

A GENEALOGY OF AN ETHNOCRATIC PRESENT: RETHINKING ETHNICITY AFTER
SRI LANKA'S CIVIL WAR

by

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Abstract

The presence and persistence of ethnicity in Sri Lanka has led scholars such as Jayadeva Uyangoda to describe Sri Lanka as an “ethnocracy” and is identified as one of the major challenges for attempts to reconcile communities after a 26-year-long civil war that ended in 2009. The emphasis on ethnicity, however, often makes it difficult for scholars to examine the discontinuities that have shaped the emergence of ethnicity as the most significant social category in the country. This thesis addresses this lacuna by providing a careful re-reading of the conditions under which ethnicity became the focus of both politics and epistemology at the turn of the 20th century in colonial Ceylon. Michel Foucault’s conceptualization of governmentality enables this examination by demonstrating how ethnicity became the terrain on which political rationalities and governmental technologies were deployed in order to shift how populations were constructed as the focus of colonial governance between 1901 and 1911. Colonial political rationalities are explored through an examination of the debate that emerged in the Census reports of P. Arunachalam (1902) and E.B. Denham (1912) over whether Ceylon is constituted by many nationalities or by one nationality—the Sinhalese—and many races. The emergence of this debate also coincided with the Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912 which aimed to reform the colonial state in response to the demands of the local population. Like the debate between Arunachalam and Denham, what is at stake in the reforms of 1912 is the question of whether the Island is constituted by many racial populations or a single population. The terms of these debates over ethnicity that took place over a century ago, continue to shape the tenor of Sri Lanka’s post-war political landscape and therefore provides a pathway for understanding how Sri Lanka’s post-war challenges are imbricated in the dilemmas of inhabiting its colonial present(s).

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Dedication

To my mother, and her questions.

To my wife, and her answers.

Chapter 1 - Introduction: My Mother's Concern

On a balmy, Colombo evening in May 2012 I answered a sudden knock on our door to find a young girl and her mother who introduced themselves as census enumerators from Sri Lanka's Department of Census & Statistics. They had come to collect data for Sri Lanka's first national census since the end of a nearly three-decade long civil war in 2009, and the first census to cover the entire Island since before the war began in 1983. The arrival of the enumerator was an event I had eagerly anticipated to for many months because I was the child of a Burgher father and a Tamil mother, two minority ethnic groups in the Island. I was looking forward to this encounter because I had decided that I would reject their attempt to categorize my ethnicity, and insist that I be marked as "Other" rather than "Burgher." Taken aback by these demands, the enumerator and her mother finally decided that the best solution would be to mark my father as "Burgher," my mother as "Tamil," my brothers as "Burgher," and accede to my demand that I be categorized as "Other." Chuckling over the complications my little act of rebellion would cause for the census numbers, I told my mother what I had done. To my surprise, she was quite upset with me for marking myself down as "Other." My attempts to placate her on the grounds that I had tried to assert the importance of her identity as a Tamil did little to assuage her feeling of unease. She thought that what I had done would make it difficult for me to vote because doing this meant that I "didn't have an identity of my own."

Reflecting on my mother's concern that I had made myself illegible to the state¹ through the denial of my ethnic identity, I thought that it was, at one level, an astute observation by a

¹ For a more significant discussion of legibility and the State see James C. Scott's *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*.

woman from a minority of how ethnicity functions in a state that has experienced nearly thirty years of ethnicity-based civil war and more than sixty years of ethnic tensions. At another level however, how was I to contend with her disavowal of my (admittedly limited) attempt to avoid the erasure of her own ethnic identity by being categorized as a member of my father's ethnicity?² Furthermore, given that this 2012 census had been repeatedly marked by its occurrence after the war,³ what was at stake in her displeasure and comment about the loss of my ethnic identity in post-war Sri Lanka? In short, my aim in this thesis is to take my mother's question seriously, not to ask what does it mean to not have an identity after an ethnicity-based civil war, but rather to ask how has ethnicity come to have so much meaning for post-war Sri Lanka?

The presence and persistence of ethnicity in Sri Lanka is indexed by the questions that my mother's concern provoke and has led scholars such as Jayadeva Uyangoda to describe Sri

² The guidelines for enumerators at this census clearly state that “[a] child of mixed ethnic parentage is regarded as belonging to the father's ethnic group.” See section 7. Ethnic Group of the Concepts and Definitions page of Department of Census & Statistics, Sri Lanka webpage for the 2012 census—
<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/pophousat/cph2011/index.php?fileName=ConceptsandDefinitions&gp=StudyMaterials&tpl=2>

³ For example, see the news coverage of the launch of the 2012 census—
(http://www.colombopage.com/archive_11/Apr05_1302014132CH.php) as well as the reference to “the conflict situation in Northern and Eastern Provinces” (31) in the Preliminary Report of the 2012 census—
(http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2011/index.php?fileName=Key_E&gp=Activities&tpl=3).

Lanka as an “ethnocracy” (“Travails of State Reform”).⁴ Uyangoda’s description is built on Oren Yiftachel’s definition of an ethnocracy as a “specific expression of nationalism that exists in contested territories where a dominant ethnos gains political control and uses the state apparatus to ethnicize the territory and society in question” (Yiftachel 730). In a recent book, Uyangoda offers a more comprehensive explanation of the relevance of this term to Sri Lanka by stating that an ethnocratic democracy “is a specific form of democracy that privileges ethno-nationalism as the dominant framework of political imagination, competition, and mobilization” (*State Reform in Sri Lanka* 4). While Uyangoda’s comments speak to the political function of ethnicity, the characterization of the country as an ethnocracy is also reflected in the body of critical work aimed at understanding the outbreak of civil war in Sri Lanka.⁵ The preponderance of ethnicity in discussions about Sri Lanka has also led to a number of analyses of the Sinhalese,⁶ the Ceylon

⁴ Uyangoda extends this analysis and argues that “the ethnocratic State in Sri Lanka is a project of the political elites whose electoral support bases and political power are rooted in an ensemble of social classes in the majority Sinhalese community that can be described as ‘intermediate classes’” (“Travails of State Reform” 54).

⁵ For example, writers such as Lakshmanan Sabaratnam have attempted to show that the recent ethno-regional divergence between the Sinhalese and the Tamils was built on markers of difference that existed prior to colonialism. Other scholars such as Judy Waters, Nira Wickramasinghe (*Ethnic Politics*), G.C. Mendis (*Ceylon Under the British*) and K.M. De Silva (“The Ceylon National Congress in Disarray”) have argued that colonial policy was a key factor in the formation, consolidation and exacerbation of ethnic conflict.

⁶ I note here the path breaking work of R. A. L. H. Gunewardena’s “People of the Lion” and Kumari Jayawardena’s *Ethnic and Class Conflicts in Sri Lanka*. See also Neil De Votta’s more recent work on Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism (*Sinhalese Buddhist Nationalist Ideology*).

Tamils,⁷ the Muslims,⁸ the Malaiyaha Tamils,⁹ and the Burghers.¹⁰ Given the importance of ethnicity to the formation of the state in an ethnocracy, writers have also aimed to trace the relationship between the increased emphasis on ethnic identity and the formation/ consolidation of the Sri Lankan State.¹¹ In a related vein, writers such as A. Sivanandan and Newton Gunasinghe have also studied the political economy of ethnic identity formation. Although these interventions are important, the emphasis on ethnicity as a dominant political and

⁷ Significant contributions have been made by writers such as K. Sivathamby, and K. Kailasapathy in the critical volume *Ethnicity and Social Change*. However, it should be noted that a significant claim advanced in much of the scholarship on the Tamil ethnic identity is for their presence on the island as a separate people. This is visible for example in the work of Chelvadurai Manogaran, and A. J. Wilson (*Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*). For a useful discussion on the nexus between religious revival and identity formation among the ‘Sri Lankan Tamil’ community see Rohan Bastin. Apart from these, I should also mention the work of Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam who maps the importance of caste in defining an ethnic Tamil identity.

⁸ I would refer here to the work of Lorna Dewaraja, Qadri Ismail, Dennis McGilvray & Mirak Raheem, and M. A. Nuhman on the antimonies of Muslim identity in Sri Lanka.

⁹ Significant contributions on the subjectivity of the Malaiyaha Tamils are made in the work of P. Devaraj, S. Nadesan, E. Valentine Daniel, Daniel Bass, and Valli Kanapathipillai.

¹⁰ The Burghers have received a great deal of scholarly interest due to the nature of their heritage and the role they have played in Sri Lanka. For example, see the work of Dennis McGilvray, Michal Roberts, Ismeth Raheem & Percy Colin-Thome, and more recently the work of F.A. Kumari Campbell, and Kumari Jayawardena (*Erasure of the Eurasians*).

¹¹ I refer here to the work of Elizabeth Nissan and R.L. Stirrat who argue “that different state forms depend upon, and generate, different senses of collective identity” (19). In a different vein, Neil De Votta makes an extremely persuasive argument for how ‘ethnic outbidding’ within and between ethnic communities over control of the post-colonial Sri Lankan State led to the outbreak of ethnic conflict (“From Ethnic Outbidding to Ethnic Conflict”).

epistemological framework often makes it difficult for scholars to examine the discontinuities that have shaped the emergence of ethnicity as the most significant social category in the country. Therefore, I aim to address this lacuna by providing a careful re-reading of the conditions under which ethnicity became the focus of both politics and epistemology at a particular historical moment for the country.

In order to develop an alternative mechanism for excavating the discontinuities that have shaped the emergence of ethnicity as a dominant category of analysis, I first attempt to develop a theoretical framework for analyzing the political and epistemological terrain on which the function of ethnicity is embedded in Sri Lanka. Towards this end, my second chapter draws from Michel Foucault's later work to argue for reading ethnicity as a problem of governmentality. Focusing on how ethnicity enables the simultaneous emergence and management of competing claims to recognition as populations affords the possibility of studying the discontinuities of ethnicity without disregarding its importance or function as a form of social categorization in Sri Lanka.

Chapter three focuses on one historical moment that was bookended by the publication of the reports of two censuses conducted when Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon) was still a British colony. The Superintendent of the 1901 census, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam,¹² was the first

¹² Born in Colombo in 1853 into one of the leading, upper-class Tamil families in the country, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, was certainly a unique figure. Educated first at one of the leading colonial high schools in the country, Arunachalam won the English University Scholarship in 1870 and proceeded to Christ's College, Cambridge for his tertiary education. On the insistence of his uncle, he sat for the Ceylon Civil Service examination and was the first Ceylonese to enter colonial Ceylon's civil service through open competition. He initially served as a judge before eventually becoming Registrar-General of the Country. He was appointed superintendent for the 1901 census by Sir

Ceylonese and the only member of a local population to hold the post of Census Superintendent while the Indian subcontinent was part of the British Empire. His report, *The Census of Ceylon 1901*, is significant to the discussion on Sri Lanka's ethnocracy because Arunachalam advances an argument for nationality as the key framework for understanding the people in the country.

Ten years later, the British colonial officer, E. B. Denham,¹³ in his census report titled *Ceylon at the Census of 1911*, sought to challenge Arunachalam's privileging of nationality by positing that race should be the primary category for understanding the people in the country. At first glance, their perspectives may appear to be a disagreement over terminology. However, as I will demonstrate, it is the issue of producing knowledge about ethnic categorization for political ends that frames and determines the parameters of the debate between Arunachalam and Denham in

Ridgeway in 1900. On leaving the Civil Service in 1913 he was knighted for his services and also served as a member of the Colony's Executive and Legislative Councils. Following years of involvement and support for local causes and reform, Arunachalam became a leading figure in the colony's national movement and was eventually elected President of the Ceylon National Congress, an organization that was at the forefront of demands for more self-rule.

¹³ Edward Brandis Denham was born in 1876 and educated at Malvern and Merton College, Oxford. He joined the Ceylonese Civil Service as a cadet on his arrival in the Island in 1899. He served in a number of capacities in the Ceylonese Civil Service ranging from Landing Surveyor of the Ceylon Custom's Department to Secretary to the Agricultural Board prior to his appointment to as Superintendent of the census in 1910. In 1920 he was appointed Colonial Secretary of Mauritius, a position he served in till he was appointed as Acting Governor of Kenya in 1923. He was appointed Governor of the Gambia in 1928 and following a period of unrest in the country, Denham was given a new appointment as Governor of British Guiana. His final appointment was as Governor of Jamaica in 1934 till he passed away there in 1938 (Hughes and Perfect; Wright).

these two census. Therefore, the debate between these two Census Superintendents highlights how ethnicity emerged as an epistemic question for colonial political rationalities in Sri Lanka.

The debate between Arunachalam and Denham also coincided with vociferous demands from the local elite for more involvement in governance in Ceylon, which is the focus of chapter four. The demands of the colonized for involvement in (rather than overthrow of) colonial rule in the Island eventually resulted in the introduction of what came to be known as the Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912. These reforms were the first major change to the colonial structure since 1833, as well as the first change significantly influenced by local demands for reform of the colonial state. One of the major outcomes of these pleas was the introduction of limited franchise for seats on the Legislative Council representing “the educated Ceylonese,” the European, and the Burgher population in the Colony. These changes are important because this was the first time in the country’s history that the the local population was extended a limited measure of franchise provided that they met certain wealth and education criteria.¹⁴ However, the Colonial Office also decided to retain communal representation (i.e. the practice of having the Governor nominate individuals to represent ethnic groups on the Legislative Council), which had been introduced in 1833. Like the epistemic conversation between Arunachalam and Denham, the debates and negotiations surrounding the changes to the Legislative Council between 1909 and 1912 foregrounded the relationship between ethnic categorization and claims for recognition as an authentic, local, Ceylonese voice. Therefore, the contestations surrounding the Crewe-McCallum Reforms are important to a discussion on Sri Lanka’s ethnocracy because they reflect

¹⁴ For full details of the criteria to be a voter under these reforms see Sec. 15 of The Legislative Council Ordinance No. 13 of 1910.

how Arunachalam and Denham's epistemic debate over ethnic categorization was inserted into colonial political technologies at the turn of the century.

At first glance, the early twentieth century debate between Arunachalam and Denham as well as the contestations over the Crewe-McCallum Reforms may seem irrelevant to the analysis of post-war Sri Lanka. However, the controversies surrounding the statistics that could emerge out of the 2012 census suggest that epistemologies of ethnicity still contour the day-to-day interaction between the country's citizens and the state.¹⁵ Furthermore, following Presidential and General elections that led to a change of regime in 2015, some writers such as Asanga Welikala have even suggested that Sri Lanka will now have to choose between a path to an ethnocracy and a republic. Welikala's caution has proved prescient as concerns about the loss of the 'majority status' for the ethnic Sinhalese population is increasingly deployed by critics to

¹⁵ For example, even prior to the publication of the final report of the 2012 census, the main minority Tamil political party in the country was moving to pre-empt moves to reduce representation in the North and East of the country due to the decline in the population as a result of war. (The proportionality of representation in the country is premised on population numbers in each electoral district). See this statement by one of the party's MPs here—<http://www.dailymirror.lk/12702/tech>. Furthermore, amidst vociferous concerns raised by hardline Sinhala-majoritarian groups in the country, a senior official of the Department of Census & Statistics was forced to reject claims that the at the time unpublished final report of the 2012 census would show that the population of the minority Muslim community had exceeded the country's majority Sinhala population. See her comments here—http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=75030. More recently, a claim made by a senior cabinet member regarding the presence of a sizeable number of Tamils who were Buddhists on the basis of the findings of the census report was met with opposition from a number of Tamil leaders and intellectuals. See details on this argument here - <http://www.newindianexpress.com/world/Tamils-Dispute-Government%E2%80%99s-Claim-About-Tamil-Buddhists-in-Lanka/2016/02/26/article3298242.ece>

oppose the introduction of a more minority-friendly, inclusive constitution by the newly elected government.¹⁶ In this context, the examination of the emergence of Sri Lanka's ethnocratic state is not an intellectual exercise but an attempt to contribute to the priorities shaping the country's post-war present(s).¹⁷

This thesis explores the imbrication of the past, the present, and the future in order to also contribute to a growing global conversation about the "colonial present." Influenced by Derek Gregory's *The Colonial Present*, a number of scholars have spoken to the ways in which colonial categorizations continue to shape politics and epistemology today. However, due in part to Gregory's questions, much of this work has focused on the United States of America (US) and its role in global politics (Morton; Gopal; Hazbun; Sharp).¹⁸ While the discussion on the role of the US in constituting neocolonial present(s) is a valuable intervention, it can only provide limited insights for understanding Sri Lanka's post-war, colonial present. In order to address this

¹⁶ For more on the campaign articulated by hardline nationalist forces in the country see P. K. Balachandran's recent article in *The New Indian Express*.

¹⁷ Soon after the end of the war there appeared to be two major priorities for the country's post-war present—economic development, particularly in war-torn areas, as well as addressing the grievances of the ethnic Tamil minority. The issue of economic development was severely ethnicized due to the government's belief that "the political and economic reintegration of the Tamil minority into the Sri Lankan state will be easier when the benefits of rapid economic and infrastructure development are felt" (Uyangoda, "Sri Lanka in 2010" 135). Much like the question of a political solution for minority grievances, the issue of economic development is therefore also marked by the prioritization of ethnicity in Sri Lankan politics.

¹⁸ This is not to suggest that there have been no attempts to apply these insights in other postcolonial contexts. See for example, Carole Ferrier's fascinating analysis of Australian indigenous women's writings, as well as Alistair Fraser's deployment of Gregory to examine land reform in rural South Africa.

lacuna in the global critical conversation, I draw inspiration from Michel Foucault's attempt to write a "history of the present," a term he uses to describe the intervention he makes with *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (31). Foucault does not appear to have provided much clarity as to what the term "history of the present" entails exactly. However, interlocutors such as David Garland, for example, argue that Foucault's work is marked by his attempt to use "history as a means of critical engagement with the present" (367). Therefore, by anchoring itself as a "critical engagement with [Sri Lanka's post-war, colonial] present," I hope to extend the critical conversation about colonial present(s) beyond its focus on the USA towards an orientation anchored in the Global South.

My project aims to shed light on how local populations contoured colonial rule in the country more than a century ago.¹⁹ More urgently however, I also aim to offer a way of understanding how Sri Lanka's post-war challenges are infused with the dilemmas of inhabiting

¹⁹ The construction of colonial categories and its antecedent complexities has increasingly become a concern for scholars working on the impact and politics of colonial rule (Mamdani; Cohn). While cognizant of the impact of the categorizations of subjects by colonial bureaucracies, more recent scholarship has sought to examine the complex processes and negotiations that shaped the development of these categorizations. Katten, for example, offers a critique of both the Cambridge School as well as the Subaltern Studies group by arguing that in spite of their differences, both groups begin their analysis from the categories used by colonial bureaucracies. Using Kerala as a field site, Katten argues instead for examining the ways in which people living in the colonies advanced their own categories and how these categories shaped colonial categorizations in nineteenth-century British India. Drawing from the Dutch (rather than the British) colonial project, Ann Laura Stoler powerfully argues for the need to study "not what [the colonial administrators] knew about the colonial worlds in which they lived but what made up the repertoires of common sense that guided their arts of governance and the violences of social policy" (350).

its colonial present(s).²⁰ Analyzing Sri Lanka's ethnocratic present through one moment in which this temporality of ethnicity was ruptured, affords the possibility of a contrapuntal reading of the country's post-war futures that is not as reliant on assumptions about the fixity of its pasts. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to lay the groundwork for a more nuanced analysis of the conditions under which my mother's concerns came to speak to the stakes for Sri Lanka's post-war futures.

A Few Methodological Notes

Writing a history of Sri Lanka's post-war, colonial present also requires addressing the methodological challenge of analyzing Sri Lanka's post-war trajectory without re-producing the very analytical categories that such a discussion seeks to transcend. This dilemma is encapsulated in Minna Thaheer, Pradeep Peiris, and Kasun Pathiraja's rich, systematic, and empirical study, *Reconciliation in Sri Lanka: Voices from Former War Zones*. Their text draws on both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to explore the challenges for reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka. Thaheer, Peiris, and Pathiraja's analysis of reconciliation is built around an understanding of reconciliation as "a process that leads to the production of socio-political and economic conditions for all communities to anticipate a 'shared future'" (5). However, Thaheer, Peiris, and Pathiraja conclude that "[t]he absence of shared values and persistent distrust and suspicion now marks the composition of the multi-ethnic society in the former war-zone" (160). While not gainsaying the validity of this finding as a broader commentary on the dilemmas for reconciliation in the country, their conclusion also arguably reflects a methodological choice:

²⁰ This is not to suggest that this is the only moment useful for understanding Sri Lanka's post-war, colonial present. This study is conceptualized as the first in a series of examinations of similar dynamics in 1833, 1871-1881, 1946, 1981 and 2012.

Thaheer, Peiris, and Pathiraja base their analysis on a comparison of the opinions of three particular ethnic groups—the Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims.²¹ In other words, in spite of their careful attention to methodology, the research method itself constructs a tautological argument that reconciliation in Sri Lanka cannot transcend the ethnic divisions central to their analysis. More worryingly, by premising their analysis on the separate opinions of these three ethnic groups, Thaheer, Peiris, and Pathiraja inadvertently reify the very categories that they seek to challenge in their advocacy for progress towards the achievement of a ‘shared future.’ This example asks us to consider how scholars can effectively approach a discussion on post-war reconciliation *at the methodological level* without reinforcing the very analytical categories that it seeks to move beyond.²²

One possible solution to this methodological dilemma is to set aside (for a brief moment at least) the fixity of ethnicity in Sri Lanka. The scholarship on ethnicity in Sri Lanka is characterized by a heavy “primordialist bent” (Rogers, “Post-Orientalism” 11), i.e. the

²¹ For example, in the section on field research methodology, Thaheer, Peiris, and Pathiraja provide details of the district, sample size, Divisional Secretariat Division, and Ethnic Group that was targeted in their field research (25). Furthermore, the quantitative analysis of the entire book disaggregates respondents by ethnicity as Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim as reflected in the fact that almost all the Tables and Figures in the text are disaggregated on the basis of ethnicity.

²² Thaheer, Peiris, and Pathiraja’s methodological problem is also visible in some of the scholarship that has been published on reconciliation and the post-war dynamics in Sri Lanka. For example, in seeking to sketch out directions for post-war reconciliation in Sri Lanka, scholars have noted that the common cultural heritage shared by Sinhala-Buddhists with other ethnic identities can form the basis for the promotion of multiculturalism within the country (Silva & Hettige). Scholars have also sought to examine the impact of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism on issues such as history (Wickramasinghe, *Producing the Present*; Dewasiri) and film (Karunanayake & Waradas)

assumption that ethnic identities in the country have existed in its current form for centuries.²³ However, I draw on Rogers' assertion that it was only during the early years of British rule that these "identities that underpin ethnic and cultural nationalism were reconstructed and placed into a new intellectual framework" (Rogers, "Post-Orientalism" 12). Therefore, in order to examine the protean (as opposed to primordial) nature of ethnicity in Sri Lanka, I argue for a careful re-reading of the how these "new intellectual framework[s]" (Rogers, "Post-Orientalism" 12) were operationalized during a particular historical juncture. This is not to suggest that ethnicity is unimportant or irrelevant to the country's post-war challenges but rather to ask how to think about ethnicity without falling into a tautological dilemma.

Setting aside fixities is a crucial aspect of the genealogical method adopted by Michel Foucault in his later work.²⁴ As Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow point out

²³ The centrality of ethnicity to both political and epistemological work in Sri Lanka is traced by Rogers to the unique position of Sri Lanka in relation to India during British rule in the subcontinent. Rogers points out that the British chose to focus on ethnicity for two reasons; firstly, unlike the role of Hinduism in India, the dominance of Buddhism led the British to believe that the caste system functioned differently in both countries ("Post-Orientalism" 17). Secondly, due to the presence of a large number of Christian converts in the country prior to their arrival the British as well as the ignorance of the British about Buddhism, colonial authorities did not consider religion to be as important a factor as ethnicity in managing differences in the country (Rogers, "Post-Orientalism" 16).

²⁴ For a useful discussion on the methodological shifts in Foucault's work see Thomas Flynn's "Foucault's Mapping of History." Furthermore, as Mitchell Dean, one of Foucault's many interlocutors, points out genealogy is also crucial to the writing of a "history of the present" for Foucault. He states that, "a history of the present is concerned with that which is taken-for-granted, assumed to be given, or natural within contemporary social existence, a givenness or naturalness questioned in the course of contemporary struggles" (35).

For the genealogist there are no fixed essences, no underlying laws, no metaphysical finalities. Genealogy seeks out discontinuities where others found continuous development. It finds recurrences and play where others found progress and seriousness. It records the past of mankind to unmask the solemn hymns of progress. Genealogy avoids the search for depth. Instead, it seeks the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours. (106)

Applying this insight to the Sri Lankan context, I hope to demonstrate the need to also explore the “recurrence and play” of ethnicity in order to understand the “progress and seriousness” of its function after the war (Dreyfus and Rabinow 106). Therefore, rather than a stable (or continuous) factor in the epistemology and politics of Sri Lanka, a genealogical mode of inquiry suggests that ethnicity be approached as an apparatus or *dispositif*.²⁵

²⁵ In an interview titled “The Confessions of the Flesh,” Foucault provides a further explanation of what he means by a *dispositif* by saying that it is,

firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the [*dispositif*]. The [*dispositif*] itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements. Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this [*dispositif*] is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements... In short, between these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function which can also vary very widely. Thirdly, I understand by the term [*dispositif*] a sort of—shall we say—formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need. The [*dispositif*] thus has a dominant strategic function. (“The Confessions of the Flesh” 194-195)

Foucault's deployment of the concept of a *dispositif* in order to study sexuality can also arguably be extended to study ethnicity not as a "kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover" (*The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* 105). Instead Foucault suggests that a *dispositif* is

the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special know ledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power. (*The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* 105-106)

In a similar fashion, I examine ethnicity not as a natural given or an obscure domain but rather as a "surface network" that enables the linking of multiple indices of power and knowledge. Some of these indices could include concerns about the body, the process of knowledge production, the proliferation of discourse about the country and its people, as well as the emergence of how to manage competing claims to recognition.

Reading the *dispositif* of ethnicity genealogically helps to avoid the pitfall of treating it as a stable category of knowledge that has existed over a long *duree*.²⁶ Furthermore, the genealogical analysis of ethnicity as a *dispositif* enables a reading of its function as a form of categorization, while still paying attention to the different registers of knowledge census superintendents such as Arunachalam and Denham sought to index as they argued over how to deploy the category as a framework for understanding Ceylon/Sri Lanka. Such a reading also

²⁶ The supposed stability as a social category is also one of the most significant fictions which is foregrounded in any comparative analysis of this category in a census report.

enables a mapping of what was at stake in shifting the terminology to describe this category from nationality to race.²⁷ In short, approaching ethnicity as a system through which particular modes of power are operationalized and contested allows for a significantly different methodological approach to understanding the function of ethnicity in Sri Lanka.

The adoption of a genealogical mode of inquiry also makes it possible to read the colonial archive at this particular juncture of Sri Lankan history as a “transparent[y] on which power relations were inscribed” (Stoler, “Colonial Archives” 87). Reading material from the colonial archive involves addressing a number of attendant complexities, the most significant of which is the contingent politics of selecting and preserving particular forms and claims to knowledge. The archival material that I work with—census reports as well as the proposals for reform submitted to the Colonial Office between 1908 and 1912—provide valuable insights into the interactions between a local elite and their colonial rulers. However, as a result of these interactions, this archive privileges an education in English from Europe, access to colonial authorities, as well as the written over the spoken. This means, in practice, that I treat the archives as Ann Laura Stoler does, “more as moments that disrupt (if only provisionally) a field of force, that challenge (if only slightly) what can be said and done, that question (if only

²⁷ At various points of time British colonial bureaucrats used terms such as race, nationality, community, and class, to describe this form of social categorization. In this project I take as my focus one moment in which the shift in terminology reflected a much larger epistemological and political conversation taking place at that juncture of the country’s history. For the purpose of clarification, my analysis of this conversation that occurred between 1901 and 1911 is not intended to be read as being an equivalent to what took place after the end of the war in 2009. Instead, I hope to demonstrate how the questions that shaped the parameters of the debate in 1911 still continue to resonate more than a century later resulting in worries such as the one expressed by my mother in 2012.

quietly) ‘epistemic warrant,’ that realign the certainties of the probable more than they mark wholesale reversals of direction” (*Along the Archival Grain* 51). Therefore, while Arunachalam’s intervention (covered in chapter three) does cause problems for colonial epistemic practices, it does work to further reinforce colonial modes of knowledge. Similarly, the claims for recognition that emerged from the local population (which are the focus of chapter four) do not seek to overthrow the colonial political technologies but rather to ensure local participation in them.

Should these epistemic and political interventions of the local population therefore be discarded due to their failure to overthrow colonial forms of knowledge and practice? I would emphatically reject this assertion because the local population contributed to infusing the *dispositif* of ethnicity with their own dilemmas and contradictions, many of which continue to exist in the fabric of Sri Lanka’s post-war, colonial present. As this ongoing exchange demonstrates, a genealogical mode of inquiry allows practitioners such as myself to explore the ruptures and discontinuities of the function of ethnicity and how it comes to be preserved in dominant forms of knowledge and practice.²⁸ Therefore, rather than simply applying ethnicity as a dominant category of inquiry, this project seeks to trace how ethnicity emerged as the most important apparatus for answering the question “who is a Ceylonese?” at a particular juncture of Sri Lanka’s history. Along with complicating the archive, such an endeavor also provides a

²⁸ For Foucault, genealogy consists of an insurrection of two aspects of “subjugated knowledges[:] ...the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemization” (“Two Lectures” 81) and “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity” (“Two Lectures” 82).

vehicle for examining the insecurities and contestations emerging around this very question in the country's post-war, colonial present.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework: Reading an Ethnocracy

Having introduced and deployed the term ‘ethnocracy’ as a theoretical framework for analyzing “the problematic absence of state reforms amidst a secessionist civil war in Sri Lanka” (“Travails of State Reform” 36), Jayadeva Uyangoda rather pessimistically concludes that “Sri Lanka’s ethnocratic state defies reform” (“Travails of State Reform” 59). Uyangoda’s conclusion raises a serious theoretical dilemma for scholars using his insights since it would appear that there is already a foregone conclusion to any intervention that deploys ethnocracy as a framework for understanding Sri Lanka’s post-war, colonial present. However, Uyangoda’s appropriation of the Oren Yiftachel’s term is marked by his critique of Yiftachel’s hesitation to “characterize the state as such” (“Travails of State Reform” 54). Therefore, one possible direction for re-deploying Uyangoda’s theoretical framework without arriving at its foregone conclusion is to revisit the concept of “the modern state,” which the author himself had previously described as “the original totemic object, the signified” (“Biographies of a Decaying Nation-State” 177).²⁹

Uyangoda’s essay makes a suggestion of a possible alternative direction when he draws the reader’s attention to the need to consider the “social bases of political struggles arising from multiple contestations for state power” in order to understand the formation of Sri Lanka’s

²⁹ Uyangoda states,

the modern state—the original totemic object, the signified—is marked by a set of signifiers that have become eminently sacred in our intellectual beliefs, discourses and practice: territory, territorial unity and integrity, sovereignty, loyalty to the nation, citizenship, and national identity. These are the markers that give the modern state its sacred character. The modern nation-state cannot be conceived without or outside them. (“Biographies of a Decaying Nation-State” 177)

ethnocracy (“Travails of State Reform” 54). His avowedly Marxist perspective notwithstanding, Uyangoda’s comment on considering the social bases of political struggle can also be read as a reference to the question of how certain population groups advance claims for recognition in order to shape the trajectory of the state. Understood in this way, Uyangoda’s suggestion of the imbrication of claims to political recognition takes on a formulation that resonates with Michel Foucault’s theory of governmentality, which Foucault introduced in his *Security, Territory, Population* lecture series at the College de France. Foucault builds on the theorization of biopolitics he began in *The History of Sexuality* to construct a genealogy of how the problem of the population came to be the major concern, target, field, and basis of analysis for governmental rationality and practice at present.³⁰ In tracing this genealogy of biopolitics, Foucault introduces the term “governmentality” as a way of moving beyond the question of the state and its role in a society.³¹ In one of the later lectures of the 1977-78 series, Foucault argues that:

³⁰ In Volume 1 of *History of Sexuality*, Foucault defines biopolitics as being “focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls*” (139).

³¹ Foucault identifies three aspects that define the term governmentality in this lecture. He states

First, by “governmentality” I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. Second, by “governmentality” I understand the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power—sovereignty, discipline, and so on—of the type of power that we can call “government” and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses

Then we would have to say that the state is not that kind of cold monster in history that has continually grown and developed as a sort of threatening organism above civil society. What we would have to show would be how, from the sixteenth century, a civil society, or rather, quite simply a governmentalized society organized something both fragile and obsessive that is called the state. But the state is only an episode in government, and it is not government that is an instrument of the state. Or at any rate, the state is an episode in governmentality. (*Security, Territory, Population* 248)

In suggesting we understand the state not as an institution but rather as an episode of governmentality, Foucault's theory of governmentality allows for a re-examination of the centrality of the state in understanding Sri Lanka's ethnocratic present. This analytical pathway does not assume the primacy of the state, but instead acknowledges how multiple practices and discourses—along with the resistances that they engender—work together to produce particular concerns at a given moment in time. Furthermore, such a reading also recognizes how these forces align to shape the practices, discourses and resistance at play in post-war Sri Lanka today. Therefore, by bridging Uyangoda's conception of an ethnocracy with Foucault's theorization of governmentality, I hope to examine the emergence of ethnicity in Sri Lanka without arriving at Uyangoda's pessimistic conclusion.

Approaching the state as an episode in governmentality also means taking seriously how claims to recognition as a population emerge as the focus of governance in the country. Scholars

(*appareils*) on the one hand, [and, on the other] to the development of a series of knowledges (*savoirs*).

Finally, by "governmentality" I think we should understand the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the Middle Ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was gradually "governmentalized." (*Security, Territory, Population* 108-9)

such as Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller clarify Foucault's understanding of governmentality by directing attention to two critical concepts—political rationalities and governmental technologies. Rose and Miller argue that the analysis of the “intricate inter-dependencies” of these two concepts allows for the understanding of the “multiple and delicate networks that connect the lives of individuals, groups, and organizations to the aspirations of authorities...” (176). The unification of political rationalities and technologies also resonates with Foucault's approach to studying what he terms “regimes of practice” (“Questions of Method” 75). Foucault explains that analyzing “regimes of practices” involves the analysis of “programmes of conduct which have both prescriptive effects regarding what is to be done (effects of 'jurisdiction'), and codifying effects regarding what is to be known (effects of 'veridiction')” (“Questions of Method” 75). To apply this to a Sri Lankan context, studying how ethnic populations become the focus of governance therefore enables me to explore the discontinuities embedded in the emergence of an ethnocracy without disregarding its importance or function as a form of social categorization in Sri Lanka.

The compartmentalization of Rose and Miller's conceptualization of rationalities and technologies offers a helpful framework for analyzing the insertion of ethnicity into governmental practice in Ceylon/ Sri Lanka. Rose and Miller define political rationalities as being “the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualized, the moral justifications for particular ways of exercising power by diverse authorities, notions of the appropriate forms, objects and limits of politics, and conceptions of the proper distribution of tasks among secular, spiritual, military and familial sectors” (175). This understanding of political technologies is extremely useful for analyzing the production of knowledge about ethnicity through the 1901 and 1911 census reports because it offers a way of understanding how

notions of ethnicity were introduced and contested while at the same time being distributed as an epistemic tool (what is to be known) for governing the colony. In a similar (and related vein) Rose and Miller's understanding of governmental technologies is also an important framework for studying Sri Lanka's ethnocracy. They explain governmental technologies as the "complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambition" (175). Rose and Miller's framing of governmental technologies provides a critical lens for studying how contestations over ethnicity became the most significant vehicle for the recognition and negotiation of governmental ambitions for local population(s) in the country. Therefore, I use the concept of political rationalities (understood as "what is to be known") as a framework for studying the census reports and political technologies (understood as "what is to be done") as the basis for analyzing the contestations over the 1912 reforms.

The dichotomization of political rationalities from political technologies in this study is aimed at separating and discussing a number of concerns that emerge and gain prominence during this period in Sri Lanka's history. However, as Brockling, Krasmann and Lemke point out "analyses of governmentality are centered on the question of how practices and thinking about these practices constitute themselves mutually, or more precisely: how they translate into each other" (11). Therefore, although I discuss the Foucauldian concepts of political rationalities and technologies separately for the purpose of my analysis, I recognize that they are in fact interdependent and mutually constitutive.

Drawing on Foucault's concept of governmentality in order to study the emergence of Sri Lanka's ethnocracy is also fraught with the challenge of addressing Foucault's Eurocentrism.³² As many writers note in different ways, it is difficult to deploy Foucault in a discussion on postcolonialism without addressing his lack of attention to the colony as well as the perception of his anti-humanism and the closure of his work to forms of resistance to power.³³ However, there is also a growing interest in using and developing Foucault's Eurocentric conceptualization of governmentality to understand the dynamics of colonial pasts and postcolonial presents.³⁴ My

³² For postcolonial critiques of Foucault, see for example Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" as well as Said's eulogy for Foucault "Michel Foucault: 1927-1984" (195-6).

³³ A response to Foucault's lack of attention to resistance is suggested by Edward Said. In an essay to celebrate Foucault's life, Said notes,

More than anyone before him Foucault specified rules for those rules [which are taken for granted as an unconscious priori by all professionals], and, even more impressively, he showed how over long periods of time the rules become epistemological enforcers of what (as well as how) people thought, lived, and spoke. If he was less interested in how the rules could be changed, it was perhaps because as a first discoverer of their enormously detailed power he wanted everyone to be aware of what disciplines, discourses, *epistemes*, and statements were *really* all about, without illusion. (196)

³⁴ For example, Chatterjee's *Lineages of Political Society* as well as *The Politics of the Governed* use Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality as the springboard for the deeper examination of the function of politics in postcolonial India. Furthermore, David Scott's work draws from Foucault to revisit one of the first British interventions in colonial Sri Lanka aimed at establishing a 'modern' state. In a similar vein, Inda's edited volume, *Anthropologies of Modernity*, brings together a number of scholars to examine the function of governmentality in countries such as French Guiana, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Africa, Brazil, and Guatemala. Another example of this strand of thought is presented in Von Glahn's chapter which analyzes registration in Imperial China in order to

use of Foucault's work in this thesis is inspired by Dipesh Chakrabarty's response to Vivek Chibber's sustained attack on the work of the Subaltern Studies School in *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. In defending the work of the Subaltern Studies School, Chakrabarty argues that,

[w]e keep reading Marx or Weber or Durkheim or Freud not so much for what they may have been simply correct about... but to understand how and where they went wrong or how we may revise/update them for contemporary use... -Not because they were silly and obvious mistakes but because they were fascinating and interesting mistakes, committed precisely because the questions behind them were of fundamental importance to the social sciences even if the answers provided were at best controversial and at worst wrong. (24)

I want to extend this argument to include Foucault's work as well. While I am cognizant of the critiques and the limitations of his theorizations of power,³⁵ the questions his work provokes are generative in the sense that Chakrabarty intends when he highlight the work of Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Freud in the above quotation. Therefore, my interest in this thesis is less in

demonstrate that the concern about the population easily predated the emergence of governmentality in Europe traced by Foucault

³⁵ See for example Jean Baudrillard's *Forget Foucault* as well as Charles Taylor's extremely insightful essay "Foucault on Freedom and Truth" among others in David Couzens Hoy's *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. For an overview and response to feminist critiques of Foucault's work see for example Shane Phelan's "Foucault and Feminism", Monique Deveaux's "Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault" as well as Margret A. McLaren's *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity*.

Foucault's theories or their inadequacies but in using Foucault as a means of thinking through some of the generative questions that his work suggests.³⁶

Like Chakrabarty's defense of Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Freud, at the heart of this project are a number of questions that are generated by Foucault's work and ideas. As a result, a Foucauldian approach to the problem of ethnicity in Sri Lanka's present opens a space for thinking through particular problems that emerge in the function of colonial political rationalities and governmental technologies. Firstly, in what ways did the concerns and knowledges of the local population about ethnicity shape the census as a document of colonial epistemic practice and what effect did this have on the production of knowledge about the colony by colonial bureaucrats? Secondly, how did the contestations surrounding ethnic categorizations in the census emerge, play out and dialectically relate to political shifts taking place during this historical moment? Finally, what is the relationship between colonial and current contestations around ethnic categorizations and what are the epistemic challenges posed because of and through this relationship? In short, if as Foucauldian thought suggests, the constructions of ethnic categories were shaped as much by colonial subjects as they were by colonial bureaucracy, how

³⁶ Nor do I think that an attempt such as this would be fundamentally contradictory to Foucault's methodological or theoretical interests. Foucault himself notes, "[w]hat I say ought to be taken as 'propositions', 'game openings' where those who may be interested are invited to join in; they are not meant as dogmatic assertions that have to be taken or left en bloc ("Questions of Method" 74). As Garland points out, Foucault practiced a "decidedly pragmatic approach to the development of theory and the use of concepts. This approach led him to regard "theory" as a toolbox of more or less useful instruments, each conceptual tool designed as a means of working on specific problems and furthering certain inquiries, rather than as an intellectual end in itself or as a building-block for a grand theoretical edifice" (366).

are we to understand the contestations shaping ethnic categories in post-colonial countries such as Sri Lanka today?

Chapter 3 - Nationality or Race?: Census Reports & the Shaping of Political Rationalities

In his essay on the relationship between political rationalities and colonial governmentality, David Scott argues that “in order to understand the project of colonial power at any given historical moment one has to understand the character of the political rationality that constituted it” (“Colonial Governmentality” 204). However, instead of pursuing Scott’s aim of “historiciz[ing] European rule in a way that brings into focus the political rationalities in relation to which this rule was effected” (204), I turn away from Europe to historicize the political rationalities through which an ethnocentric form of governance came to be effected in Ceylon/Sri Lanka. In order to contextualize the emergence of ethnicity as a form of political rationality in Ceylon, I take as my focus the conversation between P. Arunachalam’s census report of 1901 and E.B. Denham’s *Ceylon at the Census of 1911*. This examination lays the groundwork for examining how, through the census, ethnicity came to have “codifying effects regarding what is to be known (effects of 'veridiction')” for the art of governance in Sri Lanka (Foucault, “Questions of Method” 75).

The work of Benedict Anderson, Bernard Cohn, and Arjun Appadurai has inspired a number of Sri Lankan scholars to explore the relationship between colonial censuses and the reification of ethnic identities in Sri Lanka (Wickramasinghe, *Ethnic Politics*; Rajasingham-Sennanayake; Meeto [Kamaljit Bhasin-Malik]). Colonial census reports also continue to influence the production of knowledge about Sri Lanka because Denham’s census report for instance, is often used by Sri Lankan writers as an authoritative primary source for the analysis

of social relationships at the turn of the century.³⁷ In contrast, it is only relatively recently that academics have shown an interest in studying the influence of Arunachalam's census report in shaping ethnic identities in the country.³⁸ However, at the time of his death in 1924, Arunachalam's 1901 census report was fettered as "the standard authority on the island ethnography" by the *Times of London* ("Sir P. Arunachalam Dead). The high praise from the metropole for a census directed by the only member of a local population to have served as Census Superintendent in the Indian Subcontinent raises questions about the contribution made

³⁷ For example, Kumari Jayawardena's *Nobodies to Somebodies*, quotes heavily from Denham but tends to use Arunachalam as a statistical source. Apart from this her work that discusses race/ nationality explicitly, *The Erasure of the Eurasians*, does mention Arunachalam's definition of who a Burgher is but apart from that does not refer to his census report. John D. Rogers' research on caste as well as Sri Lankan historiography after British colonization quotes two other works by Arunachalam but does not refer to his census report. However, Denham is an important source of information in both these essays. Having said this however, it is important to recognize the important contribution that both Jayawardena and Rogers make to understanding Sri Lankan history. Their textual turn, particularly Jayawardena's path breaking *The Rise of the Labor Movement in Ceylon* as well as *Ethnic and Class Conflicts in Sri Lanka* marked a significantly new approach to the reading and analysis of colonial documents. Another example of the elision of Arunachalam's census report is Nira Wickramasinghe's *Ethnic Politics*, which focuses on ethnic politics in 1920s Ceylon. In spite of her topic, which would seem to require an analysis of Arunachalam's census work, Wickramasinghe does not refer to Arunachalam at all but instead draws heavily from Denham.

³⁸ For example, Meeto's essay highlights the way in which Arunachalam frames the relationship between the Sinhalese and Tamils in the country as being one of conflict rather than coexistence while also furthering questionable theories about racial categories within the country. More recently the work of Daniel Bass on the country's Indian Tamil community highlights how Arunachalam's "conflation of cultural and biological categories" in his census report continues to impact ethnic relationships in the country today (59-60).

by Arunachalam to colonial political rationality in Ceylon. In order to address these questions, this chapter analyzes the 1901 census report and the conversation it provokes with Denham about the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality. By doing this I hope to understand how Arunachalam's intervention aimed at producing knowledge for the purpose of governance altered the "changing discursive field within which the exercise of power is conceptualized" in Sri Lanka (Rose and Miller 175).

Prelude to the 1901 Census

The early censuses in Ceylon were cadastral in nature and reflected Appadurai's suggestion that these attempts "set the grounds, and constituted a rehearsal, for later discourse concerning human communities and their enumeration" (124-125). For example, the first census of the colony that enumerated the population by caste was ordered by the Dutch Governor Willem Jacob van de Graaf in 1789 (Sarkar 18).³⁹ Following the ceding of the colony to the British, the next census was taken in 1814 and, like the previous Dutch census, sought to record the castes (rather than races) of the colonial subjects living in the coastal areas of the Island. The annexation of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815 brought the entire Island under the aegis of the British Empire and after this event an island-wide census was attempted again in 1824. The 1824

³⁹ While it is difficult to locate the report on this census, the memoirs of Thomas Van Rhee to his successor suggest that the caste of these Dutch subjects was the most important social categorization for colonial authorities. Governor Van Rhee's memoirs provide information on the various castes in the areas under Dutch control with a view to providing his successor how they are to be taxed. Given that cinnamon was one of the most important commercial crops for Dutch colonial authorities, and that cinnamon peeling was undertaken by a particular caste group in Ceylon, the enumeration of the population based on caste was economic and embedded in the land of the colony.

census also continued the practice of recording castes of the population (Rajasingham-Sennanayake 111). The enumeration of the population on the basis of castes reflected the pre-colonial organization of the population into the *rajakariya* system, a feudal system of compulsory service to the King or his agents. For the Dutch as well as early British rule in Ceylon, the *rajakariya* system was economically useful and enabled the colonizers to extract labor and revenue from the population without radically changing the country's economic system (K. M. De Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* 313). Therefore, the enumeration of the population on the basis of caste in early British colonialism in Ceylon was a reflection of the organization of the colony around what Scott would term "the mercantilist rationality of sovereignty" (David Scott, "Colonial Governmentality" 207).

The nexus between caste and colonial political rationalities started to collapse with the abolition of the caste-based *rajakariya* system through the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms of 1833, which, as Scott points out, marked a transition from the political rationality "of mercantilism or sovereignty" to "that of governmentality" ("Colonial Governmentality" 207). In fact, the Census Superintendent for 1891 census, Lionel Lee, notes that the recording of caste is explicitly against colonial policy. He states that he had even rejected a suggestion to enumerate castes in 1881 on the basis that, "caste is not in Ceylon so important a factor in social life as it is in India: and the inquiry would have led the people to think that an importance was now attached to an institution which it has been the declared policy of the Government of Ceylon to disregard" (*Census of Ceylon 1891* 3). Therefore, it could be argued that the enumeration of caste was an early indication of the relationship between colonial categorizations and its antecedent political rationality. More importantly however, I read it as merely the opening gambit in a much larger colonial knowledge project that was to take shape in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The first stage of this colonial epistemic project was initiated in 1871, when colonial authorities in Ceylon conducted the first ‘modern’ census along the lines of a similar intervention that was underway in India (Cohn 238). Marking the final emphatic shift in political rationalities, caste was no longer recorded as a significant social categorization at this census.⁴⁰ Instead, the census of 1871 recorded information on conjugal condition, sex, age, profession/ occupation, place of birth (nationality), race, religious denomination, and disabilities (if deaf, dumb, blind, crippled, or insane).⁴¹ Scholars have commented that one of the most interesting findings of this was its enumeration of a total of seventy-eight nationalities and twenty-four races in Ceylon⁴² (Rajasingham-Sennanayake 111). The differentiation between nationalities and races was rather incoherent because “Sinhalese” and “Tamil,” for instance, were recorded both as nationality and race. An examination of the groups recorded under nationality suggest that the origin of the person enumerated also appears to have been a factor in rationalizing the division between races and nationalities.⁴³ However, even place of birth does not appear to be an adequate basis for rationalization since even groups such as “Irish” and “Scotch” are recorded as both a race as well as a nationality. Rajasingham-Sennanayake points out that the distinction between race and

⁴⁰ This is not to suggest however that caste was no longer a factor in Sri Lanka. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that not only was caste deliberately ignored as part of colonial policy after 1830 (Rogers 63) but also that caste continues to play a significant role in Sri Lankan society today (Uyangoda, “The Inner Courtyard;” Uyangoda, “Local Democracy and Citizenship in the Social Margins”).

⁴¹ Form of Householder’s Schedule, Annexure D of 1871 Census Report.

⁴² Although the classification of race and nationality was fluid—for example Sinhalese and Tamils were considered both a race and a nationality. However, in general the term nationality appears to have referred to place of origin since among the list of those documented included Polish, Teuton, West Indian, and Abyssinian.

⁴³ Some of the nationalities included Polish, Teuton, Scotch, Irish, and Afghan.

nationality could have been introduced to “describe groups numerically too small to be called ‘races’ (111) but in spite of this suggests that the grounds on which these divisions were decided is unclear. One of the major reasons for this lack of rationalization in the 1871 census was the fact that the respondents were allowed to classify themselves. This process of data collection unsurprisingly produced what was seen as “chaotic statistics” (Jayawardena, *Erasure of the Eurasians* 43). Therefore, while the census of 1871 may have marked a turn away from a caste-based, mercantilist political rationality, it would be difficult to argue that in terms of knowledge production for governance, ethnicity was a critical discursive fields “within which the exercise of power [was] conceptualized” (Rose and Miller 175).

By the census of 1881 a shift was initiated towards making ethnicity the main axis for the census’ deployment of colonial political rationalities. For example, the 1881 census (like the one before it) recorded the different nationalities of those who were present in the country when the census was taken (Wickramasinghe, *Ethnic Politics* 7). However, Lionel Lee, the Census Superintendent, only used seven nationalities—the “Europeans,” “Sinhalese,” “Tamils,” “Moors,” “Malays,” “the Veddas” and “Other”—for the purpose of analyzing the population (xxviii).⁴⁴ Furthermore, a serious attempt was made to systematize the process of data collection in order to mitigate the problems that arose in 1871. One of the most significant changes to the process of data collection was that respondents were no longer allowed to classify themselves but instead had to respond to questions posed by enumerators. By the Census of 1891 the long list of nationalities that were present in the country at the time of the census was omitted from the final report by Lee who was supervising his second census of Ceylon. The almost silent abandoning of

⁴⁴ At the census of 1881 the number of nationalities in the colony decreased to seventy-one.

the understanding of nationality as ‘place of origin’ that appeared to be part of the rationalization of social groups in the country in 1871 in favor of ‘nationality’ as race can also be read as another step towards the insertion of a particularly ethnicized/racial form of categorization into colonial epistemic practice.

Therefore, this section suggests that ethnicity was already an important factor for colonial knowledge.⁴⁵ However, the instability surrounding ethnic categorization in the censuses prior to 1901 suggests that ethnicity had yet to be fully inserted into colonial epistemic practice. Scott argues that “something called “the colonial state” cannot offer itself up as the iteration and reiteration of a single political rationality” (197). The lead up to Arunachalam’s census report of 1901 is significant because it suggests that although Scott argues that Ceylon was inserted into colonial governmentality by 1833, there continues to be “discontinuities in which different political rationalities, different configurations of power, took the stage in commanding positions” both at that period and beyond (197). The prelude to the 1901 census therefore suggests that while ethnicity was becoming an increasingly important social categorization, its “codifying effects regarding what is to be known” had yet to stabilize as a factor in the colony’s political rationality (Foucault, Questions of Method 75). In short, my aim in this section was to demonstrate how difficult it was to insert the *dispositif* of ethnicity into political practice prior to 1901 because Arunachalam’s predecessors had focused their attention on stabilizing the census as an object of knowledge production rather than developing it as a tool of colonial governmentality.

⁴⁵ As evinced by the fact that separate ethnicity based representation had been introduced in 1833 through the Colebrooke-Cameron reforms which Scott argues marked the insertion of colonial governmentality into Ceylon.

Means and Instrumentalities: Arunachalam's 1901 Census and the Target of Political Rationalities in Ceylon

My previous section suggests that by 1901 “the orientation of the census [in Ceylon] had shifted away from taxation to knowledge” (Appadurai 128). However, there was still too much confusion and chaos for the census to be fully inserted at the level of colonial political rationality. One of Arunachalam's major contributions through his census report was his resolution of this epistemic dilemma for the colonial state. In terms of Scott's work, the examination of Arunachalam's intervention at the level of the process of knowledge production aims to lay bare the *target* of colonial political rationality in particular “the point or points of power's application, the object or objects it aims at, the means and instrumentalities it deploys in search of these targets, points, and objects” (193). Therefore, in this section I examine Arunachalam's intervention and how it stabilized the census as a critical tool for colonial political rationality.

Arunachalam's experiences in the bureaucracy of colonial Ceylon arguably had a significant role in shaping the means and instrumentalities that he sought to forge during his tenure as Census Superintendent. Arunachalam's appointment as Census Superintendent in 1900 was the culmination of fifteen years of navigating previously uncharted waters in a colonial bureaucracy.⁴⁶ He was the only member of the local population to have held the position of

⁴⁶ In that time, he had served in the Government Agent's Office in Colombo, as Police Magistrate and Commissioner of Requests in a number of districts in the country as well as District Judge all over the Island. A reflection of some of the challenges he faced is recounted by John Richard Weinman who states “Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam... would have acted as Colonial Secretary, if he was not Ponnambalam Arunachalam.... They might have given him a Province, but, instead, they made his appointment [Registrar-General] a first class one, gave him

Census Superintendent during British rule of the Indian Subcontinent and the first Ceylonese to enter the Civil Service through open competition. Prior to this appointment he was the Registrar-General of Ceylon, an office that put him in charge of both the Department of Land Registration and the Department for the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.⁴⁷ The two departments that Arunachalam had previously presided over—the registration of land, and the registration of births, deaths and marriages—are particularly important to the exploration of the means and instrumentalities he put in place through the 1901 census. As Appadurai’s analysis of the census in India reminds us, the census marks a shift in colonial epistemic priorities away from land and taxation to the enumeration of bodies. Furthermore, Ravindran Gopinath’s examination of registration practices in the British Raj demonstrates that the colonial state in India was less interested in the registration of individuals (i.e. births, deaths etc.) as it was in the enumeration of particular groups of populations (caste, race, and religion). Although Appadurai and Gopinath speak to India’s experience of colonialism, their insights allow for the suggestion that as the individual who had previously been in charge of registering both lands as well as persons, Arunachalam the Census Superintendent embodies the amalgamation of multiple indices of colonial epistemic practice.

the highest salary possible for a civil servant, and put him in the Legislature, and finally into the Executive Council. What more can you want, they asked, but they made his junior to act as Colonial Secretary” (55).

⁴⁷ His appointment to the post of Registrar-General in 1887 while still in the Fourth Class of the Civil Service caused nearly half of the members of the Ceylonese Civil Service to send a memorial to the Colonial Secretary protesting this move (Thalagodapitiya IV; Rutnam 3). His work in this post was well-received and his 1898 report on the vital statistics of the Island elicited the surprise of an eminent American statistician, Fredrich Hoffman, who wrote the Lieutenant Governor of the Island to express his “great surprise at the exceptional care and thoroughness with which the Report of Vital Statistics has been prepared.” (Rutnam 5).

Arunachalam's embodiment of these multiple indices of colonial epistemic practice is reflected in the means and instrumentalities he deploys to intervene at the level of the targets of colonial governmentality. Three important mechanisms of colonial knowledge production—the census manual (which set out the directions on how to conduct the census), the census ordinance (which was the legal mechanism that enabled the taking of the census), and the census report (which provided an overview and contextualization of the findings)—were arguably complimentary tools used by Arunachalam to achieve this objective.⁴⁸ This section explores how Arunachalam's intervention through his introduction of the manual as well as his revisions to the ordinance and report, disciplines the process of knowledge production. Furthermore, it also sheds light on how Arunachalam's interventions continue to influence the function of the census as a tool of knowledge production in Sri Lanka today.

From Law to Knowledge: Arunachalam's Census Ordinance of 1900

Arunachalam's census ordinance⁴⁹ is remarkable for the way in which it opens rather than restricts the play of the legal parameters for conducting the census. By contrast, the 1880 Census Ordinance, which was repealed by Arunachalam's 1900 ordinance, is extremely prescriptive as to the information that should be obtained through the census. For example, section 7 of the Census Ordinance of 1880 explicitly lists the "particulars" that should be obtained through the census. It states that the householder should provide information about "the

⁴⁸ The fact that Arunachalam includes the census ordinance (a legal change to the governance of the country) as part II of the census manual and includes the census manual as Appendix B to his census report is further evidence of the close relationship between the census ordinance, the census manual, and the conduct of the census.

⁴⁹ I refer to it as Arunachalam's census ordinance because the ordinance is drafted by Arunachalam himself after a lengthy consultation with Government Agents overseeing the Provinces.

name, sex, age, profession or occupation, relation to head of family, nationality, and religion of every person who abode in every house at the time appointed for the taking of the census, and also whether any were able to read or write or both, and whether any were blind, deaf, dumb, or insane.”⁵⁰ As Arunachalam was no doubt aware, this degree of specificity can hinder rather than augment the capacity of the state to collect data about its population. In fact, in his report on the 1901 census he explains that the reason the law had to be repealed is because it is “defective... in prescribing methods which had become antiquated” (25).

By contrast, in the 1900 census ordinance that Arunachalam drafted along the lines of the Indian Census Act (25), he takes pain to ensure as much flexibility as possible for the officials involved in the census operation. The reference to “particulars” in the 1900 census ordinance is deliberately vague about the information that census takers can obtain; as it holds that “the Governor may for the carrying out of the purposes of this ordinance from time to time, with the advice of the Executive Council, make rules consistent with the provisions of this Ordinance, and with the like advice rescind, revoke, amend, alter, or add to such rules.”⁵¹ It goes on to note that “the rules may prescribe... the particulars regarding which, the persons from whom, and the mode in which, information shall be obtained for the purposes of the census.”⁵² Apart from this statement, the Ordinance does not attempt to specify which particulars should be obtained. By somewhat counterintuitively expanding rather than limiting the flexibility of the census ordinance, Arunachalam makes a significant shift in the process through which knowledge about the citizens of the country is collected and ordered. The shift that Arunachalam introduces also

⁵⁰ Sec. 7 of the Census Ordinance No 09 of 1880

⁵¹ Sec. 5(1) of the Census Ordinance No 09 of 1900

⁵² Sec. 5(2b) of the Census Ordinance No 09 of 1900

gave the colonial government a great deal of flexibility in defining and changing the parameters of what constitutes the population at various points of time.

The significance of Arunachalam's change to the census ordinance was made clear more than a century later when a retired official of the census department, in his memoir of his four-decade long career in the department, describes the Arunachalam census ordinance as a skillful blend "of legislative experience with the practical information background" (de Alwis Goonatileke 11). He goes on to say that this 1900 Ordinance "substantially remained the basis for census taking in Sri Lanka throughout the years with minor amendments in No. 6 of 1945, No. 22 of 1955, No. 16 of 1981, No. 55 of 2000 and No. 26 of 2011" (de Alwis Goonatileke 11). As this official highlights, Arunachalam's census ordinance shaped the legal process through which knowledge was produced not only by Denham but also by his successors more than a century later. In contrast, the British administrators who preceded him did not possess either Arunachalam's farsightedness or his capacity to give legal shape to an epistemic process. Therefore, the census ordinance of 1900, drafted by the only Ceylonese to hold the office of Census Superintendent prior to independence, is an important factor that enables Arunachalam to expand how the census can be deployed in order to govern the population of the colony.

From Discipline to Knowledge: Arunachalam's Census Manual

Arunachalam's census manual is also vital because it is the first significant attempt to systematize and give concrete shape to the process for conducting the census. Arunachalam himself makes this clear in his introduction to the report when he notes that the Manual "should considerably lighten the preparatory work of the Superintendent of the next Census. I should have been saved much labour and thought if I had inherited such a handbook from my predecessors" (26). Denham found this manual so useful that his preface to the 1911 census

report notes, “the preliminary arrangements for the census were considerably simplified by the excellent Census Manual prepared by Mr. Arunachalam for the Census of 1901, which formed the basis for the Manual issued for the 1911 Census” (v). The compilation and publication of a manual not only systematized the process of data collection for the census but also significantly changed the ways in which the production of knowledge about the colony was approached. In fact, more than a century later, Arunachalam’s influence continues to shape the process for knowledge production through the census with separate manuals for enumerators and supervisors being published by the Department of Census and Statistics. As de Alwis Goonatilleke points out in his detailed explication of the process of census taking “the procedure and methods introduced in the 1901 census have been found to be so satisfactory that it was adopted by all subsequent censuses up to 2001” (22).

While Arunachalam expanded the questions that could be asked by census takers, he simultaneously instituted a highly disciplined approach to the process of producing knowledge about the population in the colony. In contrast to the far more haphazard system of enumeration that was in place for the 1891 census,⁵³ the 1901 census manual establishes a hierarchy as well as spatial relationships between four layers of census officials. For example, in Chapter III of the census manual, Arunachalam sets up the roles and responsibilities of each grade of census

⁵³ The headmen were appointed as enumerator and expected to collect the data in each village or division that they oversaw and send it to the main census office in Colombo. As Lionel Lee notes in his 1891 census report, “The chiefs of the divisions and the village headmen possess an intimate knowledge of places and of the people belonging to them, which could not be acquired by a stranger except by long residence. These officers, therefore, naturally and effectively, performed the duties of enumerators under the immediate supervision of their official chiefs, upon whom depended all the work of superintendence and arrangement” (2).

official. He creates a system wherein an enumerator who oversees a block (“the local jurisdiction of an enumerator” [Census Manual 51]) is answerable to a supervisor who oversees a circle, which consists of a number of enumerator blocks. The supervisor in turn reports to the Chief Headman of a Division (District Mudaliyar; Ratemahatmaya, Vanniya, or Maniagar) who in turn functions under the authority of the Commissioner of the Census in that Province or District.⁵⁴ These Commissioners of the Census were to function as deputies to the Superintendent of the Census. What is particularly significant about the Arunachalam census manual is the way in which he approaches the process of knowledge production as a martial exercise with expanding layers of responsibility and expanding areas of spatial control.

The importance of martial discipline to the process of knowledge production is also underscored by Arunachalam’s institution of a census drill. Arunachalam explains the importance of the drill to the process of knowledge production in his main report by saying:

But rules, however carefully prepared and illustrated by model schedules, &c., are but imperfectly understood by the average village enumerator, and it is essential that instruction should be for the most part imparted to them orally. I therefore required each supervisor to put his enumerators through a practical course of training by making them visit a number of houses and fill in schedules for the residents of such houses. These trial forms were examined by the supervisor, and mistakes in them were pointed out to, and corrected by, the enumerators. (28)

He goes on to say that “the drilling of enumerators in Census detail in this manner is a point to which too much importance cannot be attached” (28). As these lines demonstrate, the process of

⁵⁴ The Government Agent, Assistant Government Agent of a Province or District, or the Chairman of the Municipality of Local Board would function as Commissioners of the Census for their respective jurisdictions.

knowledge production is set up along the lines of a military exercise with the junior cadets (the enumerators) drilled by their officers (the supervisors). Significantly, in the census manual the responsibility for drilling the enumerators is placed in the hands of the Commissioners of Census, who in effect function as Arunachalam's deputies in the field. It may be possible to read this extract as suggesting that Arunachalam was relying on oral tradition in his privileging of the importance of verbally communicating these instructions to the enumerators. However, I would argue that Arunachalam's assertion is grounded more in his desire to ensure that the operation of the census is smooth, particularly with his awareness of the 'chaotic statistics' that were produced due to the ad-hoc process adopted in some of the previous censuses in the country. This reading also furthers my assertion that Arunachalam's interest here is in disciplining the process of knowledge production through the census in order to make the census a useful tool of governmental practice. In a sense it could be argued that Arunachalam's intervention aims at disciplining the body of knowledge about the country through the conduct of the census. Therefore, if the aim of his census ordinance was to open the legal parameters of the census, Arunachalam's census manual seeks to discipline the process through which colonial knowledge is produced. This intervention is particularly important given that the previous European Census Superintendents had found it difficult to stabilize the process for collecting statistics about the colony.

From Census to Knowledge: Arunachalam's Vision for the Census Report

If his census ordinance and manual shaped the means and instrumentalities of colonial political rationality, Arunachalam's census report is also significant for how it seeks to produce targets for the operation of a colonial political rationality. One way in which he aims to do this is

by shifting the primary concern for census superintendents away from the accuracy of data towards the function of the census as a tool of colonial governmentality.

Prior to the publication of his *The Census of Ceylon 1901* the major concern for census superintendents was how to ensure an accurate reflection of state of the colony. For example, the census of 1871, which was referred to as the “first census taking according to modern ideas” (Lee, *Census of Ceylon, 1881* xv), includes a significant discussion of how rumors among the local population affected the collection of data about the population (Williams xii-xiii). The circulation of these rumors and resistance to the census was attributed to the fact that the census was “regarded as an invasion of the privacy of domestic life, so jealously guarded by Eastern nations” (Williams xiv). Central to Williams’ claims (which were also intended as a defense of the inadequacies of the 1871 census) is the argument that “Eastern nations” were unprepared for introduction of ‘modern,’ ‘scientific’ methods of knowledge production such as the census.⁵⁵

If the introduction of a ‘scientific’ undertaking was the most significant problem for the census of 1871, by 1881 the focus of the Census Superintendent had shifted to ensuring the accuracy of the census results. In 1881 Lionel Lee notes that “[e]nquiry into the system adopted in Ceylon in 1871 convinced me that although that system was sufficiently simple, it failed to afford any test of the accuracy of the work done” (*Census of Ceylon, 1881* xv). Similarly in 1891 Lee takes pains to describe the process of tabulation, which according to him was difficult but eventually resulted in the “establishing [of] complete accuracy” (*Census of Ceylon 1891* 5). As these examples indicate, the main concern of the Census Superintendents prior to Arunachalam

⁵⁵ As Meeto points out, there was opposition along similar lines when the proposal to conduct a census was first made in England (77).

was on the data produced by the census rather than on the role of the census as a tool for colonial knowledge production.

In contrast, Arunachalam articulates an ambitious vision for a census report that would shift its point of application away from the question of the accuracy of its data to the deployment of the census as a tool for the advancement of a colonial political rationality. For example, in his introduction to the 1901 census report, Arunachalam notes that

It has been said that half the circle of sciences and all the circle of human interests are open to a Census reviewer, and that the perfect Census report can be written only by that rare and fortunate individual who is at once a facile and elegant writer, a good mathematician, an authority on vital statistics, well versed in economic problems and linguistic science, and thoroughly acquainted with history, the religions, the literatures, the customs and superstitions of the people enumerated, and the intricacies of their caste and tribal divisions. (1-2)

Arunachalam's ambitious attempt to fuse these various 'modern' disciplines into a census report stands in sharp contrast to the efforts of his predecessors. Arunachalam does go on to say that he "cannot lay claim to such qualifications" (2). In spite of this however, the kind of intervention he believes constitutes an "ideal of a census report" (1) encompasses the disciplines of mathematics, demography (vital statistics), economics, linguistics, history, literature, and anthropology. The desire to amalgamate these disciplines in a census report suggest that for Arunachalam was aware that the census was not merely a document that allowed the colonial state to "systematic[ally] quantif[y]" bodies (Anderson 168). Instead he realized that a census report had the potential to produce targets for colonial political rationality.

Arunachalam's interest in producing targets of governmentality is also visible in the way he expands the colonial categories that are covered in the census report. The 1901 census report is significant for its inclusion of questions regarding whether an individual was Low-Country or Kandyan Sinhalese,⁵⁶ the denomination the Christians in the country belonged to, the introduction of a question on marital status, the establishment of the distinction between earner and dependent as well as principal and subsidiary occupation that was critical to understanding labor practices and relationships in the country, and, finally, a question relating to English literacy in the country. Therefore, another significant result of Arunachalam's expanded vision for the census report is that it significantly extends the scope for a census in the country.

It is hardly surprising then that Denham's report which follows on the heels of these interventions makes a far more concerted attempt to expand Ceylon as a category of knowledge by including detailed district histories,⁵⁷ a chapter on "how the East has been *outwardly* affected by Western civilization" as well as a chapter euphemistically termed "Nomenclature" in which Denham discusses caste in Sinhala society as well as the practices of naming in Ceylonese society, in spite of the fact that the census itself did not collect any information on caste groups in the country.⁵⁸ This suggests that the expansion of the categories covered in the census and the

⁵⁶ The division of the Sinhalese into these categories was a reflection of Sri Lanka's experience of colonialism since the hilly, Kandyan kingdom had only fallen to a European power in 1815. In contrast, the low-country areas (or coastal areas) were ruled successively by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British since 1505.

⁵⁷ In the 1901 census report, district histories are only included as an Appendix (Appendix A) to the Report.

⁵⁸ As Denham himself points out, "To the Sinhalese his name and the names of his garden and property are matters of the greatest importance. These names are indications of his ancestry, his family history, and his social position" (178). The ge name continues to play an important role in Sri Lankan society to the extent that the President in his most recent Policy Statement to Parliament proposed that ge names be made optional rather than mandatory in all

extensive descriptions that make Denham's report so useful to scholars today are made possible by Arunachalam's vision for a census report. In other words, Denham's expansion of Ceylon as a category of knowledge through the 1911 census report is only possible because it is constituted as such by Arunachalam in his 1901 census report. Therefore, Arunachalam's census report, which, as noted previously, is often ignored by scholars today in favor of Denham's, is critical to the understanding of the emergence of ethnicity in Sri Lanka. Arunachalam's report is central to this endeavor because it represents the first systematic attempt to position the census report as a tool for the production of targets for colonial political rationality.

The previous section has demonstrated how Arunachalam's census ordinance, census manual, and census report represent significant epistemic interventions that informed the governance of conduct of the colony. What is particularly significant about this intervention is the way in which Arunachalam adapts and deploys three key instruments of colonial governmentality—law, military control, and the census report—as a means of influencing the production of knowledge about the colony. In other words, the means and instrumentalities deployed by Arunachalam do not merely extend “what is to be known” about ethnicity but go further to stabilize and contour the very parameters that codify the “effects of ‘veridiction’” in Sri Lanka (Foucault, “Questions of Method” 75). By doing so he is able to make the census report the nucleus around which multiple indices of knowledge are brought together for the purpose of governing the population of the colony. As a result of this endeavor, I assert that Arunachalam succeeds in anchoring the census report as one of most critical tools for colonial political rationalities in Ceylon.

interactions with the government (See-<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/150906/news/ge-names-can-be-optional-says-president-in-parliament-163208.html>).

Zones of Functionality: Ceylon as the Field of Colonial Political Rationality

If the census ordinance, manual, and report enabled Arunachalam to stabilize the target of colonial political rationalities in Ceylon, his intervention also aims to shape the field of operation of colonial political rationalities in Ceylon. Like Scott's analysis of the 1833 Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms in Ceylon, the analysis of the 1901 census report facilitates the study of "the zone that [colonial political rationality] actively constructs for its functionality" ("Colonial Governmentality" 193). Arunachalam's report echoes Scott's insight as it reflects a growing concern with establishing Ceylon as a field of operation for the census.⁵⁹ What is significant about Arunachalam's intervention is that it coincides with his efforts to transform the census report itself into a document central to colonial governmentality. As a result, the analysis of how Arunachalam constitutes Ceylon as a field of operation for colonial political rationalities enables a more nuanced mapping of the field of political rationality in which the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality emerged as a problem of governance for the colonial state.

In seeking to establish the census as a document central to the function of colonial political rationality, Arunachalam takes pains to demonstrate the importance of understanding Ceylon as a field of operation. For example, whereas the census reports of G. S. Williams (1871) and Lionel Lee (who authored both the 1881 and 1891 census reports) focus almost exclusively

⁵⁹ This is not to suggest that Ceylon had not existed previously as a category of colonial knowledge since a number of British writers going back to Robert Percival and John Davy had contributed to expanding colonial knowledge about Ceylon since the publication of Robert Knox's *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon* in 1681.

Furthermore, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, there were a number of governmental technologies at work in constituting Ceylon as distinct from India.

on the statistics emerging from the census, Arunachalam's report provides "a short account of the island, its natural features, history, and civil administration" (2). The 1901 census report also includes short descriptions of the Island's mountains, rivers, lakes, irrigation works, ports and harbors, climate, rainfall, health, flora and fauna, and natural resources (3-6), as well as an overview of the colony's pre-colonial and colonial history (7-15), and its current civil administrative structure (16-22).⁶⁰ Of particular significance is the way in which he locates Ceylon's place in the world. Whereas Denham compares the size of Ceylon in relation to Greece, Holland, Belgium and England by way of introduction to the colony (1), Arunachalam's report locates Ceylon in terms of distance from England, Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, Aden, Gibraltar, Singapore, Hong Kong, Fremantle, Melbourne, Auckland, and Yokohama (3).⁶¹ Arunachalam justifies his decision to expand the information included in a census report on the grounds that it would result in a "better understanding of the report" (2). His emphasis that these details enable the "understanding" of the report rather than Ceylon suggests that Arunachalam's intervention could be read as a moment in which Ceylon as an epistemic category comes to be subsumed to the census' field of operation at the level of colonial political rationality.

This shift away from Ceylon as a category of knowledge to Ceylon as a field of political rationality is significant because the choices and the descriptions provided by Arunachalam appear to be more at home in the Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was founded in 1845 with the stated aim "to institute

⁶⁰ In fact, in commenting on the differences between his and Arunachalam's report, Denham says that since the chapters outlined above "embody information which can be best obtained by reference to them" (vi) there was no need for him to include such information in his report.

⁶¹ Lionel Lee's 1891 census report does not introduce Ceylon in relation to other countries in this way.

and promote enquiries into the history, religion, literature, arts and social condition of the present and former inhabitants of this Island with its geology and mineralogy, its climate and metrology, its botany and zoology” (Stark 1). As these lines suggest, the Royal Asiatic Society and its work aimed at constituting Ceylon as a category of colonial knowledge. It is significant that many of the areas of knowledge that they identify as requiring further inquiry are the ones that Arunachalam chooses to include in his report more than half a century later.⁶² Therefore, it is clear that Ceylon had already been constituted as a particular category of knowledge through the ‘oriental’ research of the Royal Asiatic Society. However, the significance of Arunachalam’s report is that it marks a critical moment in which Ceylon as a category of colonial knowledge is directly inserted into the field within which the conduct of the colony was governed.

This section has briefly mapped out how Arunachalam sought to insert Ceylon into colonial political rationality by constituting it as a field within which political rationality operates rather than as a category of knowledge. In his essay “Colonial Governmentality,” Scott states that what interests him “is the emergence at a moment in colonialism's history of a form of power... which was concerned above all with disabling old forms of life by systematically breaking down their conditions, and with constructing in their place new conditions so as to enable-indeed, so as to *oblige*-new forms of life to come into being” (193). Inspired by Scott, I would argue that Arunachalam’s census report is particularly significant because it actively seeks to dismantle the conditions under which knowledge about the Island was produced for the purpose of constituting a new colonial political rationality.

⁶² It is hardly surprising then that Arunachalam was the first Ceylonese to be elected President of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1916.

Drawing the sections on the targets—the manual, ordinance, report—and fields of colonial political rationality together makes visible how Arunachalam’s attempt to construct Ceylon as a field of functionality coincided with his intervention to transform the census into a tool of colonial political rationality. These symbiotic objectives simultaneously affirm the importance of the census to colonial governmentality while enabling both the country and its colonial categories to be conceptualized on an equal footing for the purpose of exercising power over the population in the colony. This intervention is important because it allows the statistics produced through the census to become a significant “technical factor” in what Foucault terms the “unblocking of the art of government” (Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* 140).⁶³ Crucially, the procedural unblocking of the art of government also lays the groundwork for the insertion of ethnicity into colonial governmentality through the shaping of political rationalities.

⁶³ Foucault binds the emergence of statistics with the emergence of the problem of the population. In his famous lecture on governmentality, he states,

it is thanks to the perception of the specific problems of the population, and thanks to the isolation of the level of reality that we call the economy, that it was possible to think, reflect, and calculate the problem of government outside the juridical framework of sovereignty. And that same statistics, which, within the framework of mercantilism, had only ever been able to function within and, in a way, for the benefit of a monarchical administration that itself functioned according to the form of sovereignty, now becomes the main technical factor, or one of the main technical factors, in unblocking the art of government.

How in fact did the problem of population make possible the release of the art of government? The perspective of population, the reality of phenomena specific to population, makes it possible to eliminate the model of the family and to re-focus the notion of economy on something else... Statistics enables the specific phenomena of population to be quantified and thereby reveals that this specificity is irreducible [to the] small framework of the family. Apart from some residual themes, such as moral or religious themes, the family disappears as the model of government. (*Security, Territory, Population* 103)

From Nationality to Race: The Arunachalam-Denham Debate as Effect

The previous sections mapped the procedural interventions that enabled the unblocking of the art of government. In this section I take as my focus the question of how the relationship between the nation(s) and the state were embedded in the new conditions that were emerging in this unblocked art of government. In other words, it explores how “the terrain of the political struggle itself” (David Scott, “Colonial Governmentality” 198) was transformed by emergence of the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nation as a problem for colonial political rationalities between 1901 and 1911.

Scholars have argued that, prior to 1901, there was “a certain amount of incoherence in the[] classifications” surrounding the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality. (Rajasingham-Sennanayake 111; Wickramasinghe *Ethnic Politics* 6). In his 1891 census report, Lionel Lee appears to use the terms “race” and “nationality” interchangeably, referring in general to the “increase in numbers of the races of the population” and then going on refer to the Tamil and Moorman populations as “immigrant nationalities” (11). Lee also does not attempt to provide the reader with a detailed history or background information on each of these races/nationalities, and most of his chapter deals with the growth of the population of each race/ nationality. As a result of this approach perhaps, the 1891 census report does not contain a separate chapter on race/ nationality and these groups are discussed under the title “The Progress of the Population” (11). These examples indicate that nationality/ race was an important aspect of the census reports prior to 1901. However, I would assert that it is the release of Arunachalam’s 1901 census report with its lengthy chapter on nationality that marks the moment in which the question of nationality/ race emerges as an epistemic question for colonial political rationality.

Arunachalam's definition of nationality is the first significant attempt to define the term in relation to the census in Ceylon. While admitting that there is really no agreement on the term, Arunachalam attempts to articulate an understanding of the term that might be applicable to Ceylon. He articulates what he reads as the dominant Hegelian view of nationality as being that "the state should... be national, and the nation should be a unit comprising individuals speaking the same language and of the same racial origin. Heterogeneous elements might be absorbed, but if they could not be reduced to the national type, they should be eliminated" (73). However, Arunachalam critiques this view of nationality on the grounds that though it did lead to the "unification of Germany in 1870," it "has led in later years to the deplorable excesses of anti-Semitism, from which England alone of European countries is free. To this theory also we owe the pretensions of the Russian Empire to at least a presidency over all Slavonic communities" (73). What is particularly significant about Arunachalam's explanation of nationality is his desire to demonstrate that understanding nationality in terms of a single social group coming together to constitute a state is a destructive vision for a society. As a result, Arunachalam suggests that the state is constituted by many nationalities or, in other words, a coming together of different nations with specific histories, languages, political institutions and characters. This understanding is reflected in his chapter on nationality, which includes a lengthy description of the distinct histories, customs and practices of the many nationalities in the country. Arunachalam's discussion of both Germany and the Russian Empire suggests that his privileging of nationality is embedded less in the provision of an ethnographic description of distinct groups than in foregrounding the management of difference as a problem for governance. Although he goes on to use the terms "nationality" and "race" interchangeably throughout this chapter of the census report, it is important to underscore that, from the very beginning of the chapter, he

attempts to challenge the suggestion that a nation is constituted by a single social group. Arunachalam's position on nationality is particularly significant because for Arunachalam, nationality is not simply a basis for analysis but rather a way of understanding and thereby governing distinct modes of life in the country. To re-state this in Foucauldian terms, Arunachalam's understanding of nationality privileges the production of social groups in the country as distinct populations for colonial political rationality rather than as statistical categories within the census' epistemic field of operation.

To fully understand the impact of the shift in the relationship between the *dispositif* of ethnicity/ nationality and colonial political rationalities that Arunachalam initiates, we need to read his view of nationality alongside that of his more cited predecessor, Denham's privileging of race. Denham's advocacy for race rather than nationality hinges on a fundamental disagreement with Arunachalam's understanding of nationality. Denham's begins "The Races of Ceylon" chapter of his 1911 census report by making explicit his preference for race rather than nationality by saying,

[i]n spite of the former use of the word nationality, it cannot be regarded as an appropriate description of the various peoples in Ceylon. The races in Ceylon are clearly differentiated—inter-marriages between them have been very rare; they have each their own particular religion to which the large majority belong, and they speak different languages. But of the races which are the most numerous in Ceylon—Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Malays, Burghers, and British—only one race can regard Ceylon as the home of the nation and the shrine of its national traditions. (194)

In these lines Denham challenges Arunachalam's understanding of nationality by claiming that only one race "can regard Ceylon as the home of the nation and the shrine of its national

traditions” (194). In contrast to Arunachalam’s cautioning against the potential ill-effects of a single social group being recognized as the basis for the state, Denham contends that only the Sinhalese can make a claim to being a nation within the space of Ceylon. Central to this perspective is the argument about the “home of the nation” and the “shrine of its national traditions,” which further emphasize the German and Russian perspectives that Arunachalam cautions against in his report. At the heart of the difference between Arunachalam and Denham is the question of the political rationalities that constitute the relationship between the nation and the state. To frame this in terms of governmentality, Denham appears to be suggesting that Arunachalam’s perspective is an inadequate basis for managing the competing demands to recognition as populations.

In this section, I have aimed to demonstrate how the debate between Arunachalam and Denham brought into focus the question of the relationship between the nation(s) and the state as a problem for colonial political rationalities. Arunachalam’s census report marks a change in the relation of force between the colonizers and the colonized since it is his intervention regarding nationality that provokes Denham to articulate this understanding of race. Furthermore, the terrain on which Denham contests his predecessor is still fundamentally at the level of population and its relationship to governance in spite of his disagreement with Arunachalam’s understanding of nationality. This turn of events suggests that Arunachalam’s census report, which initiates the emergence of ethnicity as a problem for colonial governmentality, also influences the shift in “*the terrain of the political struggle itself*” (Scott, “Colonial Governmentality” 198). As a result of Arunachalam’s intervention, I would argue that future contestations over the relationship between the nation(s) and the state would have to be contested through the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality.

The Challenge of Constituting Colonial Political Rationality

The above discussion highlights how the conversation between Arunachalam and Denham marks a critical moment in which ethnicity is inserted into governmentality. It is also clear that both Arunachalam and Denham shared a similar understanding of what nationality/race meant.⁶⁴ However, for the *dispositif* of ethnicity/nationality/race to be fully inserted into colonial political rationality, the basis on which ethnic differences were to be constituted had to be clearly defined. Paying attention to the contradictions and difficulties embedded in this process of insertion helps to provide a more nuanced perspective on how the codification of the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality through the census translated into the emergence of ethnicity as an epistemological problem for colonial governmentality.

Due to their familiarity with nationality and race, establishing the demarcating lines between the different ethnic groups in the country was a significant epistemic challenge for both Census Superintendents. For example, Arunachalam posits that “it is now generally believed that the progenitors of the Sinhalese race were Aryan settlers from Magadha (the modern Behar) in North India” (75), quite clearly arguing for the Aryan heritage of the Sinhalese. He then discusses the Tamils as being “an old Dravidian race, who, before the dawn of history, preceded

⁶⁴ Arunachalam claims that the markers of nationality are “belong[ing] to the same stock and having a common language, character, and political institutions” (73). As quoted above, Denham’s advocacy for race is on the grounds that “inter-marriages between them have been very rare; they have each their own particular religion to which the large majority belong, and they speak different languages” (194). Although at first glance these categories may appear to be disparate, a closer examination of the discussion on each of the nationalities/ races in the census reports highlights the extent to which both Arunachalam and Denham share similar understandings but different names for such markers of difference.

the Aryans in the colonization of India, and who, though in later times they adopted Aryan civilization, have modified it and retained their individuality” (79-80). As these lines immediately indicate there is already a significant amount of confusion in the attempt to differentiate between the ‘pure’ Aryan character of the Sinhalese and the ‘pure’ Dravidian character of the Tamils. This confusion over Sinhalese and Tamils is also visible in Denham’s report, in spite of his bold assessment regarding the claims of the Sinhalese to nationhood in the Island. He says for example, “[a]ll authorities on the race question are agreed that the Sinhalese are a mixed race... It was practically impossible that they should be otherwise —invasion succeeded invasion from India, the ruling dynasty was for generations Tamil, and there must have been constant fusion of the two races” (209). If there was indeed “constant fusion” as Denham claims, then it is difficult to define these races as being completely distinct. Such a realization also makes it difficult to manage competing claims to recognition as populations.

Given that race was such an unstable marker of difference, both Arunachalam and Denham turn their attention to language as a more reliable demarcation of populations. However, following lengthy meditations about the Sinhala and Tamil languages, each writer concludes that language is a significant though ultimately inadequate marker of racial difference.⁶⁵ Therefore, although the conversation between Arunachalam and Denham initiates a shift in colonial political rationality, a closer examination reveals that they are both aware of the need to provide

⁶⁵ Arunachalam for instance includes a discussion on the Sinhalese language and its relationship to Sanskrit but concludes by saying that “language [is] independent of race” (77). Denham disagrees with Arunachalam’s claim as to the Sanskrit origins of the Sinhalese language but concludes by saying that “though language is a useful indication of race, it cannot be accepted as anything more than corroborative evidence in support of a theory of the origin of the race” (209).

a concrete, epistemic basis for addressing doubts about the centrality of the *dispositif* of ethnicity/ nationality/race to colonial governmentality.

Resolving the Confusion: From the Body of the Colonized to the Body of Knowledge

Arunachalam, the embodiment of colonial epistemic indices, initially considers the embedding difference in the body of the colonized. For example, he says “[m]ore important than the scientific study of the language is careful observation by anthropologists of the crania, facial features, bodily structure and proportion, microscopic structure of the hair, colour of the skin, &c., of the Veddas, Rodiyas, Sinhalese, and Tamils” (76). However, in spite of his emphasis on the body of the colonized as a marker of difference, he goes on to state that

[i]n the present state of knowledge it is possible to express only a reserved opinion that there is a greater affinity of the Veddas with the Dravidian Tamils than with the Sinhalese; that the Sinhalese are a mixed race combining Aryan, Dravidian, Vedda, Mongolian, and Malay elements; and that the negritic element suggested by the French anthropologists is wanting, whether in the Vedda, the Tamil, or the Sinhalese. (76)

What is significant here is that although Arunachalam makes a claim to racial distinctions based on the body, he almost simultaneously argues that one cannot make this claim with a great degree of certainty. More significantly, Arunachalam’s comments also suggest that in order to mitigate the inadequate, ethnologically scientific investigations of the human body, the body of knowledge should become the focus of an intervention aimed at constituting a population.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Arunachalam is also clearly a product of a colonial approach to understanding difference as his understanding of the body is also clearly marked by the kinds of knowledge produced about the colonized in Europe (Levine).

However, I wish to remind the reader that unlike his predecessors, he was the first Census Superintendent in Ceylon

Denham's attempt to deal with this dilemma differs slightly from Arunachalam's advocacy for an ethnological mode of investigation. Instead he uses the colonial gaze in order to legitimize his claim to difference while resolving any confusion that may arise. For example, he says "It is remarkable that the race of the earliest settlers should have been preserved to the extent it has, for it is clear to the most superficial observer that there are very marked physical differences to-day between the Sinhalese and the Tamils" (209). The colonial gaze is similarly deployed to discuss the country's Moor population. Denham says,

[a]ny one who knows the Tamils and Moors will be aware of many distinctive characteristics of the Moorman, who in many ways bears little resemblance to the Tamil. They must, of course, be very closely intermixed, but the original Arab blood has left its mark upon the race, and their religion, Muhammadanism, has served to emphasize certain differences. Physically, too, they present considerable contrasts, and a careful anthropological examination would probably detect certain marked characteristics which would separate them from the ordinary Tamil population. (237)

The use of terms like "superficial observer," "little resemblance," and "considerable contrast" further emphasize the way Denham deploys the colonial gaze whenever the reader may be confused as to the clear distinctions between the various races on the island.

What is particularly significant about both Arunachalam and Denham's attempts to demarcate clear and strict lines of racial difference between communities is that, paradoxically, the turn to the body makes each of their claims to racial distinction untenable. As a result, both authors seek to legitimize their claims by relying on knowledge claims—Arunachalam's

to transfer the kind of colonial knowledge produced in spaces like the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society into a document of colonial practice.

evocation of ethnology and Denham's evocation of the colonial gaze—rather than the body of the colonized to press their case. Furthermore, both authors position the body of knowledge (rather than the body of the colonized) as the final arbiter that defines the basis on which the *dispositif* of ethnicity/nationality/race was to be constituted in Ceylon. The shift towards the body of knowledge as marker of difference not only justifies their own epistemic interventions but also enables Arunachalam and Denham to have a significant impact on the terrain on which ethnicity would function as a factor of governmentality. Therefore, by demarcating the body of knowledge rather than the body of the colonized both interlocutors are able to unblock one of the main barriers that could hamper the complete insertion of ethnicity into the art of colonial governance in Ceylon.

The Effects of the Shift to Knowledge as Marker of Difference

Once the body of knowledge has been established as the primary marker of difference for colonial political rationality, the next significant challenge is the evaluation and mitigation of local knowledge claims regarding difference. Both Arunachalam and Denham have to negotiate between local knowledge claims in order to establish a framework through which colonial knowledge about nationality/ race can be legitimized. For example, Arunachalam notes that

[ethnological] studies have been conducted... by Professor Virchow and by Doctors G. F. and P. B. Sarasin. But much remains to be done. Professor Virchow himself never visited Ceylon. The brothers Sarasin spent but a few months here and only incidentally engaged in this inquiry. Better results would be obtained if these investigations, which demand abundance of local material and of time and labour, were systematically conducted by residents of the Island, European as well as Ceylonese, and the recorded observations submitted for the opinion of scientists of the eminence of Professor Virchow. (76)

As Arunachalam attempts to consolidate a framework for how knowledge about the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/ nationality is to be evaluated in terms of colonial political rationalities, he also attempts to establish the importance of local knowledge to this pursuit. In fact, it is the lack of local involvement in knowledge production about the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality that leads Arunachalam to suggest that the inquiries of Virchow and the brothers Sarasin are inadequate. As a product of his times, it is unsurprising that he does not challenge or disregard the importance of an ethnological, Western-scientific framework of analysis. Critically however, his suggestions about the processes through which nationality should be investigated, establishes the importance of local claims to knowledge in the process of deploying colonial knowledge for the purpose of governing the population.

Nearly a decade later, Denham, too, is forced to negotiate between local knowledge claims and the demands for a seamless process for constituting colonial political rationalities based on the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality. For example, Denham goes to great lengths to describe and differentiate racial groups in the colony. The Burgher community however, poses a significant challenge to his vision. Denham quotes a submission by a Burgher representative, Mr. Arthur Alvis, to the commission considering possible changes to the Colonial legislative structure in Ceylon, who claim that “[t]he Burgher community desires to lay a special stress on the fact that ' Burgher ' is not an ethnographic name, and has nothing to do with race, but is of historic origin, and refers to a political community which had a distinctive character when it entered under the sway of the British Government” (239). The submission significantly challenges Denham’s perspective on race by emphasizing that the community defines itself as a political rather than racial group. It also suggests that in terms of how they define themselves, the term Burgher “has nothing to do with race” (239). Undaunted by this apparent rebuttal of his

argument, Denham dismisses the Burghers' argument on the grounds that "[t]he question is one of historical interest, which [] is unnecessary to amplify here" (239). He goes on to state that "[i]t may, however, be noted that race antecedents appear considerably to have influenced the occupations followed by the descendants of the two European races in Ceylon" (239). Therefore, if Arunachalam made a case for local involvement in colonial knowledge production, Denham's emphasis of colonial knowledge is destabilized by local knowledge claims. As different as the tactics employed by each of them may be, what is critical about these interactions is that they reveal that the terrain on which the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality is constituted as a question of political rationality is becoming increasingly well-established.

By the end of this decade in which there was a proliferation of discourses about the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality, there is also an increasing tendency to normalize difference between groups within the country by reference to the body of knowledge. For example, Denham's census report makes this perspective quite explicit when he says

[i]n spite of the closest political connection, the two races are as distinct to-day in Ceylon as the limits of their settlements are clearly defined. Though Tamils described themselves in the Census schedule as Buddhists, and Sinhalese entered Tamil as the only language they could read and write, it is inconceivable that any Sinhalese would enter himself as a Tamil, or a Tamil as Sinhalese. (196)

While Denham agrees that there may be cultural practices that belie the easy demarcations between groups, he emphasizes that what is critical to the recognition of difference in the island is how they "enter themselves." Although it is a relatively subtle differentiation, this quote emphasizes how the subjectivity of these groups is now indexed through their interaction with the process of constituting colonial political rationality, i.e. the census. Therefore, Denham's

comments suggest an increasing tendency towards the normalization of the body of knowledge as the primary marker for constituting political rationalities even among the local polities.

The emergence and normalization of the body of knowledge was central to what both Arunachalam and Denham envision as the basis on which markers of difference are constituted. This is not to suggest that group identities became irrelevant or unimportant due to Arunachalam's and Denham's interventions. Instead what I have tried to show is how the body of knowledge about the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality was integrated into colonial political rationalities at the turn of the twentieth century. In other words, I have sought to demonstrate how ethnicity was codified as a function of what is to be known in order to influence the ends of governance in colonial Ceylon.

Conclusion: The Deployment of Nationality/ Race

The 1901 and 1911 census reports bookend a critical moment in which the production and implementation of the census, and attendant questions about how the census produced knowledge about the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality, emerged as a central problem for colonial political rationalities. I have aimed to demonstrate how “the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power [both in terms of the census as well as the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality was] conceptualized” in Sri Lanka at this particular moment (Miller and Rose 175). By doing so, I have suggested that it is only during the first decade of the twentieth century that the census was stabilized as a productive tool to resolve contestations over how knowledge is to be deployed for the purpose of governing the populations of Ceylon.

In this chapter I have used the figure and work of Arunachalam in order to demonstrate that any attempt to historicize colonial power must also take into account the critical role played

by the local population in contouring the targets and field of operation for colonial governmentality.⁶⁷ As a member of the local elite produced by the Ceylonese encounter with colonialism, Arunachalam's role in shaping colonial political rationality highlights a crucial shift that was underway in Ceylon. On the one hand, a local elite that had emerged out of Ceylon's encounter with colonialism was displaying the capacity to fully participate in the function of colonialism, even though it may elide many of their own countrymen and women. On the other hand, the emergence of this class of the population also marks a moment in which the colonial master's tools were appropriated and re-deployed by members of this local population to tear down the master's house. A good example of the negotiations embedded in the emergence of these factors is what happened to Arunachalam after the publication of this report. Almost soon after the Census Report was published, Arunachalam published a letter in *The Ceylon Observer* under the pseudonym "Reform" calling for a new constitution for Ceylon. As Thalagodapitiya sarcastically notes, "nothing came out of this letter except shocked official disapprobation, and a transfer from Colombo to the then malaria-ridden town of Kurunegala as a District Judge" (VII).

⁶⁷ The figure of Arunachalam would be an important point of analysis in a reading such as this given that he has been described by J.C. Wedgewood in his foreword to *Speeches and Writings of P. Arunachalam*, as having "India in his blood, Ceylon as his field, but in his mind I like to think that he was the perfect, cultured, liberal-minded English gentleman of the 19th century." Among scholars in Sri Lanka today the analysis of the work of Arunachalam the Census Superintendent is often superseded by the analysis of Arunachalam the reformist and even Arunachalam the colonial bureaucrat. Even the *University of Ceylon: History of Ceylon (Volume Three)* which is considered by many to be one of the most important historical works on the British control of the island, only briefly discusses Arunachalam's career in the civil service (De Silva, *The Development of the Administrative System* 223). Tellingly, Arunachalam figures most prominently in the chapter on the Reform Movement in the country (De Silva, *The Reform and Nationalists Movement*).

However, on his retirement a decade later, Arunachalam was knighted and given a prominent position in the executive structure of the colony. It may be easy to dismiss both Arunachalam's letter and the disapprobation it engendered as being the fate of a unique individual with a unique form of engagement with the colonial structure in Ceylon. As the next chapter will show however, Arunachalam's intervention coincided with a decade in which this segment of the local population was increasingly vociferous in demanding a change to the structure of the colonial state. Therefore, one of my major findings in this chapter is that the participation of colony's rising middle class was beginning to have an increasingly important say in shaping the direction of colonial governance.

I have also argued for the importance of recognizing Arunachalam's work to stabilize the census as the nucleus around which colonial political rationality was organized in colonial Ceylon. Prior to 1901, the main focus for Census Superintendents appeared to be the question of ensuring the accuracy of the data. However, it was Arunachalam's re-visioning of the role of the census that centered the exercise as a critical tool of colonial political rationality. As this chapter demonstrates, he is able to do this by revising the census ordinance, writing a new census manual, and completely re-imagining the scope of the census report. Furthermore, Arunachalam's methodology for conducting a census significantly influenced his immediate successor, Denham, and continues to guide the conduct of censuses in Sri Lanka today. When analyzed together, Arunachalam's and Denham's census reports illustrate that "not only accommodation but resistance as well would have to articulate itself in relation to this comprehensively altered situation" (Scott, "Colonial Governmentality" 198). In other words, Arunachalam's 1901 census report comprehensively alters the situation of colonial political

rationality by ensuring that the knowledge produced through the census would become central to the governance in the colony.

The insertion of the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality into the art of governance is concomitant to the anchoring of colonial political rationality in Ceylon to the census. My analysis of the two census reports that bookend this decade reveals that there was a proliferation of epistemological discourse on the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality at the turn of the 20th century. Drawing from Foucault's comments on the relationship between statistics and the unblocking of the art of government, it could be argued that the simultaneous emergence of the census report and the proliferation of discourse on ethnicity enabled colonial governmentality to shift its focus away from the definition of difference to the question of how to negotiate between competing claims to recognition as a population. As my next chapter demonstrates, ethnicity becomes a critical terrain for political struggle as well as governance and therefore becomes the *dispositif* through which an ethnocratic form of governance is embedded in Sri Lankan governmentality. In other words, my chapter suggests that this historical moment is important because it marks the emergence of ethnicity as a question of governmentality in Sri Lanka.

Finally, the emergence of this new problem for colonial political rationality during this decade makes it a critical moment for the historicization of Sri Lanka's ethnocratic present. However, in spite of its importance, it would be difficult to assume that this is the only moment in which there was a critical shift in the development of Sri Lanka's ethnocracy. Therefore, another major finding in my chapter is the need to further historicize the political rationalities through which an ethnocratic form of governance came to be effected in Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Chapter 4 - Dutiful Subjects: Political Technologies of the Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912

In a review of recent literature on the study of colonial legal practices, Yanna Yannakakis notes that although colonial law is no longer seen as a tool of imperial domination but as a site of cultural contestation, it is still difficult to “write effectively about native agency in the making of colonial legal cultures” (1071). Yannakakis notes that “the tyranny of the archives persists in that the written evidence favors—in descending order—the perspective of European legal thinkers and reformers, the functionaries of intermediate institutions like the magistrates and lawyers who operated in district courts, and litigants who included European settlers and native people” (1070-1071). In seeking to excavate “native agency” from the “tyranny of the archive,” this chapter focuses on the debates and deliberations that coalesced into the Crewe-McCallum Reforms of the Ceylon Legislative Council in 1912. While my previous chapter discussed how P. Arunachalam’s epistemic intervention in the census of 1901 shaped “what is to be known,” in this chapter I wish to examine how the concerns and demands emanating from the local population shaped “what is to be done” (Foucault, “Questions of Method,” 75).

The Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912 have received little scholarly attention. Scholars of Sri Lankan studies have tended to focus on the 1833 Colebrooke-Cameron Commission reforms (as detailed below) and the 1931 Donoughmore Commission, which led to the extension of universal adult franchise in Ceylon, the first British colony in South Asia to be extended this right (Wickramasinghe, “Colonial governmentality”; Wickramasinghe, *Ethnic Politics*; Russell; Scott, *Refashioning Futures*). In contrast, the reforms of 1912 are often discussed as a prelude to the changes that took place in 1931. Along with other reforms of the colonial state structure in 1920 and 1924, the reforms of 1912 are often dismissed as “largely adjustments within the

parameters of Crown Colony rule” (Scott, *Refashioning Futures* 164). However, A. J. Wilson, one of the few scholars⁶⁸ who explores the Crewe-McCallum Reforms, describes it as “the first stage in the regeneration of modern Ceylon,” (“The Crewe-McCallum Reforms” 114) a shift “[f]rom an era of a Government of well-discussed laws” to a “period of Government by co-operation” (101). These remarks suggest that a careful analysis of the reforms of 1912 would shed light on how the local population participated in and shaped a particular episode of colonial governmentality in Ceylon. Therefore, this chapter examines how claims for recognition that emanated from local populations undergirded and provoked changes to the colonial state structure that emerged in 1912.

⁶⁸ Apart from Wilson, scholarly perspectives on the 1912 Reforms of the Legislative Council highlight a number of discordant views. One of the main areas of focus in this scholarship is on the defeat of Sir Marcus Fernando, a Sinhalese by Sir P. Ramanathan, who had previously served as the Tamil representative on the Legislative Council from 1879 to 1895 (Marasinghe 92). As a result, some scholars have highlighted this first election as a high watermark in ethnic relations in the country (Manogaran 31). On the other hand, G. C. Mendis, one of Sri Lanka’s best known historians, has argued that these reforms crystalized and perpetuated ethnic divisions in the country and led communities “to consider themselves as separate entities rather than as citizens of Ceylon” (Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British* 172). Some scholars have also suggested that caste factors rather than any larger commitment to national identity shaped the election of Sir P. Ramanathan (Wickramasinghe, *Ethnic Politics* 32-33; Kumarasingham 344). Ramanathan was a Tamil from the Vellala caste, while Sir Marcus Fernando was a Sinhalese of the Karava caste. Since most of the Sinhalese electorate were from the Govigama caste who considered the Vellalas their caste equals, these scholars argue that caste was a more important factor than ethnic or national identity.

Prelude to the Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912

The failed attempt to govern Ceylon as part of India following the cessation of the coastal areas of Ceylon by the Dutch in 1796, eventually led British colonial authorities to constitute it as a Crown Colony that was distinct from India since 1802.⁶⁹ Political intrigues within the Kandyan Kingdom resulted in the formal ceding of the Kingdom to the British by its secular and religious leaders in 1815 (De Silva, *History of Sri Lanka* 300). Although the entire Island was finally under British rule, it was only in 1833 that the colony was politically unified through the operationalization of many of the political, economic, and judicial reforms suggested by the Colebrooke-Cameron Commission.⁷⁰ Significantly these demands for reform did not emanate from the local population or even colonial officials within the island but was the result of a larger

⁶⁹ Following the annexation of the colony from the Dutch, the administration of the colony was shared by the Crown and the British East India Company with the understanding that the British East India Company would be guaranteed a trade monopoly in Ceylon (De Silva, *History of Sri Lanka* 275). However, in the long-term the dichotomization of the political and economic interests of the colony proved to be problematic and tensions between the Governor appointed by the Crown and the Madras Presidency of the British East India Company grew more acute over time (De Silva, *History of Sri Lanka* 285). Eventually the system of dual administration was discontinued in 1802, but the experience proved to be distasteful enough to convince British colonial officials that Ceylon would best be governed as a Crown colony that was distinct from India (De Silva, *History of Sri Lanka* 286). (Crown Colonies have been defined as “Foreign territories ruled by the crown and wholly under British jurisdiction were known as crown colonies” [“crown colony”] in contradistinction to India [where in some instances local jurisdictions of certain princely states overlapped with British rule].

⁷⁰ The British attempted to run parallel administrations between 1802 and 1833. They retained the political structure that had been in place under the local monarchy in the former Kandyan Kingdom, while the coastal areas functioned within the political structure put in place after Ceylon became a Crown colony in 1802.

restructuring of the colonies that the British had acquired during its wars against France.⁷¹ In spite of the lack of local agitation or enthusiasm for political change, the reforms of 1833 have been described as being “far reaching and altered radically the political, economic, and social structure of the Island...” (Mendis, *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers* xiii-xiv).⁷²

The political changes brought about by the reforms of 1833 are significantly important because it was the last major change to the structure of the state prior to the Crewe-McCallum reforms of 1912. Following the establishment of the Island as a Crown Colony under the rule of a Governor in 1802, the Secretary of State gave instructions for the establishment of an advisory council to the Governor in the hope that it would function as a check on his unlimited powers.⁷³ However, it was the 1833 reforms that significantly altered this state of affairs by reducing the power of the Governor and setting up an Executive and Legislative Council as a means of liberalizing the governance of the colony (Mendis, *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers* xlv). The Commission recommended that the Executive Council consist of six ex-officio members⁷⁴ apart

⁷¹ The Commission was tasked with investigating “the problem of slavery [in The Cape of Good Hope] and the continued political and radical dissensions [in Mauritius] (Mendis, *Colebrook-Cameron Papers* xiii).

⁷² Such an outcome is hardly surprising given that the Commission was tasked with examining “... all the Laws, Regulations and Usages of the Settlements... and into every other matter or thing in any way connected with the administration of the Civil Government the State of the Judicial Civil Military and Ecclesiastical Establishments Revenues Trade and Internal Resources” (Mendis, *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers* 2).

⁷³ However, in practice the governors did not see the Council “as a restraining influence.... [as] [t]he council was not meant to share the executive and legislative authority with the Governor, but rather to assist him in the exercise of his powers” (Samaraweera 35).

⁷⁴ Although the Commission recommended a six-member Executive Council, the Executive Council was finally constituted by five members—“the Officer in Command of the Land Forces, the Secretary to Government, the

from the Governor and was tasked with providing “assistance [to] the Governor in all details relative to the revenues and disbursements of the Island” (Mendis, *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers* 53). As intended, these revisions significantly reduced the Governor’s oversight of the financial affairs of the colony.

The most important change was the establishment of a Legislative Council, which as A. J. Wilson points out, eventually became “the hub of political activity” by the turn of the century in Ceylon (Wilson, “The Development of the Constitution” 361). The Legislative Council set up by the Colebrooke-Cameron reforms consisted of nine official members⁷⁵ (including the members of the Executive Council) and six unofficial members, to “ensure that a certain number of responsible persons with competent local knowledge would examine the regulations which the Governor proposed to make” (Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British* 56). The Commission recommended that the unofficial members of the Council would be “any respectable inhabitant[], European or native, whom His Majesty might hereafter be pleased to appoint” (Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British* 56). The inclusion of “natives” to this body drew the criticism of many colonial officials, (including the Governor) at the time even though the unofficial members were a minority in the Legislative Council. However, as Mendis points out, their inclusion marked “the beginnings of representative government” in Ceylon (*Ceylon Under the British* 57).

Advocate Fiscal and the Treasurer, [as well as]... the Government Agent of the Central Province” (Mendis, *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers* 249).

⁷⁵ The nine official members were the Chief Justice, the Officer in Command of the Land Forces, the Secretary to Government, the Auditor General, the Treasurer of the Island, the Government Agent of the Western Province, the Government Agent of the Central Province, the Surveyor General and the Collector of Customs at Colombo (Mendis, *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers* 250).

The six unofficial members of the Legislative Council were the source of significant agitation and negotiation between local elites and colonial administrators between 1833 and 1912.⁷⁶ A communal basis was established as the most ‘efficient’ method for eliciting the “knowledge of local conditions” (De Silva, “The Legislative Council” 235) that the Commission envisaged when it advocated for more involvement of the local population in the governance of the colony.⁷⁷ By convention the ratio for the six unofficial members was fixed as being three Europeans,⁷⁸ one Sinhalese, one Tamil, and one Burgher representative (De Silva, “The Legislative Council” 235). This system of governance was only altered slightly in 1889 to include two more unofficial members on a communal basis, a Kandyan Sinhalese⁷⁹ and a Muslim⁸⁰ representative. Therefore, the significant reform of the Legislative Council in 1912 marks the first major alteration to the pattern of colonial governance in the Island that had been

⁷⁶ For an in-depth discussion of this agitation and negotiations see K. M. De Silva’s “The Legislative Council in the Nineteenth Century.”

⁷⁷ It was hoped that the establishment of the Legislative Council with its local representation would provide the Secretary of State a different perspective on the affairs of the colony than the one he received from the Governor colony (De Silva, “The Legislative Council” 228-229)

⁷⁸ Over time and by convention one of the European members was to represent the interests of the European plantation community, another represented the mercantile interests of Europeans in the Colony and the third member was drawn from European professionals who were neither planters or involved in the commercial establishments in the Island such as lawyers, doctors, teachers, and missionaries etc.

⁷⁹ The inclusion of a Kandyan representative has been regarded as a means of subverting the demands for more Sinhalese caste-based representation on the Legislative Council (De Silva, “The Legislative Council” 243-244)

⁸⁰ For a discussion on the complex communal politics that led to the demand for a separate seat for Muslims, see Qadri Ismail’s “Unmooring Identity: The Antinomies of Elite Muslim Self-Representation in Modern Sri Lanka.”

set up in 1833 and which, as David Scott so powerfully demonstrates, brought Ceylon under the aegis of a colonial governmentality (214).

The Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912 at first glance appear to be a rather innocuous continuation of the colonial state structure that were initiated by the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms of 1833. The reforms resulted in the increase of the number of official members of the Legislative Council from nine to eleven and the number of unofficial members was increased from eight to ten. As before, six of the unofficial members were nominated by the Governor on a communal basis and the ratio was fixed as being one Kandyan Sinhalese, two Low-Country Sinhalese,⁸¹ two Tamils and one Muslim representative. The remaining four unofficial members—one member to represent urban Europeans, one member for rural Europeans, one Burgher member and one member to represent Educated Ceylonese⁸²—were to be elected by the communities that they represented. As a result, and in ways that are significantly different to the emergence of colonial governmentality in 1833 traced by Scott, the reforms of 1912 foregrounded “the emergence of the problem of population” (Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* 140). With this in mind, I focus on the debates and contestations that led to the extension of franchise to the Educated Ceylonese community. These contestations provide a vehicle for exploring the complex interplay of colonial geography, representation and epistemology that shaped how colonial governmentality sought to address the question of what is to be done about the population(s) of Ceylon during the Crewe-McCallum Reforms.

⁸¹ Although there was a Kandyan member of the Legislative Council since 1889, the reader should be reminded that it was Arunachalam’s 1901 census report that produced these two groups as separate categories of colonial knowledge.

⁸² Data on literacy (particularly English literacy) was first collected by Arunachalam in his census report of 1901.

Provincializing London: Colonial Geographies & the Shaping of Governmentality

I begin by examining two refusals in London and their implications as a means of mapping the how colonial geographies shaped colonial political technologies during this particular episode of governmentality. The examination of the debates surrounding the reform of the Legislative Council of Ceylon that took place in London helps to shed light on the complex geographical power flows that shaped this episode of governmentality.

Prior to 1910 there had clearly been local agitation for reform of the Legislative Council, (as evinced by the partial reform of the Council in 1889). However, these demands appeared to have been localized enough to not warrant the attention of the Center of the British Empire. For example, when the question of reform of the Ceylonese Legislative Council was raised in the House of Commons as early as 1906 by Sir John Rees MP, the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies categorically stated that there were no steps being taken “towards strengthening the Executive and Legislative Councils of the Governor of Ceylon?” (“Ceylon Councils”). The fact that it was Sir John Rees who raised this question in the house is also significant because Sir Rees was a well-known proponent of British Imperial Rule, particularly in India.⁸³

⁸³ For example, in Sir John Rees’ 1910 text *Modern India*, a monograph in a series of texts written to enable British citizens to “learn ‘to think imperially’ or perish completely as an empire” (x), unsurprisingly takes an extremely critical view of the Indian Swaraj movement in his chapter on “Present Political Conditions.”

Within two years the question of Reform of the Ceylonese Legislative Council was taken up again in the House of Commons, this time by Sir Henry Cotton who quite pointedly asked the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies as to whether

his attention has been drawn to the constitution of the Ceylon Legislative Council, which does not contain a single elected member; whether he is aware of the dissatisfaction which prevails in the island on account of this absence of representation; and whether His Majesty's Government will take into consideration the advisability of giving to such an elective Legislative Council as other Crown Colonies possess and of appointing one or more Ceylonese to the Executive Council. ("Ceylon Legislative Council")

Due to Sir Henry Cotton's pointed questions, the Undersecretary of State for Colonies is forced to confront the question of representation and democracy. In contrast to Sir John Rees, Sir Henry Cotton, who was a well-known advocate of Swaraj in India,⁸⁴ pushes the Undersecretary to address this question and articulate a position in relation to representation and democracy in the colony. As a result, Colonel Seely, the Colonial Undersecretary, takes the position that the center is pleased with the existing form of Government in the colony; he says "[t]he Secretary of State does not propose to introduce changes in the constitution of Ceylon which, I may say, appears to give as much satisfaction as can reasonably be expected of any form of Government" ("Ceylon

84 Sir Henry Cotton had served as President of the Twentieth Session of the Indian National Congress in 1904 and his sympathies for the Independence movement in India is made clear in his Presidential Address that year. He says, "[I] am conscious that it must be more appropriate for an Indian to preside at the Indian National Congress than an Englishman, I received your invitation to come here as the highest compliment you could pay me, and accepted it not only with a deep sense of responsibility, but also of gratitude and pride in this notable and public recognition of the humble services I have been able to render to India" (*The Indian National Congress* 787).

Legislative Council”). As the deputy to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Colonel Seely’s statement that the Imperial center was satisfied with the existing constitutional status in Ceylon can also be read as an indication of official British colonial policy on Ceylon at the time.

The response of the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies also sparks an interesting exchange between Sir Henry Cotton and Sir John Rees.

SIR H. COTTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that considerable dissatisfaction is expressed and felt in the island of Ceylon?

MR. REES: In what manner has it been manifested?

COLONEL SEELY: I am aware that dissatisfaction is expressed with all Governments. I cannot say what amount of dissatisfaction is felt in this case: perhaps the hon. Member for East Nottingham can inform the hon. Member for Montgomery Boroughs. (“Ceylon Legislative Council”)

Colonel Seely’s response to this exchange suggests that not only was the Center not willing to make changes to the constitution, but that it appeared to be unwilling to take into account any local demands for change to the colonial state. The posing of the question of representation and its subsequent rejection also embodies postcolonial theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty’s insight that provincializing Europe involves the recognition that there is a “connection between violence and idealism that lies at the heart of the process by which the narratives of citizenship and modernity come to find a natural home in ‘history’” (45). In other words, the provincialization of London indicates that in spite of the Crown’s normative commitment to liberal government, even as late as October 1908, there was no interest at the colonial office in reforming colonial political technologies in Ceylon.

Mapping the emergence of the question of the reform of the Legislative Council of Ceylon in the House of Commons highlights the complex flows of power between the colony and the center. Some may argue that the extent of the concessions granted to the colony through the Reforms of 1912 required the support of London. Conversely however, the speed at which the Colonial Office had to change its position on reform suggests the extent to which local agitation for reform shaped colonial politics both in Colombo and in London. In short, I argue a closer reading of the geographical power flows leaves the impression that, as far as the metropole was concerned, there was no need to alter the prescriptive effects governing the colony of Ceylon. Therefore, the two refusals in the House of Commons in 1906 and 1908 provide a useful lens for an analysis of how local populations shaped the priorities for governance in their colony.

The Demands of Dutiful Subjects: Local Calls for Change

As early as the 9th of February, 1909, the Earl of Crewe, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Henry McCallum, enclosing the exchange quoted above as well as a memorandum submitted by Mr. James Peiris on the question of Reform of the Legislative Council, thereby initiating the process in Colombo and London (*Despatches* 1-5). By the end of 1909, the Earl of Crewe was communicating to McCallum his decision to change the existing constitution of the colony (*Despatches* 21-22). Therefore, in spite of the apparent rejection of the demands for reform of the Colonial Ceylonese state less than a year previously, the reform of the Ceylonese Legislative council was already well underway by the end of 1909. This section focuses on the demands that led to the creation of a seat for an Educated Ceylonese, paying particular attention to how the memorials sent by the local population to the Colonial

Office⁸⁵ instigated the emergence of the problem of population(s) for British colonial authorities in both London and Ceylon.⁸⁶

In praying for the reform of the Legislative Council, Sir James Peiris' memorial to the Undersecretary of State argues that the colony has undergone a number of changes since the establishment of the existing system of governance in 1833. When he details the types of change that has taken place, Peiris identifies a) the growth of the population; b) the development of schools, in particular schools providing English education;⁸⁷ c) the increased revenue generated by the colony; and d) the development of an efficient administrative system (*Despatches 2*). He then points out that in spite of these changes, the Legislative Council has not been reformed since 1833 and states that "it is no wonder then that there is a general feeling among the educated and thoughtful classes that the time has arrived for a liberal reform of [the Island's] constitution" (*Despatches 2*). Peiris' foregrounding of the "educated and thoughtful classes" here is no

⁸⁵ In the Correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Governor of Ceylon, this group is referred to as "the memorialists" and their submission is discussed as a "memorial." Therefore, rather than using the term memorandum, my references in this chapter signal their use in the source material.

⁸⁶ The textual material for this section is sourced primarily from Sessional Paper II of 1910 titled *Despatches relating to the constitution of the Ceylon Legislative Council*. This Sessional Paper contains the correspondence between London and Colombo with regards to the Reform of the Legislative Council in Ceylon. The Sessional Paper includes the question posed by Sir Henry Cotton in the House of Commons (quoted previously), as well as copies of Memorials forwarded to the Colonial Secretary from Sir James Peiris, Mr. H.J.C. Pereira on behalf of 760 Ceylonese, the Low-Country Planters' Association, the Jaffna Association, the Chilaw Association, and the Ceylon National Association. It also includes Governor McCallum's objections to the recommendations made by the memorialists as well as the Colonial Secretary's recommendations for reforming the Legislative Council.

⁸⁷ To make this claim Peiris references data from the 1901 census report by Arunachalam.

accident. Later in his memorandum, after laying down the case for the extension of (limited) franchise to Ceylon, Peiris suggests the parameters for the electorate. He says “[a]s regards an electorate, there is a highly intelligent one, composed of members of the Government Service, professional men, graduates, landed proprietors, and merchants of all races, who may be safely entrusted with the duty of electing their representatives in Council” (*Despatches* 5). It is quite possible that his statement is intended as a preemptive defense against the suggestion that Ceylonese were still not prepared for the right to exercise their vote. However, his foregrounding of a particular class of individuals (“the Government Service, professional men, graduates, landed proprietors, and merchants of all races”) provokes a serious crisis for colonial authorities.⁸⁸ On the one hand, the population that Peiris foregrounds are clearly a colonial middle class, products of the social, political and economic opportunities afforded by colonialism. On the other hand, it is precisely for this reason that colonial authorities would find it difficult to silence the claims that they advance. Therefore, Peiris’ memorial can be read as a tactic deployed by a local population to demand recognition as a target of colonial governmentality.

The advancing of a class identity by these memorialists also goes hand in hand with the claim that their views represent a national (as opposed to racial/ ethnic) perspective. For instance,

⁸⁸ While I am cognizant of the criticism of this agitation that it was “mainly confined to a particular section of the community—the men of property and the professional classes” (Wilson, “The Crewe-McCallum Reforms” 84), my interest here is in how the question of this group as a population emerged as a problem for colonial governmentality. This is not to deny the exclusive, classist (not to mention sexist) dimensions of these claims (or ignore the patent suggestion that franchise could not be “safely entrusted” to the rest of population) but rather to re-frame them in terms of the dilemmas for colonial governmentality.

the memorial by Mr. H.J.C. Pereira to the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs is written on behalf of 760 Ceylonese who according to him “represent no small proportion of the landed, mercantile, and other permanent interests of the Colony” (*Despatches* 11). Like Peiris, Pereira’s call for reform is advanced on behalf of a very particular class of people in the Colony. However, unlike Peiris who makes his affiliation to his own racial/ethnic group clear,⁸⁹ Pereira goes further to claim that the signatories give voice to “the responsible public opinion of the various communities which are dissatisfied with the present Constitution” (*Despatches* 11). Pereira’s framing of the views of the memorialists as representing the views of the people of Ceylon is important since one of the major demands of the local population was that the practice of racial representation be discontinued in favor of territorial representation.

Pereira’s positioning is reinforced by three subsequent memorials forwarded to the Colonial Secretary by the Low-Country Planters’ Association, the Jaffna Association, and the Chilaw Association. While each of these groups position themselves as distinct populations deserving of recognition from Colonial authorities,⁹⁰ they are united in their call for urgent

⁸⁹ Referencing the inadequacy of having one representative for the entire Low-country Sinhalese population, Peiris says “It is absurd to suppose that one member can make himself acquainted with the wants of nearly one and a half million of people scattered all over the Island. When it is remembered that the landed and commercial interests of the [Low-country Sinhalese] community is equal, if not superior, to that of all the other native communities put together, the inequality in the representation would appear to be utterly indefensible” (*Despatches* 3).

⁹⁰ The Low-country Planters’ Association positions itself against the Planters’ Association of Ceylon, an association of European planters who were represented (by convention) as one of the three European members of the Legislative Council prior to 1912. The Low-country Planter’s Association’s memorial frames it as representing small village farmers, native merchants and local mining interests (*Despatches* 14). Rather than advancing an economic claim to recognition, the Jaffna Association advances a racial claim, noting that their views represent “the Tamils of the

reform of the Legislative Council in particular the introduction of the elective principle and the replacement of racial representation with territorial representation for the people of Ceylon. The positioning of these diverse populations in order to articulate a collective voice for change (even though it is within certain limited parameters)⁹¹ makes it possible to suggest that the reforms of 1912 represents a moment in which the *dispositif* of ethnicity/ race/ nationality was arguably secondary to class interests of certain populations in the colony.

Apart from framing their claims as a distinct population, the memorials also suggest that these local agitators deployed the tactics of colonial governmentality against colonial authority. For instance, Pereira includes a veiled threat to the colonial authorities stating,

A public agitation has been demanded by many in order to give voice to the widespread dissatisfaction with the present political system and the strong desire for a more liberal constitution. But the memorialists have used their influence to discourage such agitation as tending to produce an excitement and unrest undesirable in view of recent events in India, and likely to embarrass the Government. The risk of it will be averted by a gracious concession of Your Lordship in accordance with those traditional principles of well-ordered freedom, to which the British Government has just given its unfaltering adherence in India under conditions which would have daunted a Government less strong in the consciousness of its justice and power. (*Despatches* 12-13)

Northern Province, the chief centre of the Tamil population of the Island” (*Despatches* 15). In contrast to both the Low-country Planters’ Association and the Jaffna Association, the Chilaw Association advances a geographic claim for recognition by colonial governmentality, stating that they are an “Association of the inhabitants of the District of Chilaw, in the North Western Province of Ceylon” (*Despatches* 19).

⁹¹ For example, almost all the memorialists are firm in their affirmation of loyalty to the British Empire.

Pereira's invocation of the Swaraj movement in India and the pressure it was exerting on colonial authorities there can be read as a carefully worded warning that similar agitation could also occur in Ceylon if these concessions are not forthcoming. These lines also highlight the extent to which these signatories were using their position as (dutiful) subjects of the British Empire to advance their claims. Concomitant to this framing of their own relationship as a colonial population, Pereira also emphasizes the liberal values that the British Empire claims to advance through its empire as a means of advancing the call for reform. Pereira's comments also appear to be aimed at constructing the impression that the changes that are requested are not as radical (or even as belligerent) as the demands that were emerging in India at the time. Lest I be accused of romanticizing the claims of either Peiris or Pereira, it should also be noted that these memorials are can be read as attempting to position their calls in such a way as to create an impression that they were reasonable and dutiful subjects of the British Empire. Pereira states,

The memorialists are firmly convinced that the concession of similar privileges [like the recent reform of the Legislative and Executive Councils of India] to this Colony will be appreciated by the people as a just recognition of their deep and abiding loyalty to the Throne and of their advance in education and prosperity, will promote the efficiency of the Administration, increase the happiness and contentment of the people, and strengthen the foundations of British Rule. (*Despatches* 13)

However, the juxtaposition of the threat of embarrassment along with the affirmation of their "deep and abiding loyalty to the throne" highlights an interesting carrot-and-stick tactic deployed by a local population to call for change to the colonial state. Simultaneously, this population also stakes a claim for recognition as a distinct population/ target for colonial governmentality.

Colonial Responses to Local Demands: McCallum's Framing of Colonial Governmentality

The response of colonial authorities in Ceylon provide a useful indication of the extent to which these local claims for recognition caused a dilemma for the colonial state at the level of governmentality. In this section I explore how McCallum attempts to address the challenge to the political technologies through which local subjects were transformed into the targets of colonial governmentality. In other words, I seek to examine McCallum's attempt to prescribe, embody, and give effect to his perception of the priorities for what is to be done regarding the governance of the colony.

One of the first issues raised by McCallum focuses on the question of colonial recognition—who has the right to be recognized as speaking for the people of the colony, particularly for the purpose of governing the colony. If the different memorials stake a claim for recognition by colonial authorities, McCallum takes pains to demonstrate that such recognition would be misguided on two grounds. Firstly, he argues that there is a gap between the memorialists and the population they claim to represent. He states for instance, that the Low-country Planters' Association has “of late [] evinced an inclination to concern itself largely with questions of a political character” rather than addressing issues relating to the population they claim to represent (*Despatches* 5). He also dismisses the Ceylon National Association as a “debating society” and says that he is “aware of nothing in its organization or membership which gives it any claim to the title which it assumes” (*Despatches* 5). These comments appear to be aimed at subverting the representative basis on which the memorialists stake a claim for recognition by colonial authorities.

This claim by McCallum is merely the opening gambit in a much larger rejection of the claims advanced by the memorialists. The main thrust of this argument by McCallum is that the memorialists should not be taken seriously by the Colonial Secretary because they represent a small minority of people in the colony rather than the “people of Ceylon” as their memorials claim. He says,

all these memorial emanate, not from ‘the people of Ceylon,’ as is claimed by the memorialists, but from certain well-defined classes of the native population—classes, moreover, which represent a very small minority of the whole. I refer to those of the natives of Ceylon who have assimilated an education of a purely Western, as opposed to Oriental type, and who are to be regarded, not as representative Ceylonese, but as a product of the European administration of Ceylon on lines approved by British tradition.

(Despatches 6)

These lines suggest that for the Governor, these memorialists cannot lay claim to being “the people of Ceylon” and that they are separated by “a wide gulf from the majority of the native inhabitants of the colony” (*Despatches 9*).⁹² Playing the assimilated Western individual against the ideal “Oriental type” also serves to lay the platform for McCallum’s dismissal of this group as being separated from the rest of the population in their county. He states, “[t]heir ideas, their aspirations, their interests are distinctively their own, are all moulded upon European models, and are no longer those of the majority of their countrymen” (*Despatches 9*). The Governor’s comments attempt to position these memorialists as having lost touch with the realities faced by the population of the Colony. According to this logic, they therefore should not be recognized as

⁹² Michael Roberts also points out how Denham’s 1911 census report sort to augment McCallum’s thesis that “the Ceylonese ‘middle classes’ were cut off from the masses” due to their “educational background” (553-554).

a legitimate voice within the colony. This argument is also advanced when he goes on to note that these memorialists do not have “any wide or intimate experience of the Colony as a whole, any close and authoritative knowledge of the rural populations which form the bulk of the native inhabitants...” (*Despatches* 6). On these grounds alone he argues “apart from all other considerations, renders void... the claim which they put forward to speak for the inhabitants of Ceylon as a whole” (*Despatches* 6). As these comments indicate, McCallum’s first major rejoinder to the memorialists can be read as an attempt to argue that as individuals who are now foreign to the colony, their claims to representation, and therefore, their recognition as a population, is illegitimate. In other words, McCallum’s first major rejoinder to the memorialists is aimed at questioning the extent to which this group should be recognized as an authentic voice emanating from the population of the colony.

McCallum’s refusal to recognize the authenticity of the memorialists as a population is complimented by his second point of contention—that the many different populations of the colony are not represented in these demands. Having described for the Colonial Secretary the various races of the Island (and snidely commenting that the Muhammadans “have not associated themselves with the present agitation for an alteration of the constitution” [*Despatches* 6]), McCallum makes the point that the memorialists’ claims to a national identity in the colony do not recognize the problem of difference. He says, “[e]ven my short residence in Ceylon and the visits which I have paid to almost every portion of the Island have sufficed to show me that the needs of the various Provinces and of their heterogeneous populations differ widely according to race and loyalty...” (*Despatches* 6). Apart from his pointed comments about the heterogeneity of the population, what is significant about McCallum’s claim is the way in which he advances an epistemological claim—his own observations of the colony as a European—in

order to negate the political positioning of the memorialists.⁹³ He goes on to state that, “any attempt that may be made to represent ‘the people of Ceylon’ as forming a single entity, welded together by common interests to an extent sufficient to nullify these differences, is to the last degree misleading, and argues a radical misconception of local conditions and ignorance of the Colony regarded as a whole” (*Despatches* 6). McCallum’s negation of unity here is significant not only because he attempts to subvert the attempt to construct a national identity for the country, but also because, in effect, he relies on Arunachalam’s epistemological intervention on nationality at the census of 1901 to make this claim.⁹⁴ In other words, McCallum’s challenge to these memorialists foregrounds racial difference and arguably frames the colony not as a unified nation but as being composed of diverse peoples and nations.

This framing of the colony is replete with ambiguities and ambivalences that bring to the fore the question of who should be considered a Ceylonese. McCallum poses a question about the capacity of these memorialists to claim a Ceylonese identity at all. He makes it clear what he believes is the effect of this separation from the rest of the Ceylonese population, particularly in relation to demands for reform of the Colonial state. His comments are worth quoting at length:

.... the Oriental who has studiously forced himself to during all the most malleable years of his life to discard the native tradition in favour of the European, who has consciously

⁹³ The reader would recognize here the way in which McCallum echoes Denham’s deployment of the colonial gaze as a means of making an epistemic claim (See chapter three).

⁹⁴ The reader may remember that the main thrust of Arunachalam’s argument regarding the nationalities of Ceylon is to demonstrate that understanding nationality in terms of a single social group coming together to constitute a state, is a destructive vision for a society. His view suggests that the state is constituted by many nationalities—a coming together of different nations with specific histories, languages, political institutions and characters (See chapter 3).

taught himself to think as Europeans think, to adopt theories of life and government which are which are the exclusive product of the European intellect, character, and civilization, has gotten something which may or may not be of profit to him, but it must be recognized that *he has at the same time ceased to be in any sense a typical Oriental, and thereby has forfeited his right to speak with any authority on behalf of the typical Orientals who form the immense bulk of his fellow-countrymen.* (Despatches 9, emphasis added)

The Governor's emphasis on the foreignness of the memorialists can be read as an attempt to undermine the authenticity of their claims. This exchange raises the question—"what constitutes an authentic voice?" However, McCallum's dismisses the very personhood of the memorialists. His rhetorical claims, then illuminate the lines sketched out in Bhabha's theorization of the "fix[ing of] the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence" due to the "ambivalence of mimicry (86)."⁹⁵ In McCallum's dismissal of the personhood of these memorialists we see a very real example of Bhabha's insight that the mimicry of the colonizers by the colonized is always

⁹⁵ Bhabha says

It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double, that my instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. By 'partial' I mean both 'incomplete' and 'virtual'. It is as if the very emergence of the 'colonial' is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition *within* the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace. (86, emphasis in text)

doomed to failure because it is “at once resemblance and menace” (86). In short, McCallum does not simply dismiss memorialists as illegitimate but rather frames the very debate in 1912 as a question of local vs foreign identity.

But if the memorialists are foreigners, as McCallum contends, who, then, should be considered an authentic local voice that can therefore constitute a target for colonial governmentality in Ceylon? McCallum suggests that rather than the limited class of people from which the memorialists are drawn, the ‘real’ population of Ceylon is constituted by its peasantry. In fact, McCallum counterposes these two populations by saying that unlike the “small section of Ceylonese who have been educated on European lines,” the rural population has “undergone small change, save in material prosperity, in a more general acquaintance with reading and writing the vernacular and with arithmetic, an occasional smattering of English, and possibly in a certain increased respect for law and order” under the Colebrooke-Cameron constitution (*Despatches* 7). Therefore, although he foregrounds racial difference and heterogeneity to challenge the demands of the memorialists, the ideal population target for governmentality is not a racial group but a class formation—the peasant. Furthermore, the framing of Ceylon’s rural population as backward, under-developed and having not greatly benefitted from exposure to Colonialism’s enlightenment project, is interesting because it can be read as a framing of the ideal target of colonial governmentality. In other words, for McCallum at least, the ideal target population for colonial governance of Ceylon is a peasant class that is simultaneously a noble savage and a child in the pastoral sense.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ As Andrews points out, “[a]s the locus of incompatible impulses within a culture, the [noble] Savage was, in effect, a picturesque prototype of the complicated, contradictory conception of childhood with which the nineteenth century was so preoccupied” (11).

This framing of the peasant is aimed at furthering the Governor's claim that there is no need to reform the colonial political technologies. He says,

[t]o them, now as [seventy years ago], the *village* is their principal conception of a political entity; the native headmen and Government Agent, with the Governor with his Executive Council in the dim background, are to them the embodiments of administrative authority. Of the Legislative Council they know little, and with its doing they have even less concern. Their desire is to suffered to till their fields in peace and security and to be saved from exaction and oppression. (*Despatches* 7)

McCallum's pastoral framing of the apolitical, peasant population provides him the basis to address the demand that the technologies of governance in the colony be changed. In other words, McCallum's advocacy for a non-elite, local population is unsurprisingly imbricated in his resistance to the demands emanating from the local elite. Furthermore, rather than political representation, McCallum's privileging of the native headmen and government agent as the figures of authority can be read as an attempt to underscore the need for strengthening the administrative structure (rather than the political structure) of the colony.⁹⁷ He goes on to claim that although the various racial/ ethnic communities of the Island are represented on the

⁹⁷ The response of the local memorialists to this suggestion is worth quoting because they do not hesitate to call out the Governor's contradictions. In a subsequent memorial from the Jaffna Association to the Earl of Crewe on the Colonial Secretary's proposed reforms the memorialists state that they, "humbly confess themselves unable to see how Western culture, which has been declared to be a disqualification for educated natives of Ceylon to represent their countrymen in Council, can cease to be one in the case of European civil servants born and brought up in the British Isles, most of whom, though they have passed an examination in the Ceylon vernaculars, are unable to carry on a conversation with the villagers" (*Further Correspondence* 19-20).

Legislative Council, “in actual practice I regard their real representatives in the Council as the Government Agents of the Western and Central Provinces and the other experienced civil servants, the best part of whose lives has been passed in Ceylon, who occupy seats at the Council board” (*Despatches* 8). If his first rejoinder is aimed at addressing the memorialists’ claims at the level of the targets of governmentality, McCallum’s second rejoinder foregrounds the operationalization of colonial governmentality.

The deployment of political technologies of governmentality has been understood as the “complex of techniques, instruments, measures, and programs that endeavors to translate thought into practice and thus actualize political reasons” (Inda 9). The actualization of political reason is the basis on which McCallum attempts to reject the claims of the memorialists: he foregrounds racial difference while simultaneously questioning the authenticity and localness of the local memorialists. Furthermore, it also highlights how the *dispositif* of ethnicity was embedded in discussions over who had the right to claim representation for a population. Therefore, in this section my aim has been to demonstrate how McCallum’s attempt to dismiss the memorialists’ claims sheds light on how local demands for change provoked colonial authorities to articulate the basis on which they sought to “embody and give effect to governmental ambition” (Rose and Miller 175).

Addressing Local Demands/ Constituting Colonial Governmentality

In spite of McCallum’s attempts to dismiss the demands of the memorialists, their position as a group produced by Ceylon’s encounter with Europe cannot be easily delegitimized since they embody Macaulay’s vision for an intermediary ruling class in the colonies who are “...[Ceylonese] in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect”

(430). In spite of his framing of the memorialists as foreigners who are out of touch with the everyday lived experiences of Ceylonese, McCallum himself recognizes the validity of their claims. He even goes so far as to suggest that a “new member should be nominated in future to represent upon the Council these Ceylonese... who have received a training and education of a European character, this class having greatly increased in importance during the past seventy years, and being, under the present Constitution, without the special representation to which I consider it is entitled” (*Despatches* 9). However, the Governor’s emphasis on nomination rather than election makes it clear that he envisions merely an expansion rather than a large-scale reform of the existing Constitution. It falls to the Earl of Crewe, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to formulate a new system of governance in a way that addresses the demands of the memorialists as well as the concerns of McCallum.

The Earl of Crewe’s response to the memorialists recognizes them as a population that is important for the governance of the colony while at the same time dismissing their claims to speaking on behalf of the entire population of Ceylon. Affirming that while the introduction of universal franchise would be ideal, Crewe argues that “it will scarcely be contended that Ceylon is yet ripe for so radical a reform” (*Despatches* 22). While he is open to the concept of limited franchise, he also agrees with McCallum’s argument that it would be dangerous to allow the class of people represented by the memorialists to speak on behalf of the entire population. He says, “the power of election would necessarily fall into the hands of a very small section of the community—a section composed of men who by the very education which qualified them to vote would have acquired views divergent from, or even antagonistic to, those held by the great majority of their fellow-countrymen” (*Despatches* 22). In order to address this concern, Crewe suggests that the existing system of racial representation be continued until “Ceylon is ripe for a

wide extension of the franchise on democratic lines” (*Despatches* 22). Crewe’s concurrence with McCallum that Ceylon is constituted by separate nationalities (and therefore cannot be considered as a single nation) echoes the views that Arunachalam articulated in his census report of 1901. More importantly, unlike the reforms of 1833, which did not emerge out of local demands for change, the reforms of 1912 mark a moment in which, in spite of local pleas to the contrary, the *dispositif* of nationality/ race/ ethnicity was recognized as the most important arbiter in determining claims to recognition under a colonial governmentality. The effect of this affirmation by Crewe was to reinforce the epistemologies and technologies of difference in the colony.⁹⁸

The problem of recognition, particularly for a group of people who possess European tastes and education, cannot however be easily dismissed. Their claims to recognition pose a dilemma for Crewe. On the one hand, as McCallum points out, as citizens of the colony who have benefitted from colonial education, they can no longer be considered representative of the

⁹⁸ Evidence of this is visible in the memorial submitted by the Jaffna Association to the Colonial Secretary after Crewe had voiced his final determination on the matter of reforms of the constitution. The Jaffna Association which had also called for the abolition of racial representation and the introduction of territorial representation, recognized that Crewe’s proposed reforms would leave their community at a disadvantage in terms of numbers in the Legislative Council (as opposed to the Sinhalese). They therefore proposed a number of additional changes to Crewe’s suggestion including that the Island be divided territorially so that the Northern and Eastern Province (where the majority of Tamils reside and which has been the basis of the LTTE’s claim to a separate state) would elect one (presumably) Tamil member, or alternatively that an additional Educated Ceylonese seat be created which would allow the Tamils and the Sinhalese to separately elect their representatives on the Legislative Council. Failing all of this, the Jaffna Association proposed that Crewe name the Government Agent of the Northern Province as an ex-officio member of the Council (*Further Correspondence* 22).

'local' opinion of the population of the colony. On the other hand, due to their education and exposure to Europe, which was considered so desirable by Macaulay, this group of people is now capable of meaningfully participating in colonial politics and therefore should not be grounds for excluding them from the governance of the colony. Crewe articulates this dilemma when he states that the introduction of franchise for the European and the Burgher community would be insufficient to "provide for special representation of the class of Ceylonese whose education has to a considerable extent disassociated them from their fellow-countrymen, and has at the same time enabled them to take an intelligent interest in political affairs" (*Despatches* 22). Picking up on McCallum's recommendation for representation of this population in the Colony, Crewe proposes that rather than nomination by the Governor, the member to represent this population of Ceylon be selected through election. Crewe's intervention, like McCallum's can be understood at the level of governmentality as a tactic aimed at arranging things (in this case representation, laws, colonial authorities, and local subjects) so as to lead them to an end suitable to the metropole (Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* 135). I would argue therefore that these reforms constitute Crewe's attempt to arrive at a compromise between liberal principles and the day-to-day application of colonial politics.

The response of the Ceylonese and Governor McCallum highlights the difficulties of responding to local demands for re-constituting colonial governmentality. The Governor strongly opposed the Earl of Crewe's proposals even going to far as to say that, he "could not help but feel that the ground had been cut from under [his] feet..." by the Colonial Office's decision to introduce popular franchise rather than nomination for representation of the Western Educated class in Ceylon (*Further Correspondence* 6). McCallum's comments indicate that his disapproval of the reforms are due in part to the erroneous conception of who constitutes the

Ceylonese population in London. The question of the population of Ceylon also characterized the mixed reactions to the reforms among the local population.⁹⁹ For example, the Jaffna Association, which had also submitted a memorial along with the Low-country Planters' Association, were seriously concerned that the proposed changes would adversely impact their community. In a subsequent memorial to Crewe, the Jaffna Association states, "... even if racial representation is to be continued, one Tamil member, and that too nominated by the Governor, would not be able properly and adequately to represent the interests of this important community, with diverse interests and inhabiting all parts of the Island" (*Further Correspondence* 21). These comments highlight the anxiety among the Jaffna Association regarding their status as a population under the aegis of a colonial governmentality. The Jaffna Association which had previously been willing to sacrifice its concerns about its racial representation in the interests of the articulation of national (or more specifically, class) goals, now decides to re-frame their demands as a *racial* population. This is arguably in response to Crewe's decision to retain racial (rather than agree to territorial) representation. Therefore, the responses to the reforms of 1912 are important because they bring to light the dissatisfaction shared by both colonial authorities as well as local subjects that continued to be focused on how populations emerged as a problem for colonial rule.

⁹⁹ Some groups welcomed reforms while others disapproved of them. For example, at the Annual General Meeting of the Low-Country Planters' Association, the Chairman of the meeting commented that the introduction of the elective principle "would prove to be the Magna Charta of Ceylon" (*Further Correspondence* 16). The reference to the Magna Carta suggests a desire to mirror the progress of Britain among this association.

From Interests to Population: The Ceylonese European Community under Colonial Governmentality

The problem of the emergence of the population as a problem for colonial rule is most strikingly visible in the dissatisfaction expressed by the European community about the proposed reforms. This is in spite of the fact that the European community, like the Educated Ceylonese and Burgher communities, was also granted franchise under these reforms. However, the interactions of the European community with the Colonial Office in London provide a useful indication of the extent to which the recognition of populations had replaced the recognition of political interests as the most significant claim on colonial governmentality in Ceylon.

The representation of European members on the Legislative Council, as pointed out previously, had been set at three members under the 1833 Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms. Traditionally, the Governor nominated a member to represent the interests of the Planters' Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the views of what came to be known as the "general European" community. Crewe's proposal that European representation be reduced to two seats on the Legislative Council that represented the population as a whole (rather than specific interest groups) led to emphatic protest from the European community on the Island.

Echoing Foucault's suggestion that statistics becomes "one of the main technical factors in unblocking the art of government" (*Security, Territory, Population* 140), Crewe's proposals foreground the function of statistics to justify his decision to do away with the existing form of representation for the European population in the Colony. He says, "[a]t present the European community, which at the last Census numbered only 6,300 persons, including a considerable number of Government servants, have three representatives on the Legislative Council, and it is difficult to find sufficient justification for such an arrangement" (*Despatches* 22). Crewe's

evocation of the 1901 census places the epistemic intervention made by Arunachalam at the center of contestations surrounding this episode of governmentality that emerged in 1912.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Crewe's emphasis on numbers also suggests a recognition of the problem of the proportion of a nationality to seats on the Legislative Council, a question repeatedly raised by the local memorialists to advocate for a change to the state structure.¹⁰¹ As a result, Crewe recommends that, "... the present system by which members are appointed to represent the Planters' Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the General European community should be abolished, and that, instead, two representatives should be elected by the European community as a whole" (*Despatches* 22). Relying on Arunachalam's statistics, Crewe's recommendation therefore constitutes the European community as a specific target of colonial governmentality within the colony.

Crewe's decision to constitute the European community as a population rather than as interest groups aligned with the needs of the British Empire provoked an angry response from both McCallum and the General European community in the Colony. McCallum appears to take

¹⁰⁰ I am cognizant here that it is the census report (rather than Arunachalam himself) that is important as a tool of colonial practice. However, at a moment in which local demands were shaping colonial policy in the Island, Arunachalam's census report had clearly become increasingly important for claims to recognition as a population. In this context, his intervention that opens up both the process and the practice of colonial knowledge production is a significant contribution to the production of the hybrid structure of governance emerging from the 1912 Crewe-McCallum Reforms.

¹⁰¹ The proportion of representatives on the Legislative Council to the 1901 census statistics on each of the prominent races/ ethnicities/ nationalities in the Island is raised in the memorials to Crewe from Sir James Peiris (*Despatches* 2), Mr. H. J. C. Pereira (*Despatches* 11), the Low-country Planters' Association (*Despatches* 13), as well as the Ceylon National Association (*Despatches* 17).

Crewe's recommendation as a slight to his leadership of the colony; he not only states that following the recommended reduction he "could not help but feel that the ground had been cut from under [his] feet," but also that "the decision... was based, not only on the grounds of equity, but also on those of expediency" (*Further Correspondence* 6). McCallum insinuates here that Crewe's proposals smack of a desire to equate all communities that have received a Western education and thereby produce and govern the colony by the principle that "class distinctions are in future to be abolished" (*Further Correspondence* 6). McCallum's affirmation of "class distinctions" can be read as a reference to the elimination of differences between the local and European communities, rather than the elimination of class differences among the local population of the colony. This particular understanding of "class distinctions" is also evident when he argues that the "real reason" behind the Colonial Secretary's proposal is "the desire to have a *ped à terre* upon which to base a contention for still further increase of native representation in Council" (*Further Correspondence* 7). In other words, McCallum's angry rejoinder to the Colonial Secretary is a consequence of constituting the European community as a target of governmentality on the same terrain as the educated Ceylonese population in the Colony.

The European community on the Island also reacted strongly to being constituted as a population for the purpose of colonial governmentality. A meeting was called by the General European community to address Crewe's proposals and the minutes of this meeting were published in the *Times of Ceylon* of 18th March, 1910 and included by McCallum in his response to Crewe. One of the speakers at this meeting, Dr. Llewelyn Thomas, emphatically states that the Colonial Secretary's decision to ignore the Governor's repeated requests that the representation of the General European community not be reduced was "a thundering slap in the face" for the

Governor (*Further Correspondence* 11). Dr. Thomas also takes pains to emphasize the “moral uplifting of the people of the country” that has been performed by the members of the General European community. The emphasis on colonial education as a basis for constituting an interest group in these comments is important to the claims to recognition advanced by the General European community. The theme of that community’s contribution to the education of the local population is also taken up in a memorial to the Colonial Secretary, which urges that he revise his proposals so that the General European community will still be represented on the Legislative Council. The memorial states “... not only has the material prosperity of the island been... fostered and maintained, but the moral and educational achievements amongst the natives of this country have been mainly the result of the of the European community and affected by European money” (*Further Correspondence* 41). In other words, Dr. Thomas’ comments can be read as a contestation of Crewe’s decision to change the terrain on which the community was recognized by colonial practice. As a result, I would suggest that the recognition of the demands of the local memorialists caused the European community in Ceylon to also advance a particular claim for recognition by Colonial authorities in London.

Dr. Thomas’ comments also highlight the importance of studying the Crewe-McCallum reforms for understanding the complex dialectical relationship between the colonizer and colonized through which episodes of colonial governmentality are produced. Dr. Thomas’ angry rejoinder echoes Governor McCallum’s suggestion that the Colonial Secretary’s proposed policy privileges the claims of the local population over that of their colonizers. Dr. Thomas goes further to demonstrate that it is the work of the General European community that has made it possible for the local community to advance their demands for changing the current structure of the colonial state in Ceylon. He notes,

Britons as a whole have done a tremendous lot in the education of this country. They have given a good Christian education to the country, not a secular education without any fulcrum on which to work... Where do all the men come from who are in the Government and merchants' offices in all places where English is required? Where did they all get their education and knowledge? In Christian schools founded and run by European money. We have educated the people of the country for the last sixty or seventy years, and up to a pitch that they are now fit to sit in the Legislative Council. That is what Christian schools and colleges have done. For doing all that the European representation is to be reduced! I cannot imagine so absolutely foolish as that. (*Further Correspondence* 11)

If the demands of the local memorialists could not be rejected by Crewe because they emanated as a result of exposure to Europe, Dr. Thomas' comments reflect the community's bitterness that it was their own work as colonizers that had resulted in the change to the terrain and field through which populations were to be constituted as a targets for the art of colonial government. Therefore, the response of the General European community to Crewe's decision sheds light on how local demands for recognition as a population/ target of colonial governmentality also shaped the recognition afforded to the colonizers in Ceylon during this particular episode of colonial governmentality.

Who is Local Anyway?: The Stakes of Governmentality

The response of the European community to the proposed changes in representation also highlights how the problem of the local emerged as a point of contention in the constitution of this episode of governmentality. As pointed out previously, the question 'who is a local?' is

posed by McCallum as a means of delegitimizing the claims made by the local memorialists to represent the population of Ceylon. In spite of McCallum's attempt, the question 'who is a local?' can be read as the nucleus around which the European community built its challenge to Crewe's proposals for reforming the Legislative Council.

The demands that emerged from the European community in the aftermath of Crewe's recommendations appear to be centered on the colony rather than the British Empire. For example, in a joint memorial from the Planters' Association and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce pleading for the restitution of representation for the General European community, the writers take pains to argue that the proposed changes would "affect most prejudicially the interests of the European residents in the island, and through them the interests of the colony as a whole" (*Further Correspondence* 38).¹⁰² These comments, which emanate from the two segments of the European population that appear to be guaranteed representation in Crewe's reformed Legislative Council, suggest a broader concern about the colony (as opposed to the Empire) among the European community of the island. Furthermore, the joint memorial also expresses hope that the Colonial Secretary would be open to amending his proposals for reform due to "the readiness" Crewe had "displayed to consider favourably other requests for the modification of the original scheme as, for example, by the addition of a second Tamil member" (*Further Correspondence* 38). At one level, these comments can be read as an explicit reminder to Crewe of the possible embarrassment to the colonizers of Ceylon if his willingness to amend his proposals in response to requests from the local communities is not extended to a major

¹⁰² The evocation of "interests" in this memorial also highlights my previous suggestion that the European response to Crewe foregrounds a contestation between imperial interests and being constituted as a local population and therefore a target of colonial governmentality in the Island.

segment of the European population on the Island. However, another way of reading these comments is to recognize the way in which the European community appears to be placing its demands on equal footing with the demands that emerged from the local communities.

Therefore, it could be argued that the demands of the European community foreground a local rather than imperial interest in the affairs of the colony.

The position of the European community is also complex because the population must set itself apart from the ‘native’ community, while simultaneously emphasizing their claims to being an important factor in local (as opposed to imperial) politics in the Island. Some may argue that the emphasis on European rather than Ceylonese demands firmly aligns the interests of the memorialists with the interests of the British Empire. However, the discussions and deliberations that took place within the community suggest otherwise. For example, Mr. Harry Creasy, a speaker during the meeting held to discuss the response of the General European community to Crewe’s proposals, emphasizes the advances in terms of the population, revenue and expenditure of the European community in the island as “a sure barometer—of the financial, social, and commercial prosperity of the island” (*Further Correspondence* 9). While Mr. Creasy does differentiate between the “native” and the European population of the Island, his evocation of the “financial, social, and commercial prosperity” echoes exactly the same criteria advanced by Peiris in his memorial to Crewe praying for reform of the Legislative Council of Ceylon (*Despatches* 2). Therefore, the comments by Mr. Creasy appear to highlight the fact that the very logic advanced to call for change to the state structure by the local population is also deployed by European community in the Island to challenge the need for reform. The deployment of a similar logic by both groups, albeit for different ends, highlights the need to pay closer attention to the

complexities faced by the European community in the colony in positioning itself as a target of colonial governmentality.

The complex positioning of the European community as being simultaneously both local and not local makes it difficult for the community to advance a claim for recognition as a target of colonial governmentality. In seeking to address this apparent contradiction, the European community emphasizes its liminal position—it is neither local nor foreign but rather is the bridge between both communities in the Colony (as opposed to the Empire). This solution is suggested by Rev. H. Highfield, whose comments at the meeting emphasize the dangers of allowing only “the interests of capital” to represent the views of the community. He states,

It seems to me that it is desirable that men in my position should in some way be able to influence the election of one European, who would feel that he did not represent capital, that he did not even represent the interests of his fellow-countrymen alone, *but was sent to the Legislative Council in order that he might occupy a free but very important position in being able to understand the desires of the other communities perhaps better than a good many of his fellow-countrymen could do, and so join them in important movements at times.* (*Further Correspondence* 10, emphasis added)

In case there is any doubt as to the fact that the role of the General European community representative goes beyond both racial/ ethnic/ national interests as well as interests of the Empire alone, Rev. Highfield’s goes on to say that what he has in mind is the continuation of the role played by the previous General European representative, Mr. John Ferguson, whose “services were given to interests that were by no means limited to European and colonial interests” (*Further Correspondence* 10). As Rev. Highfield’s comments indicate, a significant section of the European community at this particular juncture of British colonial engagement

with Ceylon appears to view itself more as a viable (though non-native) local voice rather than as a population that is foreign to the interests of the colony.

Crewe's rejection of the request from the General European community that their representation on the Legislative Council be retained should not be grounds to dismiss the terrain on which they based their demands. Although he does not heed their demands, Crewe's response suggests a recognition of the positioning of the European community as being a local (rather than imperial voice) within the colony. He states,

now that the Burghers and the educated Ceylonese are to be allowed to elect their representatives, it would be anomalous, and, indeed, unreasonable, to leave the selection of the European members in the hands of [the Planters' Association and Chamber of Commerce], who whatever their importance, can speak for only a small numerical proportion of the European community. (*Further Correspondence* 43)

Crewe's comments indicate that within four years of rejecting any suggestion of changing the colonial structure of the Island in the House of Commons, the views of the local population had become the pivot for colonial policies in the Island to the extent that the claims that emanated from the European population were also evaluated with the 'local' population in mind. More significantly however, Crewe's comment appears to suggest a recognition of the European population of the colony as a local voice, since he appears to be evaluating their claims as a local pressure group rather than as an extension of the British Empire in a colony. In other words, the recognition of the European community as a population (rather than as an interest group) indexes the recognition of their 'locality' to the colony of Ceylon. Therefore, the interactions between Crewe and the European community in Ceylon suggest that one of the most significant consequences of the constitution of this particular episode of governmentality was the stress that

it placed on the ability to dichotomize the local and the foreign, the Empire and the colony, and therefore the colonizer and the colonized in Ceylon.

Conclusion: The Hybrid Shape of Colonial Governmentality in Ceylon

By the end of a decade that opened with Arunachalam's epistemic intervention that shaped colonial political rationalities through the census, the political technologies of colonial rule in the colony are also radically influenced by the British Empire's colonial subjects in Ceylon. The contestations that coalesced into the Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912 are remarkable because they are indelibly shaped by the demands that emerged from the colonized that they be recognized as a distinct population. These claims to recognition not only radically altered the direction of colonial policy from London but also led the European community in the Island to stake a claim to being recognized as a viable local voice in the Colony.

One of the implications of these complex positions is that it makes it possible to understand the episode of governmentality that emerged in 1912 as a hybrid product of local demands and colonial considerations. On the one hand, the creation of a special seat for the Educated Ceylonese and the extension of franchise to a particular segment of the population was arguably aimed at managing the political aspirations of, partially at least, the local memorialists. On the other hand, however, the retention of a system of nomination on a communal basis on the Legislative Council affirms the importance of racial/ ethnic difference that was one of the major planks of colonial policy in the Island. In short, the debates and dilemmas around the Reforms of 1912 indicate that the deployment of colonial governmentality was shaped as much by the tactics employed by the local population, as it was by the suggestions made by McCallum. Therefore,

the Crewe-McCallum Constitution of 1912 can be understood as a hybrid product of local demands and colonial considerations.

In this chapter I have also hoped to demonstrate that the core of the problems for colonial authorities was how to manage competing and complex claims for recognition advanced by differing populations in Ceylon. Foucault argues that the characteristic of governmentality is not that it is “a matter of imposing a law on men, but of the disposition of things, that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, or, of as far as possible employing laws as tactics; arranging things so that this or that end may be achieved through a certain number of means” (*Security, Territory, Population* 137). Although McCallum rejected the claim that the local memorialists represented the “people of Ceylon,” the new constitution allowed for a seat to be contested at the national level (rather than on the basis of race). The seat was also named educated “Ceylonese” and franchise was extended to any member of the population who met certain educational and wealth criteria, thereby functioning as a (limited) representative of the entire colony. The solution that Crewe recommends therefore can be read as an attempt to deploy the constitution as a tactic aimed at managing both local aspirations as well as McCallum’s affirmation of difference in the governance of the colony. In a similar vein, the reduction of European representation on the Legislative Council was possibly aimed at mitigating the concerns raised by local memorialists about the proportionality of representation. On the other hand, the retention of two European members in spite of the size of the population in the Island indicates that in spite of his use of Arunachalam’s census statistics, Crewe was unwilling to establish a completely proportional political system in the Colony. In other words, the constitution that emerged out of these reforms can be read as the deployment of law as a tactic of promoting a

liberal political philosophy that privileges the proportionality of representation while simultaneously protecting colonial commercial and political interests on the Island.

If Arunachalam's census report initiated an epistemological shift of terrain away from the body of the colonized to the body of knowledge, the claims of the local memorialists initiate a shift in terrain away from the management of difference to the problem of recognition of the colonized populations. My findings in this chapter therefore suggest that in contrast to Yannakakis' claims, the archive is hardly tyrannical and nor does it always reinforce colonial epistemic hierarchies. Instead, I argue that colonial legal practices were produced through complex encounters between the colony and the metropole, the colonizer and the colonized. In short, this chapter foregrounds how claims to recognition as a 'local' population emerged as a radical demand on colonial law and constitution-making at the beginning of the twentieth Century in Ceylon.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion: An Ontology of the Present?

[W]hat is our present? What is the contemporary field of possible experience? Here it is not a question of an analytic of truth, but of what one might call an ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves... (Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution" 96).

My thesis has aimed to excavate how the *dispositif* of ethnicity/nationality/race came to be embedded in both colonial political rationalities and governmental technologies at the turn of the twentieth century in Ceylon. However, as Rose and Miller remind us, the analysis of the "intricate inter-dependencies" of these two concepts allows for the understanding of the "multiple and delicate networks that connect the lives of individuals, groups, and organizations to the aspirations of authorities..." (176). My analysis of the political rationalities and governmental technologies suggests that between 1901 and 1911 the matrix of intricate inter-dependencies which constituted colonial governmentality in Ceylon was indelibly shaped by the interventions made by members of the colonized population. Furthermore, I have also sought to demonstrate that it was the *dispositif* of ethnicity/nationality/race that provided the framework that unified both political rationalities and governmental technologies during this period. In short, I would argue that ethnicity became the terrain, target and field of operation for contestations over how the colonial state structure could give effect to the ambitions of both colonial authorities and their local subjects. Therefore, in this concluding chapter I want to examine how the negotiations surrounding the emergence of ethnicity more than a century ago continue to shape Sri Lanka's post-war, ethnocratic present. I hope to demonstrate that it would be impossible to construct a persuasive or meaningful ontology of Sri Lanka's ethnocratic

present without reference to the episode of governmentality that was constituted between 1901 and 1911 in Ceylon.

One of the most significant concerns that emerged as a problem for governmentality between 1901 and 1911 was how to negotiate between competing claims for recognition as nation(al) populations, particularly in the context of demands for reform of the state. The re-emergence of this question as a problem for governance in post-war Sri Lanka was affirmed during the speech made by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the ceremonial opening of Parliament on May 19, 2009. Announcing the end of the war to the country, President Rajapaksa stated: “[w]e have removed the word minorities from our vocabulary three years ago. No longer are the Tamils, Muslims, Burghers, Malays and any others minorities. There are only two peoples in this country. One is the people that love this country. The other comprises the small groups that have no love for the land of their birth.”¹⁰³ Therefore, in the very moment in which the end of an ethnicity-based civil war is announced, there is also a significant attempt to re-constitute the basis on which claims to recognition as a population could be evaluated. In other words, in the moment of its birth as a post-war country, Sri Lanka returns to the question of how to negotiate between competing claims for recognition as nation(al) populations.

¹⁰³ The President’s emphasis on minority groups in the country arguably also suggests that whereas all Sinhalese already love the country, it is the minorities who have been hesitant to do so. His gesture to the time period (three years) is a reference to the LTTE’s closure of the Maavil Aaru sluice gates on the 21st of July 2006. This incident was ostensibly the reason given by the Government for tearing up the Ceasefire Agreement that was in place and inaugurating the final phase of the war (Eelam War IV). For the full text of the President’s speech to Parliament see http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/document/papers/president_speech_parliament_defeatofLTTE.htm

Taken together, chapters three and four aim to demonstrate how a new episode of governmentality took shape in the first decade of the twentieth century. Unlike the episode of governmentality mapped (or, rather, historicized) by Scott in his essay “Colonial Governmentality,” what is unique about the contestations that took shape during this period is the question of how to manage the demands of a local elite that was actively produced by Ceylon’s encounter with colonialism.¹⁰⁴ This question is visible in both Arunachalam’s intervention through the census as well as the contestations over the Crewe-McCallum Reforms of 1912. Therefore, one of the most significant arguments advanced in this thesis is the explication of how the demands of the local population, in particular the local elite, were embedded in the process of constituting a new episode of colonial governmentality.

The relationship between elite representation and the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality is foregrounded in a number of the dilemmas that shape the ontology of Sri Lanka’s post-war present. For example, the accommodation of ethnic elites through a “proto-consociational alliance”¹⁰⁵ is advanced as one of the most effective solutions to the ethnic conflict in the country by Jayadeva Uyangoda and Sanayi Marcelline. Their argument is worth quoting at length:

¹⁰⁴ What is also significant about this elite population their commitment to appropriation rather than rejection of colonial practices. For a more in-depth discussion on these elites see Kumari Jayawardena’s *Nobodies to Somebodies*, Michael Roberts’ “Introduction: Elites, Nationalisms, and the Nationalist Movement” and Patrick Peebles’ *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon*.

¹⁰⁵ They define a “proto-consociational alliance” as “an informal alliance of the majority of political parties cutting across the governing-opposition divide, including the ethnic parties... It is a provisional working agreement between the ruling coalition and opposition parties on a specific agenda” (Marcelline and Uyangoda 333-334).

[A proto-consociational alliance] centers around elite accommodation and agreement for political reforms and peace-building. Critical peace-building literature is quite suspicious of elite-led peace-building processes, because of the inherent fragility and instability of elite-led transitions to peace. However, the dilemma of Sri Lanka, ..., is that ethnicization of popular political imagination, repeatedly re-produced by the ethnic conflict, makes it difficult to ensure popular support and legitimacy for state reforms, unless there is an elite agreement to defy from re-ethnicizing the new initiatives for peace-building. (336)

The context in which Marcelline and Uyangoda advance this call has changed significantly with the electoral defeat of the former President's regime in 2015. However, their argument sheds light on how the demands of ethnic elites, which emerged as a problem for governmentality between 1901 and 1911, are still an important factor in determining the trajectory of the post-war state. In fact, as Marcelline and Uyangoda suggest, there is very little hope for post-war reconciliation in Sri Lanka without a political process that accommodates the local, ethnic elite. I would assert therefore, that the central role of ethnic elites in Sri Lanka's post-war present is the culmination of a process that started more than a century ago.

My other major contribution in this thesis is to demonstrate how the emergence of the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality as a problem for political rationalities and technologies coincided with the constitution of this new episode of governmentality which accommodated the local elite. Chapter three highlighted how Arunachalam's emphasis on the multiplicity of nations and his caution against recognizing a single community as constituting the nation in 1901 is rejected by Denham who notes that it is only the Sinhalese who can lay claim to being a nation in 1912. Almost concurrently, as chapter four demonstrates, the local memorialists are writing to Crewe praying for reform on the basis of their claim to represent the "people of Ceylon." Their

demand for recognition of a broad national identity is rebutted by Governor McCallum who foregrounds racial/ ethnic difference and emphasizes the ‘foreignness’ of the memorialists, particularly on the basis of their education, wealth, and privilege. In other words, it is the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality that enables the local elite to demand and contest the art of colonial governance that had existed prior to 1912. Therefore, although Sri Lanka’s emergence as an ethnocracy can be traced to its early experience of postcolonial political change (Uyangoda, *State Reform in Sri Lanka* 5), this thesis argues that the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality was embedded in Sri Lankan governmentality many decades prior to the granting of Independence in 1948.

Another major argument I advanced was the importance of paying attention to the debate over which population has the right to claim nationhood and thereby have a stake in the shaping of the Ceylonese state. In a similar vein, the *dispositif* of ethnicity/nationality/race continues to contour the basis on which competing views on the relationship between nation(s) and the post-war state are to be resolved today. For example, the 2015 General Election manifesto of the Tamil National Alliance or the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK), the main political party representing Tamils in the North and East states: “in April 1951 the ITAK articulated its claim that the Tamil People in Ceylon were a Nation distinct from that of the Sinhalese by every test of nationhood and were therefore entitled to the right to self-determination” (1). Based on this affirmation of their claim to be recognized as a separate nation, the ITAK manifesto goes on to state that “[t]he Tamil People are entitled to the right to self-determination in keeping with United Nations International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which Sri Lanka has accepted and acceded to” and that “[p]ower sharing arrangements must continue to be established as it existed earlier in a unit of a merged Northern

and Eastern Provinces based on a Federal structure” (4). Furthermore, in the midst of recent moves to introduce a new constitution for the country, the ITAK re-affirmed its call for a federal state structure.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, the main political parties in the South strongly oppose the establishment of a Federal structure on the grounds that Sri Lanka is a unitary state.¹⁰⁷ In contrast, the two main political parties in the Sinhala majority south, the United National Party (UNP) and United People’s Freedom Alliance (UPFA) were not as explicit about their stance on the Sinhala nation as the BBS. However, both the UNP¹⁰⁸ and the SLFP¹⁰⁹ manifestos affirmed that a unitary state (as opposed to a federal one) as the basis for any political solution in the country. These contrasting understandings about the nature of the relationship between the nation

¹⁰⁶ See video clip of media briefing by ITAK MP, Hon. M.A. Sumanthiran here-

<http://www.ceylonews.com/2016/01/26/only-a-federal-solution-will-ensure-undivided-sri-lanka-tna/> Significantly, in an attempt to address criticism from the South (and in particular the Sinhalese) that the call for a Federal solution was aimed at dividing the country, Mr. Sumanthiran argues that the first call for a federal structure of the State was advanced by the former Prime Minister of the country S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike as early as 1926 on behalf of the Kandyan league, an association representing the interests of the Kandyan-Sinhalese. As Mr. Sumanthiran’s comments indicate, local claims to recognition as a population during colonial times continue to be the basis for political rationalities and technologies even after the end of the war.

¹⁰⁷ The unitary nature of the Sri Lankan state is enshrined in the Constitution (Article 2) and any amendment to the unitary nature of the State requires the approval of both a 2/3rd majority in Parliament as well as a referendum (Article 83(a)).

¹⁰⁸ Although the UNP manifesto promises to introduce a new constitution if elected, the Party makes clear that any devolution of power would only be within the structure of a unitary state (13).

¹⁰⁹ The SLFP took on a more explicitly nationalist stance during this election and in its manifesto affirmed that while it was committed to a state structure that was fair and just to all communities, it would ‘protect with its life if necessary’ the hard fought freedom, territorial integrity and unitary structure of the Sri Lankan state (7).

and the state that are reflected in the manifestos of the major political parties in the South and the ITAK, is at the heart of the debate about the reformation of the State in Sri Lanka. Uyangoda, who maps the post-Independence trajectory of these two competing visions of the post-colonial Sri Lankan State, points to the fundamentally different conceptions of ‘nation’ in Sinhalese and Tamil political consciousness. He states:

While [the ‘nation’] meant in Sinhalese consciousness a politically unified single entity of citizens organized within a territorially unified and unitary state with centralized sovereignty, the Tamil construction of the nation implied the coexistence of two distinct yet equal nationalities within a ‘nation,’ sharing sovereignty in the form of territorially distinct political units. (*State Reform in Sri Lanka* 32)

Therefore, even as recently as 2015 the question of the relationship between difference and the political constitution of Ceylon/ Sri Lanka as a nation continues to be of significant importance to the shape and trajectory of the post-war Sri Lankan state. The different proposals for the shape of the state structure echo those of the local memorialists, who claimed to represent the people of Ceylon (ergo a single, unified nation), and the rejection of those claims by McCallum on the grounds that they negated fundamental differences within the country. More importantly, the 2015 debates about ethnicity and nation also resonate with the epistemic debate between Arunachalam and Denham regarding the basis on which a community can lay claim to nationhood. Therefore, Sri Lanka’s post-war ethnocratic present is indelibly marked by the question of how to formalize the relationship between the nation(s) and the political constitution of the state that emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The debate on the relationship between nation(s) and the structure of the post-war State is currently receiving even more attention due to efforts to introduce a new constitution for the

country. Hon. Jayampathy Wickramaratne, MP and chair of the committee appointed by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to provide technical support to the Constitution-making process, was recently asked by a journalist about the “guiding principles” shaping the development of the new constitution. He responded by saying, “It must be a democratic Constitution. Democracy also means that it must be a very inclusive Constitution. Sri Lanka is a multicultural society. We have ethnic groups as well as political minorities, smaller parties... They all must be included in the process of government.” Central to these comments is the sense that the management of competing claims to recognition as populations and local voices is essential to the process of constitution building in the country. In other words, Wickramaratne’s comments foreground the problem of recognition as a fundamental issue for post-war governmentality. However, the equivalence attributed here to both ethnic groups *as well as* smaller parties is also important because it suggests that “an inclusive constitution” involves the management of the claims of populations as well as political interests. This dichotomization between population and interests returns us to the dilemma faced by Crewe in seeking to address the demands of both the local population as well as the claims advanced by the General European. Therefore, the management of political interests and local claims to recognition particularly in the context of moves to formalize the relationship between the nation(s) and the State, continues to be a problem for post-war governmentality in Sri Lanka.

One possible disagreement with this thesis’s attempt to historicize Sri Lanka’s post-war moment through a moment in its colonial history might be the lack of a colonizing power currently determining the shape of Sri Lanka’s post-war trajectory. However, one of the hallmarks of Sri Lanka’s civil war is its increased internationalization (Goodhand and Walton; Uyangoda, *Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*), which has played a crucial role in determining its post-

war trajectory (Goodhand, “Sri Lanka in 2012”).¹¹⁰ The participation of the international community in Sri Lanka’s post-war trajectory is fundamentally different to its experience of colonialism. However, the involvement of the international community in shaping Sri Lanka’s post-war futures demonstrates the multiple, overlapping layers of power that continue to play a part in determining the country’s post-war trajectory. Therefore, mirroring the overlapping colonial power relationships that led to the deployment of a particular form of political technology at the turn of the century, the post-war Sri Lankan State is also attempting to navigate the complex relationships between international interests and domestic concerns.

The negotiations between international and domestic considerations are visible in the contestations surrounding the fulfillment of its commitment to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to establishing a hybrid domestic mechanism. As per the UNHRC resolution, this body will be empowered to investigate and prosecute those involved in violations of international law that took place during the last stages of the war.¹¹¹ The UNHRC Resolution co-

¹¹⁰ This is not to equate the participation of the international community to Sri Lanka’s experience of colonialism.

¹¹¹ The Government’s commitment to this process was the culmination of years of concern at the UNHRC regarding allegations that large-scale violations of international law took place during the final stages of the war. In its March 2014 session the UNHRC authorized the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to “undertake a comprehensive investigation into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes by both parties in Sri Lanka” as well as “to establish the facts and circumstances of such alleged violations and of the crimes perpetrated with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring accountability”

(A/HRC/RES/25/1[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/RES/25/1]). Following the release of the comprehensive report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Sri Lanka at the September 2015 session of the UNHRC, the Sri Lankan Government co-sponsored a resolution (A/HRC/RES/30/1) to undertake a domestic investigation into these allegations with significant input from

sponsored by the Government in September 2015, which set up this mechanism, recognized seemingly unusual populations as being critical to Sri Lanka's post-war trajectory towards reconciliation and accountability. The resolution commented on the need to “engag[e] in broad national consultations with the inclusion of victims and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, from all affected communities, which will inform the design and implementation of these processes, drawing on international expertise, assistance and best practices” (3). The recognition of victims, civil society and NGOs, and international experts in this accountability structure appears to suggest the emergence of a new population (or rather a constellation of populations) not based on race/nationality/ethnicity as a mechanism for the operationalization of post-war governmentality that straddles both local and international interests.

The local opposition to the Government's international commitment to setting up an accountability mechanism however, is vocalized by groups such as the Bodu Jana Peramuna (BJP), a political party representing the hardline Sinhala-Buddhist organization known as the Bodu Bala Sena.¹¹² These groups argue that the place of the Sinhalese in the country is currently under threat due to the nefarious activities of “imperialist forces” who have either settled or

international and Commonwealth “judges, defence lawyers, authorized prosecutors and investigator.”

(<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/236/38/PDF/G1523638.pdf?OpenElement>)

¹¹² Nira Wickramasinghe explains who and what the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) stand for. She says “The BBS was formed in 2012 by two Buddhist monks as a break away from the Jathika Hela Urumaya (National Heritage Party), which they felt was not adequately representing Sinhala Buddhist interests. The BBS seeks the enforcement of Buddhist predominance in Sri Lanka and engages in hate speech and attacks against minority religions. It receives implicit support from some leading monks” (“Sri Lanka in 2014” 62).

supported the claims of non-Sinhalese groups within the country (බෙදා දී ජන පෙරමුණ 3).

Therefore, whereas the UNHRC Resolution appears to be aimed at transcending the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality in order to promote reconciliation in Sri Lanka, the challenge to it foregrounds the ongoing concerns of race/ ethnicity/ nationality. In other words, the debates surrounding this hybrid domestic accountability mechanism foreground how local, international, and normative concerns are imbricated in the management of competing claims to recognition in much the same way as they did for British colonial rule in the country in 1912.¹¹³ Furthermore, the contestations over the scope of a hybrid *domestic* mechanism for investigating violations of *international* law index how the deployment of law as a tactic to address both local and international legal considerations continues to be marked by the *dispositif* of ethnicity/race/nationality.

What I have done so far is to demonstrate the possibilities of historicizing Sri Lanka's post-war, ethnocentric present through the examination of one particular moment—the first decade of the twentieth century—in Sri Lanka's modern history. While this analysis provides a glimpse of what can be gleaned through one such juncture, there is a need for more comprehensive genealogical inquiries that examine other moments in which Sri Lanka's ethnocentric, post-war present was given concrete shape. One such instance, which is only alluded

¹¹³ It is hardly surprising then that there has been a great deal of confusion as to the final shape that this accountability mechanism will take. In spite of the commitments made by His Government in Geneva, Maithripala Sirisena, the President in a recent interview with the BBC stated that “foreign judges and prosecutors should not be involved in an investigation into allegations of war crimes.” A few days later, his Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe told the Sunday Times that; “[w]e will have participation from foreign judges. This is nothing new. There have been occasions when foreign judges served here in the past too.”

to in this thesis, is the conduct of Sri Lanka's first 'modern' census in 1871. Historicizing the deployment of the census in Ceylon as a tool of epistemic practice between 1871 and 1881 would also have to take into account the statistical congresses held in Europe that profoundly influenced the decision to conduct a census in colonies such as Ceylon. Another episode that requires a great deal of further genealogical exploration is the contestations surrounding the publication of the 1946 census report since it was contemporaneous with the institution of a new constitution, the granting of Independence, and the almost simultaneous disenfranchisement of a significant segment of the population on the grounds that they were foreign. In a similar vein, it is also worth examining the conduct of the 1981 census, which was the basis for constructing knowledge about the country's ethnic group for more than 30 years. It is also the last census to be conducted before the outbreak of violent riots that led to the civil war and the first census after the introduction of a neo-liberal economic system in Sri Lanka. As these sketches suggest, there is a great deal of work that remains to be done to construct a comprehensive genealogy of Sri Lanka's ethnocratic present. Therefore, what I have really hoped to do through this thesis is to sketch out a methodological approach that can be deployed in similar genealogical inquiries into how Sri Lanka's ethnocratic pasts, presents, and futures are embedded in each other.

In a country dealing with the visible repercussions of a nearly three-decade-long civil war however, it is little solace to know that our present is imbricated in our past. Thus, the most critical contribution I have wished to advance is that the options for Sri Lanka's post-war trajectory are not as limited as it may appear. In a situation where the two major forms of nationalism seek to exist in solitude (Uyangoda, "Healing after War") and where scholarly methodologies often reify the very divisions they seek to challenge, I have sought to open up a new pathway for thinking through and speaking about Sri Lanka's ethnocracy. I have aimed to

demonstrate that understanding Sri Lanka's "'now' which we all inhabit, and which defines the moment in which I am writing" (Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution" 86), is impossible without recourse to a more careful consideration of the imbrication of its ethnocratic pasts, presents, and futures. Such a reading frees us intellectually from the totemic status of the state and enables us to frame the conversation about Sri Lanka's post-war, colonial present beyond the existing limits of our scholarly imagination. Furthermore, it also provides for a way of including the views of subaltern groups such as the families of the missing, the displaced, war widows, the disabled, and the traumatized, for example, not on the basis of their ethnicity (as important as that is) but also on the basis of the claims that they make to recognition as populations. Therefore, to my mind, the most significant direction that this thesis suggests for future research is the need to free our imagination from the deterministic limits that have been set for us. It suggests that although Sri Lanka's ethnocratic present may indeed be fraught with overlapping divisions, its futures need not necessarily be as bleak as they currently appear.

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