here.

Section 1

Temporal changes in discursive style in individual discourses

In this section, I present two representational interviews of participants whose positionality on the militarisation of universities remain consistent in interviews conducted during 2012-2014 but show differences in discursive style and argumentation. Temporary shifts in position are evident with regard to both academics, but do not impact their positions on militarisation fundamentally.

Bhagya and Hirusha are mid-career academics in the Social Sciences and Humanities respectively, from two universities. Bhagya is an active member of her trade union, whereas

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21 While FUTA did not take an official stand for or against candidates of the Presidential Election in 2015 January, academics publicly identified with trade unions actively participated in campaigning against the then President, Mahinda Rajapaksa (see Ferdinando, 2015).
Hirusha, though she has participated in major trade union events (e.g., protests), had not obtained trade union membership by Time 2. They also differ in their perception of militarisation in universities: at the end of her interview Bhagya stated that universities are militarised; and Hirusha dismissed this as being impossible. They maintained the same positions in subsequent interviews. They were first interviewed in July 2012 (Time 1). Hirusha was interviewed for the second time in 2014 (Time 2). With Bhagya I conducted two follow-up interviews, in 2013 (Time 2) and 2014 (Time 3).

Hirusha is an academic who has extensive experience in the field of education. I had a long-term acquaintance with her as a colleague and friend. In July 2012, when I first interviewed her, she firmly rejected the idea that education could be militarised, saying that militarisation is a “nice phrase people use” but that it was difficult to “operationalize” in education. In what could be interpreted as a face threatening act towards me, she also said “people don’t even know what they mean when they say the government is militarising education.” Excerpt 1a is her definition of militarisation of education in Time 1.

**Excerpt 1a ‘Education is anyway militaristic’**

1 K what would be your definition of militarisation.
2 H education↓ well it would be like the stereotypical situation where (hhehee) teachers
3 will have the military designations, students will have to stand in line, any way there
4 are elements of militarism in education already. There is corporal punishment,
5 corporal punishment is banned, there is- it is banned by the ministry but it is flouted
6 everywhere, you hear of children getting- getting tortured in class, there is it’s very
7 hierarchical, it’s not only hierarchical within the classroom when the teacher is held as
8 god, it’s also hierarchical in the management of education
9 […]
10 So there are those hierarchical issues which are very- which you associate with the
11 military. Then tech you know no uniforms are military (hehehe). The absolute (.)
12 uniformity of uniforms. Like for example fif- th- maybe thirty years ago we didn’t we
13 had the same dress as the uniform, but the shoes could differ. But now if you look at
14 kids they have the same brand of shoes. They have the same (.) length of socks. So
15 individuality is- at least sartorial individuality is less now even less. Hair has to be
16 tied the very same way. Except in a couple of private schools the government schools
17 actually promote that kind of thing.
18 […]
so there is nothing new to militarise the education system if you’re looking at like
a(hh) organism of a school. But on the other hand (.) how can the military get into
education. That’s not something that’s possible no?

Hirusha imagines militarisation of education in its concrete definition, similar to other
academics in Chapter 4 (section 2). Her formulation of the process connects typical signifiers
of militarisation, much as Bhagya’s initial discussion of it in Time 1 (Chapter 4.4). For
Hirusha these features are “stereotypical” elements such as military designations (line 2-4), as
well as other “elements of militarism”. Here, she veers towards a discussion of militarism that
she feels is foundational to education: extreme cases of corporal punishment (lines 5-7);
hierarchical structures (lines 7-9); strictly enforced uniformity of appearance (lines 12-18).
Hirusha’s characterisation of school as a regimented, hierarchized “organism” coincides with
the diffused version of militarisation in universities by other academics such as Dimuthu and
Anjula (Chapter 4.2). In the exercise of defining militarisation, Hirusha has moved along the
full spectrum of characteristics of militarisation, without connecting
the militarism visible in
schools to militarisation in universities. This disjuncture is most clear in her conceptualisation
of militarisation as direct military involvement, as illustrated at the end of excerpt 1a (lines
22-23).

A temporary shift in Hirusha’s position occurred some days after our interview in
Time 1. During an informal conversation between Hirusha, a colleague and a mutual friend, I
asked them if they had seen the news report that school principals were given military
designations (see ‘Military mentality breeding’, 2012). Hirusha then narrated to the others her
refusal to accept that education is militarised during my interview, laughingly describing her
shock a few days later when she came across a news report of principals being designated
colonels (fieldnotes, 2012). When I interviewed her two years later in June 2014 (Time 2), I
assumed that this incident had acted as a catalyst of self-reflexivity. Contrary to my
assumptions, Hirusha claimed that universities were not militarised. It is possible that the
interview, the news report and the subsequent narration did not produce a fundamental
change in her positionality. Another explanation is that she preferred to express the same
position in Time 2 as in Time 1 during the conventional frame of the interview. Since it does
not feature in Time 2, I consider her reference to the news story a temporary shift in position.

In Hirusha’s interview in Time 2 (in 2014), she brought up the leadership course as an
illustration to prove that universities were not militarised, asserting that it had “become quite
…civilian”. Hirusha accompanied this with a story of her students’ benign views on the
leadership course (i.e., that it is harmless) which they shared with her. Her definition of militarisation in Time 2, given in excerpt 1b, follows her narrative of these student views.

Excerpt 1b ‘Militarisation as a way of doing things’

1  H  good question. (.) yeah it’s hard to define ne? ((no)) Becuz there can be degrees of militarisation no.
2  K  yeah so what would be let’s say the highest. As opposed to like a lo:::w [kind of subtle [sense of [militarisation.
3  H  [right. [ok. [highest could be something like a defence university [like
4  K  [right
5  H  where the all the decisions makers from the Vice Chancellor the administration will be the military. Who run it like a military
6  K  hmm
7  H  camp.
8  K  ok.
9  H  ok. And it will also impact on what we teach. You know strictures placed on-
10 H  militarisation in its limited very oppressive sense. You know? We won’t be able to teach what we want, there will be no freedom of thought, and that kind of thing. That will be the extreme of militarisation. But of course I suppose subtle militarisation (.).
11 H  >I suppose< if we take Jaffna university as an example that’s subtle militarisation==
12 K  =like how
13 H  where it’s it’s no military [in the system:
14 K  [(unclear)
15 H  it’s a uh it’s still the same old academics military presence around that society is so strong and so oppressive that it can
16 K  impinge
17 H  impinge a lot directly indirectly on what you do.
18 [...]  
19 H  but so if you come from a situation like that which has been like that for the last thirty years and which is not getting less.
20 K  yeah.
21 H  there- it’s militarisation no. becuz it’s obviously (feels) you know having an effect on how you think, on your perception of freedom, on your perception on mobility, on
your perception on what you can say, and can’t say, your perception of who is really in authority?

K hm.

H so that is also- and that’s a s- very pervasive but (.) kind of militarisation which [might be subtle.

K [yeah.

K Yeah. Yeah.

H apart from that I don’t know. I mean what do we mean by militarisation. We have- suddenly a VC who’s a military person.

K yeah like let us say: the university of Colombo’s Vice Chancellor who has also worked as the KDU’s Vice Chancellor or [or somebody at some [point

H [ok. [right.

K kind of.

H it’s a mind-set no? we’re thinking of a way of a. way of doing things and (.) way of sa- idea of a of a- yeah I suppose it’s extreme authority, extreme control can (.) if you exercise that within university then it’s a form of militarisation no?

In Time 2 Hirusha maintains the same position as in Time 1, with the difference that her definition of militarisation now includes not just the military (lines 5-11) but the “mind-set” contributing to a form of governance (lines 13-16, 45-48). She astutely points out that there are “degrees of militarisation” (lines 1-2) and introduces the University of Jaffna as an example. The University of Jaffna is an index of “subtle” militarisation (lines 17-18) due to its location in a city that has been the site of several decades of armed conflict (lines 27-28). This example serves to identify a site of militarisation as well as to distance her from such a site. The citation of a geographical area, the Northern Province, which is frequently invested with militarisation, acts as a contrast to universities in Colombo where she works. By employing an example from a zone of heightened militarisation, she implies that universities outside such areas do not face militarisation or that militarisation takes less severe forms. She distances herself and the universities she is familiar with from the process of militarisation by the consistent use of distal demonstratives and deictic markers (“that” and “there”, lines 22-28, 35). In this way, she positions militarisation of universities as a process limited to exceptional situations.

In the abstract, Hirusha’s individual discourse of militarisation features concerns similar to other academics, such as the lack of mobility and expression of opinion, including
limits to pedagogical decisions (lines 13-17, 30-33). However, according to other participants (in Chapter 4), including academics from Hirusha’s own university, such concerns are already present in universities. Even though she has named these characteristics as features of militarisation, and her response is seemingly cooperative, Hirusha illustrates an unwillingness to elaborate or provide concrete examples from her immediate environment.

At the same time, by asking her for examples, I have forced specificity on my participant. Hirusha’s response contains a number of discourse strategies that signal her discomfort. A large variety of stance markers appear in this excerpt, the majority of them working to mitigate her statements: modals (could/can, lines 1, 5, 47), the use of the future tense (in particular see lines 13-16), and hedgers such as “I suppose” (lines 17, 46). In response to the hypothetical conjecture that a militarised university might, for instance, be headed by a VC “who is a military person” (line 40), I provide Hirusha with a concrete example of such an event 22 (lines 41-42). Hirusha appeared surprised by this information (fieldnotes, 2014). Even though she appears to agree here, stating that “extreme authority, extreme control” can be considered militarisation, it is presented once again as a hypothetical situation. Furthermore, the large number of discourse strategies she uses for mitigation conveys her lack of agreement: “I suppose”, reformulations, a modal, a conditional, and finally a tag question (lines 46-48). In both Time 1 and Time 2, Hirusha rejects the possibility that universities may be militarised (except in former war zones). It is also probable that Hirusha was taken by surprise by my question in both instances, and needed to formulate her thoughts on the issue, resulting in the time-gaining discourse strategies that she uses. The discursive style and argumentation of Hirusha’s individual discourse, however, has changed by Time 2, demonstrating a more complex set of features than in Time 1 when she focused only on militarisation in relation to schools.

The next representative profile discussed here is Bhagya, who was first introduced in Chapter 4 (section 4), to illustrate the capacity of reflexivity as a catalyst to change even within a single interview. My acquaintance with Bhagya is not as lengthy as with Hirusha, and had begun as a social acquaintance. It progressed over the period of the study due to our mutual interest in the events unfolding in universities. The realisation of such a mutual interest in the situation in higher education may well have contributed to the collaborative and reflective manner the interview in Time 1 unfolded. When discussing militarisation in universities in Time 1, Bhagya first states universities are not militarised, then questions the

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22 I mistakenly refer to him as the KDU’s Vice Chancellor, though the phrase “or somebody” ensures that I do not fully commit myself. He was, in fact, a Dean of the KDU (University of Colombo website, 2014)
reasons underlying her position, and finally retracts her initial statement. In July 2013, I interviewed her for the second time to clarify responses in Time 1. A third interview was conducted in August 2014, with the intention of incorporating her views on the developments of the previous year. Here, I first provide an excerpt from Time 1 and briefly review her position at the time; then I move to a discussion of Times 2 & 3.

In her interview in 2012 (Time 1), Bhagya was vehemently against the leadership course and the retention of Rakna Lanka security services within universities, but initially stated that universities were not militarised. A few minutes later, consequent to changing her views, she explained that her instinctive denial of militarisation was a result of the “extent to which we are militarised” as Sri Lankans. To illustrate this, she provided examples of militarisation that had been overlooked by academics, such as the unquestioning acceptance of military occupation of an area bordering one university and the installation of surveillance cameras inside universities. The self-reflexive reasoning Bhagya engaged in during the episode resulted in a shift in her position on militarisation. Her impromptu definition of militarisation in Time 1 is given below:

Excerpt 2a ‘The military have a huge say in how things are’

1  K what would be your definition of militarisation.
2  B (hhhh)
3  K off the cuff. Obviously.
4  B yeah [(heheheh) not according to].
5  K [hhhe (laughter)]
6  B who- whoever. Yeah. Um I think it’s pretty much stuff that I’ve described actually.
7  Like authorita- growi- the authoritarianism, control of dissent, and where the military
8  and that’s what is less obvious I think. Where like the military have a huge say in how
9  things are. Right? And the military is sort of like um (.) tch where the the the the
10  boundary between military and civil life is increase- increasingly blurred. U::h and I
11  think that is happening actually.

I conclude from this excerpt that in Time 1 Bhagya’s hesitantly formulated definition of militarisation includes “authoritarianism, control of dissent”, and an expansion of the role of the armed forces. The laughter and collaborative speech in the initial segment (lines 1-5) acknowledges that I have ‘put her on the spot’ so to speak, by requiring her to define a theoretical concept with no preparation. This impromptu quality is noticeable in her speech.
The definition part (lines 6-12) includes discourse strategies indicating ongoing formulation of thought. The frequency of the discourse marker “like” in the definition segment (lines 7-10) signposts the consequent turns as imperfect attempts at theorising (Jucker, Smith, & Lüdge, 2003). The self-correcting discourse device “actually” occurs twice with references to covert signs of militarisation in universities (lines 7, 12). This is followed by four attempts at formulating the role of the military in a militarised state, only two of which are completed (lines 8-11). It is following the interaction shown in this excerpt that Bhagya re-assesses her position on militarisation (as discussed above).

In Time 2, I again asked Bhagya if she “noticed anything else [about militarisation], in the last year”. During this year, allegations of undue state interventions in universities had increased. Bhagya’s answer is shown in excerpt 2b:

**Excerpt 2b ‘I have no hesitation in saying universities are militarised’**

1 B now I would have no hesitation in saying yes it is.
2 K why.
3 B um well you know the the mili- the leadership training continues:. Uh principals
4 K titles=
5 B =titles. Uh military are involved in teaching in the north and east.
6 K teaching in schools or [universities
7 B [teaching in schools=
8 K =military intelligence is much more active in schools (by) in universities.
9 B they’re collecting information.
10 K how are they active in universities.

Bhagya’s speech in Time 2 differs from Time 1 in its specificity and readiness. Her speech is fluid, with fewer hesitations. There are few instances of discourse strategies that can be interpreted as holding the floor while formulating thought: only 3 instances of fillers, each in turn-initial position (lines 3-4) and truncated or compacted phrases are absent. She also anticipates my clarification question, answering it before I complete my turn (lines 7-8). Overall, excerpt 2b shows an episode where the participant is ready to deliver the content and is committed to her claims.

Bhagya’s individual discourse trajectory in Time 1 is characterised by a shift in positionality, which reads as if it were a self-reflexive journey. Her position in Time 2 and the
discursive style in the first segment of it (given in excerpt 2b) illustrates that it was a significant change, despite taking place over a short time period (of four minutes). Bhagya’s position on militarisation remains consistent until Time 2. It also accompanies a concurrent shift in her discourse of militarisation. In Time 1, she was opposed to programmes in universities that involved the military but interpreted it through a discourse of autonomy (or lack of it). In contrast, in Time 2 Bhagya uses a discourse of militarisation that makes these connections explicit, identifying military-inclusive events in educational institutions as instances of militarisation (e.g., the military in schools).

Excerpt 2c shows Bhagya commenting on her position on militarisation in universities at Time 3, August 2014. She had responded to this same question in Time 1 as well (excerpt 2a).

**Excerpt 2c ‘Society is militarised’**

1. K (hhe) it was. So: so that’s two years ago. And I want to know if you still- like what is your opinion about it now.
2. B (0.8) I think society is militarised.
4. B so:: then obviously::: yes. Universities are militarised. I think the issues that we’ve been having with students is an indication of that.
5. K What are the issues you’ve been having.
6. B Uhhhh yeah I think most of the universities have not had student council elections.
7. K There’s a h- there’s lot of student repression going on. Student activism is like stamped down on really harshly. I think all of that is a reflection of militarisation. I think there is a kind of uh internal censorship going on about what to say and what not to say and things like that.
8. K From:: (.) from the side of the students? [Academics? Administration?]
10. K Are you saying self-censorship or
11. B Yeah I think. I think ins- there’s like you know there’s more wariness.
13. B there’s like uh a feeling that you know you got your researching writing saying maybe monitored.
14. K [...]
15. K [h]
I suspect that some building is coming up somewhere in some far end of the corner {of this university}. I suspect that’s mil- the military is involved. Uhhh I don’t know where else […] Right? So that is there. So I think that overall sense of militarisation that you feel in society is not absent within the university. Right? But you ca- I won’t say directly as in you know it’s not obvious or it’s not like=

K =yeah.=

B =yeah. No one has come and questioned us or anything- there’s no military presence inside or ehem neweyi ((any such thing)). But I mean what- the feeling you have outside is is present inside.

In Time 3, Bhagya implies that her definition of militarisation may have changed, and connects militarisation within universities to that of Sri Lankan society (lines 3-5, 24-26, 31). Her positionality on this (line 4) is identical to Times 1 and 2, but in Time 3, she frames the situation in the university as a result of militarisation in the outer social world that has seeped through to the university system. To support her argument that universities are militarised, Bhagya voluntarily provides exemplifying instances of militarisation: student activism is repressed (lines 8-10); academics exhibit signs of self-censorship (lines 11-20); military personnel continue to be used for labour in universities (lines 22-24). In Times 1 and 2, Bhagya’s conceptualisation of militarisation was concretely defined, directly involving the military. In Time 3, however, the first few examples that Bhagya supplies are of biopolitical disciplinary strategies and their effects (e.g., student repression and self-censorship). Over a period of three years Bhagya’s individual discourse has changed, aligning with a more diffused version of militarisation than she held at the beginning. The epistemic shift is helped by changes in the socio-political context during 2013-2014. Before examining the impact of context on discursive shift, however, I will examine the metalinguistic features of Bhagya’s discourse in Time 3.

Despite the readily provided itemised examples, Bhagya’s initial turn in this excerpt takes place after a lengthy pause (8 seconds), thereafter discussing the socio-political context outside the universities (line 3). The readiness to present propositional content contrasts with the hesitation and vagueness that characterises this excerpt (unlike in excerpt 2b). This is especially evident when she discusses self-censorship amongst academics. Unlike the continuous speech in the description of student activism (lines 8-11) her description of self-censorship is in discrete turns, given as responses to my questions (lines 13-20). The
hesitations in this segment could be due to multiple reasons. It is the evening of a busy day at work, and the participant could be tired. Another reason could arguably be the expectation of shared knowledge from the interviewer, which I do not exhibit (I continue to ask questions, lines 7, 13-16). Indications of this would be the use of discourse markers signalling encouragement and agreement when we discuss academics (“yeah”, “you know”, lines 11-20). In addition, discourse strategies indicate that the participant appears to be expressing critical information and that they both jointly construct the later stages of the discussion (lines 26-29). A more probable reason for the hesitations is the contextual changes that have taken place during this time.

The socio-political context of universities in the period leading up to Time 3 differs from Time 2 or even Time 1, as mentioned in relation to discursive shifts in the propositional content above. The interview in Time 1 was conducted a few months after the first leadership training course and the imposition of Rakna Lanka security services. When Bhagya was interviewed in Time 2, the military was still directly involved in schools and universities (excerpt 2b). In contrast to these visible events or actions, the events of Time 3 are amorphous, the involvements of the defence sector being neither direct nor obvious (lines 25-31). As Bhagya stresses, harassment of academics by the armed forces or the state is absent (“No one has…questioned us”, line 29); the most blatant act of repression being targeted at students. Nevertheless, Bhagya’s assessment of the psyche of universities in 2014 is identical to Anjula’s description of it in Chapter 4.2, and occurs at the same time. Despite being from different universities, they experience surveillance (lines 19, 31) and self-imposed restrictions of speech amongst academics. This lack of concrete citable examples is a more probable cause of hesitant connections between these examples as well as the importance given to the more diffused versions of militarisation provided in Bhagya’s interview in Time 3.

To examine this implied progression in Bhagya’s individual discourse trajectory, I investigate her definition of militarisation in Time 3 (excerpt 2d below), two years after she provided the first definition (excerpt 2a). I request her for the definition immediately following our discussion shown in excerpt 2c.

**Excerpt 2d ‘The omnipresence of the military’**

1 B  ok. It’s (.) I think it’s where A↑ there is some involvement with the military
2  [(where)=
3 K  [hm.
B = the military is having control over spaces that are generally civil. Spaces. Right? In
the management of affairs or whatever. But also it’s it’s a mind-set. It is a mind-set
of control, surveillance, regimentation, and
K with and without the presence of the military?
B with a sort of a- the military is present. But not. directly.
K hm.
B it’s like there’s an omnipresence as- of the(hh) mili(h)tary. It’s there.
K ok.
B Right? It’s not as if you know they’re in uniform marching around.
K hm yeah.
B (I think) there’s some yeah I mean like uh I heard recently I think at U- if the people
are doing stuff with the UGC the military presence is very obvious.

Bhagya’s conceptualisation of militarisation in Time 3 is similar to her initial
definition of it in Time 1, with some minor differences. In Time 1, Bhagya theorised
militarisation as authoritarianism paired with an expansion of the role of defence personnel.
However, her illustrations in both Times 1 and 2, as I show in this section, are of direct
military involvement. In Time 3, as excerpt 2c shows, the disciplinary regime is of added
significance in relation to universities. As in her initial definition, in this definition too she
maintains that the intrusion of the military into civilian spaces is a component of
militarisation, but reduces the authority of this statement with the qualifier “some” (line 1).
The core component of this definition is the ideological component, or the “mind set” that
results in “control, surveillance, regimentation” (lines 5-6). The features of this diffused
version of militarisation are expressed precisely, made easier by the environment of
repression that Bhagya has spoken about before. The presence of the military in the diffused
version of militarisation is not obvious, exemplified by the experiencing of repression as a
pervasive “feeling” rather than through discrete acts (excerpt 2c, lines 29-31). Bhagya
reiterates this amorphousness of military presence in excerpt 2d when she describes the
military as being “sort of” present, an “omnipresence” (lines 8-12). The broader political
context of Sri Lanka in the years 2013-2014 results in the psyche of fear and surveillance.
The government of the time used military force to crush civil rebellions (though not in
universities); and blocked internet access to several news sites. The epistemic shift in
Bhagya’s discourse of militarisation from Times 1 to 3 parallels changes in political
developments in Sri Lanka.
In this section, I have presented two individuals, Hirusha and Bhagya, whose position on militarisation in universities remains consistent (despite temporary shifts). The temporal shifts evident in their individual discourse trajectories over a period of three years (2012-2014) take the form of discursive strategies illustrating preparedness to theorise and a progression in the conceptualisation of militarisation. Hirusha’s discourse of militarisation is more complex in Time 2 in relation to Time 1. However, her position that militarisation is not present in Sri Lankan universities appears to blind her to incidents exemplifying a repressive disciplinary regime in her work environment, resulting in dissonances in her discourse. In contrast, Bhagya’s position on militarisation results in an increasing ability to identify events in education as militarised incidents and creates space for a pronounced shift in conceptualising militarisation as well. In the next section, I examine two individuals who display shifts in their position on militarisation.

Section 2

Temporal changes in positionality in discourses of militarisation

This section is an illustration of the shifts in political position, between Times 1 and 2 in individual discourses. The academics I present, Shehara and Amanthi, are of similar status (mid-career academics) working in liberal arts programmes in two universities. Their interviews show a marked alteration in position on militarisation, necessitating parallel discursive shifts.

My first interview with Shehara was in July 2013, conducted a few months after she returned from a lengthy stay outside Sri Lanka. Due to this, she had not experienced the events that occurred in universities in 2011 and 2012. During her interview, she cited the leadership training course as an example of militarisation of universities. In Shehara’s opinion “to have the military getting hold of our young people before they get into the university system is to me problematic becuaz then you know that undermines everything that we are supposed to be doing with them”. Her discourse mirrors the public discourse generated by other academics and civil society groups (e.g., the Friday Forum), focusing on the rigid regimented hierarchies imposed by the military as opposed to the critical engagement that await students in universities. In a later segment, Shehara talked about the
Rakna Lanka services in universities, stating that she was aware of the concerns regarding this, but had not noticed any change in the security services of her university. At this point, I ask her if she has observed an “an increase in surveillance” and whether she felt “watched”, to which she answered in the negative. Her definition of militarisation, given in excerpt 3a follows that discussion.

**Excerpt 3a ‘Behind militarisation is politicisation’**

1. K  umm do you think education is being militarised?
2. S  I think so. Especially: because of the (.) leadership thing.
3. K  mm
4. S  and that is why I’m (.) not happy with the institution of the whole leadership thing
5. S  ummm yes it is being militarised. And behind that yes it is being politicised. And that
6. S  is a problem. >Becuz the the the r- the desire< the (.) decision to militarise it is also
7. S  becu of (.) political involvement no?
8. K  hm. you’re you’re saying there is a time- a link between
9. S  [politicisation and [militarisation.
10. S  [hm. hm. [hm. hm.
12. S  um (. ) tch (. ) in terms of [education
13. K  [or ok. Let’s say general what is your definition. Of
15. S  hm. I (.) don’t know whether I’ve actually thought of it as(hhh)£ a defini- as as clearly
16. S  as in terms of a definition(hh) but [((cough))
17. K  [when you say militarised what do you mean.
18. S  I mean when the (. ) undergraduates have (. ) come in contact with (. ) any (. ) any level
19. S  of military presence and that is why the whole leadership thing is a problem and um
20. S  that means the whole (. ) trickledown effect of the tch ideology that they may have
21. S  had. As part of that experience that worries me. And also >I suppose though I haven’t
22. S  really thought about it< just um no that’s it. I was just trying to think whether there is
23. S  this whole um taking to arms business but I don’t know. Whether that is actually (. )
24. S  to what extent the the leadership course you know (. ) that was part of the leadership
25. S  course. So I don’t know.
26. K  so for you the leadership course is the main or the sole event in terms of militarising?
27. S  up until now. I I haven’t thought of anything else. In terms of militarisation.
In excerpt 3a, Shehara connects politicisation and militarisation, citing the former as the cause of the latter. Shehara’s discourse with regard to militarisation is significant due to this link. In the public discourse of universities, and in most individual discourses, politicisation and militarisation are discrete categories. For FUTA for example, politicisation is a dominant concept while militarisation rarely appears in the texts (Chapter 4.1). Initially unsure about this (line 2), Shehara becomes more confident as she speaks about it, as illustrated in the emphasis (in “yes”) and the parallelism in “yes it is being militarised….yes it is being politicised” (lines 5-6). Shehara’s analysis of militarisation locates the process as arising out of the state’s need to influence university governance (lines 6-8). She sees the government not as a political institution using the military judiciously in clearly circumscribed situations, but one in which militarism is a pronounced component (Jacoby, 2003).

For Shehara, the exposure of undergraduates to militaristic ideology is a matter of concern since it leads to the permeation of such an ideology in the student body (lines 18-21). Shehara attempts to link militarism to recent student activism (lines 22-25) but then rejects that particular conclusion. Reflection on the long-term presence of aggression in student activism (see Chapter 1.3) leads her to conclude that recent conflicts may not be connected in such a straightforward manner to a military-conducted programme. Even though Shehara does not extend her discussion to the links between state repression and increased student agitation, this connection is noticeable. As we have seen from Bhagya’s interview in section 1, student activism has been affected by state repression. Student unions have also espoused a more explicit discourse of militarisation than apparent in the public discourse of academics. Inadvertently, Shehara has alluded to an effect of militarisation in universities. In Time 1 for Shehara, the state political project is foundational to militarisation and state-initiated encounters with students being the visible sign of it.

The follow-up interview with Shehara took place in August 2014, a year later. The interval between Times 1 and 2 is shorter in this instance than for most participants. Prior to the segment quoted below, Shehara declared that she would prefer the leadership course be terminated, saying “I still feel the same way about it. I am still unhappy with the leadership course”. Following the discussion of the leadership course, I asked her if she held the same view on militarisation as in Time 1. Instead of giving a straightforward answer to my question, Shehara discussed the issue of politicisation in universities, which she felt was more visible. Towards the end of the interview, as shown in excerpt 3b, I return to the topic of militarisation.
Excerpt 3b ‘No visible signs of militarisation’

1 K so to just to um clarify: when I asked you about militarisation you said militarisation
2 kese: wethath ((whether that is happening or not)) politicisation is happening. Does
3 that mean you don’t think it’s being militarised or do you
4 S no: um I (.) think it is still being militarised. But I don’t I don’t I haven’t seen visible
5 signs of it here. here. What I see more blatantly right now is a politicisation.
6 K ok. right.

Shehara’s reply in Time 2 shows a considerable shift in positionality from Time 1, informed by a lack of visible signifiers of militarisation. Unlike in Time 1 when Shehara was convinced that universities were being militarised, in Time 2, she is unsure. In line 2, I quote Shehara’s response to my earlier question on militarisation verbatim, repeating her words back to her. Her use of kese: wethath (line 2) is a discursive strategy that emphasises the importance of what follows (politicisation) rather than what precedes it (militarisation). Her speech on militarisation versus politicisation acts as an analogy of her position: the segment on militarisation includes fillers and reformulated fragments (lines 4-5), while the segment on politicisation is fluid with no hesitation or hedging (lines 6-7).

Shehara’s response mirrors the response of other participants interviewed in 2014 in that she holds militarisation to be a less visible phenomenon in universities. For instance, both Anjula (both in Chapter 4.2) and Bhagya in Time 3 (section 1 above) discussed militarisation in universities as invisible. The events that Shehara cites in her interview, such as student repression and the leadership training course, are not unknown to other participants. The distinguishing characteristic of the positions taken on militarisation by Anjula or Bhagya as opposed to Shehara is that Shehara has shifted from a discourse of militarisation to a discourse of politicisation to discuss these same events.

The second instance of individual discourse in this section is that of Amanthi. Amanthi was first interviewed in June 2012, when the FUTA campaign for that year had just begun. Since her interview in Time 1 was conducted during an earlier phase of this study, the interview protocol did not include the question ‘are universities being militarised?’ or a request for a definition of militarisation (see Chapter 3.6.1). However, Amanthi’s interview contains several references to militarisation that occur during an extensive discussion on the leadership training course. Even though I have refrained from drawing conclusions that
oppositional stance on the leadership training course results from a perception of militarisation in universities (the dangers of this are evident in Chapter 4.3), I make an exception to this in relation to Amanthi since she uses an explicit discourse of militarisation, as seen in excerpt 4a.

**Excerpt 4a ‘Connecting the apparatuses of education and defence’**

1. A yeah. But I we all found out about it around the same (h)time (hehe) and (he)I
2. (h)think (h)we were all quite stunned. Mmm. Tch u:h £(hhh)it (hehe)seemed the
3. rationale was so £(heh)twisted to me it seemed like what the message was was
4. that you train undergraduates, to somehow- first years, to somehow HUH there’s a
5. massa ((fly)). On um to a better, defensive skills. As it were £against £fragging
6. (hehehehh↑) ok? And also you give them military skills in order to give them
7. leadership skills. So there was a conflation of the two. It wasn’t only military skills. I
8. do know they had other kind of life skills and all that↑ and there was also but so I was
9. concerned about this. That from a country that had emerged so newly↓ from war and
10. and where the military military s- the idea of military triumph was still so strong↓ um
11. that it was being advocated into the university se- for the university sector. Uh it
12. seemed like y’know if you think of the state apparatuses, education and defence,
13. (heheh) what (great) connection was there. Except of course there are connections.
14. But here it seemed like the connection was being made really explicit and it seemed to
15. me like the militarisation y’know of the- it was a it was a mark to me of a post-war
16. scenario. That- the a military approach can solve everything. Even education.
17. Y’know? And it that seemed to me was a way of amping up the uh the
18. of amping up?
19. A of amping up of the standing of the leadership- the state leadership that somehow led
20. to.
22. A so it was a way of saying uh look we can solve everything with this. It’s a one size fits
23. all kind of model. We can solve everything. And also it’s very dangerous becuz
24. previous this was a- it was it was about trying to find a role for the military. (hh) after
25. (ahhh) y’know?
26. K post war?
27. A uh in the post war situation. Becuz we all knew they turned up and they cu- mowed
28. the lawns of the campus, y’know? And (they’re) we know the navy was dredging wai-
you know? Eh they’ve moved into civilian life in a way that had not being the case. In pre-war situations where we clearly knew they were the navy. And they were the army becuz they manned these posts, and however much people spoke about the militarisation of society at least it was explicitly that. Here it was as if there was no distinction between the two at all. It was the society is militaristic militaristic is society. Y’know what I mean?

K  

A  
th so see it was a very: kind of scary situation and it was a way of I think y’know whatever and u:h and it was also a way of saying that the universities were not doing a job a good. A good job. And they didn’t know how. And let us show you how. Which was an (utter) y’know lack of consultation. On the part of the uh administration as far as universities were concerned. So there was no consultation

Amanthi’s objections to the leadership course are numerous. First, she critiques the misguided curriculum of the leadership training course, arguing that leadership skills are mistakenly conflated with military skills (lines 6-7). Secondly, it extends war triumphalism to higher education (lines 10-12). Instead of reducing the visibility of the security forces, as expected of a country emerging “so newly from war”, the then government extended their message of military supremacy (lines 15-18). With the leadership training course the government signalled that the duties of the armed forces have changed, from its previous defensive mandate of national safety (lines 32-35) to civilian institutions such as education (lines 29-32). A distinction is made between militarisation of society during the war, with its “clear” boundaries (line 33), and militarisation in the post-war period, where there is little distinction between “education and defence” (lines 13-14).

Another example of military triumphalism is the application of militaristic solutions to non-military sectors that the state deems unproductive (lines 24-25). This is a securitising move by the state, using a productive tool (the military) to solve issues in an area of the country that has caused problems (education). This is brought up by Amanthi towards the end of the excerpt as she refers to the critique of universities. Ventriloquizing the voice of the state - “they [academics] didn’t know how. And let us [the state] show you how” (lines 40-42) - Amanthi identifies the state discourse on universities. The voicing change also conveys

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23 In line 32, by “pre-war” Amanthi is presumably referring to the time before the war ends, rather than the time before the war itself (the 1970s), since the contrast is of experiences of conflict and post-conflict militarisation.
the paternalistic overtones of the state’s discourse, confirmed by the lack of consultation over undergraduate programmes (lines 43-44).

Another important quality of Amanthi’s response in Time 1 is the display of intense emotion regarding the leadership course as well as the military’s post-war role. Her first response to my question about the leadership training course is laughter (lines 1-3), identical to Iroshi’s response in Chapter 4.3. Excerpt 4a incorporates several affective stance markers: she is “stunned” and “concerned,” the idea behind the course itself was “twisted”, and the intervention in the university sector acted as a barometer of a “very dangerous” and “scary” political situation (lines 1-4, 25-26, 39-43). Frustration at the state’s autocratic interventions and concern at the political situation of the university and the post-war state produces the intense emotional tone of this excerpt and her discussion of militarism in Time 1.

Amanthi explicitly refers to militarisation in two instances in Time 1. The first instance is her reference to the leadership training course as an index of militarisation in the post-war scenario (lines 15-19). The second instance is her reference to the differences between militarism during and after the civil war (lines 29-36). During the war, the duties of the armed forces were strictly defined as national security, whereas in the post-conflict period the role of securing the country has overtaken civil institutions. In Amanthi’s words, by 2012, “society is militaristic militaristic is society” (line 36). These are the reasons, along with other explicit citations of militarism, that lead me to argue that Amanthi used a discourse of militarisation to interpret events related to universities in Time 1.

By Amanthi’s interview in Time 2, June 2014, her perception of universities and the defence sector had changed. By this time, I had also included the questions on militarisation of education that I did not ask her in Time 1. Excerpt 4b is her response in Time 2:

Excerpt 4b ‘Is that what we mean by militarisation?’

1 A (. ) (h)Hu::h (h)do I see us being militarised. (h)umm. (. ) well u::h I know there are certain incidents for example uh I think you see the military now is on< they perform civilian tasks. Like civilian construction duties for example. […]
2 K Yeah
3 A Yeah. So (. ) yes. I don’t know whether that’s a militarisation of uh of it.=
4 K =what- for you what would be a militarisation.
In Time 2, Amanthi’s position on militarisation appears to shift, her discursive style moving from assertive (in Time 1) to ambivalent in (Time 2). Whereas in Time 1 (excerpt 4a) Amanthi constructed universities as an institution targeted by the state’s militarism, in Time 2, she points to the military itself as being the focus of the state’s intervention. Amanthi’s position in Time 2 differs from Time 1 also in her unwillingness to consider the expanded role of the armed forces as militarisation: referring to the military presence in universities as labour she asks “is that what we mean by militarisation?” (line 15). She defines militarisation to be the occupation of a space (presumably a non-military space) for “military tasks”, which by her own admission differs from current discourses of militarisation circulating in Sri Lanka (lines 9-10). In this her position on militarisation, and her discourse, differs from all other participants in the study. Signalling this understanding, Amanthi counters it by arguing that the existing militarisation of Sri Lankan society invalidates equating military presence with militarisation (lines 9-11).

There is no outright negation of militarisation in universities, as displayed by the repeated use of “I don’t know”, a hedger, and the alignment move “yeah” (lines 15-17). Amanthi’s discursive strategy is to use a discourse of demilitarisation. She interprets the presence of security personnel within universities as a result of the state’s necessity for finding “peace time roles” for the defence forces (lines 18-19). Her exclamation “see that’s
the thing, you know” when she discusses the significance of military presence in universities (line 20), appears to be an acknowledgement that higher visibility of military personnel arising from demilitarisation efforts is inherently contradictory (lines 23-24). The military’s post-conflict role was only a brief reference in Time 1 (excerpt 4a, lines 26-27). However, in Time 2, this becomes the foundation of her position on militarisation (lines 18-24). While Amanthi embarks on a theorisation of militarisation at my request, she continues to be less invested and more ambivalent about framing military involvement in university spaces as militarisation in Time 2 than in Time 1.

In excerpt 4c, given below, Amanthi continues to develop this discourse as an alternative to other individual discourses. At this point in the interview, Amanthi and I have also discussed commercial interests of the security forces. These include controversial projects that include the management of tourist resorts and other mercantile ventures in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka (see Chapter 1.2.3). Citing these examples, Amanthi stated that the military’s commercial interests were apparent “much more than militarisation”, implying that the military’s participation in such ventures did not constitute militarisation.

The segment excerpted below begins with my question: ‘does the military itself have commercial interests or are they used for such purposes by the state?’

**Excerpt 4c ‘The army in peace time is a dangerous thing’**

A: I don’t- I don’t know if the military has commercial interests. I think that there are people who are commercial interests where the- there’s an intersection where perhaps the military is (.) I >don’t (know)< in some ways participating, or part of it or whatever. But that’s what I’m saying. I don’t know if it’s ju:st militarisation now anymore. I think e: e: e: argument ekә don= ((That that that argument is now))

K = iwәrai.= ((over))

A =iwәrai man hithanne. Hm. ((Over I think.))

K =hm. (0.5) it’s an- it’s quite interesting. Um two years ago: when I asked the question from (. ) people I think (. ) it depends on when you ask the ques[tion=

A [hmm.

K =so then there was a feeling of yes::=

A =it’s militarisation.=

K =yeah.
now what are people saying? = What I’m saying. (. ) (unclear) taken us a long time I think. And (. ) (bec) now you see that the military also-\textit{duen} ( (now)) tch there has to be a place for them to go: And there have to be (. ) roles. Now what- what do you do with them? You see?=

=hmm. 

U::h=

=maybe (. ) ask them to sell out?

sell out what?

like leave the army and do something else?

masses. Masses of people. And some of them may not want to. Leave [the army.]

[yeah.

=some of them may not want to leave the army and so they may have vested interests pensions and \textit{ekwe ekwe de:waluth thiyen\text{\text{\text{-}}}wane.}=

\textit{(That sort of thing is also there no?)}

=After having um spent a long time. mm \textit{e: ekwe ekwe de:wal ithin thiyendo puluwan. }\textit{E:ke api dannæ: aethule.}=

\textit{(That sort of thing could also be there. We don’t know about that- inside.)}

=I don’t know enough about it. uh but I know that this is not just a problem for us \textit{ne: (no?)}. there- there are- there are ways- this whole question of (. ) crime being linked [to this and=

[yeah.

=uh civil unrest and (. ) i- there are- it’s many ways £(hh)y’know it’s trying to control the militi(h)ary £in many ways£. What- more than militarisation >it’s trying to make sure< the military doesn’t get out of hand. The mi- a military (. ) uh army in peace time >is is< is quite a dangerous thing. Volatile. Specially after- >y’know< what do you do. you can’t come to a screeching halt on May 14\textsuperscript{th} (hheh)

Amanthi’s views in Time 2 (in both excerpts 4b and 4c) show that her position on militarisation has changed and accordingly her discourse has shifted. Excerpt 4c is a further display of this shift in positionality, and includes two significant discursive transitions. First, Amanthi states that the use of armed personnel in universities is not “just militarisation now anymore” (lines 4-5). She finds that a discourse of militarisation in which military personnel
in educational spaces are indexed as militarisation is unhelpful, and implies that there may be a post-militarisation phenomenon happening at this time (“it’s over”, lines 5-9). As we continue our discussion, I share my observations of temporal shifts in participant responses in 2014 (lines 10-16). Assuming that the response of other participants is similar to her own (notice the lack of wait time, line 16), she continues to elaborate on a theme she introduced in excerpt 4b (lines 18-19), the military’s role in peace time.

The military in post-war times is the focus of the latter part of excerpt 4c and is the second discursive transition. Amanthi rejects my suggestion that demilitarisation would mean creating alternative careers for military personnel, by pointing out that this is a large mass of people of whom some may not desire any other form of employment (lines 25-35). As additional justification she cites the lack of knowledge on the discourses within the armed forces. The role of the military is part of a larger argument that Amanthi makes in Time 2, that the military is being securitised. The reminder that academics are not the only group to find the presence of the armed forces problematic (lines 35-37), is a reference to a (gendered) public discourse on the military where unregulated security personnel are seen as potential troublemakers, morphing from disciplined, skilled combatants into abusive, violent males given the opportunity (lines 39-40). Using that discourse, she argues that the military itself is being securitised (see Chapter 1.2.3 for securitisation). The danger of an ungoverned army, she says, would be heightened by an abrupt end to their deployment as a war machine (lines 45-46). The use of security personnel as ‘efficient’ labour in spheres such as education, tourism, or commerce, is the state’s attempt to manage a “volatile” population (lines 42-44).

Amanthi’s individual discourse has changed considerably within three years. Whereas in Time 1 the presence of military personnel in the university sector was cause for intense negative emotion, in Time 2 Amanthi appears less emotional as well as more ambivalent. While the discussion of militaristic events is framed in Time 1 within a discourse of militarisation, in Time 2 this is framed as securitisation of the army itself. The implied position in Time 2, as conveyed by her discourse is that universities are not militarised since the symptoms have been misrecognised. I would, however, argue that securitisation of one institution, in this case the military, does not inherently result in the absence of militarisation of other institutions, such as in tourism. In this case, the militarisation of universities and the securitisation of the “volatile” armed forces are achieved simultaneously.
Conclusion

In this chapter too the examination of individual discourses reveal multiple and at times competing discourses of militarisation in academia. Competing discourses, and the validation of some of these discourses as the public voice, entails that there is little space for a counter-discourse of militarisation in individual discourses. It also creates a space for the sustenance of a surveilled and controlled space, allowing militarised action to ‘hide in plain sight’. As this Chapter shows, the lack of a public academic voice that challenges militarisation ensures that the statist discourses on militarisation circulate without challenge.

In comparison to Chapter 4, where discourses of a single time frame was analysed, here the examination of multiple discourses is achieved through the examination of discursive transformations taking place over a lengthy period of time (3 years). As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4), changes do take place within a single interview as well, but this is essentially different to the changes in discourse over a period of years. In the case of a lengthier time frame, as discussed in this Chapter, it can be expected that the progression of events affects the discourse as well as changes in identity of interviewer and participant. A number of observations can be made by the study of discourse along a line of temporal continuity. The first observation, that discourse is not static or unitary, appears an unnecessary and overly simplistic conclusion. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of discourse studies base their conclusions on single episodes of discourse, i.e., a segment from Time 1, undermines our understanding of the shifting nature of discourse.

Secondly, Chapter 5 has also shown the importance of attention to context in the study of discursive shifts. In Sri Lankan universities, for instance, changes in discourses of militarisation are connected to specificities of rights infringements, student politics, faculty affiliations with trade unions. Even though new events of militarisation did not take place in 2014, the leadership training course and the use of Rakna Lanka security services continued. However, participants hardly referred to these events in the interviews of 2014, illustrating that the retention of certain events in our memory is linked to issues of subjective certainty, i.e, what each individual thinks has undoubtedly taken place. As illustrated by the interviews shown here, participants base their discursive construction of phenomena, in this case militarisation, through the indexing of specific events. In most instances, these indices appear to be chronologically closer to the time of the interview. This is particularly true in situations of turmoil, where our memory is assaulted by several problematic events in succession. The
best description of the local situation was provided by Bhagya in Time 1, when she said that “every day practically there’s been some other… urgent thing that has come up [in universities].”

Events more obviously associated with militarisation occurred in 2011, whereas events in 2013-2014 are less directly linked to the military, for example mandatory participation of academics at a speech by a politician at universities (fieldnotes, 2014). In the public discourse of academics, these events are interpreted through a discourse of politicisation or audit culture (see Chapter 4.1). I argue that the ambivalence and contradictions in individual discourses over the course of several years, as in the case of Hirusha and Shehara for instance, are as much a reflection of FUTA’s avoidance of an explicit discussion of militarisation in universities as the academic’s personal discomfort at addressing these issues. Participants who already use a discourse of militarisation to interpret such events, such as Bhagya or even Amanthi in Time 1, are able to interpret ongoing events in ways that are different to FUTA and other academics. An analysis of these individual discourses also shows us that participants who maintain a position accepting universities to be militarised have used their lived experiences to progress from a concrete definition of militarisation to a diffused version of militarisation. This makes it possible for them to incorporate authoritarian disciplinary strategies into a discourse of militarisation. However, I note that while the long-term individual discourses included participants from ethnic and religious participants, they were mostly female participants. This invites the question of a differentiation in temporal shifts in terms of gender, an issue that needs further investigation. In Chapter 6, I will expand on the discussion of Chapters 4 and 5, focusing on the implications of these analyses and directions for future study.
Chapter 6

Concluding remarks and future directions

This dissertation is at the intersection of discourse, education and militarisation. It set out to study discourses of militarisation in Sri Lankan academia, during the period 2011-2014. It examines the discursive formations of militarisation in the private and public sphere of Sri Lankan academic communities, and the continuities and discontinuities in individual discourses of militarisation during this time.

A study of discourses of militarisation has many implications to the field of higher education. Analyses of individual formulations of experience provide a rich and complex view of social processes, complementing knowledge gained from analyses of public and institutional discourses. This study also illustrates discursive changes that take place as a social process proceeds over time. Such an analysis provides insight not only to the process of militarisation, but to other social movements and institutions. It is critical to our understandings of higher education, raising questions such as ‘how do these discourses (or their silencing) affect the generations of citizens being educated in these institutions? In what ways does the university system change when discourses of militarisation are embedded in its daily practice?’ Such a discussion of militarisation complicates our view of education as a solely enlightening prospect. Above all, by making visible the “types of discourse it harbours and causes to function as true” (Foucault, 1977, p.13) this dissertation contributes to a review of the “politics of truth” in Sri Lankan universities. The exposure of discursive formations places the burden of figuring out their political function on academics, of considering how best to act in response to militarisation. Through this, it also creates an imperative to consider the academics’ political role in higher education.
Discursive formations of militarisation in Sri Lankan universities

According to Foucault, “each discursive practice implies a play of prescriptions that designate its exclusions and choices” (Bouchard, 1977, p.199). Taken together, the public and individual discourses of militarisation encompass the discursive formations of militarisation in higher education. For a more effective analysis of the different dimensions of discourse in academic communities, I disrupted the binary arrangements generally used as complements to each other, those of ‘public/private’ and ‘collective/individual’. Instead, I focused on the public/collective voice of academics and the individual voices that rarely appear in the public sphere. This approach facilitated the study of the circulation of discourse at two different levels.

At this point, I would like to highlight the absence of a particular discourse of militarisation from the discursive formations described in this dissertation, a pro-militarisation discourse. The lack of a discourse supporting militarisation in universities could possibly be due to the result of the choice of participants. A far more probable cause, however, is the discursive pressure on academics at this point to position themselves in opposition to the state. The public discourse of academics, through FUTA, has positioned themselves as anti-state, a defensive position that intimates that given the state’s aggression towards academics, this has been warranted. A pro-militarisation position during this time of heightened academic activism would also align the individual academic with the state and against one’s own community. In such an intensely political atmosphere, participants would necessarily be circumspect about such views. The absence of a pro-militarisation stand, missing from the range of discourses of militarisation in this study, does not indicate the absence of an endorsement of military involvement in higher education.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the public discourse of academics presents Sri Lankan universities as an institution intense politicisation. Phenomena that index securitisation and militarisation (Chapter 1.2), such as surveillance, excessive control of university administration, and military involvement in academic matters are discursively constructed in FUTA’s texts as products of undue political interference. While there are some references to events that involve the military, as we saw in
Chapter 4, these references are embedded within discourses of neoliberalism and politicisation of universities. The homogeneity of the academics’ public discourse of militarisation disguises the polyphony that becomes visible when individual discourses are considered for analysis.

To say that individual discourses of militarisation are more varied than the public/collective discourse on militarisation amongst academics would be a truism. The revelatory nature of this analysis lies in a tension between conceptualisation and positionality. This relates to a common misconception on consciousness and understanding. Many strands of research on political issues assume that the understanding of a particular phenomenon (e.g., racism) in the abstract entails the ability to identify it in our surroundings as well. Accordingly, the ability to theorise on militarisation and to identify its dimensions should also result in the identification of it in one’s context. This assumption is questioned by the findings of this study. As a discourse study, it would be problematic to make claims on a participant’s perception. It is only possible to consider the participants’ position noticing or denying militarisation, assuming that perception entails the resulting stance. Regardless of their position on militarisation (affirming or rejecting it) academics defined it as a social process that ranged on a spectrum: from the involvement of the military in spheres outside national security (the concrete definition) to the inclusion of militaristic practices in areas unrelated to security (diffused version). Despite similarities in their conception of militarisation, individual discourses of academics included both constructions as well as its contestations. Individual discourses of Chapter 4 dispute these assumptions of understanding/perception/position, showing instead that there is little congruity between a nuanced understanding of militarisation and the individual academic’s position on it.

Sri Lankan academics perceive universities as a space where agentive action is restricted. They experience surveillance, fear retribution, and complain of the absence of critical debate and lack of dissent. Nevertheless, few academics, as shown in Chapters 4 and 5, frame these issues within a discourse of militarisation. Their discursive contestation is not over the existence of events (e.g., a military-led undergraduate program or the preference for military-related instructors in universities). Rather, the disagreement is over the meaning accrued to these events, floating signifiers in light of the fact that there is no fixed meaning to these events.
assigned by academics. In individual discourses where militarisation is denied, these events are re-signified to index politicisation or other such processes. Such changes in meanings are conducted through the deployment of other existing discourses, such as those of student violence or politicisation.

It is here, when resignification of specific events in universities is evident, that the exclusions and choices in discursive practices become relevant. Discourses circulating in a particular sphere, such as the university, imply acceptable ways of ‘seeing’ a specific phenomenon. This is especially true of discourses circulating publicly, through the voice of authoritative sources such as a trade union. The complicating factor in social institutions such as a higher education system, however, is the availability of multiple authoritative discourses ‘jockeying’ for power. As I show in Chapter 4, in addition to the public discourse of FUTA, individual discourses embed strands from state discourses on higher education and universities. Such competing discourses include the framing of certain militarised events as responses to violence in universities or unemployability of undergraduates in light of global flows of knowledge. Where dominant discourses from the state or the trade union exist, there is little space for a counter-discourse of militarisation in individual discourses.

At the same time, some exceptions are evident in this situation. Despite the dominant construction of Sri Lankan universities as politicised rather than militarised entities in the public sphere (both through state and FUTA), some individuals construed universities as militarised spaces. These exceptions are an example of the permeability of discursive spaces. While discourses on universities are by and large devoid of references to militarisation, discourses of militarisation do circulate in other sectors in Sri Lanka (e.g., peace and development sector). The statement that universities are militarised is a marked position in individual discourses, make it evident that despite the authoritative discourses emanating from the state and trade unions, discourses from spaces external to universities can seep into academic spaces as well.

What is the function of this dominant discourse of militarisation in universities, and on higher education in general, when discussions of militarisation are silenced and avoided? A discourse that recognises militarisation in universities would necessitate action. In other words, academics would have to ask themselves if “we can behave as we must when an event presents itself?” (Foucault, 1988, p.35). To refrain
from acknowledging militarisation as a process embedded in academia and universities, is to withhold from engaging and resisting the process of militarisation as well. By assigning action to the other, the state, academics position themselves as the aggrieved party. They present themselves as a group prohibited from taking the initiative by more powerful agents such as the government or the administration. Framing these events as issues of productivity and financial accountability, especially at a time when the state and academic representatives are engaged in a discursive contestation, creates an environment in which academics can forego action on militarisation. Crucially, this lack of engagement by academics ensures that what is produced by militarisation – surveillance, limits on critique, regimented behaviour in universities – continue to prevail without challenge. To draw attention to the effects of this dominant discourse of militarisation in academia does not detract from the importance of individual discourses that construct universities to be militarised. On the contrary, in the face of a dominant discourse in universities that denies militarisation, these alternative individual discourses are even more important. Such individual discourses create a space for debate and change, even if it is a very minor space.

An issue that is central to critical studies of higher education is the discussions of the impact of neoliberal political agendas in education. Scholars ranging from Henry Giroux (2002) to Norman Fairclough (1993) engage with the problems associated with the entrepreneurial turn in universities of the late 20th century onwards. Echoing similar concerns, FUTA cites neoliberal agendas as cause for constraints on democratic space within universities. By citing neoliberal discourses the public voice of academics presents itself as a critical body of scholars, familiar with current debates of higher education. This serves to counter the competing discourse on Sri Lankan universities by the state, which portrays these academics as intellectually isolated and academically inferior. The tension in the public discourses appear in the “limits of the sayable” (Butler, 2004, p.xvii). The public discourse of FUTA has given limited attention to overtly militaristic events in universities, discursively producing effects of governmental strategies as issues of autonomy and rights. Even though critics of neoliberalism in other parts of the world have drawn connections between militarisation and neoliberalism (Coleman, 2013; Giroux, 2007; Stavrianakis, 2006), paving the way for a more complex discussion on higher
education, it has not happened in the public discourse of academia in Sri Lanka. The reason for this, as argued in Chapter 4, is the nature of the trade union agenda, which generated a debate on financial management, resulting in foregoing the discussion of militarisation. Nevertheless, by making this choice, FUTA participates in creating and sustaining a public domain in which debates on militarisation of education are discouraged.

If, on the other hand, these issues are addressed through other discourses, as I showed in the analysis of FUTA’s texts in Chapter 4, one could also argue that the choice of discourse is immaterial to the treatment of events. This is especially relevant currently, when FUTA’s discussions with the new government (as of January 2015) has resulted in revocations of authoritative regulations imposed by the previous government. It necessitates a reflection on the value of using a discourse of militarisation that highlights the process of militarisation that universities are undergoing at present. The issue becomes one of the regimes of truth in universities, and especially how it affects individual discourses. The discourse of financial accountability allows academics to engage in a discussion of the financial viability of state universities and the resources necessary for public higher education. However, a discourse of militarisation that suppresses a discussion of it in relation to higher education, as is apparent in universities in Sri Lanka, prevents a reflexive engagement with issues of our own disciplinary conduct as academics. The current discourses where a lack of university autonomy and autocratic interventions are highlighted encourage the treatment of the state as the other. It does not, however, allow academics to look at their own involvement in control and surveillance.

**Temporal shifts in discursive formations on militarisation**

The advantage of researching an evolving situation in a time critical to a community, as the years 2012-2014 are for Sri Lankan universities, is that it provides the opportunity of observing ensuing discursive shifts. As I set out to examine the temporal continuity of the discourses of academics, publicly and privately, I expected an incremental progressive discursive shift, in the form of a growing awareness of militarisation corresponding to the development of events of these years. As I
illustrate in Chapters 4 and 5, both the public and individual discourses belie this expectation.

I presented in Chapter 4 the static nature of FUTA’s discourse of militarisation. This should not be taken as an implication that FUTA’s discourse in general is static. On the contrary, their texts show discursive shifts in relation to issues of national education policy, and the state of public universities. Given FUTA’s discursive progression on these other issues, the absence of a discursive shift on militarisation over a period of three years (2012-2014) is remarkable in itself. As I reflected in Chapter 4, this absence of a noticeable change is the result of a complex set of factors. These factors include a centralised authorship and animation of texts, the strategic choice of a discourse of financial accountability, and the need to effect a united movement out of a large and unwieldy combination of member unions.

In contrast to the public discourses, where authoring and animating texts is centralised, temporal shifts in individual discourses were varied. While this is an expected occurrence in discourse, the analysis as illustrated in Chapter 5 revealed little linearity or continuity in these individual discourses. As we see in Chapter 4, public discourses are the products of a selected group of individuals, and the authorship of texts is at times contingent on the situation and time constraints of the event to which it responds. The process of producing public texts ensures that only select individual discourses become part of the public discourse, while competing or conflicting individual discourses receive no leverage.

Changes in discursive style are most intriguing when academics display a fixed position with regard to universities, and more pronounced still when their position is that universities are not militarised. As was shown in Chapter 4, this was true even when their theorising of militarisation progressed from a concrete to a more complex understanding. The gap between a conceptual understanding and positionality becomes even more significant when we consider that it is true of a discussion of militarisation in the first instance (as in Chapter 4) as well as in a second or third reiteration of such a discussion (as in Chapter 5). In the course of the study, I expected that repeated conversations on militarisation would create the opportunity for reflexivity, triggering awareness of the militarised events taking place in universities and thereby effecting a change in discursive practice. On the contrary, several interviews showed either a continued rejection of militarisation or a
retrenchment of their previous acceptance of militarisation. Given that the episodes and events referred to in their interviews continued to exist (and actually increased) over the duration of the 2012-2014 period, I count these responses as evidence of the normalization of militarisation rather than a reduction of it in universities. The contradictory positions observed in the long term question our assumptions regarding the progression of thought in a community.

At the same time, the initial impact of such events is superseded by subsequent events, which are then interpreted as results of other processes. For instance, mandatory attendance of academics at a speech by a politician in universities is framed as politicisation. While the role of memory in chaotic and crisis situations is an important factor here (which I address later), this is also the result of such events being indexed as components of a different discourse, as shown by FUTA and the state. The framing of militarised events as exemplifications of state interference or financial mismanagement ensures that they continue to be excluded from a discussion of militarisation. The norms of interpretation for such events are already fixed by both FUTA and the state as situated outside a discourse of militarisation. This is also evident when participants repeatedly claim that universities cannot be militarised, such a thought being incommensurable with their perception of the discursive field of higher education.

The exclusion of such events from discourses on higher education signals a lack of discussion amongst academics on issues that fundamentally affect the nature of universities in the country. Open and uninhibited discussions of increased regimentation, control and surveillance in universities appear to be disallowed even in the private sphere. Individual discourses therefore become not only a reflection of the public discourses of militarisation in universities, but also an index of the internal censorship prevalent in academia. In turn, the lack of an effective discourse of militarisation in the private sphere could contribute to its avoidance in the public sphere. This does not mean, however, that there is a smooth cyclical connection between a public discourse that avoids militarisation and individual discourses that for the most part reject militarisation. Given the multiple factors at play in the production of academics’ public position, this could be a factor of considerable importance.

The study of temporal shifts also confronts us with the need for longitudinal studies of discourse, going beyond the frozen segment isolated for analysis in Time 1.
This would entail time intensive work, requiring the investment of a longer time period in researching an evolving phenomenon, in the face of fiscal constraints currently evident in higher education. However, it is also work necessary in order to advance the methodological and theoretical boundaries of discourse studies.

In addition to its importance for discourse, the examination of temporal shifts shows the value of studying social processes in situ as they emerge and evolve. This creates particular difficulties for researchers since the researcher is within the evolving situation. Conventional practices in qualitative research methodology expects the researcher to ‘stand outside’ the researched phenomenon or situation, taking decisions in a disengaged way on data, time periods, and participants. Imminent situations such as that studied here makes such decisions difficult since the researcher “cannot stand outside history” (S. Makoni, personal communication). For instance, the situation in Sri Lankan universities evolves as I write, since a new government and head of state in place since January 2015 could necessitate a reorientation of academic discourses. Environments such as these leave little time for sedimentation of memory, and discourses shift as the situation evolves. Conclusions from research conducted during an emergent phenomenon would be significantly different to those arrived by historical analyses of those same events.

This is a suitable moment in the study to discuss the connections between memory and discourse. In her work on militarisation and popular culture in Sri Lanka, de Mel (2007) “foregrounds the labours of memory in upholding, altering and contesting militarization” (p.17). Even though I have not highlighted the role of memory in this study ‘certainty/uncertainty’ and ‘remembering/forgetting’ are recurring themes in the interviews, pointing to this as a rich area for future studies. It is also an important issue in the historicality of social movements (as implied by Abbott, 2005). As Abbott (2005) stated in his discussion of the historicality of the individual, “individuals are central to history because it is they who are the prime reservoir of historical connection from past to present” (p.3). This argument has been an important factor in my focus on individual discourses. At the same time, in relation to memory, this creates a problem since the body of records (a zone of historicality for Abbott) is usually dominated by public discourses. If individual discourses are not part of the public sphere, as is the case in this study, these memories find it difficult to become part of the history of the social movement or organisation.
discourses, such as those of a trade union, become reservoirs of history by ‘fixing’ discourse, through documentation and archiving (as FUTA does with a website, press statements, etc.). While this is necessary for the creation of a social movement, making its position visible and disseminating its stance to the public, in the long term these practices ensure the entrenchment of written texts in the body of records as opposed to unwritten, unrecorded individual discourses. While such moves ensure the survival of FUTA’s discourse on higher education, contesting state discourse, it also produces FUTA’s position as hegemonic in relation to other discourse in universities. In time, the hegemonic nature of a trade union’s discourse would leave little space for the existence of different traces of memory in the public sphere.

**Limitations and directions for future study**

For the purposes of this study, I have focused on academics, counting them the most visible category of individuals in universities in terms of the Sri Lankan public consciousness. This is an arbitrary and artificial boundary, constructed for methodological purposes and other groups, such as students and administrative staff, should be taken into account for a wider discussion on issues in Sri Lankan universities. For instance, Vice Chancellors, Deans, and Heads of Departments (HODs) act in a dual capacity as academics and administrators with a key difference. In the lower levels of academic administrative hierarchies, such as Coordinators and HODs, teaching and research are still a considerable part of their academic work; whereas the upper levels of academic administration see a reduction of these aspects of academic work. This understanding is implied in the different stance by academic trade unions towards the ‘administration’ of universities versus ‘academics’. The majority of the participants of the study have administrative experience in the lower levels of the hierarchy, as HODs or in similar capacities. However, I have not included academics of higher administrative positions in the study. Since much of the decision-making and implementation of these decisions are made by administrators (both academic and non-academic), this is an important group to study.

As the sole legitimate representative of academics, FUTA’s discourses merit a more in-depth study than I was able to undertake here. Given the paucity of research
on educational or academic trade unions, such a study would contribute to the role of trade unions in education. It would also contribute to the understanding of trade unions in Sri Lanka since FUTA’s practices of administration differ from those of other professions. From the perspective of trade unions and social movements, an examination of the discourses related to the members’, i.e., academics’, socialisation into trade union leadership would also enrich our understanding of the evolution of social movements.

In addition, a very important area for further study is that of ragging (or ritual hazing in Sri Lankan universities). Participants make inadvertent but lengthy narrative detours on ragging; the government based their rationale for the leadership course on the need to eradicate ragging. These recurrent, voluntary narratives of ragging show its links to the security apparatus of universities. It is an aspect of university life that needs thorough treatment in research, and awaits further study.

Even though I have stressed the importance of focusing on the individual in this dissertation, treating this as a major theoretical concern in the study of academics, I have not extended this same treatment towards the military. The treatment of the military as a unitary, homogeneous institution, as I have done, is not unusual in militarisation studies. However, in doing so scholars including myself, erase the multiplicity of discourses within the military (though exceptions are de Mel, 2007; Jacoby, 2003). In Sri Lanka in particular, the military is a larger institution than academia, though more homogenous in terms of ethnicity due to politico-historical factors. Research on militarisation in education would be complemented by the study of military discourses of militarisation as well. Militarisation research proceeds on the assumption that the military-civilian relationship is unidirectional, with the military influencing civilian institutions. Given these foundational assumptions, a study of the ‘other’, as the military is to militarisation scholars, could contribute to a theoretical reorientation of the field.

A methodological decision taken at the beginning of this study was to focus on universities in a geographical area that is considered ‘unmilitarised’, the Western metropolitan area (see Chapter 3.4). In several instances during the study individuals assumed that the study was on the Northern and Eastern areas of Sri Lanka, showing surprise when told to the contrary. These responses provide insight to the construction (and contestation) of militarisation, with zones of militarisation being limited to areas
of direct armed conflict. Such comments also signal the demarcations of authenticity in militarisation, where the value of the study is indexed through its location in a ‘properly’ militarised zone. As the competing discourses of militarisation by academics illustrate, such hegemonic discourses hinder us from engaging with phenomena in areas outside the ‘officially’ militarised arenas. A contribution of this study then is the exposure of a range of academic discourses of militarisation in sites that are considered not militarised. At the same time, research into discourses of militarisation in the Northern and Eastern areas is important and the need for it imperative.

Research in militarisation of education is important for many reasons. Academic-activists stress the constraints that a discourse of militarism brings to personal freedom and institutional autonomy. In addition to that, however, I look at the local instances of militarisation as part of the global flows of knowledge. As students, scholars and researchers travel across continents there is a cross-pollination of discourses. Their experiences and ideologies travel back and forth with them, creating multiple spaces of control and resistance. Despite the diversity that this picture of mass migration conjures, the apparatus of higher education grows tighter. States increasingly adopt policies enabling educational crossovers (e.g., the Bologna Process), while academic publishing is dominated by Western companies, in particular the United States (Canagarajah, 2002; Štech, 2011). At the same time, there is a rising phenomenon of security (or militant) programmes, irrespective of whether it is in state-sponsored higher education or in militant insurgent institutions. For the reason that local changes in higher education are subtly and delicately connected to other local contexts, in-depth studies of militarisation in higher education are very necessary.

It is important to stress the need for a closer look at the impact of militarisation and militarism in fields such as TESOL, Applied Linguistics and Foreign Language Education. Being fields that have close associations with war, empire and the military, in recent decades they have also resisted exploring the impact of their own uncritical affiliations with militarisation. As language educators, teachers and researchers in these fields have a significant impact on communities and individuals. Taking a critical look at what we teach, both inside and outside the language classroom, is necessary as teachers, curriculum designers and researchers, in
order to produce a student body that engages critically with the politics of everyday life.

Discourse studies allow a methodological intervention that can expose the epistemological boundaries of militarisation and inform our responses to it. Due to the absence of in-depth discourse studies on militarisation, we lack an understanding of the operationalization of militarisation at an individual or institutional level. In addition, as stated above, we remain ignorant of the complicity of our disciplines as they proceed in and support securitised institutions or communities.

This dissertation focuses on militarisation by examining the multiple discourses of militarisation in higher education. In highlighting the competing, nebulous and even contentious nature of these discourses my agenda is not to push for a unified, totalitarian discourse on militarisation. On the contrary my desire is to aid the recognition of such multiplicity and to provoke more discussions on Sri Lankan higher education as we continue our work in a mode of perpetual crisis.
Appendix A

Detailed list of events related to universities (2011-2015)

This list is not an exhaustive list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 May-June</td>
<td>First leadership training programme held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 June</td>
<td>The Supreme Court dismisses six fundamental rights petitions against the leadership training programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 September</td>
<td>All universities instructed by HE Ministry to hire Rakna Lanka security services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 October</td>
<td>Ruhuna University students and faculty protest the use of SL security forces for a Shramadana in university premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 December</td>
<td>Peradeniya University student protests stopped by security forces; student union banned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News circulates on govt plans to found private universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 April</td>
<td>FUTA renews campaign - letter to President and HE Minister notifying new campaign; token strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 June</td>
<td>University non-academic staff go on strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Threatening phone calls and intimidation towards FUTA President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 July</td>
<td>FUTA launches continuous strike action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Govt announces plans to give military designations to principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruhuna University student leader attacked by unidentified men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 August</td>
<td>Minister of HE announces closure of universities (exceeding his authority)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2012 September  Several protest marches by undergraduates take place
OUSL VC refuses permission for FUTA meetings to be
held on premises
Universities open again
FUTA holds multiple rallies & 5 day cross-country
march
IUSF Convenor arrested

2012 October  FUTA suspends continuous strike

2012 November  Jaffna University student leaders beaten and illegally
detained by police
Jaffna University union member questioned by
Terrorism Investigation Division

2013 February  Leadership training course takes place for second year

2013 March  Conflicts over appointment of Colombo University VC
Student union in Sabaragamuwa University banned
Eastern University union members strike against
harassment of faculty by VC

2013 May  Dr Kumara Hirimburegama, husband of UGC
Chairperson, appointed as VC of Colombo University

2013 July  SL Army conducts training for school principals
IUSF Convenor remanded for violating bail conditions
Colombo University VC refuses permission for FUTA
meeting in university premises

2013 September  Tamil academics threatened by Chief of Defence staff

2014 May  Police attack students protesting in front of UGC
Female student hostel attacked by thugs at Ruhuna
University campus

2014 June  FUTA token strike
Threatening phone calls made to FUTA President
Student protests
Rajarata University is closed indefinitely; students take
VC hostage
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014 July</td>
<td>SJP administration takes disciplinary action against approx. 200 undergraduates; students start continuous protests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 August</td>
<td>Deputy VC of Colombo University arbitrarily dismissed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaffna University trade union releases report on malpractices in recruitment procedures of academics in the university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamil students in Sabaragamuwa University attacked by unidentified men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 October</td>
<td>Attack on Sabaragamuwa University student <em>satyagraha</em> (sit-in)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 December</td>
<td>Key officials in FUTA support election campaign of Joint Opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 January</td>
<td>New govt promises to fulfil FUTA demands of the previous campaigns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Interview Protocols (2012-2014)

Interview protocol for first interview (Time 1)

Background information

- Position in the university
- Number of years of experience
- Affiliation
- Which language(s) do you use in your academic work?

Trade Union involvements:

- Are you a member of a trade union in the university? Name of trade union?
- If you are not a member, why have you not become a member? Please explain your reasons.
- If you are a member, what are your involvements with the trade union (go to meetings, receive letters, write letters of protest, etc)?
- Are you or have you been an office bearer in the trade union or any other activist group related to universities? For how long did you hold office? What were your duties and responsibilities?

2011 Leadership training course

- Can you describe your thoughts and feelings when you first found out about the leadership course?
- What is your opinion of the leadership course?
- If you were against it, did you take any action against it? If so, what was the nature of that action?
- Can you describe the response of the academic community to this event?
- If they took action against it, was that action appropriate?
- What other forms of action do you think academics could have taken?
- Are you satisfied with the civil society response on the leadership course?
- Do you see any impact of this course on the students who underwent it?

FUTA action on salary increase demands in 2010-2011

- When did FUTA first start the process of trade union action demanding a salary increase?
- Do you believe the FUTA action was appropriate? Please elaborate.
- Were you involved in any specific action taken by the FUTA regarding the salary increase demands?
Can you describe the events that unfolded during the months that FUTA continued with trade union action?
In your opinion, was the FUTA campaign a success or failure? What were the reasons for this?
What other forms of action do you think academics could have taken?
Are you satisfied with the civil society response to academics and their role in universities?
What do you think of the representation of FUTA action in the media?

Private universities bill

Can you describe what your thoughts and feelings were when you first found out about the private universities bill?
Have you seen a copy of the bill? How did you have the opportunity to gain access or see this bill?
In your opinion, is this bill necessary or appropriate to Sri Lankan higher education? If yes/no, why?
If yes,

Did you express your opinion to other academics?
If you did express your opinion, what was their response to it?
If you did not express your opinion, what were the reasons?
If the bill is not necessary or appropriate,

Did you take any action against it? If so, what was the nature of that action?
What was the response of academics on this event?
In your opinion, was that action appropriate?
What other forms of action do you think academics could have taken?
Contrary to the English media, academic responses were not noticeable in the Sinhala media. Were you aware of this and what do you think is the reason for this?
Are you satisfied with the civil society response to this situation?

Interview protocol for follow up interview (Time 2/3)

What is the difference between having private health care and private education in the country?
What is the difference between having private schools and private universities/medical colleges in the country?
Has the leadership trained course continued?
How has this affected the intensive courses in your own university?
How do you feel about the leadership training course now?
Do you think universities are being militarized?
What important issues in the university system have I not addressed?
What changes would you like to see in the state universities in future?
Do you have space to change or resist in universities?
Appendix C

Key to transcription conventions


Final intonation, similar to but not always at the end of a sentence .
Continuous intonation (similar to listing),
Higher pitch, questioning intonation ?
Rising intonation ↑
Falling intonation ↓
Markedly lower volume °word°
Markedly higher volume WORD
Untimed pause, less than 5 seconds (.)
Timed pause (0.5)
Onset of overlapping speech [
Latching, or speech with no discernible pause =
Rapid or compressed speech >word word<
Truncated word/phrase wo-
Emphasis or stress word
Laugh pulse (heh)
Smile quality £
In-breath or outbreath (hh)
Transcription of Sinhala speech word
Comments and meanings of Sinhala phrases ((laughter))
Sections changed to retain anonymity { }
Sections removed […]
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Watz Dissertation Award, Pennsylvania State University (Fall 2014)
Fulbright Junior Scholar (2005-2007)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS
2014, March. Co-presented with Susan Strauss. DMs in Sinhala: me ‘this’ and dæn ‘now’ as high-focus and time-immediate indexicals. Paper presented at the Georgetown University Roundtable, Washington D.C., USA
2013, November. The academic trade unionist in the era of globalised knowledge: A study of the Sri Lankan educational reform campaign. Panel presentation at the 38th Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association, Chicago, USA.