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Schooling-in-Wartime in Northern Sri Lanka:

A Bourdieusian Exploration

Gayathri Fernando

PhD International Development
The University of Edinburgh
2024
Dedication

To the teachers in the former northern warzone of Sri Lanka
who opened the doors of the classroom, day after day.

To all teachers in crisis locations in the world,
who keep on teaching...
Abstract

This thesis examines the legitimacy of schooling structures and practices in the northern warzone of Sri Lanka during the civil war (1983-2009). Despite war, oppression and displacement, the Tamils in the northern warzone sent their children to school, university, and to sit the national examinations with diligence each year. This was enabled by a peculiar characteristic of the Sri Lankan civil war: the state continued to supply education and health in the same area they were shelling and bombing. Employing the oral history method, this study places at its centre, the teacher, educator and student. How did a child in rebel-held territory move through a corridor of state schooling institutions to a place at university? How were educators enabled to intervene in the field of armed power and conduct the A levels as an annual educational event across the lines? In the thesis I analyse this using the tools of Pierre Bourdieu: habitus, capital and doxa. Locating the field of schooling within the field of rebel-state power, I examine how the complexities of a game qua game unravelled and collided in the lives of the war-affected students in LTTE-controlled schools in the Vanni, and in state and mission schools in the Jaffna Peninsula. Departing from existing literature, this study looks beyond the motivations of state and rebel governance in warzones to a theory of practice. Interrogating the habitus, I explain how diverse social agents carry out practices that obey regularities in the social field, rather than doing so in obedience to rules. I argue that Bourdieu’s notion of illusio is important to better understand how a belief in the legitimacy of the symbolic capital of schooling structures in the social space of positions, held together, over a quarter century of war. This research concludes that historical dispositions in the habitus enabled the teacher and educator to converge with diverse social agents across the lines in doxic submission to the legitimacy of schooling structures, and that this convergence devolved sanctuary measures on war-affected students. Questioning Bourdieusian notions of the limited awareness by the social agents of the structures guiding their practice, this study proposes field theory analysis of oral history data as providing significant insights into articulations of self-identification, location in the field, and their commonsense view of the world.
Lay Summary

This thesis is about legitimacy of the schooling system and the practices of principal, teacher, administrator and student in the northern warzone of Sri Lanka during the civil war (1983 – 2009). Despite war, oppression and displacement, the Tamils in the northern warzone sent their children to school, university, and to sit the national examinations with diligence each year. This was enabled by a peculiar characteristic of the Sri Lankan civil war: the state continued to supply education and health in the same area they were shelling and bombing. I use the oral history method in this study to understand the lived experience of wartime schooling. How did a child in rebel-held territory move through a corridor of state schooling institutions to a place at university? How were educators enabled to intervene in the field of armed power and conduct the A Levels as an annual educational event across the lines? In the thesis I analyse this using the tools of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu: habitus, capital and doxa. In this study the struggles that continue in schooling are treated as taking place within the armed struggle between rebel and state. I examine how all this unravelled and collided in the lives of the war-affected students in LTTE-controlled schools in the Vanni, and in state and mission schools in the Jaffna Peninsula. This study looks beyond what motivated the state and rebel in governing the warzones, at a theory of how practices are enabled and carried out in schooling in wartime. Habitus is a concept that is used in this study to analyse how teacher, educator, armed officer and rebel appeared to act in regular ways without doing so in obedience to rules. Another tool is illusio, which is important to better understand how schooling held together its symbolic power and legitimacy over a quarter century of war. This research concludes that the teacher and other armed and unarmed individuals shared a respect for the legitimacy of schooling which flowed from historically ingrained traits and relations. It argues that this enabled them to converge, and that this convergence devolved measures of sanctuary on the war-affected students. Questioning the position of Bourdieu that the individuals were not really aware of the structures guiding their practice, this study proposes that oral history data is helpful to this type of analysis, as it provides significant insights on how the individuals saw themselves, where they stood in this field of analysis, and their commonsense view of the world.
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Acknowledgements

The writing of this thesis journeyed through the changing scenes of a global pandemic, personal loss and difficulty. It was the ‘sand-box’ to which I returned with purpose and resolve. I was guided by the wisdom and experienced skill of my supervisor Jonathan Spencer. Thank you for your patience and conviction that I would ‘find my voice.’

Pete Kingsley and the IDEAS group’s warm welcome and Delwar Hussein’s engaging QM and ethnographic fieldwork course sessions, coffee clarifications and helpful guidance during the early stages are remembered with appreciation.

A special mention of the swift response and support of the IT teams, especially Angie, who sorted out a laptop exchange during lockdown, and EdHelp responders who fixed things like a nerve-racking Endnote glitch on the last working day before Christmas vacation.

Thank you, Nireka, for being a strong force of encouragement, insight and much-needed critique as an anthropologist-friend.

Thank you, Asha, for receiving me off the Jaffna bus at 4 am in Colombo after that final day of field interviews and walking around the pond on that spend-the-day with an emotionally overwrought, yet terribly inspired old schoolfriend. Thank you for ‘seeing,’ resonating, and walking beside me.

Finally I wish to thank the champions of my work: my daughter, Anjou, and my son, Daniel.
# List of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>Air Raid Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>Church of South India</td>
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<td>CYPO</td>
<td>Children and Young Person’s Ordinance</td>
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<td>DPCCS</td>
<td>Department of Probation and Child Care Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMOHA</td>
<td>East Midlands Oral History Archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>EROS</td>
<td>Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPKF</td>
<td>Indian Peace Keeping Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>FARC</td>
<td>The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>JVP</td>
<td>Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna</td>
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<tr>
<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORC</td>
<td>Open Relief Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBA</td>
<td>Old Boys’ Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Regional Coordination Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLMM</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>TELO</td>
<td>Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRO</td>
<td>Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TULF</td>
<td>Tamil United Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>University Grants Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children’s Education Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNP</td>
<td>United National Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTHR(J)</td>
<td>University Teachers of Human Rights (Jaffna)</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Leading a Caritas-funded book project with a local NGO in Sri Lanka during the shaky ceasefire of 2002-2006, I discovered through case studies of oral histories of peacebuilding, the parallel reality of living in the warzone. We, who had schooled, worked and played in multi-ethnic Colombo, had had no idea of ‘the other life.’ Jaffna was still too sensitive and volatile to enter. When the war finally ended in 2009, a phenomenon we Sri Lankans had never believed would take place in our lifetime, there was a surge of research publications, novels, biographies, stories, documentaries, poems and else. Local and international researchers, writers and content-creators appeared to primarily focus on conflict dynamics and justice for those directly involved in the field of armed warfare, including child soldiers, former combatants and families of the victims. Informed by former experience as a public administrative lawyer in Sri Lanka, I was interested in the lived experiences of members of professional groups in public service, such as teachers and doctors. In 2011, I returned to Sri Lanka and visited Jaffna for the very first time with a young family. With many questions flowing from my preliminary research, I wished to investigate more about the terms on which schooling-in-wartime had continued.

Preliminary Research

Welfarism, a ‘mission,’ notions of legitimacy

There were peculiar characteristics of the civil war in Sri Lanka. First, the state continued to supply education in the same territory they were bombing and shelling. This was enabled as public administration did not completely collapse in the warzone. Eastern bureaucrats were described as being ‘in the eye of the storm’ on the frontline, caught between carrying out duties as government representatives while submitting to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) threats and appropriation of state resources (Klem, 2012). The Government Agent (G.A.), Mannar, recounted how, following aerial bombardment by state armed forces, he would receive orders to go out and deliver emergency supplies to the war-affected populations. Being a devout Christian, he would kneel and pray before leaving home for deliverance from unexploded devices, an enraged and traumatised population among other threats, and a safe
return to his family. The teacher did not appear to operate from such a position of vulnerability. In the midst of shelling, bombing, threat and intimidation by LTTE, state armed forces and other armed agents, the teachers who remained in the warzone considered it their ‘mission,’ a civil service term used by the teacher-interviewees, to keep the classroom doors open for a generation of children born and raised in wartime. Principals were not shot or harassed for doing so, while those who showed resistance or political opposition to the LTTE demands, were executed. Doctors I interviewed on that field visit, while remaining outside the focus of this study, appeared to have continued their work in public health and hospitals.

What I was hearing at this stage of research appeared to go beyond explanations provided in rebel governance and sovereignty discourse for the continued supply of welfare and public goods to warzone populations in civil wars. Over the past decade, rebel governance literature emerged out of scholarly interest in non-sovereign forms of governance in insurgent rebellion (Arjona, Kasfir, & Mampilly, 2015; Fortin, Klem, Sosnowski, Bloom, & Kingston, 2021; Mampilly, 2011). The conceptual approaches developed in this literature have been used to frame earlier research on the LTTE and state practices in rebel-held territory during the civil war in Sri Lanka (Klem & Maunaguru, 2017, 2018; Klem & Suykens, 2018; Mampilly, 2015; Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, 2018). Rebel engagement with civilians is proposed as being marked by symbolism, performance, competition over legitimacy as well as instrumental purpose-driven outcomes. Mampilly notes the absence of a singular logic guiding the reasoning behind this engagement, suggesting that diverse rebel groups operate from diverse motivations and objectives (Arjona et al., 2015). Legitimation theories aside, the admitted difficulty of carrying out field research in rebel-held territory appeared to inform the depiction of rebel governance practices at times as objective and strategic, such as the reaffirming of Tamil cultural norms in naming institutions, while preliminary research for this thesis queried the extent of translation of all these practices on the ground (Mampilly, 2015, p.91).

Relevant to this thesis is the convergence on education being one of the most common public goods supplied by rebel organisations. Offering explanations of education being a core method of socialising civilian populations, it is proposed as being linked to public support and an important site for the dissemination of ideology. The failure to supply this important public good to the war-affected population under their control is expected to result in resentment by the local community and loss of credibility and recognition among international states,

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1 Interview with the former G.A. of Mannar, Colombo, August 2018.
international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and other international groups of interest. I found the conceptual distinctions drawn by Frerks and others, such as the distinction between governance and governance practices, important to this research (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018). All this informed an understanding of the model of state-rebel contestation, compromise and competing interests played out in the field of schooling under rebel control in the Vanni, examined in Chapter Two of this thesis. Where I met its limitations was in the arguments that stayed largely within the territory of state sovereignty. ‘Rebels attempt sovereign behaviours without ever becoming juridical sovereigns’ and this argues Mampilly influences and drives ‘rebel development of civilian governance’ (Arjona et al., 2015, p.95). Conceptual claims of performed sovereign ‘mimicry’ takes this enquiry further (Klem & Maunaguru, 2017). I find it problematic to draw conclusions on how social agents in these territories internalise and are convinced of and shaped by such performances. Consider this claim: ‘states are sovereign because they are; non-state armed groups are not because they are not. People caught in between can end up without a useful legal identity and without any recognised citizenship (Fortin et al., 2021, p.134).

In this thesis I attempt to understand how the teacher, student and educator social agents, including at times the armed rebel and state armed officer, had imagined their sense of belonging in a social space; their sense of personhood, citizenship and relation to the state order beyond such frames. I suggest that rebel governance literature does not adequately address the historical struggles, especially the continuing symbolic struggles in the empirical location. Kasfir to some extent points in the direction of this research enquiry: ‘cultural beliefs and social values instilled in insurgents before they rebel, influence their governance of civilians, often more deeply than rebels realize’ (Kasfir, 2015, p.40). Mampilly also indicates the link between the historical supply of education as a public good and its importance to the population in an earlier work: ‘faced with the entrenched preferences of the Tamil population, which, since independence, had been able to access extensive public goods from the government, the insurgency would have risked alienating its support base if it had tinkered unsuccessfully with the provision of education or other public goods’ (Mampilly, 2011, p.127).

In this thesis I hope to expand further on the importance of the historical struggles and dispositions of the social agents in the rebel-held territory, asking how state-rebel hybrid governance practices translated into teacher-student engagement in the sites of schooling in the rebel-held Vanni.
I turn to another argument which suggested that in this empirical location, welfarism had historically informed the entitlement to free education and health services. Wickremasinghe argues that ‘more than through rights given by the constitution, however, it was through welfare entitlements than people imagined themselves as part of a social order and were able to conceive of themselves as citizens’ (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.90). Here I felt was an indication of the historical struggles over legitimacy from the perspective of the social agent-citizen, of how the social space of positions in the field was historically imagined and was emerging from my own preliminary field interviews. The teacher and doctor appeared to have demonstrated a commitment to their mission which was natural; just by being a teacher, a doctor in public service. I realised that historical structures had gathered new meaning in wartime and had held together somehow.

Schooling did not just continue without structure or direction in classrooms. My very first interviewee, retired principal PS, declared that the national examinations were held annually in the warzone: ‘there was no foul play, no tampering! No pilferage! University examinations, entrance examinations, O Levels (equivalent to the GCSEs in Year 11 in the UK), A Levels, everything...Teacher’s College examinations...everything was organised!' Responding to my queries, PS clarified that ‘tampering’ referred to the seal placed upon the bundle of examination papers in protocol-regulated practice by the central state department of examinations. Despite a war which had divided and polarised the populations in a seemingly intractable political gridlock, students all around the nation including in a closed warzone, would be united on exam day, receiving their exam papers at the same time in a synchronised ritual. I quickened to the realisation that here was something that called for a deeper exploration into the practices that had continued during wartime in the site of schooling. In the narration of this educational event, I ask, why was it a matter of significance and pride to this educator-community that even in a closed warzone, beyond supervision of the authorities, that the Tamil teacher-invigilators and coordinators of the state examinations had not committed ‘foul play’? Nor had there been pilfering of exam papers?

There were notions of legitimacy here traced through the site of schooling that needed to be unpacked and examined. How did the A Levels continue to be held in the warzone as an educational event with the cooperation of all armed agents across the lines for over a quarter of a century of civil war? Why was it not mimicked, paralleled and disrupted? Even a makeshift

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2 Interview with PS, Jaffna, August 2011.
justice system of sorts had been paralleled in rebel-controlled territory. This is where I began my research inquiry. In 2018, nearly a decade after the war ended and three years’ after psychosocial services had commenced in the former northern warzone, when fear and post-war uncertainty had abated, I returned to the Jaffna Peninsula to conduct field interviews for this research undertaking.

**In search of a theoretical framework**

In parallel I was searching for a theoretical framework of analysis. In a time we considered to be historic, there was this need shared in discussion with other researchers to make our field research with survivors of this long war, significant, somehow. I did not wish to produce more stories. The thing of significance I felt, was the need to find a way to make sense of the layer of experiential reality of schooling-in-wartime. All this called for a theoretical approach where nothing I was hearing in field interviews from teachers and educators needed to be rejected, discarded as misfits to a selected theory. In preliminary field research I had encountered representations that were seemingly at odds with armed oppression; traces of civilisation that had refused to bend to the depravity of war. I felt I needed to make sense of what appeared to be incongruous to wartime schooling.

In such an empirical context, the magnetism of studying the state as a thing was powerful. I meandered on a well-trodden path through articulations of state and sovereignty; how the modern state ‘disaggregated into the multitude of discrete operations, procedures, and representations in which it appears in the everyday life of ordinary people’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.15). More on the postcolonial state: ‘what is striking about this situation, in retrospect, is the degree to which the state has become implicated in the minute texture of everyday life’ (Gupta, 1995, p.375). While such interpretations of the state continued to inform this research study, I did not consider ‘the thought of the state’ to be at the heart of this enquiry (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.5). Sieving through the literature on the civil service I found useful interpretations on imagining the bureaucracy as ‘not a rational, hierarchical and coherent instrument of rule’ but ‘societal agents that broker strategic relations with a wide range of actors’ (Klem, 2012, p.5). Yet the teachers were no ordinary bureaucrats. Interpreting the representations by educators in enabling a child to receive a good education in wartime, I found Amarasuriya’s findings on the child probation officers, helpful (Amarasuriya, 2011). Criss-crossing notions of welfarism, education and guardianship of the child, all mapped a
landscape where there appeared to be hidden meanings. Governance was laden with in-betweens in postcolonial Sri Lanka.

Impossible though it appeared, after many attempts from this discursive entry-point or another, I arrived at Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice. Finally in the conceptual approaches, notions and tools of Bourdieu, I found an adequate theoretical framework of analysis (Bourdieu, 1977). First, here was a ‘relational’ approach, which I suggest is important to this investigation: ‘to think in terms of field is to think relationally’ (Wacquant, 1989, p.39). There appeared to be the need to separate war relations and schooling relations, and not just in sites, either, but in a host of inter-changeable relations which Bourdieu terms field (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, Chamboredon, Passeron, & Krais, 1991; Kögler, 1997; Wacquant, 1989). Going beyond analysing stance-taking by diverse interviewees, Bourdieu’s approach is considered with position-taking, the positionality of diverse social agents in the ‘field’ and how they related to each other and to the field of power. Second, ‘the relational and analogical mode of reasoning fostered by the concept of field’ allowed for an investigation which ‘enables us to grasp particularity within generality and generality within particularity’ (Wacquant, 1989, p.36). Third, I was enabled in placing the teacher as operating from a habitus, a concept which I define and expand on in a further section on the use of Bourdieu in this thesis. Habitus, by proposing that the teacher’s practices in wartime schooling was informed by a historically ingrained set of dispositions, allowed this enquiry to admit the important influence of colonial structures and the notions of capital, especially symbolic capital in the field of education in this postcolonial society. Fourth, the teachers did not speak in terms of abstract notions, nor did they dwell on identity, political ideology, accounts of personal loss or family life. Much of the in-depth interviews detailed the practices of schooling and the exchanges and transactions they entered into as teachers, not as individuals. Bourdieu’s approach of looking for the practical sense, the practical reason, fitted well with the research emerging from the field (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998). Here was a theoretical approach that situated practices in grounded empirical reality, rather than in abstractions. While I expand on Bourdieu’s notions further on, in the next section I detail the historical background to the postcolonial struggles that inform this thesis, in an evolving field of violence, unpredictability and dispossession.

Historical Struggles

While the state was often imagined as an apparatus, in response to Wacquant’s query on the difference between a field and an apparatus, Bourdieu replies:
An essential difference: struggles and thus historicity! The notion of apparatus is the Trojan horse of "pessimistic functionalism:" it is an infernal machine, programmed to accomplish certain purposes no matter what, when, or where. The school system, the State, the church, political parties or unions are not apparatuses but fields. In a field, agents and institutions constantly struggle, according to the rules constitutive of this space of game, with various degrees of strength and therefore diverse probabilities of success, to appropriate the specific products at stake in the game. (Wacquant, 1989, p.40)

I introduce the historical background to this thesis set in a postcolonial state, drawing out the relationships that inform this thesis, rather than ‘groups, members and numbers’ (Bourdieu, 1985, p.723). In newly-Independent Sri Lanka there were different fields with different interests and different struggles. I include the symbolic struggles that continue in this thesis. I include a rather detailed account of the forces of violence in the field. Taken together, I propose, both these unsettled what Bourdieu proposed as being at stake in the field: the very representation of the social world held by the social agents, emerging from a colonial past (Bourdieu, 1985).

Colonial structures, historical dispositions

Located on a maritime route, this island, encountered by European explorers just off the tip of the Indian subcontinental land mass received western modern structures laid by colonising powers since the early 16th century. Significantly, apart from the Portuguese, Dutch and British influence on this isle, by a quirk of history, the Jaffna Peninsula in particular, in relation to the rest of the island received an additional layer of structured western institutions. In 1816, American Missionaries from the Congregationalist Church, arrived in the island encouraged by the British Governor’s stance in comparison to the British East India Company censure on missionary work in India, especially by American Missions (Richards, Poor, Spaulding, & Winslow, 1821). These missionaries including those educated at Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary, were ordered to limit their mission to the remote Jaffna Peninsula, where they then proceeded to establish schools with modern structures. There were seminaries with English education teaching a number of subjects including the sciences, philosophy and mathematics, and ‘vernacular’ schools in the Tamil language (‘New York

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3 Abstract reads as ‘The last public letter from this station, forwarded by way of Calcutta, brought down the affairs of the mission to Nov. 13, 1819; and a duplicate, sent by way of Bombay, Jan. 14, 1820, contained, in a postscript, the grateful information of the arrival of brother and sister Scudder at Jaffna, and of the brethren and sisters Winslow and Spaulding at Columbo.’
Evangelist“'The Jaffna College, Ceylon,” 1870; Martyn, 1923; Root, 2004). Girls’ education in English was introduced in the 1800s, a phenomenon which informed the dispositions and practices of female principals and vice principals in this thesis (Hastings, 1894; Hubbard, 1917). The British allowed the American Mission to proceed on the condition that there would be no forced conversion, which could result in a Hindu mutiny. Significantly this meant that a number of Hindu students attended the seminaries and colleges and headed off to government employment recorded as early as 1839 (Poor, 1840). The British Wesleyan Mission followed by establishing their own schools in the peninsula.

From these colonial structures of schooling linked to lucrative government employment, I argue, arose a historical disposition in the Jaffna Tamil to education and governance. With a number of Hindu and Christian Tamils from the northern peninsula filling the civil service, I suggest that a shared habitus which drew on structured schooling experiences and continued in civil service structures, was criss-crossing faith lines. What is relevant to this thesis is how symbolic power was drawn from historical structures in the field of northern schooling, where faith as a result was of less importance. With the change in British empirical governance policies in the 1900s where Sinhalese were granted civil service positions, I suggest that the roots of a ‘shared civil-servant habitus’ took root. The Christian mission schooled civil servants north-south shared a habitus which criss-crossed faith, ethnic and regional lines. In this thesis I examine how this shared habitus gave rise to a doxic submission to notions of regularity, including an appreciation of hierarchical order.

American medical missionaries translated medical dictionaries into Tamil, established hospitals and laid the foundation for a historically ingrained disposition among Jaffna Tamils to the sciences in the small peripheral headland (Martyn, 1923, p.165; Root, 2004, p.79). This is relevant to better understand the reaction of the Northern Tamil educator class to the introduction by Sinhalese Governments of educational reforms that limited the admittedly disproportionately high numbers of Jaffna Tamil students who gained access to the science faculties in higher education. The introduction of a printing press in 1820s resulted in literary skills, journalism and the establishment of a printing office, all contributing to a disposition to keep diaries and journals, write letters, petition, complain, document and translate with pen and ink (Martyn, 1923, p.173; Poor, 1840). Here, the Jaffna Peninsula residents witnessed the rivalry between the British and Americans in a colonial game over symbolic power on their territory, when the British Government confiscated the American printing press that arrived in 1821 and handed it over to the Wesleyan Mission who then made it available for the printing
of tracts and books. In the peninsula, the tracts had been hitherto written on palmyrah leaves. In 1834, it is recorded by the Rev. Mr. W. W. Howland that ‘with the restrictions of the Government having been removed, the press was transferred to our Mission and set up at Manepay’ now Manipay, Jaffna (Martyn, 1923, p.173).

I reproduce this historical note to underscore the rupture in relations, when a century and half later, southern Sinhalese politicians ordered the burning of the prestigious Jaffna library. Valuable books on Tamil history and literature and ancient texts on leaves, were irreplaceable, according to Mr. P. Iyer, the founder of Noolaham, an organisation digitising books in a library which can never be burnt down. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in her term as president of Sri Lanka ordered the rebuilding of the physical library. Yet the relationship between the Northern Tamil and southern Sinhalese governments shifted to a place of outrage, deep grievance and distrust. Moving back to Colonial Ceylon, propelled by structures of British governance, the Northern Tamil had now become legendary, a model civil servant, drawing lucrative pay in what was termed ‘permanent and pensionable’ employment and sent to govern colonies such as Malaysia and parts of British Colonial Africa. While certain elite southern Sinhalese also shared in the accumulation of such capital, sections of the relatively small Tamil population in the northern peninsula had received an unusual historical position of amassing all forms of capital, economic, social and symbolic, in the field of colonial education leading to colonial governance in a strange and temporal enactment of Bourdieu’s notions of ‘reproduction’ and ‘the state nobility’ informed by the French schooling system (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu, Saint Martin, & Clough, 1998).

All this appears unimaginable for a small peninsula headland of around 1,200 square kilometres in extent, in an island a little more than a third larger than The Netherlands. Despite only a minority of Jaffna Tamil residents accessing the privileges of a Christian mission school English education and enjoying lucrative civil service positions, what is important to this thesis is that a disposition to education, the primacy of documentation and a respect for governance was ingrained in Jaffna Tamils beyond this minority. It had created a sort of imagined tracing of social hope through the site of education which I examine in this thesis. Even economic decline, with the delayed impact of the global economic depression of the 30s on the prices of exports of tea, rubber and coconut did not shift the colonial educator and governor habitus. Nor did the dwindling well-remunerated government jobs. The illusio in the field, a notion I discuss further on, guided what was considered the stakes in the game in the field, which did not evolve within an evolving field. Here the social agents did not appear to give up a belief
in the legitimacy of the historical accumulation of symbolic capital, the stakes in the game of governance by symbolic power, nor did it give up belief in the game either.

**Violence, grievance and a cycle of dispossession**

Newly-formed governments of the independent state appeared hostile towards the Northern Tamil educated population. The political practice of legisitating Sinhala as the ‘Sole Official Language’ by the Sinhala Only Act 33 of 1956, threatened access to the number of jobs in the public administration held by the English-educated cross-ethnic groups. Nowhere was this felt more keenly than in the Jaffna Peninsula. This was followed by what may be argued as measures of affirmative action re-distributing access to places in higher education, the science faculties of the universities in particular: standardisation. (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012). Now, the Tamils due to higher literacy in English and better science teaching facilities, in 1970, were 12% of the population securing 35.3% admissions to science-based courses, 40.8% of engineering places and 40.9% of medicine. In comparison, Sinhalese who formed 75% of the population had 60.6% of admission to science-based courses, which included 55.9% in engineering and 53.5% of places in medicine (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.84). Standardisation was a complicated, hard-to-understand formulaic approach which was accompanied by rumour, and political opportunism. The formula was changed in response to the insurrection by the Sinhalese Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in April 1971, led by educated unemployed Sinhalese, workers and bhikkhus who felt education was not delivering social mobility. It was changed again as the Sinhalese nationalists opposed the removal of standardisation as proposed by the United National Party (UNP). All groups had lost their way along the path of transition.

Why is all this relevant? A civil war could not have erupted on the curbing of the number of science graduates from the Tamil community? Yet if you ask the average Sri Lankan what triggered Tamil disillusion with the government, quite a few would reply: ‘standardisation.’ No one really understood why things had come to this, but something had to be blamed. According to Wickremasinghe, when standardisation was first proposed, rumours circulated inciting Sinhalese that 60% of the engineering places at university would be reserved for Tamils. Yet it was the other rumour, that Tamil examiners were over-marking their students to secure more places in the sciences at university, that aggrieved the sense of integrity and pride that marked the dispositions of the Northern Tamil educator-habitus (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.84). Both were false and only served to deepen a sense of grievance among the Tamils.
While to an outsider, all this sounds petulant and hardly a national crisis, read together with the violence incited by and arising from majoritarian policies of newly-formed governments, relations of distrust shifted to fear and apprehension. Conflating the national identity with being Sinhala-Buddhist, anti-Tamil riots in 1956, 1958, 1977 and 1983 moved the Tamils into the position of the dominated, marginalised and aggrieved (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012).

What set this postcolonial field apart was that neither identity nor violence stacked tidily. Identity is presented as fragmented, hybrid and criss-crossing ethnic and linguistic lines (Daniel, 1996; Spencer & Uyangoda, 1994). A group with a shared habitus, inter-ethnic, inter-faith, fluent in the English language and sharing symbolic capital from secondary school experiences in western modern structures, emerged as ambivalent towards the state. Yet the ethnic Tamil however, victim of government incited mob violence, was in the position of the greatest vulnerability. Rev. Fr P. A. A. Caspersz testifying before the Sansoni Commission appointed to investigate the communal riots of 1977 made the important point that if people thought their grievances were real it was as good as if they were real: ‘it is not easy for us to see how much of the Tamil sense of grievance is imaginary and how much of it is real. But I have no doubt that much of it is real, and something effective must be done to remove even the imaginary grievance’ (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.89).

In place of dealing with the Tamil grievance, on June 1, 1981, the prestigious Jaffna Library, claimed to be one of the best in South Asia, was burnt, and political instability in the south saw accusations hurled and denials between rival parties. This act of attempted erasure of the historical academic and literary tradition of the Jaffna Peninsula changed the relational disposition of the Jaffna Tamils to any future Sinhalese government. It was a direct hit at the symbolic power of the Jaffna Tamils and the symbolic capital of being an educated people. In a pogrom type operation, later known to have been politically orchestrated by the government led by J. R. Jayewardene, in July 1983, an event of brutal communal violence changed things irreversibly. As Tambiah argues, the political aim to dispossess the Tamils of their wealth and industry was apparent in the targeting of middle-class Tamil businessmen of Colombo (Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, 1986; Stanley J. Tambiah, 1997). Attacking the body of the Tamil, inciting multiple mob riots that caused Tamils to flee their homes and workplaces, mentally plunging

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4 Dept. of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2012. According to the 2012 census, Sinhala were the ethnic majority (74.9%) and the main minority groups of Tamils (15.6%) and Muslims (9.2%). Not all Tamils are Hindu, sharing Christian faith with Sinhalese - not all of whom are Buddhist.
the community into fear and betrayal and threatening the accumulated economic and symbolic capital, the cycle of dispossession of the Tamil minority now appeared complete.

Support for the LTTE surged and the optional futures were reduced to just one absolute stance: autonomy in a Tamil homeland as the only safe future for a Tamil civilian (Spencer & Uyangoda, 1994). Tamils sought political asylum in large numbers thereafter and left their homeland. Assassinating moderate Tamil politicians, the LTTE proclaimed itself the sole representative of the Tamil people, the single defender of the ‘Tamil nation’ or ‘Eelam’. This was the beginning of a long civil war. Significantly, the war was not fought at the popular level in Sri Lanka. Sinhala and Muslim neighbours had risked their lives to protect a number of Tamil families during the pogrom and despite a number of bombings and assassinations in the capital Colombo, multi-ethnic communities continued their intermeshed daily life without violent retaliation. The battlelines were drawn in the North-Eastern warzone. A low-intensity conflict with periods of intense warfare and psychosis, this long civil war lost many opportunities to find a peaceful resolution. Finally, a quarter of a century later, civil war ended with the Sri Lanka armed forces militarily vanquishing the LTTE along with thousands of Tamil civilian human shields in May 2009. Many escaped to army lines and survived. Too many had died on all sides. This brings us to the end of war and the beginning of our attempt to move on with a critical understanding of the ground realities for those who had remained in the warzone.

Bourdieu’s Theoretical Tools and the Thesis

At the heart of Bourdieu’s theoretical framework is the relational concept of habitus.

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.
In his characteristically long labyrinthine explanations, Bourdieu packed in every aspect of his theoretical notion of habitus. Class in the northern peninsula is generally dealt with in terms of caste. One magnified claim attributed to the LTTE, was that they had levelled caste. Yet in my investigation I found habitus useful to show how all agents including the armed agents appeared to be unconsciously working through an existing system of classification. While Sri Lanka lacked political coherence, it had structure. Schooling, public administration, churches and the armed forces were inlaid with western modern structures. Even the LTTE attempted to reproduce state administration structures termed ‘the civil administration arm’ and the Tamil Eelam Education Council (TEEC). In the life of a teacher, the conduct of schooling, exams and teacher appointments, all followed detailed regulation. These structures were historical, dating back to colonial rule, informing the habitus of the teacher, educator, and student.

This leads to the other element which together with dispositions informs practices: capital. Early conceptualisations of economic, social and symbolic capital were informed by his ethnological fieldwork amidst the Kabyle, a Berber mountainous tribe in northern Algeria (Bourdieu, 1979). I do not include notions of cultural capital, nor institutionalised capital, which Bourdieu later introduced into the discussion.

Power in the form of symbolic capital is perceived not as power, but as a source of legitimate demands on the services of others, whether material, such as help at harvest time, or symbolic, such as the expression of deference; and it is precisely this perception or misrecognition that makes it effective as a form of power. (Fowler, 2020, p.756)

Especially in the North where there are few opportunities for economic investment and wealth accumulation without the stamp of education, this tended ‘to make the accumulation of symbolic capital the only recognized, legitimate form of accumulation’ and ‘sufficient to restrain and even prohibit the accumulation of material capital’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.180). Being a principal, a school teacher, an A Level student, receiving a place at a university and gaining credentials in the field of schooling, had a special symbolic power in Sri Lanka, especially in the North. This exploration seeks to understand how symbolic capital enabled practices, traced lines of immunity, limits, no-go zones and made allowances, all which contributed to the enabling of sanctuary practices for the student in the sites of schooling, and enabled the principal and the A level student to continue schooling practices in wartime.

Let us discuss the important notion of doxa, or as Bourdieu described it, ‘the universe of the undisussed’ and hence, undisputed, as opposed to the universe of discourse or argument.
which includes opinion, heterodoxy and orthodoxy (Bourdieu, 1977, p.168). The application of doxa ranged from Bourdieu's explanation of 'naïve doxa of lay common sense' and the 'no-less naïve doxa of scientific common sense', to Fowler's art-historical doxa, to Chopra's articulation of neoliberalism as doxa, discussing the Indian state (Chopra, 2003; Fowler, 2020; Wacquant, 1989, p.53). I applied doxa in this empirical enquiry to the undiscussed and undisputed practices across the lines between social agents and their relation to schooling-in-wartime (Bourdieu, 1977). Of particular significance to this thesis is how doxic submission to the legitimacy of an educational event such as the A Levels, enabled convergence of diverse social agents, armed and unarmed for the time of the intervention, dispersing after. I divert from the original interpretation of doxa in which Bourdieu posited doxa on the side of social injustice and dominance (Bourdieu, 1977, p.169). In this society the educator class had a legitimate symbolic power, in a time of crisis, where primitive events of war threatened the definition of their social world. Here I would agree that ‘the drawing of the line between the field of opinion, of that which is explicitly questioned, and the field of doxa, of that which is beyond question and which each agent tacitly accords by the mere fact of acting in accord with social convention, is itself a fundamental objective’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.169). In the former northern warzone, where the struggle for legitimacy was dominated by violence of civil war, admittedly, the teacher and educator struggled to hold together the undisputed, undisputed doxa that had ruled the field of schooling, thereby keeping hold of their dominant educator-class power, over a long civil war.

Finally, there is the notion of illusio at times left out of the recital of Bourdieu’s main theoretical notions, habitus, capital and doxa. Illusio is a compelling theoretical notion that informs this exploration. It allows the tracing of an ideologically constituted belief in the legitimacy of symbolic capital, which is at the same time ‘functional in constituting the social practice’ in the field’ (Kögler, 1997, p.149). Illusio goes beyond a feel for the game. In his workshop with Wacquant, Bourdieu explains that ‘each field calls forth and gives life to a specific form of interest, a specific illusio as tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game’ (Wacquant, 1989, p.42). It explains relational dispositions between diverse social agents and a belief not only in the stakes of the game, but in the game itself (Kale-Lostuvali, 2016, p.279).

Armed with the theoretical tools of Pierre Bourdieu, I reformulated the questions at the heart of the empirical enquiry in this thesis: how did the social logic in this field enable a war-affected child to be conveyed through a corridor of schooling institutions to a post-war future? How did notions of habitus, doxa and illusio enable diverse social agents to converge across the
lines in an annual intervention in the form of an educational event such as the A Levels? How did they create possibilities in sites of schooling to enable practices that devolved a measure of sanctuary for the war-affected student over a long civil war?

Methods, Methodology and Ethics

This qualitative research used purposive sampling, employed the oral history method to in-depth interviews conducted in the field, and ethnographic research methodology. The oral history method diverges from general qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviewing in that it looks exclusively at the past, at historical events or phenomena, and how these were experienced and represented by the interviewees (Dawson, 2007; Portelli, 2009; Thompson, 2000). Oral history is considered a practice as well as a method of research. It is the practice of recording the lived experience of individuals, engaging with the interviewee in an ethical and respectful process and repeatedly engaging with the interviewees to gain a position of trust and generate a more fulsome account of the lived experience of such individuals. The interviewee is permitted in the first open-ended interview to select the order in which they wish to relate events or phenomena, while interruptions, interpolations or guiding the interviewee away from the natural trajectory of the interview is discouraged. The interview data is preserved in aural form, in more than one hard drive in a safe and secure location treated with confidentiality. Publication of such aural data or archive access is usually granted after permissions and access are discussed and limited to interest groups to avoid any form of hurt or injury to the interviewees.

Oral history methods have struggled with treatment of the data and with issues of ‘signification, interpretation and meaning’ (Abrams, 2016, p.1). Having employed oral history as a method in former research, I propose that Bourdieu’s relational approach of ‘field’ which he explains is about historicity and struggles, is particularly informed by the oral history method. I propose that the oral history data collated through interviews and repeated engagement in the practice of oral history with the interviewees, when treated with the tools of habitus, capital and doxa, offers insights into the historically ingrained nature of relational dispositions which informed schooling practice in wartime. The very permissions in oral history that allow and encourage the inclusion of contradictions, shifting allegiances and convoluted sentiment informs the way the field is constructed to either permit movement or inhibit shifts and flows between positions and dispositions of the individuals. On interviewing a number of key interviewees, I was enabled to detect the extent of doxa cutting across the lines and
cleaving through political polarisation in the field of schooling-in-wartime. As the aural record is considered the primary resource, I was able to return to the recordings and listen again and again to the extent to which doxic submission to a certain practice, values held or classification in the order of schooling was followed undisputed and undiscussed, and not as a consequence of obeying a rule. It was especially in understanding the extent to which dispositions were ‘unconscious’ as Bourdieu suggests, that I found the oral history method particularly useful to this research undertaking.

This brings us to memory theory at the heart of this method. I propose that this research falls between the representation of personal memory, as each chapter is constructed around the representation by individuals of how reality was experienced, and collective memory, as it informs how the professional group of teachers experienced war. Admittedly, this and other work is intended to contribute to an expanding social memory of schooling practice in wartime, bearing witness, memorialisation, commemoration and reconciliation between communities by attempting to make sense of what had happened. Particularly, here, the interviewee-teacher rather than speaking from an ethnic or culturally constructed notion of self, is indicating the practices and choices made as a teacher in wartime schooling, leaving the interviewer to draw out the relational dispositions, underlying principles and the extent of doxa in this field. In order to do so, the memories are posited in the wider meta-theoretical framework of analysis of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice. I argue that this worked well in this empirical setting as the structures in the schooling order delivered a strong identity of being a teacher, principal or educator.

Why do people remember some things and not others? Does age and gender alter what is remembered and how does memory ‘order and relate such memories to others and ourselves? These questions have always raised the query of how reliable is memory as a historical source (Abrams, 2016, p.78). In this research project, the interviews took place around 15-30 years after the events narrated in the interview had occurred. While teachers are generally credited with possessing good memories, the interviewees followed to some extent corresponding narrative structure and form as their profession had ingrained in them.

Why is it that this memory is so poignant, so charged with meaning and emotion? One of the things that make oral history different is that while more conventional history is primarily interested in what happened—why was the massacre carried out, in what way, whose responsibility is it, what was its place in the overall military scenario of the war
and of the Resistance—oral history also asks another question: what does it mean? (Portelli, 2009, p.22)

In this research while constructing the meaning-making on the one hand, I was able to corroborate events narrated with written records of ethnographic research produced at the time these events occurred, by academics and other professionals writing soon after the dust settled on civil war. Memories alter over a period of time with shame or trauma. I argue that this research differs from memories of attitudes taken by the interviewee to a social issue such as abortion which may have changed with the passage of time, or traumatic events in the past that were too painful and private that the interviewee had blocked out in earlier years. Narration of events of war invading the schooling order I propose did not present such a ‘shame’ or ‘trauma’ which then altered the interviewees’ recollection at the time of interviewing, to represent versions in accordance with views held later. What is important is Hoffman’s approach that ‘there are some memories that are permanent, resistant to degeneration,’ also termed ‘archival memory,’ deemed significant at the time they were experienced, and likely to be later recalled with greater accuracy.

Frequently in studies of autobiographical memory, the researcher lacks a means to determine the extent to which an informant’s memories are accurate representations of the events she purports to describe. Where available, the use of historical data and analysis to corroborate autobiographical memory perhaps has possibilities for future memory research. While the memories presented here are primarily derived from just one individual, they indicate that within the range of human memory it is possible to reliably and accurately recover past events and to amplify and extend the existing written record. (Hoffman, 1974, p.124)

Preliminary interviews were conducted in 2011. Returning to commence field work in 2018, there were no restrictions on access and the United National Party had allowed psychosocial services to commence in the northern warzone. Survivor-narratives of the final battles and trauma were allowed expression. It is considered responsible practice to allow a period of settling post-crisis or traumatic event before interviewing survivors. I identified through my extensive network of local and Tamil diaspora contacts, their principals and teachers who had led the schools with memorable leadership in difficult phases of war. During fieldwork the

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5 I obtained unofficial permission and clearance from a high-ranking state officer to travel to Jaffna in possession of a simple version of a voice recorder as international visitors to the peninsula with such devices were usually journalists or documentary-producers.
snowballing method helped by the initiative of interviewees, enabled the gaining of access to key teachers and educators by introduction. This is not a representative sample of teachers in Jaffna. It represents teachers, educators and students who operated from diverse points in the field, from diverse schooling institutions in phases of upheaval and educational intervention.

Field visits to the Jaffna Peninsula were planned at regular intervals of around two weeks at a time, totalling six visits in all, at the same location. Continuing conversations with the first interviewee PS and two former students generated much contextual understanding, a space for argument and new thinking. I interviewed 36 key interviewees among others: of the eight principals/vice principals, four were male and four, female. Former teachers numbered nine male and two females, while former students included 11 males and three females. I also interviewed three key educator-bureaucrats all male and the Bishop of Jaffna. On visits to Jaffna, I returned to a few interviewees and continued themes begun on earlier occasions or to gain more insights into events that I had now understood as important to schooling-in-wartime. Two interviews were conducted in East London, while three interviews were carried out in the capital city, Colombo. During the Covid-19 pandemic, having concluded fieldwork, I conducted follow-up semi-structured interviews with select interviewees on Skype and WhatsApp to obtain a detailed account of specific events. Though a limited number of interviewees are included in this thesis, I have attempted to include as many as possible and all the interviewees have contributed to the interpretation of the research. In August 2018, I participated in an unscheduled group discussion on the invitation by Prof. Daya Somasundaram at Shanthiham with translation provided, which was engaging, mindset-challenging and delivered spontaneous interviews in a space of sharing that was moving and insightful.

One limiting factor of interviewing teachers in former crisis locations is language and access according to Van Ommering who carried out research on wartime schooling in Lebanon (van Ommering, 2011). In the empirical location of the Jaffna Peninsula, the former teachers now retired from active teaching in their sixties to early eighties, had received their education in the English medium and were fluent, needing no translation. In the field, a researcher encounters good fortune: a university teacher from Vadamarachchi also happened to be training the new recruits in English and communicated easily in the language. I used a Zoom H4N voice recorder during fieldwork, to which no interviewee made objection. Following oral history guidelines, I stored the audio files in two hard drives to reduce the risk of loss or deterioration. In transcribing the key interviews I included in this thesis, I selected the East
Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) summary form shared in an oral history methods workshop I attended at the University of Leicester. It recommended transcribing the interview in five-minute slots with a summary of the themes accompanied by the complete narrative data if required. I opted to transcribe the full interview. The data is then identified with keywords which are searchable across an excel spreadsheet or word document to highlight segments of interviews which cross-references the search term.

It is a significant marker of this field research that none of the prospective interviewees declined a request to be interviewed. For many, it would be the first and last in-depth sharing of their experience of schooling in wartime. Except PS who had been interviewed during a literary festival and by a documentarian, none of the other interviewees had shared their lived experience of wartime schooling in an interview. Some interviewees had not even shared these experiences with extended family. Each interview lasted around three hours. The choice of location was always left to the interviewee and most took place in the veranda or garden of their home. While it compromised the aural quality of the recording at times with background sound of birdsong, barking dogs and tuk-tuks, I did not object, allowing the interviewee to select where he or she felt most at ease.

I obtained verbal permissions to use the research in a doctoral thesis and for an additional print publication. The teachers were aware of my objective and agreed to the reproduction of their own words as recorded at the interview. I use letters of the alphabet to identify the interviewees, yet admittedly complete anonymisation is not possible as their tenure as principal and the events they faced may carry suggestions as to their identity to those who schooled at the time. Yet the benign theme of conducting schooling and organising national examinations during the civil war is not considered politically sensitive. There have been no prosecutions of civil servants who had operated in far more controversial contexts. The teachers continue in retirement to manage orphanages, carry out exam duty as examiners, and are involved in community activities locally. In Sri Lanka, the greater suspicion falls on members of visiting diaspora, rather than those who continue to be employed in their work, on national territory. The teachers did not examine the letter of authorisation signed by my supervisor on the university letterhead. Such credentials were not formally requested by the interviewees, who considered my travelling from the UK to Jaffna to understand their experiences of wartime schooling to be adequate evidence of my ‘mission.’ Apart from being a researcher, I was seen as a Sinhalese who wished to understand what the Tamil ‘other’ community had endured, while
travelling from the UK added another layer of international interest. In his diaries, the Dutch Missionary Ben Bavinck had made this entry on 9th March 1989 in Jaffna:

Diocesan Council of the CSI\(^6\). After our American friend had spoken a few words [Rev. Paul Clayton, rep. of the American Mission], the old Bishop Kulendran got up and told him ‘you in America may forget us in Jaffna, but we will never forget America.’ It was a moving reference to the origins of this church, which lay in the founding of the American Ceylon Mission in 1816. (Bavinck, 2011, p.56)

This peninsula was no stranger to international visitors and interest taken in their affairs historically nor during the war, when a number of INGOs lodged in the warzone. One keepsake from my field interviews is a letter I received here in London from an old English teacher in Jaffna. He asked during the interview if I could give him my postal address in order to send over some cuttings of articles he had penned under a pseudonym as well as selected clippings on the war. I thanked him and suggested that perhaps it might be easier if he could hand the letter to PS, a well-known principal and author in Jaffna, to which he gravely replied: you can’t trust anyone, how would I know where his real political beliefs lay? No, I will post this to you directly to the UK. I received the letter formally typewritten on the teacher’s letterhead and his correspondences and clippings. At the bottom he had penned in an elegant fist:

P.S. To be brief, I may say during the terror era, education, schools, pupils and families in general were affected. Death, dislocation, etc were a curse. What precisely is your mission, dear lady I do not know. To be brief, we all have had a horrendous time! That’s all, signed.

Trust fell on grey and fuzzy lines yet I consider being a Sinhalese an advantage, as Tamils were immediately ‘slotted’ according to family and possible connections with the diverse factions in the armed struggle and politically partisan families. Operating from a shared habitus, I realised that the symbolic capital of fluency in English and being a doctoral student indicated that I understood the stakes in the game, and had a feel for the game. A vivid recollection is how a teacher expressed in the middle of the interview, ‘now, this must not leave us... this...what I am about to say!’ I switched off the voice recorder and put it into my bag. There had not been a formal request, and this demonstration of the extent of trust was unexpected and humbling. It signified what had remained unchanged in this empirical setting despite a long civil war.

\(^6\) Church of South India (CSI).
Chapters of the Thesis

Chapter One examines how the order of the school day was disrupted by the disorderly practices of militant recruitment and other forms of armed threat in the Jaffna Peninsula. In the discussion, a key notion in the thesis is introduced: all social agents armed and unarmed appeared to have worked with the existing schemata of classification and symbolic relations of power, mostly. Detailing how danger and threat was negotiated by the teacher who chose to remain in the warzone, I examine instances of upheaval and the practices of teachers aimed at defending the schooling order. I draw out the individual in the teacher and argue that situating practices in their real conditions of existence helps avoid pitfalls of false objectification.

Chapter Two is set in the rebel-held territory of the Vanni where schooling operated under a hybrid rebel-state model of supply and control. Examining the lived experience of a student in the sites of an LTTE-managed Home, the state school and the extracurricular, I explore how legitimation practices of both state and rebel translated on the ground as normalising lives of the war-affected students. As student K is enabled to continue to a place at university, this chapter provides insights on the social logic in the field of schooling-in-wartime in this empirical location, that held its currency in post-war Sri Lanka.

In Chapter Three I draw out the less-discussed insider-outsider teacher in the social space of positions in the field of wartime schooling in the Jaffna Peninsula. Detailing acts of ‘cooperation’ and ‘non-cooperation,’ I examine continuing struggles over legitimacy in a site of higher education which fell below the university: The Technical College, Jaffna. The discussion includes the rebel-claimed entitlement to state-supplied goods and the tracing of a principal’s authority as being discrete from military command in wartime. I draw out how old petty jealousies, rivalries and allegiances continued during wartime, where regularity and revenge went hand in hand.

Chapter Four begins a two-part exploration continued in Chapter Five, of the annual intervention by central and warzone bureaucrats to conduct the A Levels in wartime for all the students in the island, including those in rebel-held territory. In this chapter, the voice of the Coordinator of the A Levels for the Northern Province, guides this discussion of how a chain of social agents across the lines, military, militant and bureaucrat, converged to conduct this intervention, dispersing after. Employing Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘shared habitus’ ‘regularity’ ‘doxic submission’ and ‘illusio,’ this intervention is presented as an assertion of legitimacy by
the educators in a time of armed oppression. I present the educators as operating with awareness of a sense of practical reason that the A Level exam results were a sort of passport for a student to move beyond the violence into a site of higher education.

In Chapter Five I argue that the educators appeared to raise the educational intervention of the A Levels above the primitive enactment of violence in the site of armed struggle, through spectacle and performance. I interpret the treatment of the exam papers in this intervention by using the notion of fetishization and discuss the parallel spectacle of the LTTE’s ‘mock’ exams held before the O Levels (GCSE equivalent). Detailing the framing of victims of war-related violence as ‘deaths of A level students,’ I suggest that the dimensions of the ought-to-be in this empirical setting appeared to be bounded by a postcolonial modernity.

Chapter Six begins another two-part exploration into education as a site of sanctuary. I examine how a sort of pastoral sanction devolved on vulnerable students caught up in a war marked by insurgency, suspicion and intimidation. I contrast the embodied pastoral power in the shepherd-leader in the sacred site of church with the symbolic legitimacy and pastoral power of the school principal. I argue that, in this empirical location, the power to make pastoral exception and intervention was embedded in the structuring structures of the schooling habitus.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by discussing how movement in the field of schooling in the former northern warzone enabled sanctuary practices. I examine the historical residential school model and the measure of instrumental sanctuary it devolved on the vulnerable child. At the centre of this chapter is the detailing of the final journey to sanctuary by war-affected children and young persons from the Menik Farm refugee camp in the aftermath of war, to a place of sanctuary in sites of schooling.
‘We were between the devil and the deep blue sea’: middle-class teachers were caught up in a long struggle between multiple armed agents in the Northern Jaffna Peninsula. Political writings describe all parties as having diverse stakes and interests in the game, while Somasundaram described all interests as being a struggle for control over the Northern Tamil civilian population by diverse means, armed and unarmed (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.568). In contrast to the Vanni largely under the ground control of the LTTE and under air attack by the state armed forces, the territory of the Jaffna Peninsula was a site of disruption over diverse phases of war in varying degrees by LTTE-rebel, the Tamil paramilitary groups, the Indian Army, and the state armed forces. In the Jaffna Peninsula, according to Somasundaram:

Since 1983 the writ of the official government no longer runs. Various Tamil militant groups have been contesting the state and between themselves in internecine fighting for power, control and the legitimacy to rule. For a period between 1987 and 1989, the Indians attempted to establish military and administrative control in the north-east but even then, the situation was muddled with the Lankan state, Indian proxy paramilitary group, Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and the LTTE contesting each other for different aspects of power. (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.569)

Compounding the existential daily struggle of the civilian in the peninsula were the plural insurgencies: the LTTE emerging with ruthless violence as the dominant militant group and the other militants who aligned with the state or the LTTE. Somasundaram writes that they ‘continued to have considerable control and power over the local population in state controlled, ‘cleared areas’, through sympathy, terror and infiltration of most institutions and organizations’ (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.570).

In this chapter I look at how armed violence entered the classroom of the north, disrupting the world of the teachers who struggled to hold on to their own representation of the world
and their practice. Rebel governance and politics discourse highlighted the LTTE as carrying out governance practices on the one hand and practices that performed a mythical hero status on the other (Klem & Maunaguru, 2017; Mampilly, 2011; Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, 2018). Community leaders were outraged at the devotion in recruits as young as ten years' old for the leader, Prabhakaran (Bavinck, 2011; UTHR(J), 1995, 2000). In contrast, this chapter situates the LTTE recruitment practices as engaging with the existing order in the site of classroom and schooling structures. On the one hand, the LTTE tried to transform ‘categories of perception,’ while on the other I argue using illustrations of the LTTE’s disruptive practices in the site of schooling, that they worked through the existing schemata of classification and symbolic relations of power, mostly (Bourdieu, 1985, p.728). While on both sides agents were engaged in an endless negotiation of their own identity in an organised struggle in political life, I ask how the social logic in the field enabled some children to continue schooling in the warzone, while others did not.

First, I discuss how the interviewee-teacher and self as interviewer correspond on the construction of the legitimacy of the existing social order in schooling which informed a common-sense world. Guided by Brubaker’s key work Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu, I introduce a notion that lies at the heart of this chapter and thesis: How did the teacher and student disposition lead them to ‘to act in a way that reproduces the social structure (more precisely, the regularities constitutive of it)’ under armed threat of disruption? How were they enabled to operate from the premise that what took place in the order of armed warfare did not necessarily mean the radical transformation of the order in the classroom? (Brubaker, 1985, p.759). Stepping away from the ‘network of oppositions’ strewn around the warzone I ask uncomfortable questions: Had ‘the symbolic power to nominate’ of the Movement, hesitated at the gateposts of the mission school and the urban school, respecting to some extent the existing hierarchical schooling order? (Bourdieu, 2010, p.470). Had the classified recruitment practice worked through the ‘sense of distance’ regulated by the schooling-habitus which girded the rebel as well as the student? (Bourdieu, 1977, p.82).

Second, I examine the site of classroom employing a layer of experiential reality of student and teacher accounts of encountering armed threat, fear and disruption. I look beyond the rebel-agent’s recruitment performance to understand how far the practices of such

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7 The terms ‘Movement’, ‘LTTE’ and ‘rebels’ are used interchangeably in this thesis.
recruitment worked within an existing order of schooling. I illustrate the relational position of the teacher and the acquiring of a disposition to disruption in the classroom and the sense of distances maintained by social agents in this unfamiliar confrontation.

Third I illustrate through diverse stances taken by young students, that students will be students, and the sense of place in the social order appeared to be guided by the habitus acquired in early formative experience. I try to bring out the nuance and pathos of a growing child and ask how does the awareness of the ought-to-be and ‘this is not for the likes of us’ remain somehow despite a long civil war (Bourdieu, 1977, p.77; 1985, p.728). Here I turn to the classification of treatment of students as a stripping down of a network of opposite labels and polarised positions in existing literature.

Fourth, I look at teachers from the mission schooling habitus and the other. In this section I detail in their own words the danger and threat negotiated by the teacher who chose to remain in the warzone. I talk about how the teachers acted at times in defiance of armed orders, illustrating how they imagined their role in defending the schooling order in wartime. Treating the teacher as an individual as well as a member of a professional group, I argue that situating practices in their real conditions of existence, helps avoid pitfalls of false objectification.

The Order of the Day

PS: I was a schoolteacher teaching English. I saw so many youth movements advocating armed uprising, liberation struggle as they called it and justifying taking arms against the state, disrupting government activity, in short, breaking the law and disturbing the order of the day; peace and order. The students in the upper classes were encouraged and invited to join the fray. To join the drop outs. Education was disturbed.

Youth walk into your classroom and say we are going to have a hartal today; we are going to have a walkout. Teacher and principal are helpless. There is no respect for the teacher. Youth walked out like chicks following a hen. People may blame me for oversimplifying matters but the breakdown of discipline started there. 8

This was my first interview with PS, my very first schoolteacher-interviewee, five years' before I undertook doctoral research. This is how PS presented the rebel practices of recruitment and framed how violence invaded the site of classroom. Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron in The Craft of Sociology write: ‘One of the requirements of communication is that utterances be

8 Interview with PS in Jaffna, 2011.
organized...where the principle of organization need not be stated explicitly in this case by the interviewee or recognized by the listener...organising frames can be of various sorts' (Bourdieu et al., 1991, p.174). Here the organising frame was established jointly as I had conducted oral histories in earlier projects and now followed the oral history method in asking an open-ended question: 'what was it like being a schoolteacher inside the warzone? The in-depth interview that followed lasted three hours, the average length of interviews with educators and principals who were leading stance-takers in the field. PS was an English teacher, a former principal of a higher educational institute, a poet, a writer of short stories and a translator of classical Hindu literature into the English language.

It was 2011 and the aftermath of war still hung like a cloud over the peninsula, two years after the end of hostilities. I had never visited Jaffna, a closed-off warzone growing up in Sri Lanka. This was my first visit travelling from Italy with family, my children just four, and one and a half years old. We took a flight from Colombo to Jaffna as the trains were not yet running and stayed in the only bed and breakfast with good facilities. I wished to seek out community leaders who were members of professional groups and perhaps here my own professional membership as public administrative lawyer many years ago in Sri Lanka, had influenced this selection. Dialling a Jaffna phone number for the very first time was momentous. A Canadian member of the Tamil diaspora had given me PS’s number asking me to look up his former English teacher. ‘I still remember him teaching us Stopping by Woods One Snowy Evening by Robert Frost’ he recalled. An image of a snowy horse ride by woods lovely, dark and deep arose in peculiar contrast to the heat of sun and civil war in Jaffna. Later on, I would interview another student, T, who remembered being taught that very poem adding while on a Masters scholarship to study English in the USA, had not been too far from those very woods.

They were just like us!

This is what moved and disconcerted us in that aftermath of war: while we, in the South had never met the Northern Tamil who had remained in the warzone, the student and teacher sounded the same as our brother, sister, uncle or aunt did. PS spoke in the style of his generation drawing from registers of civil service and the ‘old school’ class of postcolonial society, acting with a familiar sense of propriety. It deepened the need to understand how people like us had been disturbed by, responded to and emerged from the violence of civil war. I found this chapter on Constructing the object by Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron useful in locating the teacher, the semantic style and my own reflexivity: ‘In short, concrete
imagery in middle-class communication is dwarfed or overshadowed by the prevalence and richness of conceptual terminology’ (Bourdieu et al., 1991, p.174). I encountered in interviews such examples of less-concrete thought and speech in ‘devil’, ‘deep blue sea’ or ‘chicks following a hen’. The classroom was ‘disturbed’ as was the ‘order of the day’! They go on to explain: ‘This is not to claim that middle-class persons always think with and use classificatory terms, for doubtless this is not true. Indeed, it may be that the interview exacts from them highly conceptualized descriptions’ (Bourdieu et al., 1991, p.174).

As the article explains, the interviewee is barely conscious of it and it is likely ‘part and parcel of his formal and informal education’ (Bourdieu et al., 1991, p.174). The teacher here was speaking the same language as I did, dispensing with the need for clarification of metaphor, leaving no ambiguity as to its meaning. I would discover this commonality with the majority of teachers, observing that those who positioned themselves as being opposed to this class, nevertheless displayed the same propriety and trust, despite noting the different ‘class perspective’ on the LTTE-stance in the struggle. This empirical enquiry in the field of schooling-in-wartime Jaffna begins with an observation: as middle-class interviewer and interviewee engage, the space of the interview would be marked by a taken-for-granted trust, resonance, a sense of propriety and semantic ease flowing from what I understood later as a shared habitus.

Former students struggled to understand how contours of violence and revolution in Jaffna had caught them in a noose of suspicion, intimidation and harassment growing up in the warzone. A disgruntled interviewee reported how his father when confronted by his son’s demand for an explanation of what this armed struggle was about, trapped as a young Jaffna male under the gun of state, LTTE and other militants, had responded: ‘read Animal Farm!’ The father, a man with little economic capital had amassed so many books as a young boy, he had had to build a small lean-to outside his modest home to house them. It was a postcolonial time both North and South when the middle-class, as the French are claimed to have done, drew notions and worldviews primarily from literature. In the 80s, global socio-political revolutions in Jaffna were absorbed through books which were then reportedly thrown down wells behind Jaffna homes by student revolutionary movements as the LTTE and armed forces of state hunted them down.⁹

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⁹ As recollected in a film screening in London where former members of northern Tamil and Southern Sinhalese revolutionary groups in the 80s reflected on the EROS Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students formed in
Students were at the heart of the social revolution before the LTTE crushed all resistance, emerging as the purported sole representative of the Tamil people. Here in Jaffna, I was beginning to see how the notion of revolution differed according to social classes traced through education. For middle-class students, the notion of revolution was informed by global ideologies on the ought-to-be of social order, yet were less inclined to inflict violence in person to secure power and domination over other groups to effect such social change. For the middle-class teacher, while the notion of an armed struggle for independence was ‘highly commendable’, the teachers’ habitus did not allow for disturbance or disorder stemming from such struggle to enter the classroom, disrupting the main business of schooling. I examine the site of the classroom and how violence of civil war invaded its boundaries, the form it took and how teacher and student negotiated it, to open the doors of the classroom the next day, for the usual business of schooling, later on in this chapter.

No radical social change

So, what was ‘the order of the day’? What this chapter is trying to show is how the rebel-recruitment practices appeared to fall outside the continuing order of schooling in this empirical setting. Earlier on in this research study, someone observed that crowd theory offered insights into PS’s stance here; the teacher representing the legitimate ‘order’ here while designating the rebels as being an unruly crowd, wielding an unregulated threat of violence against the teacher. Now in our discussions, PS admitted that he understood the anguish of the Movement arising from the oppressive conduct of the central government post-independence and violence of the 83 anti-Tamil riots. The notion of anyone carrying out shramadhana work which translates as volunteer work or donation of labour involving supplying food or digging bunkers for the Movement, was not censored. Yet PS was also an educator appointed by the public administrative order, a civil servant. I began to see how schooling-in-wartime in the Jaffna Peninsula was imagined as taking place as a field within a field, an order within an order, with different codes, registers, practices, legitimacy and rules of the game. It was part of the doxa of the schooling habitus in this Jaffna community that the order of schooling was inviolable. The liberation struggle for a separate Tamil State of Eelam purportedly fought in their name was in theory laudable, on the condition that it needed to

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London in 1975, splitting up later in 1980, as students took up splintered positions. Apart from incidents, these organisations were considered to be ideologically Marxist and were not reported as having carried out organised armed operations.
be performed outside the site of the classroom, refraining from disturbing the matters of education and higher education.

I argue that in order for such a stance-taking to be thinkable, it appeared that while the teacher could be disposed to understand and relate to the social revolutionary elements aimed at securing social change in a general sense, he did not quite envisage an accompanying rapid social change occurring in the schooling habitus. Take this illustration of PS electing to confront the Indian Army later in 1989, over the arrest of a student in higher education:

Somewhere in Dec 1989 I was a lecturer at the Teachers College...and our students were sitting their finals in a couple of weeks. One of my students, a teacher, had been taken into custody. He had been detained. Somebody told me, this is the place where he is being detained. I thought, as a teacher I was duty bound to see that the boy sits his finals now, otherwise, he would be penalised for life... in the sense, if he doesn't sit this exam in time, whatever the reason be, he would have to sit it next year and his job opportunities, his prospects would be affected. So, I had no contact with the IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) but I knew the town commandant was housed at the Jaffna Kachcheri (Colonial term for state administrative office such as the District Secretariat). I thought ‘what’s the harm, I am going for a reasonable cause, I will go and speak to the town commandant.’ I went... I remember I went... and asked to be shown to Brigadier Karon. A lieutenant-colonel told me he was away but I could sit and talk to him instead, as he was acting on his behalf. Then I told him my mission.

I spoke to him very frankly. I told him, ‘a lot of people who are not involved, a lot of young people like my student, who are not involved, have been made victims, made scapegoats! And this is going to ruin our society. This is going to have a very bad effect on us.’ Then he said, ‘do you know your student well?’ I said ‘Well I know him. To the best of my knowledge, he is not a militant, I’d say!’ Then he said, ‘there you go, to the best of your knowledge!’

We return here again to the point Brubaker made, that ‘dispositions lead individuals to act in a way that reproduces the social structure (more precisely, the regularities constitutive of it) without radically transforming it’ (Brubaker, 1985, p.759). This notion is at the centre of analysis in this thesis. In this instance, I borrow this notion and apply it to PS where he is ‘re-making’ the structures threatened with collapse in this armed struggle, while in discussion with the Indian Army Officer. Brubaker explains Bourdieu’s argument ‘that a person, by virtue of
belonging to a particular class, has an "objective future" (Brubaker, 1985). Here I see PS as resurrecting this notion of an 'educated class,' drawing on the disposition to education in his habitus and using it to trace the contours between the site of order and disorder in the sites of schooling. Behind all this, I detect the sens pratique informing the teacher’s practice of attempting to secure the release of the student-suspect, a trainee teacher, in order to lead him to an alternative future to violence.

Ben Bavinck was a Dutch missionary embedded in the Northern warzone and working as an emissary North-South, carrying out relief and humanitarian work. At the beginning of that year, 1989, during the occupation of the peninsula by the Indian Army, he made this entry in his journal on 5th January 1989 in Jaffna:

Today I had a long conversation with Rajani Thiranagama, lecturer in the Medical Faculty of the University of Jaffna, and an old student of mine. She told me that a number of professors in the university had met to discuss the 'advice' from the LTTE for the university to remain completely inactive, as a protest against the IPKF and as a token of non-cooperation. The professors thought that the long-term consequences of this would be detrimental to the community, and they therefore wanted to open the university again.

Despite the changes to the practices at every level in this war-torn society, there was this assertion that in the field of schooling-in-wartime, things carried on, fixing its unflinching and undaunted gaze on the long-term continuance of a social order in this society which was traced through education. Later on, I examine through representations and practices, how violence appeared to be imagined as an interruption, a disruption and not as a permanent change in the social structure. This disposition conditioned by the changing field of wartime schooling gave rise to practices informed and structured by a schooling habitus. Practices, which would otherwise have been rendered unthinkable.

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10 Ben Bavinck lived within and moved to and from the northern warzone from 1984 – 2004. Bavinck’s diaries translated from Dutch are a rich source of insider ethnographic accounts containing entries of every child reported to him as having joined up, some as young as eleven in the early 90s.

11 Rajani Thiranagama was murdered by the LTTE later that same year on 21 Sep 89 on her way home by bicycle from the University of Jaffna where she was a Lecturer in Anatomy. She and other teachers who were victims of LTTE violence were reportedly killed for openly criticising the practices of the LTTE from their individual political perspective, and not for being teachers or teaching in wartime.
**Principles of division**

Later on in this chapter and the next I discuss how a student K in the Vanni, and T in Jaffna, emerge from the warzone and continue life, post-war, despite their experiences. What happened to the other students? Why did they not continue behind a school desk and sit for their A Levels? I was beginning to see how certain students had been conveyed through a corridor of schooling institutions, while others had not. They had entered institutions of higher education in Art and English, studying what they loved best. This did not quite fit with war-reports of the threat to all school-going children in the warzone: recruitment by the LTTE, the most powerful insurgent-rebel organisation in the North. What I was looking for were other ‘principles of division’ in a civil war in which children sharing the same ethnic identity in whose name a war was fought for political autonomy, appeared to be grouped on either side of the divide, marking who got to go to school, and who did not (Bourdieu, 1985, p.726). The entry for 7-10th June, 1993 in Bavinck’s diaries makes this observation:

> Again, I heard of an 11-year-old boy who had joined the Tigers. I also heard that the girl Tigers have a great devotion for the great leader and sing songs in his honour. There now exists a rift between the children who enjoy secondary or higher education and are thinking in terms of some kind of employment and the children with very little education or sometimes none at all, who have no other choice than joining the Tigers. There they will serve an ideal, but also enjoy food, clothing, shelter and monthly wages apart from the satisfaction they experience by exerting power. Personally, I see this as one of the worst aspects of life in Jaffna. A section of the youth is growing up with a very narrow vision shaped by Tamil chauvinism and are caught within a culture of violence, which will ultimately result in their own death or in their inflicting violence on others. (Bavinck, 2011, p.297)

It appeared that the observation of Somasundaram, ‘to a large extent, under the LTTE, recruitment had been voluntary up to the last stages of the Vanni battle’ was more or less accurate (D. Somasundaram, 2014, p.228). An uncomfortable truth that emerges from this study is that as a result of the LTTE-recruitment practices, the Sri Lankan warzone may not have been emptied of children by wide-scale abduction of child recruits by the Movement. Why were things different here in comparison to rebel insurgent wars in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Colombia, for instance?
Here I return to the core concept of Bourdieu’s theory of practice, habitus. This is the notion that distances his former ‘happy structuralist’ position in early ethnographic studies to one that posits purely structural explanations as inadequate by reason of structures not actually existing nor realising themselves except and through the system of dispositions of the agents (Brubaker, 1985, p.758). Bourdieu in what has been described as his metatheoretical framework of analysis, has defined the habitus as a set of internalized dispositions that mediates between social structures and practical activity (Bourdieu, 1977). Adding to Brubaker’s explanation, the factor which at times is overlooked in definitions of habitus, the impact of ‘capital’, I point to the legitimate power of symbolic capital embedded in schooling structures and ask an uncomfortable question. Did the LTTE surrender to a pre-existing ordering or classification in the social order in the field of schooling, when planning and carrying out recruitment practices among students?

Despite the purported stance of the LTTE as a leveller of caste, social and gender-based discrimination, in contradiction to the propaganda which implied the construction of a social world in which they controlled the dominant structures such as the judiciary, police and administration, in matters of recruitment the LTTE leadership were not impervious to the place in social space occupied by, say, the mission schools. The Christian mission schools were historical, tracing roots back to the early 1800s. They were transnationally linked to Great Britain and America, institutionally linked to churches and bishops in the power centre of Colombo Christian clergy and beyond, to churches in the West. These Christian mission schools appeared to communicate directly with the LTTE leadership on matters of security, despite there being no guarantees in a climate of unpredictability. Another force in the field was the reliance by the LTTE on funding from the international Tamil diaspora within Jaffna school alumni networks. Structured relations between the positions taken in the field between the LTTE and the schools appeared to be informing the LTTE-recruitment practices and the expectation of the student to be allowed to complete his or her secondary schooling in the warzone.

While we cannot argue in absolute terms that the LTTE had a sense of one’s place, or what they could or could not permit themselves to do, I explore in this chapter, illustrations of practices of recruitment which implies an internalised understanding of ‘a sense of distance’ not always respected and never to be expected by the teacher or student as a given (Bourdieu, 1985, p.729). In contrast, the ‘sense of distances’ marked and kept by the ‘regular’ state armed forces concerning the disruption of sites of mission school in particular, and the institution of
principal and educator in general, appeared to be traced more opaquely. I discuss in this chapter and later on in this thesis, how this classification enabled the teacher to negotiate with the state armed officer with greater ease than with the rebel. The state officer and the state schoolteacher are proposed as drawing from the same structures of the social order here.

It is not entirely accurate to say that there had been no abductions. Returning to the practices of LTTE recruitment, it appeared that objective selection had exploited the vulnerable Tamil groups in correspondence to the principles of social hierarchy which posited the Jaffna Tamil at the top and the Vanni Tamil, the Batticaloa Tamil and the rural economically disadvantaged Tamils, at the bottom of the order. In the rebel-held Vanni for instance, the vulnerable pockets of camps of internally displaced Tamil civilians lived in fear of their children being abducted by the LTTE as child-recruits (UTHR(J), 1995). Another incident was reported by the UTHR(J) where a principal of a Batticaloa school protested the attempted abduction of 40 students by the LTTE from the site of a school.

Kaluwankerny lies close to Kiran, north of Batticaloa. On the 19th September, the LTTE’s area leader, Kutty, came to Vipulanantha School at 11.45 AM and demanded from the principal that he wanted to take away 40 children for training. The principal and teachers told him that he cannot remove children from the school while the children are under their care. Kutty pulled out a pistol and placed it against the principal’s forehead. Suddenly the LTTE guards warned Kutty that an army patrol was coming there on a tip-off. Kutty escaped through the backyard and drew off with his guards in a vehicle. (UTHR(J), 1995)

In rural Jaffna:

From early March 1995 even as the recent peace talks were supposed to be going on, LTTE propaganda wing leader Thamil Chelvan addressed school children in the Rural North announcing preparations for the next round of war and calling for volunteers. Recruitment took an aggressive turn, particularly when the war became a physical fact from 19th April. There was a sharp increase in the invasion of schools and tutoories in Jaffna by the LTTE to have recruitment sessions. A Student’s Revival Week was announced beginning 6th June targeting students in the mid-teens who were to be subjected to intense propaganda and the screening of action videos. Schools are now grinding to a halt as parents and teachers fear for the children. In recent weeks there have been several amazing instances of unorganised and spontaneous resistance by
parents and teachers to the LTTE. The latter have used desperate methods to enter schools whose authorities and parents tried to prevent them. Principals have been manhandled and veiled threats issued against individual teachers. (UTHR(J), 1995)

As recruitment heightened during the 1995 Battle for Jaffna phase, teachers and parents risked their lives in these vulnerable areas to defend the students against what I call the LTTE system of classified student recruitment. There are claims such as ‘it is well known that the LTTE asks each Tamil family to contribute one member to the organisation’ (Alison, 2003). What is overlooked is the mention of how the LTTE applied this rule to some areas and communities, and not to others. While mothers in the rebel-held Vanni, in vulnerable areas in rural Jaffna and in the Eastern Province were ordered to do so, it appears that the LTTE did not apply this rule to the children of middle-class families in Jaffna.

In this chapter I grapple with the uncomfortable notion that the symbolic power to nominate had delivered a sort of classified recruitment practice which translated as two disconcerting facts in the field of schooling-in-wartime. One, it had enabled greater possibilities for a continuation of the practices of schooling for teachers and students of middle-class families, missionary schools in Jaffna and urban schools to cite a few examples in the Jaffna Peninsula. Second, it had normalised the notion of ‘alternative futures’ where some students would remain behind a desk in a classroom, sitting national exams, while others joined up and took up combat roles or served in the LTTE organisational structure. This would potentially give rise to future divisions and choices made as a result of being a product of this struggle on either side of the divide within this war-affected society. In awareness of the long view of the social order continuing in this society and considering themselves the keepers of the ‘northern schooling’ if not of the ‘national habitus,’ the Jaffna teachers and educators kept on teaching, opening the doors of the classrooms with renewed resolve, for the war-affected child (Fowler, 2020, p.447). The continuity of the structures which informed their habitus was essential to keep from unravelling, their view of social order and their commonsense view of the world as they knew it.

The Classroom

Soft route

It is not the argument of this thesis that the rebels made an objective determination to locate the present struggle in a former historical struggle between nationalist Hindu schools and
Western Christian mission schools dating back to the 1820s in the Jaffna Peninsula. What was experienced at the level of practice though was that the Hindu Colleges received a heightened level of LTTE disruption and violence as compared to the mission schools. Ideologically the Hindu College students aligned themselves with the notion of nationalism, independence and Hindu supremacy to a greater extent than their Christian mission school counterparts. These Hindu schools began in the late 1800s and early 1900s and were managed by the Hindu Board of Education which was a structure of some prestige and pride in the wake of zealous Christian mission schools. Later these schools were absorbed into the national unitary network of schools while the Hindu Board of Education lost its regional power over education in the peninsula. Significantly while the position of the LTTE in the field of power in Jaffna is no longer in existence, what continues today is the powerful school alumni formations of both historical Christian and Hindu schools that aim to sustain and reproduce the structures that inform the *illusio* or belief in the legitimacy of the symbolic capital in the social space of positions in the field of schooling in the peninsula.

A teacher at the time of the interview in August 2017 and a former student of Kokkuvil Hindu College, a mixed provincial school founded in 1910, spoke of her student experience of LTTE recruitment practices before 1995: ‘There was a force to join all these Movements and they will come to the college and have meetings and try to convert students to come to them... *soft routé*. B explains that ‘soft route’ meant while there was enticement and persuasive propaganda, there had been no compulsion or forcible removal of unwilling students by the rebels in her schooling years. The LTTE did not seek permission to enter, nor was any notice given. They targeted children 16 years and older in the Advanced Level classes to avoid the stigma of ‘child recruitment’. In 1990s she says, ‘the recruitment was heavy in our school and we were a little bit smaller...we were in Grade 10 (Year 11). The older children in A Levels were pointed out and whoever willing, they would take.’

B: They will suddenly come, strategy, and ask the principal ‘We have to meet the children and it’s an order!’ And the principal cannot say no! If he says no, they will (clicks fingers signalling gunshots). They will talk... *class will be interrupted*. They will take the children out of the classroom and not talk in the classroom. They only made speeches. Publicly they made speeches to many classes... O Level to A Levels after Grade 9 and 10... to both girls and boys... a big assembly in the Hall.

GF: They get on stage? In the Assembly Hall?
B: Yes. They will go with them immediately - the people who are willing – like ten, not many. Then they will speak more, many stories! If we keep quiet... you see, they will say there is a need for us to come...we always keep quiet because we have no right to speak! And maybe ... (pause) ... I am sorry ... no, now only I realise! ... (pause) ... because at that time we were children, and we were just looking at our Amma and Appa and thinking of my parents and only thing I thought was ‘I have to go home, I have to go home! My parents are waiting, my parents are waiting! Because I am very attached to my parents. The parents will come and cry and go to the camps and ask ‘where are my children’ and the LTTE will say ‘not here, we are keeping them in another camp’, but the children were there, inside, in the camp. Parents are helpless and the teacher is helpless!\(^{12}\)

I draw out the taken-for-granted references that unconsciously passed for regular and normal in this society. The rebels ‘ask the principal, ‘We have to meet the children and it’s an order!’ Despite it being an order not a request, the rebels approached the legitimate figure of authority at school appointed by the legitimate structures. The LTTE was engaged in a symbolic as well as an organised political struggle on the one hand, while on the other, the symbolic relations of power in the site of education, tended to ‘reproduce and reinforce the power relations’ in the schooling order (Bourdieu, 1989, p.21). By speaking to the principal, taking the children out of the classroom to the assembly hall and getting on stage, it appeared that the rebel-agents had related to the objective schooling structures, unconsciously, from the dispositions informed by these very same structures. By placing themselves on the stage, outside the classroom, the rebels attempted to secure legitimate recognition and wield authority in the same structures which they sought to disrupt.

In Colombia, it was reported that rebels entered the school playing fields and abducted students in trucks (Mampilly, 2011). Here, the LTTE behaved a little differently. Kokkuvil Hindu College was a provincial school located outside the centre of Jaffna, but not classified as a rural school. Parents who sent their children to this school included middle-class individuals with connections to prominent Kovils and administrative centres. Here, in place of coercion, was persuasion apparently, in the ‘limits’ section of the rebel handbook of recruitment practice which was both unreliable and unpredictable. Another explanation would be that the internalised habitus was at play here: while the rebel-agents attempted to push the schooling

\(^{12}\) Interview with B, Jaffna, 2018.
system beyond its limits, in practices of so doing, they had succumbed to the legitimate transgression of limits. This, I suggest in the northern warzone made all the difference between the abduction of students in a truck, and getting on stage in an Assembly Hall to deliver propaganda speeches on joining up. For all this, fear was palpable; the threat of seduction, real.

**Fish out of water**

B: The teachers can’t teach again... we go back to our classes... and the teachers feel something bad... and they keep quiet. And the students... we are talking: ‘she has gone’ and ‘he has gone’ and we are waiting for the end of school, when we can go and tell the parents who has gone. They wait till school is over for safety! Some parents were able to find... [their child] ... the teacher was able to send the message to the parents after the people... [LTTE]... have gone. If parents come at same time, there will be a problem for the teachers! If the parents come and confront, then the teacher has the problem and will become the victim. How often did the LTTE come? Just one or two times only they came to my school, not many times... I don’t remember... only during Grade 10 to 12.

GF: Do the teachers tell the children anything?

B: If the teachers have time, they will tell you ‘don’t go!’ Secretly quickly they will say *pullayal powanga* ... don’t go... so that is the word they will say if they have the time to say quickly, they will say! No teachers said join up because they had families and everything.

Over a long civil war, strategizing informed all practices of agents in this tight-rope walk of survival. Teachers knew when to push against the violence and when to stand back. The most often-used term was ‘helpless’ as they made informed decisions on the limits of permitted protest and negotiation with diverse armed agents: Indian Army, LTTE or state armed forces. The LTTE rebel-agents on their part according to B’s recollection had disrupted the classroom to carry out recruitment practices ‘one or two times only’ during the A/Level years. Though chilling and disturbing, the disorder entered and left the same day. K added an observation that her student experience at the Hindu College contrasted with her teaching experience at a Christian mission school for girls, later, where the militants had not entered the site of school to carry out recruitment practices.
The teachers I spoke to were objectively determined to stay on teaching and keeping the classrooms doors open for those children who didn’t join up. This was a new form of the disposition to serve and perform one’s duty no matter what which was an ingrained disposition in the Jaffna teacher: carrying on. The next day, the teacher was present in his or her place, and the business of studying resumed. Parents sent their children to school again without fear of reprisal by militants for not joining up. The classroom continued as students acquired a disposition to continue schooling despite the empty seats, sense of confusion and trauma of their social world changing. The teachers informed by their habitus, considered their mission was to ‘serve’ the community and not their place to make a moral or heroic stand against an armed agent who was ‘unregulated’ and acted arbitrarily. The teachers were aware that they faced an autonomous form of power which had broken away from what they considered ‘the order of the day.’ Bourdieu argues, ‘social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents,’ and so, when the habitus encounters a world of which it is the product, it finds itself as a ‘fish in water’ (Wacquant, 1989, p.43). Here, we could say that when the field of armed warfare entered the classroom, the teacher encountering a social world of which it is not the product, was a fish out of water. Teachers were allowed to continue teaching as long as they remained in their order and did not enter the site of political struggle, while unregulated agents were free to nominate who was to be left alone, and who would be killed.

The LTTE in 1985 assassinated Mr. Anandarajan, principal of St. John’s College, Jaffna, the British mission school for boys, now private. This was during the early phases of war when the LTTE had exerted supremacy over other Tamil groups and controlled the site of schooling and public governance by instilling fear and carrying out assassinations of government agents, mayors of Jaffna, and this principal, among others. Though the popularised version of this event was that the principal had hosted the army to a cricket match with the St. John’s team and angered the Movement, the real reason according to the interviewee-teachers was that Mr. Anandarajan was a marked target for his rigid stance on recruitment of students. ‘You cannot come in. That’s the boundary of the school. You can do whatever you wish outside. But in here you are not welcome. This was his message to the militants.’ The teacher was moved to emotion at the recollection of the death of his principal. The militants had left the premises. They would not put a gun to the principal’s head in Jaffna on the site of school as they did in the Eastern province. They carried out executions of teachers outside the site of education with no witnesses.
Very few joined the Movement (from St. John’s). They had an ill feeling towards the College...they had an ill feeling towards the College... and as a result of that we lost one of the best principals, Mr Anandarajan! The beginning of the incidents in Jaffna started in ‘82. There were so many movements, they say ‘Thamil Eelam’ but there was no unity amongst them. The attack of the Chaavachcheri police station and the subsequent murder of Anandarajan. People were earlier sympathetic but found that things were going out of hand. There was no unity amongst the parties.

I was beginning to understand that the political stance taken by the teacher on this particular issue of an independent State of Tamil Eelam was conflicting with the position he occupied in the social space in the field of positions in schooling in wartime Jaffna. Bourdieu articulates that ‘the whole history of the social field is present, at each moment, both in a materialized form – in institutions ...[...]...and in an embodied form - in the dispositions of the agents who operate these institutions or fight against them’ (Bourdieu, 1985, p.738). The historical structures of the mission schools were powerfully endowed with symbolic capital, social and economic capital and dominant in the field of schooling in Jaffna. St. John’s was considered the most powerful of these institutions funded and directed by an alumni network for over a century. When practices and stance-taking of the LTTE were directed at misrecognising the historical classification that practically constituted his social world, the teacher felt threatened and at unease.

In contrast, in rebel-held Vanni, around 1998 there was an intense militant recruitment drive, and the Movement proposed to close schools for military training. Here the teachers used the symbolic class struggle in the site of schooling to negotiate limits and get the LTTE to move back on its first proposal. The UTHR(J) reports that these victories were ‘hard-won through severe hardships sustained by teaching in wartime’.

Recently the LTTE floated proposals to place the Vanni under a proclamation of state of war similar in tone to that declared by Mahattaya soon after the outbreak of war in June 1990. Under the new proclamation it was proposed to close the schools for three months and students of about the age of 13 (i.e., year 9 or standard 8) upwards to be given military training. This was strenuously opposed by principals and associations of parents and teachers. It was pointed out by principals and teachers that they were running the schools with great difficulty under enormous drawbacks, shrewdly pointing to the schools running smoothly in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar
Island. The LTTE has since modified its proposal to one hour a day of ARP (Air Raid Protection) training. (UTHR(J), 1998)

Historical schemes of perception were at work here: the habitus, classification, the social struggle in the field of schooling all were flung at the rebels by the keepers of the legitimate order who had endured hardship and held on to their positions as teachers of schools in the most deprived part of the warzone. While Somasundaram points out ‘Those with leadership qualities, those willing to challenge and argue, the intellectuals, the dissenters (labelled *throhis*) and those with social motivation had been weeded out’ (D. Somasundaram, 2014). I suggest that the teacher in wartime had acquired a disposition by teaching in such conditions, to wait, to endure, to keep on teaching, seemingly helpless and powerless yet understanding that gains were made in practices and acts in the field of schooling. Such schooling practices formed the taken-for-granted and overlooked by other community leaders who considered themselves the keepers of legitimacy, the spokespersons for their collective plight. The teachers waited and internalised over a quarter of a century the disposition to make a strategic intervention at given intervals in this war, by converging to offer the student a significant opportunity, and dispersing after, to resume the space of a quiet teacher in wartime.

The Student

Going to school daily was something of a ritual practice in Sri Lanka in general which acquired a heightened intensity in the war-torn Jaffna Peninsula. This I propose was informed by practical reason. Getting a good education in order to move towards a future beyond violence was seen as opposed to joining a militant group or being harassed by the state armed forces. In the network of oppositions, going to school in a white uniform as a student was seemingly juxtaposed to the gun-toting insurgent in the social order in this field, which I expand on in later chapters of this thesis. The young boy was given a ‘student ID’ as the identity card is referred to’ at the age of ten, a piece of ephemera preserved by many students as a token of their vulnerability in a strange time of childhood in the war. Outside the warzone, in contrast, the first form of national identity was obtained at the age of 16 just before sitting the O Level Examination (GCSE equivalent).

The white uniform was recognised by the armed officers of state as a symbol of legitimate activity, but in the era of the Indian Army occupation of the peninsula 1987-‘89, very young boys received this ID as a further layer of ‘protection’ from suspicion. The ritual practice of going to school I argue was at the same time functional as well as sounding a ‘symbolic chord’
in emphasising the fundamental disposition in the schooling habitus here. It was this disposition that had informed the practices of teachers such as Thiranagama and PS which again harked back to a historical social order. The continuation of this social order was simply performed in this ritual practice of the daily walk to school by white-uniformed students in the disorder of a warzone. In reality, things were a lot less tidy; students fell into grey, ambivalent categories in changing phases of danger, growing up in civil war.

**Student’s Union: ‘We were, like, school-educated people!’**

Hindu College Jaffna had a reputation in wartime for supporting the LTTE and the ‘Tamil Cause.’ Interviewee G was born in ’84, a decade after B, and had experienced a lot of militant activity in the school in the early 2000s. Yet even at Hindu College, according to G, politics did not disturb the usual school ordering. The main curriculum teaching time was not usurped or set aside. Within the site of school, the matters of nationalism, political ideology and support for the Movement took place in more or less bounded spaces within the overall site of schooling; one being the Student Union:

G: And I studied at the Jaffna Hindu College which was supportive of the LTTE and my best friends were in the Student Union. So, when I was in the A Level, I was in many supportive activities, in the Union. Not in arms or anything. Oh, we joined the Union cos we had the spirit, because we didn’t know any other thing - we would jump over the wall and go hang the flags! The teachers? Yes, they also supported the LTTE in those days.

We didn’t join up, we supported only through blood donation. The Student’s Union is not LTTE! ... We went and supported by teaching the Vanni students... that kind of activities. We were like *school-educated people!* Other people were called to dig the bunkers and all that. That’s a different department - yes, *shramadana weda!* [donation of labour]. From our school, Hindu College, there were people who joined up by themselves. ¹³

In this representation of the social world and political struggle by this A Level student, just 16 or 17 years old, he makes a number of significant points. Here he captures the ‘indeterminacy and fuzziness’ which engulfs the supporter of the Tamil Cause (Bourdieu, 1985, p.728). The meaning of what it was all about depended on the future, was in ‘suspense, waiting, dangling’

as Bourdieu termed it (Bourdieu, 1985). In time, G would turn away; he would lose contact with those friends and that world. The importance of the ‘Cause’ in his personal student life had changed meaning over time. When he recovered, he studied hard and went to university and didn’t think about such things. Returning to the Student Union, G applies the division of arms and joining up as stacking on one side, while hanging up flags and blood donation fell on the other. The ‘perception of the social world and the implied act of construction’ had applied this principle of division that there were two camps (Bourdieu, 1985).

He was defining the position the students occupied in social space as being ‘school-educated people.’ I argue that the student’s sense of place in this struggle is located through the ritual of going to school daily, as opposed to departing from the schooling order and being an irregular militant (Bourdieu, 1985). I argue that the categories of perception of the social world in this society are traced through the site of schooling as revealed in the notion of being a ‘school-going person’ and thus imposing a sense of limits in an uttered ‘that’s not for the likes of us’ position (Bourdieu, 1985). All this translated as voluntary joining up to militant practice was halted by natural perception of a sense of distance and no-go limits informed by a disposition in the habitus of the school-going student.

In contrast, one of the youngest interviewees, T, represented a different relational position to the LTTE and the Tamil Cause. Similar in age to G and engaging in A Level study in the early 2000 ceasefire, T was a student of Jaffna College, the well-known and historically chronicled American mission school, in rural Vaddukkodai, Jaffna. Located on the western corner of the northern headland, Vaddukkodai derived symbolic significance from two historical forms of symbolic power in this peninsula. First, in 1823 Jaffna College grew to be a singular success claimed to rival any European seat of higher learning, formed out of American missionary zeal. Education and the ensuing economic capital along with the social and symbolic capital that a modern structured western English education gave these boarders, resulted not in creating reverends and leaders of the Christian faith, as much as it delivered highly remunerated positions in the then Colonial Government Service (Poor, 1840). The local Jaffna alumni took over from the Americans and continued these structures to date. I write more on this in the final chapter of this thesis. The second legitimacy devolved from the Vaddukkodai Resolution in 1976, the first political call for an Independent state of Tamil Eelam by the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) led by Samuel James Velupillai Chelvanayakam.
The habitus of the mission school was dominant in the disposition of the schoolboy T. The Jaffna College boys were reluctant to participate in memorials and commemorations and only attended under compulsion during the ceasefire of 2002-2006. ‘I remember in 2003 I was bored cos there would be long speeches outside the Nallur temple and we had to all go, despite having to go the next day for tuition classes.’ Aware of the scheme of classification applied in the field, he clarified that while schools participated in the commemoration, not all did: ‘but not the big schools, not Hindu College, either.’

Joining up: ‘There was no entertainment, akka!’

The northern peripheries of the northern peninsula were caught in the intense heat of LTTE recruitment as Prabhakaran the enigmatic leader of the LTTE was born in Valvettithurai, on the northeast coast of the Vadamarachchi North Division of the Jaffna District. In 2008, a year before the end of war, I contacted the Jaffna Facebook group to view photos of a peninsula I was yet to discover. I lived in Italy and I received a response from a young Sri Lankan Tamil male, M, in London accepting my request. In the first of many conversations we had over the years, he told me his story of a childhood and adolescence lived inside the warzone. It was the very first account I heard, over skype. M was born and raised in Point Pedro in the same area strongly supportive of the LTTE. The term preferred by SriLankans is ‘sympathetic to.’ Situated close to the birthplace of the leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, these northern areas experienced a greater aerial bombardment by the state armed forces during the war, generating support towards the Movement and insecurity and fear of being treated with suspicion by the state armed forces. Aged nine, M had witnessed his friend, a little girl of same age, killed instantly in an air attack by the Sri Lanka Air Force. Another interviewee points out that a big army checkpoint had been placed too close to M’s school, Hartley College, when the state armed forces took control of the entire peninsula in 1995. Tension was reported between schoolboys and the armed forces.

‘What made you join up?’ I was expecting reasons of hatred for the Sinhala nation, outrage, heroism. Instead, his reply was simply, ‘there was no entertainment akka! Nothing! There was nothing to do!’ This was too ordinary-sounding just like any other teenager. Somasundaram talks about ‘Pied Piper’ enticements which drew ‘susceptible young minds looking for

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14 Akka means elder sister in both Sinhala and Tamil.
adventure’ especially where there was none. This succeeded in the case of interviewee M. As a teenage student, he was tasked by the LTTE to carry packages for them, and conceal and deliver parcels. He was then informed that the army was after him, and that his best chance of safety would be to join the rebel movement. ‘I couldn’t study akka, I couldn’t concentrate!’ Finally, M cycles off to join the Movement at night, leaving a letter for his parents: a teacher and a civil servant. Leaving a letter for the parents was the strange literary custom among those who joined up at the time. The leader Prabhakaran, elusive and near-mythical in the minds of young people, ‘personified the resistive, defiant, and proud spirit of Tamil youth and was the alter ego for many Tamils, locally and abroad’ (D. Somasundaram, 2014). M related the humiliation he had felt, to learn, on the inside, of these methods and strategies that he himself had fallen prey to.

The treatment of recruits within the Movement appeared to follow a system of classification.

In specialized units such as the Leopards, children formed an effective fighting force in difficult battles. It is those who were unable to find a way to flee abroad, those from the lower socio-economic class trapped in the north and east with no other avenue of escape that became the catchment population for the militants. (D. Somasundaram, 2014, p.228)

On the other hand, middle class students like M, were treated much like the ‘middle class girls’ described in the key work by university lecturers, Broken Palmyra, who ‘soon get frustrated by fascist tendencies in the organisation’ (Hoole, 1990, p.89):

Many of them develop problems of conscience and are unable to conform their independence and initiative to the tastes of the organisation. Once the honeymoon is over, many of these girls wish to leave. The parents quickly get into the act and pack off the girl to stay with an aunt in Colombo so as to get over the trauma. An S.O.S. would then be sent to a relative abroad to get her out. The girl would then continue with her studies abroad and get over the past. (Hoole, 1990)

M’s trajectory was similar. He claimed he never saw active combat, and had doubts if he could ever fire his weapon on a human, during overnight practice on nocturnal jungle creatures. He

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15 Public displays of war paraphernalia, funerals and posters of fallen heroes; speeches and videos, particularly in schools; heroic, melodious songs and stories; drawing out feelings of patriotism and creating a martyr cult all created a compelling milieu (D. Somasundaram, 2014, p.231).
was finally released on the pleas and ransom paid by his parents desperate to save their only son from militancy. There were bargain pleas and negotiations: in some instances, one child given in exchange for assurances of non-recruitment of siblings. He continued his studies overseas. M had crossed back from the disorder, into the order of schooling sites. The phase was considered an interruption, and the recruit was once again a student. M returned to Sri Lanka years later, post-war, and entered the Toastmasters competition for the Vadamarachchi division, winning awards. In our conversations I realised that here was a young man whose habitus had been informed by early experience of having grown up around the military as well as the militants, who recalled the kindness of Brigadier Larry Wijeratne. M appeared to have no fear of armed agents. Being middle-class, had given him the social and symbolic capital to be regular and understand regularity, despite the ‘interruption’. The family disposition of a Tamil dad who had been raised in Kandy among the Sinhalese had influenced his own, and he emerged ready for post-war Sri Lanka, without the LTTE in it.

The Teacher

Living in a rural area, in the northern part of the peninsula where the population received harsher treatment from the state armed forces, did not appear to significantly condition the habitus of the Jaffna College student, T. Our principal ‘was a teacher and not a nationalist’ says T, attempting to explain the limited contact in the site of school with the militants. What did this mean ‘to be a teacher and not a nationalist?’ Again here we see how ‘organization of speech around classifications comes readily’ and the speaker is barely conscious of having done so (Bourdieu et al., 1991, p.174). In this social order, there were ‘historical schemes of perception and appreciation’ which stemmed from the objective division into classes and here was a teacher-class (Bourdieu, 2010, p.470). It appeared that T did not feel the need to clarify what he had implied, as the distinction ‘functioned below the level of consciousness and discourse’ (Bourdieu, 2010). It was clear that here, the network of oppositions placed the teacher in the field of education, as opposed to the nationalist in the field of political struggle. In the social order, education had a legitimacy that was aloof to political division and dissent.

The A Level econ tuition master: ‘You have studied economics, now you will study politics!’

T: When we were students, we all went to private tuition classes. The school was more for extracurricular activities. And until the O Levels you didn’t have to leave the village
as there are good tutors there. It was local. But when you move up to your A Levels, all
go to the big tuition centres in Jaffna town. And I remember the parents were scared
that their children... something may happen to them in Jaffna town. But fortunately,
nothing like that happened to me or my batch-mates as our A Levels fell within that
period – the ceasefire! I used to cycle on my bike. I had three different tuition classes –
economics in one place, political science in another place and English in two different
places. And I would cycle all over Jaffna and explore the narrow lanes and there would
be gaps between those hours and that’s how I learnt the geography of the place in
those years, 2002 to 2004.

And that’s the time that the LTTE propaganda was directly targeting us. There was a
famous economics teacher called AH – he was a big LTTE supporter! And once in a
while he would invite the LTTE to give a lecture. He would say ‘ok, you have now studied
economics and it’s time to study politics’. He would leave us with these guys and we
got annoyed as they go on talking for two hours maybe, and we had another class, a
real political science class in another location. And we thought, one day, if they are
going to come, we will not go for the economics tuition class, but head on to the
political science class... and AH got so angry! (laughing) So those things happened and
this was in a very well-known tuition centre. He was one of the main teachers and was
very famous. 16

Though the relational position of the econ master differed from the Principal of Jaffna College,
even AH in constructing his political vision was submitting to structural constraints. Here again
we see a distinguishing of economics as falling under education, and the taken-for-granted
normal business that carries on, and LTTE propaganda as the political business that was grafted
on, rather than taking away from the economics slot (Bourdieu, 1989, p.18). The distinction
appeared to have been made unconsciously. It is in these practices of distinction and selection
that we see how the habitus of mission schooling in the Jaffna peninsula informed how space
is made for politics. The teacher and student are locked into a relational disposition in the
social space of positions in this field where legitimacy of schooling structures traces back to a
historical genesis two hundred years ago.

While we discuss illustrations of a teacher, a student, a rebel, Bourdieu reminds us that ‘the
construction of social reality is not only an individual enterprise’ but is also a collective

16 Interview with T, Colombo, 2019.
enterprise, politically and scholastically speaking (Bourdieu, 1989, p.18). Examining social agents in the field of positions, then, encourages us to look for a social logic produced by structuring structures that inform the cognitive, the mental structures of all agents. Looking at the individual too closely could blind us to the taken-for-granted distinctions and choices that are eclipsed by the iridescent aura of the ‘heroic’ teacher or the revolutionary. The economics teacher went on to join a political party after the end of war. Despite his politically objectified stance, the internalised embodied social structures that inform what constitutes ‘reasonable behaviour’ is visible in the outrage of the economics teacher at a student boycott of his ‘legitimate’ practice as an econ tutor (Bourdieu, 2010, p.469). He was first an economics guru; then a supporter of the Tamil Cause.

**Vice principals of mission schools: ‘We had to guard the documents’**

During phases of armed operations in the peninsula, the teachers received advice to leave Jaffna ahead of the military advance. A vice principal of a Christian mission school for boys, KN, stayed on in the premises of the school against the wishes of the bishop and tells his story:

KN: Our real problem of suffering started in 1987 when the IPKF marched towards Jaffna. We had three stages of suffering: the first one of course was the IPKF. The second one was the Battle of the Jaffna Fort - 1990 and the third one was the ‘mass exodus’ - 1995. The principal and myself, we were in the college premises. Of course, there were others there with us. The Archdeacon was there and it was a moral strength for us. **Now why we stayed was to protect the documents!** Historical documents of the college. We can’t be carrying all that. We decided to stick on there and our wives were very cooperative with us. IPKF started shelling... they marched from Vanni, came up to ‘Chaavachcheri’ (a local term for the town of Chavakachcheri in the Jaffna District).¹⁷

The teachers interpreted the threat of the armed advance as including a threat to the symbolic power of their school’s historic past. Guarding the documents was placed higher than even following the rules of armed warfare and evacuating in line with state security advice. Crossing over to a Christian mission school for girls, there too it was the female vice principal, MK, who had led the students to safety in 1995 during what the mission schools termed ‘the exodus’. It was the first reference to this biblical term I had heard outside the site of church. Uttered by the community of Christian mission school principals, it somehow conveyed the deeply felt

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¹⁷ Interview with KN, Jaffna, 2019.
significance of this event of war. The field of armed warfare had directly disrupted the field of schooling; they had been driven out of their homes and villages by violent events beyond their control! These middle-class teachers did not at any time accept that deprivation and displacement were part of civil war. It was ‘a horrendous situation’ as many teachers both Christian and Hindu, reported.

MK: Another teacher said, MK akka, shall we go and take some documents from the office? We came in a Landmaster (an open tractor-like vehicle) and took some documents from the cupboard. She and a few teachers came with me. We thought teacher’s documents, certificates, particulars… they need it … we took only that. We didn’t know where the money was kept. We didn’t touch anything. This is all we took: the children’s files, birth certificates., baptism certificates, the educational certificates, the O Level certificates, the originals of the teachers’ certificates and files – teachers as well as children’s – the Landmaster was full! We took it with us and brought it back here. In Chavachccheri, when it became a bit better, we started running the school. Finding people’s salaries…. It was so hard!¹⁸

All I was hearing was how disorder was negotiated through the school order in times of threat and helplessness. Yet despite the events of war being shrouded in conceptual terminology such as ‘exodus’ what I was hearing was how the sens pratique of the principal engaged in practices preserving documents in order to maintain records and continue schooling after this ‘interruption’ of an event of war had passed. The threat to their lives was considered less important than the collapse of the schooling order here.

Permissions to continue schooling in wartime were not absolute or reliable. At each phase and turn of this long war, teachers were compelled to validate and evaluate the changing nature of threats and constantly reassess the danger facing teachers over the timeline of war. MK the former vice-principal of the Christian mission school for girls, received a death threat. The envelope addressed to the vice-principal was inked in red. ‘I knew what it was as soon as I received it’ she says. First MK continued working till the end of her school-day, reporting this to no one. She then returned home and says she put her large almirah (Portuguese-style heavy wardrobe where clothes, jewellery and important documents are preserved usually), in order. This she explained, was that in the event she was killed, all her documents would be in order.

¹⁸ Interview with MK, Jaffna, 2018.
Then she had called the bishop who was the authority presiding over the school. ‘Didn’t you tell your husband?’ I asked. ‘No’, she said simply. ‘The bishop came on his bicycle. He said we need to settle this.’ The bishop and MK finally met with the LTTE civil administration wing as they referred to the offices which appeared to be bureaucratic and orderly and dealt with matters relating to public services. ‘They assured us that this death threat was not genuine. They showed us the list and said, see that is the list, and your name is not there.’ MK went on to add that they showed her a name of a principal who had been killed for his political involvements. They affirmed to MK and the bishop that principals and teachers were not targets unless their political views and activity posed a threat to the Movement. They assured the bishop and MK that this was a fake threat by a group who were masquerading as the LTTE, and these assurances were relied on.

Fake death threats? Official lists of potential targets? Guarantees given by the Movement accepted and relied on? It would appear fantastic except that MK had also retained the letter in her almira as a souvenir, which she produced after the interview. It appears that nothing was quite normal after two decades of civil war where multiple diverse armed parties waged war in a small peninsula. The war-fatigued mindset, Somasundaram explains, becomes ‘socialised to terror’, accepting any level of unreality and staying silent most of the time in the face of armed resistance (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.569; 2014, p.40). The teacher asserted here the moral authority of an unarmed teacher and backed by the community leader, the bishop, challenged the militants. Fear here took on a different complexion and it is not altogether clear what changes between one exchange and another.

Situating practices: The carcass of a cow

I interviewed MK on a field trip to Jaffna in August, 2018. This was the first time she had given an interview or even verbally recollected that time. I returned a few times over the next years, to her home, for more in-depth conversation with a growing sense of trust. Yet on the morning of that first interview, her daughter had warned her against it saying that it would bring back memories of the bad things that had happened. But MK felt she needed to talk about that time and not all of it was simply ‘bad’. She was negotiating her own image and commonsense view of the world many years later, in reflection. MK went to check on her school immediately after returning from the displacement following the exodus during the Battle for Jaffna in 1995.

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19 This interview took place in Jaffna, March 2019 on a return visit, when MK had built sufficient trust and friendship to feel she could share a different more personal experience of war.
The Sri Lanka Army had taken control of the peninsula, while the LTTE had retreated south to the Vanni.

Three days ago, I was thinking of these times...SM’s house was here. She always said MK, come to Colombo, but I wanted to stay here in Jaffna. The students were still in Varani, Chaavachcheri, Point Pedro. I thought...I saw my house... everything in order! Only the cow dung that can be cleaned, the cattle had been sleeping. I told my two children and went to the school. There could have been bombs, landmines...how did I dare? In the Mission House everything was scattered. She had maintained the house like a mansion. I don’t know why, but there were Sinhala slogans scattered, Gajaba regiment, this and that regiment, on all the Mission House walls. It has been painted. She had around 100 towels and bed sheets. All were scattered...pillows...she has visitors all the time. Everything was in the linen cupboard, the cutlery, crockery...all were scattered!

I looked around and in the third classroom...we walked down the classes... after the hall, in the third class there was a big cow...or bull...I don’t know! They must have cut it to use as meat. No...not a man, the cow had been killed there and they must have used it to make beef curry. Half the body was there! ... It was hanging... hanging! And the smell! ... the carcass! ... and a lot of crows were there! Aiyooo one week ago I was thinking about this, remembering this, and today you have come all of a sudden, out of the blue...! Our children saw that, the stench is still there in the memory. Even now I think, why did I go there, anything could have happened to us. And no one was there to help us. No medical aid, nothing.

I learnt a lot more from these representations, than in articles in which the armed agent and society were placed fixedly in opposite relational positions in the field. Bourdieu provided the theoretical tools which helped avoid the pitfalls of false objectification to a great extent, while MK halted a tendency to get too enraptured over ‘symbolic effect’. Listening to the carcass of the cow in the classroom incident, I was in a great state of excitement. Here was a parallel to Van Ommering’s research on the 34-day war between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006 (van Ommering, 2011, p.109). In the aftermath, a teacher Maya returning to her school in a suburb of Beirut considered a Hezbollah stronghold, ‘recalls how worried she was that her school had not survived the bombardments’ (van Ommering, 2011):
The war ended at 8 pm. I was here, at school, at 8.15. There was no single soul on the streets. Only a chicken with no head, right in front of the school. I do not know why it was there. Perhaps it was shot. And many leaflets, which had been dropped by Israeli planes over Haret Hreik. All the windows of the school were broken, there was glass all over the place. But, thank God, the building was still intact. (van Ommering, 2011)

A beheaded chicken in Lebanon and the carcass of a cow in Jaffna! Was this not a sign? MK laughed, simply saying ‘They needed to eat something, the Army! They must have made a beef curry!’ In such exchanges I understood how ‘cutting practices off from their real conditions of existence, in order to credit them with alien intentions could ‘dispossess’ them, as surely as its opposite, of everything that constitutes their reason and their raison d’etre’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.115). The oral history method employed in fieldwork helped to situate practices in their practical historical setting and avoid inspired interpretations: ‘The Kabyle woman setting up her loom is not performing an act of cosmogony; she is simply setting up her loom to weave cloth intended to serve a technical function’ (Bourdieu, 1977).

When we came back, the bishop also came. He said even if you had only two children, we have to start the school! There were no children, no teachers, so I asked how, bishop? We had to clean the whole thing; there were shell covers, pieces of bullets. They (the Sri Lanka Army) were also searching for LTTE, they just shoot, they didn’t occupy the school. We have to inform the army and they came and cleared the carcass. It was taken out and took a long time for the smell ... now it’s ok... at that time! Around 23 children, me, another teacher, none of the other teachers returned! Even the present principal got a job in the US – they wanted to go and do their studies and they left. Her husband and she. SM was in Colombo... so many were away!

Conclusion

The argument which I begin in this chapter and continue in the rest of the thesis is that the strong historically ingrained disposition to education in this community had given the teachers the symbolic capital and symbolic power enabling the teacher to view the events of war as an interruption, and not as a radical transformation of the order in the classroom. I unpick the notion of ‘order’ as informed by the schooling habitus as a teacher walks into the Kachcheri and pleads for the release of a suspect who is required by the order of schooling to sit for his final teacher-training exams. Examining the classroom, this investigation looks past the rebel-
recruitment practices, to the symbolic struggle for legitimate authority on the site of school. I show how these practices indicated a recognition of the hierarchical order of schooling by the rebels, as they worked within the symbolic power of the sites they sought to disrupt. An uncomfortable question on LTTE-recruitment working through existing schemes of classification is discussed with representations from diverse students. It appeared that even in the disorder of civil war and the allure of revolutionary politics, the middle-class student of a ‘good school’ did not consider joining up or getting arms training as an option that was for the likes of him or her. Diverse student positions all delivered a notion that somehow born and raised in warzone, they knew their place, and there was a network of oppositions which unconsciously informed where this or the other practice of engagement with politics and armed rebellion fell. Yet I draw out what is at the heart of this Bourdieusian exploration: that the teacher in holding together this view of the social order was operating also from a sens pratique, in awareness, that the practices carried out with this symbolic power held the structures in place to keep the war-affected child behind a school desk in the warzone. In the layer of experiential reality delivered by the in-depth interviews that informed this chapter, I argue, that the habitus was conditioned by the field marked by wartime deprivation and the vulnerability of the school-going child. In the following chapters of this thesis I continue to examine how the practical operators deep in the system of acquired internalised generative schemes, were sharp and functioning on full throttle, in wartime.
CHAPTER TWO

Education as a Site of Legitimation and Normalisation

The long civil war in Sri Lanka, a low-intensity conflict with phases of active warfare and psychosis-inducing trauma for the civilians of the Northern warzone, ended in May 2009. Survivors of the final intense battles were herded by the state armed forces into a large refugee camp, Menik Farm. The battlefields were shielded from the view of international and local media and INGOs. What we know is based on individual eyewitness accounts which ‘chronicled the relentless violence experienced by survivors’ between September 2008 and May 2009, when the Sri Lankan government forces finally decimated the LTTE and declared victory (Hoole, 2009). During this period, the people of the Vanni region who had lived under the command of the rebels had been ‘forced to retreat with the rebel fighters and act as human shields against advancing government troops’ (Fuglerud, 2020, p.1). The survivors were deeply traumatised and fatigued. Having had little food or drink for months, they had witnessed ‘incomprehensible brutality, and massacres too many to mention’ (Fuglerud, 2020). Menik Farm refugee camp, over 100,000 acres in extent, was guarded and run by the state armed forces.

Menik Farm, Habitus, Doxa

It is against this backdrop that an announcement on the public address system at Menik Farm reached the ears of K, a young male refugee from the rebel-held Vanni: students who had qualified for university admission at the A Level Examination held last year, were asked to report to the specified zone inside the camp! K was just 19 years old, alone without family. The camp had been divided into zones corresponding to the administrative zones of the Northern Province. Amid the traumatised war-affected populations rescued from the warzone, beside the national defence activities of processing the refugees, the zonal department of education had set up a unit inside Menik Farm to enable the processing of students who had qualified

20 The online report did not contain page numbers.
for university entrance. What was going on here? How did the A Level Examination and university entrance follow deeply violent battles? I turn to the conceptual approaches of Bourdieu for an interpretation in a continuing enquiry in the chapters of this thesis. Arguing that the teachers and educators appeared to trace the sites of schooling and armed struggle as discrete, I treat the field of schooling as being played out within the field of armed warfare. I use the concept of *illusio* to interrogate notions of legitimacy and citizenship as traced through the site of education in this postcolonial society.

The habitus is not visible; what is visible are its effects. We need to go deeper beneath the surface of empirical phenomena to hypothesize the existence of a generative principle (Grenfell, 2014, p.56). I quickened to the need to look at the practical operators that enabled such an intervention in the form of *regulated practices*. Bourdieu had begun his inquiry with a similar question: ‘all of my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?’ (Bourdieu, 1990, p.65). Setting up operations and processing educational opportunities for young persons who had lived their entire life under rebel rule, the educators appeared to be taking part in a rule-bound activity which was not produced in obedience to rules.

This was significant for a number of reasons. First, here was an intervention, I suggest, informed by the durable system of dispositions that adjusted to what the educators strategized as being ‘demands inscribed as objective potentialities’ they perceived in the situation at Menik Farm (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72). Active warfare had subsided and the guns were silenced. Into this site of war-devastation, marched in the educators and set up their operations in a designated zone at Menik Farm: ‘Bourdieu tried to capture the combination of freedom and constraint with the formula of “regulated improvisation” or “improvisation within defined limits”’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.79; Steinmetz, 2018, p.608). I propose to examine in the chapters of this thesis how the educators were afforded ‘freedoms’ to intervene and how such ‘regulated limits’ were taken-for-granted in the field of schooling in wartime. All this indicated that the social game in schooling-in-wartime was regulated. The structures and order in the field of public governance had entered the camp, and the institution of zonal bureaucrat appeared to be recognised in the field of armed state power. Second, an intervention in a military site, where schooling practices appeared to be informed by a belief in a post-war future traced through education, suggested that the taken-for-granted legitimacy of the social order had not completely broken down. Nor could it be said to have been replaced with a military order despite militarisation.
of society in the warzone. Third, the intervention of educators in a military operation appeared to be taking place within the ‘rules of the game’ in this empirical location.

K had indeed qualified for university entrance at the national A Level Examination and had received his grades as A, B and C. In the final chapters of this thesis, I detail how months later, a chain of diverse social agents would converge from schooling, faith, public administration, justice, and local and international social welfare institutions. Following due protocol and process to a considerable extent, they would enable K to be escorted to the Jaffna University with only a sarong and a change of clothes. He was boarded at the university and chose to do a degree in fine arts as he was a talented artist. Later K would go on to win a prestigious international scholarship to one of the best art faculties in South Asia and graduate with a Masters in Contemporary Art and an ardent love of Frida Kahlo.

What I had read on the civil war so far, the existing political science and conflict theory, did not quite offer the tools I needed to begin this exploration. A Foucauldian notion of governmentality perhaps could explain to some extent how bureaucrats assert the ‘rational apparatus’, the paraphernalia of administration to create an appearance of order (Foucault, Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991). In States of Imagination, Hansen and Stepputat discuss rationalities, how ‘certain styles of knowledge and governmentalities made specific policies plausible, specific forms of rationality thinkable’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.4). Yet it did not adequately provide theoretical frames to better understand the structures, practices, and social logic in sites of schooling in the rebel-held Vanni that had enabled K to complete his schooling and sit for his A Level exams. The Southern population outside the warzone imagined the rebel-held Vanni as isolated and impenetrable, patrolled by armed militants and marked by child-soldiers. The announcement that K had sat for his A Levels was disconcerting; unsettling the held perceptions and at odds with this imagined scenario. It indicated a possibility of a shared set of dispositions arising from a shared habitus, emerging from sites considered alien and hostile.

As significant as these events, was the unremarkable way in which K narrated how he had received the news of a place at the university as his natural entitlement. Apart from the ambiguity surrounding the ‘normal’ civilian families living in the Vanni, K, in particular, had grown up in a TRO (Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation) Home in rebel-held territory, patronised and managed by the rebel-LTTE. Speaking across the lines, I queried this measure of offering a place at university, from a Sinhalese civil servant at the central department of
education, to which he responded ‘of course, the students who have received admission to the university, they must go to university!’ This unambiguous acceptance by the state education department and a student from a rebel-held territory, two entities polarised by separatist war, of the student’s natural entitlement to higher education at state university, was intriguing. I argue that Bourdieu’s notion of doxa and illusio are important to this examination.

I argue that the undisputed undisputed doxa in the habitus of schooling had informed the schooling practices in wartime. This intervention calls for an enquiry into how the teacher and educator held on to the belief in the stakes of legitimacy in the game of schooling-in-wartime. What Bourdieu’s approach does is to enable the social agents to be treated as operating from positions in the field in symbolic struggles and armed struggles. Moving beyond motivators, I look at the legitimation practices of all social agents in the rebel-held Vanni in schooling and ask how did this translate on the ground as normalising and socialising practices in the lives of the war-affected child?

Illusio is Bourdieu’s term for the recognition of the legitimacy of symbolic capital in the field of positions or social logic (Bourdieu, 1985; Kögler, 1997, p.149; Wacquant, 1989, p.41). Did the illusio in this field enable the scenario in which the practices of the educators and the ‘field’ of schooling acquired a greater legitimacy and recognition in wartime? Here was an indication that the field of schooling in wartime, where the fields of schooling and armed warfare coalesced, was marked by ‘doxic submission’ to something that resonated with the social world which they knew. It is significant that in this community, doxic submission did not bow down to community tradition nor exotic ritual, but to a modern schooling structure, a sort of UCAS-type processing of students for a place at university! In later chapters of this thesis I examine how, during civil war, there had been extraordinary interventions in the field of schooling by social agents who engaged in re-constructing the field of schooling-in-wartime according to their commonsense view of the world as informed by the habitus.

As fieldwork progressed, I began to see that a place in a university was a sort of visa through which the education department officials had negotiated the movement of students beyond the violence of civil war. State and rebel armed forces appeared to have recognised the passport of the A Level results. I return to examine this in the final chapter of this thesis. In the next sections of this chapter, I map the field of positions in rebel-held Vanni and tell the story of K, growing up entirely under rebel control. I examine three sites of his daily life: the TRO

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21 Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS), a charity and private company operating the university application process for British Universities and Colleges.
Home, the local state school, and the sphere of extracurricular activity. First, I discuss the field of positions and governance practices in the former Vanni. Second, I examine how state-rebel legitimation practices enabled K to criss-cross from a site of a rebel-managed orphanage into the site of state school. I argue that such criss-crossing had continued to instil in K, a historical relational disposition in the habitus between the student and the field of schooling, rooted in the past, pre-dating this interruption of civil war. Living in the sites of armed warfare in the field of rebel-rule, the relation between K and the notion of Tamil Eelam was an illusory one. Meanwhile, the schooling habitus continued, held together by structures and practices in this temporal field of schooling-in-wartime. Third, I look at a strange collaboration taking place within the state-rebel model of schooling, where the symbolic power of giving children in war-deprived zones a good education had delivered a measure of normalisation.

The State-Rebel Legitimation Game

The ‘uncleared’ Vanni

Known as the underbelly of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, the Vanni was divided into the districts of Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar. Acknowledging the recent discussions on how Bourdieu’s approach engages with historical material in examining habitus, I attempt to locate the Vanni in a historical context (Steinmetz, 2018). While the practices exist in a defined time and location, habitus looks at the past, present, and future. Historically the northern and southern neighbours of the Vanni enjoyed relations from a position of greater dominance. While the dominant social classes and autonomy was concentrated in the Jaffna peninsula, little has been published about the Vanni people. What is known, lies in historical accounts which revolve around the ‘tank’ or water resource, around which agricultural settlements grew. ‘The greatest need of the people of the Vanni is a supply of good food and water, and for this village tanks are absolutely necessary’ is one entry in Martyn’s historical notes on Jaffna (Martyn, 1923, p.282). In 1896 ‘the restoration of larger tanks’ such as Kanukkani continued in the Mullaitivu District, while the ‘Giant’s tank’, Mannar had been completed. Mr R.W. Levers appointed Government Agent of the Northern Province in 1896 is recorded as having been ‘a warm advocate of Irrigation in the Vannies, where he spent the greater part of his time on circuit …[…]… despite his other failings, among them the unfortunate horse-breeding experiment in Delft Island (Hindu Organ, 22 Feb, 1905)’ (Martyn, 1923).

22 Interviews in the Jaffna peninsula also suggested that the lived experience of a student growing up in a warzone was limited to and moved between these sites in other parts of the warzone.
Distanced from northern Jaffna Tamil and Southern Sinhalese this society grew out of myth, marked by tanks, agriculture and dense malaria-infested jungle. Prof Daya Somasundaram cites the role of the anopheles mosquito, breeding in tanks and irrigation infrastructure that fell into disrepair in Independent Sri Lanka, as a chief barrier to the inter-mingling of the ethnic communities on the borders of this region, Sinhala and Tamil (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.3).

Myth depicted the Vanni people as being strong and martial-skilled which fed into the image of the founders and inheritors of the imagined nation of Tamil Eelam, popularised in the warzone and among the global Tamil diaspora. Continuing a remote depiction of the Vanni, on their part, the Ministry of Defence elected to draw from agricultural registers in symbolic reporting of Vanni during the civil war. Territories under state control were termed ‘cleared’ areas as though cultivated, while those under LTTE control were termed ‘uncleared’ areas. This contributed to the notion held by the Southern communities, of the Vanni being an impenetrable jungle, as no nuanced accounts filtered south in wartime. Tamils residing in the Vanni in wartime did not mingle with Sinhalese. Their disposition to the Sinhalese was a hostile one as the armed camouflage officers of what they perceived as a ‘Sinhala’ state were the only representatives of the other community. The trajectory of the Vanni may have been different had there not been an outbreak of civil war. Since 1982, the knowledge transmission of the Vanni only took place in the form of war reporting with statements such as ‘The recent history of the Wanni has been tumultuous. The Wanni was a central battle-ground during the Eelam War III (1995–2002)’ (Culbert, 2005, p.41). In the Southern imagination of the south, the emblem of the ‘child-soldier’ was associated with the rebel-held Vanni. Total militant control of the entire generation of Vanni children was imagined as publications of INGO officers at the United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF) rehabilitating child soldiers filtered through.

How did the Vanni folk perceive their own community? A recurrent notion arising out of a reliable, structured research study is that of imagining their community as a collective. This representation of a collective disposition may possibly be traced back to the historical agricultural settlement beginnings clustered around the tank. It appears to have continued to inform how the Vanni people imagined their community in wartime and post-war. In psychosocial studies conducted among the deeply scarred Vanni victims, post-war, Somasundaram notes: ‘collective trauma is explored and interventions suggested’ (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.7). In the Vanni Narratives, published as part of such in-depth study, Somasundaram from his Jaffna habitus, notes the significance of their claim that community
life had continued during war and a belief that somehow community was still out there, a possibility, and one that they would return to. This year, more than a decade later, the author and others posted on the Cambridge Core Blog that the healing of the Vanni people’ is attributed to ‘a community’s shared belief in its collective strength and capability to effect change.’ Even a decade after the war, its traumatic effects persist, but communities with robust collective efficacy showed resilience (D. Somasundaram, Tay, Alvin Kuowei, Wickremasinghe, R, 2023).

Field positions

With the eviction of Muslims and Sinhalese from the field, there were only Tamils in the Vanni. The LTTE retreated into the deep Vanni forested areas to escape the operations of the Indian Army during 1987-1989. After the withdrawal of the Indian troops in 1990, the LTTE consolidated power over the Vanni area and held the territory through many operations in the 1990s. The Sri Lankan state controlled a part of the south-eastern Vanni while the LTTE began to build administrative infrastructure in the Vanni which controlled the civilian operations of the population with alternative systems of justice, finance, administration, health, social and other services. ‘There was a certain atmosphere of Tamil nationalism, a feeling of autonomous independence, a Camelot of sorts- a Tamil de facto state with the illusion of liberation. Tamil language and culture was in unhindered if not exclusive use’ (D. Somasundaram, 2010. p.5).

Within this model of Tamil Eelam-in-progress the LTTE assumed the dominant position vis-à-vis the state in the field of power in the Vanni. It was a temporal field and one that was created by the historical conditions of that time of rebel-rule. Significantly, a ‘collective’ disposition, an imagined independence and the removal of elements who represent different interests, political, economic, social and cultural in the game, gave the field of power, the appearance of approximating an autonomous one. ‘The more autonomous the field, that is, the more it is capable of imposing its specific logic, the cumulative product of its specific history’ (Wacquant, 1989, p.41).

Now, under certain historical conditions, which must be examined, a field may start to function as an apparatus. When the dominant manage to crush and annul the resistance and the reactions of the dominated, when all movements go exclusively from the top down, the effects of domination are such that the struggle and the dialectic which are constitutive of the field cease. There is history only as long as people revolt, resist, act. Total institutions -asylums, prisons, concentration camps- or totalitarian
states are attempts to institute an end to history. Thus apparatuses represent a pathological state, what we may consider to be a limiting case, of fields. (Wacquant, 1989, p.40)

Was the field I seek to analyse in this chapter, schooling-in-Vanni, a field at all, or was it functioning as an apparatus? The difference between a field and an apparatus according to Bourdieu lies in ‘struggles and thus historicity!’ (Wacquant, 1989, p.40). The notion of apparatus ‘is the Trojan horse of "pessimistic functionalism:" it is an infernal machine, programmed to accomplish certain purposes no matter what, when and where.’ (Wacquant, 1989). Bourdieu goes on to say that despite the fact that those who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage, they need to contend with the resistance, ‘political’ or not, of the dominated. For the purposes of this thesis, I argue that schooling-in-Vanni operated as a field in which the total domination by the LTTE in the field of power was contested by the state in the field of schooling in particular. ‘The school system, the state, the church, political parties or unions are not apparatuses but fields,’ explains Bourdieu in discussion with Luc Wacquant. In my analysis I place the field of schooling-in-wartime in the overall field of power of LTTE totalitarian rule over the Vanni. In the next sections of this chapter, I argue that struggles took place almost unconsciously in this field of schooling-in-Vanni arising from the very model the LTTE set up in the Vanni: state-rebel hybrid rule. It was marked by contestation, compromise and a strange collaboration in supplying educational entitlements to the war-affected students in the Vanni. Following Bourdieu’s arguments, I attempt to make visible, the often overlooked grey and blurry fault lines in the field of schooling-in-wartime where ‘agents and institutions constantly struggle’ (Wacquant, 1989). Drawing from this important clarifying work of Bourdieu and Wacquant presented as a Q&A, the questions I ask here, continue to guide the analysis in the chapters of this thesis (Wacquant, 1989, p.40). Did the struggle in the field of schooling-in-Vanni take place ‘according to the rules constitutive of this space of game, with various degrees of strength and therefore diverse probabilities of success’ (Wacquant, 1989)? What were the specific interests at stake in the game and how were they appropriated?

For the LTTE, the stakes in the game, the interest, was securing legitimation for political but also for economic gain. The acquisition of capital from the local as well as the global Tamil diaspora arose from an appearance of governing the Vanni population. Rebel governance theory offers an explanation. The link between the legitimacy of a rebel-organisation and their capacity to provide public goods and services to the population in their territory is an
established one (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017; Klem & Maunaguru, 2018; Mampilly, 2011; Terpstra & Frerks, 2018). Additionally, rebel organisations need legitimacy achieved through ‘normalisation’ during long civil wars.

Apart from the fact that the LTTE aimed to impose law and order in the areas under its control, we may also assume that it provided governance services in order to exercise that control, to serve the civilian population and to engender collaboration. Through these governance provisions it was able to cement its de facto sovereignty and public authority throughout the uncleared areas, particularly in the Vanni, and normalize the situation there [emphasis added]. (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018, p.1025)

Applying Bourdieu’s theoretical tools to the field of wartime governance, rather than to the art field or literary field includes struggles by agents who find themselves integrated into intangible and shifting stakes in the game, and whose at-times, unwilling cooperation is essential for the game to be played according to the rules. In a field dominated by violence such as the Vanni, allegiance is vital to the functioning of the field and to the securing of the legitimation interest in the game. Here in the Vanni, allegiance to the LTTE had been stronger than in the Jaffna peninsula. Within an evolving field of warfare, the field conditioned the changing of a once-loyal disposition to one of deep ambivalence. ‘The LTTE maintained a fascist, totalitarian control over the civilian population’ (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.5).

The LTTE also forcefully recruited men, women and children, gave them increasingly minimum training and pressed them into battle. As a consequence many died and the returning bodies caused increasing friction with the once loyal and passive Vanni civilians. Thus the twin forces of onslaught of the state forces and the LTTE’s trapped the civilians. The Vanni population and the Tamils had learned to live between the terror and the counter terror, the parallel authorities and violence of the LTTE and the state. (D. Somasundaram, 2010, p.6)

The legitimation game

Mullaitivu District where K lived was considered an ‘uncleared’ area, falling under the sole control of the rebel organisation, the LTTE. Yet the field of power was marked by contestation and compromise in the struggle for legitimacy. The government supplied the resources of schools, teachers, textbooks, uniforms, curricula, examinations, amongst others. Schoolteachers and principals were salaried and pensioned employees of the state as detailed in the introduction, while the rebels controlled the running of schools and educational
activities. The same teachers officially appointed by the state had to abide incredulously by LTTE rules in their daily teaching activities. Despite this seemingly untenable situation, schooling in wartime in uncleared areas was more or less continuously provided, despite disruption by events of war. Terpstra and Frerks conclude that while ‘in some sectors the government was not allowed to function in the uncleared areas, in particular the police and justice sectors...[...]...the government did however, provide governance services in other sectors such as healthcare and education (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018, p. 1025). Experts on rebel-governance frameworks report that according to an interviewee, schooling in the Vanni was ‘one of the few things that went on very well’ (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018, p.1023).

The decision to give the group a say in governance questions reflected the recognition by the government that cutting off public goods to the northeast would force the LTTE to develop more extensive civil administrative structures, further burnishing the group’s image as a Tamil government-in-waiting (interview with Lankanesan). The government preferred to negotiate directly with the rebel leaders about service provision because they feared that the insurgents might set up a comprehensive parallel administration as a testament to their secessionist credentials. Partly as a result of this dependency on the Sri Lankan state, the organization did much to promote the idea that it was an autonomous government, devoting considerable attention to symbolic projections of power within its territory. (Mampilly, 2011, p.114)

Mampilly’s work undertook a comparative analysis of the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the SPLM/A in Sudan and the RCD in Eastern D.R. Congo. The LTTE is ranked as the insurgent organisation, which developed the most ‘comprehensive governance system’ (Mampilly, 2011, p.6). Terpstra and Frerks clarify and draw conclusions of their own, from earlier field research carried out in the Vanni. Significantly, Frerks distinguished that the LTTE did no
t government, but carried out governance practices (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018). In the field of power, both state and rebel engaged in contested performance of state sovereignty and de facto sovereignty to downplay the other’s position in the field of schooling-in-wartime. Anton Balasingham, the ‘LTTE’s key theorist’ was cited on the position of the LTTE that education and health were the functioning government institutions in an interview in 2002:

Don’t forget that government institutions are still functioning in areas controlled by the LTTE. We do not interfere with those. We have only taken over the enforcement of law since our armed cadres are confined to barracks. And there we are expanding civil
administration. Some day you have to accept a Tamil regional police force and we have to discuss how it would harmonise with the national system’ [emphasis added].

Here Balasingham does not express the desire to establish a complete, parallel system of service provision to circumnavigate the existing state structures. Rather his aim seems to have been to further incorporate those structures into the LTTE rule. (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018, p.1028)

The stakes in this game were not what Bourdieu had in mind when he designed his model of a theory of practice, yet situating the practices of the social agents finds a useful framework in field theory. This hybrid state-rebel model of contested-collaboration and compromise in the provision of education in rebel-held Vanni, I suggest, emerged from this need to secure the specific products at stake in the game here: normalisation and legitimation. In the complex contested interface that resulted, the lines were not always clear, and institutions emerged as ‘grey.’ Yet there was an important marker of the field of schooling which would enable a continuation of the habitus and the dispositions of the social agents in the field: education was governed from within a pre-existing postcolonial political order.

The real purpose of several ministries within the insurgent civil administration was to regulate and supplement the services provided by the Sri Lankan government. Other ministries, particularly in the security sector (including the police and the judiciary) remained completely under the control of the insurgents. But when it came to health, education, and several other sectors, the rebels worked alongside government institutions to meet the needs of the civilian population. Faced with a population accustomed since independence to the continuous provision of public services, the rebellion had little choice but to work with pre-existing institutions to ensure civilian welfare. (Mampilly, 2011, p.112)

In practice, education did far better than health service provision under rebel-state distribution. The main reason cited for this is that education unlike health, was not heavily reliant on highly-skilled personnel and timely supplies. A lack of funds and capacity to create parallel structures of education is cited as the reason for the LTTE utilising the pre-existing state apparatus of educational governance instead of setting out their own in rebel-controlled territory (Mampilly, 2011; Terpstra & Frerks, 2018).

What Mampilly and others failed to apprehend in its fullest effect is the powerful belief in the legitimacy of the symbolic capital in schooling structures historically ingrained in this
postcolonial society. Apart from a lack of funds, the LTTE were not able to set up an independent education system, break with the state structures, and create new schemes due to a sort of ‘legitimacy deficit’ in the field of schooling. This belief was visible in the apparent inability by populations in the rebel-held Vanni, to accept alongside the enigmatic notion of a separate state of Tamil Eelam, an alternative to the Year 6 Scholarship Examination (equivalent to the Eleven-Plus exams in the UK), the O Level Examination and the A Level Examination. Admittedly mystifying to an outsider-researcher, I, as an insider-outsider understood how diverse stance-taking on politics and governance, worked. What I had been hearing in discussions with university lecturers who claimed to have understood the dispositions of the rebel-agents better than certain elite, aloof colleagues is that possibly it had not occurred to the rebels themselves to see an advantage in replacing state schooling exams and schemes. PA, a lecturer, explained that probably it would not have been considered desirable, and they may have even been aggrieved, should the state have denied the supply of national exam certification to the student populations in the Vanni. After all, was it not a place at university and the entry scheme for students in Jaffna, the purported ‘Tamil grievance’ in the majoritarian politics in the newly-Independent state of Sri Lanka?

A model of reality

While this aspect of rebel-rule was largely unknown to the southern populations in Sri Lanka, knowledge transmission focusing on governance and de facto state structures, was effected by the promotional policies of the LTTE organisation. International scholars of conflict and security studies were invited to visit the rebel-held north so they could study the LTTE model of governance, at a time when the LTTE travelled on self-promotion world tours (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017; Klem & Maunaguru, 2017; Stokke, 2006; Terpstra & Frerks, 2017). It is intriguing that the LTTE considered this important. It is this importance that somehow signifies the relational disposition to education in the habitus, which I argue continued to inform the habitus of the leaders of this rebel organisation and the ideologists in global locations. The government of Sri Lanka permitted such travel and as a result, a number of conceptualisations of the field emerged. Academics such as Norwegian Stokke demonstrated a clear bias towards the rebel organisation and the reproduction of LTTE propaganda:

Within the areas they control, LTTE runs a de facto state administration, which includes revenue collection, police and judiciary as well as public services and economic development initiatives. [...]...At the same time, local government institutions and
officials continue to function within LTTE-controlled areas, which means that there is a dual state structure also within the areas that are held by the LTTE. (Stokke, 2006, p.1022)

Sarvananathan a Sri Lankan Tamil expert criticised Stokke’s method as well as the translation of what he claimed to have witnessed in the rebel-territory:

My first criticism is that field research (interviews) for the article was undertaken only among the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and its affiliated institutions. These comprise the LTTE Peace Secretariat, the Planning and Development Secretariat (PDS), the Secretariat for Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs in the North and East (SIHRN), the Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO), the North-East Secretariat on Human Rights (NESOHR), the Tamil Eelam Police, the LTTE Special Task Force for tsunami-affected areas, and The Economic Consultancy House (TECH).

By only interviewing the personnel of the LTTE and aligned institutions, Kristian Stokke has connived in suppressing truth and objectivity, which is unbecoming for a professor...[...]... Despite being based on a conceptual framework of core state functions, Stokke’s article totally lacks an objective assessment of the LTTE’s ‘state-building efforts’ because it rests on partisan (and often false) empirical evidence. (Sarvananthan, 2007, p.1186)

Sarvananathan’s rebuttal detailed many institutions set up by the LTTE and considered by Stokke to be empirical evidence of state-building and dual-state structure governance. Attempts at mapping the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions competing for legitimacy in the field would prove far from straightforward. It is not difficult to see where the LTTE emerged as a structurally impressive phenomenon in comparison to its counterparts in Sudan, Eastern DR Congo and Colombia. Yet both authors disappointingly veered away from a nuanced analysis of state and rebel governance beyond a polarised contestation. Both scholarly interpretations appear dependent on their own dispositional framework and understanding of the cultural value-relatedness, situated in a particular position in the social world (Kögler, 1997, p.157 & 158).

Drawing from the state-sovereignty discourse, Mampilly and Terpstra & Frerks in their analysis of hybrid rebel-state governance of education in the Vanni, call for a ‘nuanced understanding of rebel-governance beyond a simple state versus non-state binary’(Terpstra & Frerks, 2018,
I found that LTTE behaviour and motivations are located in sovereignty discourse in much of the rebel-governance literature.

We conceptualize sovereignty as a citational practice that involves the adaptation, imitation, and mutation of different idioms of authority: political and religious, modern and traditional, rational and mythical. Understanding sovereignty in this way debunks the idea that insurgent movements are merely lagging behind established states. As sites of mimicry, bricolage, and innovation, they transform the way sovereignty is practiced and understood, thus affecting the frame that sovereignty is. (Klem & Maunaguru, 2017, p.656)

The field of power in rebel-held Vanni was interpreted from the academic habitus of many research scholars. At times it appeared that ‘the model of reality’ was confused with ‘the reality of the model’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.29). I argue that we need to turn to the situated, practical nature of practice to avoid this pitfall. For Bourdieu, there is always a danger, by virtue of the external, distanced vision of the scholarly gaze, of turning logical terms of analysis into reality-concepts as reified phenomena (Grenfell, 2014, p.55). The next sections are written from the in-depth interviews with student K and the layer of experiential reality delivered by employing the oral history method, post-war. The view of the game from above is not the same as the view of participants on the ground (Grenfell, 2014, p.55). What this thesis is concerned with is not how rebel-governance practices inform established notions of state and sovereignty. I look at how the complexities of a game qua game, placing the field of schooling within the field of rebel-state power, unravelled and collided in the three sites K inhabited: The TRO Home, the local school and the extracurricular activity sphere. I argue that they translated into intended and unintended possibilities for students like K in rebel-controlled territory.

TRO Home

The original scope of this research study did not include the rebel-territory as an empirical location and was limited to the Jaffna peninsula. Difficulties of accessing former Tamil-speaking students from the Vanni who were willing to share their experiences openly, I considered a barrier to a non-Tamil speaking researcher. In this instance, fortuitously, it was the prospective interviewee K, who made direct contact with me in 2015 before I undertook doctoral study. K, a graduate from the Faculty of Art at the University of Jaffna, wished to talk about his forthcoming art exhibition in Jaffna. At the time, I was curating a website uniting middle-of-the-road voices from Sri Lanka and the diaspora in the aftermath of a violent end to civil war. He sent a short text on Facebook messenger requesting I speak to him and create
a post on his exhibition in English, which he could then share on social media. To gain insight into the background of this exhibition, I listened to his life story on that first Skype call in 2015. I was unprepared for the life-events so simply related by this young survivor. K had survived war and the Asian Tsunami of 2004 leaving him with little family and possessions. Becoming a ‘graduate of Jaffna University’ he appeared to have gained a place in the social space of positions, proud of his upcoming art exhibition and hoping to leave overseas on a scholarship to do a Master’s degree in Art. With the liberal mind of an artist, K has argued, discussed and shared his life experiences and impressions with me over the past six years since 2015. On field trips to Jaffna, when K was on vacation during his Masters, we continued in-depth interviews focussing on the impact of war on his family and growing up in the warzone. K always spoke in English, haltingly in 2015, but rapidly gaining fluency during his overseas study.

**Tiger orphanage or children’s home?**

We live in a world in which it has become brutally apparent that our collective survival depends on the ability to understand, and sometimes to anticipate, the strange world of other people’s politics. (And, yes, the first problem is pinning down who ‘we’ might be, and asking just who ‘other people’ are, in formulations like this.) To achieve this, we need to pay sympathetic attention to the workings of apparently different versions of the political in places with different histories, and apparently different visions of justice and order. (Spencer, 2007, p.2)

K was born in a coastal village of Mullaitivu, an under-developed district of the Vanni remaining entirely under rebel control during the war. His childhood was characterised by multiple social issues common to many families in the warzone: poverty, alcoholism, permanent war injuries (inflicted on his father by the Indian Army), and a mother in overseas migrant employment to save and build a proper home for her family. In her absence, K as a very young boy was placed in a TRO Home by an uncle with connections to the LTTE organisation who declared that his nephew ‘was running amok and should be given structure and discipline’. K asserts that he did not enter the Home as imagined by the Southern populations: to be trained as a ‘Tiger-cub’ or child-soldier from a home destroyed by the state armed forces. Stripping the TRO Home of the singular ‘Tiger-Orphanage’ attributes, I was beginning to see how in some aspects, this Home approximated another post-war orphanage, government-approved in Jaffna. The policy in both Homes was to offer a sanctuary within funded structures for children orphaned by direct violence of war as well as children from
impoverished homes, where there had been a lack of nurture, healthy environment and extreme poverty. Missionary school hostels also followed this approach of assessing charitable beneficiaries by not differentiating between victims of the direct violence of war and victims of war-induced poverty and deprivation. In this context, the TRO Home appeared to some elements of the population as a measure of social welfare in the Vanni at the time. I proceeded to enquire about the practices in this Home.

GF: Tell me about the Home!

K: Have you heard of Foucault theory?23

Everybody becomes one through control. There is no individual independence... becomes a collective. That makes it easier for us to be accessible and controllable, you understand? We should respect their whistles, orders, like five-thirty we have to get up, if we did not get up, they will beat us with that pirambu, (cane)... they beat us ...that is very painful for me. I was the lazy person! [chuckles] There was no religion, the Home has kind of, well every day we would repeat Prabhakaran’s words: pray for Tamil Eelam! We never hated that – he was a sort of Godfather for us! When I was a child... they are not telling us... we didn’t know the Sinhala part!

How many students? 150 boys! Aged five to 19. Dormitories based on grades: one and two together, and three and four together. Some boys, many of them had lost parents, very poor people! For instance, when I joined them, my family was so poor. Some of them were interconnected to the LTTE, it is a kind of recommendation – introduced by some connection. They were like, day by day, they got used to the system. First few days they are crying. Then we are playing together, then they are ok. Grade one and two, three, four and five – there will be one lady, she is looking after them. Washed their clothes. Brothers came from one family – they were only sleeping separately, according to their grade.

For a child with deep wounds and loss, here was a sort of structure with a remote ‘Godfather’ figure of protection. Above all, there was something to pray for together, uniting Christian and Hindu Tamil children of the Vanni deeply affected by the wounds inflicted by the state. The

23 Googling what was heard as ‘Fuko’ theory – mistaking the term for a martial arts concept - I realised he was alluding to Foucault not ‘Fuko’ as I phonetically recorded initially.
divider of religion removed, inside this Home, the children faced a collective ‘plight’ with a common figure of protection and a common enemy.

Journalistic accounts and policy documents both locally and internationally labelled the TRO Homes as ‘tiger-orphanages’. This stigmatisation arose from the controversial identity of The Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation which funded and managed these Homes. Many academics published on the status of the TRO in western Tamil diaspora communities deeming it an LTTE-front organisation (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017, 2018; Sarvananthan, 2007), an LTTE-affiliated NGO (Stokke, 2006) and formally an NGO but practically an LTTE proxy (Sørbø, Goodhand, Klem, Nissen, & Selbervik, 2011). Functioning admittedly as a ‘buffer institution’ that legitimised dealings with international organisations that the proscribed LTTE could not, it was charged with funding the activities of the banned terrorist group, under the guise of providing welfare services to the war-affected Tamils in the North (Klem & Maunaguru, 2017, p.641). What is relevant to this study is that the practices of the TRO Home devolved a measure of sanctuary and care on the one hand by providing welfare services to the war-affected children, while on the other, reserving selected Homes as ‘recruitment-pools’ for the Movement. The welfare services of the state had no power in the ‘uncleared’ area of rebel-held territories. The Government of Sri Lanka was in a hostile position in relation to the warzone, enforcing economic embargoes, the harshest of these impacting civilian populations in rebel-controlled Vanni in particular.

Field of stances

Nothing was black and white, nor straightforward in the field of power in the former northern warzone. The TRO, the Northern Tamil diaspora, INGOs in the Vanni, the LTTE, the state and international researchers were all mixed up in diverse understandings of the game and interests, which I suggest, informed the TRO Home structures. Let us consider the stance of the Tamil diaspora. Historically, the habitus of the Vanni diaspora drew from a collective history of a dominated people economically and socially disadvantaged in comparison to the Jaffna Peninsula to the north and the southern communities, pre-dating civil war. Reports circulating among the diaspora of great hardship and deprivation caused by wartime embargos enforced

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24 In an era when LTTE-supporting organisations overseas wielded great influence over the Tamil diaspora in Western societies, especially in Norway, the UK, USA and Canada, the TRO was categorised as falling under the Western model of a 4th pillar of diaspora-driven development in the homeland (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017).
by the ‘oppressor’ state, on the Vanni especially, fuelled a sense of duty to provide from within the comfort of developed host nations.

Now the TRO operated from the notion that buffer organisations act with greater legitimacy when the platform of coercive patriotic rhetoric is solidly planked. Guribye and Tharmalingam identified in their research among Norwegian Tamils, that guilt at leaving their fellow-Tamils behind to endure the deprivation of war in the struggle for a separate state of Tamil Eelam for all Sri Lankan Tamils, played a large role in securing funding for the TRO (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017). This duty took on a moral dimension while the TRO appeared to supply the mechanism to channel relational guilt. The alternative agents to the TRO, the prolific INGO presence in wartime Sri Lanka were facing charges at the time, of donations applied to offset inflated administrative costs (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017). Returning to the habitus, the social conditioning of Sri Lankan communities demanded a Sarvodaya type shramadhana or donation of labour or a sucharitha sewawa or charity service which operated on values of the ‘unpaid volunteer’ model. Operational costs, professional skills and a sustainable apparatus did not resonate with Sinhala or Tamil communities. I gained insights into this perspective from personal experience of working with European-funded local foundations and discussions with local and overseas Srilankan communities engaged in development since the ceasefire of 2002 to date. Paid NGO workers or researchers were viewed as puppets of the Western powers and discredited as lacking in integrity. INGOs were seen as self-serving, while donations to such organisations were viewed as being for their own rather than the community’s benefit. This position-taking in the field, only served to burnish the claim of the TRO as the sole direct link to alleviating the deprivation of the war-affected Tamils in the warzone (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017).

The social welfare measures of the TRO appealed to historical revolutionary roots in elements in the diaspora. Sympathy with the common platform of social reform of the Tamil revolutionary groups rising up in the 80s found it hard to ignore the publicised aim of the LTTE amongst the minor castes and socially disadvantaged communities (Madavan, 2019; Pfaffenberger, 1990; Sarvananthan, 2007; Thiranagama, 2018). It was a personal and deeply emotional cause for some: especially during the ceasefire and post-Tsunami, members of the diaspora personally visited the Vanni with relief items for children, including those in the TRO.
Homes. Yet, such a cause not only enables buffer institutions of armed insurgent groups to attract substantial funds, but also serves to camouflage violent practices by drawing prominent members of the diaspora to participate in their welfare measures. Rebel organisations in many cases ‘perform substantial forms of governance, often in tandem with predatory practices’ (Mampilly, 2011; Terpstra & Frerks, 2018). Overseas, the TRO as a mechanism of relief distribution and reconstruction post-Tsunamis gained importance among the Tamil diaspora (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017).

Where did the state stand in all this? A ceasefire in 2002 and the natural disaster of the devastating 2004 Asian Tsunami brought about a shift in the field of positions in the warzone politics. Legitimacy of the TRO in Sri Lanka increased by being allowed to register as an NGO in Sri Lanka. Social changes in the field post-Tsunami had brought about a shift in the relational disposition between the social agents in the field of power. Stokke incredulously claims that the TRO even received an award from President Chandrika Kumaratunga for its post-Tsunami relief work, despite international scrutiny by governments in Canada, Australia, the UK and the USA of funds transferred through front organisations to the LTTE, listed as a proscribed terrorist organisation (Stokke, 2006, p.1030). According to Bourdieu’s theoretical approach, such practices and expressions are located in the field of stances or position-takings (prises de position) which are informed by the relative position of the agents in the field. Possibilities opened up for more aid and relief supplies to be delivered to the TRO Home sites in the isolated forested Vanni.

K: Food, yes, before the peace talks in 2002, we had only rice and curry: dhal and vegetable! Because there is no food – we used to eat the ‘vee eta’ (unhusked grains of rice)…. and the dhal also… had these little insects inside (contorts face). Kanji (rice broth) we used to eat. Then after 2002 we had a good foundation for cultivation, banana every day, rice, curry stuff, we also got fish and beef, chicken often. Earlier, even during the night we used to go searching for something to eat. So hungry!

The legitimisation practices of the TRO had trickled down into normalising the survival of the children at the Home. The field of positions and stances changed in an evolving field. The interests and the stakes of the game shifted over phases of war. Yet the involvement of state

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25 Conversation with a returnee from London, detailing the clearance at Customs at the national airport of a consignment of children’s clothes and items to be handed over in person to the TRO in the Vanni for distribution post-2004 Tsunami.
and TRO in a compromised and contested game dominated by the LTTE, I argue, had enabled possibilities that would not have existed, had they not intervened.

Rebel-Home Student at State School

**Schooling practices**

Significantly, the children in certain rebel-controlled TRO Homes under the sole control of the LTTE, attended the local government school more or less continuously during the long civil war. This is the lynchpin of this thesis: possibilities enabled for the provision of schooling practices in state structures for children including those in militant-managed sites. Attending the local government school was a daily ritual that the children at K’s TRO Home performed continuously in their very young and adolescent life with some ceremony.

K: Yes, we were in the Home and I went to a government – a state school - in Mullaitivu. We walk to the school, in a queue! Made a line- Grade One to Twelve. I was kind of the leader of my part... I am remembering now [laughing]. Students must not break out of the line, must keep the distance. The public scold their children; and show the children; and say ‘look at these children, they are moving!’ We thought we were kind of role models! (laughing). Returning home, again, a queue! When we are out of the school, all students must wait, get in line, and go home. If we miss that line, we should have a reason to tell the person in charge.

GF: Did the students in the state school avoid you? Were the ‘Home’ children separated from the other children?

K: The other children in the school are very friendly and there was no segregation. We followed the government system, we study from eight to two, and there is a break! We are in a *boys’ boarding* you see, so that’s how we see the girls! They brought the food and we are laughing and eating together. Mixed school. No, no discrimination – we are the champions, we are skilful, we work together – teamwork! We are already trained like that – playing together, like we do in the Home.

Daily the child K crossed from TRO Home, a site of militant control into the state school, a site of state control; from the position of militant child to the position of student in the field of schooling-in-wartime. The children from TRO Homes were not segregated in the classroom enabling K to enter a site of normalisation daily. This was a daily criss-crossing and continued

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26 Again the reference to living in the ‘boarding’ facilities of a school, rather than in a rebel-Home.
as a structured ritual all the way to A Levels. In this field of struggle, the state-rebel contested supply of education had somehow granted the rebel-Home child an opportunity to internalise a social disposition to learn in schooling structures with other children. This was how normalisation looked on the ground under the canopy of legitimation practices of rebel-state governance.

Not all rebel-Home children received the normalising effects of schooling practices in the Vanni. The LTTE reportedly operated within a schema of classification explaining how K managed to stay on in the schooling system, while others in other Homes may not have had such opportunity. The LTTE appeared to be dividing children to be trained as *Mahaveerars* on the one hand, and remaining in school to emerge as potential future administrators and governors on the other, in the imagined state of Tamil Eelam. It is reported that this system of classification was applied by the LTTE even in the depths of the rebel-held Vanni. The UTHR(J) reports that the LTTE relied on recruitment pools such as *Punniapoomi* (Sacred Land) a school run by the LTTE in Oddusudan in the Vanni, ‘where children are moulded and trained in a militaristic environment’. Then the report goes on to speak of other LTTE-run Homes and other children: ‘In the Homes they are graded into categories and used accordingly. Some would study and get into universities. Some do military-related work from a very early age’ (UTHR(J), 1995).

Then there is the view from the ground as narrated by K. Despite patrons of the Home being the LTTE, the daily practices of rudimentary care were not carried out by men and woman in fatigues. The ‘ordinary civilian’ people he recalled, provided a very basic level of care which was not marked by extreme corporal punishment or neglect: ‘People looked after; children didn’t die.’

They never gave the arms training. It is kind of another Home like Kandarubananaravichcholai. [K means that arms training was given in this Home] and Sencholai Children’s Home for girls, Vallipunam.

GF: Were there direct hits of the Air Force on your Home? No, only hearing ‘97 *Jeyasikuru* period, Chandrika period, bomb-blasting far away. No direct hits near the school. Later we made the bunker, in front of the class, before the ceasefire, 2001... we had that kind of stuff. Many times, we had to run to the bunker at the Home in the night. Close to us. We are close to the forest - aircraft bombing the LTTE places. When the aircraft comes down, the land is shaking... we can even feel the aircraft heat.
Looking back, K simply explains the transition of children from TRO Home to the LTTE-camps at the age of 18 as a sort of institutional solution to a lack of social welfare, housing and food, than in terms of a deep patriotic desire to join up to the LTTE ranks.

My sister was in another Children’s Home. Literally they don’t have this kind of intention [recruitment]...later the situation changed. The boarding place... they cannot control all of the students because of the war...we need to move to another place and they cannot provide the logistics of food’.

K selects the terms 'boarding place' for students and a ‘Children’s Home' here, dropping the ‘TRO’ identity.

Afternoon we have lunch...two-thirty. Then three to four-thirty, we have a class inside the Home...tuition class. Any civilian organisation, they can enter and teach us and the institution will pay them. Not involved in the LTTE. Not part of it. Then we have an evening work cleaning the ground, cultivation. Every evening, we had chicken, cow, vegetable dairy farm, rice farm, big land – two, three acres.

GF: When did you begin to like Art?

K: I cannot call that art...we just studied to pass the exam. Whoever can paint very well...they are proud students! Recently one of my school friends, he is younger than me, recently he says that I was his hero, for painting. I did very well and they are wishing to look at my work. We used the sketchbook provided from the Home. Paints and the stationery from the Home.

Schooling practices, tuition, art supplies? These elements did not quite reconcile with impressions held outside the warzone, of childhood in a Tiger-run orphanage. From interviews and conversations had with Jaffna University arts faculty members and the London Tamil diaspora, I learnt that in the ‘80s, the revolutionary movements posted artworks in public spaces in Jaffna. They were considered an expression of opposition to the traditional dogmatic preference in Jaffna society for science and maths subjects at secondary school and medicine and engineering in higher education. Within this concoction of tuition, sketchbooks and paint, it is apparent that the identity of the student, the artist, was informing the set of dispositions in this young child. An unintended consequence of the structured activity within the label of a rebel-run TRO Home was that in the memory of a friend, his hero was not a gun-toting boy; the hero was an artist. Amidst the rigid discipline with no recreational or individual freedom in
the daily life of K at the Home, a censorship of news from the outside world and little cause for celebration, K's innate artistic talents found the freedom of expression. 'I used to sketch the LTTE uncles he recalled during one of our earliest conversations,' wistfully. He named a few.

A Strange Collaboration

Supply-teachers in the Tamil Eelam Education Council (TEEC)

A peculiar structure in the rebel-held Vanni was the TEEC response mechanism. In event of war-related disruption in the form of a lack of teachers and materials, the LTTE are credited with providing a 'response mechanism' to war-disrupted schooling. Parents and educators are reported to have made up the members of the TEEC, committed to supplementing the state education system as teachers were known to discontinue their teaching positions under rebel rule. Mampilly reports:

During the war, the LTTE established the Tamil Eelam Education Council (TEEC) to coordinate the provision of education with provincial representatives. The Council functioned as the Ministry of Education within the rebel civil administration under the leadership of a secretary of education. Its purpose was to encourage the establishment of civil-society-based advisory committees in every district comprised of parents and educators to regulate and supplement the provision of education. (Mampilly, 2011, p.121)

The rebel administration structures in the Vanni appeared to mimic the state structures of educational governance. Here, contestation appears to have delivered an improved supply of education as a public good in the Vanni.27 In a field where the relations between the TEEC, state schools and educator was one of collaboration, mediating from historical dispositions in the habitus of schooling, mechanisms such as the TEEC gained legitimate authority from within rebel structures as it met objective functional needs in the field of schooling-in-wartime. The social agents in the field whether in rebel or civilian structures, submitted to the doxa of the need for autonomy in supplying schooling to their war-deprived student population. One of the interviewees in Terpstra and Frerks' study respond with an articulation of how he wishes the Vanni people to be viewed: 'people try to get educated. They study, because they have a

27 Terpstra and Frerks support this position with reference to Suykens’s analysis on the Naxalite and state governance in the Telangana state of India where ‘regimes of rebels and the government build on each other and do not necessarily contradict one another in particular dimensions of governance ‘Both sides of the conflict benefit from the shared influence on a commodity chain in the local economy’ (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018, p.1025).
good drive…[...]…They studied well in this period even though the war raged on. When I was there [in the Vanni], I studied and I passed all my exams, because there, you study!’ (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018, p.1024). K insisted that his former principal encouraged him: ‘He always said I will get the district highest!’ Over a long civil war, practices in a game qua game become regularised and legitimised, if the underlying structuring structures in the habitus generated practices that met the functional needs of the population and informed the doxa of the ought-to-be.

**Uniforms from Chandrika: Imagining the state**

School-going children in every school in Sri Lanka inside and beyond the warzone, including those under rebel control, wore the same school uniform: white polyester shirt and trouser for the secondary school boy students, blue short and white shirt for primary school boys and white uniform for girls. As part of public social welfare benefits predating the war, poorer areas received bales of uniform fabric from the state. Chandrika Kumaratunga the president of Sri Lanka ensured that the children under rebel control in the Vanni, received theirs.

K: Uniform… we got from the school…blue short material and white shirt, we got from Chandrika…we were happy that we got it from another world…pure white…we used to kiss the cloth! New one! Chandrika’s picture was there and signed on the packet! President gave us! Even we were jealous cos the girls get a longer piece of cloth. All textbooks yes, Tamil textbooks – given by the state – same system!

Here the child in rebel-territory had received an autographed package of school uniforms from his president, despite praying for a separatist state from the field of warfare. States needed to perform their sovereignty in rebel-controlled territories. Not doing so would only burnish the claim by the rebels of operating a separate state. Refraining from stamping the state as provider of health and education meant that the separation from state would be felt strongly by its citizens under rebel-control (Mampilly, 2011; Terpstra & Frerks, 2018). If states were imagined in metaphor, symbol, performance on the ground, by young children growing up in rebel territory, the state and its president arrived in K’s memory as brand-new sweet-smelling cloth! K recollected this memory of the cloth with emotion, mimicking the way they inhaled the scent of that fabric ‘I can still smell it!’ he says. ‘Why was it special?’ I ask. His pragmatic response was that this was the only brand-new item they had ever received as children, in a world where nothing smelt fresh or new. The situated, practical nature of practice reminds us that the view from the ground is a lot simpler (Grenfell, 2014, p.55).
Singing the Eelam anthem every morning, seeing in prominent display the photograph of the ‘Godfather’ Prabhakaran, raising the Tiger flag, you may say K received in full, the ‘symbolic repertoire’ of identity building and legitimation at the site of the TRO Home (Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, p.1007). Narratives of Tamil nationalism, resistance against state oppression and the demand for Tamil Eelam based on the right to self-determination were repeated on visits of the ‘LTTE uncles’ in the rebel leadership. Yet there were other symbols, structures and relational dispositions between children like K and the field of schooling in rebel territory. While the LTTE recited the call for separatism, Chandrika Kumaratunga had attempted to remind him that he was a citizen of a unitary Sri Lanka with one sovereign seal and one president. Uniforms had been planned out of white cloth in Northern Sri Lanka as far back as 1894 at a British mission school for girls. Despite moving between a TRO Home and the local school, he did not feel a contradiction or compromise of identity, allegiance or purpose. For K, a young boy in a fresh blue short and white shirt, going to school every day, all this translated as delivering a degree of normalisation, while growing up in a warzone.

The extra-curricular: Inter-regional competition under the LTTE flag

Overlooked by political science researchers, the extracurricular inter-school competition is a site in which teachers and educators break with militant and military doxa, and attempt to continue schooling practices by converging with other schools. Missionary schools had introduced the element of extracurricular activity into the school system, later incorporated into the state schooling structures in postcolonial Sri Lanka to a lesser or greater extent depending on the facilities, crossing the private-state school divide. The social agents in the schooling field in Sri Lanka have a strong historical disposition to competition inter-school at district, provincial and national level. Athletics, cricket, chess, toastmaster and judo competitions, scouting, guiding, drama, choir singing, Christian youth guild and Sunday school rallies were annual events all over the island. In wartime, the LTTE administrator social agents organised sports and drama competitions with ceremony, protocol and pride. This site saw a convergence of state department of education officials at zonal, district and provincial level. The TEEC was involved and where necessary, security permissions were obtained from state armed forces and the LTTE. Significantly, despite the extracurricular falling outside the governance practices of mainstream schooling, the protocol laid down for the schools outside
the warzone were applied as far as possible, admittedly war-affected, to the schools within the isolated peripheral warzone.  

Why did the educators move students within a ‘closed’ warzone and beyond to Colombo, Trincomalee and Vavuniya in areas partially under government control for participating in extracurricular meets? What were the stakes in the game and how did the illusion or belief in the legitimacy of symbolic capital in the social spaces in this field explain this phenomenon? I argue that it is the notion of habitus and an ingrained set of dispositions in the field of schooling which allows the suggestion that emerging victorious over other schools with awards and medals, was considered vital in the inter-regional struggles. Here unarmed battles for supremacy were valiantly fought in the site of schooling. The ceasefire of 2002 marked a phase when this convergence and collaboration resulted in even bringing the students from the warzone to the capital Colombo. K details how he emerged a martial arts champion winning medals at the inter-school competition.

I did Karate, many sports, running, volleyball, football. At the school we didn’t have proper training, we learn. Jaffna people never came. Vanni and Jaffna were separate lands...forest land. And the village was in the middle of the forest, so when we are coming, we have to go through the forest to reach our village. So that is kind of scary! We had sports ground...airless footballs, and then for cricket...some soft ball like tennis balls, bats also we can buy it from 'zonal education' – they provide for each school. But karate, it was attached with the Home! They had a good trainer...so that’s why we went to Colombo [during the ceasefire]!

I just remembered... 2002 when I went to Colombo for National Karate Tournament. OMG that I fought with the Sinhala person! Even we had the weight categories... we should fight with the same category. Over there they put us with the heavy one. When I had the first fight, the Sinhala one he kicked my stomach. I was falling down! I remember that was kind of animal fight! We didn’t have the sense that this is the sport, we are playing, we had the sense that this is battle... Sinhala and Tamil...kotiya [tiger], they call us... you know? We are dark!

This recollection by a young man told in the vein of a boyish imagining of a heroic battle with his enemy, beyond the isolated village in the jungle, was poignant. It had occurred in the site of the extracurricular, and not on the battleground. This was the first time he had participated

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28 Interviews conducted with an educator in charge of the then-merged administrative province in 2017 and 2018, Jaffna.
outside the known parameters of the warzone in an activity involving the opposite community and it had taken the form of a Karate competition. For students like K, the extracurricular was a site of spirited engagement transporting isolated students mentally and physically beyond the warzone and beyond their narrow existence. It built self-confidence, and located identity and achievement beyond the gun-toting militant, the war hero. In this site K was not so different from other rural students of Sri Lanka, who had never journeyed beyond their village, revelling in inter-regional competition trips, medals and achievement.

What is significant here is that in the less visible site of the extracurricular, we see the tiger flag and anthems detailed in rebel governance accounts, unfurled and sung, the difference being, that in this site the object was an inter-school sports or other competition. ‘Symbols function to validate rebel rule’ in most South Asian cases say Terpstra and Frerks citing Sundar’s discussion of Maoist insurgents in Central India (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018, p.1034).

They had a provincial sportsmeet [the department of education]. The sports-meets were run by the school. When they are starting the sportsmeet – one LTTE person came as a chief guest– hoisting the flag...Tiger-flag!...singing the LTTE song and the programme starts. Whoever singing the song they call, come here, line up together! Vision, belonging, pure heart in the earlier days – no aggressive days. We lived in our own style, own world!

While the de facto state legitimacy was performed by rebels using symbols of their leader and struggle, here in the site of the extracurricular in the field of schooling, it was diluted with the power and seduction of the inter-school competition for the school going child. ‘The way in which legitimacy feeds the subjective and individual identities of the civilian population that lives in a rebel-controlled territory’ need to be studied through situated practices in the field and interrogated with the historical notions in the habitus (Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, 2018). Scholars lament the lack of ‘empirical manifestation’ of social practices through which rebels perform statehood. Here, the performance took the symbolic shape of certificates and medals for karate. In the site of schooling within the same structures that pre-dated war, it appeared that the LTTE were investing in some practices that appeared to be informed by the habitus of schooling. K was proud of his medals. ‘In martial arts at inter-school sports, zonal, district, province’, says K, ‘I got certificates! I had a medal and I threw it away in the IDP camp. Because that is the medal provided by the LTTE: Tiger-insignia!’ Symbols turn menacing as powers shift. K discarded these symbolic threats to his security, during those final battles, as a future inspired by the vision and belonging of the LTTE anthem, fragmented. Years later, K would go on to
represent the Jaffna University in Karate and receive more medals and certificates inscribed with state insignia; this time, of post-war Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

The intervention by educators in the site of Menik Farm called for an analysis which did many things. I propose Bourdieu’s field theory as enabling the treatment of social agents as mediating from their educator-habitus, their position in the field, and the illusio or belief in the legitimacy of the symbolic capital in education in this postcolonial society. Applying the notion of field in this chapter allowed the avoidance of dichotomies such as state-rebel, individual-society and structure-agency, while locating the distribution of public educational entitlements in its historical particularity in the rebel-held Vanni. Placing the field within a field, and treating the legitimation practices as taking place in a game qua game, I treated K’s practice in criss-crossing daily between the rebel-managed TRO Home and a state school as a taken-for-granted activity informed by the social logic of the field. More importantly, I argue that this criss-crossing enabled a child under rebel-rule to move and shift between fields and share a habitus with children beyond rebel-rule and the warzone. I included in this study, situated practices of the teacher, educator and student exploring these from a Bourdieusian perspective for ‘a resemblance within a difference’ or regularities in the field of educator class relations in wartime schooling in the Vanni (Wacquant, 1989, p.41). Employing a layer of experiential reality, I show how normalisation translated on the ground in the lives of the war-affected students. What I have begun in this chapter and continue in the rest of this thesis, is a closer examination of the social logic in the field of schooling-in-wartime in this empirical location that held its currency in post-war Sri Lanka.
CHAPTER THREE

Education as a Site of Cooperation and Non-Cooperation

Thula picked me up at the East London station and drove to the small pensioner flat, home to the former principal of the Jaffna Technical College. RD sat patiently in readiness for the interview. It was the first and possibly the last interview he would give, on his wartime experience being Principal of the Technical College, Jaffna. While Thula made tea in the tiny kitchen, RD held forth on how good the fish and chips shop was in the shopping area of the building, climate change, and the state of the world, before arriving at the theme of the civil war years in Sri Lanka. I observed in fieldwork how retired teachers regard the interview as a rare opportunity to exchange worldviews beyond the theme under discussion with a ‘visitor.’

Despite a long civil war, I observed how the social capital of English fluency, age, and educational purpose of my visit as a doctoral researcher linked the Tamil teacher and I, a Sinhalese researcher, in a shared habitus. A historically ingrained set of dispositions cleaved across the ethnic, faith, and political divide in Sri Lanka before, during and after civil war. The teacher was an individual, an intellectual who had occupied a space of authority and respect in the social space of positions, once. Wilson in her article on teachers in Andean Peru observes that ‘teachers are more than state employees. They are also local intellectuals, recognized as having the authority and responsibility to defend and promote their community, town, and province’ (Wilson, 2001, p.314). In this interview-space, former principals and educators donned that mantle, once more.

The Malaysian Jaffna Tamil Educator Class

‘They were conservative; we at least wear tennis shoes’

RD began the interview, identifying himself as an insider-outsider to the Jaffna community. Born and raised in Malaysia, RD belonged to a closely-knit sub-group of Malaysian-born Jaffna teachers, including Thula’s mother.
I was born in Malaysia and was caught up in the Second World War as a small boy in Malaysia under Japanese occupation for four years, till the British returned in the latter part of 1945. Four years, no education! The Japs said, ‘our language or you’ll be thrown out!’ when Japan surrendered after the two bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Brits returned and re-opened the schools, but they were all completely destroyed. I started in English school and never went to Tamil school. My father said you need an English education, so I started with ABCD. I went on Sundays to a temple to learn my mother tongue. At home, we spoke in Tamil because my mother never knew English. The main thing was the discipline, and we can get a job if we know the English school. Because we lost four years, the ministry decided we only needed six months in one class. A rapid intensive programme was drawn up and if we passed well…promoted! Next class… finished two classes in one year! Then I moved onto the Victoria Institution: all the headmasters were Englishmen. In 1948 my father decided that we should settle in the country of his birth, Sri Lanka. And I stepped into Sri Lanka for the first time in my life...I was 16 years’!

Employing the oral history method in field interviewing, I had grown accustomed to receiving unexpected entry-points into the discussion of wartime schooling. Relations with the Jaffna Peninsula were a little complicated for this sub-group, a product of the specific colonial history of Sri Lanka. In the early 1900s, the Malaysian Jaffna Tamil had emerged as a wealthy elite subset, as wealth flowed from Malaysia to the peninsula (Hodelin, 2021, p.10). Entering into high-caste marriages in the local community, where streets were claimed to have been marked by Malaysian migrant wealth, their alignment with British colonial values set them apart from the local Jaffna community (Hodelin, 2021).

My first impression of Jaffna was not so good. They didn’t wear footwear and the stones were pricking … village life… people were good, nice, but the comforts we had in Malaysia were not found. We at least wear tennis shoes! And then you had to go to the well to draw water…transition was a problem…but we had to adapt and manage. Their lifestyle was very different. They were strict; they were conservative.

To better understand the representations by RD of being ‘progressive,’ we need to understand how the habitus of the Malaysian-returnees to the peninsula was informed by the dispositions acquired by Jaffna Tamil migration to colonial Malaya. ‘During the early to mid-twentieth

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century, the Jaffna Tamils emerged as a middle-class group holding jobs as civil servants throughout colonial Malaya’ (Hodelin, 2021, p.6). This phenomenon in the early to mid-twentieth century ‘was informed by greater access to education and higher socio-economic capital back in the country of origin, which translated to privileged status in the new locale’ (Hodelin, 2021, p.9). Adding another layer to the discussion of the group positions in the field, the Malaysian Jaffna-Tamil returnee group takes the discussion beyond the well-known caste distinctions in this hierarchical society (Kadirgamar, 2017; Thiranagama, 2018). Here a Hindu Tamil from ‘abroad' returned to a community that had established rules on who belongs and who does not. While it is not the object of this chapter to undertake an analysis of categories of strangers, RD's particular position in the social space of differences falls to some extent under the category of ‘those people... their people abroad just build for themselves’ (Thiranagama, 2018, p.358).

I turn to Bourdieu’s articulations of social space as multidimensional and ‘constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation’ which translates in this empirical setting as different groups possessing forms of capital, both economic and symbolic which conferred ‘strength, power within that universe, on their holder’ (Bourdieu, 1985, p.724). Here RD is defined by his relative position in the social space of schooling, his family and schooling choices. Later on RD would enter the civil service and take his place within the cognitive and objective structures of ‘legitimate’ state order. Returning to the young sixteen-year-old returnee, a limited working knowledge of Tamil, which in RD’s own admittance was ‘superficial’ and falling short of plumbing the depths of this ‘deep’ language, together with the ‘handicap’ of not belonging to the peninsula, and perceived as lacking a sense of Ur or belonging to the land, cast him and the group of Malaysian Jaffna Tamil returnees as insider-outsiders. RD had internalised dispositions from birth and family of this group who had enjoyed a ‘sub-elite position’ as ‘a colonial model minority’, nicknamed ‘Brown British men’ or ‘Black Europeans’ by other communities (Hodelin, 2021, p.10). The Jaffna Tamil in Malaya had internalised dispositions of being adjacent to their British colonial rulers. ‘Their style of dress, speech, housing, education, jobs, and patronisation of social clubs expressed the performance of British colonial culture’ (Hodelin, 2021). At the time of interviewing, I did not fully understand the importance RD placed in introducing himself by reference to membership in a Jaffna social club:

   I was a member of the Lions Club of Jaffna. I had a lot of Sinhala friends no, every year we used to meet at BMICH. I was a charter member of the Jaffna Club for 17 years. I was the secretary, president, everything! Lot of professionals in the North you know,
and members of the clubs, and doing service here and there, and it was a very good gathering. I was in the movement for a long time (Here RD refers to the Lions Club organisation as the ‘movement’ and not the LTTE organisation which was referred to by others as ‘the Movement’).

Tennis shoes? Lions Club? Tropes of ‘progressive’ social life gave way to markers of social order as RD continued to detail his formative experiences. Studying until 16 years’ of age in the Victoria Institution in Malaysia, he notes: ‘all the headmasters were Englishmen. The main thing was the discipline, and we can get a job if we know English.’ Significantly, this disposition would guide RD later as a principal in times of suspicion, fear, and violence. His habitus would place him at greater ease in correspondences made as an unarmed teacher negotiating with ‘disciplined’ ‘English-speaking’ officers operating from an order that the teacher considered legitimate. Associations with the rebel insurgents remained insecure and uncertain, by contrast.

RD’s story is significant to this thesis for several reasons. First, it allows an examination of an insider-outsider position in the social space of differences, which admits the specific colonial history of this empirical location. I turn to Bourdieu’s theoretical framework of analysis, as the examination of social conditions that produce dispositions is the main interest of the concept of habitus. I find his notion of the ‘cleft habitus’ useful in locating contradiction which marked this field and confounded many experts and observers like Bavinck. ‘Habituses are sometimes the result of socially heterogeneous situations and are therefore internally divided or “cleft”... bearing in the form of tensions and contradictions, the mark of the contradictory conditions of formation of which they are the product’. I detail in this chapter the choices made by birth, family, and economic capital of the Malaysian migrant family which placed the young RD in structures of elite schooling practices and the choice of governance of education and employment in the civil service. In his representations, I present his worldview in dealing with issues of caste, and empowerment of disadvantaged and vulnerable student communities, from a habitus which, I suggest, remained to a significant extent outside the Jaffna Tamil homegrown prejudices and biases. I detail his practices of educational governance from an outsider-progressive relational disposition to the field.

Second, detailing how the acquisition of symbolic capital in the form of schooling credentials in sites of elite schooling, automatically enabled RD’s entrance into the civil service, shows how schooling and civil service structures in this field, self-reproduced the social order of
governance in wartime schooling. RD is thus examined from the position of being an outsider to the peninsula-Tamil habitus, but an insider as an ‘agent with a proper sens pratique,’ who was ‘in possession of a habitus that is rightly attuned to the field in which the agent occupies a position’ inscribed in the register of the civil service apparatus (Schinkel, 2007, p.710). His trajectory explains how Tamil civil servant-educators in the warzone gained ‘enough symbolic capital to assure a preferable position in the hierarchy of the space of positions’ (Schinkel, 2007). By examining a life empowered, rewarded, and sanctioned through bureaucratic regulation inscribed in gazette notices, letters, and credentials, I draw out the relational disposition of the peripheral Tamil educator class to the state central bureaucrats in a time of civil war. All this allows a discussion of how relations forged in doxic submission to regularity, coalesced with the changing field conditions of irregular and ambivalent relations to ‘state’ and ‘legitimacy.’

Third, I continue the empirical inquiry begun in Chapter One and Chapter Two of this thesis, of the symbolic struggle taking place beside the armed struggle, in the social space of positions. Detailing exchanges with diverse armed and unarmed agents who posed a threat to the principal’s leadership of the Technical College in wartime, I argue that the rebel-insurgent claimed a ‘legitimate appropriation’ of state-supplied resources. I discuss how the principal traced the bounded limits of cooperation and non-cooperation with armed agents. Dealing with internal division and betrayal, I show how an inter-ethnic shared habitus and a doxic submission to regularity informed his practices in delivering account to the central bureaucrat and dealing with insurgent and colleague.

‘The Malaysian handicap’

RD was sent to a leading Christian mission school for boys. He mentions ‘high discipline, good school, Christian – entire education was Christian – a protestant school managed by reverends and good discipline.’ In these choices made by the family on behalf of RD, we see the transferability of the arguments made by Bourdieu in The State Nobility and other works, on education as a site of reproduction of governing power and privilege, to this empirical field of schooling in Jaffna (Bourdieu, 2013; Hawthorn, 1997; Robbins, 2004; Scott, 1997). The repetitive theme of discipline and good schooling’ included here ‘Christian,’ though RD himself was Hindu. Christian mission schools continued the practice of the first missionaries who admitted Hindu children without enforced conversion as directed by the British governors who wished to avoid a mutiny (Root, 2004). This practice continued together with social mobility principles
of the welfare state model in Independent Sri Lanka. I was also beginning to see how personal
faith was secondary to education in the scheme of classification of schooling selection in Jaffna
as well as for other towns such as Colombo, Kandy and Galle.

I was a Hindu throughout. We were not compelled to go to a church throughout. I was
not a fanatical Hindu, just respected the rules and regulations of my religion. I might
go to the nearest, the Nallur Kandasamy Temple. Not regular, but after a bath in the
morning, I do a prayer, and this keeps me going for the day! The fasting, the festivals,
I don’t do much. My mother knows and won’t compel us to go for religious stuff in a
serious way.

Malaysian-born Tamil boys had a problem with our mother tongue. Banana is vazhai
pazham. I used the wrong word. The teacher would write idu illa - this is not the word
- and go away. The medium was English – and my best subject was English...my essay
was the fastest but in Tamil vice versa. The Tamil language is a very deep language...I
only knew the superficial... frankly admit!

RD entered the Advanced Level and selected zoology, biology, chemistry, and physics.
‘Because of my age... I was two years older, Malaysian handicap...’ says RD, referring to the
missed schooling years in Malaysia. ‘I decided to go to India. I was thinking, many Sri Lankan
Tamils went to India to get a degree quickly.’ In that era, the leading Christian mission
schools in Jaffna had networked connections with Indian Universities. In colonial times, prep and
entrance exams had been conducted in a couple of leading Christian mission schools for boys
in Jaffna (Martyn, 1923). The linkages remained long after this practice was formally
discontinued. He described his father as being able to finance him, due to being a man ‘who
doesn’t smoke or drink, disciplined and quiet.’ RD studied for a four-year degree in Agricultural
Science at the University of Pune and excelled both as an academic and a cyclist. With a 2nd
class honours degree, he retained the record for the fast-cycling champion for four years,
1953-57, beating the Kenyan, Patrick. When he was returning to Sri Lanka, an Indian professor
asked him for his Raleigh bike that he had brought with him from Sri Lanka.

He gave me some money but more than that he was a thorough gent...PhD people
from abroad! Most had a PhD from an American Uni. A very good education...they
could speak and write and read English very well. Exposure to education was very good!
Very good! No question of going out in the nights! Hostel life... the Master, they’ll
observe! Discipline was observed!
‘Education’ ‘discipline’ and ‘English’ were all inscribed in the system of ingrained dispositions acquired by RD in early formative experiences. In the structures of western Christian mission schools in Jaffna, I propose ‘school-mediated reproduction’ of elite administrators of the British Colonies dated back to the mid-nineteenth century, generating an educator-class in the Colonies (Scott, 1997, p.518). In his report on Jaffna in 1839, Poor mentions Cleveland, a graduate of the Batticotta Seminary, later Jaffna College, as one of the first recipients of an important and highly-remunerated position in the colonial government (Poor, 1840). In the choices of Christian mission school and the selection of an Indian university, we see a reflection of Bourdieu’s premise as explained in Scott’s review of The State Nobility: ‘in a class-based system, academic judgements unconsciously reflect class and status distinctions. The system of elite educational organisations converts various forms of capital into the kind of capital that is required for access to positions of command’ (Scott, 1997, p.518). These practices begun in Colonial Jaffna continue in the field of schooling to a great extent today. Emerging from a habitus informed by elite schooling practices and exposure to transnational sites, RD had acquired symbolic capital with his second-class honours degree, ready to step into the reserved position of governance from schooling sites of reproduction which ensure the transmission of capital across generations.

Drawing on Bourdieu’s arguments on the French system of schooling and governance, in this postcolonial society, structures of governance and the welfare state blurred the rigid tracing of schools as modes of reproduction. Those with a little economic capital drew on the historical disposition to giving their children a good education while the illusio in the field fuelled a desire for the legitimacy of symbolic capital in the form of educational credentials. Social and economic mobility could not be completely ruled out. Kadirgamar cites an interviewee as claiming that toddy tappers30 were remunerated adequately when distillation of toddy into the local liquor, arrack, commenced and that this enabled their children to receive a good education:

There are people during that period, who earned well as tappers, built houses and educated their children and moved up because of the good incomes. When I worked in the Palaly branch there was a man who did not know how to sign his name, and I

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30 Toddy is tapped from both Palmyrah and Coconut tree shoots, and is drunk on the same day without processing; due to fermentation, it cannot be drunk after about eight hours at which point it needs to be distilled into arrack. Toddy has an alcohol content of 4.5% to 6% and is mainly drunk by the farming communities in the villages after work in the fields in the morning and then again in the evening (Kadirgamar, 2017, p.259 n.199).
used to sign his name for him. He did so well that his two sons studied and became doctors. (Kadirgamar, 2017, p.262)

‘Being that and not anything else’

I am reminded of Bourdieu’s famous statement in an interview translated by Robbins from original French in his article on the transcultural transferability of Bourdieu’s sociology of education:

The two main contributions of the schooling system to social reproduction are the verdict effect - the deliberate effect which locks those subject to trial (les justiciables) into an essence, a nature (‘you are that and not anything else’), and the hierarchisation effect which consists in imposing the acceptance that there is a linear hierarchy of all competences. (Robbins, 2004, p.424)

RD was selected with five other Tamils and four Sinhalese for the advertised position of a graduate-trainee job in the well-known development project of the Gal Oya reservoir and paid a monthly salary. According to protocol, civil service vacancies are published in the government gazette. RD applied based on the gazetted notice and was interviewed by the Ministry of Education for the post of ‘Inspector of Education on Agricultural and Science subjects.’

Because of my Honours degree, I was straightaway given the appointment... and the starting salary was 285 rupees in 1959, it was a lot to receive...rupees 440 with allowance. When I was appointed, I was asked to cover the northern province from Jaffna. They gave me 6000 rupees to buy a car! I bought a second-hand Morris Minor. I got a travelling allowance, 150 rupees. I had full freedom to go to schools. I didn’t go to the well-equipped schools, like Vembadi, St John’s, Ramanathan College; I went to the Mahavidyalayas. They needed agricultural science, especially in areas where there was possibility to do a bit of cultivation.

The young bureaucrats were remunerated well, both Tamil and Sinhalese. Civil servants in postcolonial Sri Lanka would acquire economic capital, in exchange for compliance with civil service regulations. The educator could now make a very suitable marriage, assuming influence in the community in the social space of positions. After two years’ in the ministry, despite being able to do ‘general science work in Tamil’ RD was informed by letter ‘you are required to pass Tamil language syllabus A and Tamil literature at the O Level. Pass it within the one year or
your increment and your service will be suspended. RD complied, receiving tutoring, and passing exams in order to be confirmed. A year later, he received another letter ‘Now you have to pass your Sinhala…or else…this was early 60s… or else you will be in trouble.’ I expressed frustration at these demands, while RD insisted that he was ‘not against it,’ as a true bureaucrat accepting the inscription of progression and making the grade according to civil service regulation. Receiving tutoring from a secondary school teacher, he passed the Sinhala exam.

After about a year in service, I got a further communication: ‘It’s good if you can qualify further. One-year full paid study leave to do the Diploma in Education at Peradeniya (University).’ And I remember the Prof of Education, J. E. Jayasuriya. Then another doctor, pleasant and decent. One or two professors were Tamil. But I took an interest in educational psychology – third-term teaching practice - sat for the exam. They watched us and marked us on our performance.

By being ‘that and not anything else’ RD was regularised as a member of a group that approximated the ‘state nobility,’ emerging from schools with elite practices and entering into the esprit de corps of the civil service. It adds empirical weight to Bourdieu’s increased recognition of the power of ‘institutionalised capital’ over individualised cultural capital (Robbins, 2004, p.423). I also found that Bourdieu’s notions of doxic submission and regularity, clarify and explain the at-times perplexing loyalties and near-religious adherence of the Tamil civil servant educator to state regulation, despite civil war. All this enabled schooling practices to continue without losing legitimacy, despite state oppression and armed bombardment of the northern warzone by the state armed forces.

If I am not mistaken, latter part of the ‘60s… many of our Tamils were moving into African countries, lot of people were in Northern Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana. My friend Patrick could have got me to Kenya. I got married in 1959 and I asked my wife, ‘how about I go to Africa too for two years?’ My wife told me ‘are you so greedy, can’t you serve here?’ I forgot with that…I don’t regret it! After 10 years’ service…I was in the Ministry of Education.

The northern Tamil struggled to move away from the peninsula, holding on as long as it was humanly possible, in the face of threat and oppression. They perceived those who left the peninsula for better job prospects overseas as being profiteering and money-minded, contrary to the educators’ disposition of electing to remain and serve his community, legitimately.
Becoming Principal of the Jaffna Tech

In Tooting, London, I stepped into a small Indian restaurant for a quick lunch. The manager, I discovered, was of Jaffna origin and told me he had studied at the Technical College. I asked him if he remembered a former Principal, RD, and his face transformed. ‘Where is he? Is he dead? Alive? Where?’ I assured him that I had met RD recently and he was in good health, but that unfortunately, I was not able to share the address. At times like this, it is hard to manage the roles of researcher and fellow Srilankan. He spoke of RD and the days at the Technical College in wartime with a depth of emotion. This somehow differed from the entitlement with which former university students reflected on their time at the Jaffna University and the memory of professors and teaching. Being the Principal of The Technical College, Jaffna was rather significant as the Tech offered a sort of lifeboat to those students who did not succeed in entering university. They were the ones who did not possess what I term in this thesis as ‘the passport of the A Levels’ to gain a visa to be conveyed beyond the violence of war. These ‘university rejects,’ were the ones who had to figure out an alternative path. During the lapse between A Levels and the next occupation of these vulnerable young people, the risk of being recruited to the militant ranks or being arrested by the state armed forces was greater. This was especially so in an environment where the community had internalised dispositions to higher education as the norm.

Those who sat for the A Level and failed to get into the university by a few marks... the Ministry was under Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle.... they created a new system of Junior University Colleges. There were four in Sinhalese and one in Tamil: Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan Junior University College in Palaly near the airport and close to the Teachers Training College. This was a Public Services Commission appointment. One course in agricultural science, library science management, and a diploma in English, all two-year courses. I was the senior-most agricultural lecturer. The principal was from Point Pedro. ‘As you are senior’, he told me, ‘you can be in charge of the labs!’ We got 4,000 rupees a month and 200 rupees annual increment. Two hours of work a day... 1967 or 1968. In 1972, Al Haj Badiuddin Mahmud closed down the junior university system31. But I was a visiting lecturer at Palaly Teacher Training College... I was an external examiner in science subjects. When they were closing this system, there was a one R. Paskaralingam, civil servant, very pleasant unassuming man. He came to Palaly

31 Badiuddin Mahmud was the Minister of Education under Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike’s SLFP government.
and said ‘Sorry, government is changing the system. Would you like to go to the Teacher Training College as a lecturer?’ He asked me! This is a question he asked me! [registers indignation] I said ‘Sir, I have an ambition’ I said, ‘most of the lecturers there are senior to me, and I will end up only as a lecturer.’ He says ‘Ok I will contact you; you hold the fort! I will let you know.’

I employ this detailed account recollected from memory by the 70-year-old former principal, as an indication of RD’s habitus as being ‘rightly attuned to the field in which the agent occupies a position’ (Schinkel, 2007, p.710). In this detailing of ascension in the civil service apparatus RD talks about engaging with agents crossing ethnic, faith, and regional lines, yet all imbued with similar forms of symbolic capital. Here, the Tamil educator was in a strong position in relation to the field of power, despite being a minority. All agents submitted to the doxic regularity of upward positional mobility in the field of educational governance, pre-war.

Junior Technical School in Jaffna, like in Maradana,(Colombo town)... they upped it to the status of a polytech institute and gazetted it for a vice principal. I was the first vice principal. From the Ministry of Education, I went into the Ministry of Higher Education. JR (J.R. Jayawardene former president of Sri Lanka 1978-89) was the minister, and Dr. Stanley Kalpage was the Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education. He left it to us and we hardly saw him. The Ministry of Higher Education was situated at 18, Ward Place (Colombo). The Director of Technical Education, Cecil D. Fonseka... Samarasinghe...I came to know them well... 19 years under the system! Polytech was upgraded to Technical College Grade One. I continued as vice principal. I was in Class 2 and my principal was Class 1 (Civil service rankings). It was more or less administrative work. Two-year, three-year courses, one-year courses: trade side, engineering side, commerce side. Students followed a four-year level accountancy diploma. They had to have A Level accounts, good grades. Then the National Diploma in engineering including electrical engineering – three-year courses, trade course one and two-year courses, carpentry wiring, joinery, electronics, and mechanics. Fifty or fifty-five permanent staff graded as senior lecturer, lecturer, senior instructor, instructor - a fully-functioning technical college. After years, the principal retired, and I was the principal in 1982, Class 1, and the starting salary was 6,000 rupees, annual increment 300 rupees. Full freedom! I did not abuse that freedom! Most of them were employed out of Jaffna. They were moving out to Colombo; some of them to Kandy.
The detail of civil service ascension remained etched in the memory of this educator. I differentiate here the peripheral civil servant-educator in postcolonial Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, from Gupta’s Indian peripheral bureaucrats including teachers referred to as constituting the ‘broad base of the bureaucratic pyramid’ (Gupta, 1995, p.376). The postcolonial Jaffna civil servant-educator is also differentiated from Wilson’s provincial Andean teachers who were operating within a militarised context in far-flung peripheral peasant societies (Wilson, 2001). What I am attempting to show is how the peripheral principal in the Jaffna Peninsula by contrast was a qualified senior-level bureaucrat with over a decade of moving up in the civil service ranks, passing state examinations in order to be appointed to an institution of higher education and succeed in rank to be appointed principal. This was not Algeria, where Bourdieu had observed peasant societies forced to adopt French Colonial economic rules, very different to their own dispositions (Moore, 1980). Here, the principal was located in the social space of positions in a place of greater legitimacy than a bureaucratic state representative carrying out the orders given by the Ministry of Education. In post-independent Sri Lanka, the field of educational governance at the time was informed by the strong democratic underpinnings of the welfare state and the entitlement to a free education which continues to date to some extent. It engendered a sense of paternalism no doubt, but also contributed to a sense of guardianship and strengthened state legitimacy in peripheral areas. It was a time of educational reform expanding access to education for a larger section of marginalised students in Independent Sri Lanka. Linking notions of democratic entitlement, Western notions, and the English language in matters of governance by state representatives and educators, these reforms were based on the British educational examination system and national adaptations proposed on western models (Nira Wickramasinghe, 2015b).

I suggest that all this contributed to both strengthening state legitimacy in educational governance of the peripheral areas and casting the principal as the supplier of democratic entitlement which pre-dated the state, in the model set by Western colonial rulers. Relevant to this study, I suggest that this sort of muddied the flow of state authority through the institution of principal and added a layer of complexity of being a provider of welfare entitlements.

Colonial rule in many ways entrenched the principle that different communities were entitled to different degrees of rights, dues, and representation according to criteria that varied in time. Later, with universal suffrage and the newly independent state’s commitment to welfarism, it was the citizen who was bestowed with certain privileges
such as free education and free health services, privileges he/she still partly enjoys ... [...]... Thus the nature of state and society remained deeply influenced by the ideology of welfarism, even though the welfare state had been considerably dismantled in the late 1970s. Even today public support for the welfare state has not faded. Many people believe in a benevolent, all-embracing, and all-providing state. (Nira Wickramasinghe, 2015b)

There was more to being a principal than being a bureaucrat. I return here to Chapter One where T, the student in the northern Vadamarachchi rebel stronghold says of his secondary school principal, 'he was a principal, not a nationalist.' In the next section, we see how even more contentious, the role of principal of a higher educational institution such as The Technical College was, in comparison to the corresponding role in secondary education.

Meeting quite a number of his ex-students in London:

    RD: One fellow came and held my hand. He is now a civil engineer! A married lady also came. How can I identify? Thousands passed through my hands! Always kind... never scolded or punished. I had a psychological approach and no complaints of indiscipline. Good children and keen on studying something. I never entered a classroom when a lecture was on. I had a habit to walk down the corridor and walk back. The lecturers knew that I would be there...had a psychological effect! Visiting, lecturers, each year we selected 60 to 70. They are paid by the hour.

    GF: Did the students come from the rest of the island too?

    RD: No, just from Jaffna, as at that time, you had to come daily in the evenings. I had a plan you know. I spoke to the station master and asked him to hold the train for five minutes. The station was just near the technical college. Then I asked the lecturers to finish up the lectures, five minutes before. Allowing the students to catch the train without fail. You see, if they missed it or were loitering, who knows what would happen? I could have left earlier 5 pm... like that... but I stayed on till 7 pm. My wife used to say 'you are married to that college.' But I wanted to stay behind in case... well... you know, I wanted to see that they got back home.
The Technical College, Jaffna

The Technical College, Jaffna offered 'university rejects' a degree of symbolic capital sanctioned by state education credentials. In this section, I limit my discussion to the empirical ground realities of The Technical College operations in wartime as narrated by the former principal. This site was of particular importance to the rebel movement as it contained resources such as typewriters, lathes, carpentry equipment, and other items of great utilitarian value to the insurgents. This, especially in a time when war embargoes limited access to a large number of items and raw materials. Now the rebel LTTE appeared to operate from an entitlement disposition in relation to state resources in the warzone, borne out by Klem's field research in the Eastern warzone and other writers in the Northern Province (Bavinck, 2011; Klem, 2012; D. Somasundaram, 2010). In this section, I discuss the exchanges and transactions detailed by RD as falling on the side of 'cooperation' with the rebels and 'non-cooperation.' I look at cooperation and non-cooperation practices between the principal and the LTTE armed agents, the Indian Army, the state armed officers, colleagues, and central bureaucrat in the Ministry of Education, Colombo.

Pandora and Godridge typewriters

State administrators in the warzone were caught up in a site of contestation of power, resources, and legitimacy. In the northern warzone, Somasundaram writing from lived experience within, calls it serving parallel governments, in which community leaders had to deal with the state armed forces as well as the insurgent LTTE organisation (D. Somasundaram, 2010). Additionally, there was the Indian Army (1987-1989) and various Tamil militant and paramilitary groups competing for control of power and resources (D. Somasundaram, 2010; UTHR(J), 1989). The principals, government agents, engineers, and other officers in the civil service, especially in the 80s were threatened by the LTTE and in some cases, killed for opposing the movement or for non-cooperation in sharing the government resources with the rebels. RD witnessed the killing of many of his colleagues in the 80s:

Senior government servants in Jaffna were subjected to very serious demands. I still remember I'll tell you – I knew Mr Kanagarajah, chief engineer-- he had a difference of opinion with the LTTE and was bumped off. One of my close good friends earlier, he was District Land Officer. They were all absorbed into the Sri Lanka Administrative Service, earlier civil service. One Jeyanathan, then he became the G.A. Mannar! Mr V. A. Panchalingam was the G.A. Jaffna.
It is a peculiar marker of this field, that the armed struggle and the struggle to keep the classroom doors open and maintain the legitimacy of civil governance were imagined and traced as two discrete sub-fields even though they interlocked and overlapped in reality.

Mr Panchalingam passes daily to his workplace – then he asked me ‘why isn’t the wall of the technical college whitewashed?’ Moss and stuff like that! I said ‘thank you for asking cos I don’t have the funds’. He said ok, very soon I will give you the funds. I said... there are more important problems...we have a two-year shorthand and typewriting course.’ We had at that time English Olympia typewriters and for Tamil – the Godridge Indian typewriters. I told Mr Panchalingam ‘some of these machines are like going to the dentist, where the teeth are pulled out and false dentures are provided. In other words, they are pretty old, and the children are suffering. Could you please provide these, as I cannot get them under the ministry funds, under district funds?’ He said ‘How many?’ 30 English Olympia and 30 Godridge’ I said [laughs softly!] He said ‘A bit too much for now, I will get 20 now, each, and later I will fulfil your requests’. In two weeks, 20 new Olympia and 20 new Godridge typewriters were delivered! The children saw stars, for they had never seen such lovely typewriters. I told the teachers, withdraw the old ones and put them somewhere, check, and take them into the register, be careful that they don’t misuse it. Tragically, before he could deliver the next batch, the Additional G.A. Mr Ramanathan, he is sort of a hottie...he is from Telipallay...Mahajana College! He was bumped off by the LTTE! Then the G.A. had to coordinate the government activities...then he got bumped off!

Moss on the wall? Olympia and Godridge typewriters? All this sounds rather incongruent with the danger and deprivation of the warzone where both the Additional G.A. and the G.A. were ‘bumped off’ by insurgent rebels. Here in the site of higher education, the Principal of the Technical College traced a boundary line around the quotidian business of schooling as discrete from the events of war around the site. All this arose from the social logic in the field that prioritised the continuation of democratic entitlements, citizenship, and community life in a time of civil war. I return here to the packages of brand-new material white and blue for school uniforms, which had been delivered to the students in the Vanni under rebel control by Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, their president! There was an undeniable element of pathos in considering how the cooperative practices of bureaucrats securing and delivering these 20 Godridge and 20 Pandora typewriters to The Technical College in response to a request by the principal for the needs of the students, were juxtaposed with such violence. A
paper trail of requisitions, authorisations, and deliveries had all been sanctioned from within
the bureaucratic paraphernalia of public governance.

When the G.A. was bumped off, my nerves became very shaky, you know why? After
the typewriters came... You know.... a lady... designated Captain J by the LTTE ...she was
living in my relative’s home in Thirunelvely [Utters Tamil phrases]. She came in a jeep,
she was an LTTE cadre, a Captain! She came in a jeep and stopped here and the peon
directed her to me and I said ‘Thangachchi, sit down!’ So she sat down. ‘What’s the
help you want?’ She said ‘I heard that you recently received Tamil typewriters. I want
ten right now!’

Ten? I received 20, she wanted 10! I virtually begged... I said 'Thangachchi, if you want
you go and see, the class is in progress. I will give you five now, later on ... please!' She
firmly said ‘no. I want ten now! What the hell can you do, no? I mean she is seated
there. You know why I said this?... You know why I said this? I felt if I had refused, I
would have disappeared that night, I’ll tell you why! I said... ok...please sit down...I went
to the class...Ms. S from Nainativu... I called her to the corridor. I told her... ‘I am going
to send my peon to you, to your class. First two rows... ten typewriters will be taken
out... don’t ask me why... put the old ones back! [ interpolating in Tamil] Don’t say...
just say... the principal has taken it, for some purpose.' Accordingly, within minutes, the
ten typewriters were loaded into the jeep. This lady didn’t even thank me, she just
disappeared! That was the end of that story.

The threat of violence and the experience of intimidation was raw and real to the former
principal even 30 years later. RD’s sense of frustration and deep insult was palpable, and we
sat a few moments in silence. What had been transacted here? Non-state agents had
employed the threat of violence to appropriate some, not all of the state-supplied typewriters.
This added a layer of complexity to the order issued by the armed agent. As evidenced
elsewhere, the LTTE in a politically hostile position in relation to the field of state political
power, intriguingly shifted to a different relational position when it came to governance
entitlements. From this position, they enforced their ‘imagined’ entitlement to appropriate, yet
not completely take over, state resources. I traced this in Chapter Two, detailing practices of
rebel-state cooperation in providing schooling to students under rebel control in the former
Vanni. In Chapter One I discussed how the diverse agents, students, teachers and rebel, traced
lines of schooling and armed conflict as observing different rules of the game with different
dispositions. Here material resources were appropriated with that same sense of ‘entitlement to state-supplied public goods’ that acknowledged the need to recognise the students’ legitimate need to an education, while asserting their own ‘legitimate’ need imagined from being subjects of the provider-welfare state.

This incident was relayed with deep emotion as though the principal’s very offspring had been abducted by the Movement. Amarasuriya studying the Sri Lankan civil service many decades later, writes of a bureaucratic self-image as seeing themselves as caring and accountable (Amarasuriya, 2011). RD in his interview sees himself as a benevolent principal, custodian of equipment of the welfare state, attempting to separate the site of the Technical College as far as possible from the dangers and depravities of war. Interestingly thangachchi or younger sister, an attempt to draw on social capital had failed here. The habitus had changed, yet teachers and others refused to accept the changed rules of the game. ‘This lady didn’t even thank me, she just disappeared!’ was a sentiment echoed by another interviewee teacher’s wife, who said of the Indian Army ‘they did not even remove their boots when they entered my home.’ This drawing out of community ways and custom, this refusal to accept that the rules of the game had changed under war conditions was something I encountered many times in field research.

**A set of keys: Limits of cooperation**

The workshop of the Technical College contained lathes, carpentry tools, draughtsman tools for the practical elements of the courses conducted here. They were also objects of value to the insurgents as these items were hard to procure in the warzone.

Then right... right... right... I come to another important point, I had forgotten and now it is back in mind. During the time of the LTTE, not only money, which I donated from my salary, as I could not let the teachers be penalised... I was asked by another LTTE – I don’t know his rank in the LTTE ... he came and said to me ... [Tamil paraphrasing] ... ‘Are you the principal?... Keep all the workshops and the draughtsman rooms open in the night. We will come at any time in the night and remove ... tell the watcher. I said ‘absolutely’!

Significantly, the rebels did to some extent submit to the doxa of regularity in the field of wartime schooling. They approached the legitimate state-appointed authority in keeping with the hierarchical social order. This continues the argument begun in Chapter One that recruitment practices had observed to some extent the bounds of regularity in the site of
schooling. They did not break in and enter at night at gunpoint. They did not disrupt the daytime college use of the workshop by the students. Yet I argue that in requiring agreement to provide the use of such facilities, the LTTE were demanding recognition of their own legitimacy here, not by threatening violence with a show of weapons, but a voiced demand to the principal.

They said ‘have you got a set of keys?’ I told him, ‘I have a set, and the other teachers have... but don’t worry, I will ask the watcher to keep the rooms open, and don’t worry you can take anything you want.’ They didn’t take the furniture but took the draughtsman tools. I told the watcher, Emanuel, a pleasant man ‘you just keep quiet, you just allow them, cooperate! I can’t come here in the night. Don’t say anything! Let them take whatever they want. They were not rude, but they came and took whatever they wanted. Everything was left open, no? Whatever was lost, I told the teachers ‘forget about it!’ But of course, you know our Tamils, no? You think they will keep quiet? As always, you know, there are some elements...!

As Klem reported from fieldwork carried out among government administrators in the Eastern Province, keeping a semblance of order ‘does not eliminate the widespread antithetical practice of bending rules and shifting affiliations’ (Klem, 2012). Here, the educator called such bending of rules, practices of cooperation. The element of hostile armed intimidation, the implied threat of violence as a consequence of non-cooperation, was not admitted in the framing of this encounter as one of ‘cooperation’ with armed agents who were ‘not rude.’

Placing limits on the modalities of such practices of ‘cooperation’ though, the principal decides not to hand over the set of keys to the rebels. Keys objectified the legitimate and regular authority arising from state protocol and regulation. In electing not to hand over the keys to the LTTE agent, the teacher steps back into the habitus of the civil servant in the field of governance, pushing the LTTE agent back into the field of armed warfare. To hand over the keys to an illegitimate and irregular agent would be unthinkable according to the habitus of the civil servant-educator. The teacher was authorised to hand over the keys only to another teacher of a designated rank in the civil service hierarchical order, not an insurgent. The rebels accepted the compromise offered by the principal and did not insist on the handing over of the keys at gunpoint. I argue that we need to unpack the exchanges and negotiations between educator and armed rebel to understand that within the modalities and limits however slight, placed on such practices of ‘cooperation’ we see, how the rebels were automatically working
in such instances, within the illusio of the field of wartime schooling. Here, the principal was still the principal and the legitimate head of authority, despite being a state bureaucrat until he took up a political position and crossed over into the field of armed warfare.

**A different habitus**

I insert here another exchange between a female vice principal (WM) of a leading national girls’ school in Jaffna town and the Indian Army engaged in military operations against the LTTE in 1987-1989 in the peninsula. I interviewed WM in 2019 March in Jaffna. WM, the vice principal paid regular visits to the school, which was located next to the Indian Army camp, despite it being temporarily closed due to the ongoing military operations. On one occasion, she was confronted by an armed officer who asked her why she was entering the school and what her business was.

WM: I told him that I am the vice-principal of this school and I need to come to the school for certain duties from time to time. He said ‘what duties? The school is closed!’ I said ‘the school may be closed, but the teachers need to be paid. I am in charge of making those payments and keeping the books in order and so on.’ He says ‘You are not the vice-principal. This is wartime. We are in charge. Please hand over the keys to the school.’ I told him ‘Oh, I cannot do that! I have no authority to hand over these keys to you. Only the Ministry of Education can give me permission to do so. I will now go to the divisional secretariat and ask them what I should do.’ By this time, someone had sent word to a nephew of mine that I was involved in an argument with the Indian Army officer. He came over and took me on the pillion of his bike to the DS office. There, the officer was not very happy with me. He said, Mrs. WM, if you don’t hand over the keys to the Indian Army, you will get shot. Then I will have an even bigger problem.’ Well, what can I do? I returned home and kept the keys on the table and sent a message to the Indian Army camp that they could come to my home and remove the keys. No one came.

GF: Did you return to the school after that?

WM: Oh yes, I had to check on the situation in the school, you see, the army camp next door. Had to make payments and check that everything was in order. Once or twice the army fellows would jump into the compound when I was there and walk around. I didn’t take any notice. That was that.
Significantly, here, the Indian Army officer did not recognise the tracing of the discrete field of schooling governance and armed warfare: In wartime, the principal was not a principal. Yet WM was not shot at, nor were the keys removed from her home. In such performances of legitimacy-tracing in wartime schooling I see how in practice, the illusio of the field did hold together in wartime, recognising the legitimacy of the symbolic capital of the principal.

RD narrated with some emotion an instance of ‘non-cooperation’ with the Indian Army request that he, the principal should identify insurgent from civilian on the site of military camps:

The IPKF came – those devils came, though they were designated as the Indian peacekeeping force, they were not peacekeeping. They were doing funny things you know...funny, funny things! I remember PD from Maharashtra. A science graduate and a handsome tall fellow. He was occupying a house in my village. He came in a jeep and I said ‘Captain, what can I do for you?’ He says ‘I want you to come to some camps and identify if these guys are LTTE or not. I said ‘Captain, I am sorry I cannot come. I have to get permission from my ministry in Colombo.’ Psychology worked there. ‘I am not coming! I cannot come without permission from the ministry. Why are you asking? How can I identify an unknown fellow? You think I am a mind reader? You think I saw him carrying a weapon or something? I am an educationist. I cannot come to the camp. Please leave me.’ Fellow can talk good English!

Here is a clear contrast between what is thinkable and unthinkable according to the Indian armed officer and the social logic of this empirical field. The illusio or belief in the legitimacy of the symbolic capital of the principal erected imagined limits as to what could be considered a reasonable order in wartime by an armed officer and what could not. Pulling a principal from the site of governance into the site of military activity to perform such practices indicated that there was no shared relational disposition nor an automatic doxic submission by the Indian Army officer to the imagined divide between the fields of armed warfare and schooling. According to the social logic of this community, a principal’s only duty and nothing else was to ensure the continued supply of the democratic entitlement to education in his site of governance, and not to be politically useful to armed agents.

In this act of non-cooperation of teachers with armed agents, the teacher’s habitus places the armed officer as possessing the social and symbolic capital by identifying him as a ‘science graduate’ ‘can talk good English!’ as a legitimate opponent worthy of negotiating with, despite being an armed agent. Yet this only serves to increase the teacher’s bravado in pushing the
limits of ‘non-cooperation.’ I argue that in confrontation with ‘regular’ officers whose power is granted from what he considered legitimate authority of state and civil service, the teachers acted with greater trust and courage in a time of unpredictability and danger. Going further in comparison to ‘irregular’ armed agents in tracing what they imagined to be the contours of a discrete site of education, protecting those within, from encroachment by violence of warfare.

Showing Cause

**Ten charges**

In the field of wartime schooling, intra-Tamil petty jealousies, caste, class discrimination, and revenge continued at the site of the Technical College, Jaffna. RD attempted from his habitus where he had imbibed progressive notions of equality, from his outsider position, to deal with the continuation of caste prejudice, pre-dating the war. Despite claims that ‘in postcolonial Sri Lanka, increasing ethnic discrimination and violence have generated widespread feelings of ethnic allegiance across caste and class,’ the old fault lines continued to be drawn in sites such as the Technical College in Jaffna (Thiranagama, 2018, p.362).

You know…I remember at my college, there were some staff members from the lower caste or so-called...some members used to pass remarks. One lady, Ms. V, complained – 'Sir [Tamil paraphrasing] he didn't use bad words but hard language.' I told her 'you are a good person; you go and teach!' I said that I would deal with it and see it doesn't happen again. I told the staff member that I would take action if this happens again and you pass hard words on her, because this is a place where she has a right to teach. Another person, a shorthand typing teacher from Nainativu...he complained ...when I retired and I was given a farewell, the first person who came and garlanded me was this lady, Ms. V! Did I lose respect? This is my way of looking at life you know. By nature, I studied these problems carefully.

RD’s teacher-colleagues responded by drafting a letter notifying the central Ministry of Education that RD was extorting money and jewellery for the movement: ‘There were ten charges against me! They typed it and sent it to the education ministry. Ten charges sent to the Permanent Secretary!’

This practice of betrayal and revenge on the principal was significantly carried out from within the regularity of civil service protocol. The letter was duly acknowledged and responded to by the Additional Permanent Secretary, Mr. M C T Fonseka. ‘He must have gone through that and
he took a photocopy of it and sent me a letter saying ‘I want a reply within 28 days! ... signed and sent me a letter under registered cover’ says RD. ‘When I saw this, I saw stars! Ten charges no...all this...nothing happened, no? Only thing that happened secretly was money. Nothing happened openly, I didn’t demand jewellery or anything. Still, there were ten charges against me...I forget the charges!’ He sought the advice of the registrar who advised him that the only course of action was to deny every single charge on the sheet. RD drafted the letter, the registrar typed it out on his computer and the letter was sent within the stipulated time limit laid down in statute. ‘Within 28 days I did that!’

‘Keeping the files clean’ was a practice described by Klem’s bureaucrats in the Eastern Province which required that no mention was made in regulation documents of state bureaucracy that any ‘cooperation’ had occurred with rebels and that rules had been compromised:

To preserve their own position in this messy reality of ‘two governments’, several bureaucrats confided that they kept a shadow administration for decisions, correspondence, and agreements that did not match the official procedure — to ‘keep the files clean,’ one of them said, in case they would be audited. (Klem, 2012, p.15)

Yet here we see the habitus of the civil servant educator as differentiated from the administrator-bureaucrat. RD the educator, the principal of a higher educational institution was more than a bureaucrat who needed to keep up an appearance of correct practice. This was an insult and assault on his integrity, his principal-repute, and his civil service record of service. RD decided he would travel south to Colombo and render an account of practices of ‘cooperation’ with the LTTE demands and the limits of such cooperation.

Later I went to the Ministry. I met Mr. F directly. I said ‘Good morning, Sir!’ he said, ‘please sit down!’ I said ‘Sir, you sent me a letter. I sent you a reply. What is your reaction to that? Since I am here, now, you can get me arrested and land me on the 4th floor. [Tamil paraphrasing] Those days there was a place called 4th floor (the Criminal Investigation Department interrogation unit). If you want, you can easily arrest me and land me there, I can’t do anything! I am here in Colombo... or you can do anything... my fate is in your hands! My life is in danger in Jaffna! We did lose some equipment, I said, I won’t lie. I was under pressure. And I was under the ...the...the... gun you see so you can’t do anything! My life is in danger! It is up to you now to accept the version I have given there. I have not given the details, I am telling you today openly, it’s up to you, you make the decision.
You know what he said? He knows me for more than 15 years no, from a vice principal, as a principal, 17 years...he knew me! So he said ‘you forget about... I'll close the file; you look after your life! What goes, let it go! You make a note of it if you can, if not, don’t worry! You look after your life! I am closing the file, there is nothing against you!’ I said ‘thank you very much for your answer and your gesture. I am now relieved.’ I was able to get back... the ministry was kind to me... you see... because I was doing my duty out there.

When educators on the frontline expressed with emotion the deeply felt obligation to render account, there was a certain pathos to such encounters. It was a time of war and pre-war Collegialities and understandings held. No one was prepared for war here. It confounded researchers and drew derision on how the Jaffna Tamil civil servant was stubborn and inflexible. Bourdieu argues that the pre-schematization of experience by habitus, acquired in early childhood, is supposed to explain the 'hysteresis-effect', a social inertia that keeps agents from changing their habitus even if they encounter different social situations. (Bourdieu, 1977, p.78; Brubaker, 1985, p.759). I argue that it is this very hysteresis-effect, that enabled the teachers to trace the lines between the fields of schooling and warfare as far as they could go, carrying out practices of schooling in wartime as essential and taken-for-granted doxa, in the face of danger.

**Flying the flag**

At the Jaffna University, the former (late) Vice-Chancellor Prof TJ allowed the hoisting of the ‘Tiger flag’ at the university in place of the national flag. At the Ministry of Education meetings in the capital Colombo, the central bureaucrats, mostly Sinhalese, challenged this verbally. In response, Prof TJ would dramatically throw down the gauntlet, inviting any other educator to take his place as the Vice-Chancellor of Jaffna University. He would resign forthwith! The Colombo-based largely Sinhala bureaucrats would then placate him and urge him to continue his duties as Vice-Chancellor. They knew TJ was no Jaffna-Tamil but from Kandy, a victim of state-organised Tamil riots as Thula’s mother informed me in our East London interview at her home. TJ and Thula’s mother both had been forced to flee their beloved Kandy and begin life again in Jaffna. These events had informed their relational disposition to state oppression, resulting in a demonstration of understanding and appreciation of the rebel ‘Cause.’

PS: TJ was a man of international standard. He won’t say anything that he cannot practice. He was a man who used to cycle all the way from Point Pedro to Jaffna
University, some 20 miles daily mind you, he was 55 then. He could have had a lift, the boys... I mean... you know who I mean when I say, boys? Boys from the movement, they had vehicles, they had said when they see him at Velle junction or somewhere, cycling, they had halted to give him a lift, but he had politely refused. Because he was such a principled man. If the average Jaffna man or his university student had to cycle all the way, then he had to. That was his stand.32

Yet at his funeral, Prof. TJ had left instructions that the Tiger flag should not be draped over his coffin as the LTTE was accustomed to do, in order to honour the death of a respected supporter! Here we see the teacher placing the marker on the limits of cooperation which I argue arose from the teacher’s sens pratique: securing rebel permission for the continuation of schooling practices in wartime. Here the cooperation had involved the highest emblem of state, the national flag that had been replaced by the LTTE pennant. Admittedly, while the LTTE had demanded this symbolic act of cooperation, the Movement had not completely take over the university and administrate it; governance remained in the hands of the legitimate civil servant-educator, Prof TJ. In Colombo, the shared habitus held despite the flying of the Tiger flag in place of the national flag; their commonsense view of the world and collegiality, continued.

Flags, typewriters, keys, lathes! In exchange for the classroom doors in higher education to remain open in the warzone, the LTTE asked for symbolic cooperation and the allowing of resources to be appropriated for the Movement. Cognisant of the real dangers facing their colleagues in the warzone, intriguingly, civil service regulations and protocol were also appropriated by central bureaucrats in order to offer a visa of sorts to the Jaffna educators and community leaders. In RD’s case, his wife and children had already left for western nations that were opening their doors to the war-affected Tamils. He remained on the peninsula with his mother-in-law in his home in Jaffna Town till he too, emigrated, a few years later after her death.

Oh yes, once they asked me...there were four or five Assistant Directors of Technical Education in Colombo, and the director said ‘if you apply, you will get it and the other four will go to Sinhala applicants. If you apply, you will get it. I’ll automatically give you the Assistant Director’s post.’ I said ‘Sir, the salary for the Assistant Director’s post and the salary I am drawing in Jaffna as a principal, it is the same. But I don’t own property

32 Interview with PS, former principal, Jaffna, 2011.
in Colombo... so if I come to Colombo... I will have to find a place to stay on my own and it will be expensive, and I won’t be able to manage. I would love to work in Colombo as it is an opportunity to learn Sinhala and speak Sinhala well. Learning Sinhala is always a good thing, because I can speak Malay, I can still speak broken Malay. So I said ‘learning a language is not a bad thing, but this is my personal choice.’ He said ‘this is your choice, if you apply you will get it. And you can freely move around and examine technical colleges as the Assistant Director.

Significantly, the visa out of the violent warzone was offered here from *within* the civil service protocol to a northern educator. This regularised offer follows the procedure for internal applications for a ranked placement beyond the warzone. The position corresponded with the educator’s qualifications and remuneration and was a ‘suitable position.’ Yet the educator knew his place in the social world. He had invested in the social game and despite armed threat, betrayal, and fear, he felt more a fish in water within his familiar structures in the Jaffna Peninsula, within his own comfortable home (Grenfell, 2014, p.59; Wacquant, 1989, p.43). Like many other humans in the world, at this stage of life, leaving his own roof to lodge under another unfamiliar one, was unthinkable, undoable. As life became unbearably oppressive and the war progressed, RD grew very lonely without the comfort of his family. His mother-in-law finally passed away. He shut the door for the last time on his spacious home in Jaffna, to join his wife and daughter overseas. On field visits to Jaffna, I passed his home many times, now occupied by relatives, as many others are.

**Conclusion**

Insider-outsiders and the sites of higher education below university level have not been given much attention in the existing literature. The Malaysian Jaffna-Tamil principal adds a layer of experiential reality from a little-recorded position in the field, which I locate in the specific colonial history of this empirical setting. The principal acquiring capital and enjoying legitimacy in the field, had a governing disposition and like his colleagues, attempted to trace a discrete boundary around the field of schooling. Detailing the civil service regulations, I showed how a principal in postcolonial Jaffna was an institution that required a disposition to education and a long career ascension, not one that was easily gained nor relinquished. The salaries also indicate that it was a position well-remunerated and bestowed with such power of symbolic capital and legitimacy, that staying back in the peninsula in such positions, was a rational
decision as well as a noble one. While much has been written about the rebel activity on the site of the Jaffna University by Hoole, Thiranagama and others, sites of higher education such as the Technical College are less likely to be featured, as it was not political ideology that drew the rebels to this site, but practical need, always a less beguiling theme of discussion (Hoole, 1990; Russell, 2022). I use the example of the Technical College which together with the Teacher Training College, provided those who failed to gain a place at university with practical skills, and kept the young persons occupied.

In acts of ‘cooperation’ and ‘non-cooperation,’ we see the limits within which other struggles over legitimacy were taking place. Rebels claimed entitlement to state-supplied goods, while teachers asserted their discrete power as principals not subject to military command on matters of schooling and students. Old petty jealousies and rivalries continued during wartime and regularity and revenge went hand in hand. I bring in the performative aspect of the civil servant, who was not one of Gupta’s bureaucrats accepting a bribe, but offering whatever was demanded, a different bribe, to the insurgents in return for keeping the classrooms open (Gupta, 1995, p.379). There was a certain pathos in the throwing down of the gauntlet by peripheral Tamil educators on the frontline and the response by the central Sinhalese bureaucrat, which gave formal impersonal inter-ethnic relations, a strange intensity and intimacy.
CHAPTER FOUR

Operation A Levels Part I:

Education as a Site of Intervention

In this chapter I set out on a path of inquiry into the significance of conducting the Advanced Level exams in wartime, to this community. On that very first visit to the former warzone in 2011, years before I began my doctoral study, a former principal I interviewed had made an ambiguous statement which I return to here: ‘but in spite of all this bombing and shelling, exams were held. No tampering! No pilfering!’ What was not tampered with, and why this was important to a community caught up in a civil war, is where I began my research. From in-depth interviews and by press releases by the commissioner of examinations at the central Ministry of Education, I was informed of an intriguing fact marking the conducting of the G.C.E. (General Certificate of Education) Advanced Level Examination in the warzone. Reportedly, the strict wartime protocol requiring that no item must enter or leave the warzone without multiple checks performed by both state and rebel armed personnel, appeared to have been ‘suspended’ in the sole case of the A Level exam papers and answer scripts. Resultantly, the seals placed on bundles of exam papers according to elaborate protocol detailed in educational administrative regulations were not ‘tampered with’ nor broken. This was what my interviewee referred to and called for a deeper investigation.

The Significance of the A Level Intervention

Habitus, doxa and enabling convergence

What was the significance of conducting the national Advanced Level Examination in civil war, which called for the suspension of routine wartime protocols? ‘How did educators, parents, students and armed officers of state and rebel, engage across the lines, converging in agreement that national exams and higher education were entitlements that must continue despite civil war?’ I propose that Bourdieu’s tools of field theory, particularly habitus and doxa
are important to this enquiry. In this chapter I examine how the social agents were enabled to think and act as they did. First, I use habitus to indicate the structuring structures of this community which gave rise to what Bourdieu terms a ‘durable system of dispositions’ and which had apparently generated a ‘shared habitus’ among those politically polarised, enabling them to converge and act in concert in this intervention. Second, unpicking the meanings in the transactions and exchanges carried out by civil servants, armed officer and rebel in coordinating the A Level Examination, habitus is an essential tool as it looks at practices and representations by social agents which could be ‘objectively regulated or regular yet not necessarily produced in obedience to rules’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). Another important tool of Bourdieu’s field theory, doxa, is essential I propose in examining how a historical disposition to education amongst the Northern Tamils and Southern communities did not collapse in wartime realities. Doxa is “a set of fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma” (Bourdieu, 1999, p.16). It refers to the apparently natural beliefs or opinions that are intimately linked to field and habitus (Deer, 2014,p.115). Doxa informs this research by admitting the ‘misrecognition’ of wartime realities, required in order to conduct the A Levels in wartime.

Admittedly, historical entitlement offers an explanation as to why conducting the A Levels with such elaborate protocol in the northern warzone, made sense to this community. As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, the schooling habitus in this northern community was informed by a tradition of modern missionary schooling structures, especially American, since the 1820s (Conroy-Krutz, 2015; Harris, 1999; N. Wickramasinghe, 2012). This generated an unshakable internalised belief in ‘getting a good education’. After all, was not the framed ‘grievance’ of the Tamils proposed as being the threat of reduced numbers of Tamil students from the Northern Province entering the science faculties of the universities? (Gunawardena, 1979; Murray, 1984; N. Wickramasinghe, 2012). There was also a political rationale: the hybrid state-rebel governance model had resulted in the LTTE setting up ‘civil administrative’ structures for education which appropriated the state schooling institutions to supply schooling to the population under their control. This granted to the rebels a degree of legitimacy as discussed in Chapter Two, both in the warzone and internationally (Guribye & Tharmalingam, 2017; Mampilly, 2011; Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, 2018). On the other hand, for the compromised state authority in these rebel-held territories, the conducting of the A Levels and other national exams enabled the state to keep its foot in the door. Supplying the rebel-
controlled student population with national exam certificates valued highly by the citizens there, served as a marker of continued territorial sovereignty.

Yet going beyond these explanations, in this chapter and the next, I look at how, under this rebel-state governance canopy, the educators were busily negotiating with armed agents, creating mechanisms that cleaved through divisions, adjusting wartime realities during this intervention. One such mechanism detailed later in this chapter is ‘The Coordinating Meeting.’ The significance of these coordination meetings was that a Sinhala military officer of high rank, sat with the Tamil zonal department of education officers in the warzone led by the Tamil ‘Coordinator of the A Levels for the Northern Province.’ These meetings took place at set intervals to prepare for the important annual business of conducting the A Levels, O Levels and Year 6 Scholarship Examination in the warzone. Relational dynamics and established wartime hierarchies had been re-ordered I suggest in this site for a common objective. A second mechanism examined in the next chapter is ‘The Tripod Agreement.’ There were understandings reached and an appearance of civil agreement including those with unpredictable armed agents: order in disorder. These were extraordinary measures in a separatist war and ones that point to much more complex transactions from a shared habitus, indicating a strong doxa in this community, which prevailed in this field of schooling-in-wartime.

As I began writing this chapter, I realised that there was first a discussion to be had, on the habitus of the social agents. Next, I discuss the relational dynamics in the sub-site of the Coordination Meeting unpicking the meanings in representations, allegiances, defiance, and in understandings given and received. I then continue a second conversation in Chapter Five on the enactment of the A Level as a spectacle drawing on notions of ‘governmentality’ and examining the mystical and rational aspects of the state apparatus which enabled the social agents to act with pragmatism and guile in a context of civil war (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.14). On a return field visit to Jaffna in 2018, I asked PS to introduce me to a teacher who had insider knowledge of the detailed operation of conducting the A Levels in the northern warzone. Fortuitously, at a funeral that evening his memory was jogged by a friend and fellow-retired principal, reminding him that ‘the authority on the subject’, was LP, the then Coordinator of the A Levels for the Northern Province in wartime. Employing the oral history method, much of this chapter is written from the in-depth interviews I had with LP in his home in Jaffna. I also draw on interviews with former students, teachers, principals, ethnographic reports, diaries and published academic works.
Protocol and politics

Let us look at the strict protocol applied to the conducting of the national exams, particularly the A Level exam which I examine in this thesis. Bundles of exam papers were sent to the northern warzone unfailingly each year, to all students in the rebel-controlled territories - attending state schools as discussed in Chapter Two – as well as students in state-controlled areas of the peripheral northern warzone. Across the lines, in the central bureaucracy, the Commissioner-General of Examinations, Mr. Anura Edirisinghe details the exam protocol in conducting the Advanced Level exams in the national press:

Firstly the number of question papers needed by each centre is counted and inserted into small packets (colour-coded with blue for Sinhala medium, pink for Tamil medium and white for English medium) in keeping with the serial numbers, and sealed. Then all the small packets are put into a bigger outer cover. This cover would have all the small packets per subject to be distributed per session – either morning or evening. The outer covers are also clearly colour coded depending on the session they are meant for – black for morning and red for evening. Finally, the outer covers for both sessions are enclosed in a special water-proof canvas sack which is security-sealed once again. ("Exam muddle: ‘question of misreporting, not mistakes’ Top exam official hits out at allegations of irregularities in exam papers and conduct of exams," 2009)

In wartime, this detailed protocol was rigorously enforced by both central and northern bureaucrats, performing what the department of examinations term as their “national service”. These bundles of exam papers were transported from central state examination department to the former warzone by the state air force, handed over to the peripheral zonal department of education in the Jaffna warzone and transported into rebel-controlled territory, without being subjected to security checks and unbundled. The answer scripts would be sealed and transported by the designated state-employed zonal department of education officer out of rebel-territory, unchecked, handed over to the state armed forces following agreed military procedure in state-controlled territory, and finally, into the high security zone of the Palaly airport to be transported to the marking centres. I will discuss this protocol in greater detail in the next chapter.

What I was beginning to hear on later field visits was even more intriguing: reliable sources reported that newspapers during wartime would carry an announcement by the department of examinations, calling on all parties to the conflict to observe an unofficial ceasefire, mindful
that the A Level exams would be held that week in August. I was quickening with each fragment to the need to investigate what appeared to be an extraordinary intervention from the site of education in a deeply polarised separatist struggle. Meanwhile, central bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education, predominantly ethnic-Sinhalese, were trying to find a way of formalising the activities of conducting examinations in the northern warzone. ‘The Department of Exams and the Department of Education in the Ministry of Education’ says LP, ‘they felt that they had to have...to make...some special arrangements for the important national exams. Especially Grade 5 (Year 6) Scholarship, GCE O Level and GCE A Level Examinations. Simply, they can’t do what they liked, cos the war was going on and bombing, all this.’ The central administration decided they needed a coordinator. They cited criteria such as ‘he must be able to converse in all three languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English; he must be resident in Colombo, be able to stay in Colombo for a long time, and he must be able to bring the papers by car, or if it is by ship, by boat or vehicle. He must have a very close access to the Department of Exams.’ Following strict protocol, this ethnic-Tamil Coordinator of the A Levels for the Northern Province must be nominated by the zonal department of education in the local administrative division of Jaffna, below provincial and national level in the dense civil service network in this postcolonial nation.

All this sounded very detailed, democratic and rather elaborate, signalling a standard that was somehow at odds with the reality of the ground situation of supplying education to the warzone in Sri Lanka. I recall here, Amarasuriya’s observation in her doctoral thesis examining the provision of children’s social welfare services by the department of the Child Probation Officer. She points out the wide disparity between the expectations laid out in regulation and protocol, on the one hand and the ground realities on the other, especially in resources supplied to the bureaucrats to achieve these goals. ‘Moreover, as I have shown in my thesis, the increasingly ambitious goals for child protection in Sri Lanka are expected to be achieved by state bureaucrats who are poorly compensated and have very few resources with which to respond to the complex problems of their clients’ (Amarasuriya, 2011, p.248).

Into this appearance of order and regulation, enters disorder and unregulated violence.

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33 Besides the university examinations, the teacher training examinations and others, the significance was clearly placed on three Special Examinations as they were known: The Grade 5 Scholarship Exam (equivalent to the Eleven-Plus in the UK), the Ordinary Level Examination or O Levels (equivalent to the GCSEs) and the Advanced Level Examination or A Levels.
One NM, he was the coordinator, he was doing his job well, things were going on well. The papers were brought from Palaly airport by helicopter to Vembadi Girls High School...the Regional Coordination Centre, we call it, the RCC. The papers were taken there by helicopter and the exam was coordinated like that for years. Then he went missing. Still...now, his place is not known.

GF: Strange.

LP: Strange... He is missing. The dangerous time for government servants doing this type of work was the peacetime, not the wartime. In the peacetime only he went from Jaffna to Colombo. He reached Colombo. One morning he went out of his house... his house is still there. But then he went missing!

Many civil servants who were compelled to criss-cross the government-rebel divide and carry out their duties in wartime, were ‘disappeared’ without any further investigation carried out, and no perpetrators named. It was not even clear who the perpetrators were, as these attacks did not tidily align on north-south, Tamil-Sinhala lines. Sensitivity to a lasting sense of war-induced fear in survivors, calls for a refraining from probing too far. In many interviews, personal memories of loss of colleagues to war-related violence, are reduced by the teachers and educators to the simple insertion of a reference to the remaining markers of their passage of life: ‘his house is still there.’ A pause follows such a statement, a cup of tea or juice is offered before continuing the interview. ‘The dangerous time for government servants doing this type of work was the peacetime, not the wartime’: this sentiment that war was not all bad, and peace not necessarily an improvement in matters concerning public administration was echoed by Klem in his article on civil servants being on the frontline, titled ‘In the Eye of the Storm’ (Klem, 2012).

Immediately they wanted to appoint a coordinator.’ Nobody was prepared [to take on the risk].34 Then they came to me, ‘LP you must take over.’ The Department of Exams, they wanted a person who must be able to coordinate the exams, and the department here in the zonal offices, they want a strong man to do that. Right? We had a meeting, a special meeting for this with the zonal directors. They were invited to Kilinochchi to the civil department [LTTE administration unit in charge of education]. I was invited, the North East

34 Preserving the original narrator style, I insert clarifications in parenthesis.
Provincial Director of Education was invited, the Secretary of Education also there! One full day we were discussing...staying in the LTTE camp there.

Take special care of these words: ‘exams must be conducted!’ Who said? LTTE said. ‘Exams must be conducted! It should not be disturbed.’ Please take over. We'll give all the assistance. Whatever you need. Because no one is giving support to conduct the exams. So I said ok, I don’t want to take a long time on that issue, I will take over. I was invited to Palaly. Major D was there.

Credentials of an Exam Coordinator

‘First and foremost, I am a Benedictine’

I was the first to have posed this question to LP: ‘How did you conduct the A Levels each year in wartime also for students in the LTTE-controlled Vanni?’

Not only Advanced Level... public exams...Grade 5 Scholarship, O Level and Advanced Level. These were the mainstream examinations in Sri Lanka for students. Every exam was conducted perfectly. I can tell you – without any interference, without any interference, with the support of all parties: forces, Department of Exams, Tigers, Department of Education, with all the support it was conducted. How it was conducted I will tell you; I will be very happy to tell you about this, cos it is in my mind. I am the person who has faced the basic problems while conducting the exams, I will start. The war started in Jaffna, the Jaffna man has a separate culture ma’am, look into it. Education is the base for it. Whatever you say, anyone touches education, they will uprise. That was the problem in 70s, standardisation. They uprise, standardisation has come, they feel subordinated, they tried to talk to the government, nothing happened.

I will tell you my views what am having...in my view... no personal bias. Because I have already told you I am a Benedictine first and foremost...I am a Benedictine! I studied with thousands of Sinhala students. There were only 400 Tamil students. I was a footballer, I still have Sinhala friends, still I have the same friends – I am 67 – I am a Hindu, actually. I have visited Jerusalem, Bethlehem, I was in Israel, I was in Parsi, a spiritual place for Hindus. All are the same. My views are on the basis of that. All are the same.

GF: Humanity?
LP: Yes.

LP begins by presenting his credentials, worldview and positionality in this interview. ‘Old Bens’ or ’Benedictines’ is a term used for the alumni of St. Benedict’s College, Colombo. It is claimed to be one of the oldest Roman Catholic schools in Sri Lanka formed by Silvestro Benedictine monks in the latter part of the 19th century and taken over by the Lasallian tradition, a Roman Catholic educational community taking pride on extending education to the poor and marginalised. Selecting the overarching identity of ‘first and foremost’ being a ‘Benedictine,’ he elects to align himself with the membership in a secondary school alumni association, as opposed to his ethnicity, religion or region. This statement by a Hindu from a region engaged in separatist struggle with Colombo is relevant to this research. As discussed elsewhere, in the case of the former Technical College Principal RD in Chapter Three, this positionality was enabled by the fact that religion did not play as important a role in the ‘structuring structures’ of the field of education in the North as the social mobilising factor of ‘getting a good education.’ This marker of the habitus of the Northern Tamil, I suggest, is reinforced by the field habitus drawing from historical policies of the missionaries, especially those of the American Congregationalist Church, placing ‘civilisation’ before ‘Christianisation.’ This opened up mission schools for both Hindus and Christians in the 1820s, some 200 years ago in Jaffna (Conroy-Krutz, 2015; Harris, 1999; Root, 2004). The contribution of such policies to the habitus of this postcolonial society is further discussed in Chapter Six. The state followed placing high emphasis on education in the newly-independent state. This I propose contributed to a sort of ‘disposition to educational entitlements’ which appeared to have crossed the ethnic and faith divide in this differentiated society.

LP was a footballer and St. Benedict’s was known for sports, excelling at national level in football, basketball, hockey and cricket with sports hostel facilities. ‘I still have the same Sinhalese friends’ says LP. Now if I may insert my own positionality here, I could say the same ‘I still have the same Tamil friends’ and this arises from sharing to some extent with LP, the class habitus of those schooled in non-segregated inter-ethnic schools in Colombo. The interviewee directly links his secondary schooling experience within these postcolonial modern structures of education to a worldview of being ‘broad-minded, possessing a worldview where all faiths and beliefs are respected: a liberal man. In ‘Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction’ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron hold that cultural capital is usually passed on from one generation to another and in particular those who are able to attain a good quality education, often belong to the higher strata of society. They are able to secure
their future and hence provide their children with good quality education. Yet the Sri Lankan schooling system has reportedly facilitated social mobilisation, where students such as LP gained social and symbolic capital by way of English language competencies and cultural knowledge resulting in LP enjoying to some extent a shared habitus with other members of the civil servant class. This elevated a generation beyond the aspirations of their parents in terms of economic and symbolic capital, as the example in Kadigamar’s thesis of the tobacco farmer’s son qualifying as a doctor, illustrates (Kadirgamar, 2017, p.280). I understood in this study how students formed a special allegiance with postcolonial modern structures that enabled their social mobilisation. This symbolic capital is relevant in this empirical context as it joined those from diverse ethnic, political, faith and regional groups in times of ethno-nationalist separatist war.

‘I am from Vadamarachchi’

Signalling an insider-outsider identity he was yet to reveal fully, LP says ‘anyone touches education, they will uprise!’ ‘Uprise’ here is used in the colloquial sense of signifying rising up, an uprising. Who are they? and who is LP? It is not until the interview passes the third hour with shared narration, silence and emotion, that LP feels comfortable to reveal his origins to me as the region of Vadamarachchi. This area is of historical significance in the Sri Lankan civil war as the hometown of the rebel leader of the LTTE Velupillai Prabhakaran is located in this region. Vadamarachchi is described as located ‘in the north-eastern corner of the Jaffna Peninsula, separated from the rest of the peninsula by a three-mile strip of moorland extending from Thondaimanaru lagoon and running northeast’(UTHR(J), 1988). The report goes on to state that it was ‘the home of several key figures of the Tamil youth militancy in the 1970s. Although the bulk of militants today are largely from Tamil rural areas outside the peninsula, Vadamarachchi continues to be associated in many minds, Tamil and non-Tamil, as the heartland of the militants’ (UTHR(J), 1988).

And especially madam I am from Vadamarachchi. My residence is only a kilometre from Prabhakaran’s village. But I have seen Prabhakaran from the childhood. Because he was residing there. Our ancestral properties are from there, even the dowry I gave my daughter from there, Vadamarachchi. Because of these people only we are living here (daughter’s family) and built this house, no? Because they are working and they don’t want to live up there.

GF: What was life like in Vadamarachchi?
LP: Terrible... terrible... how can you live like that? You can't imagine it. This problem... the war started in 1983 you know... there was a strong military camp in Vadamarachchi. That is Velvittithurai. My daughter and my son ... we were married... '82 we were married and '83 only it started, we carried the two children and we had a bag only one bag with the documents, and the money and the jewellery and stuff. And she (wife) doesn't know how to cycle also... three miles... five miles! We come back and then we couldn't stay... '91 we were displaced to Jaffna town. Because '87 the IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) came, and we had so many problems due to IPKF ....

If sociology treats individuals of a class habitus as sharing a system of dispositions produced by the same objective structures, then LP as a Jaffna Tamil, shared the same schooling structures with Sinhalese from the opponent community. Yet the diversity within the shared habitus here is supplied by his individual history of sharing the history of those from Vadamarachchi. A further layer which interrupted any simple semblance of ‘concordance’ between his habitus and that of any particular group, was LP’s direct experience of war-related violence by all parties.

The Sri Lankan army assault during Operation Liberation, which lasted five days from 26th May 1987, was a devastating experience for the people of Vadamarachchi. Their sufferings did not end with the indiscriminate bombing and shelling. A large number of youths, some of them picked up from officially designated places of refuge, were summarily killed. After the experience of Operation Liberation and the conduct of the Sri Lankan army, the people of Vadamarachchi welcomed the IPKF in July through to the end of 1987 with undisguised enthusiasm. (UTHR(J), 1989)

Yet, the Vadamarachchi experience was one of betrayal and armed reprisals. The LTTE practice of attacking the IPKF to incite reprisals against civilians caused ‘the situation to deteriorate in June ‘88’ and as per the report, ‘those beaten included Urban Council employees, doctors, engineers and clergy’ (UTHR(J), 1989). Norms were turned on their head and the common-sense world was obliterated in the crossfire of war. ‘You only opened your mouth to eat’ was an oft-quoted wartime saying in the peninsula. Between diverse armed parties, the population in the Jaffna Peninsula including civil servant-educators such as LP, moved in mute fashion, between the Sri Lanka Army, the IPKF, Tamil paramilitaries and LTTE, between hope and despair; between betrayal and senseless violence. The diversion came at the time when the educators could find their voice, intervening in this war-affected landscape at odds with the
habitus of this postcolonial society, by conducting the national examinations. The *lex insita* which drew on his secondary schooling experience at a Missionary school, informed LP’s ‘mission’ to conduct the A Levels and deliver the students beyond the violence of war. I suggest that it strengthened shared dispositions with the habitus of the opponent Sinhalese bureaucrat, while political differences appeared intractable.

**I am a sportsman, a ‘strong’ man**

LP indicated in the interview that he imagined his positionality in dealing with diverse armed agents in the field of schooling-in-wartime by drawing on what he had excelled at in school: sports. Interestingly, in Chapter Three, RD, the former Technical College Principal, also alluded to dealing with armed agents by turning to something he had learned at University: psychology. This representation of guile and cunning in navigating the threat of violence by referencing educational skills, created an appearance of controlling what was uncontrollable, predicting the unpredictable. Here, LP signalled that he was fully aware of the rules of the game, where the goalposts lay and how far they could be shifted in conducting this intervention of the national exams. Unlike RD whose Malaysian roots, postgraduate Indian degree, elite membership of the Lions Club and town lifestyle had placed him at a disadvantage with the militant LTTE, arousing in him emotions of fear and dread, LP drew on his roots to deal with the LTTE team on the field. He leveraged the identity of shared origins in the under-developed North, recognising the ‘colours of the LTTE blazer of youth rebellion’ as it were. LP was accepted by the Movement, as the coordinating agent with the state bureaucracy as well as the armed forces, in order to conduct the A Levels for the students in the rebel-held Vanni.

Tigers asked, because Tigers also had the control. They know me, those who are involved in the education sector in LTTE, they know me personally, myself and the top officers from the education dept. Because they used to have contact. I was in charge of sports for the North and East and conducting the tournaments. I was a strong man. They know me well.

‘I was a strong man!’ is a statement I wish to interrogate further in light of what was going on in this warzone in the site of education. I propose that this negotiation across state bureaucrat – militant lines did not take place in isolation, but needed to be located in a wider framework of ongoing contact and cooperation. The education ‘wing’ of the civil administration units of the LTTE were known to issue orders to state bureaucrats to assist in educational and
extracurricular activities for rebel-held Vanni schools, which strived to emulate the modern western model of schooling in the Jaffna Peninsula. As discussed in Chapter Two, extracurricular inter-school events and regional competitions including sports meets, karate competitions, also Tamil Day, Science Day, English Day across the warzone, had connected civil servant educators with teachers and schools on both sides of the state and rebel-controlled territories. The militant leadership bolstered these processes with passes, certificates, administrative clearance and in this way, created an appearance of state structures, a rational apparatus, rather than a mystical one of warlordism and sacrifice. This appearance of governance structures - which Frerks clarifies were governance practices only – served the illusory rational apparatus of ‘stateness’ within the LTTE Movement (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018).

All this I suggest led to the placement in the warzone, in the zonal and district education offices of the Ministry of Education, of ‘strong men.’ I interviewed a few such strong men during my fieldwork, who had navigated this divide expertly and continued in the aftermath of war to supply education without pause to all war-affected students in the former warzone. It was peculiar to this postcolonial habitus somehow that all this was ‘possible’ and ‘thinkable’ amidst seemingly intractable political contentions. ‘They know me well’ was in this light still bounded I suggest by values aligned on the side of ‘civilian’, ‘community’ and ‘benign’, as opposed to ‘militant’, ‘subversive’ and ‘double-agent’. I suggest that the teachers in the Northern Province here differed from Wilson’s ‘double-agent’ and militarised teacher profiles in the Andes. In the Peruvian peasant rural and urban divide, there was no shared habitus formed in educational entitlements flowing from a governance model pre-dating the formation of the nation-state (Wilson, 2001).

I insert a note here on the interviewing of teachers and such professional groups who have negotiated long timelines of crisis. Having internalised an accepted representation of roles played, positions taken in negotiating wartime relations, including misrecognition of other notions, it takes time for the interviewee to move beyond these established relational dispositions. For instance, while dealing with the rebel agents was always unpredictable, leaving the teachers no room to refuse or reject an LTTE order; their dealings with the state armed agents, were more straightforwardly represented. Both LP and RD the former Principal of the Technical College Jaffna, referred to the role of symbolic capital in the form of English linguistic and cultural competence in relations with armed officers of state in schooling-in-wartime:
GF: Do you think that because you studied in Colombo that they felt that you were somebody who knew them (the army officers)?

LP: [soft tone] Yes...yes...the language...the character and the behaviour pattern... because I was in sports...I don't know....(GF interpolating: yes, yes...no problem... tell me)...these characteristics...it has helped me to do my job...clearer...those are the basic criteria even to have a cordial discussion with you...don't you think?

GF: I also think maybe you went to a Colombo school and you had a multi-ethnic childhood and a non-segregated life?

LP: And the broad mind. ...

I bring in my own positionality here and give an example from my schooling experience: how the non-segregated schooling experience at Methodist College, a missionary school in Colombo, did nurture ‘a broad mind’ and inclusivity. LP recollects Methodist College being multi-ethnic and responds ‘because my elder brother’s wife was at Methodist and she got the admission... no it was the education...yes!’ At times, the insider-outsider positionality of the interviewer I suggest plays a role in these interviews. Educators I interviewed and even the younger war-generation had had little space for discussion or critical self-reflection, this interview being in all cases, the first such opportunity for discussion and recollection of how they had dealt with it all.

Bureaucratic protocol aside, the ground reality was that the Department of Examinations was tasked with an impossible mission: appointing an incorruptible, impartial and above all, loyal civil servant who would in all improbability, prove ‘acceptable’ to all armed agents and the central bureaucracy. He must also possess the required operational skill in order to pull off this national ‘Operation A Levels’ with simultaneously-timed precise coordination. LP was accepted as being such a person. Leveraging the shared origins with the rebel leadership, the department was aware that this was no indication of an absolute homogeneity of habitus. Significant of a shared habitus, is the confidence placed by the state administration in the durable set of dispositions LP had gained in similarly structured experiences at secondary school to the civil service. He was ‘one of us’ to the bureaucrats. As suggested elsewhere in this thesis, LP and other educators embodied the notion that ‘even when he is ‘being individual and ‘different’ he does so in socially regular ways’ (Grenfell, 2014, p.53). Bourdieu’s original concept clarified in simpler wording by Grenfell, talks about an individual’s ‘personal style’ not only by its conformity, but also by the difference, being ‘never more than a deviation in relation
to the style of a period or class’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.86). In a differentiated postcolonial society such as Sri Lanka, what a man was when he was at home, when a bureaucrat in his office or member of a professional group, has always been accepted as a difference of personal style as long as understandings could be relied on from a shared class habitus. In conducting the exams for all students in the island at the same time, ‘fair play’ was required, a stopwatch like precision timing of coordination as well as respect for the ‘rules of the game’. I propose that being a sportsman, LP considered himself both willing and able to pick up the gauntlet thrown down to coordinate this national educational event in the warzone. He believed that he would not be killed, nor would he bow down to military or militant command. This is what he meant, I believe, when he said they needed ‘a strong man.’

The Coordination Meetings

The mechanism of the coordination meeting is significant to this study of governance of education in wartime as I suggest that it sort of re-ordered the relational dynamics that were in place at other times in civil war. First, the role of the Jaffna local coordinator flattened to some extent, both the established hierarchical order in the bureaucracy, as well as military ranks. Second, the A Level Examination emerged as a common objective within opposed and divided interests and positions in the field, resulting in a converging chain of agents from military, militant and civil sites who dispersed after the intervention. Third, new flows of dialogue and mediation, exchanges of understandings and guarantees took place in order to conduct the A Levels, in an otherwise politically polarised and seemingly intractable warzone. Drawing on a shared habitus that cleaved through categories of civilian -military, north-south, Tamil-Sinhala, the educator and armed agent caught up in this educational intervention for the students in the warzone, formed collegial bonds, friendship and sympathy which endured long after the intervention.

Bad elements

That first coordination meeting LP says was conducted by a Colonel, whose initials incidentally spelt ‘war’: Colonel W.A.R. Gunawardena. Interestingly the armed agents, both the LTTE and the Sri Lanka Army tended to appoint a militant or military officer of a senior rank as their representative to deal in matters of public governance in health or education. Permissions were granted by the top ranking LTTE cadre to doctors and principals and educators, who needed ‘clearance’ to continue to supply governance to the war-affected population. This appeared to indicate an internalised disposition in postcolonial Sri Lanka, that military men
were required to possess an additional credential of education in order to deal with matters relating to governance. Now, Colonel W.A.R. Gunawardena insisted that the question papers would be released from one centre only: Vembadi Girls High School, which was known as the Regional Coordinating Centre (RCC). ‘At other times, and even now, they are keeping the question papers in different coordination centres, but at that time there was no security’ says LP, using the register of national defence for matters of civilian education.

However, below the level of operational chit-chat, the ground realities of resentment and polarisation on ethnic and territorial lines, interceded. In what LP termed ‘a bad incident,’ before he took over as coordinator, the Colombo Sinhalese bureaucrats realised that entering the northern warzone to conduct the exam with the ‘pass’ they were issued, was no protection against the unpredictability of a hostile environment. In those early years, a ministry official from Colombo entering a communication centre in Jaffna on an A Level exam duty visit, had identified as Sinhalese by making a phone call in Sinhala. What ensued was dismissed by LP as a bad incident by bad elements in the communication centre mentioning that the official’s pass had been lost together with his wallet in that incident. This is how teachers and civil servants framed what was admittedly the vulnerability of the Sinhalese Southern colleague in wartime. They point to the lack of an official document such as a pass or the failure of ‘order’ rather than admitting ethnic hostilities among colleagues, placing them at greater risk. When I inquired whether he had been attacked, LP said he did not wish to use that word, but that it was ‘a bad incident.’ Violence appears to fall into what is ‘unthinkable’ for this community and has never been a comfortable theme for teacher-interviewees especially when it occurs in the site of governance directly targeting community leaders outside the zone of armed struggle. In describing the potential threat to his life after the riots of 1983, RD in Chapter Three recalls: ‘twice I had to go to Colombo to meet the Director and I was nervous, whether I would be struck…a bad element, an unfortunate fellow, all would be lost, gone!’

If an official language of a community included ‘concepts by which the members of a given group provide themselves with a representation of their social relations’, then I suggest that education not only framed what was ‘thinkable’; violence was cast as ‘unthinkable, and perpetrating violence, framed in terms of education. Perpetrators of violence in many instances of mob riots in Sri Lanka were portrayed as not having had the good fortune to receive an education, to know better. They were considered the exception, ‘bad elements’, rejecting the notion that the violence of civil war informed the inter-ethnic social relations of this community. I propose that in this world of disorder, education contributed to the ‘maintenance
of the symbolic order’ from which this community drew its authority (Bourdieu, 1977, p.21). Juxtaposing violence and education, LP reflects: ‘The exam went on smoothly, this blowing up and shelling ... killing... these Jaffna fellows were not bothered at the time. They would go over the bodies and do the exam and come... the students!’ Here was a deliberate misrecognition I suggest of war-dynamics and violence. What Somasundaram terms as a ‘socialisation to terror’ which had taken hold in Jaffna in these times, was represented by the educators as somehow being a conscious prioritisation of education in wartime, clutching at a notion of order and civilisation informed by their habitus (D. Somasundaram, 1998, 2014). Significantly, Prof Somasundaram himself framed his need to exit the warzone on receiving numerous death threats from the LTTE, as ‘a good time to take a sabbatical’.35 He retreated to an Australian university and proceeded to write and teach till he was able to return to Jaffna and resume his work, post-war.

State abstraction, ground realities

LP took charge, his appointment as coordinator of the A Levels giving him the power to lead, outside civil service hierarchies. When Colonel W.A.R. Gunawardena met with the provincial and zonal directors, LP accompanied them:

I am small fry...I go behind them.... But I am going to be the big man there in the hall, because I have to explain everything... how we are going to conduct the exam: to the Police, Army, Navy, Air Force.

GF: So you have a meeting with the four forces?

LP: Yes, before every exam. A Level and Scholarship, both exams are held in August, so that is one meeting, and O level, one meeting. All zonal education directors, Vadamarachchi, Thelmaratchy, islands etc. I had a lengthy discussion with the five zonal directors; I was covering the whole of the Northern Province.

Regaining power and authority in a zone where normally military men were in control, LP says ‘Then my work started, the papers came.’ The Air Force conveyed the question papers by air to Jaffna, accompanied by the officers of the examinations department in Colombo, and LP would go with his team and receive the papers at a secondary school.

This was the last sentry point to the Palaly airport. ‘That is the border, so I go and stay there. Then we take over the papers with my people. I take my people also there. That is

35 Interview with Prof Somasundaram, Jaffna, 2018.
the best. The police had to give some escort, but they can't come in my vehicle. The army, they are the people controlling Palaly Airport.

This was the handover of command of Operation A Levels and the custody of the exam papers territorially from Colombo to Jaffna in the Northern warzone, from the state armed forces to the civil service, from Sinhalese to ethnic-Tamil, from central bureaucrats to the peripheral warzone education administrator. The final agent in this warzone, involved in this intervention was the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who would deliver the exam papers from the Regional Coordination Centre of Vembadi College to the exam centres in the Northern Province.

Let us consider that the A Level intervention was enacted as a ‘state abstraction.’ Hansen and Stepputat claim that a ‘mythology of the coherence, knowledge and rationalities of the (ideal) state exists’ and is ‘carefully cultivated inside the bureaucracy’ as ‘the state’s own myth of itself’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.17).

This myth is carefully cultivated inside the bureaucracy and among political figures as the state’s own myth of itself and is constantly enacted through grand state spectacles, stamps, architecture, hierarchies of rank, systems of etiquette, and procedures within the vast expanse of the bureaucracy. (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.18)

In this empirical setting, the ‘elaborate state ritual’ took the form of a national examination. Did it ‘actually manage to create or reproduce a state mythology coherent enough for the state to impose itself on populations with effective authority?’ I argue that in this empirical setting, the A Level Examination was considered an educational entitlement, bounded in notions of welfarism rather than state power. The distribution of the educational entitlement of the national examination, the doorway to higher education to this community, held meanings which went further than ‘spectacles and rituals of the state’ which were ‘more for internal consumption among bureaucrats, clerks, accountants, officers’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001). Apart from asserting the legitimacy of the schooling order in a time of armed threat and upheaval, the A Level Examination was considered a sort of passport by the warzone population, for their child to leave the warzone to a place of sanctuary in the structures of higher education.

Meanwhile, below abstraction and performance, commonplace grumbles and arguments continued. The invigilators took issue with the way military officers carried out body checks:
And they used to have checks... The lady teachers will come ... In Vembadi centre, there are three or four centres. One centre will accommodate 150 children, maximum. So the checking was done by army personnel gents to ladies. That is very rude checking, they said ‘we won’t come for the exams’. The invigilators said ‘we will not come’. You know how they are checking us? So, these problems came up and step by step we have settled it. Then we have spoken to the Department officials, they are also reluctant to speak at the early stages because the army fellows... terrible! Later only when everyone started to understand each other, then the problem was minimised. I can speak with the department, I can speak with the forces, Major C used to say ‘it is easy to work with you’, and my department officers here in Jaffna gave me full support. They knew I was doing a very hard job. Morning, I will go to the centre, very interesting days!

The discourse of women’s rights and civilian interests were re-reordering the military dynamics during this intervention of schooling-in-wartime. In a polarised warzone, the introduction of the mechanism of the coordination meetings appeared to have introduced dialogue and complaint, resolving ground issues below the level of armed struggle. It is significant, that statement: ‘later only when everyone started to understand each other.’

Night, we had to stay [At the RCC]. We can’t go home and come. Because at 5 am, we had to be ready to put the papers in the Red Cross vehicle and send them. So...the army said you can’t come out. So we had to urinate into tins... how much we have suffered to conduct the exam, you should know! They are scared (Army) that we may do something to them, so they told us not to come out. Next meeting at the department [Department of Examinations, Colombo], I spoke, and there was pin drop silence when I said these are the problems, we were undergoing to conduct your exam! This is a national exam.

‘Your exam!’ Governance in this postcolonial state was marked by in-betweens. While the State remains the regulator of entitlements and the ‘hegemonic centre of society’ despite the challenge to sovereignty from separatist war, the exam was yours, mine and everyone else’s (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.19). Calling it the national exam in the North, as opposed to state exam, and national school preferred to state school, speaks to the historical symbolic struggles between the Northern Tamil schooling agents and the notion of the ‘state.’ When faced with the armed forces of state, LP would assert this is our exam: ‘and I will not give our exam papers to the armoured vehicle because it is our exam not the Army’s exam. They are
forcibly trying to give an escort for us! I don’t blame them cos they thought that LTTE may disturb.’

And the LTTE also wanted to show that they are conducting the exam.’ I said ‘no, don’t say it is your exam ... it is our exam’. I was telling ‘the exam is the government exam, no? National exam, no?’ They say ‘this is our exam, our children, so we are very careful about it and we will support... don’t think it is the government exam’... Arun Master would say ‘be careful! The army may give you something to take, saying question papers, and it may explode inside your vehicle. But we won’t.’ Sivapadan is the name but the LTTE name was Arun Master and he was the ‘in-charge’ of exams. He is no more. He is no more.

A strong doxic submission to historical educational entitlements and modern governmentality I suggest was marking this site of intervention in the northern warzone in postcolonial Sri Lanka. Here I argue that to some extent even Arun Master, the LTTE rebel member in charge of education in the civil affairs organisation wing, who stood on the other side of the state and non-state divide, may be considered to have internalised this ‘disposition to education’ in the habitus of the Northern Tamil community. Important questions arise from this empirical context of wartime Jaffna. Did the ‘appearance of structures’ arising from micro-operations - in the context of distribution of educational entitlements in civil war, in this instance, not policing, in this postcolonial society, produce not a ‘state effect’ but what I argue as a ‘governance effect’? Let us consider this shared doxic submission to governance in the form of wartime distribution of educational entitlements by social agents forming a chain across the polarised divide. As the distribution of historical entitlements pre-dated the formation of the contested nation state, I propose that they had contributed to a strong doxa which appeared resistant to armed challenge posed to such nation state. I argue that this intervention of conducting the A Levels in wartime, had criss-crossed and muddied the tidy categories of ‘state’, ‘non-state’ ‘militant’, ‘military’ ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ in this warzone.

The Call For a Ceasefire

The bureaucrat’s press notice

Annually over the long timeline of civil war in Sri Lanka, a notice appeared in the national newspapers: a call for a ceasefire by the Ministry of Education, requesting all armed parties to be mindful that the A Level exams were scheduled for a specified week in August. This was an extraordinary measure by bureaucrats operating from the site of governance, intervening in
matters of defence in wartime. On closer examination, I suggest here as I have done elsewhere in this thesis, that this practice owes its form to the objective structures of a postcolonial modernity in Sri Lanka which created shared habituses with a certain extent of shared doxa. How did a bureaucrat, the commissioner-general of examinations, acting from within the apparatus of the department of examinations consider it taken-for-granted practice to issue such a notice of appeal to armed parties in the newspapers in civil war? The department of examinations in their practices during wartime appeared to do so from an imagined separate site to that of state and non-state armed confrontation. This was an instance of deliberate misrecognition of wartime dynamics by the educators.

LP: But government I tell you, refused to declare peace for the exam! The department of exams asked whether you can go on ceasefire. These are the main important things I am telling you. The LTTE had accepted because they wanted a relaxed time.

GF: And they didn't declare a ceasefire?

LP: That is government. Government also, they have different people inside the government. The military will say ‘no! no! no!... they will prepare in this time, so we will continue.’

The bureaucrat distributing educational entitlements had cast the armed agents on both sides as a threat to the continuity of the order of the schooling habitus, pre-dating the war. This informs the doxic submission that underpinned the instance discussed in Chapter Two: in the immediate aftermath of war, the Department of Education had set up operations and carried out the business of university admissions protocol, despite trauma and devastation, at the Menik Farm refugee camp. I expand on this further on in this thesis in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. That intervention narrated as unremarkable flowing from doxic submission to the taken-for-granted notion of the ought-to-be by all social agents across the divide was enabled I propose by this intervention, the A Levels, without which the war-affected child would not be enabled to go to university. The strong doxa in this field of schooling-in-wartime, these objectively harmonized practices for the duration of the intervention, though regulated, were not carried out in obedience to a rule, and without the conscious reference to a norm as it were (Bourdieu, 1977, p.80).
The militants put up a poster

Now this set of dispositions was not limited to the educator bureaucrat class, but appeared to have been internalised in the very populations in the warzone. The following excerpt is from a report on the A Level Examination: LTTE and Government Attitudes by the University Teachers of Human Rights (Jaffna) issues on 10th September, 1990. The war-displaced Northern and Eastern Tamils who had accepted war-related deprivation as an inevitable consequence of civil war, voiced their outrage at the decision by the government to go ahead and conduct the national examinations on schedule. Armed hostilities had placed their displaced children at a disadvantage they asserted. Then the LTTE in the East called for a boycott of the A Level Examination:

Thousands of students were busy preparing for the A Level Examinations scheduled for August, when the war broke out in June. Ordinary civilian life was shattered in the North-East and in the East, people were living in terror, in refugee camps. When the government announced that the A Level Examinations would be held on schedule, the people felt furious and powerless. The government further announced that people from troubled areas could sit at other centres… The delay in the government announcing a separate examination for the North-East was damaging.

The LTTE was on the other hand looking for any means to get students involved in anti-government protests. Its student association organised a campaign against the government’s earlier decision and called for a boycott of the A Level Examinations. Subsequently, the LTTE became excessively agitated at the thought that a few students may go to Colombo and sit for the examination - an option hardly feasible to the majority. Then posters came up calling those who would sit for the A Levels outside the North-East, traitors. They together with their families were deemed unfit to live in the North-East and were condemned to exile. The problem itself was not a serious one in comparison with much else that was going on. This action demonstrated the LTTE’s inability to appeal to reason and community sense. Its paranoia and insecurity impelled it to rely on terror. (UTHR(J), 1990)

All this sounds rather out of place in ground situation reports on civil war. People in terror, displaced by fighting to refugee camps, nevertheless divert their outrage and felt furious and helpless by a government decision to go ahead with a national exam? There appeared to be a
shared habitus here within a larger habitus, extending beyond the governing class to the population of Northern and Eastern Tamils in the warzone, even those under rebel-control. Even from the site of a refugee camp in the warzone, this community continued to objectify their hope and resilience in the A Level Examination, despite war-induced deprivation and hopelessness.

The rebel governance practices were not quite clear on how to handle a population with such strong dispositions on educational entitlements, clearly at odds with the ground realities of war. This is the legitimacy conundrum they faced, significant to this research, performed in the enactment of an educational event, as differentiated from other measures arising from political ideology or conferring material benefits or capital on the populations under their control. For these armed guerrilla fighters are reported to be ‘excessively agitated’ at the possibility of a revolt if some students were enabled to go to Colombo and sit for the examination, while the majority could not. If such an act could cause a rupture in the relations between the militants and the population, this implied how civil society was able to levy a counterweight in matters of armed warfare drawing on ‘the historical aura and weight’ of educational entitlements in the minds of the population, as well as the militants (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.14). Consider the labelling of those who would sit for the A Levels outside the North-East as ‘traitors’? Deemed unfit to live in the North-East, committed to exile? Here in the East, a certain segment of the LTTE had attempted to treat the educational entitlement as not being discrete from armed warfare; not being located in the field of schooling, imagined as separate by the teachers. They had located the entitlement in the same site as the separatist struggle though ‘the problem itself was not a serious one in comparison with much else that was going on.’ Yet, the militants appeared to be similarly fixated by the A Levels in framing their own governance and legitimacy of the warzone population, they controlled (UTHR(J), 1990).

**The university teacher-activists make report**

Let us consider here the doxic submission of the writers themselves, the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna). The tenor of their writing implies that they are operating from the relational standpoint that the government is obliged to distribute entitlements to the war-affected Tamil North, while, at the same time engaging in active warfare in this period with the armed insurgents in a separatist struggle. Interestingly, here is acceptance of the state as being violent and destructive, as well as benevolent and productive: ‘While the authority of the state is constantly questioned and functionally undermined, this does not reduce the obligation of
states to confer full-fledged rights and entitlements’ on their citizens (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001). Also here, the University teachers appear to be puzzled at this momentary lapse of all reason in the militants: ‘this action demonstrated the LTTE’s inability to appeal to reason and community sense. Its paranoia and insecurity impelled it to rely on terror.’ The writers appeared to be wrestling with this conundrum from within a sort of deliberate amnesia relating to expectations of behaviour of the militant LTTE. While accepting that in other matters they were unpredictable and despotic, there appeared to be expectations held by the University teachers that they needed to succumb to a shared doxa on this matter, the conducting of the A Levels, this intervention.

Contrast this with the opinion of the Dutch Missionary Ben Bavinck who does not share the same class habitus, nor submit to the same doxa, as the educators in postcolonial Sri Lanka. He often expressed his non-comprehension of the contradictory statements and positions taken by community leaders, depending on the issue and the parties involved. Bavinck had served for decades in the warzone and Colombo. The journal entry on 14th August, 1995, reads:

The public education officials are calling upon the Army and the LTTE by written notice in the newspapers, to halt hostilities in the weeks in August due to the conducting of the Advanced Level Examination...But people say, the Army will surely wait to attack until the Advanced Level exams are over and the most important religious celebration in Jaffna, the Nallur Temple Festival is also finished on the 25th of August. Isn’t it moving to see the trust the Jaffna people still have in the government and in the army? (Bavinck, 2014, p.112)

In a context of crisis where the very structuring structures that inform the habitus of the field of education are under threat, there is, I suggest, a deliberate misrecognition of war-dynamics by the educator. Taking the approach that ‘the state may be analysed...not as an actual structure, but as the powerful, apparently metaphysical effect of practices’, I argue that all notices, measures, transactions of the state apparatus during the A Level Examination resulted in creating not just a ‘state-effect’ in wartime, but a ‘governance’ effect (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.17). Such deliberate misrecognition was needed, I suggest, in order to reinforce a commonsense world at odds with the ground realities in the warzone (p.79). Placing a notice calling for a ceasefire ‘in the public interest’ in the national press was also a notice to all parties I suggest, that education retained ‘historical aura and weight’ in this time of crisis and rupture. Caught up in the apparatus and metaphysical effect of all that was transacted in
conducted the exams, the educator needed to internalize the belief that the national exam is indeed an event, which all armed parties and their agendas must respect and defer to. What distinguished the A Levels and gave it further weight was that it was ultimately seen to deliver a pragmatic outcome: the student would be delivered beyond the violence of war. This is discussed in further chapters of this thesis. Whether in higher educational institutions in the state-controlled warzone, or beyond the warzone, the students would be moved to an alternative future with the passport of the A Levels. This was all made possible and thinkable, from a system of dispositions gained from a habitus which still traced hope through the structures of education in the imagination of this community.

Collegiality Across the Lines

Finally I insert a note on how the educators in this warzone established contact and collegiality from zonal to central bureaucracy, and how the mechanism of the coordination meeting was also a site of friendship across the lines between the male educator in the warzone and the armed officer of state. The notion of ‘politics’ being transcended by the higher morality of conducting ‘national exams for all’ accentuated in this context of deprivation and disorder, I suggest opened up kindnesses and mutual empathic understanding. For, despite the lofty rhetoric of distributing entitlements as we see in this study, the ground realities differed: economic embargoes caused hardship and unjust deprivation to the Northern war-affected community.

LP: The dept officials... there are still very good friends in the department of exams, because of that they used to bring me good things from Colombo, those things we couldn’t get here,

GF: Nice things to eat?

LP: What eat? Panadol [a brand of paracetamol]! You couldn’t get Panadol here, those days. So I was very popular in the department... so once I asked them to bring a big bundle for 35,000 rupees and it was distributed to the entire department. In Jaffna, everything was restricted, even a box of matches! Why should they? Soap, paper, sugar... even chemicals for the chemistry labs... those things were banned! One litre of petrol went up to 7,000, 8,000 rupees those days. We used to eat dinner early cos we didn’t have light; we didn’t have kerosene to burn the wick for the kerosene lamp.
Kerosene 2,000, 3,000 rupees a bottle, where to get it? You can’t get a box of matches?
We have forgotten now; our fellows have forgotten everything.

Operational activities in organising the A Level Examination contained exchanges which held emotion and meaning for these civil servants. LP reports how he was provided with a mobile phone called a CDMA on order of the Major General X and preserves the receipt where it is mentioned, ‘by order of the Major General X, this CDMA is issued to so and so.’ ‘I am having that receipt... remembrances!’ he says. Keeping these tokens safe, LP marks this intervention by respectful recognition he received from and gave to the ‘other’ agent, gaining an ally in the form of an armed officer of state. The army and the coordinator worked together in this intervention. They depended on the connections and acceptance of each other on either side of the divide. The reference to the ‘Tripod Agreement’ dealt with in the next chapter, signalled a tripartite agreement between the civil service unit of the Department of Examinations, the armed agents of state, the Sri Lanka Army and the non-state militant organisation, the LTTE.

LP: Brigadier X will joke, ‘we don’t need an LTTE person here cos the big LTTE fellow is here.’ He will joke like that. One day he lost his temper at me and shouted that I have to shut up. Because they didn’t have the vehicle, we needed to take the exam papers. They sent us a broken-down bus, just to prove a point. We managed, we put the exam papers in-between the seats. That day he may have shouted at me. But he knows that without the confidence of the LTTE in me, I would not have been accepted in that Tripod Agreement. You understand? So ‘this man is acceptable.’ So he thinks ‘this man knows the ins and outs of LTTE. The LTTE trust him no? But it takes a strong man to be neutral! So... I was entering the hall, the last man. He hugged me.... He hugged me in front of all the officials, ‘LP you are here!’ They will give us the Maliban cream crackers biscuits and cheese, and a very nice plain tea. After the meeting is over, Brigadier X said ‘there is a very good news for you LP...’ He was smiling... I was wondering, this man did not say anything! He says ‘I will be going on transfer, next Tuesday!’

Really Madam, I felt a tear, you see... !’ ‘No, no, no, this is a good news for you, no? ‘I said ‘no Sir, it’s not like that!’ Then he gave a first-class speech to the officials, a first-class man! He gave a very good speech about me after the meeting is over, he said ‘he is a very hard worker, he is very trustworthy, very rare to see, we have coordinated... cooperated well.’ He went next Tuesday. He put in the SMS... the mobiles started... he put in SMS... ‘LP... this is my home Tel no. This is my mobile no. Whenever you want
my support, please call me'. I said ‘thank you sir, we will meet again! I felt bad as both my friends were leaving.’

The war is over. Nearly three lakhs of people [300,000] were put in the camps. Can you remember?
GF: Menik Farm.

LP: Menik Farm. My son in law's parents also were in Vanni. They were also taken to the camps. She [gesturing to the little child quietly drawing in a corner of the room] was born only three or four months... first child! We have to go from here by plane to Colombo and then train to Medawachchi only up to Medawachchi the train was running and then we have to hire a vehicle and go. We had to show the child to the grandparents, no? They were in the camp! I saw Brigadier X there on TV. We went to Vavuniya first, I told him Sir, I saw you on TV, I now need a favour from you!’ ‘What is that LP? [imitating the Brigadier's voice] ‘Sir, my son-in-law's parents are inside.’ ‘So then you are a big Tiger? So my words are correct, I used to say you are an LTTE fellow?’ He was laughing like that. ‘No sir, they were actually doing farming in Vanni …’ ‘So what can I do for you?’ he asks ‘I want to see them’ I say. ‘Alright, when are you coming?’ Oh… a great man! I told him the schedule. ‘Alright, that day Basil Rajapakse is coming. I won't be available; I won't be meeting you. But there will be two MPs ... Military Police... they will come and meet you... they will take you to the camp. Everything, they will do for you.’ I reached Vavuniya, the army vehicle was there. After that I didn’t contact him. Military police asked ‘LP?’ I said ‘I will come in my vehicle.’ Because I have to take her, no? The daughter and granddaughter. They took me inside. No one was allowed, at that time!

In this large chunk of narrative, we see how social agents attempted to draw on a cultural reservoir of Sri Lankan family and social obligations, as if, I suggest, to balance a conflicted and ruptured ‘political’ against a continuous sense of ‘community’. It may appear unfathomable why a young baby a few months old needed to be taken to the refugee camp in the aftermath of war. Yet, to carry out these cultural family rites and look after family that needs support is essentially Srilankan. I see LP defying even the most divisive event in the history of the civil war: the loss of large numbers of Tamil civilians in the final battles and the deprivation of the Menik Farm refugee camp. By exhorting an armed officer of the perpetrator State, to recognise camaraderie and drawing on symbolic capital in this instance, the shared
habitual is traced through what was imagined and enacted as a sort of ‘enduring cultural community’. ‘Oh...a great man!’ was confirmation that both agents, acting in socially regular ways, not in reference to a rule, had restored the threads of continuing social order. Social sensibilities had even pierced the tight cordon of military control around the Menik Farm refugee camp where the contouring of legitimate-illegitimate, civilian-militant was a bit fuzzy. It informs this thesis on how educators intervened, setting up their zonal educational office in Zone X of Menik Farm Camp, in the aftermath of cessation of hostilities.

Conclusion

Over the course of fieldwork, the significance of this intervention by educators conducting an annual national educational event, the GCE A Levels, in the warzone, deepened. It was here that parties politically polarised in a separatist war, had converged in order to conduct a governance intervention in armed conflict. This is where I suggest the heartbeat of this research undertaking is located. It was in this intervention that unarmed educators were enabled to sit down together with armed officers of the state at one time and with the armed rebels on the other, taking command of a governance operation. It was in an annual educational event, that students under state and rebel control territories, isolated and militarily opposed in civil war, would unite in performing an intervention according to civil, not military protocol and regulation, concurrently. In seeking to understand the social logic that informed the dispositions that enabled the educator and armed agents to converge, I argue that in the give and take of war, the legitimacy of the stakes in the game, the illusio, had not been ruptured by armed struggle. It was the illusio or the belief in the game, that had informed the practice of calling for a ceasefire in the press on account of the A Levels being held in the second week of August, unremarkable, taken-for-granted. The pathos in this chapter arises from the awareness in the social agents that somewhere down the line, things had gone wrong and the loss was one of community. Yet in this empirical setting, the community arose from within a shared habitus informed by the structures in the schooling and bureaucratic governance order. Governance fell in-between. What was clearly marked in the sub-sites of this intervention was a notion of regularity which marked the site of schooling and governance and which the high-ranking ‘regular’ army officer recognised. Differences were not erased nor papered over. Being different and operating from a shared habitus was possible as the social agents even when being ‘different,’ did so in socially regular ways (Grenfell, 2014, p.53).
CHAPTER FIVE

Operation A Levels Part II:
Education as a Site of Spectacle, Fetishization and Parallelisation

In this chapter I propose that the conducting of the Advanced Level Examination annually in the warzone, the most important of the national exams, was objectively elevated by the educators above the transactions taking place in the site of armed struggle, through spectacle and performance. This was a time when the state was experienced as ‘hostile’ and ‘external,’ as well as received in palpable and intimate forms of violence inside the warzone. Writings by professors and other educators who had chosen to remain and serve in the warzone cited Hobbes, Locke and Taussig among others in reflecting the state as an agent of counter-terror needing to be resisted, while facing the daily threat of terror by diverse opposed Tamil militia groups (Hoole, 1990; D. Somasundaram, 2010). Against this backdrop, I explore in this chapter how the educators appeared to distance themselves from this conflicted notion or ‘idea’ of the state as well as the ‘experienced-state’, in order to intervene and draw on the resources and apparatus of state for this governance intervention. In Western European tradition, distancing the state usually imagined a state-society divide, and a diminishing of the importance of the state as a real thing. The positions taken by Foucault, Abrams, Taussig, Radcliffe-Brown and Mitchell are comprehensively discussed by Spencer and Hansen and Stepputat (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001; Spencer, 2007).

I propose that this site offers insights on how in postcolonial settings, lines of difference may blur and shift, and not exactly how Mitchell imagined, as clearly placing the state on one side and society on the other. While the state was losing out on sovereignty and control over the warzone populations, it was also materialising as the benevolent welfare provider in the warzone in the form of schoolbooks, school uniforms, school examinations and certificates. Using Bourdieu’s notion of field within a field, enabled this enquiry to examine how a notion
of legitimacy and citizenship was traced through schooling in contrast to the primitive acts of war in the field of armed struggle.

What is important to this study is not ‘where is the state located in all this?’ but ‘how did the educators re-imagine the world they inhabited? Here were educators operating from a habitus with western modern structures informing dispositions to education and governance on the one hand and a practical sense of distributing educational entitlements to children caught up in a civil war on the other. How did the educators negotiate a conflicted notion of the state in their representation and performance of the educational intervention? How did the habitus, the set of internalised dispositions of the educators find in this intervention an opportunity to be actualised? What does the possibility of convergence to conduct the A Level with armed agents across the lines and the impossibility of replacing the state exam or avoiding it, say of the doxa and illusio in this empirical setting and how did it translate in practice? Bourdieu held a universalistic view that the bureaucrats or jurists consider themselves as guardians of the national habitus (Fowler, 2020, p.447). I argue that the educators considered themselves to be guardians of the schooling habitus and held aloft this educational intervention, seemingly above the primitive struggle in the field of war. Underlying this ‘spectacle’ and ‘performance’, I suggest, was a layer of pragmatism and guile; this spectacle was not an end in itself. Here was a real tangible gift of moving the students away from the violence of civil war, negotiated through educational practices which had not been overwritten by wartime regulations.

In the following sections, I first discuss how legitimacy and authority was negotiated through the protocol of the seal, as standing clear of armed warfare, armed agent and a hostile state. Second, I propose that a sort of ‘fetishization’ of the exam papers was performed in order to negotiate with armed checkpoint and conduct this exam according to governance protocols. Third, I examine how the militant LTTE paralleled a national examination in a spectacle of their own and ask what this tells us of the doxa of this community. Finally, I add a note on how this community framed the loss of young lives to war-related violence through their view of the social order of schooling by framing the victims as A Level students. Did this enactment of an educational event re-order according to the habitus of schooling, who was at the centre, who was at the margins, and who belonged to the past and the future of the nation?

The Protocol of the Seal

We return to the discussion begun in Chapter Four on the insistence by the Department of Examinations on enforcing the protocol of the seal which must not be tampered with, nor
broken, as an exception to wartime regulations. As each and every package ordinarily needed to be unpacked and checked thoroughly before entering or leaving the warzone, involving queues and lengthy delays at both military and militant checkpoints, this was a special exemption demanded for sealed bundles of question papers for the duration of this intervention. Further on in the final chapters of this thesis I examine the power to make pastoral exception, to mark sites and practices as operating from a doxa that falls outside the rules of war. Later, this protocol was detailed in a public statement issued in the national press by the Commissioner-General of Examinations, responding to certain allegations of a possible leak of a biology paper in 2009. The historical significance and weight of the A Level Examination in this society is better understood with reference to a contentious issue in 1970. Then, rumour had circulated alleging that ‘Tamils were cheating by over-marking their own students’ at the A Levels (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.85). Intriguingly, Tamil minority expectations of fair treatment by the newly independent state, inter-ethnic resentment and loss of trust appeared to have been expressed through an educational event: the A Level Examination. The protocol of conducting the A Levels appeared to be of national public importance to all communities in Sri Lanka:

The coordinating officers at the 300 exam coordinating centres can break open the canvas sack seal only in the presence of three other officers manning the centre. The sealed outer packet is then sent to the exam centres, where they can only be opened by the Supervisor in the presence of the assistant supervisor and the examination crew along with two candidates. Here they check whether the packets for all the subjects to be held during that session, are there. The smaller packet is opened in the exam hall in the presence of the invigilator and the staff. Immediately after, they count the number of papers and distribute them to the candidates. If there are excess papers, they will re-enclose them in the small packet and re-seal within five minutes of distribution. This is to ensure that no paper will go out of the centre. At every point when the seal is broken, the set of people who are present have to sign. Sunday Times 30th Aug 2009. ("Exam muddle: ‘question of misreporting, not mistakes' Top exam official hits out at allegations of irregularities in exam papers and conduct of exams," 2009)

The significance of this unbroken seal was, I argue, an assertion of the symbolic power and legitimacy of the schooling order as well as a pragmatic measure. Despite the disorder in the warzone, educators were carrying out governance practices informed by the order of bureaucratic governance. Here were educators pushing boundaries, challenging armed agents
on all sides to ‘recognise’ that these material objects of governance required ‘special treatment’ and must be regarded as exempt from suspicion and permissions by armed agents. Notions of welfarism inform a doxic submission to educational entitlements in this postcolonial society. Using symbolic power, the educators appeared to be restoring the legitimate stakes in the game, the illusio, through the enactment of the A Levels (Wacquant, 1989, p.42). Practical reason dictates that in order to conduct this exam impartially for all students in and outside the warzone, it was considered unacceptable to this community that the bundles of exam papers would be opened and perused by armed agents at checkpoints, and perhaps ‘leaked’ to students. Intriguingly, amidst war-related displacement, suffering, intimidation and loss, it could appear unthinkable that the A Level Examination may be compromised in any way. ‘Even in the Vanni, it must be said... there had been no pilferage’ was one of the ambiguous statements I had quickened to on that first visit to the former warzone. The call for a ceasefire in the newspapers, discussed in Chapter Four was another practice informed by the symbolic power of the schooling order, while at the same time urged by practical reasons of safety and security for the students. It was impossible to organise the dissemination of question papers to all exam centres, to enable students all over the warzone to arrive at the centre at the same time, on the same day, if shelling, bombing continued in such sites. Meanwhile, the educator was re-tracing the lines of what was thinkable and unthinkable in a time of war.

During this intervention, the educators drew on different registers. In some instances, they would draw on a civil servant-missionary rooted vocabulary in describing their ‘mission’, of ‘serving’ and discharging their ‘burden’. At others, they would appropriate the vocabulary of national defence matters. In the newspaper article, the Department of Examinations refers to the conducting of the national examinations as performing their ‘national service.’ In our conversations, LP animatedly asserted:

> You can’t have the exam papers here, no? For one or two weeks, here? Only two days or three days only before the exam, the question papers will be dispatched from Colombo to Jaffna! You know why? Because of the security of the papers! Confidentiality of the papers...!

The unit in the Department of Examinations in charge of setting the exam papers was referred to as ‘the Confidential Branch’.

> The question papers for the ALs are set by a subject-specific panel of university staff comprising professors and associate professors, while for the O Levels and Scholarship...
Exam, the panels are drawn from the Colleges of Education, Teacher Training Colleges, the National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education, he said, underlining the fact that no teacher in the school sector is involved in these panels. "The panels are sworn to secrecy," he said. Sunday Times 30th Aug 2009 ("Exam muddle: ‘question of misreporting, not mistakes’ Top exam official hits out at allegations of irregularities in exam papers and conduct of exams," 2009)

These micro-operations carried out in modern, protocol-regulated form appear to show the educator moving between guardian, bureaucrat and operational commander. Initial preoccupation with readings on imagining the state and modern governmentality led to former versions of this chapter being concerned with what I saw as manifestations of Mitchell’s ‘state-effect’ and ‘state-abstractions’ discussed in Hansen and Stepputat. ‘The “appearance of structures” on the basis of these micro-operations seems to be one of the most fundamental features of modernity in general and the preeminent feature of the “state effect” that modern governmentality produces (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.17).

The question is how these insights can be given historical substance and differentiality and how we can create ethnographic sites from where such “state abstractions” can be studied. One obvious, if very underdeveloped type of study is that of the bureaucracy itself: its routines, its personnel and their internal cultures, gestures, and codes, its mode of actual production of authority and effects by the drafting of documents, uses of linguistic genres, and so on: in brief, an anthropology of the policy process that looks at it as ritual and as production of meaning rather than production of effective policies per se. (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.17)

Yet governance in Sri Lanka was full of in-betweens. If as Wickremasinghe held, being part of a social order was bound up in welfare entitlements rather than in constitutional rights, I return here to my argument that this is not so much the ‘state-effect’ but that which I term the ‘governance-effect’ (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.90). Here it cannot be said that the state ‘persisted in the imagination as an embodiment of sovereignty condensed in the covenant, as Hobbes saw it’ (p.2). I shifted my line of inquiry from asking ‘where is the state in all this?’ to ‘what is attempted by these educators, here?’ Protocols of bureaucratic governance were enacting a sort of re-appearance of governance structures of the state in an isolated warzone under armed control. A sort of ‘governmentality’ suffused every transaction and exchange in the process of conducting this national exam as discussed in this chapter and elsewhere in this
thesis. Heath and Legg write of India, where ‘the dominant imaginary of this state was that of development (Zachariah, 2005), embedding a governmentality at the heart of the bureaucracy that was co-worked by colonial and nationalist politicians and civil servants, and was transferred with power in 1947’ (Heath & Legg, 2018). In this postcolonial society, I suggest, that historical weight had placed educational entitlements closely bound to notions of authority and legitimacy, above other welfare services implied by ‘development.’

Yet the relations between the state and its citizens in postcolonial war-torn Sri Lanka were contradictory. The populations treated the state as hostile and unreliable, while at the same time, looking towards the state as ‘the representation of the volonté générale producing citizens as well as subjects; as a source of social order and stability’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.2). Let us discuss this a bit further. In this politically conflicted state, educational entitlements appeared to be intrinsically bound to notions of citizenship and legitimacy which populations demanded from the sovereign state as well as requiring the rebel non-state actors to be intermediaries in securing these entitlements for the duration of the national examinations.

The essential thing is, however, that a state exists only when these “languages” of governance and authority combine and co-exist one way or the other. The decisive step in the invention of the modern nation-state was exactly when the sovereign state became entrusted with expanding tasks of managing the social and economic well-being of its people, to protect, reproduce, and educate its citizens, to represent the nation, its history, and its culture(s). (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.8)

Nowhere more so than in the warzone. Impassioned local duels took place between the governed and the state on the one hand, and the militants on the other, when the A Level Examination was threatened by war-related disruption. I return to the reported instance discussed in Chapter Four of how displaced populations had ‘accepted war-related deprivation as an inevitable consequence of civil war’ yet ‘voiced their outrage at the decision by the government to go ahead and conduct the national examinations on schedule. Armed hostilities had placed their displaced children at a disadvantage they asserted’ (UTHR(J), 1990). You could say the demand on the state to represent the volonté générale appeared to be strongly apparent in the call to distribute the A Level Examination entitlement to the war-affected students in particular. Failing to do so would result in the state being cast as the source of social (dis)order and (in)stability and devoid of authority in the eyes of the
population. Here, the growing pressure emanated from within the citizenry of this state, burning in the imagination of local populations demanding educational entitlements as a historical right dating back to colonial rule.

The very notion that students all around this divided island, locked in civil war for decades, sit for national exams together, on given days of the school calendar year, I suggest, was by itself a ritual of ceremony and significance. The reinforced doxa of this community had pulled together a chain of social agents who converged in order to deliver this governance measure and then dispersed, after. It had enabled the educators to insist that the seal must not be broken on bundles that passed through both military and militant hands, criss-crossing sites of civil governance and armed struggle. Here the educators were not really engaged in creating the ‘state-effect,’ Each year they moved through state structures to deliver a ‘real’ measure of governance, bound up in modern notions of a Western European tradition. For the duration of this intervention, the state, the citizen, re-appeared subsumed in a language of governance and authority, creating an appearance of social order in disorder.

‘Fetishization’ of the Exam Papers and a Tripod Agreement

The treatment of the exam papers in this section is interpreted using discussions on the ‘spectacle’, ‘mythological dimensions of the state’ and ‘fetishization.’ Examining a layer of experiential reality of conducting the A Level Examination as an intervention by educators in the northern warzone of Sri Lanka, I look at what was ‘fetishized’, why was this deemed necessary, and to what ends? I propose employing the tools of habitus and doxa as being important to avoid misinterpreting what we may see as spectacles of state power and pomp in postcolonial communities.

Mbembe’s (1992) well-known and controversial depiction of the obscenity and absurdity connected with public exercise of state power in the “postcolony,” in casu Cameroon, points to the importance of the state as an entity manifesting itself in spectacles. To Mbembe, the impulse of state power in the postcolonial world, due to its origin in a system of excessively violent, colonial power, is organized around an equally excessive fantasy of making the imperatives of the state, commandement, the hegemonic center of society.

But the specifically postcolonial feature, Mbembe suggests, is the way the state is excessively fetishized in pomp, ritual, and entertainment, and the way these spectacles
are disarmed but also domesticated through jokes and humor to an extent that there is a coexistence or conviviality between the official and the everyday world. (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.19)

Jokes of a sexual nature, bodily functions and appetite, popular forms of ridiculing power were interpreted as examples of ‘how hollowness of state power’ was dealt with. Hansen and Stepputat in the introduction to their edited work, critique this interpretation as there being nothing African nor postcolonial about such jokes. J.F. Bayart’s argument similarly depicts African politics as remaining ‘organised around specific discursive registers that often predate colonialism, such as the “politics of the belly” understood both as a practical politics of feeding populations and a symbolism of power around metaphors of eating and digesting’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.19). All this means that misinterpretation of what appears as spectacle is all too easy, and license has been taken in translation to diminish postcolonial communities as being ‘chaotically pluralistic,’ ‘unstable’ and ‘unreal’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001).

So what is particular in the case of the Sri Lankan trajectory, in the enactment of the spectacle of the A Level exam? To begin with, this performance was not about state pomp and ritual in a warzone where the very notion of the state was hostile and conflicted. It was a measure of governance. Legitimate power in this site used the established register of ‘governance’ creating a spectacle by performing roles of guardian, governor, and teacher. The real object of studying this spectacle is to understand how in this community, legitimacy could be enacted even when state power was compromised and sovereignty was challenged. The fetishization here, I suggest, is not attached to objects which imply sumptuous state powers but to educational documents signifying something to this community responding from an ingrained system of dispositions gained long before civil war: the A Level exam papers. From this entry-point, I look at the exchanges in conveying the question papers of the A Level exam into the warzone where Brigadier D took charge of the operation from a military perspective. ‘We trust you LP’ he says. LP elaborated on how he interprets such ‘trust’:

LP: Trust in the sense, if I had put an answer script inside, they are bundled, you know? Answer scripts, not only question papers! Question papers come from airport to here, I will take over those papers outside the sentries. They won’t allow me to go to the airport. Then, (after the exams) the answer scripts have to be put into the vehicle for 24 hours. The vehicle should be there (outside the sentry point), then only they will take over, under their custody (the Army), the vehicle will be there, but the papers
coming from there, everything checked, no? So they will give the papers this side, no? Taking over from army is not a problem for me, question papers, cos they are getting .... Answer scripts no problem... No! No! No! ....I will tell them, Don’t touch... ! I am more than the Major!

GF: So Question papers... answer scripts... they can’t touch?

LP: They can’t handle the question papers as well as the answer scripts! I was the steady person. I was commanding them. I told them, ‘otherwise I will go home!’

The exam paper was to be carefully conveyed, unsullied by the handling by armed agents. No one could touch the papers except the agent who was unarmed and negotiating his authority from above the primitive struggle of ordinary armed men battling for political ends. The exam papers were elevated above all this, pristine, the seal unbroken, signalling a ‘thing’ of virginal purity. There was no trace of obscenity or lurid jokes by these educators, operating from this site of governance, not politics.

I was the supporting agent to the department of examinations. This is my theory. The exam is not mine, I am not responsible, I am supporting, I am helping the department of exams to the government to conduct the exam. That’s all. I don’t want to take the risk. And they wanted to take me. There were so many chances, I was forced to go by forces vehicle. I said ‘no, I can’t come because it will be blown up in the landmine. Allow me to go by civil vehicle. I can go because the LTTE has given me the assurance that they won’t touch my vehicle.’ (GF interrupting: a vehicle was blown?) I tell you, so many examples, my friends tell me I have to write a book...

Here I am beginning to see the instrumental purpose of ‘fetishization’. In accordance with exam protocol, the papers should not be perused by anyone before given out to the students at the exam centre by the appointed teacher. Yet here was a performance which spoke of something more, through the command issued by LP and the statement ‘I am more than the Major!’ Being the guardian of this exam paper, LP, the coordinator of the national exams for the Northern Province, appeared to swell in significance for the duration of this intervention, subsiding after, to his customary rank as deputy zonal director. ‘I am small fry’ he said, ‘but at this time, I am the leader’. Gupta writes about the performative competence of bureaucrats (Gupta, 1995). Though the coordinator may be at other times not so different from Gupta’s low-level bureaucrats, at the time of this intervention, he was extraordinary and stepped out of the bounded daily transactions of routinized bureaucracy.
Many teachers re-told with pride how the former (late) Vice-Chancellor Prof TJ had moved the bundles of university exam papers ‘which must not be opened’ through all security checkpoints, militant and military. The Vice-Chancellor would assume the role of ‘the anointed one’ conducting a sacred rite. When faced with the younger LTTE cadres of minor rank at the checkpoint, he would dramatically announce in a low mock-serious tone that these bundles could not be opened, as he, the professor, had taken a vow. Not a drop of water would pass his parched lips until these exam papers were safely conveyed to the exam centres. Now the last drink of water he had had was before he had taken on this charge, he would say; this near-sacred duty of conveying the exam papers. He felt exhausted with dehydration and appeals to the junior rebel guards that he would be grateful for speedy clearance, so he could hasten on his way. Only when he had delivered the bundles to the appointed authority, and his entrusted rite of conveying them had been performed, would he be able to take a sip of water and revive. Here, the professor assumes the role of the anointed one bearing the fetish-object, the exam papers, into the dark territory of the warzone, from where something had been ‘robbed’ needing to be restored. This spectacle, gave those who were entrusted with the charge of carrying the exam papers through the armed barriers, protecting it, such as Prof TJ, the notion of being spiritually tenacious; LP, a strong man. A continued supply of educational entitlements from within the state bureaucratic apparatus had delivered temporal possibilities for educators to intervene in a war climate with humour and theatrical performance, which peaked in the conducting of the A Level exam.

How did the educators, students, parents, re-imagine the world they inhabited? How did the spectacle perform the notions of this imagined world and what had been used as symbols and ideas of statecraft and power?

Geertz retrieves the importance of this in his study of the classical Balinese theater state, the negara, a polity whose basis of sovereignty was its status as “an exemplary center—a microcosm of the supernatural order.” Pomp, ritual, and spectacle were not devices to represent the state or occlude its violent nature; they constituted the core of the state that was based on the “controlling idea that by providing a model...a faultless image of civilized existence, the court shapes the world around it.” (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.15)

Here, the ritual and spectacle of the educational intervention in the northern warzone similarly were neither aimed at representing the state particularly, nor occluding its violent nature.
Informed by a habitus that imagined a civilised existence through governance, especially education, this spectacle enacted the just distribution of educational entitlements to all students in this divided island. As discussed in Chapter One and elsewhere in this thesis, the ought-to-be was imagined as a community where its children went to school daily. At a time of great threat to a ‘civilised existence’, this spectacle was charged with an even greater aura and meaning. Discussing Geertz, Hansen and Stepputat suggest that

the negara should remind us that there are languages of stateness other than those invented in Europe in the past two centuries but also that the rationality of intent, purpose, and action often imputed to modern states—by the analyst as well as the citizen-subject—tends to occlude the important mythical dimensions of the modern state. (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.15)

I propose that in this study, both the rational intent, purpose and action of the modern state, and the imagined ought-to-be, coalesce in this spectacle of the A Level intervention in the warzone. In place of the ‘mythical’ I use Bourdieu’s tool of field theory, doxa, as informing the imagined ‘ought-to-be’, the dimensions of which appeared to be bounded by a postcolonial modernity. For the ‘magic’ lay in something more tangible, contradictory, hopeful and altogether pragmatic: all around this divided island, the spectacle of students from rebel and state-controlled territories uniting in sitting for this public examination rejecting a future as an armed fighter. This was the most compelling performance of all.

I now turn to the informal Tripod Agreement imagined and enforced by LP. Here was an example of an ‘abstraction’ of formalised agreement, of concord, of something which informed a notion of civilised existence, within the disorder of a warzone. ‘An unwritten pact’ says LP. ‘You can use that word, the ‘tripod’ agreement! I created it. The educator had wagered his life on relying on a verbal, proposed agreement of being allowed to safely move through militant and military controlled points in the warzone, on condition that he would travel unarmed in a civilian vehicle without armed escort, state or rebel. LP tested the limits of ‘possibilities’ and what could be achieved in this space of intervention. The armed forces could not allow this bureaucrat to appear not to need state armed protection. They could not let the ‘thing,’ the exam papers be conveyed without armed escort, by accepting LP’s assurances that he needed none. ‘Once I came from Vavuniya taking the question papers’ recalls LP. ‘My vehicle is in between...that is, I was coming towards Omanthai’ he goes on, signalling that he was passing the state armed forces checkpoint at the border of state-controlled Vavuniya. Omanthai was
in ‘no-man’s land’ as it was called between the state armed forces-manned checkpoint and the LTTE checkpoint at the entrance to the rebel-controlled Vanni. In this instance, LP was transporting the Grade 5 Scholarship exam papers:

I was in the civilian vehicle! Then in the lorry, one of my officers and one peon was there. The lorry was full of the question paper packets. I never get down from the vehicle... no...because the Scholarship papers are also inside my vehicle. So one police constable came to me and said ‘Sir, IP (Inspector of Police) wants to meet you’, he said. ‘I can't come from the vehicle, please tell...’ I wasn't making big shows or anything...I was very polite but I kept my grip very carefully. I told him go and tell him that the question papers are in my vehicle also and I can't leave the vehicle and come. Right? He's about two metres away. He went, again, he returns ‘Sir he wants to meet you?’

I said ‘you tell him if he wants to meet me, I will go back...I will not get down from the vehicle.’ Police IP was coming...‘hmm...you can’t get down from the vehicle?’ I said ‘I am sorry, sir [humble tone]... the question papers are here and I was strictly instructed not to leave the vehicle. I can’t leave the vehicle, sir.’ So he wanted to find some mistake. He wanted to check the vehicle. I said ‘no Sir, you can’t check the vehicle. You see both vehicles ‘exam board, both vehicles are carrying...’ I said ‘this is a Tripod Agreement: LTTE, Ministry of Exams and Forces!’

LP then states directly to me: ‘You can use that word! I created it - an unwritten pact!

Despite the attempt by LP to create the notion of order and agreement by citing ‘The Tripod Agreement’ the Inspector of Police presses LP: ‘why didn’t you bring an escort from Vavuniya to Omanthai?’ ‘he was using some strong words’ says LP. The Inspector goes on ‘up to Omanthai it is under government control, no? So you should have brought a police officer with the question paper lorry.’ That is the question he’s asking’ says LP who explains that ‘if the police officer comes, he will be blown, I also will go up!’ Here LP clarifies to the police officer that these were the terms of The Tripod Agreement:

That is the understanding we are having with the Movement, that I won’t take military officers or forces in my vehicle. If you come in my vehicle as an escort from Vavuniya to Omanthai, I will get blown up in a landmine! ‘Ah... you tell like that, ah?’ He asks me. He leaves me. So I asked ‘Sir, shall I proceed or go back to Vavuniya... I won’t allow you to check the vehicle. I have told him, right? ‘Go!’ he says, like that. Then I have to proceed through Vanni. I asked him the very instant the driver started the vehicle, the
Inspector was by my side, he had allowed me to proceed, so I asked him ‘I am going to Muhamalai, are you going to give me an escort through LTTE country?’ He smiled, ‘you are a very cunning fellow!’... like that...So this was the situation, I don’t know what will happen in Vanni to me. It was under the control of the LTTE. They may shoot me.

Returning to a discussion with the representative of the armed forces for Operation A Levels, Colonel W.A.R. Goonewardena, LP represents:

Sir, am sorry to tell you, we don’t want any escort! The papers will go on smoothly, The exam will be conducted smoothly. I can understand...because I have had a discussion with the LTTE. They are prepared to give all the support. They are the people who want to conduct...If the exam is not conducted the LTTE will get a bad name no? The people will...revolt against them, they know it, the people will revolt against them. So they wanted to conduct the exam. Then he says ‘no, no LP!’...he is a very good friend of mine, ‘WAR’ Gunawardena...’we will give you an escort.’ ‘I tell you... (lowers voice)...but our officials will not come into your vehicle.’ I have told them. At that juncture, I will be a big fellow and I will speak from the heart. I have told them...‘my officials, they will not come...’ ‘No, no, but we will give escort! Front and back, armoured vehicles!’

Right at Nelliady, Vadamarachchi, the first day itself...the army vehicles...were bombed and three or four soldiers died and so many injured in the armoured vehicle. But luckily our exam vehicle...nothing happened!

In this spectacle all three actors, civil servant, armed officer of state and armed rebel are involved in an extraordinary enactment of something which is difficult to pin down completely.

What may be simply said is that they struggled for control, authority and territorial ownership of a governance measure, the A Level Examination. Hansen and Stepputat discuss how Taussig explored the notion of the state-fetishization ‘through a range of magical transactions and spectacles from spirit possessions to official textbooks and monuments in a Latin American country’(T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.20). Both Taussig and Mbembe ‘s interpretations of the ‘spectacle’ is that a sense of the absurd and surreal suffuses the representations of power’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001). There was a story on how the Liberator Bolivar’s sword which is described as the ultimate fetish of the state, had been stolen from a museum. This is interesting as it described how a fetishized ‘thing’ when in their possession, was wrapped ‘in multiple layers of cloth and plastic so that it literally grew and grew to such a size (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.20).’ These examples are cited here to contrast with the comparatively
regular and formal educational document, the exam paper, which appeared to swell and grow in importance through what I suggest as ‘fetishization’. Here, LP is the agent who brings the ‘thing’ to its fruition, this ‘thing’ which has grown into something beyond the rational boundaries of its importance, at odds with the realities of the warzone.

Second day: 13 soldiers died. 13 soldiers were killed at Kaithady. Second day of the exam. Very interesting I will tell you...when the exam was over, they were carrying the answer scripts to the coordination centre of Kaithady. A small coordination centre. The call will say come and take it to the RCC. So...the paper was going with the escort of these idiots, the armoured vehicle in the corner – 13 soldiers! So...I got the message those days, no mobile also. Mobiles banned! I got the message that some people have said that the answer scripts were on the road... but it was not like that!

Our vehicle was kept there...They were in an armoured vehicle, the army. They (the LTTE) started firing from trees, after they blew them up, they were firing from the trees to the armoured vehicles. I went to the spot, because I had to take the answer scripts, luckily...we had only one vehicle, the G.A. gave me, the education department didn’t have a vehicle those days, luckily the G.A.’s number plate was in front. We used to joke ‘there, the G.A. is going!’ I used to use it with the GA's banner!

They...the army people had thought that the government agent is coming! Because of that that they did not shoot me. Another man, they wouldn’t care, even department of education they will not worry, because they told me, ‘you idiots, because of your children we are giving support to conduct the exams and now our people are killed!’ The big people were shouting at Kaithady: ‘we are giving help for you to conduct the exams for your students, but they are blowing us up, we are blown, our 13 soldiers have died!’ he thinks that I am the Government Agent. He has seen the board there, that’s why he didn’t shoot me! It is simple, those days that is simple. I was acting like the government agent: ‘I am sorry I got the message from the Kachcheri secretary and I came.’ I said ‘sorry, I came from Kachcheri I got the message that some incident took place.’

LP says the rumour had been about answer scripts being on the road, the objects of disorder. ‘But it was not like that’, he asserts. In order to save the ‘fetishized-object’ the answer scripts, the educator who cannot depend on his immunity due to his rank as a state bureaucrat, turns to the emblem of order to restore a sense of civilisation in chaos: the vehicle of the government
agent. The ‘paraphernalia of vehicles, titles, and little rituals, as parts of a continuous state spectacle asserting and affirming the authority of the state’ in this instance was still negotiated from the site of public governance, which could attempt to re-create a notion of order. (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.37). Taussig and Mbembe both make this point, argue H and S: ‘state power is fetishized through displays and spectacles but becomes effective as authority only because it invades, and is appropriated by, everyday epistemologies of power, of the magical, the spiritual, and the extraordinary (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.20). Here, there had been robbers who had robbed this community of something that was intrinsically tied up with the notion of the ought-to-be, the core of a civilised existence. (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.37). Education was a symbolic totem pole around which the Northern communities had rallied, and importantly, around which all communities in the island had gathered, especially at a time of national examinations held in civil war.

The LTTE’s ‘Mock’ Exams

Returning on fieldwork to Jaffna in 2018, I mentioned to PK, a lecturer at the Jaffna University that I was looking into how the A Levels had been conducted in the warzone. His reaction was unexpected: Throwing his head back, he laughed out loud:

Oh...the A Levels! The A Levels! That is the point on which the LTTE comes apart! Their Achilles heel! I mean, they were not able to get the people to accept a different version of the A Levels? They were able to do so much, really, parallel states, parallel government, this, that, but the A Levels? No, no, they had to succumb to the government exams!'

Why did the LTTE refrain from conducting their own version of the A Levels if they had a parallel government with an administration ‘wing’ in charge of education? What did it say about the representation of social order in this Northern Tamil community if the doxa did not consider it acceptable to replace a national examination such as the A Levels? The practical operators in the schooling habitus deemed it unthinkable to a parent, who would not allow their student to be removed from the competition with all other students in the island and placed at a disadvantage. They would tolerate all manner of war-related oppression and deprivation without violent resistance in many parts of this community. On the matter of the A Levels though, the LTTE would not find a replacement for the state examinations, acceptable to the warzone population. Most significant was the categorisation by the LTTE discussed in

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37 Interview at the University of Jaffna, May 2018.
earlier chapters of this thesis: some children in rebel-orphanages would take up arms and fight, while others continued to study up to the A Level as potential administrators of the imagined nation of Tamil Eelam. All this meant that the LTTE were bound by and sort of automatically submitted to a doxa which placed the A Levels as ‘the will to remain in education’ and somehow up to O Level as potential ‘armed recruits’. None of this was guaranteed or could be relied upon and students did not walk along these lines in the disorder of a warzone. Yet the LTTE opted to conduct a very important exam, recollected by student and teacher interviewees: ‘a special exam’ held in Year 9 for fifteen-year-olds according to T, the former student of Jaffna College.

LP: LTTE had their own exam. Everything same style like that O Level, they had their own exam. We felt it was like a revision test. Even if we don’t like we can’t say no. They had their own competitions but they didn’t block the department exams. They published in the newspapers and they gave prizes also. They distributed the papers. They were running a parallel government. They wanted to show that we can also have it. Very serious exams, and the papers were set by our fellows.

GF: When you say our fellows?

LP: Printed in our press! (state press) Our teachers!

GF: But they must have set it in the Vanni?

LP: Vanni? Who can do that? The Tigers can do that? If you want a chemistry paper, they will take the best chemistry teacher and provide the best accommodation in the Vanni...like a workshop...lots of teachers, everybody was involved, you can’t refuse! Yes, if you are asked to be the chief guest, on prize giving day, of the tournament conducted by the LTTE? You had to do like that! There is nothing to hide.

GF: Of course! You had to survive!

LP: You used a very good word: we had to ‘survive!’ We didn’t show the government in the wrong way. We didn’t show the bad side of the LTTE. You want to conduct the tournament for under 14? Alright...they will ask...because I was responsible for sports. You want a tournament? I will advise, You meet the zonal director, you will meet the educational officer, I will advise. You will meet the divisional officer, what are the things you need, and we will start the tournament. English competition, Tamil competition,
dance, music, very competitive. Even the Ministry of Education matter, they will provide.

If the school is bombed, they will put up a temporary shed and ask you to study there.

Significantly, at no point in this long separatist war, did the LTTE replace the O Levels at age 16 in Year 11 and the A Levels taken by the students in Year 13, leading to a place in a state institution of higher education. As discussed in Chapter Two, experts in rebel-governance offer an explanation: ‘when it came to health, education, and several other sectors, the rebels worked alongside government institutions’ (Mampilly, 2011, p.112). Repeatedly applying the clarification made by Terpstra and Frerks that what we see as LTTE-governance is not provided by durable structures, but governance practices, I treat this parallelisation of the national exam as an LTTE governance practice (Terpstra & Frerks, 2018). Another position taken by political analysts is that even rebel formations when carrying out governance practices are bound by what I suggest in this thesis as being the habitus and doxa in this field that pre-dated the war. Guha states that ‘revolts inevitably take place within social imaginaries structured by prevailing arrangements of power and only rarely transgress established notions of authority,’ (Guha, 1983, p.10). Eqbal Ahmad echoes this along with other rebel governance experts ‘successful parallel hierarchies, therefore, are generally based on extant local patterns and experiences—a phenomenon notable in the Mexican, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Algerian revolutions’ (Ahmad, 1971). I propose that Ahmad’s statement is true of both the state and non-state LTTE in this empirical location: ‘symbols and styles of leadership derive from the mystical and the rational bases of legitimacy’ in a community (Ahmad, 1971, p.11). Finally I return to Kasfir’s observation that ‘cultural beliefs and social values instilled in insurgents before they rebel, influence their governance of civilians, often more deeply than rebels realize’ (Kasfir, 2015, p.40).

Turning away from rebel governance and political discourse, I look at the communities under their control in this postcolonial setting as finding their own inconvenient ways of imposing limits on both rebel and state. Particularly, in this empirical location, as I have argued elsewhere in this thesis, this community did not view national exams as a simple provision of public welfare services. Going beyond, I see the Northern Tamils as demanding educational entitlements historically ingrained in their habitus since colonial times, pre-dating the formation of the nation-state. I argue that the rebel-LTTE too had appeared to work within, not outside this doxic submission to state schooling and state exams as a given, not as a result of not having a choice.
In a strange postcolonial trait of this society, the practice of paralleling rather than replacing the A Levels and employing the apparatus of the state for educational governance appeared to coalesce with a hostile armed challenge to the political legitimacy of this state. Not recognising the sovereignty and unitary nature of the state in maps, flags, anthems and other symbols, coexisted with the recognition of textbooks, school uniforms, classrooms and curriculum structures. Moving up, seals, exam papers and that final order, the national A Level Examination certificate spoke to a habitus from which the rebels in their mimicry, could not diverge, even in disorder. It was the national certification awarded only by the state authority to students taking national exams, that carried historical weight. I will return to this later. The community and the teachers and educators would accept LTTE-control, appropriation and usurpation of the school resources and were helpless to stop recruitment from the school classroom. In return, they would not accept replacement exams set by the LTTE for the Year 5 Scholarship exam, the O Levels, the A Levels, the Teacher Training exams, the University Exams and others. This was considered unthinkable.

According to interviewees, the grand spectacle of the parallel national examination, the LTTE put on each year, the ‘special exam’ held before the O Levels (equivalent to the GCSEs), was recollected vividly.

T: They had their own Tamil Day, Science Day. Then before O Levels in all areas in the Northeast, the LTTE had an exam. The Voice of Tigers radio service would read out who got the highest marks. I remember they gave away prizes, the rumour was that Prabhakaran himself would give the prize to those students who got the highest marks. Yes, you could call it a parallel system. They even produced publications for teachers – the LTTE’s educational arm released these. I sat for the A Levels in 2004. 38

Here, the LTTE appeared to commemorate students’ educational achievements in the same forms used to commemorate those killed in militant ranks. T mentions the Voice of Tigers radio, incidentally a Western slogan, announcing the names of students in the warzone who excelled at this examination. Prabhakaran the rebel-leader was reputed to have only appeared in person to meet young cadres who were to perform a suicide mission the following day. This was reportedly at a bizarre rite of a Last Supper, symbolic of the Christian faith. Rumour attaching to the student who excelled at the LTTE examination is significant, fetishizing the exams to capture the imagination of the student population. All this confused binaries of

38 Interview with T, a former student of a Christian mission school for boys, Colombo, 2019.
militant-civil, violent-benign, sacrifice-entitlement and illegitimate-legitimate. Whatever rulers have in mind, the world inhabited by the teachers, students, educators, parents did not necessarily correspond to the intended version enacted in this spectacle. A female principal of an American Missionary Girl’s School, SM, spoke from the habitus of this community but adding a note on the vulnerability of the student and the trauma faced by those sitting the exam in wartime, omitted by male educator-interviewees:

SM: I think it’s basically, innately, everybody wanted that factor of education, that’s all ingrained...And also you know that humanistic feeling that the children had to do the exam, pass the exam and move on. That was at the back of everyone’s mind and there was this subconscious coordinated effort to make sure that the children sat without disruption. At that juncture, everyone overcame their...whatever...idiosyncrasies that they had, and combined, came together in a concerted effort, saw to it that the children sat without any disruption.

Some children...there are children...who get affected by the war, and sometimes they will come for the morning exam and they will vanish for the second exam. Because some are not able to...to do the exam. And then you know Gayathri...you had to go...pick them up from school....and the examiners cooperated...you had to get them to the exam centre, even if they were late, they were allowed to sit. And then sometimes the identity cards were a nuisance, a problem. And then the Director of Education would give...whatever they could, they did, to ensure that these children sat the exam....And finished their whole school career. I think that was kind of an...innate...something. 39

Let us return to the confusion of the borders between state apparatus and imagined notion of the LTTE state dissolving. The reality on the ground was that the Movement could not or did not wish to produce exam papers by teachers who were not of the ‘very best,’ in order to give this mock exam the importance in the eyes of the population. ‘Vanni? Who can do that? The Tigers can do that? If you want chemistry paper, they will take the best chemistry teacher and provide the best accommodation in the Vanni...like a workshop...!’ this indicated the solid weight of an important school examination in the eyes of all the members of this community, including I suggest, the Tamil Eelam Education Council of the LTTE organisation. Where does doxic submission begin and where does it end? As the contours grew fuzzy between state

39 Interview with SM, Colombo, 2018.
apparatus, historical entitlements and the ‘mission’ of the teacher to ‘serve’ the pragmatic needs of war-torn students, it was all a bit confusing for those living in the warzone. In Chapter Two, student K in the rebel-held Vanni would step forward and sing the song of the future nation of Tamil Eelam. Similarly in Chapter One, student S from Hindu College would go teach the Vanni students and participate in commemorations, while student T narrated how during the ceasefire the state would visit Jaffna College to speak about peace. The LTTE would host their commemoration and the students would try to avoid attending long boring events hosted by either party. What the teachers or the students did with whomever, at whatever time and for whichever dreamed up nation, was done in order to survive and negotiate a pragmatic way out of this chaos. The A Levels with both its spectacle and rational promise did appear to capture the imagination of teachers, educators and parents living in this war-torn community, conjuring up in a time of hopeless deprivation, hope for a future generation beyond the violence of war. For the students I interviewed, this was simply the LTTE ‘mock exams’ or the added benefit of sitting ‘practice exams’ way ahead of the national exams.

The Death of an A Level Student

Finally, in this chapter I insert a note on how a community in a warzone in Northern Sri Lanka framed the loss of their young members, the future generation, to war-related violence. The deep shame experienced by the Northern Tamil community leaders expressed in diaries, reports, books and poetry, was rooted in their helplessness to prevent the infliction of senseless violence on the young by the Indian Army, their own Tamil paramilitaries, the state armed forces and the LTTE, their purported liberators (Bavinck, 2011; Hoole, 1990; D. Somasundaram, 1998). From a habitus structured by modern educational institutions and values, the governors, civil servants, professors, teachers, doctors and other professionals framed those who joined armed revolutionary groups as uneducated or unfortunate not to have received a good education. An educated person was not expected to take up arms or be militant. At the very early stages many university students and older school children revolted against the oppressive policies of the state and the growing intimidation by armed forces. Hoole, Thiranagama and others write of this, notably, in the publication The Broken Palmyra a key work by Tamil intellectuals in the Northern warzone (Hoole, 1990). Those early revolutionaries were thought to have considered the armed struggle to be short-lived, not lasting over quarter of a century.
After July 1983, almost a whole class of senior boys at Hartley College, Pt. Pedro, joined the T.E.L.O. Most of them were bright students from an elite school with good G.C.E. A Level grades. They made the sacrifice in the belief that within two years Eelam will be won, enabling them to get back to their careers. (Hoole, 1990, p.56)

Within a generation of young people born and raised in war, from 1983 to 2009, some graduating from higher educational institutions that did not shut down completely in the warzone, were those who never lived beyond adolescence. As discussed in Chapter One, schooling marked the crossroads at which the student stood, his choice signposted by markers of O Level Examination, A Level Examination and a place in higher education. I return to Bavinck's diary entry on 7-10<sup>th</sup> June 1993, quoted elsewhere in this thesis, which talks about there being 'a rift between the children who enjoy secondary or higher education and are thinking in terms of some kind of employment and the children with very little education or sometimes none at all, who have no other choice than joining the Tigers' (Bavinck, 2011, p.297).

Things changed when the Indian Army occupied the peninsula. They did not submit to this doxic notion of education as a marker of innocent student and suspected rebel. Large numbers of young persons were killed in phases of active warfare when the Indian Army launched operations to disarm the LTTE in Jaffna from 1987 to 1989. The violence inflicted on the young people in Jaffna at this time drew condemnation even amongst Sinhalese church leaders in the south. The UTHR(J) in *The Broken Palmyra* reports:

There were several deaths for which the Indian Army cannot be condoned. Mathivathani was a young girl with good A Level results who was hoping to do medicine. During a lull in the firing she left her house to shut the gate. She was shot dead inside her compound. Lalinthi was an A Level student who was taking refuge elsewhere. On discovering that they had left behind the feeding bottle belonging to her sister's baby. Lalinthi went back home to fetch it, when she was shot dead. The young lady added later that Lalinthi's mother had come to her weeping after the A Level results were released. Lalinthi had obtained 285 marks (out of 400), putting her amongst the leading students in the island to be admitted for medicine. (Hoole, 1990)

I struggled, in the writing of this thesis, to deal with the emotional pain and outrage I felt, digesting the raw detail of loss documented by Hoole and others in their valuable ethnographic reports. A student who had continued to A Level years in the classroom in this community may be considered to enjoy a degree of immunity from suspicion of involvement
in insurgent activity. Many student interviewees showed the state armed forces the student ID card and others protested that they were doing the A Levels or had sat for the A Levels later during the final battles, when surrendering to the state armed forces in the aftermath of war.

When they got to the other side, they were well received. At that time army casualties were low. An officer speaking in English asked Muhunthan what he had studied, and on finding out that he had passed his A Levels told him that he could now study computer science. It felt very good then, until they began experiencing the squalid hopelessness of the IDP camps.

An alternative future to a rebel was traced by agents across the lines through education. The A Level student embodied hope that took two forms: the hope of the family in terms of social mobilisation through higher education, and the hope of survival by being moved into institutions of higher education, beyond the violence of war. The doxic belief that social mobilisation of an entire family depended on a child continuing higher education was strongly ingrained in this community. Reports of a young male arrested by the IPKF on suspicion of being a militant and ‘disappeared’, states: ‘His mother is a widow and makes a living by doing odd jobs like pounding rice. He had a younger brother and 3 sisters. Kantharuban was a G.C.E. A Level candidate and the family’s main hope of social upliftment.’ In the Northern warzone, the A Levels was a marker of how far the family had brought this young vulnerable student, protected from diverse forms of violence in this warzone. The mother of Kantharuban went to the Stanley College camp followed by a friend who went from camp to camp and Major to Major, till finally in 1989, the message was received that the mother did not need look for her son any more (Hoole, 1990).

Intriguingly, suspects who were alleged to be involved or had carried out militant activity were also recorded with reference to them being A Level students, marking a loss to the individual, family and community. In July 1996 Antony, ‘a student of St. John’s College, Jaffna, due to sit for his A Levels Commerce, was removed by the Army from his home.’ In another report, the mother identified as a civil servant notes the son Ramesh, as being ‘a student at Hartley College, Point Pedro, who sat for his O Levels in 1993. He joined the LTTE in 1995…In August 1996 Ramesh left the Movement and joined his mother at XX.’ (UTHR(J), 1996a) Even in instances where LTTE cadres had been killed, those who had sat A Levels were identified as a

40 This excerpt was inserted from a saved offline report of the UTHR(J). Digital links have been deactivated to the report and to the online publication of Chapter 3: The War of October 1987 in Broken Palmyrah, Vol 2.
loss to this community. An entry in June ‘96 reads ‘The LTTE made an appearance and three of them were shot dead, including the son of X, who was once a brilliant A-Level student’ (UTHR(J), 1996b). Another peculiar characteristic of this community is that the significance of reaching the O Level and A Level at secondary schooling, as well as tertiary level at university, was considered relevant in negotiating as unarmed civilians with members of the state armed forces. In 1996, community leaders negotiated with the Sri Lanka Army to secure the release of young detainees, from incarceration and violence:

15 Nov ‘96 As regards missing persons “Uthayan” of 15/11/96 reported that The People’s Committee for Peace and Goodwill submitted to Major General Janaka Perera a list of 230 missing persons, many of whom are said to have been detained by the Army. Of this number 35 are students, 12 of whom were prevented from sitting the G.C.E. A Levels. 5 are university students, one had gained admission to the university, one is a technical student, and the remaining 16 are G.C.E. O Level students. The Committee demanded that the inquiries concerning these students should be completed speedily so that they could resume their education. (UTHR(J), 1996b).

I argue that the teachers, educators and community leaders were drawing on the habitus of northern schooling which called for the devolution of a measure of pastoral sanction on the student who had remained behind a desk until now. Here I suggest that they were pushing the limits of their symbolic power to secure a practical measure of protection for the student. I examine these notions further in the final chapters of this thesis. To be legitimate and innocent of being an insurgent, appeared to fall in the network of oppositions, on the side of being an O Level and more so, an A Level student, who had been engaged with matters of schooling, which was considered to be on the opposite side of being engaged in insurgent activity. The civilian committee issued a demand to the armed agents, as though they derived authority from symbolic power in the schooling order supplying the educational entitlement of students to sit national examinations. This was even thinkable in this site, due to the extent of shared doxa reinforced in the field of schooling-in-wartime across the lines, including the armed forces of the state. This was not the case when PS appealed to the Indian Army on behalf of a suspect who had been arrested before he was due to sit his final examination at the Teacher Training College. The appeal on the basis that this student’s life will be ruined if prevented from sitting this exam did not appear to resonate with the Indian Army officer.
Significantly, in a report titled ‘The Young as Instruments of Terror’ by the UTHR(J), we see how even the state armed forces appear to succumb to this shared doxic belief that national exams were an entitlement and right of all young persons, even those who had been suspected of involvement in militant activities. In this instance, the young persons had been students in the site of the classroom until the O Levels. According to this report, three individuals identified as O Level students were detained. The LTTE coerced the students into carrying weapons and to commit to killing a member of the TELO, a rival paramilitary group. All were arrested by the state armed forces. Another O Level student was detained, released on parole, went missing and was caught ‘swimming into Batticaloa from the other side of the lagoon with a bag of bombs’ (UTHR(J), 1996a). What is important to this study is that the report confirms how ‘all the students caught above have been released on parole and sat for their O Level examinations’, except the student who had been in possession of a weapon ‘who sat his examinations with an army guard to watch over him.’ (UTHR(J), 1996a)

This all sounds a bit odd and rather hopeful in a time of civil war. The age of this student, the fact that he has remained in the classroom till the O Levels meant something. He had not been deemed to have surrendered the right to enjoy educational entitlements supplied by the state in the all-important national examination. Sitting the O Levels in detention under an armed guard? Released on parole and allowed to take part in O Levels? This is where I propose the strong shared doxa was reinforced in this field across the lines and traced hope and a notion of justice for the young in this postcolonial community through modern institutions. It was an ingrained notion that to deny a student national examinations would be to close a door through which he may walk away from this violence.

In the Senchollai incident, both rebel and state did not look closer at the victims as those who had completed their A Levels. When the war intensified, these understandings crumbled. During a particularly violent final phase of war, Eelam War IV began. On 15th August 2006, 51 young females reportedly died in an attack by the Sri Lanka Air Force on the site of an LTTE-run Children’s Home, Senchollai, in the rebel-held Vanni in a period of active warfare. The state claimed that the attack was targeting a combat-training camp run by the LTTE. Yet the victims were identified by the UNICEF, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and other neutral organisations as having been former A Level students around 19 years of age. Significantly, the framing of these young victims of war as A Level students continued in rebel-held territory. They had remained in school behind a desk until the A Levels which translates as not being considered insurgents in the order of schooling.
We learnt from local sources that the premises were used by the LTTE, but not quite as a training camp. The girls were from several schools around Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. International pressure and the presence of UNICEF had made outright conscription problematic for the LTTE and also enabled school principals to show some opposition to cruder methods of recruitment. What the LTTE then did was to organise these first aid programmes for which school girls were routinely taken and brought back after several days. This was something difficult for the principals to oppose. (UTHR(J), 2006)

Significantly, the names of the victims were identified by participant lists provided by the state schools in the rebel-held territory. Finally, I insert a note on a shared doxic submission to the importance of national examinations as an instrument of hope to the poor student and family. This article appearing in 2009, post-war, recorded the death of a young person in a traffic accident in a southern Sinhala village in Sri Lanka, post-war:

Aug 2009 Bright student in fatal road accident By Mohammed Buharrudeen GALEWELA: A student who was cycling to Ibbagamuwa carrying a bag of paddy to the grinding mill was fatally injured when his bicycle was hit by a bus from Batticaloa proceeding to Colombo. He was rushed to the Kurunegala hospital where he had succumbed to his injuries. He was identified as Muminda (19), a pupil in the Advanced Level class of St. Anne’s College, Kurunegala. He was the eldest in the family and is said to have bought his bicycle from the money he made by repairing radios and TVs in his area. A grieving mother said her son was dreaming of seeking admission to the German Technical Training Institute, as he was mechanically inclined, she said.

The Last Judgement

I return to LP, the coordinator of the A Level Examination for the Northern Province, and the Coordinating Meeting with the state armed forces. The first hurdle was to ensure that the student could reach the examination centre in time on that day despite the threat of war-related violence. LP insisted that if the road is closed, the student may be on this side, and the exam centre on that side, but the student would not be allowed to walk over. ‘Because the order of the military man on the road is to safeguard the road, no? I had a big fight at Palaly!’ At the coordination meetings held before the exam, LP stressed ‘I said listen to the exam students. I know with my experience they are very much affected. Because the military man on the road can’t understand anything no? If you speak to him more than that, he will shoot.’ Referring to a later Major General who led the coordination meeting from the security side, LP
says ‘Major C’s word is that: first thing is the security, then the exam. The security of the forces, not the security of the child!’ LP places himself here between the student and the violence of war. Unwittingly, the dramatization of the student, the road, and the exam centre, illuminates LP’s depiction of the military as an obstacle standing between the student and his future: ‘So I tell you, this side you can see the exam centre, the child is looking from that side...he can’t cross the road.’ Then, criss-crossing as interviewees tend to do, LP inserts a nuanced note of appreciation for the role of the armed forces in the overall context of civil war: ‘How many problems we have faced. I don’t want to say...I am not against the military, because they are in that sort of big problem.’

Then, LP slips in a note of validation: ‘Even Prabhakaran’s son sat the national exam!’ This claim has been uttered by many teachers and civil servants of the Northern warzone with wry humour and triumph that in this measure, the LTTE leader had no alternative solution, and did not withhold his son from sitting this exam. Stepping back for a moment, in Chapter One, I heard the same sentiments when relating that the revolutionary leader Prabhakaran purportedly opposing elite schools, had selected the British Anglican Missionary School, St. John’s College, reputed as being the best standard of secondary school education for boys in Jaffna, rather than Hindu College, for his son’s education. The shared doxic submission to giving your child the best education in this community apparently did not exclude even the rebel leader. His son was accepted according to protocol despite the rebels having assassinated the principal of this school for rejection of the LTTE movement and prohibiting entry into St. John’s College grounds. What all this reinforced was that to this community, the state certificate of national examinations had a legitimacy and authority that appeared unaffected greatly by political ideology.

I propose that here was a ‘symbolic language’ of governance. It had managed to reproduce the imagination of the state as that specific authoritative centre of a society which in principle was capable of issuing what Bourdieu calls ‘the last judgment’ (T. B. Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p.6). Significantly, in this community, ‘the last judgment’ took the form of conducting and issuing the certificate of Advanced Level Examination results, which the populations demanded as their rightful entitlement despite an ongoing civil war. What all this means is that this war-torn community continually drew on the notions of modern educational institutions to imagine a ‘faultless world of civilised existence’ by seeing themselves as ‘an educated people’. The warzone populations continued to see governance as a requirement and demanded this measure of educational governance as entitlement.
This spectacle of the A Level Examination with its fetishization and performance was subsuming the state, the apparatus and the intervention in something which traced hope through a postcolonial modernity. The performed objective of all this fetishization was admittedly a rational one. The threat of death and harm to body and life in a warzone was palpable. The educational bureaucracy tried to grant visas in the form of places in higher educational institutions on the basis of this ‘passport’ of nationally certified examination results, to enable the war-affected students to traverse a more pragmatic boundary from violence of civil war to a site of an alternative future, beyond. In performing the spectacle however, the educators had grasped at this intervention as their moment in the theatre of war, their hour of triumph! War-relations had challenged their governing powers, which they had historically enjoyed in this community. Here was humour, courage and drama, risking life and death, throwing gauntlets down left and right. They had been waiting for years to be asked what had happened here, and there was glee in recounting that young militants were no match for a great man like Prof TJ, a mathematician, a vice-chancellor and a very talented dramatist. Guile was admitted, and the educators did not lose sight of rationality in what had been performed in this spectacle, and why.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how symbolic power of structures of education conducted a national examination in the warzone by demanding the granting of pastoral exception for this event and performing it in a sort of spectacle. Examining the protocol and procedures of sealing the exam papers, the elaborate process of carrying the exam paper bundle unopened into schooling, militant and military sites, I discuss notions of fetishization in existing literature on state and sovereignty and contrast it to this governance operation in wartime in Northern Sri Lanka. This chapter argues that legitimation and governance practices of the non-regular, non-state LTTE stopped at the boundary of the A Level Examination. Notions of legitimacy and entitlement required the imagining of the student as situated in the space of positions in the nation, and this is where the political ideology hit the brick wall of commonsense reasoning of the warzone population. Legitimacy and loss, insurgency and innocence appeared to be bound up in being a student and making it to the A Level Examination in wartime.
CHAPTER SIX

Education as a Site of Sanctuary Part I:
Pastoral Sanction

‘Men may come and men may go, but we at Uduvil Girls College will go on forever.’

(Excerpt December ‘89, diary of former teacher, Esme Niles)41

A generation was born and raised to adulthood in the warzone. In a long civil war which lasted over a quarter of a century, a number of war-affected children remained behind a school desk. They were enabled to do so by a number of teachers who stayed on in the peninsula and opened the doors of the classroom, daily. Over earlier chapters of this thesis, I plotted many practices in the site of schooling, which appear to have offered an intended or unintended measure of sanctuary to the war-affected student. Revisiting Chapter Two, we see how K, a student in rebel-held territory, had moved between the sites of rebel-Home and state-school. Legitimation practices arising from competing claims to sovereign rule appeared to have devolved a measure of sanctuary in the form of ritualised structured schooling, on the student, in an unpredictable disordered world.

What rebel governance and sovereignty discourse did not fully explain was how K had been conveyed beyond the violence through a corridor of schooling institutions. As fieldwork progressed, I was beginning to see how the very structures, rituals and an instilled set of dispositions to teach, learn and engage in schooling practices, seemingly at odds with the realities of a warzone, had appeared to devolve measures of sanctuary on the student. Using the oral history method to generate a layer of experiential reality, I quickened to the

41In Dec 89, when Jaffna was under the control of the Indian Army, Uduvil Girls College teachers were moved to another location and were guarded by the Indian Army. On return, the teachers found the Indian Army was camped in their midst, in close proximity to their homes and school neighbourhoods. Miss Niles, teacher at Uduvil Girls College, moved later to the USA in later years.
dispositions and taken-for-granted doxic submission to the provision of sanctuary in the sites of schooling in the habitus of this Northern Tamil community.

In hours of in-depth interviewing, I identified interventions by former principals on behalf of their ‘flock’ to offer sanctuary to war-affected students, in what Lippert calls ‘sanctuary incidents’ (Lippert, 2005). Here, the interviewees consciously named the sanctuary measures provided and their role as sanctuary-providers. Significantly other accounts of ‘sanctuary practices,’ arose from examining the very structures, rituals and dispositions which informed schooling practices which had devolved measures of sanctuary on students in the warzone. Detailed as taken-for-granted, ordinary and unremarkable practices immersed in the apparatus of wartime schooling, they helped a better understanding of the habitus and doxa in this community.

In this chapter, I first discuss the approaches taken in the existing literature on how sanctuary is enabled by powers that have the capacity to ‘make an exception’. The sanctuary provision in the sacred sites of church in Montreal and Mannar are contrasted with a pastoral intervention in Menik Farm refugee camp. I argue that the zonal education officials entered a site of upheaval, claiming pastoral exception for the refugee child who had remained within schooling institutions. I look at how this was enabled turning to Bourdieu’s tools of field theory, habitus and doxa. In which form did sanctuary devolve, and how was it negotiated? Second, I examine how a sort of pastoral sanction devolved on vulnerable war-students caught up in an insurgent struggle marked by suspicion and intimidation. Third, I look at how the teacher is both sanctuary-receiver as well as sanctuary-provider, the disposition to ‘serve,’ and a pastoral rationality.

I argue that the power to create exception and devolve sanctuary is not embodied in a charismatic shepherd, but is embedded in the structuring structures of the schooling habitus. Resultantly, as seen in earlier chapters, four and five on the A Level intervention, I propose this enabled sanctuary practices to be carried out by a chain of social agents, the teacher, the bureaucrat, armed and unarmed agents, who, from a shared habitus, converged across the lines to create an intervention, dispersing after. I try to bring together in this chapter, the strands of doxa emerging from earlier chapters in this thesis, to deliver a better understanding of the possibilities created, and the meanings which go deep into the heart of teaching-in-wartime in the northern warzone. It informs the translation of detailed accounts of final
journeys undertaken by students in the next chapter, moved by shepherd and shepherdess-principals from the violence of civil war, to sanctuary within the site of schooling.

Pastoral Exception

‘The capacity to make an exception’

Sanctuary is claimed in sites by a power that has ‘the capacity to make an exception’ as argued in existing literature (Johnson & Korf, 2021; Lippert, 2005). Lippert in his book titled *Sanctuary, Sovereignty, Sacrifice* describes the instance where a Guatemalan migrant facing certain deportation by immigration officials, was concealed for five weeks in a church building on the outskirts of Montreal, Canada (Lippert, 2005). Masked and hooded, referred to simply as ‘Raphael’, he was placed on display while church officials and members of the community pronounced St Andrew’s United Church, a sanctuary. I select arguments made by Lippert for purposes of discussion and contrast in this chapter.

Granting sanctuary to Raphael was about making an exception to a rule... Strategically situated next to church officials and community supporters in the church amidst the gaze of television cameras and photographers, Raphael had become the object of a sovereign power. Such a power, with its capacity to make exceptions and its affinity for spectacle, is typically thought in current scholarship, when reflected upon at all, to flow from the modern nation-state. But this was an instance, as Raphael’s protectors put it, of “God’s law coming before the government’s.” (Lippert, 2005. p.1)

Lippert makes a number of assertions relevant to this thesis. One, sanctuary offered to Raphael was about making an exception to a rule. Second, the capacity to make exception and perform spectacle in this instance, ‘God’s law’, was seen as being opposed to and superseding the government’s regulations. While the church was lifted head and shoulders above state power, bound in immigration laws of deportation, the power of the church to make an exception was imagined by Lippert, Johnson and Korf as a different sovereign power, retaining the trappings of state sovereignty (Johnson & Korf, 2021; Lippert, 2005). Notions of pastoral power in the sacred site were still ‘a sovereign power’ which ‘began to flow from a much older wellspring of local church and community and then to surge through channels of mass media to become a torrent of spectacle’ (Lippert, 2005, p.1&2). This is Lippert’s argument of the power that made an exception and protected Raphael on the site of church against deportation orders of the sovereign state.
I discovered Lippert as cited in Johnson and Korf in their theorising work on sanctuary in the historical sacred site of the Madhu Church in Mannar, empirically located in the northern warzone. It is a well-known historical fact in Sri Lanka that over diverse phases of war, the Madhu Church area had provided a space of sanctuary in the warzone (G. Hansen, 2003; Johnson & Korf, 2021). Led by a charismatic leader, the Bishop Joseph of Mannar, Madhu Church Sanctuary, or Madhu-palli as the no-fire area of refuge was locally known, was political and contested. The bishop negotiated with both polarised armed state and rebel factions, throwing down gauntlets when the Madhu Church and refugees were harmed in phases of active warfare (G. Hansen, 2003; Johnson & Korf, 2021). He issued a public statement to the Sri Lankan media on a ‘no guns, no uniforms’ policy, and a zone of peace completely and solely under the administration of the Church’ (Johnson & Korf, 2021, p.5).

Locating sanctuary provision in sovereignty discourse, Johnson and Korf take Lippert’s argument further: ‘sanctuary codifies an exceptional space where sovereign and pastoral registers of power converge into a form of ‘pastoral sovereignty’ that can temporarily ‘interrupt’ the law of violence of sovereign power.’ Pastoral sovereignty radiated from the embodiment of sanctuary in the charismatic shepherd and descended in ‘a torrent of spectacle’ (Lippert, 2005, p.1&2). I considered the intervention of conducting the A Levels in the warzone which had attempted to interrupt the violence of sovereign and rebel powers. There too, the intervention to conduct an educational event of importance to the war-affected students, had been performed in a sort of spectacle by the bureaucrats.

The ‘zonal’ at Menik Farm

What I was beginning to see unfold in the field of schooling in wartime differed from the scenarios of sanctuary instances on sacred sites in the literature. I return here to the line of reasoning traced by Lippert, Johnson and Korf. There, the site of exception was traced through notions of a sovereign power into which transgressed pastoral registers of power, marked by the embodied powers of pastoral sovereignty which then would reach the ultimate level of

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42 In former research conducted in 2006 for Caritas Intl, I interviewed Visaka Dharmadasa, a Sinhalese from Kandy, a mother of an officer of the Sri Lanka Army missing in action along with hundreds of other soldiers during the LTTE attack on the Army base in Kilinochchi in the northern warzone. Visaka had met LTTE rebels on the site of Madhu to appeal with other mothers for identification and release of those killed in war by both factions. She is the founder and chair of Association of War Affected Women and Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action. The Madhu Church leaders assisted in facilitating this meeting on the Madhu Church Sanctuary site. When asked by the LTTE why they had come to meet them, Visaka responded ‘We came to see your claws and teeth’ (Interview with Visaka Dharmadasa, Kandy, 2006).
sanction by attaining moral untouchability through pastoral sacrifice, performed in ‘a torrent of spectacle’ (Johnson & Korf, 2021; Lippert, 2005). At Menik Farm things were a little different. I return to the situation of K at the hundred-acre refugee camp, where the war-battered citizens of the Northern peninsula were herded, after the LTTE were militarily vanquished by the state armed forces in May 2009. Here in the final chapters I ask ‘what was the power that had the capacity to make an exception here?"

K: I was in the camp from May 2009, end of war. I didn’t go to University directly from the camp. I was six months in the camp. In this time, they had a small zonal education office in the Menik Farm. They had district level, Kili district [Kilinochchi], Mullaitivu district, like that. They called us: “Whoever sat the A Level, and who is going to take the A Levels...O Levels...!” Even they had a school inside the Menik Farm. I said ‘these are my results’ to the ‘zonal education.’ There were people from civil service. My principal was in the next camp in Menik Farm. He was civilian and displaced. He directly connected with the ‘zonal education’ on who can come. He helped with that.

What was happening at Menik Farm? As asserted by Lippert, sanctuary for K, like Raphael, was about making an exception to security regulations governing the aftermath of civil war. Yet things were a little less spectacular at Menik Farm. Here, there were no television cameras, no mass media, no spectacle; only the armed guard of the state and war-deprivation. Yet admittedly, the power that intervened and protected K at Menik Farm had demonstrated ‘the power to make exceptions to the rule.’ Such power had manifested when the unspectacular, bureaucratic arm of the Ministry of Education, the peripheral zonal office in the warzone, set up operations with the permission of a state armed guard in the site of Menik Farm refugee camp in the immediate aftermath of civil war.

So what are we seeing here? Pastoral power had emerged in the hybrid site of sovereign violence, intimidation, suspicion, and humanitarian relief. Nothing stacked up tidily in the warzone of Sri Lanka. I suggest that sovereignty discourse did not provide the tools to deliver a fuller interpretation of the extraordinary pastoral interventions manifesting through ordinary bureaucratic practices and structures, appearing unremarkable and taken-for-granted by both sanctuary provider and receiver in the warzone. I mentioned this at the beginning of Chapter Two as something I quickened to and called for a deeper exploration. I draw on the arguments in the existing literature on sacred sites to interpret pastoral power in this empirical context. In sacred sites of church in Montreal and Mannar, the exception was created by power.
embodied in a charismatic shepherd, whereas at Menik Farm, I propose, pastoral exception had been negotiated by a form of pastoral power *embedded* deep in the habitus of this community and bureaucratic structures of schooling. Johnson and Korf talked about ‘transgression’:

Claiming sanctuary as a "sacred" space of exception, thereby underwrites the transgression of pastoral registers of power - “a power of care [of the shepherd who] looks after the flock” (Foucault 2007, p. 127) - into sovereign registers, and through this operation constitutes what we call “pastoral sovereignty”.

The state of exception that pastoral sovereignty declares in the extra-territorial space of the sanctuary interrupts the "law" of sovereign violence on humanitarian grounds. (Johnson & Korf, 2021p. 2)

I suggest that *transgression* here at Menik Farm was one of many such *ingressions* of the pastoral into the sites of sovereign violence to create exceptions for the student continually during civil war. During wartime, pastoral power had ushered in a legitimisation of the hostile practices of state sovereignty in the warzone by distributing the democratic entitlement to public education to the war-affected children. Here, a school had been set up inside Menik Farm. Yet, was it not normalised practice that displaced teachers and community members would repeatedly construct temporary schools in sites of displacement with the consent of the state or rebel armed factions? I argue that in this empirical setting, the doors through which pastoral power entered sites of war-related violence were the very sovereign doors of state power, speaking from registers which armed officers of state could respond to. This is important as it muddies binaries such as humanitarian sanctuary practices opposed to state violence, ‘God’s Law not the government’s.’

I suggest that this form of ingressation over time grew to be taken-for-granted, setting its own limits and possibilities of intervention which was at times carried out spectacularly, at others, unspectacularly. Now, the annual spectacle of the A Level intervention had 'interrupted the law of sovereign violence' but on grounds of carrying out governance, not humanitarian practices. Yet even there the power to make exception had been negotiated from the very structures of schooling, not the charisma of the A Level coordinator. Significantly, *this* intervention, unspectacular and considered unremarkable by those who were afforded a measure of sanctuary, was a sort of reminder, I suggest, that *sovereign violence was the interruption* in a historical order of schooling and governance. More on this later. Reconstructing pastoral
structures, the ‘zonal,’ the school and the teachers, had emerged here and there in sites of upheaval during wartime, re-affirming a sort of pastoral order in disorder.

Subject of pastoral power

Deep in the habitus of this northern community of teachers, informing its very structuring structures, are notions of pastoral power and pastoral care. These notions I suggest are western, modern and transcultural, informed by American and British pastoral notions, structures and teacher-dispositions since the 1820s. A shared habitus continued between agents armed and unarmed who were employed in public administration, drawing on old roots with a mission school education in the peninsula and elsewhere in the island. A cross-cleaving number of social agents drew on pastoral and civil service registers, which in turn informed sanctuary practices by the shepherd-principal or teacher. What I am trying to explain is that the pastoral power of educators in the field of schooling-in-wartime in this postcolonial society, appeared to draw from a much older well-spring pre-dating the formation of the modern nation State of Sri Lanka.

Sanctuary provision for vulnerable children caught up in the net of suspicion in an insurgent war, was also informed by the bureaucratic apparatus that governed the welfare, reform and rehabilitation of the child which was set up in the colonial era, modelled on British developments. Schooling as a site of potential rehabilitation and sanctuary for exploited and vulnerable children, I suggest, was encouraged by the spirit of the legislative structures which were strongly influenced by discussions in Great Britain. The approach was less punitive and more reform-oriented. The main legal framework that relates to children is the Children and Young Persons Ordinance, Act No. 48 of 1939 (CYPO) which was introduced six years after a bill by the same name had been introduced in England. Delays and obstacles permitting, the apparatus creaked into action and in 1956 the Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS) was established. Amarasuriya’s thesis Guardians of Childhood is important in understanding the peculiar disjuncture between the lofty framework, inadequate resources and zealous dispositions of probation officers who play a role in sanctuary provision to the school-going child, regardless (Amarasuriya, 2011).

Amarasuriya cites a sessional paper in which the proceedings of the State Council noted in the Hansard dated January 26, 1939 states as follows:

...the ‘Children and Young Persons Bill was unanimously passed by an enthusiastic House....“We welcome this Ordinance” said a senior member, “as an epoch-making
measure, because we have to recognise that children, after all, will in due course be the political citizens of the future and every endeavour must be made to give them their right place in society and every opportunity of achieving that right place.” Other stirring words claimed that “for every child who is in conflict with society the right to be dealt with intelligently as society’s charge not society’s outcast, the home, the school, the Church, the Court and the institution will shape to return him whenever possible to the normal stream of life.” (Amarasuriya, 2011, p.54)

Structural frameworks, ideals, notions and dispositions embedded in the habitus of the field of schooling-in-wartime appeared to pre-date state-formation and notions of sovereignty. I argue that flowing from this particular historicity, a doxic submission had arisen from this shared habitus north-south among the civil servant-educators in wartime, as demonstrated in this thesis. Sovereignty on the other hand, when ushered in with the formation of the republic in 1972, had been greeted with deep ambivalence. The newly-formed sovereign state was challenged by multiple groups, and armed separatist threat erupted into a full-blown civil war in just over a decade (Spencer & Uyangoda, 1994; N. Wickramasinghe, 2012).

I tried to explain in this thesis how structure, ritual and disposition which informed schooling practices in the northern warzone had resulted somehow in the rebel-managed TRO Home not emerging as the sole marker of K’s life in LTTE-held territory. Everyone who lived in the Vanni was a tiger or a tiger cub to the southern Sinhalese as well as to segments of the Jaffna population. As discussed in Chapter Two, while rebel governance scholars examined LTTE-state collaboration on schooling in the Vanni through the lens of sovereignty, theorising on de facto sovereignty, sovereign mimicry, mutation and kingship, I took a closer look under the canopy. The extraordinary ordinary possibility emerged of children from rebel-managed Homes forming a line each morning and afternoon, walking to and from the state school. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga had reminded the children, under a de facto sovereign power, that she was their president, by symbolically stamping the bundles of uniform fabric and textbooks with her face, emblematic of their sovereign leader.

Now, after the final battles, K found himself cast as a refugee of sorts in the Menik Farm camp, his freedom of movement restricted. He needed to be processed and restored to the status of legitimate citizen. At Menik Farm, K, like Raphael was now an ‘object of sovereign power,’ but of the state, not a higher power. From birth in the Vanni territory, K had been the object of a de facto sovereign power: the LTTE (Klem & Maunaguru, 2017; Mampilly, 2011; Terpstra &
Yet K had also been a subject of pastoral power all his life, performing the daily ritual of going to school, the annual ritual of taking exams, and remaining within the schooling apparatus of the warzone. His experience differed to Raphael’s, whose ‘shift’ of status had taken place during the sanctuary incident through charismatic spectacle. Now the civil war had just ended and the devastation was concentrated in this site of a hundred acres. The sling of pastoral power which had never let go of K, still held him. He responded to the announcement and walked towards the ‘zonal’ as the district education office was called. ‘There were people from civil service.’; the convergence of civil service agents with rebel administrators and armed agents distributing schooling entitlements in the warzone, had instilled in this child, growing up in rebel-held Vanni, a disposition which now enabled him to identify, trust and respond to educator-civil servants of the state. All this I argue was deeply significant of the particularity of this empirical setting.

Casting the child as a subject of pastoral power, brings about a shift in the discussion of creating an exception for the war-affected student. What is most important to sanctuary provision here is not the interventions during sanctuary incidents as in the case of Raphael in the church in Montreal. It is not territorially bounded as in the case of the Madhu Sanctuary. Pastoral power had seamed in the student during a quarter of a century of civil war into the apparatus of schooling. A chain of diverse social agents had carried out schooling practices that had enabled this, such as educators, government agents, even rebel administrators, members of the state armed forces, INGO workers, church leaders and others. A thread of continuity had held, as a result of the illusio in the field of schooling-in-wartime which had enabled the annual ritual of the A Level intervention. K had emerged I propose with a set of schooling dispositions which were not too dissimilar to the students outside the rebel-held warzone. Illustrating this I return to an interview I conducted with K, who had already completed his Masters in Fine Arts in an overseas university having received a prestigious scholarship. Despite the lapse of time and importance, K recalls the petty injustices sustained in the marking of the A Levels with indignant emotion:

December 2008, I got the A Level results. I got A, B, C. But... but... I got C for art?? Can you believe? ‘Whoever sits the A Level, from Vanni, especially in art subject, they think ‘LTTE can only take!’ This is the mentality of the examiner. ‘Because it is the easier way to enter the university. Because the simplest thing, even the LTTE can take the subject!’ That was their assumption. Teachers who go for paper-marking for the A Level, they
had a discussion: ‘whoever takes the art paper – they must be LTTE!’ So they reduced the mark.

I attempted to return to the events at Menik Farm, yet interviewee K was not yet done with his rant: ‘Listen, compare with Jaffna! When I enter the university, they are very childish, they don’t know how to draw, but they got A! I got A for history, B for Tamil, C for art. This is like mafia…. Just imagine… but they don’t know how to do painting in the university! They got A!’ All this was strangely too normal. It appeared that neither K nor the A Level paper-marking teachers imagined, that maybe the LTTE wanting to take the easy path to university was not ‘normal’ for potential militant recruits in rebel-held territory? Pastoral power with its battle lines, petty injustices and scars had somehow muddied and confused the notions of militant and student, exposing the hidden symbolic struggles that continued in parallel to the battles over state sovereignty. It is here we see how normalisation of rebel-state legitimation practices in schooling in the Vanni and the interventions in the lives of war-affected students by a chain of social agents, converging and dispersing, had dug deeper into a shared habitus and normalised notions of self, citizenship, and civilisation amidst the hopelessness of war.

Pastoral Sanction

‘Our entries were clear!’

Negotiating immunity at a time of confrontation with armed agents by pleading pastoral exception and receiving a sort of pastoral sanction devolving on the ‘student’ was not, I argue, an impulsive or instantaneous decision. It was informed, I propose, by the habitus of the field of schooling in this northern Tamil community. The LTTE had increased recruitment drives among student populations in attempts to swell their ranks as the war lengthened and enthusiasm to join up, lessened. Yet the student was not a ‘target’ of the LTTE and this is where the practices of the rebel-LTEE diverged from the southern Peking Wing communist group, the JVP. Up north, the former male students especially would share their first form of ID, issued to students as young as ten years old and above. This was produced by the public administration in order to purportedly enable the Indian Army to identify who was a student and therefore ‘regular’ and who was a rebel. The student’s white uniform would be another form of insignia which would indicate the need for pastoral sanction for especially older teenage male students. The state armed forces would ask for the credentials of being a school-going student and the rebels did not target the student for going to school and engaging in
schooling practices. They recruited and appropriated in the site of schooling as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis within bounded sites of activity.

I insert here a note of contrasting personal experience during the JVP insurrection as it was called, at its peak during 1987-1989 in the capital Colombo. Here the practice of going to school was carried out in fear and intimidation. The school, the teachers and the students on their passage to and from school wore coloured clothing and carried their schoolbooks in fabric tote bags or shopping bags. At the time, we were attending classes which prepared us for the O Levels, equivalent to the all-important GCSEs in the United Kingdom. The schools had been closed by order of the JVP insurgents. This is how the white school uniform, a symbol of immunity to some extent in the north, was considered to increase vulnerability of being a target of JVP violence in the south. They in the North, had sported the very insignia of student identity, which we had camouflaged, in order to perform the same schooling ritual: going to school and returning home safely.

I return here to the story of S, detailed in Chapter One, a former student of Hindu Girls College, Jaffna. In 1995, during the Battle of Jaffna, large numbers of Jaffna residents moved south to the camps in the government-controlled Vavuniya or shared homes with those who lived in rebel-controlled Vanni areas. S had completed her A Levels and was looking around at options for higher education.

S: Army is checking and everything. People who came from Vanni they were sent to the camps. We were sent to P. Maha Vidyalaya (school).

GF: Why did you have to wait at the camp?

S: After those inquiries, we would be allowed to go. Until the displacement, my brother was studying in Grade 10 (Year 11) and he was occupied in the studies. And my other brother had completed his A Levels and was doing TAQ...that is an external degree. So he was... At the time, I was studying at the Jaffna Technical College the Higher National Diploma in Accountancy. Because I couldn’t get the results to go to University at the A Levels. I had 250 and 270 was the cut-off...no problem...I decided to do this diploma

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43 Returning home from school by a later train after drama practice, I accidentally hopped onto the Samudra Devi, a southern express train that ‘overcarried’ me as they used to say, to Kalutara South, where victims of the JVP and Sri Lanka armed forces violence were reputed to be found floating in rivers, burning on tyres and hanging from the famous sacred bo tree at the junction. I recall a passenger asking me to remove my school tie as it would identify my school as being a little more privileged as Methodist College, Colombo 3, and appointing responsible adults to accompany me to an intercity bus which would take me safely back home to a southern suburb of Greater Colombo. My school uniform was considered to increase my vulnerability to harassment.
because my teacher said it was equal to B.Com. So till the displacement, we, everybody, were engaged in studies and so, our entries were clear!

S continued narrating her story without pause, while her phrase echoed in my head: ‘our entries were clear!’ This litany of educational engagement even during displacement, from educational structures that had held together, war-affected, was significant. First, they were notches of legitimate regular citizenship in the life of a young person in the warzone under continuous suspicion of being involved with rebel-insurgent activity.

GF: So when you say your entries were clear, it means that you could prove that you were studying at an institute? Education gave you a clearance...that you were not involved in any insurgent activity?

S: Yah!

Being occupied with studies had devolved a sort of sanction negotiated from schooling structures for students growing up amidst the intimidation and suspicion, which marked insurgent armed struggles. Schooling structures, ritual and disposition had kept the students in a sling of pastoral power, which held together for different objectives by both state and rebel alike. In rebel-controlled territory, bounded and isolated from the outside world by military lines of war, K’s possible identity of tiger cub in a tiger Home had been diluted by a form of pastoral sanction by virtue of having daily attended the state school. Ritualistic practices of school principals, educators, bureaucrats and even rebel administrators, had developed points of convergence over the years. What was significant is how resultanty, the pastoral sanction appeared to have devolved directly on the student, the subject of pastoral power, the sanctuary-receiver: their entries were clear. There was no pleading for compassionate exception here on humanitarian grounds. Here, at the point of danger, confronting the hostile armed officers of the state, the power that interceded on behalf of students such as K and S, to create an exception, was not God’s law embodied by church leaders: It was pastoral, bureaucratic, laced with meaning and was embedded in the structures of schooling in the habitus of this community.

Tokens of sanction

Shepherds appeared to act as interlocutors between student and hostile agent rather than embodying sanctuary in the northern warzone. The student was the sanction-bearer, usually carrying a token of his or her schooling practices and empowered to conduct an exchange
with the interrogator, independently. K had walked over to the ‘zonal education’ officers, unchaperoned; his entries were clear! The principal would have vouched for his flock, yet the argument that ‘territory is made ... through bodies’ where ‘a pastoral sovereign acts as shepherd to protect the flock from de facto sovereigns’ imposition of violence over their bodies’ did not quite fit here (Johnson & Korf, 2021, p.4). K had received his pastoral sanction from the very structures of the bureaucratic schooling apparatus: entries in school registers and annual G.C.E. A Level Examination results entry at the University Grants Commission office in Colombo. He had no token in his possession. Yet the entry was made, administrative documents would be dug out and pastoral sanction granted, allowing for sanctuary measures in the sites of schooling to be implemented for this student.

Let us consider the instance when a student falls into a grey area, unable to prove continuing institutional enrolment in education, from which a pastoral sanction could be negotiated? In a contrasting set of circumstances, a former female student of a Christian mission school, L, documented as having been born in the rebel-held Vanni areas was taken into police custody in a special police cordon-off-and-search security operation, carried out randomly in areas where Tamils from the North and East were known to temporarily reside in the capital Colombo. L had completed her A Levels and was in the capital Colombo, awaiting departure to Canada, unaccompanied by family. Those residing temporarily from the Northern warzone needed some sort of permit. She had arrived in the Mission School after the Tsunami of 2004, says SM, a former principal. Having lost her mother and sisters in Tsunami-devastated Mullaitivu, L had been brought to the school by a priest and a surviving family member, a grandmother, who had also died later in an accident. After her A Levels, she received an opportunity to migrate to Canada and join relatives there. It was in this transitionary period that the Army officer questioned her as a suspect living in Colombo with no fixed abode. L failed to produce any official documentary proof of her past activities, but presents the armed officer with one she hoped would establish her status as a non-combatant: her school character certificate issued by her principal SM.

I remember the character certificate handed to me by my principal Mrs. Shanthi Peiris to all the girls of Methodist College, a Christian mission school in Colombo. It was a personal document detailing my academic and extracurricular achievements, my character strengths and a personal observation by the Principal on my behaviour, wishing me the best in my future endeavours. A principal-shepherdess who knew her flock would take time to draft each of these documents, and many students would treasure it forever, at times more highly valued
than the certificate of academic results. Significantly here, the principal had exercised her pastoral care and pastoral power in a further measure: She inserted her phone number under her name, in case further queries were required. The Army officer elected to make that call to the principal. SM informed him that this former student had had no involvement in armed rebel activities and had suffered so much in both the man-made disaster of war and the natural disaster of the 2004 Tsunami. The Army officer then released her on the testimony of the principal and the character certificate in her possession: her entries were clear!

**Dispositions, signs, response**

What I am trying to explain is how a shared habitus had informed the relational disposition and flowing from this, the response of an armed officer to the institution of principal, the notion of being a student, and the pastoral registers in this incident. In postcolonial Sri Lanka, the sling of pastoral care in the form of schooling for young persons affected by armed warfare, had not remained strictly outside the contours of national security. The ‘zonal’ intervention at Menik Farm was the final of many such permitted exceptions carried out during this long civil war. Apart from the politically motivated objective portrayal of the armed forces as a benevolent force, there are numerous references in wartime to the practices of individual members of the armed forces, offering assistance and cooperation to heads of churches and principals. I detail such a case study in the following chapter of this thesis.

The purpose of this discussion is to understand how a shared habitus and doxic submission was traced as including armed agents. It is not an attempt to portray the armed forces as a collective in any particular light. In the case of L, the armed officer made a call and accepted the credentials presented by the principal. I suggest that these are the signs of natural beliefs or opinions, doxa, ‘which are in fact intimately linked to field and habitus’ (Deer, 2014, p.115).

I now return to S, the former Hindu Girls College student and her confrontation with armed agents in Colombo.

So we were able to go to Colombo. Then I had a horrible experience! Then we thought we would move to India. Whether I am Tamil or Sinhalese, *I thought I was Sri Lankan*! 1997, we moved to Colombo. When I was in Vanni, I had applied to the Open University Nawala to do a small certificate course. When I was in the Vavuniya camp, I got the interview letter. And my father got me the pass for one week. And my brother and myself, we went to Nawala and we joined, but we came back. At that time we couldn’t
stay, as we got the pass only for one week and we returned to Vanni. Later we returned to Colombo and we started following this.

S was able to apply from the Vanni to the Open University and receive the interview letter to the Vavuniya Camp. I was beginning to understand that what I considered to be remarkable, was detailed as unremarkable by interviewees. I insert a note here on the forms of rebel and state-run system of public administration which had continued in the warzone. There was a continued disposition to carry on a reliable postal service war-affected mentioned by Hansen in his report (G. Hansen, 2003, p.9). A band of postmen and an informal system of receiving and passing on mail even to those displaced in camps, together with a system of passes allowing criss-crossing in and out of the warzone for educational purposes, had appeared to keep the war-affected student in a sling of pastoral power. It was alleged that students of music were allowed to attend the Trinity College of Music Examinations in Colombo war-conditions permitting. Movement for civilian purposes though admittedly delayed and disrupted, did not appear to have been obliterated by civil war.

My father, sister and I decided one Friday evening (sighs)….when I think….we decided to go to temple because we were staying at Kotahena. After that we thought we would go to Galpalli (stone church).44

And there was an army vehicle that came and suddenly they stopped. One army man he came and said ‘mehey enna!’…come here! I knew a bit of Sinhala and I had to learn because the students speak in Sinhala, because I was studying at Nawala (Open University, Colombo). Most of the students are Sinhalese and whatever doubts I ask in Sinhala and they explain in English, but I asked for the Sinhala words. Because I was working and studying with them and also renting out with a Sinhala family, I wanted to learn Sinhala. Then my father, sister and myself went; then the man said ‘get into the bus!’ Army bus!

My father could speak in all three languages but he was shocked as we are girls and akka (elder sister) was a teacher and grown up, and myself, a teenager. And I said suddenly ‘akka, no!’ And I said to them ‘enna baehæ!’ (can’t/won’t come)...then he said

44 Tamils do visit Hindu and Christian places of faith on one visit. Sinhalese also tour sites of diverse faith.
‘æthulata ennal’ (come inside). I asked ‘æi?’ (why). A word came from inside the bus, quietly, ‘Madame, please come!’ Then I told my sister ‘ok, you go!’ Because I felt… someone was there… educated? Maybe. Discipline?… there was…I felt… you have to judge quickly! Then there was a man: ‘what is your name?’ And in English. I said, ‘my sister is a teacher.’ He said ‘alright!’ I asked my sister to give her job identity card as teacher. I gave my open university ID card. He said ‘very good, you may go!’ I said ‘thank you, sir!’ Then I got back…I got angry and said to my Appa, ‘no more Kovil! Better you get back. Because I was so…oo… angry! No more will I tolerate this, cos I am a Sri Lankan but I don’t have any right!…Yes?…Appa said ‘no problem.’

The pastoral exception pleaded by S here at a time of hostility and uncertain danger was significant. Somewhere, in the habitus was lodged a notion of a civilised world where order was presented in colonial registers, the English language signifying ‘official,’ ‘respect’ and ‘reliability.’ In Chapter Three, the former Principal of the Technical College of Jaffna had responded to English ‘spoken to a high standard’ by an Indian Army officer. Similarly here S recalled how ‘a word came from inside the bus, quietly’ in English and she had responded with recognition of possibilities of engagement. She told her sister it was alright to proceed, informed by a relational disposition in the schooling habitus in the Northern Tamil community to ‘English,’ ‘educated,’ ‘disciplined’ and ‘regularity.’ What I am trying to explain is how the dispositions within an unarmed female student of the warzone were honed to detect tropes, registers, emblems which signalled possibilities of sanction, negotiated from the identity of student, even in confrontation with armed opposed agents. The simple ID card, the informal character certificate and the verbal communication of A Level results without a supporting document, all these were emblems of that imagined separateness of the world of schooling, criss-crossing with the world of armed warfare.

Negotiating and being conferred with this form of sanction was both intense and intimate. S spoke from a set of dispositions instilled by continuous schooling in legitimate pastoral institutions sanctioned by the state. It had done so in ways that cannot be translated fully, nor defined adequately. Yet here was where that long-term transgression or ingress of pastoral registers into sovereign ones had led: ‘they called us: ‘whoever sat the A Level and who is going to take the A Levels, O Levels!’’ K, battle-worn without family, knowledge of his sister’s fate and traumatised by the rebels guns that had turned on the fleeing refugees, arose and responded to the call. This is the practice that followed such schooling practices in wartime. An indignant S was ruffled by what she considered to be shameful treatment of a citizen, an
outraged K considered being graded C in the A Level as a grave injustice, and a former student L, lodged hope in the armed officer making a phone call to her former principal. A citizen-disposition and a student-disposition had been instilled into students in the warzone who had remained in that pastoral sling. In 2017, nearly a decade after the end of civil war, a returnee teacher from the UK settled in Jaffna remarked while teaching at a Christian mission school, how strange it was that the children who had survived the devastation of war, were uncannily ‘normal.’ Diverse social agents had somehow converged in seaming together a potent notion of what was considered ‘normal’ in the site of schooling. In a sort of collective misrecognition of the depravities of war, a strong doxic submission to a notion of the ought-to-be had rendered that which otherwise would not have been considered possible, possible.

A Pastoral Rationality

The disposition to ‘serve!’

Admittedly there would have been few sanctuary practices in the site of school for war-affected students had a number of teachers not elected to remain inside the warzone. I interviewed the leading principals in the community and asked them the same question: why didn’t you leave? PS, my first interviewee and a former principal simply stated ‘how could we leave? What would happen if everyone left? We had to stay and see what would happen here, what would befall us! At the time, years before I began my doctoral study, I failed to detect the missionary registers used by teachers who had studied in such schools and were principals and vice principals as well as members of the public administrative service, formerly known as the civil service. Significantly, this was a time when the heritage of mission schools in the Jaffna community and the government agents were under threat by armed insurgent. Both Hindu and Christian teachers drew on the lexicon of the missionary-teacher. In the memoir of Harriet Newell, a young missionary, the first to have died on a mission voyage in 1813 in the Isle of France, now Mauritius, they used this phrase facing the unknown: ‘what would befall us here?’ (Kofoid & Newell, 2017). The teacher-disposition was adapting to schooling practices needing to be carried out in wartime conditions. A former principal of a national girls’ school, described the sportsmeet held in the Fort area: ‘Yes we had the sportsmeet but as we finished the burden … the sportsmeet… the finals all done, and we came back to school, they started shelling!’ ‘Did you know that there may have been shelling that day, I asked her. ‘Well, we didn’t have a sports ground back then,’ she said. ‘They have one now.’
Sanctuary practices in the site of schooling were forged in the crucible of war. Under the rebel-governance canopy, on the ground, teachers in the rebel-held territories were moving around creating ritualised order: daily in classrooms, and annually, marking the life of the student by extracurricular intra and inter-school competitions and commemorations. I discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis, the ‘normalising rituals of schooling emerging in K’s story of drama competitions, Tamil Day, Teacher’s Day celebrations, and students preparing for the important business of national exams in the warzone. Then there were spaces and possibilities. Crossing over to the Jaffna Peninsula, I suggested that the LTTE-practices admittedly disruptive and unpredictable, had not fully obliterated the space for sanctuary in the site of schooling. The rebels appropriated the site of schooling, yet did not appear to overtake or overwhelm it completely. Rebel recruitment policies had no-go zones, limits and shifting needs which translated as enabling a significant number of students to complete their O Levels; some continuing to sit for their A Levels in the warzone. Structures of schooling though war-affected, did not collapse entirely. Rituals of schooling, interrupted by temporal acts of violence, resumed.

While there were possibilities to carry out their ‘mission’ to teach, to give the students sanctuary of site, structure and ritual, the teachers ‘served,’ electing to remain in the warzone. Even danger, risk, and the deprivation of government embargoes on many essential goods including kerosene which PS commented as being ‘horrendous,’ did not give all the teachers good reason to ‘abandon post’ and migrate. To leave was considered cowardly, an act of betrayal and abandonment of their fellowmen and women, and to gain what was seen as the unfair advantage of safer havens overseas with greater comfort and career prospects. In conversation with interviewees, using the snowball method as well as identifying select institutional heads by position, I drew comments such as ‘I was a little surprised Gayathri, when you said you wanted to interview principal so and so. She was not here during wartime. She was in Colombo.’ This is how potential ‘sacrifice’ that Lippert discussed appeared to the shepherd-teachers in Jaffna. There were traces of what Daniel talked about, a sense of Ur or sense of place, a sense of belonging, that appeared stronger in a time of threat (Daniel, 1996). Yet, the Jaffna teacher was also not inclined to leave his or her ritualised territorially grounded life in the peninsula and the social and symbolic capital in society, for new beginnings overseas, lightly. The prospect of living with relatives as ‘second-class citizens’ in their homes, was considered abominable. The bitter cold of a Canadian winter was mentioned as an especially
daunting prospect. The list of reasons for not moving away grew longer as fieldwork progressed.

Underscoring that the teacher-interviewee was after all, an individual, was KM. She exhibited an irrepressibly spirited demeanour and candid humour. When asked why she stayed back in the warzone she simply said: ‘oh Gaya, we were waiting!’ ‘Waiting? For what?’ I ask. ‘Why, for Eelam, of course!’ was her reply in a matter-of-fact voice, adding with a shake of her head ‘Ah...nothing happened in the end... They made us all suffer... for nothing!’ Now KM was rather vague on the actual details of the imagined nation of Eelam, much like K in the Vanni. She had good relations with the state armed officers who brought the teachers bars of soap and other small banned items embargoed by the state, on trips up from Colombo. She simply said ‘Oh well, when they said the Army would be here, I thought, this would be a good chance to learn Sinhala’. The teachers reminded me how the Jaffna teacher was not unlike any other independent-minded middle-class teacher elsewhere else in the world, forced to succumb to an armed presence in her neighbourhood and war-induced deprivation. They struggled to frame this imposition, demonstrated embarrassment at any form of violent repression, and considered the decision to leave on account of coercion by armed agents, humiliating.

There was a strong pastoral rationality here. The teachers knew that their salaries would be paid and their pensions assured by the bureaucratic structures of public administration. There was no community which placed greater trust in the bureaucratic apparatus than the northern Jaffna community. A quarter of a century of hostile violence had not appeared to shift the disposition to join the public service as a teacher, doctor or administrator. On a field visit, I was instructed by a former principal when caught up in the midst of a rail strike on the Jaffna-Colombo route, that the government would have to sort things out, and that I would be surely reimbursed. I suggest that the disposition to serve was not one that arose from a sense of individual agency or subjective reasoning; it arose from a historically ingrained set of dispositions dating to missionary times. It had instilled a sense of an orderly world, with its rational apparatus of educational bureaucracy of numerous parts, which cranked without stopping during the long civil war. While this framework continued, the teachers had not been made to feel that they were forced away by the gun. One principal shared the sentiment that as better candidates for the role of principal had migrated, he was offered this chance, and took it.
Many teachers went overseas during wartime. PS visited family and Fr GN followed for two years of postgraduate study. Prof Somasundaram left to Australia on a sabbatical at the time of receiving death threats. All returned and at the time of writing, still continue to ‘serve’ the community of Jaffna in retirement. I offer a limited interpretation in this thesis for the roots and motivations of the disposition to serve in the northern warzone by the teacher. I can only present the sentiments and practices of the teacher-interviewees whose presence in the warzone during the war, was a testament to both a pastoral rationality and a doxic submission to education as a given. What stood out, was that the teacher was first and foremost, a teacher.

Shepherds and shepherdesses

Then there was the shepherd of Lippert’s description, the Head of a Christian mission school, Fr GN. In the next chapter, I detail the journey in which he led children into a site of long-term sanctuary in the hostel of a boy’s mission school. While I argue that Fr GN had not exactly ‘embodied’ sanctuary, shepherds do lead in sanctuary provision drawing on the social and symbolic capital of being a principal. Also the location of a member of the clergy in a shared habitus with a number of social agents across the lines is an important one in civil war. Yet the pastoral exception and power still flowed, I suggest, from the structures of schooling. GN spoke of non-return of teachers after the displacement following Indian Army disruption in 1987 and his decision to remain on the site of the Christian mission school, and in the peninsula, despite being eligible for seeking asylum in many nations offering war-affected Tamils a way out:

GN: One by one, some had opted to stay in Colombo, others in Vavuniya. Even in ’96, much later, I had a sister married and settled in Australia. She sent the papers for us to migrate to Australia. At that time we had all the criteria, (makes a box-ticking gesture) because my father was shot by the Indian Army by mistake, we were displaced. Well, the eldest went in ’98. I opted to stay here.

GF: Why did you stay on?

GN: Why I opted to stay here? I don’t know. I thought that we had to save the people and support the people. Now I feel I took the correct decision.

GF: What would have happened if you had left?

45 Vavuniya remained partly under the control of the state.
GN: It’s like this, we were here to save the suffering people, and for them, there was someone here for them. My mother was here. So many countries had a similar criteria...we had a 100% qualification to enter Australia. Because my sister was there, I was able to go away, yes! But we thought that God gave us the strength to stay and support the people.

GF: You became a reverend?

GN: I did. During that time, we were short of clergy, also.

GF: At the time when you had to make these decisions, did you feel that it was necessary to stay back?

GN: There was war all over the world and we understood that it’s a big market in the world and we cannot do anything. And also those who are taking up arms, fighting, there is no other option, they won’t listen to anyone. At first, they started to fight for the rights of the people and then they ended up with bad politics. They are unable to control themselves, to give them to others, for the betterment of society. Same with the government, the army, we are unable to say anything. They won’t discuss, they don’t want to listen to anyone. There was no space for them to get their ideas and long-term vision. We thought ‘within this struggle how can we support the people...the weakest people...? So that was the situation. We are unable to say anything. 

Pastoral rationality in the northern warzone made principals here appear not too different from their counterparts in the West. The principals in Sri Lanka took their position seriously with a dose of hard-nosed pragmatism and awareness. Post-independent Sri Lanka had been a hotbed of young persons emerging with modern western schooling, English literacy and debate on Marxism, socialism, revolution and thus translating the local with notions of global power struggles.(Hughes, 2013; Spencer & Uyangoda, 1994; N. Wickramasinghe, 2012) Significantly, having a professional calling, a mission, a duty to the community was a form of sanctuary for the teacher, in the site of schooling. In a quarter of a century, no one had escaped the deep wounds of war, inflicted by multiple armed agents on this warzone. Fr GN recalls what happened to his father, his grandmother’s sister, an uncle in his 80s who ‘could walk a bit but was almost paralysed.’ The Indian Army started operations there, in Mullaitivu in 1987 he recounts, searching for the LTTE. ‘One day the Indian Army surrounded the area and they

46 Interview with Fr GN, Jaffna, 2018.
killed my father, my grandmother’s sister, uncle and the helper - all four of them they were shot dead on that morning in Mullaitivu, 1987. ‘Why, why did they do that? I ask.

GN: Because they were scared of the LTTE and they were moving around, then one morning, the army came to the house and my aunty said ‘we say good morning and my father threw open the door and they openly fired. My uncle and grandmas sister, son and the helper were all killed in one house, we don’t know the reasons and this is the reality... not only us, many were killed.

Into a world of orderly relations entered confusion, upheaval and violence of counter-insurgency operations. The educators from teacher in the warzone to the bishop in charge of school leadership in Colombo, sought sanctuary within the commonsense world of a shared habitus constructed in the site of schooling. Here lay an extent of homogeneity within its boundaries, a synchronicity obviating the need to analyse nuances and ask ‘what do you mean?’ or ‘what does it mean?’ Fr GN offered himself to be ordained as a priest a couple of years later in 1990, when the bishop informed him: ‘you will become a principal, so stay there! We won’t take you out to be a clergyman.’ He did. Principals such as Fr GN transcended senseless violence from within the sanctity of group membership in a particular habitus. He would enter conditions of existence which had a degree of homogeneity, enabling him to offer sanctuary practices which in turn would be objectively tuned from this habitus, rather than in obedience to a rule (Chopra, 2003, p.425). Turning to his mission before him, GN served, and continues to do so, at the time of writing, in retirement reproducing the structures of the very habitus of schooling that had instilled in him the disposition to do so.

Finally, there were shepherdesses as well as shepherds. Unlike in sacred sites where the head of church would manifest as a male embodiment of sanctuary as a bishop or archdeacon, roles which were predominantly reserved for males, the principal or vice-principal of girls’ schools emerged as a sanctuary-provider for vulnerable girl-students in wartime. The apparatus of schooling produced that same ‘separateness’ of habitus with its priorities, regulations and particularities embedded in the British-modelled bureaucratic order for female principals in national schools, as it did males in Christian mission schools with a hierarchical Anglican church order.

WM: I worked only five years as a principal but nearly 27 years as a teacher. Then the public, the SDS (School Development Society), the OGA (Old Girls’ Association), everybody, thought I should be appointed as a principal when the vacancy appeared.
The person who was the predecessor was about to retire on medical grounds. She asked me to act, but I was reluctant. I had no idea about administration and administration in a national school was very difficult. I remember the quote of Julius (WM pronounced it as yulius) Caesar, ‘uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.’ By the grace of God, I didn’t take it as a serious burden. If you are a good teacher, you will be a good principal also, cos you have learned all those things regularly and my concern was the students. I was straightforward.47

In Chapter Three I detailed how WM challenged the armed authority of the Indian Army in the premises of the girls’ school: the site of the girls’ school was imagined as out of bounds to booted male armed officers or ‘soldiers’ in wartime. Female guardian-principals of girls’ schools tried in diverse ways to trace a sanctuary around the site of schooling even more opaquely on gender lines. The disposition to serve the ‘girls’ as spinster-teachers with a life-mission reaches back, deep into the historical habitus of mission schooling and the arrival of single unmarried white American females announcing their intention not to marry male missionaries, but to be teachers in young girls’ educational institutions. These sites of exception were not traced only by ‘sacred’ consecration, but also by a 200-year-old historical tradition of matriarchal pastoral practices commemorated today in Jaffna. Eliza Agnew was the first unmarried female mission teacher to travel in 1840 from Boston, Massachusetts to Uduvil, Jaffna and begin her lifework among girls in the first all-female boarding school in South Asia.48

I interviewed single female teachers in the warzone who had not considered marriage to be as important as their vocation. They said ‘no, I am Miss D, not Mrs! I am unmarried. I did not see the point in getting married at all. I had a mission, I needed to teach these girls.’ WM remained a spinster and says simply that wartime did not seem the time to get married, but to serve her girls. In the following chapter I look at how matriarchal guardians in sites of residential schools informed notions of pastoral care. As discussed in the case of Fr GN, being a teacher was a form of sanctuary for the teacher as well as for the student here, especially the female teacher in wartime. What they had held on to and protected cannot be translated simply. It was something which bubbled up from a far older stream which seemed, as the diarised sentiment by Mrs. Niles, serving undaunted in the presence of male Army boots, noted, like Alfred Lord Tennyson’s famed Brook, to go on forever.

47 Interview with WM, Jaffna, 2019.
48 Uduvil Seminary, now Uduvil Girls College.
An older wellspring

Finally I wish to conclude this chapter with a discussion of a multiplicity of meanings held out by notions of sanctuary and community practices in sites such as schooling and church for this community. Diverse, seemingly opposed groups, armed and unarmed I suggest, drew from multiple meanings in responding to site, structure and ritual of schooling, yet all contributing to schooling remaining in a place of significance for all. In a report compiled during the shaky ceasefire period before the final phase of civil war, Hansen pointed to the meanings and beliefs attached to the Madhu Sanctuary in his explanation of how a site of exception had been created there (G. Hansen, 2003). He notes that ‘Catholics understand a sanctuary as a consecrated place, giving protection to those fleeing injustice or persecution. In the Catholic tradition, the right of sanctuary was based upon the inviolability attached to things sacred’ (G. Hansen, 2003, p.3).

For Catholics and the Catholic Church, Madhu is a centuries-old place of refuge and the Sanctuary of a venerated Icon, the statue of Our Lady of Madhu. For many Buddhists and Hindus, present-day Madhu is sacred partly (or even solely) because it is situated on the grounds of the Buddhist Pattini Devale or, as Tamil-speakers know it, the Amman Kovil from early in the first Millennium. Others, of all faiths, venerate Madhu because of their beliefs in its powers to heal. (G. Hansen, 2003, p.13)

However, during my visit to Madhu, even Christian Tamil pilgrims from Vavuniya readily suggested that Madhu was sacred ground for Buddhists and Hindus long before the Catholics fled there. *What people believe about the place helps to define it, and that is what is important here* [emphasis added]. (G. Hansen, 2003, p.3)

Hansen’s approach appears closer to what I am trying to explain about a notion of doxic submission in this community to sites of sanctuary which may flow from multiple strands of meaning. In underscoring schooling practices in sites of violence, I suggest that the educators tapped into a reservoir of ‘pre-reflexive, shared but unquestioned opinions and perceptions conveyed within and by relatively autonomous social entities – fields – which determine “natural” practice and attitudes via the internalized “sense of limits” and habitus of the agents in those fields.’. It was not about a site or a shepherd as much as it was about ‘the apparently natural beliefs or opinions which are in fact intimately linked to field and habitus’. Did the LTTE support education? This notion which posed a conundrum to those outside the northern warzone, did not appear to confound those who lived within. The overwhelming response was
Schooling practices and the northern community have gone hand in hand for centuries. Apart from the faith and superstitious beliefs embedded in Madhu, the tank or water reservoir in Madhu area similarly ‘has gone hand in hand with human settlement for thousands of years’ (G. Hansen, 2003, p.5). What I am implying is that the sites of sanctuary provided real pragmatic measures to these people in the North. In the next chapter, I examine the structures of the historical residential-school model introduced by the missionaries centuries ago, and explore the link between the site and its significance in the habitus of this community as a place of sanctuary, long before civil war erupted. I argue that in discussing doxa that goes to the heart of community life, the discourse on ‘sovereign power’ does not allow for translation of ‘possibilities’ which is important to this thesis. I consider Hansen’s explanation more illustrative of the mediation of sanctuary in northern Madhu than Johnson and Korf’s ‘embodied sanctuary’ imagined as halting, interrupting and placing the body of the shepherd as a shield against violence.

Another issue I feel is overlooked in the sovereignty discourse is ‘convergence.’ Hansen describes for instance, that ‘the relationship between Madhu Sanctuary and the UNHCR ‘Open Relief Centre’ (ORC) at Madhu, on the grounds of the Sanctuary’ was ‘symbiotic and effective’ (G. Hansen, 2003, p.2). Here, collaboration was agreed with the government and ‘under the protection of the Clergy’... ‘each reinforced the ability of the other to keep Madhu neutral and provide safety and respite for war-affected people’ (G. Hansen, 2003, p. 2). Here convergence as in the ‘zonal’ at Menik Farm, had produced a form of pastoral power of transnational-local and state-community character, and drawing from historical, multi-faith and other meanings in order to deliver a real pragmatic measure of help to the communities in the warzone.

In the northern warzone, things were a little topsy-turvy. Here the fault-lines were tangled between God, government, school, reverend, rebel, principal and a few other social agents inbetween including armed agents in camps issuing the required passes, and those interrogating suspects. A shaky student ID, a character certificate in possession of a student, and in the case of K, possessing nothing but his personal student details, all had propelled the student to speak up with knowledge, in trust and anticipation of a measure of sanctuary. In an insurgent struggle, when confronting an armed threat, these tokens of pastoral sanction may
appear flimsy and ephemeral. I argue, that a principal present to confirm the flock, a principal at the end of a phone line at the time of danger did not embody sanctuary here. The pastoral sanction here appeared to have devolved directly on the vulnerable student arising from the very structures of schooling, itself. Embedded forms of sanction rather than embodied, as it were. Raphael, in contrast, did not possess a token, nor could he avail himself of sanctions that were embedded in structures from which sanctuary could devolve, in times of danger.

In this study, I draw on Bourdieu’s explanation of practices, structures and habitus. Practices detailed in this thesis have revealed that the objective structures underlying schooling had to some extent, girded the armed officer, bureaucrat, principal and student. This is what I suggest, engendered them to the conditions in which schooling operated, despite military mindsets and wartime conditions.

In each of us, in varying proportions, there is part of yesterday’s man; it is yesterday’s man who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. (Bourdieu, 1977, p.80)

Did the armed officer who elected to call up the principal on behalf of the young female suspect and accept the character reference provided by the principal, do so in objective awareness? Bourdieu’s argument that ‘subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing, that what they do has more meaning than they know’ has been widely critiqued (Bourdieu, 1977, p.79). It has been interpreted as reducing the agent’s capacity to think and act objectively. What Bourdieu refers to is that in each field of positions, a belief exists in the legitimacy of the symbolic capital specific to that field. Here the field of schooling still recognised the principal as having ‘a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p.291). SM inserts a humorous anecdote on how her driver leapt out of the car at a military checkpoint in the northern warzone crying ‘Princhipal! Princhipal!’ to get waved past the checkpoint. This had drawn a rebuke from the Sinhalese Army soldier ‘Princhipal nemei, Principal! (Not princhipal, it’s principal!).

Sanctuary in this empirical field appeared to have been enabled by a harmony of habitus, and schemes engendered by a long history of schooling in modern, western models, which then informed this interaction negotiated from bureaucratic regulation, certification, documentation. Tokens and practices appearing peculiar to those outside this habitus, made sense to these agents. ‘That part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own
producers’ is the very aspect by which such agents demonstrated how objectively adjusted they were to schooling practices themselves in this field (Bourdieu, 1977, p.79). Unlike the ‘predicament of pastoral sovereignty’ that Johnson and Korf described, where the belligerent’s goodwill or tacit authorisation was relied upon in order for sanctuary to be devolved, here the doxa appeared to be submitted to by rebel and belligerent across the divide (Johnson & Korf, 2021, p.2).

Locating schooling in the larger habitus of community relations, at the time of danger, when the recipient of sanctuary stood before the social agent pleading pastoral exception, state security had to step back and recognise civilian schooling practices of going to school, the institutions of principal and student. In the *Vanni Narratives* study, post-war, Prof Daya Somasundaram had interviewed numbers of the deeply war-affected residents of the former Vanni. He noted that inexplicably, many still held that community life had continued under rebel-rule, something that they needed to get back to, despite the devastation by armed warfare (D. Somasundaram, 2010). Here I see something of what Bourdieu termed ‘that principal of continuity’ which ‘cannot be given a fully rational basis’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.82). Returning to war-devastated villages, broken and traumatised, experiencing severe loss, they had excavated ‘the mysteries of a pre-established harmony’ in tracing social hope in a return to community life (Bourdieu, 1977). The thread of continuity had held together somehow. All this had been enabled by a habitus which had informed possibilities for a pastoral disposition to prevail in the field of schooling-in-wartime. This had remained important to this community over a long civil war, in spite of the deep loss, trauma and deprivation that wars bring to communities, everywhere.

Conclusion

In this chapter I began an enquiry continued in the next, on sanctuary measures devolved on the student in the warzone, from sites of school. Drawing from articulations of pastoral sanction and pastoral exception in existing literature, I contrast the sanctuary provided by a charismatic ‘shepherd’ in sacred sites of church, with the intervention at Menik Farm refugee camp by the ‘zonal education’ bureaucrats. A central argument of this chapter and important to this thesis, is that the power to make pastoral exception in the field of schooling-in-wartime in Northern Sri Lanka, was not embodied in a charismatic shepherd-individual, but embedded deep in the habitus of the schooling structures. Flowing from this is a discussion on how
remaining in school, had enabled students like K from rebel-territory to be considered subjects of pastoral power, and enabled students from the Jaffna Peninsula in instances of danger, to receive pastoral sanction. Returning to the practical operators in the habitus, teachers are discussed as social agents with a pastoral rationality and having received as well as provided sanctuary for the vulnerable war-affected student. Bourdieu’s conceptual approaches of habitus and doxa are held out as enabling a study of sanctuary as going beyond the immediate instance, and linking the practices of sanctuary and the location of the ‘child’ to multiple strands of meaning known to this community, which gave life to a doxa that informed sanctuary practices in wartime.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Education as a Site of Sanctuary Part II:

Movement

In a ‘closed’ warzone, the site of schooling was marked by movement. Teachers and educators kept talking to each other, kept moving, converging for this or that conference, meeting, or annual inter-school competition at district or provincial level. Social agents with transnational links moved with official passes. They included INGO employees, bishops and social workers such as Dutch Ben Bavinck who performed emissary functions north and south during civil war (Bavinck, 2011, 2014). I observed as fieldwork progressed that accounts of the experiential reality of wartime schooling detailed a continuous engagement in the form of territorial movement and convergence. The system of passes issued by the armed agents on both sides and transactions of leaving and returning to the warzone appeared to have been absorbed into the day-to-day inconveniences of the teacher and educator for over a quarter of a century of civil war. Going beyond the everyday forms of movement, educators converged with diverse social agents carrying out governance practices in interventions such as conducting the A Levels in the warzone. Theories of rebel-governance and sovereignty discourse explained convergence for governance and legitimation practices, yet did not quite account for other instances of movement detailed by the interviewee-teachers (Terpstra & Frerks, 2017, 2018).

Movement, Symbolic Capital, ‘Illusio’

Examining practices of social agents in the field of schooling-in-wartime, I found teachers moving in ways that called for a deeper exploration into the principles that underpinned such practices that did not stack tidily in governance theory. A retired former high-level educator in the Ministry of Education narrated how he had organised a workshop on educational reform in the rebel-held Vanni during the shaky ceasefire of 2002-2006. Despite the polarised divide deepening in a climate of suspicion and uncertainty, the Jaffna Tamil educator had secured
the trusted participation of his colleagues from the southern Sinhalese and Muslim communities. They had converged in rebel-held territory to discuss common goals and a common future traced through the site of education. At the time of interviewing in 2018, the ‘retired’ educator was continuing his work in in post-war educational rehabilitation of the Northern Province. He had been in the ‘eye of the storm’ as Klem wrote of the Eastern warzone wartime administrators (Klem, 2012) and detailed his achievement with pride: ‘I will leave no stone unturned for my people!’ Had this event on educational reform moving teachers across the lines, somehow restored their notion of the ought-to-be? I was handed a copy of the paper he had presented at the University of Oxford, UK on the subject.

Studying movement in the northern warzone, I suggest, offers insights into the illusio or social logic in the field of positions in schooling-in-wartime (Kögler, 1997, p.149; Wacquant, 1989, p.41). Wacquant (W) in dialogue with Bourdieu (B), a key resource used in this thesis, points to the existence of many fields. I found this illustrative of how schooling-in-wartime appeared to be a field imagined as discrete from the field of warfare in examining the practices of teachers and the exchanges with armed officers.

W: This would imply that there are as many "interests" as there are fields, that each field simultaneously presupposes and generates a specific form of interest that is incommensurable with those that have currency elsewhere.

B: Absolutely. There are as many practical understandings of the game, and thus interests, as there are games. Each field calls forth and gives life to a specific form of interest, a specific illusio as tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game and as practical mastery of its rules. Furthermore, this specific interest implied by one’s participation in the game specifies itself according to the position occupied in the game (dominant vs. dominated, or orthodox vs. heretic) and with the trajectory that leads each participant to this position. Anthropology and comparative history show that the properly social magic of institutions can constitute almost anything as an interest, and as a realistic interest. (Wacquant, 1989, p.42)

Bourdieu goes on to explain that an ‘interest’ if understood as an investment in the game, is ‘the propensity to act which is born out of the relation between a field and a system of dispositions adjusted to the game it proposes, a sense of the game, and of its stakes, which implies both an inclination and an ability to play the game’ (Wacquant, 1989, p.42). It is through this conceptual tool of illusio that I propose to examine the social agents in the field of
schooling-in-wartime for their relative autonomy in moving, converging and how all this contributed to generating sanctuary practices for the war-affected children. Bourdieu’s approach requires such agents to be always placed within the game, the field, and operating through a habitus, a set of dispositions acquired in a collective history. To better understand what was attempted by principals, bureaucrats and church leaders, we need to see how ‘agents enter the field by acquiring competence (scientific capital and a sense of the game)’ and how this relates to the propensity to take part in the game. Once in the field, they engage in a struggle to attain a monopoly of scientific authority/competence, or at least the recognition of their competitor-peers (Bourdieu, 1975 in Kale-Lostuvali, 2016, p.279).

In a chapter on doxa in Grenfell’s Key Concepts, a work which attempts to concisely present the rather elaborate concepts of Bourdieu, Deere reduced illusio to ‘normative beliefs’ leaving out its importance in examining how agents had ‘a feel for the game’ which Crossley discusses in his review. The northern principals, church leaders, educators operating in the field of schooling-in-wartime I argue had both competence and a feel for the game. As detailed elsewhere in this thesis, they went beyond Klem’s Eastern bureaucrats who ‘kept their files clean’ (Klem, 2012, p.15). Their practices at times fell outside the bounds of state legitimation practices, taking matters into their own hands. Klem and other researchers on internal conflict draw on notions of ‘the state and competing claims of sovereignty’ arguing that these ‘were at the core of what the conflict was about’ (Klem, 2012, p.3). Towards an understanding of what was really going on in the northern warzone and the field of positions, I propose, a theoretical approach going beyond notions of state and sovereignty was required.

Here were northern bureaucrats of a certain class taking up a position in the field approximating a Bourdieusian notion of state nobility and operating from within an illusio as ‘the guardians of the national habitus’ (Fowler, 2020, p.447). They were engaging in a ‘game qua game’ which I propose to examine in this chapter through ‘movement’ (Crossley, 1999, p.451). As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, the power to enable education informed the dispositions of the northern educators. Illusio recognises the stakes in the game as the symbolic struggle over legitimacy in the field of schooling. From this position, the educators operated with a fervour generated from an evolving habitus, conditioned by, as well as seeking to construct a commonsense world in an evolving field of wartime. The war-affected child was in the most vulnerable position in the field of armed warfare. All social agents operating from their habitus moved and converged to give the war-affected child some degree of sanctuary, hope and purpose at odds with what seemed like an unending civil war. Within competing
claims to state sovereignty in the field of armed warfare, a parallel struggle for legitimation by powerful social agents was continuing in the field of schooling-in-wartime.

I turned to Bourdieu’s conceptual approaches, going deeper, excavating the principles underlying the visible practices, and uncovering invisible relationships in the field (Grenfell, 2014, p.56). The mission schools drew on their symbolic capital in the field of positions during wartime. This in turn appeared to have informed the practices of principals of such schools operating from within an illusion which I simply refer to as the social logic of the field (Schinkel, 2007, p.709). It explained for instance, how the principal of Uduvil Girls College had been permitted to travel to Boston for the Annual General Meeting of the Board overseeing accounts of the school during wartime, and return. This was not a legitimation practice but a ‘privilege’ allowed by all armed parties. Uduvil Girls College was recognised as occupying a historical and transnational position in the field which I discuss later on. Then there were the scholarships which attempted to ‘move’ students from the warzone to Europe and the USA. Among the Dutch poetry award recipients was the student known as Selvy. On 2nd August, 1994 Bavinck enters in his diary that he had received a big bundle of mail in which there was a letter from The Embassy of The Netherlands informing that Selvy had won an international poetry prize and whether he could help in finding her whereabouts. He notes that Prof Somasundaram had informed him recently that Selvy and Manoharan had both been killed while in ‘Tiger detention’ though there was nothing definite nor official (Bavinck, 2014, p.25).

Studying movement attempted and performed, we see power struggles taking place in the social space of positions in the field of schooling within the field of armed warfare. Take the spectacle of the combined carol service. This was an annual convergence of students and teachers in an event falling outside the bounds of governance practice in that ‘extracurricular’ site which had marked the rebel-territory schooling experience of K and others. A unique postcolonial structure of schooling, the extracurricular, I observed, had slipped beneath the gaze of conflict researchers. A number of Christian schools in Jaffna joined in ‘the combined carol service’ held in November, to avoid clashing with the annual GCE O Level Examination (GCSE equivalent), in December. According to SM, the former female principal of a mission school for girls, this tradition pre-dated the war. Continuing to date, this was one of the important mission school events in the calendar in wartime:

SM: Carolling during the war...when the third term starts, we start practices. The tradition of this carol service is since the 60s. I think we came to the 62nd now. I can
get you... it was a routine... and during the troubles... we needed to have two sections: one across this bund and one across the other. At one point, they had to split the carol service, there was this bund or whatever, and hold it on both sides, because they couldn’t move!

One carol service was held during the year in which MK a vice-principal of a Christian mission school for girls had received a death threat from a group claiming to be the LTTE, as detailed in Chapter One of this thesis. SM recalls how she had thumped out carols on the piano with one eye peeled for a sighting of a gunman or weapon. The combined carol service had carried on. Uduvil Girls College and Jaffna College were the ‘pride’ of American Mission School establishments in Jaffna and were at the heart of this annual ritual. Historical structures of schooling occupied a significant position in the field. Among the oldest historical schooling institutions in the entire island, these schools were set up in 1824 and 1823 respectively, by American Missionaries of the Congregationalist Church, Boston, Massachusetts. Harriet Winslow, Eliza Agnew and Daniel Poor as mission teachers and missionaries are commemorated at the time of writing this thesis, in anniversary ceremonies 200 years on, for their contribution to these resilient schooling structures.

In the next section, I look at how the structures of these mission schools informed a set of dispositions in the habitus of this field which flowed beyond faith and mission school boundaries to engender practices of sanctuary. It is apparent that other female principals of state girls’ schools I interviewed, WM in Chapter Three for instance, had drawn from the same wellspring as the former principal of Uduvil Girls College. The institution of principal of Uduvil Girls School was historically a position held by four American female principals followed by five Srilankan Tamil female principals at the time of writing. It was reportedly the first all-female boarding school for girls in South Asia, a fact imparted with pride by MK in her interview in August 2018 in Jaffna. I return to the diary of Mrs. Niles and the inscription I quoted in Chapter Six: ‘men may come and men may go but we at Uduvil Girls College will go on forever’. In the field of wartime schooling, shepherds and shepherdess-principals were excavating historical dispositions in an evolving habitus within an evolving field, marked by war and armed male presence.

There was, embedded in such performances of movement and in normative stances taken in the social space of positions, something that flowed from a historical habitus. Linking the past, the present and the future, it flowed from that which one has acquired, and become durably
incorporated in the body, in the form of permanent dispositions. I have suggested elsewhere in this thesis that sanctuary was possible, at times an inadvertent measure, at times taken-for-granted allowance or permitted practice within structures of schooling. I look at how the practices of principals and students caught up in war and its aftermath had been informed by a doxic submission to the legitimacy of the symbolic capital specific to that field or illusio.

Alongside cultural, social and economic capital as main forms, Bourdieu sees symbolic capital as especially indicative of power and position. Symbolic capital often exists as a form of capital that is not recognised as such, and each field has its preferred form of capital which, in that field, stands for ‘a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability.’ (Schinkel, 2007, p.710)

The question I ask in this chapter is, how did the illusio in the field of northern wartime schooling create possibilities of movement, which conveyed the student from the violence of war to a space of sanctuary in schooling sites, beyond? How did the location of the principal in the social space of positions, inform relations with social agents in the field to deliver possibilities of movement of war-affected children to sanctuary within schools? First, I discuss the structures of ‘the residential school’ model dating back to the 1820s, as flowing beyond faith and mission school. I detail how an instrumental measure of sanctuary was offered from within this hostel-school model. I include in this illustration, hostellers in Christian mission schools, TRO Home resident-children in rebel-held Vanni and war-affected children in a state-sanctioned Hindu Krishna Children’s Home in post-war Jaffna. Second, I examine through case studies of movement, how the war-affected students were shepherded from Menik Farm refugee camp to the hostels of schools and universities.

The Residential School

The teacher-interviewees in the former Northern warzone referred to a school with a hostel or boarding facilities for students, either on the premises, or in close proximity to the school, as a ‘residential school’. The Christian mission school principals additionally used terms such as ‘hostel-school’ and ‘church-school’ for the two-hundred-year-old tradition of western modern schooling introduced in the form of the residential school model to Jaffna. The symbolic capital of these structures ‘especially indicative of its power and position’ included transnational, local, church, alumni associations and other links in and beyond the peninsula and overseas. Introduced by the American Mission in the form of ‘the charity boarding school’ in 1816, Daniel Poor founded the ‘Common Free School’ later known as the ‘Family Boarding School’ in rural
Tellippalai, Jaffna (Root, 2004). The Batticotta seminary at Vaddukkodai in northern Jaffna in 1823 was reported to have been considered equal to many European universities, while the Uduvil Seminary mentioned in the earlier section, formed in 1824 is claimed to be the first boarding school for girls in South Asia (Martyn, 1923, p.59, 360). These structures did not collapse, facing disastrous epochs such as the devastating cholera epidemic of 1850s in Jaffna and the threatened closure of schools by the American Mission due to low conversion rates of Hindus among other reasons. Adapting and sustaining the structures, these schools continue to date as Jaffna College and Uduvil Girls College respectively, all celebrating around 200 years of western modern education. St. John’s College is one of the leading schools with boarding facilities established by the British Wesleyan Christian Missionary Society also 200 years’ old (Martyn, 1923).

I discovered in field interviews that the residential schools were at the centre of diverse stories of movement of war-affected children to sanctuary. Going beyond the admittedly instrumental measure of sanctuary offered by hostel accommodation in close proximity to school, reducing risk of recruitment, harassment or violence of insurgent-state struggle, I turn to habitus, illusio and doxa. How were the sanctuary practices of the social agents within these structures informed by the historically ingrained dispositions of the habitus? How did the habitus evolve adjusting to an evolving field of schooling-in-wartime? How did the illusio operate to enable movement of children into these structures in wartime, converging diverse social agents across the lines? In the search for the practical operator or habitus ‘through which the action of the subjects becomes social actions, the practical ‘re-construction’ of the social world, I propose an exploration into the structures of the residential school as relevant to this thesis. Flowing beyond the original wellspring of western Christian faith and mission school, I look at the residential school model including Hindu institutions housing children affected by poverty and war such as the Krishna Children’s Home in post-war Jaffna, and even the TRO Homes where K lived his young life in rebel-held territory. There was something else. From within the illusio or the social logic of the field, the residential school was at the structural core of doxic

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49 Following guidance of the British Governor on conditions of setting up mission schools, the missionaries did not enforce conversion of Hindu students entering the Christian mission schools. The British did not wish to face a mutiny caused by western Christian mission conversion of Hindus as experienced in India. The excuses made in letters to Boston was that while these charges remained under the control of their families, it was not possible to enforce conversion to Christianity. The Jaffna Mission was deemed an educational success and a failure in numbers of converts to Christianity. The funding was reduced and the Batticotta Seminary ordered to close down in 1850. In 1870, the alumni re-opened the school under the same principal E. P. Hastings as Jaffna College. The schools Jaffna College and Uduvil Girls College were placed under the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India.
submission by the ‘noble bureaucrat’, the shepherd and shepherdess—principals that here lay hope in hopelessness.

Moving children into hostel and ‘Home’

In an interview in Colombo in 2018, I asked SM how students from the rebel-held Vanni had been moved into the safe spaces of the Jaffna school hostel. ‘We are a church-school’ she explained.

Most of the children who come are referred by the pastor of Kilinochchi and Vavuniya districts, especially Kili where it was difficult to access school. No, they are not always Christian, also Hindu children. Background…the children were taken away to be soldiers or as suspects. Some from normal families were referred due to poverty…I never regret going back as I felt I could give something to those children, and because this was a residential school, so many boarders, they came from very traumatic backgrounds, from the Vanni. When the war was very intense and it was traumatic for the children. You get a lot of satisfaction in what you do for the children…you know… they had lost their family.

In wartime, the church leaders criss-crossed faith and state-rebel lines, converging and moving children to safety under the canopy of war and divide. Significantly, a sense of having a mission, a disposition to ‘serve,’ had enabled the war-affected teachers to provide pastoral care for their flock from within the structures of the residential school. In an in-depth interview with a principal of a Christian mission schools for boys, Fr GN recalled how he had grown up in the former Vanni before war took hold. He had witnessed and lived amongst economic poverty and a lack of opportunity in this under-developed region of the northern peninsula. Later he was placed in the same mission school hostel where he was now the principal. ‘The church …they move with the people,’ he says, ‘The people come and share their stories and need support.’

When people ask to get support for education, they ask for residential facilities, to give accommodation. In former Vanni, we had no proper system to accommodate children and school them. In 1995, during the displacement, I had 23 children in my house there. No work, but my heart is always with the needy children. I could teach them. Back in 1991, one child asked, eight years, ‘GN anna, can you please take me with you and give education for me?’ That happened in 91. That calling was within myself. I was a simple teacher, no support no finances, an ordinary teacher. We can’t take administrative
decisions, we had to ask them (the church leaders). At the time they were not prepared to give financial support. In 1996, when I came here, I see the children after five years. The boy, he was starting to go on 13 or 14. In displacement, I taught English and Maths and everything in my home. The bishop visited us and said ‘I will try to organise financial support here in Mullaitivu.’ This is the poor Mullaitivu… poverty…parents were not educated. The rebels did not raise any protest.

In disorder, unpredictability and fear, the bishop would converge with principals and armed officers and rebels at times of crisis. During active and intense battles causing displacement in the 1987 Indian Army advance on Jaffna and the 1995 War for Jaffna, assistance was sent by the church headquarters in Colombo through the unlikely emissary of the Sri Lanka Army officer to the vice principal offering sanctuary to displaced students.50 Taking refuge in the dormitory of a Christian mission school, the vice principal and the archbishop considered their presence to be a deterrent to armed attack by the Indian army or the LTTE. Johnson and Korf would allude to such acts as ‘embodied sanctuary’(Johnson & Korf, 2021). Here, the state armed forces were considered the least likely to target the principal of a school or a faith leader operating from a shared habitus. ‘Even if there are two students, open the school!’ was the order given by Bishop Ambalavanar to MK after they returned from displacement and found the girls’ mission school hostel in disarray, but intact.51 While the evolving field of wartime schooling was informing the structures of the mission schools, from within the institutional structure of the school, the social agents were attempting a cognitive (re)construction of a commonsense world in the field of wartime schooling. Here daily schooling resumed, hierarchical pastoral power and order held, while centuries-old pastoral practices continued, war-affected. What I am trying to draw out here is that the structures of schooling created possibilities of convergence with social agents with symbolic power in the field. Parents and teachers kept moving with principals and bishops to keep hope of a sanctuary in schooling structures alive.

I was detecting a strange sort of habitus-field match in this concoction of residential-school structures, local-transnational church powers and pastoral disposition of the shepherd-shepherdess principals all caught up in the need to save the children from the violence of civil war. Yet this was a phenomenon I suggest that was neither spontaneous nor a reaction to the threat of war. Placing their sons and daughters in mission school structures to gain an

50 Interview with KN, a former vice-principal of a Christian mission school for boys.
51 Interview with MK, a former vice-principal of a Christian mission school for girls.
education was historical practice in the Jaffna Peninsula. One early reference dates back to the 1800s when Nathaniel Niles, a teacher in charge of a girls' mission school, had as a young boy been handed over to the Batticotta seminary by his mother through an uncle’s connections:

It appears that soon after the boarding school was opened at Tillipally, Niles’s uncle, his mother’s brother, became acquainted with Malleappa, who at that time was stationed at Mallagum as a catechist. Malleappa gave this man an account of the new school and of the advantages which boys would derive from it. On his return to his native village some ten or twelve miles distant, he related in the hearing of Niles’s mother, what he had heard respecting the missionary boarding school. She immediately conceived the idea of entering her only son who was at that time under the tuition of a celebrated teacher known in our circle by the name of ‘the poet’. Without communicating her thoughts and intentions to her husband or to any of the family she put her brother in charge of her son that he might be brought to Tillipally. He was accordingly brought and readily admitted, his whole appearance being much in his favour. When it became known what the mother had done, it caused a great movement in the family-circle and neighbourhood. (Poor, 1840)

The boarding, hostel, residential school model with its dispositions, structures and embedded meanings had taken its place in ‘the acquired system of generative schemes’ 200 years ago in the Jaffna Peninsula. Whether introduction of mission structures had given rise to this historical disposition or the structures of western modern schooling had fed an already-ingrained disposition to education, is unclear. Historically in this community, they believed that the structures of the residential school would educate their children for a better future. Here was a different kind of movement: social mobilisation. Tamil parents in war and peace had come to expect from a mission school education a promise of all forms of economic, social and symbolic capital which it no longer delivered. In the colonial era, mission-schooled students had upon leaving, gained well-remunerated appointments in the Government Service as the administrative service was called under British rule. Some, like one of the first students, Dwight, had disappointed the missionaries by returning after completing his education at the Seminary to wed a Hindu bride, selecting government employment over faith leadership (Poor, 1840). Then there was the story of ‘little Cleveland, the youngest and smallest in his class.’ Mr. Poor writes:
He has far surpassed all other graduates from the seminary, in obtaining what all eagerly desire - a lucrative situation at a post of honour and influence. He is employed by government as a vaccinator. Receives a stipend of between $70 and $86 monthly, and rides in a palanquin. He stands high, I learn, in the estimation of his European employers. He was modest in his appearance, and said he owed all his good fortune to the American mission. It does not appear, that he has made any progress in attending to the concerns of his soul. (Poor, 1840)

In colonial and postcolonial Jaffna there persisted a deeply ingrained permanent disposition that schooling resulted in social mobilisation. The desire to move their children into schooling structures continued long after there were no such dividends of 'high influence' or 'lucrative situation'. Later on in this chapter we see how parents in Menik Farm held on to this historical disposition which appeared to have deepened, not lessened, in the aftermath of devastating final battles.

**Christian mission schools for girls and boys**

Here, there were shepherdesses as well as shepherds. Unlike in sacred sites where the head of church would be a male bishop or archdeacon, in the site of schooling, it was the principal or vice-principal of girls' schools who emerged as a sanctuary-provider for vulnerable girl-students in wartime. SM detailed with awareness, her guardianship role in wartime over the girls in the hostel. 'Born in Jaffna, my father was a priest ...[...]... my mother was a teacher' she began. 'My granduncle was an educationist and I was a graduate, a teacher.' SM had to leave Jaffna in the middle of wartime, but returned. As the final battles intensified, the rebel-held Vanni had been cut off from the peninsula, leaving the hostellers safe in the residential school on one side, while their families were caught up in unpredictable and dangerous battles between the LTTE and the state armed forces on the other. The roads were blocked. While the casualties piled up and the LTTE withdrew taking the civilians as human shields, the tragic divided fate of daughters and their families became clearer.

They realised that they were not going to see their parents, it was at that moment... there was this road blockade... the children I think... realised! There was this big war, close to 2009. The papers used to publish the names of the people who died. So these children from the hostel, they used to dash to the library first thing in the morning after breakfast. They used to run to the library and scan the papers to see if any of their relatives had died. The papers used to ... publish... the names of the people who had
died... the local papers... where there had been shelling... and those who had lost their lives, names and places... and they used to wail and cry! I remember them just fainting, collapsing! And then one thing I did was to remove the papers from the library...that’s one thing I did...that was a temporary ... (shakes head!). When we got word, we used to say someone is sick, and then we send them off home. And sometimes they would just stay in the hostel. That was one way we survived, looking after the hostellers! You tried ... if a person got a letter like that... you saw that she was safe, how do you deal with grief at that age? You are scared and you don’t know what is going to happen! It was very traumatic...!

Nothing stacked up tidily or objectively in the events of the Sri Lankan civil war. It was hard to make sense or to anticipate in a narrative where possibilities and pastoral rationality would descend to events of senseless violence. A sense of pain, futility and helplessness was palpable in the aural recollection by those who had lived in these times. I quickened to the ‘plight’ as they called it of middle-class teachers and students facing war-related phenomena, they were neither prepared for nor equipped to deal with.

Then there is the contradiction that marks the site of the Sri Lankan civil war. In 1985 during the early phases of asserting its armed supremacy over a number of other Tamil paramilitary groups in Jaffna, the LTTE organisation ordered the killing of Mr. Anandarajan, the principal of St. John’s College, Jaffna. Though the purported reason was stated as organising a cricket match between the army and the school, according to the teacher-interviewees, hostilities arose from Mr Anandarajan’s vocal critique of LTTE ideology and practices, and his policy of banning the rebels from entering the site of school. Significantly in an act of contradiction, years later, Velupillai Prabhakaran selected this same school, St. John’s College, as the residential school for his son, placing him in the pastoral care of the school leadership. This type of contradiction has marked the postcolonial warzone of Sri Lanka as being in some ways ‘unique’, marked by practices that have not been replicated in other sites of rebel-insurgent struggle.

An explanation from the politics of rebel governance is that contradiction was part of rebel practice, rebel positions changed over diverse phases of war and that exchanges were made, permissions and guarantees granted by both state and rebel. Yet this act by Prabhakaran falls outside legitimacy and governance exchanges. I turn to Bourdieu’s notion of structures and habitus for an interpretation. As laid out in La Distinction, the principle of the structuring
activity of the habitus ‘is not a system of universal forms and categories but a system of internalised, embodied schemes’ (Bourdieu, 2010, p.469). I suggest that in attempting to understand the object here, the knowledge which the agents, that is Prabhakaran and also the St. Johns’ administrators who are part of the object, have of the object, is bound up in the collective history of the Jaffna Tamil disposition to getting and giving the best education.

So what was the contribution this knowledge made to the reality of the object? This is where it all becomes a bit fuzzy. The LTTE opposed mission school ideology and privilege. Why did Prabhakaran not select Hindu College in keeping with nationalist ideology, which supported the Movement to a greater extent than the mission schools? Pragmatically, the mission schools being transnational and private in all reality afforded the greatest assurance of sanctuary for his son, perhaps. Whatever negotiations had led to this curious selection, I suggest that the hostel facilities of this important residential school had enabled a measure of sanctuary to devolve even on the rebel-leader’s son, despite the stain of LTTE violence. Relevant to this discussion is also the regularity, order, protocol and process adhered to in the admission of the boy. He received pastoral care in hostel facilities dating back to 1876, when ‘Dr Wood bought an additional piece on land on which in 1888, a Boarding House was erected by the Revd. G.F. Fleming with funds collected from the Old Boys to perpetuate the memory of Mr J. Evarts, whose name as Headmaster of 20 years, is still revered.’ (p. 188 Martyn book). Admitted as a student and taught the national curriculum, he had been given a good education in a leading boys school where he was treated as a minor, as a student, and was afforded that place of sanctuary from the warzone, inadvertently, at least, for a time. The habitus was at work here, unfailing in its inclusion of all social agents in the field of wartime schooling in Northern Sri Lanka.

The TRO Home and the Krishna Children’s Home: K and N

The structures of the residential school model flowed beyond faith and church, as competition in the supply of schooling far outdated any practices of state-rebel compromise in wartime. An extract from a 1916 colonial text on mission schooling in Jaffna reads: ‘During recent years a vigorous opposition to the Christian schools has developed on the part of the Hindu community. Within a mile of Uduvil a fine building was erected for a Hindu boarding school for girls’ (Root, 2004, p.75). In the course of fieldwork I quickened to the commonalities as well as divergences in the life of K, the students in the Jaffna mission school hostels and N, a foster-child I encountered in a post-war project in rehabilitation. All the children in these schools
slept in dormitories and the main object of their existence was daily schooling. As discussed in Chapter Two, even the LTTE-managed orphanages included Homes that sent the children to school daily. K had received a degree of structure, mingling with students from ‘normal’ homes as they referred to civilian families. K and N had both participated in extracurricular activities.

In the aftermath of war in 2011, while things were still very raw in the peninsula, on that first visit, PS invited us to visit a Children’s Home he was managing in Jaffna. There was no time as we were due to leave on the next morning’s flight to Colombo. A year later, we fostered two children in an educational sponsorship project in post-war rehabilitation. One child, N, who had lost both parents in the final battles that ended the civil war, was reported as absent from school, carrying out domestic chores, caring for her aged grandparents. Her grandfather was blind, and the only source of income was the sale of dried fish outside their home in a remote coastal village of the Jaffna peninsula. The schoolteacher, a Samurdhi Bank employee and the project worker in Jaffna had visited the child to assess the situation. They reported that N had raised her hand and asked to be placed in a Home, so that she could go to school like other children who had been similarly placed. She was only ten years old.

Sri Lankans living in European or similar cultural contexts struggle with realities of the warzone learnt from a distance. How did a ten-year-old ask to be placed in a Home? We had considered buying her a bicycle to help her go to school from her remote coastal village. But then we were informed that as she was assessed as qualifying to be placed in a Home, the bicycle would not be appropriate. Recalling PS’s mention of a Home, I called him and with some emotion, asked him to please take this girl-child N, into his care. ‘My dear Gayathri,’ PS replies, ‘we are not yet a banana republic. I cannot just take over this girl into my care! There is a procedure to be followed.’ A procedure? ‘She will be made a ward of the Court. Then the Probation Officer will assign her to a Home on a list of government-vetted Homes. I can assure you that our Home has been approved by the government and will be considered.’

Protocol and procedure took a year before N was finally placed in the Home. An appeal had been made to the probation officer that it would be in the best interest of N if she were placed in the Krishna Home managed by a former principal directly known to her sponsor. The Home made it clear, that while a modest sum was welcome annually towards her welfare, a kovil would be funding this Home, and N’s needs would be provided for until she completed her secondary education. The convergence of diverse social agents within and beyond Sri Lanka
had moved N into a site of sanctuary where she would daily attend the state school and sit for her exams. Her grandmother was her only visitor. Four years later, when I began my doctoral study and fieldwork, I met N once on a field visit, not wishing to cause her confusion and disturb her healing and integration.

Over a decade, my insider-outsider insights grew as an unintended consequence of gaining a position of sustained trust into the workings of sanctuary, post-war, within structures of such homes. Significantly, the residential school model appeared to have aroused no stigma and fear in the mind of a ten-year-old child who had suffered war-induced trauma, loss and poverty. She believed that this site would give her a measure of sanctuary, and that the prospect of daily schooling was something she desired. The disposition to be ‘like every other child’ that is, a student, had helped her move into the site of sanctuary in the Krishna Home. The model had become a taken-for-granted institution in Jaffna. As Hansen points out, ‘what people believe about a site helps to define it and that is what is important’ (G. Hansen, 2003, p.3).

Though K in rebel-held Vanni admittedly received very little pastoral nurture, the structures of this Home-school model would deliver an unintended measure of sanctuary after the Tsunami of 2004 hit the Mullaitivu coast on Boxing Day. K’s mother had returned from the Middle East and their new home was ready, built with her earnings. K was allowed to return home for the Christmas holidays and recalls his mother stroking his head, telling him to be a good boy and study well. In the devastation of the Tsunami, K lost his mother, a sister and their newly-built home. He paddled strongly through the water and when he hit dry land, he remembers just running and running! Yet unlike other victims of the Tsunami, K returned to his TRO Home, which lay unharmed by the Tsunami, deep in the forested areas of Mullaitivu. Trauma and loss marking his young life around 14 years old, K received a measure of sanctuary from the familiar structures of daily schooling at the same school to which he formed a line and left and returned, to the same Home, rituals and routines.

Fifteen-year-old N appeared in the local paper in a dance performance. She had had difficulties studying in those early years, but excelled at dance. The Home-school model appeared to have seamed her life together in this space until she passed her A Levels and was assigned a place at the University of Jaffna last year. Two journeys in similar structures had devolved a measure of sanctuary long-term and transformative from these modest structures linking a Home and state school. The probation officer had kept in touch with N, reminiscent of the profiling of the
officers employed in the bureaucratic Department of Childcare and Probation detailed in Amarasuriya’s thesis (Amarasuriya, 2011). People had moved, the war-affected had moved, the experience of that convergence had moreover shifted something that reached deep into the habitus of this postcolonial society. We had all submitted to the doxa of tracing hope through the site of schooling for the war-affected disadvantaged child. Structures left over from the mission school charity boarding model, the welfare state legislation on childcare and probation all had somehow informed the lives of such vulnerable children. Pastoral care by dedicated teachers had filled the void in a context of post-war deprivation. Possibilities of a future, traced through a place at university had prepared their young minds for a life without the support of family, scarred by loss.

What is important is that we see in the rational as well as irrational forms of convergence and movement, the notion of pastoral rationality held by the parent, the church leader, the teacher. While the rebel-state battles continued in rebel-held Vanni, K’s uncle, not unlike the uncle of Nathaniel Niles in the 1820s, had used influence to secure a place for K in the TRO Home as K was running amok without a mother’s supervision. This was all too ordinary. The church leaders in the rebel-territory had moved children, both Hindu and Christian, away from a deeply violent site into safe structures of Christian mission schools. Prabhakaran for reasons which cannot be fully understood, had used his powers to move his son into a Christian mission school for boys. I had used whatever contacts I had with a chain of social agents to secure a place for N in the Krishna Children’s Home. What I attempt to show in this thesis is how schooling and institutional structures were informing the practical operators in the habitus of all social agents in this postcolonial society. This chord of doxic submission crossed lines and territories cordoned off by political divides. I include my own invisible relationships and position to the social space of positions in the field. This practical construction of the social world in the field of schooling in wartime had enabled the war-affected children K, N, and many others, to be moved into the sanctuary of residential schooling institutions. They would emerge with a certificate of ritualised structured schooling practices, a set of dispositions and symbolic capital to take their place beside the ‘normal’ students at university and find possibilities in a future constructed by knowledge of which they themselves are a construct. At the very least, a future which offered an alternative to hopelessness and violence.
Journey to Sanctuary

During an earlier conversation on a field visit in 2018, Fr GN had alluded to a journey made from Menik Farm to the Christian mission school with a number of refugee children, that, he said was ‘a big story.’ Fr GN was a busy principal. Immediately after our interview, he would inaugurate a boy scout event at the school and left, assuring that he was available for further interviews. Fr GN was not an easy interviewee to track down, constantly moving from Jaffna to Colombo and Kandy on his work. Yet he had added me on to his daily bible verse listing on WhatsApp. It was in Tamil, a language I was not fluent in, yet a comforting daily reminder that to the interviewees in the former warzone, I was an insider-outsider. I had travelled to the former warzone to understand the experiential reality of wartime schooling and so, was added to the listing. In May 2021, during a second wave of covid-19 in the United Kingdom, I texted Fr GN, requesting a follow-up interview to discuss the journey from Menik Farm to the mission school for boys with boarding facilities for the refugee children. ‘Good timing as I am just retired and back in my village to revive the boy scouts chapter’ said Fr GN making a cup of tea and sitting down to detail a journey to sanctuary from Menik Farm to a residential Christian mission school for a number of children who were directly affected in the final battles. In the following sections, I record the events and exchanges including details from an earlier interview in 2018. I reproduce this important account in the order it was narrated; as a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Additionally, another layer of experiential reality is supplied by K’s journey from Menik Farm to the hostel of the Jaffna University.

‘Go and bring them!’

Actually because we used to go through this experience of displacement and hardship and everything...a long history... and I had the experience of ‘77 riots and ‘83 -a little bit -and within northern province, ‘87 and ‘95 exodus52,...moving time to time...I feel the pain of the children as well as the parents. So when this happened, soon after they organised the camp and everything, the papers came out with the news that more than 10,000 orphan children are in the camp and struggling. Then I thought... this thought came to my mind, to bring some children to our school in Jaffna. Immediately the Old Boys responded that they will take responsibility: ‘don’t worry about the financial burden, go and bring them!’

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52 The 1987 displacement due to Indian Army operations to dismantle the LTTE and the 1995 Battle for Jaffna between the state armed forces and the LTTE.
Because we need the financial help for accommodation and food and everything...for long term...full education at least, to go through O Levels (GCSEs) and A Levels. And we couldn’t. When our hostel functions were not functioning...our hostel closed in 1990 when the fort operations started. We couldn’t function...some people stayed overnight...a group. We lost most of the kitchen utensils and the furniture after 1995-the army! We couldn’t work it out and required the OBA (Old Boys' Association) to furnish and upkeep the facilities. Then also, immediately, a group of Old Boys came forward. We demolished the hostel and rebuilt it.\textsuperscript{53}

In the field of wartime and post-war schooling funding was an enabler of sanctuary practices in sites of schooling. In Northern Sri Lanka, mobilised by the quickening of the shepherd to the need to offer pastoral sanctuary to war-affected children, funds and expertise moved through nodes of alumni mobilising from territories all over the world. This practice was apparent in all school alumni formations in Sri Lanka; particularly in the international alumni of the Northern Tamil diaspora, the field was marked by special characteristics. Diaspora-guilt and power struggles over symbolic capital in inter-school and inter-regional groups from Australia to UK to Canada, contributed to zeal, contentious competition and movement of funds through established networks of ‘trust.’ This mobilisation enabled decision-making on sanctuary measures by principals of Jaffna schools. More recently in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic, the Old Boys of a Hindu secondary school in Jaffna enquired of the principal if they could wire funds to secure dry rations. The principal wryly commented that they had enough dry rations, thank you, but he would be grateful if the alumni could fund a few smart boards instead. He set up a dedicated media production room on the site of school with the funds received, trained teachers on how to deliver pre-recorded lectures and created an online learning resource to be used beyond the pandemic, for all students preparing for the O Levels and A Levels.

Returning to Fr GN, the original decision was to bring 100 orphan children to the school and fund their care until they reached the age of 18. ‘We went searching for the orphan children...we had a tough time to enter the camp...we had to get a court order! We struggled for months, visiting in the camps, that’s a big story: how we entered the camp and how we worked it out.’\textsuperscript{54} Fr GN was informed that in order to get the required permission to release the refugee-children from the camp, education, health and hygiene procedures had to be

\textsuperscript{53} As a private school, they were dependent on school alumni organisations for funding such renovations.

\textsuperscript{54} Interview in Aug 2018, Jaffna.
completed. ‘They clearly told us; the government worked out the system: orphans to be released to the court to be made wards of the court by the child probation officer.’ As in the case of N, the administration was entering the power struggle over symbolic capital in the field through protocol and forms.

Also in the field were sanctuary providers, who, competing from stronger transnational positions, had ‘fast-tracked’ the process by setting up centres within the camp itself; the SOS Children’s Village, for example. GN explains that they had influence, financial support and the organisational capacities of an INGO which the school system did not have. The authorities would not allow the child orphans to leave without the order of Court declaring them ‘wards of the Court.’ When they were processed, all the children went with the SOS Children’s Village Organisation. First, children of single parents were prepared for release and children reunited with both parents. This was in order said Fr GN ‘to send the children away from that environment, the trauma. As long as they are in the camp, their trauma will increase.’

**A bureaucrat, a shepherd, an armed officer**

Clergy managed to enter the ‘closed’ Menik Farm camp; the illusion had enabled possibilities for Fr GN. I was aware of another Buddhist monk born in Sri Lanka engaging in international development from New Jersey who had been allowed to enter the heavily-guarded camp at the very initial stages.

Fr GN: Earlier no one was allowed. Through the Education Department we got the names of a few children, then the army commander guided me to prepare the list. Then the Government Agent for Jaffna and Vavuniya had to give the permission. Releasing permission is granted by Vavuniya and receiving permission granted by Jaffna. They insisted on the proper officially signed form. Even after doing all that, they (the receiving agent) will protest! The comments! Whenever you take the children as a group, they object! To avoid that situation, they (the releasing agent), wanted to get the approval. The government agent shouldn’t feel that the children arriving are a burden. You see the government point of view is that if we bring the children, we will go ask for financial assistance to keep them.

Sanctuary was a process that cranked slowly from a bureaucratic apparatus that leveraged its power continuously during wartime and post-war, in some instances, helpful, at others, unhelpful. In the case of foster child N, physically moving the subject of sanctuary from her peripheral coastal village to the residential school in Jaffna took an entire year as the school
insisted that N must take the Year 6 Scholarship exam held on similar lines to the Eleven-Plus in the United Kingdom. Schools did not always cooperate with moving students into other zones, regardless of the humanitarian need. Continuing in her domestic caregiver role at home was delaying the healing and nurturing of N’s capacities to focus, study in ritualised structures and progress. It was deeply frustrating. The school refused to issue the school-leaving certificate before the eleven-plus exam. Escaping death, N was delayed to reach sanctuary of a residential school by bureaucratic power struggles in the field. Then it was floods in January in Jaffna. Finally the team of Colombo and Jaffna-based volunteers converged in an intervention and conveyed N and her grandmother to the Krishna Children’s Home in a hired vehicle which could travel through the flooded areas. In order to provide sanctuary measures, man, nature and regulation were negotiated by such mundane acts of convergence and diligent intervention, as well as more important ones.

Fr GN: After this, I went with the army officer and told him that we had got info on the children, but we hadn’t met them personally. As the Menik Farm authorities had given the educational department the go-ahead to enter the camp, and the ‘zonal’ had set up the office, we got the names to start with. I went to each and every zone of the camp to prepare the list, and examine each and every student. I told him that now I needed personal contact to crosscheck whether the children are willing to come with us. And then they gave the permission. And then it was easy for me to enter into the camp. And then I went there.

Unlike Johnson and Korf’s straightforward transgression of pastoral registers into the sovereign registers of violence, here transgression entered through diverse registers: pastoral, diplomatic, humanitarian, civil service and military (Johnson & Korf, 2021). As in Lippert’s and Johnson and Korf’s explanation, sovereign violence did not remain fixed and opposed to pastoral power (Johnson & Korf, 2021; Lippert, 2005). Here agents oscillated from this to that position in the field, converging with sanctuary providers, state bureaucrats, armed agents and others. Shifts, movement and convergence were taking place all over. Lines were blurred and allegiances fuzzy in this extraordinary intervention to move war-affected children to sites of residential schools in a regular and expeditious process.

Parental doxa: ‘safety and studies for their children’

It was a 100 acres area and we don’t know where the children are. You cannot reach the children, but we identified the children, and I wanted to check if they were really
affected, and get the background and history and everything. We communicated with
the public address system: ‘Those children who are registered with Fr GN to come to
the main office’. So they had *publicly* announced you know, this school principal is here
to do the evaluation process! Ah... so in one camp if ten students had given the name,
when they announced, people came *in bulk!* Those who were not registered....they also
wanted... the numbers increased!

Pastoral power transgressing into militarised sites had revived in this war-battered population,
a sustained doxic submission to schooling as the only hope for their child facing war-
devastation. A disposition to education coalesced with a disposition to order which had
survived the disorder and upheaval of war. They responded to the public announcement and
arrived to register their wish to have their children appraised in a structured process by school
officials. While representations by all political agents appeared to have betrayed their trust,
the representations by pastoral shepherds in the form of zonal education departmental
officials and principals, still spoke to the habitus from which hope was traced through
schooling in their experience of the world.

So we scrutinised and scrutinised and scrutinised, and managed to get 179 names:
orphans, single parents, some known people, some educated parents, unknown
people. Now we set the target as 400. *They all wanted to send their children for safety
and their studies!* So we prepared the lists and the process and everything. And we got
the first batch, 36 students, here, officially full-free education and accommodation, etc.

We checked with the single parents, if the child consents, whether he is prepared to
come with us, from the orphan children’s guardians, whether they are prepared to
come with us. And we finalised 128 names for the first set. These were countersigned
by Jaffna, then by the Vavuniya G.A., at the time, a lady. She countersigned, then the
Army Commander. Then we were told that the children with the single parents and two
parents can be released. The other children had to be submitted to the court process.

The ‘suspected-militant’, ‘known’ and ‘unknown person’ all wanted the same thing: ‘*They all
wanted to send their children for safety and their studies.*’ In the field of governance, the
parents had still retained a notion of citizenship beyond ideological position and allegiance,
despite being maimed and harmed by the state artillery in the final battles, they converged
demanding pastoral governance. They had crossed over from a shaky and vulnerable position
in the field of warfare to take up a position operating from within the illusio that translated as
educational entitlement for their children. Meanwhile, the bureaucrats assert their power by resurrecting forms, protocols and the paraphernalia of bureaucratic order.

There are many fields. During research I quickened to the shifts and movements of all social agents between fields of armed warfare and fields of community governance seamlessly. It was as though they were moved without their knowledge by a strong doxic submission to schooling for their children; something that lay beneath the reality of ordinary sense-experience belonging to a relational rather than an existential mode of thought in this community (Bourdieu in Schinkel, 2007, p.56). Bourdieu does not suggest that social agents are blind with regard to their social practice. The commonsense knowledge is the starting point he asserts, but if we go deeper, we arrive at the relationships and connections that remain hidden within appearances and actions (Bourdieu et al., 1991).

A shepherd, a magistrate, an armed officer

Setting aside the portrayal of a shepherd as ‘embodying pastoral sovereignty,’ an aura which enabled sanctuary, here was a shepherd invoking the social logic in the field, drawing from the symbolic capital of his institution (Johnson & Korf, 2021, p.7). Fr GN was attempting to guide his flock of war-affected children to a place of sanctuary from perils of war-induced trauma and loss. He wielded a competence and was girded by what was considered in the illusio of this field as ‘respectability and honourability’ (Schinkel, 2007, p.710). Things were less spectacular and more complex here in Northern Sri Lanka than in Montreal or Mannar, where bishops had placed their bodies between the threat of violence and the subject of sanctuary like Raphael. Fr GN was worn down by bureaucracy, a military apparatus and emotion. In the next chunks of narrative we see the ‘danger’ he placed himself in was not a threat to his life but his position and reputation as a member of the clergy and the principal of a school in order to move the children to sanctuary.

Because we couldn’t work it out simply...straightforwardly...and that was the frustration! The probation officers delayed it... why, I don’t know! Some did, some did not. First batch we brought, only 128 first. But fortunately, in one camp, the officer in charge was very kind to us...and he wanted to help the orphan children...and did not go through the Commander’s procedure. That put me in trouble!

The children were at Chavachcheri (local name for Chavakachcheri town in the Northern Province). They say ‘either you have to bring back the children or give us the
court order!’ Then I went back, dropped back the children and got the Probation Officer.

Magistrate gets involved...Magistrate will say, ‘this must go through the Probation Officer. Prepare files and bring to Courts, then there is an argument between the judge and me...blaming other officials and me...and I said finally ‘I am not doing this for my benefit, it’s for the society! Give me the letter, or I shall go and bring the other children back and hand them over to the Camp.

I consider Fr GN acting as ‘an agent with a proper sens pratique, in possession of a habitus that is rightly attuned to the field in which he occupies a position’, gaining ‘enough symbolic capital to assure a preferable position in the hierarchy of the space of positions’(Schinkel, 2007, p.710). He was in charge of his flock and he had operated in this field in ways that had assured him that the illusio would recognise his legitimacy and concede on issues of procedural irregularity. Why did the armed officer break with the code of military conduct and cross over from the field of armed warfare to the field of humanitarian social relations? This criss-crossing was a marker in this field as discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis.

Every day I need to go to each camp and check with them and they release only four or five children. Then in the evening, I arrange the bus and bring them to Vavuniya Church Hall and the local parish priest arranges meals and accommodation. The next day I return, again 26 or 27 children on first trip, four or five orphan children from one camp with the cooperating officer. That day I hired a vehicle and took them to Jaffna and they were in the school. Then the Chavaccheri call came! Back I went to the magistrate!

‘If you give the order, I can keep them with me! If you don’t give, then I will go back to school, get the children, and hand them back to the camp officer! And when you are prepared to release...’ [pause]... then magistrate says ‘now we can’t do anything! You took the children there...!’ Immediately I took the letter of release to the Probation Officer, and went back to the camp officer. He was covered with the letter...if not... he would have been in trouble!

In the symbolic struggles in the field of positions, the power to enable education, welfare state notions and something more, a sense of pastoral power over children caught up in war and deprivation, had informed the illusio here. The armed officer had risked his career and penal sanction; the principal, his reputation. I recall the Buddhist monk speaking of armed officers
who had been caught up in this aftermath of violence and had given arbitrary orders to carry on with aid trucks delayed by administrative procedures. As described in the literature on sacred sites, when the monk or priest placed the seal of ‘moral untouchability,’ I suggest, this stirred a disposition in the armed officer and he crossed over to the field of community governance in practice. What I am trying to underscore is that the illusio still recognised the legitimacy and symbolic capital of the faith leaders as things grew fuzzy in this site of deprivation. Convergence I suggest, ignited a pastoral instinct in this field where together, diverse social agents moved in a chain to enact sanctuary practices for the war-affected child. A field of warfare marked by upheaval had conditioned the habitus of all agents caught up in it armed and unarmed, just as the habitus had contributed to constituting the field as a meaningful world.

Emerging from this power struggle, I argue that sanctuary practices were enabled as the western modern structures of pastoral power in schooling, church and governance all cranked with a synchronised habitus and regularity, admittedly war-affected. The welfare state apparatus had continued during the long civil war. The Government Agent had been authorised to distribute food rations in Mannar to victims of state shelling and bombing.\footnote{Interview with the former G.A. of Mannar.} Public goods of education, health and the public administration service had not fully collapsed. Similarly, if K and other students in the rebel-held territories had not been granted access to the public good of education in wartime, there would have been no such regularity nor doxa. The welfare state pre-dated the formation of this polarised nation state as I have argued elsewhere in this thesis, and this had helped trace a site of exception in schooling in order to enable sanctuary practices in a time of war. Modelled on notions embedded in the corresponding British legislation, the state bureaucracy in Colonial Ceylon administered probation and child welfare services since around 1940 (Nira Wickramasinghe, 2015a).

On the practice of this lofty apparatus, we return to the illuminating thesis titled ‘Guardians of Childhood’ where Amarasuriya details the gap between policy and practice while noting the spirit of the officers and the legislation (Amarasuriya, 2011). I personally observed the pastoral power vested in government offices such as the Child Probation Department during the intervention to move N to the Krishna Children’s Home, post-war. The probation officer continued to monitor the child’s progress at the Home and state school until she reached the age of 18. N, K and others who escaped those final battles, left Menik Farm on diverse paths
to ultimately arrive at places of sanctuary within schooling institutions, in an ordered and legitimate tracing of their entitlement to the public good of education. Ideals of child protection and rehabilitation, I propose, informing dispositions of the social agents, had enabled sanctuary practices to be carried out in regularity and in accordance with the historical habitus of this field.

‘Purely on merit’

Stepping back to December 2008, the resident children of the TRO Home were displaced in the rebel-held Vanni area during the final battles that ended the civil war. Despite this upheaval, fear and uncertainty, K says ‘I heard from our ‘in-charge’, who was with us: ‘you have got these results.’ I believed that I could go to university. No one told me that I could go.’ Significantly, this belief in K arose, I suggest, from the practice of attending a state school and observing students in the rebel-held Vanni area being awarded a place at a university beyond the borders of the warzone, moving away for higher education. No one told K he was on the wrong side. This is a particular form of ‘movement’ in the Sri Lankan civil war which distinguishes the illusio or social logic in the field and sets it apart from other internal conflicts in Somalia, Colombia and Afghanistan.

I asked Fr GN if he could shed some insight on how students moved from rebel-held territories to the universities beyond. ‘If they are eligible… through the selection process, they will be awarded the place in university. They (those allocating university places), don’t see the difference, they won’t give interviews, they won’t check the background… purely on merit’. Purely on merit? Was I observing how the democratic entitlement to the public good of education in this postcolonial welfare state had overruled political ideology and transgressed rebel-controlled fault lines? A child raised in a rebel-managed Home was judged academically on merit! Had the habitus enabled this entitlement to be offered as a natural gift to the citizens of the north under rebel-rule and hold open the door to sanctuary for their children? The northern people had come to recognise education as a natural rather than a social gift with the historical location of schooling in the habitus. The spectacle of the A level annually offered a sort of passport in the form of A Level results to the students in the Vanni.

When the A level results come, they… the students… are supposed to fill the first application form: which faculty at which university. They will write the faculties… bio, medicine, dental, veterinary sciences. Then the A level courses will indicate which universities they prefer. The University Grants Commission in Colombo, they have a
system: which university can have how many candidates and what is the cut-off score. Medicine—First is Colombo, students are eligible from any part of the country. Depends on the A level aggregate marks. When they give the criteria. For example, if they give the cut-off marks, Colombo District is say 2. They won’t say ‘this is for all districts!’ They’ll say for Monaragala, it is 1.3. The UGC (University Grants Commission) doesn’t know the background of the child. First selection is from the system they created: On merit, how many? District quota system, how many? Rebels did not interfere in the distribution of these forms.

‘The pass system was allowed for educational purposes. They (the LTTE) also wanted their own medical college and science, etc... they wanted!’ Empirically a habitus is not visible, what is visible is the ‘effects’ of the habitus in the practices, the beliefs and doxa. To offer a sort of ‘visa’, the educational institutional structures of the department of examinations, the university grants commission and others had converged. The same protocols of selection were applied within and beyond rebel-held territory and the warzone. In a uniting ritual performed at the same time all over the island, the students would submit to the doxa in this society that higher education was an entitlement, regardless of political ideology and a civil war. Emerging after a quarter century of struggle, the western modern institutions, the welfare state structures, the disposition to education, the illusio which recognised the legitimacy of symbolic power of governance had coalesced somehow in the convoluted tracing of imagined statehood governed by educated skilled professionals. This was at odds with the realities of armed primitive warfare and devastation of civil war in which a number of such agents were killed for their political allegiance. In a return to the realities of militant control, Fr GN inserts the LTTE-restriction on movement: ‘They wouldn’t let the family leave the district; only the child is allowed. Family will stay. Only one mother or father. The whole family was not allowed to go over there.’

**A passport and a visa**

We now return to K who had been told that there was a chance that he may go to University, while on the move towards even greater violence in the final battles. There was no space for protocols to be met and forms to be filled.

Fr GN: Till two years’ back, all forms were printed. Now everything is online. Generally, the papers will announce publicly that the students were selected, We will receive the official information from the University, then the admission booklet is available, the
application form and the info. The principal has to sign, get documents. Some faculties, the Law faculty will ask for English, a credit at O Level.

In attempts at regularising the irregular, the student in the warzone was conveyed through the educational apparatus in the long civil war. This same apparatus cranked into motion at Menik Farm creating an appearance of order in disorder. What follows is a recital of protocol by K who queued up in Menik Farm to be ‘processed’ by the educational authorities, not by the security forces:

K: The ‘zonal education’ provided the first procedure - those who had sat for the A Levels, already. There was a big book, which describes the university system...courses that are available. Through that, I filled up the form and sent it to the Ministry. I chose a fine arts degree. ‘Zonal’ processed all the paperwork. I didn’t have any identification. After six months, at the Menik Farm, I had been studying again for A Levels. I didn’t expect that I will get a chance to go to University. If I get fine arts, normally you have to sit another exam within the Jaffna University...entrance exam...only for fine arts. Art and design - there is a practical exam. I didn’t have that opportunity to participate in the exam. Through the first process, they gave a chance to take the fine arts course...I put on the paper art and design...I got three options fine arts and common art: I got fine arts. I didn’t even know what I was going to study. I was thinking I was going to study art and design.

I observed how K revisited the protocols and form-filling practice of university registration. He was conversant with this world. Something had been instilled in him in the warzone which had held its currency, post-war. He had crossed over from the field of warfare to the field of governance, immersed in the sense of purpose and social space, afforded. K detailed how they had left the TRO Home as the final battles began, many months before. ‘We didn’t have to bury bodies, we never had to do that. I brought our 60 students, some of them went to the family members, 23 students only came with me.’ It is significant that K referred to the children in the Home as ‘students’ reinforcing the ‘either you were a militant or a student’ dichotomy in the field, traced through the site of schooling. The 23 students who survived had first been brought by the military and stayed in a tent at the Vavuniya IDP camp, recalls K. He then states in a formal tone: ‘it is the first interaction with the Sinhala people, I was 18 or 19.’

I had grown accustomed to this oscillation which marked our conversations. K would detail the educational bureaucratic procedure while war events were stated in a matter-of-fact tone.
I began to realise in the course of field interviewing that asking about the site of schooling in wartime had delivered rich textured data due to the restorative effect it had on the interviewees who negotiated their position in the social space in the field through schooling structures.

GF: Were you interrogated or tortured at Menik Farm?

K: I was never interrogated or tortured. When we reached Menik Farm, the Army Commander and those people came, they provided food and we were living together. At Omanthai I remember they called out ‘whoever joined the LTTE’...I was telling them that I wanted to go to university.

GF: And they didn’t interrogate or scare you?

K: No, no, no!

One and half months later at the end of 2009, K was taken with others to Mannar. They were first met by the Child Probation Officer and taken to the courts at Vavuniya, and at that time says K there was a declaration that ‘they are students and they can go to Mannar! Of the 23 TRO Home children with him, half of them, the younger ones went to an SOS Children’s Home from Menik Farm. K and others were taken to Mannar to the Don Bosco Home run by Christian missionaries, he recalls. The ‘zonal education’ sent the documents on to the Don Bosco Home.

The Child Probation Officer dealt with the entire process. He is in Vavuniya and used to come and gave the phone number, and I called through the Father's phone at the office. And finally we got the vehicle pass, the court’s letter! And I went to the Mannar Court with the Probation Officer. And they declared to me that ‘you can go and study at the University.’ Again I went to Vavuniya – for the bus to take us to the university- ten or eleven buses together. I give the documents and everything, and they gave the pass and the seat number also. Like a passport and airline ticket – like a landcraft!

They drop us in Jaffna station. Then I didn’t know where is the Jaffna University? Where is the bus? Then a senior fellow from the Home, who studied in Jaffna Technical College, Kopay, he came and we went together to the hostel. Students from the Vanni heard and came to help. Then finally I went to the hostel and the seniors did some ragging... I was scared, but they didn’t do anything to me. Then my seniors came and guided me, register, talk talk...blah, blah...and finally I went to the main university where the course was. AP was there, and some seniors, G was there. I met a friend from a
different school, during the Vanni, we were in the inter-school competition. I met again this guy who was already at the University. I was friendly with everybody and things became accessible.

We sat for a few minutes in silence after that final interview. Do you know the time? I asked K. It was 12.40am Lankan time on Thursday the 27th of August 2020 in the midst of a global pandemic. K in Jaffna had talked for two hours and twenty-five minutes on this Skype interview. K laughed and laughed! ‘Two hours?’ He could not believe it. Did you return to see the Home? I asked. K replied that they had wanted to recreate that Home and the government wanted to do rehabilitation, so he went to the District Secretariat office with the Technical College friend from the Home who had received him in Jaffna. They then discovered that this initiative had been taken over by someone else. ‘We returned once’ he said, ‘and I never went there again.’

The student had received his visa. The bureaucratic apparatus had delivered the final measure to the war-affected child who had emerged from the crucible of war, clutching the passport of the A Level results. Many social agents had converged at many points in the war to deliver this outcome in annual rituals such as the O Levels and A Levels. Under the canopy of armed rebel control, the extracurricular competitions had delivered a measure of social interaction that now flowed back into his life as all this had been enabled in the site of schooling, which ushered back in the same companions, same rituals, same dispositions. The habitus had generated practices K had participated in, just as it interpreted the conditions of the social space in which K and the other agents were now situated. Order had been created by the illusio or social logic in this field, as the student emerged through the disorder that absorbed the shadow of the militant-child.

Conclusion

There were layers beneath the visible practices in the sites of schooling that needed to be drawn into this chapter on sanctuary. What was happening in the present followed historically ingrained dispositions in this postcolonial society with a particular history in schooling. I unpack the notions of rebel-Home, state-orphanage and argue that the colonial structures of schooling and welfarism had somehow normalised a model of residential schooling in this community which was now followed in a time of crisis. Moving beyond notions of faith, rebellion and stigma of poverty, these structures had held together the internalised disposition in this community that ‘safety and studies’ were a possibility. In the journeys to sanctuary, this
chapter shows how a shared habitus with notions of ‘get the children out, give them a good education’ had enabled a chain of social agents including the army officer, the reverend-principal, the bureaucrat and the global diaspora, to converge in this intervention, dispersing after. Now, a decade and a half after the end of war, in the field of schooling in the Northern Province, movement continued: Christian mission schools commemorated two-hundred-year anniversaries, a Hindu Board celebrated their centenary, and the state armed forces posted regular updates on rehabilitating schools and winning hearts and minds. Positions in the field had changed and forces in the field had shifted, but the illusio had not dimmed a recognition of the stakes in the game, nor a belief in the game itself.
CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the social logic in the field of schooling-in-wartime in Northern Sri Lanka. At the initial stages of field research, I asked how it had enabled a war-affected child to be conveyed through a corridor of schooling institutions to a place at university beyond the violence of civil war. Analysing the layer of experiential reality of the teacher, educator and student in the warzone, I split the investigation into two lines of enquiry which is reflected in the structure of the thesis. In the first three chapters I examined the practices of daily schooling in the warzone in the Jaffna Peninsula controlled by diverse armed agents, and in rebel-held Vanni where schooling was supplied by the state, and controlled by the LTTE. In the next four chapters, I followed a second line of enquiry examining the practices of teachers and educators carrying out interventions in wartime to conduct the annual A Level Examination in the warzone and to devolve a measure of sanctuary on the war-affected child from within the structures of schooling. The theoretical concepts and approaches of Pierre Bourdieu, I found, both directed the exploration, as well as introduced another way of investigating what I was seeking to find.

A Field within a Field

I treat schooling-in-wartime in the analysis as a field within a field with diverse interests and games. Bourdieu’s relational concept of ‘field’ is proposed as useful where the social agents themselves adopt relational positions and imagine the real as relational (Wacquant, 1989, p.39). An argument that runs through this thesis is that the social logic in this empirical setting had enabled the teacher to imagine the field of armed warfare and the field of schooling as discrete sites of struggle. The position-taking in the field is considered as having conditioned this relational disposition of the teacher-in-wartime. Dominated by the field of armed power, the teacher emerged as operating with a degree of autonomy in matters of wartime schooling, with little interference by central bureaucrats sitting in the field of ‘governance’ power. This was discussed in Chapter Three where the stance-taking of the central bureaucrat was to leave the peripheral principals and vice-chancellors in the peninsula to carry on with practices of
cooperation and non-cooperation with rebel demands in order to continue higher education in the warzone.

For their part, the stance-taking of the LTTE organisation had not placed the teacher at risk of armed threat for opening the classroom daily as a teacher. In student T’s representation of the positions taken in the field, his principal ‘was a teacher and not a nationalist.’ While this study does not assume that these stance-takings are representative of the entire field, the practical translation of all this was that in this empirical setting, the teacher was enabled to go on teaching in civil war. Crossing over to the field of armed struggle and taking a position by acting informant, opposing militant demands on the site of schooling or their political ideology, the teacher risked execution. The killing of Mr. Anandarajan, Principal of St. John’s College in the early phases of war, and the principal of Central College, were interpreted by teachers as arising from their political stance-taking in the field of armed struggle, and distinct from being a principal in the field of schooling.

Uncomfortable Truths

‘How were certain students enabled to continue studying, while others were not? Interpreting the practices of rebel-recruitment on the site of the classroom as experienced by teacher and student in Chapter Two, I dug deep into the reports of the UTHR(J). I argue in this thesis that while the LTTE purported to be a leveller of caste and critical of the privilege of a western mission school educated class in Jaffna society, violent practices of rebel-recruitment appeared to have not deviated too much from the existing schemata of classification in the social order of schooling. The forces in the field of Jaffna schooling, where symbolic power and economic capital were linked to historical structures and transnational church and school alumni networks in the Tamil diaspora, had informed the extent of rebel-recruitment and disruption on site of school.

Other principles of division such as ethnicity or faith in this field, while giving greater powers of engagement to the Movement on the site of Hindu College in comparison to the Christian mission school of Jaffna College did not appear to change the classification through which the students represented their view of the social order. A student of Hindu College, born and raised in a warzone, considered arms training as ‘this is not for the likes of us’ which he translated as ‘we were school-educated people’ (Bourdieu, 1985, p.728). Though Tamil nationalism seemingly traced lines of solidarity on ethnic division, in the social space of positions, the ground reality looked a little different. The impoverished rural student, arms
training and practices of participating in public performances of rebel-commemoration stacked on one side of the network of oppositions, while being middle-class, going to a good school and limiting participation to symbolic practices of support for the Movement such as donating blood and hanging flags, apparently fell on the other. Social agents had a sense of one’s place in this empirical setting, a sense of distances, to be marked and kept, respected or expected (Bourdieu, 1985).

No radical change to the representation of the social world, here. Classification as a structure of relations translated as enabling some groups of children to continue schooling-in-wartime, while others were classified as recruitment pools. Classification had enabled students in rebel-managed Homes like K to continue studying in order to take a place in the administrative corps in the imagined future nation of Tamil Eelam, while other children were pulled out of school for arms training. In the northern warzone, the notion of alternative futures became normalised. Then Prabhakaran, the leader of the LTTE having ordered the assassination of the principal of St. John’s College in the early phases of war, in an act of contradiction, elected to send his son to this same school; Christian, private. Here I argue that Bourdieu’s approach of situating practices as generated by practical reason, offers an interpretation where theories that deal with abstractions, struggle. A private school with hostel facilities and transnational links offered greater autonomy and security in comparison to a state school. The boy stepped over from the field of armed warfare to the field of schooling, submitting to admission protocols, while the ideological notions of Tamil Eelam had submitted to a commonsense view of the social world which had not deviated too far from representations held by other social agents in the field.

Habitus

An internalised disposition to education marked a shared habitus in this field of northern schooling. The narration by K of how he had received news at Menik Farm refugee camp of a place at a university as unremarkable and not needing explanation, is significant of the socialisation he had somehow received as a student in a state school crossing over from a rebel-managed Home. Family decisions to place him in such structures had enabled schooling; and the schooling and governance practices that had allowed him to continue behind a school desk and complete his A Levels in the rebel-held warzone, had held this disposition in place. A place at university he considered a natural gift, an entitlement arising from having received good results at the A Levels. This is one of the incongruent markers of this empirical setting.
How did the social logic of the field enable a student from rebel-held territory with no knowledge of the world outside the warzone, to emerge with such a disposition? Conversely, Bourdieu discussed this same disposition as being held by those privileged and entitled to believe that education was a natural gift rather than a social one (Bourdieu, 2013, p.38). Cultural heritage is held out as bestowing such dispositions on a student who does not see school as a system of perpetuating social inequalities and believes it to be a liberating force (Bourdieu, 2013, p.32). Here, the habitus plunged into hysteresis, where there is a mismatch between the anticipated practices and the new social reality also termed a ‘maladjusted habitus’ (Brubaker, 1985, p.759; Fowler, 2020, p.439). In Sri Lanka, while all economic commonsense pointed to a ‘structural mismatch’ between the system of schooling and employment opportunities, there were in-between truths: university credentials held their symbolic power. Importantly, in wartime and in the aftermath of civil war, being granted a place at university for a war-affected young person, liberated him or her from being considered a terrorist and gave him a new belonging in a group.

Significantly this hysteresis of habitus had imbued the teachers with courage and a sense of legitimate authority and a continued belief in the game and in the stakes of the game. In the rebel-held Vanni, a disposition to education had enabled principals and associations of parents and teachers to oppose the LTTE ‘proclamation’ to close schools from Year 9 upwards for three months for arms training by pointing out that schools in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar were running smoothly, and this would place the struggling Vanni schools at a greater disadvantage (UTHR(J), 1998). The practical measure of protection it devolved on the student was that the LTTE training was reduced to one hour a day of air raid training (UTHR(J), 1998). The illusion in the field of schooling-in-wartime had not changed the stakes in the game, nor the belief in the game itself. The teacher held on to the notion of his or her legitimate authority in matters falling within the field of schooling. In crossing over to the field of armed struggle with different stakes and relations, the Jaffna principal decides to speak to the Indian Army officer, pleading for the release of a detained suspected insurgent. His premise was ‘I was duty bound to see that the boy sits this exam in time, otherwise he would be penalised for life... in the sense, if he doesn’t sit this exam in time, whatever the reason be, he would have to sit it next year and his job opportunities, his prospects would be affected.’ By misrecognising the realities of an evolving field of civil war, the teacher held on to his view of social order as traced through the site of education, in order to carry out practices that held this world together.
If as Wickremasinghe argues, the making and unmaking of citizenship hinged not on rights in the constitution but on entitlement to public welfare, then education was notched high above other welfare goods (N. Wickramasinghe, 2012). A young boy who had once received the fresh-smelling uniform fabric sent by the president in the rebel-controlled Vanni, was now stepping into university. An entitlement to a place at university corresponded with the notion of the ought-to-be in this field of schooling-in-wartime in Northern Sri Lanka. Student K was now inscribed in the structuring structures of higher education that perpetuated the same hope, the same classifications and symbolic violence, post-war. K’s struggles would continue both within and beyond these structures. Yet for now, the socialisation he had received in schooling institutions in the rebel-controlled territory in wartime, had held its currency, post-war.

Following another line of enquiry, in the final chapters six and seven of this thesis, the structures of the habitus of schooling in this field are examined as enabling practices that devolved a measure of sanctuary on the war-affected child. The power of pastoral sanction and the pastoral power to make exception in times of danger, was not embodied in a charismatic shepherd or shepherdess in this field. An important finding of this investigation is that the pastoral power to make exception was embedded in the structures of schooling: in regulation, bureaucratic order and the symbolic power of the principal. While the intervention at Menik Farm by Fr GN may appear as a shepherd leading his flock with the sanction of the church to sanctuary in the school, this investigation went deeper. The residential school model was examined as offering an instrumental measure of sanctuary, enabling movement of vulnerable children into the hostel facilities of schools. Discussing diverse instances where being a student or carrying a character reference of a principal had devolved a measure of sanctuary from violence on the vulnerable student, the final intervention at Menik Farm is located, not as an isolated measure of rehabilitation, but as a continuation of sanctuary practices in the field of schooling during the long civil war, which had been informed by the schooling habitus in this empirical setting.

Convergence of diverse social agents in the field of schooling-in-wartime in this empirical location was key to enabling interventions by teachers and educators to convey the war-affected child beyond the sites of violence. In this empirical setting, social agents across the lines, armed and unarmed, converged to carry out such interventions, dispersing after. One of the key findings of this thesis is that the structures of the habitus and the illusio of the field had enabled a shared habitus with doxic submission to notions of welfarism and legitimacy.
traced through the site of education. It also raises interesting questions on the particular dispositions in the teacher who like AG had schooled in western modern structures and was enabled to be both a ‘Benedictine’ as well as a ‘Tamil from Vadamarachchi.’ It allowed Fr GN to be the reverend principal of a Christian mission school and maintain strong regional identity with the community he considered his roots, and with poverty. Despite having been the products of schooling structures that led to structures of bureaucratic order they had avoided being ‘that and not anything else’ (Robbins, 2004, p.424). Deviating from the limits imposed on the social agent who can only submit to the dominant doxa within the cognitive structures of a bureaucracy, this exploration drew out the influence of the split habitus on the internalised dispositions. Here the bureaucrat and principal were not condemned to be ‘that and not anything else.’ The social mobilisation they had received within the schooling structures had resulted in a split habitus which, when infused with notions of welfarism in the structures of educational governance meant that they were not just wielders of the ‘dominant doxa’ perpetuated by the state order, but they had been allowed to be ‘that, and something else.’ In a western illustration, Bourdieu used Manet as an example of a split habitus, arguing that Manet was able to overcome the existing polarities structuring the artistic order due to his split habitus, which combined “the two poles of the field of power: bankers/bohemia.” Manet is described as ‘both bourgeois and a rebel artist . . . a revolutionary aristocrat’ (Fowler, 2020, p.452; Steinmetz, 2018, p.613).

Doxa and Illusio

‘Of course, the students who have received admission to the university, they must go to university!’ This doxic submission across the lines, north and south, is a tacit recognition of the value of the legitimacy stakes of the game and speaks to the specific illusio in this field of schooling-in-wartime. I argue in this thesis that this field had called forth and given life to an illusio that in recognition of its practical mastery of the rules of the game, had carried out the A Level Examination intervention in the warzone. I presented the enactment of the A Level intervention in two chapters of this thesis. The practical workings of the illusio in the field translated as enabling a notice to be issued by educators in the national press, calling on all parties to the armed conflict to be mindful that the A Levels would be held in the second week of August. Using Bourdieu’s concepts delivers interpretations of practices in the field that guides the researcher to think of such interventions as not just an arrogant game played by the bureaucrats in a show of power in competition with armed agents, but as a game of
competing forms of legitimate authority speaking to symbolic struggles, while delivering practical measures to students caught up in a civil war.

Then there was the elaborate parallel performance of the LTTE’s ‘mock exams’ held before the O Levels (equivalent of GCSEs). Using Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, doxa and illusio enabled the LTTE practices to be placed in position in the field competing for legitimacy traced through the site of education. From this position, the LTTE governance practices had recognised that the illusio did not translate as giving their organisation mastery over its rules. The brick wall in this empirical setting was the ordinary educational event of the national A Level Examination which held out the extraordinary gift of a place in a national university. In a ritual of ceremony and significance, all around the island divided by civil war for decades, children sit for national exams together, on given days of the school calendar year. Behind the spectacle of fetishization, tripod agreements, mock exams and calls for ceasefire, postcolonial modernity continued to trace legitimacy and hope through the site of education in wartime, and continues, post-war.

Practices of armed struggle had disturbed, not destroyed ‘the order of the day’ and war was seen as a temporal interruption. The teachers of Uduvil Girls College had requested the Indian Army to vacate the church they were occupying in order that the carol service may be held that year, 1987, following a particularly deeply violent ‘October war’ in the Jaffna Peninsula.\(^{56}\) There were unique markers in the field of schooling-in-wartime in Northern Sri Lanka where teachers of both genders pushed the limits of their symbolic power, in the face of armed threat.

Finally, the teacher remained in the warzone by keeping sight of a world where schooling must continue, schools needed to be guarded and the ought-to-be was negotiated from exam results and a notion of legitimate authority which had continued in the field of schooling-in-wartime. The state of Sri Lanka continued to pay what the teacher considered an adequate monthly remuneration and a state pension. The decision to remain was not just a noble one in the northern warzone of Sri Lanka. It was as Bourdieu argues, a decision taken by a sens pratique, motivated by practical reason. The teachers chose to remain where they could continue their ‘mission,’ had symbolic power, and where the set of dispositions they had acquired, had found in this field of schooling-in-wartime, an opportunity to be actualised.

In the aftermath of war, the parent who had emerged from the violence of the final battles had only wanted ‘safety and studies’ for her child. The people of the Vanni still thinking as a

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\(^{56}\) Excerpt from the diary of Ms Niles, a former teacher at Uduvil Girls College.
collective, spoke of a community life to return to (D. Somasundaram, 2010). Hope is traced in ways that cannot be fully interpreted in sites that have experienced the greatest devastation. Yet the conceptual approaches of Bourdieu enable a translation that is situated in grounded reality, without straying too far into abstractions and objectification.

This thesis explains how, in this postcolonial society, schooling continued to be accepted across the divide as the site of re-negotiation of social order. This thesis shows how a shared disposition to education had enabled students in this divided nation to unite in a ritual of the commonplace, sitting the A Level Examination, behind which lay the entire schooling order. Though a state was encountered as hostile, and was experienced in intimate forms of violence in a warzone, this thesis argues that educational governance fell somewhere in-between notions of state and citizenship in this postcolonial setting. The violence of a long civil war had not stripped away the recognition by the teacher, educator and parent in this community of their own legitimacy, as traced through the entitlement of their children, the future generation, to a ‘national’ education, equal to any other citizen of Sri Lanka.
REFERENCES


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