

IN PURSUIT OF HEGEMONY:
Politics and State Building in Sri Lanka

Shyamika Jayasundara-Smits

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**IN PURSUIT OF HEGEMONY:
Politics and State Building in Sri Lanka**

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Politiek en staatsvorming in Sri Lanka**

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APRC	All Party Representative Committee
CIABOC	Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery and Corruption
CNC	Ceylon National Congress
COPE	Committee of Public Enterprises
CP	Communist Party
CPA	Centre for Policy Alternatives
CWC	Ceylon Workers Congress
DDC	District Development Councils
DUNF	Democratic United National Front
EPDP	Eelam People's Democratic Party
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GST	Goods and Services Tax
ICES	International Centre for Ethnic Studies
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
ISGA	Interim Self-Government Administration
JHU	Jathika Hela Urumaya
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
LMSL	Lanka Marine Services Limited
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MEP	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NFF	National Freedom Front
NIPU	National Integration Project Unit
NPC	National Peace Council
NPM	New Public Management
NSS	Nawa Sama Samaja
NUA	National Unity Alliance
PA	People's Alliance
PCs	Provincial Councils

PEs	Public Enterprises
PR	Proportional Representation
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
PTOM	Post-Tsunami Operation Mechanism
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLIC	Sri Lanka Insurance Company
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
SLMM	Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
SSA	Social Scientists' Association
TMVP	Tamil Makkal Viduthlai Pulikal
TNA	Tamil National Alliance
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNF	United National Front
UPFA	United People's Freedom Alliance
VAT	Value Added Tax
WB	World Bank



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Abstract

Since the late colonial period, Sri Lanka has been subject to modern democratic state building experiments. The number of challenges this project has encountered is rising. Many of these challenges have been identified alongside the multi-ethnic character of Sri Lanka's population, illuminating the antagonistic inter-ethnic relations between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils. The various policy measures designed endogeneously and exogenously focused on building a democratic state where the rights of the ethnic minorities could be guaranteed. However, the outcomes of these policy measures have not reflected this goal. These policy measures have not sufficiently contributed to a guarantee of rights for ethnic minorities and paid ill attention to numerous other tensions that are of a non-inter-ethnic nature in Sri Lanka's state building project.

By focusing on the broader state-in-society relations and privileging hegemonic formations in Sinhalese politics through historical and contemporary times, this thesis re-problematizes the issue of Sri Lanka's state building. This thesis also aims to answer the following key questions: what are the key hegemony building processes identified in Sri Lanka's state building project?; how do the dynamics in Sinhalese politics and the broader political and economic context influence these processes?; what were the main tensions between hegemony building and state building in Sri Lanka?; and how did they affect democratic state building? These questions are examined by applying a qualitative method of inquiry. The data for this study has been collected through a series of field interviews conducted in Sri Lanka in 2009 and 2011, as well as a preliminary literature survey conducted between 2005–07. The in-depth field interviews were carried out with the aim of gathering primary data on the perceptions, first hand experiences and narratives of the trajectories of elite and subaltern politics and state building. The primary data gathered through an extensive literature survey that was further complemented with the field interviews and a process of observation. Based on critical analysis of the data gathered from the above mentioned multiple sources, the research argues primarily that state building in Sri Lanka has been a struggle for hegemony of the right, in which the Sinhalese political elites and the broader Sinhalese community have played a decisive and an equally important role.

The empirical inquiry identified four hegemony building processes – Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, a political party driven and a patronage system institutionalised at the state level, and events

and discourses of war, peace and conflict that were used by the dominant Sinhalese political elites in their attempt to build political alliances in order to obtain consent and legitimacy for their rule, which essentially influenced the trajectories of Sri Lanka's state building. The findings of this research suggest that, due to the underlying principle of inequality and right-wing political ideologies present in the above hegemony building processes, the state building project has consequently been drifting away from the path of democratic state building and fermenting the conditions for realising hegemony of the right.

The results of this study show several implications for state building at the scholarly and policy level. At the scholarly level, it shows the relevance of examining politics as usual and politics taken for granted. Further theoretically and methodologically this research shows the relevance of engaging with class and the dynamics of class relations for the study of Sri Lanka's state building. At both the policy and scholarly levels, this study shows that in understanding the paths and dilemmas of state building, particularly in the contexts of civil war and post-civil war scenarios, it is not only the much debated and antagonistic inter-ethnic relations that should receive attention, but also the subtle hegemonic relationship formations and the hegemony building strategies taking place at the intra-ethnic community level. Last but not least, this study highlights the need for re-examining policies aimed at state building by considering state-in-society relations in the broadest possible manner, which is done by tracing the seemingly disconnected strategies that are being pursued by the political elites under changing social, political and economic contexts in both the local and global spheres.



Samenvatting

Er zijn in Sri Lanka sinds het koloniale tijdperk experimenten geweest op het gebied van moderne democratische staatsvorming. Op dit gebied is sprake van een toenemend aantal uitdagingen. Veel van deze uitdagingen hebben te maken met het multi-etnische karakter van de Sri Lankaanse bevolking en vestigen de aandacht op de antagonistische inter-etnische relaties tussen de Singalese meerderheid en de Tamil-minderheid. De verschillende beleidsmaatregelen die van binnenuit en van buitenaf ontworpen zijn, waren gericht op het vormen van een democratische staat waarin de rechten van de etnische minderheden gewaarborgd konden worden. Dit doel kwam echter niet tot uitdrukking in de resultaten van deze beleidsmaatregelen. Deze beleidsmaatregelen hebben niet in voldoende mate bijgedragen aan het waarborgen van de rechten van etnische minderheden en met deze beleidsmaatregelen is onvoldoende aandacht besteed aan diverse andere, niet inter-etnische, spanningen in Sri Lanka's project van staatsvorming.

Dit proefschrift richt zich vanuit historisch en contemporain perspectief op de bredere relaties tussen staat en samenleving en op de voorrechten verschaffende heersende formaties in de Singalese politiek, en stelt daarmee het onderwerp staatsvorming in Sri Lanka centraal. Het doel van dit proefschrift is ook om de volgende hoofdvragen te beantwoorden: wat zijn de voornaamste processen die tot hegemonie leiden in het Sri Lankaanse project van staatsvorming? Hoe beïnvloeden de dynamiek van de Singalese politiek en de bredere politieke en economische context deze processen? Wat waren de belangrijkste spanningen tussen het opbouwen van een hegemonie en staatsvorming in Sri Lanka? En welke invloed heeft dit gehad op de vorming van een democratische staat? Om deze vragen te beantwoorden is een kwalitatieve onderzoeksmethode toegepast. De data zijn verzameld in een serie interviews in het veld die in 2009 en 2011 in Sri Lanka zijn afgenomen, en ook door middel van een voorbereidend literatuuronderzoek dat plaatsvond tussen 2005 en 2007. De diepte-interviews in het veld waren bedoeld om primaire data te verzamelen over de percepties, ervaringen uit de eerste hand en verhalen over de weg die wordt afgelegd door de elite en groepen met een lagere status op het gebied van politiek en staatsvorming. De primaire data zijn verzameld door middel van een uitgebreid literatuuronderzoek dat is aangevuld met interviews in het veld en observatie. Op grond van een kritische analyse van de data uit deze verschillende bronnen wordt betoogd dat de staatsvorming in Sri Lanka gekenmerkt wordt door een strijd om de hegemonie van rechts, waarbij de Singalese politieke elites en de bredere Singalese gemeenschap een beslissende en even belangrijke rol hebben gespeeld.

Uit het empirisch onderzoek blijkt dat er vier processen zijn die leiden tot het vormen van een hegemonie: Singalees boeddhistisch nationalisme, een door een politieke partij gestuurd en een op patronage gebaseerd systeem dat geïnstitutionaliseerd is op het niveau van de staat, en episodes van oorlog, vrede en conflict en het discours daarover, die werden gebruikt door de dominante Singalese politieke elites in een poging om politieke allianties te vormen om toestemming voor hun bewind te verkrijgen en het legitimitéit te verlenen. Deze processen waren van wezenlijke invloed op de staatsvorming in Sri Lanka. De resultaten van het onderzoek wijzen erop dat het onderliggende principe van ongelijkheid en de rechtse politieke ideologieën die besloten liggen in bovengenoemde processen van hegemonievorming ervoor gezorgd hebben dat bij het

project van staatsvorming is afgeweken van het pad van democratische staatsvorming en dat de juiste voorwaarden zijn gecreëerd voor een hegemonie van rechts.

De resultaten van dit onderzoek hebben verschillende implicaties voor staatsvorming, zowel op wetenschappelijk als beleidsniveau. Wetenschappelijk gezien blijkt uit dit onderzoek dat het relevant is om te kijken naar de dagelijkse politiek en de politiek als gegeven waar men niet bij stilstaat. Daarnaast laat dit onderzoek in theoretisch en methodologisch opzicht zien dat het relevant is om sociale klasse en de dynamiek van relaties tussen verschillende klassen in aanmerking te nemen bij het bestuderen van staatsvorming in Sri Lanka. Zowel op beleids- als wetenschappelijk niveau blijkt uit dit onderzoek dat voor een goed begrip van de processen en dilemma's van staatsvorming, vooral binnen de context van een burgeroorlog en de nasleep daarvan, niet alleen de veelbesproken en antagonistische inter-etnische relaties aandacht verdienen. Er moet ook gekeken worden naar de subtiele vorming van relaties en strategieën die gericht zijn op het bereiken van hegemonie en die plaatsvinden op intra-etnisch-niveau binnen de gemeenschap. Ten slotte benadrukt dit onderzoek dat het belangrijk is om beleid gericht op staatsvorming opnieuw te onderzoeken door op de breedst mogelijke manier rekening te houden met relaties tussen staat en samenleving. Daarvoor moet gekeken worden naar de schijnbaar losstaande strategieën die de politieke elites volgen in een veranderende sociale, politieke en economische context op zowel lokaal niveau als op wereldschaal.

1.1 Literature Review

...while we know a lot about state-building, there is still a great deal that we don't know about state building (Fukuyama 2004:17).

The concept of state is often perceived to be universally agreed upon and a fixed category in political analysis. Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and the Duties of the States (1933) refers to the state as having a geographic sovereign, political entity with a permanent population, defined territory, government and the capacity to enter into relations with the other states, with concepts themselves being defined under international law. Before the Montevideo Convention, in 1919 Max Weber defined the state as a set of social institutions that claimed a monopoly over the legitimate use of force within a given territory (1964:154). In addition to the above widely quoted definitions, there are number of other definitions that are also used in literature, creating a considerable amount of disagreement and confusion about what the state and state building actually mean, and what elements and processes it entails. Fukuyama (2011:81–6), recently summed up the current body of literature on state building by identifying its factors, i.e., social contract (Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau), irrigation (Wittfogel), population pressure (Boserup and Malthus), war and violence (Charles Tilly) and circumscription (Robert Carneiro). The relationship between these factors has shown different results in different contexts and shaped its various successful manifestations. Below are a few examples that capture these mixed results, including the diversity of the problems involved and the complexities encountered in state building in different parts of the world, a reality reflected in Sri Lanka's state building experience.

While drawing attention to South Asia, a continent where the modern state emerged under the influence of European colonisation, Bose points to a number of cases that highlight the non-linear processes leading to state building, even within the same continent (2004). Further, Bose and Jalal find that, although India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were all formerly under the British imperial power, they show different patterns of political development and state building that was shaped by uniquely local circumstances (2004:95). Similarly, Jeffrey Herbst, a political scientist who has focused on Africa's experience with state building has argued that 'the fundamental problem facing state building in Africa, be they colonial kings, colonial governors, or presidents in the independent era has been to project authority over inhospitable territories that contain relatively low densities of people' (Herbst 2000:11). By comparing and contrasting the experiences of state building in China, Europe and India, Fukuyama notes several unique factors underpinning the processes of state building:

unlike China but like Europe, India's institutionalization of countervailing social actors – an organized priestly class and metastacization of kinship structures into caste system acted as a brake on the accumulation of power by the state...China's default political order was a unified empire punctuated by periods of civil war, invasion and breakdown, whereas India's default mode was a disunified system of petty political units, punctuated by brief periods of unity and empire (2011:94).

The above examples raise a few important issues relevant to contemporary debates on state building. First, it is difficult to present generic claims on state building, including the definition of state building and the aspects or variable matters for it to be successful. This in turn presents other issues on the discourse of the state, amongst which is the ambiguity raised on whether the very existence of the 'state' is important. Questions regarding whether there is actually an empirical reality or a phenomenon called the state exist, as well as whether the state is only an idea that has given rise to the grander concept of state building. Is it a shadow of an ideal that exists? Other related questions are raised in this discourse. Migdal (1994) has suggested one way to get out of this dilemma is by disaggregating the state and understanding the interactions between the different elements that constitute it.

Despite these unresolved dilemmas raised on the very existence of the state (Redcliffe-Brown 1940:4–5, Abrams 1988:75) and the interesting arguments that have been presented for and against giving primacy to the power of the modern democratic state (Foucault¹ and Arendt cited in Edwards, Undated), grand plans aimed at state building continue to be unveiled. The most recent plans were informed by the security dilemmas set in motion by the events of 11 September 2001.² Post-9/11, exogenously imposed modern state building has become popular. These exogenous projects are mainly driven by a coalition of developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Western European countries. Constitutional and institutional reforms or restructuring and market reforms are at the heart of these exogenously driven state building projects. These plans are being implemented on an experimental basis in Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Indonesian Papua and Melanesia. In addition, a mix of nation-building and state building projects has been launched in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Sierra Leone and Liberia (Fukuyama 2011:x, Migdal 2004:20). In these projects, a clear distinction is made between nation-building and state building, the former of which refers to the processes leading up to the construction of a national identity, and the latter is referred to the building of a functioning state. Yet again, in the literature, there is no conclusion about what 'functional' means. Furthermore, there is considerable disagreement over the degree of functionality needed and the various measurements or yardsticks that are being used to analyse the functionality of a state. In spite of the enormous intellectual and financial investment made on these projects, the growing disagreements shows the inadequacy of the current understanding of state building, the limited intellectual capacity to deal with the complexities surrounding state building and the successful use of the unique mix of opportunities and challenges that are encountered in state building (Fukuyama 2011:17). Needless to say, these challenges and complexities are influenced by a mix of internal and external factors. The latter seem to be related to the changing boundaries of the global political map, which constantly shifts its focus depending on the degree that issues and regions matter to the main drivers of the project (Fukuyama 2011:18). Reflecting on past failures and emphasising the need for different, diverse, non-linear paths and giving primacy to endogenous processes of state building, there is a recently renewed debate on state building.

A study of the state and state building in Sri Lanka has been a hot topic for academic research. Many studies have focused on the issue of state building and have captured numerous manifestations, complexities and challenges specific to the Sri Lankan case.

Though scientific in nature, local studies on state building often appear to contain an element of subjectivity. Local scholars, who were deeply involved in the discursive communities on state building, find escaping the political reality of their surroundings challenging. One such scholar who focused on the local actors remarked that a 'critical look at Sinhala society would make me a traitor among some Sinhalese. A critical look at the Tamil society would make me a racist among the Tamils, but a darling among ultra nationalist sections of Sinhala's...' (Perera 1995:81). This is not just a Sri Lankan phenomenon; it is a situation applicable more widely to South Asian scholarship. Ludden (2002:4) has remarked that in South Asian scholarship, in general for local intel-

lectuals at least, embracing politics in one form or another is considered a professional responsibility of citizenship.

Literature on state building in Sri Lanka has relied on various approaches and the topic has been examined under a number of subject areas, but, as Uyangoda has pointed out on the general situation of social science literature (2010: 67), literature on state building also suffers from poor theoretical and conceptual experiments. This has led to several limitations in our understanding of the complexities and issues on state building in Sri Lanka.

This weakness in theory and theoretical experiments has developed a tendency to apply standard mega theories and dominant liberal approaches to the study of the state and state building in Sri Lanka. With regards to the latter, the general decline of Marxist influence is especially noteworthy. Since the 1960s, there has been a decline in the influence of Marxist politics in the national political field, which can also be observed internationally since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. The decline of influence at the domestic and global level is an important factor when explaining why liberal approaches to the state and state building have gained momentum. The works of Sunil Bastian, Newton Gunasinghe and Kumari Jayawardena are a few exceptions. Declining enthusiasm for Marxist State theory in Sri Lanka also seems to correspond with other developments in the international political and academic arenas. Two of these developments were internal to the Marxist theory of state and the others related to specific theoretical developments during this period (Jessop 1990:2). The failure of international academia to distinguish between Marxist politics and the Marxist epistemology, as well as the emergence and influence of right-wing hegemonic coalitions in global and local politics heavily advocating liberal theories of the state (i.e. Institutional and Pluralist approaches) are significant developments in this regard (Jessop 1990).

Other tendencies suggest that scholars take a keen interest in addressing a wide range of issues and aspects concerning state building, ranging from formal to informal structures, cultures, practices and processes, which Almond together referred to as the elements of a political system (1960:3–4). In addition to prominent political scientists who claim the study of the state as the primary object of their research, scholars from history, anthropology, economics, geography, law and sociology have taken an equal level of interest on this subject.

The literature survey of this research suggests that political scientists have dominated the study of state building in Sri Lanka. Their primary interests have been chronicling, interpreting major political events and studying the degree of functionality of democratic institutions. This orientation has left a few gaps in the literature, such as a failure to link the micro and the macro picture. This could also be due to the dynamism in electoral politics and elite politics that often capture the limelight of scholarly discourses and the general public. Previously, as mentioned briefly, studies of state building have been done by social anthropologists. The culturalist, society centric and micro-political approaches they employ greatly help to fill in the gaps left by political scientists. The links between cultural transformation, state (institutional) transformation, functions and inventions of religious rituals, and cultural symbolism in electoral politics have caught their attention. With the intensification of the ethnic conflict, their work seems to have increasingly leaned towards investigating the processes of cultural hegemony building by the Sinhalese and examining the phenomenon of the Sinhalese-Buddhist hegemonic state. Some critics point out that the ethno-centric orientation of their work as one of the causes of the advancement of ethnic essentialism in studies on Sri Lanka (Hennanyake & Hennanyake, Undated).

In addition to the political scientists and the anthropologists, there are a few scholars who have taken an interdisciplinary approach to this subject matter,³ which this research intends to pursue further. Their works are more promising for understanding the contextually grounded complexities and unpacking the wide range of issues and challenges in Sri Lanka's state building project.

1.1.1 Scholarship on Sri Lanka

The challenges involved in Sri Lanka's state-building experience have been somewhat addressed in the scholarship on Sri Lanka's state building. The 'Subaltern studies project' associated with the works of Partha Chatterjee, Sudipta Kaviraj, Ranajit Guha, Gayathri Spivak and Edward Said (Ludden 2001:2), carried out by a group of elitist intellectuals, seems to have had a significant influence on scholarship on Sri Lanka. This project, initially conceived in India in the mid-1980s, had a noteworthy impact on studies of post-colonial state building, making Sri Lanka a fascinating case study. The project's influences can be traced in the works of scholars of cultural studies and social history (Wickramasinghe 1995, Ismail & Jeganathan 1995, Abeysekara 2002, Ismail 2005; De Mel 2007). Directly and indirectly, their work had shed light on various aspects and challenges on state building. Importantly, taking inspiration from the works of Foucault, Scott, Gramsci, Derrida and Thompson, their works have partially addressed the issue of hegemony building within the realm of state building. Following the main ideas of the Sublateral project, some of these scholars attempted to subalternise elitist understandings of concepts such as domination, subordination, hegemony, resistance and revolt. In doing so, they were able to bring attention to the everyday politics of the subalterns (also identified as those who live in the margins of society and power) as a crucial element for understanding the nexus between hegemony building in the cultural domain and state building.

By the late 1990s, the Subaltern school had lost its academic momentum in India. Regional research was becoming more hybrid with growing internal criticisms and breakaway politics from its core group (Ludden 2001: 26). This had an influence on local subaltern followers, leading to a decline in the explicit use of the subaltern approach. Further, the blurring boundaries between the politics of subalterns and elites⁴ seemed to have consolidated this decline. Since the 1990s, the importance attached to state institutions by the hegemonic forces in the local and international elitist ruling class further diluted the influence of subalterns in politics. As a result, the importance assigned to the subalterns in state building became less important for elitist academic proponents. Finally, the decline of the influence of the subaltern approach in Sri Lanka's studies also seemed to have been exacerbated by tensions developed in the regional politics between India and its smaller neighbouring countries. Due to India's meddling in Sri Lanka's internal politics during this period (Wickramasinghe 2006:238–9), criticisms were levelled against 'anything Indian' by the vocal 'nationalists', and the possible dangers of being labelled as a collaborator or conspirator of Indian hegemony building projects may have contributed to the decline of this influence. However, with the granting of universal suffrage in Sri Lanka in 1931, the political power assigned to the subalterns, who constitute the majority of the total population in formal democratic processes, and their importance in politics and political analysis remained highly valid.⁵ Against this backdrop, the subaltern approach that primarily dedicated attention to exploring different dynamics and factors related to the subalterns and their politics remained valid.

Since the late 1980s, another important factor behind the decline of the subaltern approach was the heavy inroad made by international (mainly European) scholarship on Sri Lanka. The structural-policy-issue orientation of European scholarship from this period took a keen interest in Sri Lanka's constitution, institutions and markets (Ludden 2001:27), slowly causing the demise of the subaltern approach. Also, a large portion of research funding on the state in Sri Lanka since this time has come from the West. As a result, local scholarship has been trapped in criteria set by Western funding agencies, whose primary focus is on elite-oriented approaches to the study of the state. Further, these funding agencies became heavily reliant on outside expert knowledge and local followers of knowledge traditions were propagated by the outside experts. As a result, the subalterns or the politics of the subalterns received an immaterial place in scholarship and their relative worth as an object of inquiry declined; in such an environment, subalterns becoming 'footnotes' was unavoidable. On the one hand, this development created a distance

between the scholars and the subalterns and, on the other hand, the policies they contributed created an additional distance between the subalterns and the political elites. Interestingly, at the same time, these specific developments seemed to have closed the distance between the political elites and the intellectual elites. All the above led to the usefulness of a 'unique' subaltern approach to the study of the state being questioned, at all levels of scholarship.

In addition to the influence of the subaltern project and its approach, there have been considerable contributions made by numerous other scholars, who have continuously paid attention to the complexities of Sri Lanka's state-building experience; a majority of these scholars are British and American. As far as the British scholars are concerned, their interest in Sri Lanka can be attributed to the fact that, for a long time, Britain was the European Centre for Sri Lanka studies (Rogers 2005:8). As far as the American scholars are concerned, their interest can be easily attributed to the spark ignited by Indologists, who undertook academic studies on the history of culture, language and literature on the Indian subcontinent, as a subset of Asian studies.

The strength of the overall scholarship on Sri Lanka's state building is that there have been occasions of clear exposition of certain trends in Sri Lanka's state-building project. This is particularly notable in the international scholarship. However, this international scholarship also denotes the culmination of several fixations. In the beginning, there was an element of the 'Occident's passion for the Orient'. After the Second World War, the scholarship reflected a neo-colonial knowledge-production project, more recently the aggressive persuasion of neo-liberal economic agenda by powerful global political-economic actors, so attention turned to ethnic strife and violence. Last but not least, on a positive note, the equity and growth debate conceived in the 1980s focused extensively on the links between economic reform and distributional consequences; the political reactions to these reforms has sparked considerable attention and made an important contribution to debates on Sri Lanka's state building (Dunham and Jayasuriya 2000: 97).

1.2 The Setting and Justification

Since the late colonial period, Sri Lanka has been a subject to modern democratic state-building experiments, despite a large number of challenges. Many of these challenges are identified in the process of state's institution building, the character of the population and the ways in which politics operate in the society. Of particular significance though is the ethnic categorisation introduced during the British colonial period and the dominance of ethnic identities in Sri Lanka's national politics.

At present the total population of Sri Lanka is approximately 21 million. The majority Sinhalese constitutes 82% of the total population, whereas the Sri Lankan Tamils constitutes 4.3% of the total population. In addition to these two main ethnic groups, Indian Tamils constitutes 5.5%, Muslims 7.9% and others 0.7% (<http://www.statistics.gov.lk>).

There is a significant cultural difference between the Indian and the Sri Lanka Tamil population. Sri Lanka Tamils claim to have their origins in the island, whereas Indian Tamils were brought to the island during the British colonial period. The latter group was primarily brought to work in the plantation sector. As a result, until today, Indian Tamils are mainly concentrated in the hill country areas, where the tea plantations are located.

Among the Sinhalese and the Tamils, two separate caste systems are practiced. Compared to neighbouring India, these two caste systems are considerably less rigid. The Sinhalese caste system constitutes of only a few caste groups, with the Goyigama (cultivator caste) occupying the supreme position; Goyigama constitutes more than 50% of the Sinhalese population. However, Goyigama caste members who originated in the upper country and are of Kandyan aristocratic origin claim to be superior to Goyigama of low country origin. Although these differences seem

subtle, in politics and everyday affairs, such as when seeking a marriage partner, they play an important role. In addition to the Goyigama caste, there are number of subcastes associated to regional origination (i.e., along the division between upper country and low country, the latter representing the southern part of Sri Lanka). In the Sinhlaese caste system, in addition to Goyigama, Karava (fisher), Salagama (Cinnamon peelers) and Durawa (coconut cultivators and toddy tappers) are a few subcastes found throughout the southern regions.⁶ In national politics, due to Britian's support for an expansion in Sri Lanka's economics, Goyigama's supreme position was challenged by Karava and Salagama caste members, who came to be known as the *new rich* in the country. In the history of political party development, especially the founding of the main two Sinhalese political parties – the UNP and SLP, this distinction has played a major role and resulted in a number of tensions and family rivalries that influenced the setting of Sri Lanka's national political scene, and historical and contemporary paths of state building.

Among the Sri Lankan Tamils, there is a caste difference between those living in the northern and eastern part of the country (IDSN 2008:3). In both of these regions, the Vellala caste (farmers) occupies the highest rank in the Tamil caste hierarchy. Regardless of the orchestrated unity the northern and eastern Tamils achieved during the ethnic conflict, the underlying caste tensions and the domination of the Eastern Tamils by the Northern Tamils has been an issue in Tamil political relations. The split that occurred in the LTTE in 2008 led to the creation of two factions, one under the command of Prabhakaran from the north and the other under Colonel Karuna from the east, and is suspected to have links to the differences detailed above.

The Muslim population in Sri Lanka is believed to have arrived on the island during medieval times; their origins are traced to the spice, ivory and gem trade (Ali 2001:1). They consist of two sects – Shia and Sunni – with the majority, Sunni, concentrated in the eastern province. In addition, there is large concentration of Muslims in the north-eastern province and the Kandyan hill areas. The expulsion they faced in 1990 by the LTTE from the northern regions resulted in mass displacement, as well as a closer relationship between the two groups (Nesiah, www.groundviews.org/2010/citizens-commission). Despite occasional outbursts of violent incidents, at present, Muslims have a relatively cordial relationship with the Sinhalese, although the political relationship between the Sinhalese and the Muslims is heavily dominated by the Sinhalese. In addition to the significant role they play in regional politics in the eastern province, since the early 1990s, Muslim political leadership has played a significant role in national politics. Similar to Sinhalese and Tamil political representation based on ethnic identities, Muslims are also represented through a few political parties primarily founded on the Muslim identity. These parties are dedicated to the social, economic, cultural and political upliftment of the Muslim population. Muslims in Sri Lanka speak Tamil, a language they share with the Tamil community. Nevertheless, a majority of Muslims are also fluent in the Sinhala language.

In terms of the main religions practiced in the island, 76.7% of the population is Buddhist, 7.8% are Hindu, 8.5% are Muslim and 7.0% are Christian (<http://www.statistics.gov.lk>). Among the majority Sinhalese, 69% are Buddhist and the rest are Christian. Buddhists on the island are followers of the Theravada tradition, the orthodox school of Buddhism that has its literary tradition in the Pali language (Pieris 2006:336). The *Sangha*, a Buddhist priestly order in Sri Lanka, play a dominant and important role in national politics. Among the Tamils, the majority is Hindu; there is a small percentage of Tamils (and Sinhalese) who are Christian.

The geographical distribution and concentration of these communities has a significant impact on the island's electoral politics. 90% of the Sinhalese are concentrated in the southern, western, central and north central parts of the country (Pieris 2006:342) (see Appendix 1 for the map of Sri Lanka). However, since the 1930s, as a result of state-sponsored peasant colonisation projects in the eastern part of the country, together with an equal percentage of Tamils and Muslims, there is currently a significant percentage of Sinhalese (25%) who live in the eastern part of the

island (Department of Census and Statistics 2007:16). From time to time, artificial demographic changes and changes made to the electoral boundaries by the ruling Sinhalese political elites in this area have caused political tension among these three communities; this is especially the case in the Trincomalee district, the capital of the eastern province.

The majority of the Tamils live in the northern part of the country, although there are a number of small concentrated pockets of Tamils in other parts of the country. The capital, Colombo, is significant in this regard. However, the actual percentage of Tamil habitants residing in Colombo is disputed and a politically sensitive matter. The majority of Muslims live in the eastern province. However, due to war-induced conditions, such as mass displacement and several waves of migration related to trade, a considerable percentage of the Muslim population lives in other parts of the country (i.e. central, north-western and western provinces) (Pieris 2006:342). As far as the provincial distribution of the population is concerned, the western province records the highest percentage of the population with a figure as high as 5,865,000. Second to the western province is the north-western province, recording a population of 2,342,000. This is followed by the southern province, which has recorded 2,494, 000 of the total population. It is important to note that, in these three provinces, Sinhalese constitutes the highest percentage of the total population.

Given the importance of ethnic and religious identities in Sri Lanka, there is hardly any data available on the class composition of the population. Further, since 1977, with the opening of the economy to the forces of globalisation and the emergence of many new types of occupational categories that struggled to find their place in the four basic classes rigidly defined in the traditional Marxist class schema also had made class an analytical category difficult to reconstruct. However, an observation made on to the obvious socio-economic backgrounds of the population suggests that the majority belong to the lower-middle class or below. In this circumstance a detailed analysis of data on the labour force, which is often categorised by different economic sectors can be useful starting point in any attempt towards reconstituting a class schema. For example, sectoral wise, 36% of the working age population is engaged in the agriculture, whereas 40% are in the services and 23.6% are in the industrial sector (www.statistics.gov.lk).

Sri Lanka has also been experiencing an interesting trend in its population growth, which has had some significance for the island's politics. These trends have had a significant impact on the country's economic performance, as well as on its inter-ethnic relations between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. In this regard, the high population growth experienced in the 1940s is of significance. In the economic sphere, the population growth rate in this period was considered to be an important pillar of the welfare state policy pursued in the country. From 1975–99, the average population growth rate was estimated to be 1.4%. From 1999–2015, population growth rate is projected to be 0.8% (Pieris 2006: 7). In 2001 alone, the average population growth rate was estimated to be 1.0%.

As presented above, the population in Sri Lanka is diverse in many different ways. However, it is correct to suggest that, more than a cause of unity, this diversity has caused major political tension. This is mainly due to the politicisation of these diverse identities by the political elites, who only seek short-term political goals that primarily satisfy their power interests. This is especially applicable to the Sinhalese political elites and the Sinhalese majority who dominate the political, economic and cultural scene in the country. Given this background, it is accurate to state that these tensions and the ways in which narrowly defined identity politics have been practiced by the political elites have impacted the different trajectories of state building in Sri Lanka.

Since the late colonial period, Sri Lanka has been subject to modern democratic state-building experiments, principally in the electoral political arena due to the deliberate attempts taken by the Sinhalese political elites in state power for the politicisation of diverse identities; the number of challenges that this project has encountered is staggering. Despite various underlying tensions

and conflicts between rival elite groups, the early consolidation of elite solidarity and hegemonic tendencies in politics and the various policies and strategies pursued by the dominant Sinhalese political elites with a view of political alliance building with the majority Sinhalese subalterns are of significance. Moreover, the resistance this direction of Sinhalese politics faced from the minority communities, especially from the Tamils, which eventually led to an ethno-political conflict and a twenty-five-year-long civil war is another specific challenge worth highlighting.

Apart from internal political issues, for those who take a critical stance on the links between colonial intervention and the complexities of Sri Lanka's state building, the tensions created by a western-liberal framework of governance (in particular the Westminster style of parliamentary democracy that was imposed by the British) is being identified as one of the major initial causes for the political tensions (Spencer 2008:619). As an exogenous framework of governance, the Westminster style of parliamentary democracy has been criticised for aiding the tyranny of the majority in a multi-ethnic society. Further, it has also been criticised for providing very few safeguards for protecting minority rights. By using the Foucauldian understanding of the term governmentality David Scott offers a critical view on the various policy and institutional measures extorted by the British colonial rule in the guise of democracy and sovereignty that led to many of the challenges in contemporary politics in the country (1999). The lack of competency amongst local political and administrative elites, the continued persuasion of state and political power by playing identity politics, the lack of political agency amongst the rest of the population and the difficulty faced by the local elites in obtaining broad-based support from the masses for political institutions have also been cited as other factors responsible for the failure of democratic state building in the entire region (Bose 2004:111). It has also been argued that the above characteristics are not only identified in Sri Lanka, but that the entire South Asian region has established weak democracies and weak developmental states (Shastri and Wilson 2001: 6).

Since 1983, with the escalation of the civil war between the government forces and the LTTE, Sri Lanka became a case study and a laboratory for peace-building-cum-state-building endeavours. These projects have been both endogenous and exogenous in nature. The proposal to establish District Development Councils (DDCs) is an early example of an endogenous plan, experimented from 1971–81 (Matthews 1982:1118; Wriggins 1982:171; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 2009:78). It was neither successful in establishing a strong democratic state nor facilitated a political framework for state power sharing among the competing ethnic communities. Among the notable exogenously inspired experiments aimed at state-(re)building, India's involvement in Sri Lanka from 1987–91 is the best. India's involvement in Sri Lanka was facilitated by an executive agreement called the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, signed between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (later assassinated by the LTTE) and Sri Lankan President J.R.Jayawardena. The main goal of this agreement was to establish a system of Provincial Councils that would allow a greater share of political and administrative power at the provincial level (Shastri 1992: 723; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 2009:78).

Likewise, from 1994–2006, the intermittent phase of Norwegian mediated political negotiations carried out between the LTTE and the GOSL is of special significance (Schaffer 1999: 131–4; Uyangoda & Perera 2003). Several plans unveiled during different phases of the negotiation process, such as the World Bank-led plan named 'Regaining Sri Lanka, the Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development' unveiled in 2002 (Government of Sri Lanka 2002), the UN, WB and ADB steered 'Triple R framework' (2002) that targeted Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconciliation and Socio-Economic Development in the Conflict-Affected Areas of Sri Lanka and the Post-Tsunami Operation Mechanism (PTOM) proposed in 2005, are other examples of recently launched exogenous inspired state-rebuilding plans. It is important to note that these plans were strictly defined within the framework of ethnic conflict settlement. As well, they were deliberately oriented towards addressing major issues of governance, decentralisation, power sharing, democ-

racy and human rights in the country. The external character of these plans and the suspicions raised on the possible damage they could cause to Sri Lanka's sovereignty, as often suggested by hardcore Sinhala nationalists, played a major role in discouraging international involvement in Sri Lanka (Goodhand 2010:342). Given this situation, from time-to-time the political elites in state office were keen to introduce local initiatives. The All Party Representative Committee (APRC), initiated by the Rajapakse Government in 2006 and still continuing, is the most recent example of such a local endeavour. Although the process of APRC does not have much credibility among civil society and the international community, as Sinhalese hardcore nationalists back it; critics suggest that APRC is only reasserting the Sinhalese hegemonic state (Edrisinha 2008, video interview available on www.groudviews.org; Wickramasinghe 2008:197, 2010:160).

At the end of the civil war in May 2009, the current President Rajapakse embarked on a new path of state-rebuilding (Wickramasinghe 2009:1045–46). This new initiative is officially linked to a manifesto named 'Mahinda Chinthana; Emerging wonder of Asia, vision for the future,' unveiled in 2011. It is presented as an indigenous model of state building. It promises to revive the indigenous culture, establish the ancient glory of Sri Lanka and a locally conceived economic plan. The latter guarantees Sri Lanka's self-sufficiency in food (<http://www.treasury.gov.lk>).⁷ Besides the renewed role assigned to the old actors in the new architecture of state-rebuilding, i.e., the *Sangha*, this new path for post-war state building has also brought new actors into the limelight of the politics of state building, among which the military elites and the intellectual elites is especially significant. By bringing these actors to the forefront of national politics, the present state-building project has been able to empower as well as disempower different groups in society (Wickramasinghe 2010:160), among the disempowered, Sri Lanka civil society is of special significance. Meanwhile, the integration of the military elites has given a new face to the Sri Lankan post-war state-building project, denoting a civilian-military or semi-military state (Rajasinghe-Senannayake 2011). While the majority of the Sinhala-Buddhist population in the southern part of Sri Lanka has embraced this new architecture of post-war state-rebuilding with pride and prejudice, it is being resisted and challenged by the Tamil minority community and Western countries. These two groups of actors, as well as a few dissident groups from the Sinhalese community, continue to demand the inclusion of a plan for reconciliation and accountability for human rights in the new state-rebuilding project. The continued expressions of dissatisfaction and the legal opposition sought by the Tamils living abroad to the new state-building project pursued by the political elites (i.e., the Rajapaksa government) have become an integral part of Tamil Diaspora politics.⁸ Despite the many concerns that have been raised by certain forces in the local and international political spheres, there are no signs of halting or reversing the process. Meanwhile, within the Sinhala and Tamil community, those who do not approve and resist the current path of state building pursued by the Sinhalese political elites in state power are being suppressed by the state through coercive force and extra-legal measures.

Against this backdrop, the research questions posed in this study attempt to identify the tensions in democratic state building in Sri Lanka. The findings of this research can contribute at three levels. First, it can help provide a better understanding of the dynamics and the complexities of state building in multi-ethnic communities in general and in Sri Lanka in particular. Second, it will also help to better prepare policy-makers on current and future challenges in post-civil war contexts, where complex interactions between state building, hegemony building and politics run the danger of tilting towards authoritarianism and open predation. Third, by calling direct attention to class and dynamics in class relations that often get obscured and coopted by ethnic identity politics and political party politics, this research will widen the theoretical and methodological scope of the socio-political studies on the Sri Lankan state.

1.2.1 A Statement of the Problem

State building is a topic that continues to attract the interest of researchers worldwide. Since the Congress of Westphalia in 1648 laid the foundation for the contemporary nation-state, important aspects and processes from institutional and constitutional elements of state building have been examined. Migdal (2004: 40) has suggested three components that are important for state building: relations of states to their populations on the input side; creation of intra-state coherence; and a relationship between states and their population for the delivery of services. Other theories and models of state building have also proposed several elements for the facilitation of a successful path of state building. The OECD/DAC guidelines of 2008 and 2011, the works of the Overseas Development Institute in London (ODI) and the World Development Report of 2011 of the World Bank have added a few more elements to this list.⁹ The analytical and explanatory power of these frameworks and the theories underpinning them varies across different and diverse cultural, political contexts and geographical continents. Yet, despite the marked differences in terms of historical experiences and social-cultural cosmologies of communities living around the world, European-inspired models of state building have been continually exported to the rest of the world. This is a topic that is extensively discussed in post-colonial studies (Jalal 1995; Shastri & Wilson 2001; Sharma & Oomen 2001; Bose & Jalal 2004). What is forgotten when implanting European liberal and democratic state-building models in former colonial territories is the unique historical and cultural contexts in which European state building occurred over decades (Fukuyama 2007:13). Although, direct western European colonialism is over, residues left by the western inspired state building models of the late twentieth century have had a profound impact on their former colonies (Shastri and Wilson 2001:2). Today, they have given rise to many hybrid states,¹⁰ where elements of the modern (capitalist) and traditional organisation of communities and methods of governance interact with each other. Besides the many other compelling issues unique to these territories and communities, the hybridity itself has posed interesting challenges; state building in Sri Lanka illustrates this scenario.

The foundation of colonial state building in Sri Lanka was laid during the British colonial period (1815–1948). This phase of state building was different from the state building project pursued by the local elites in the post-independent era. However, the use of coercion and domination in alliance building can be cited as the most favoured and common strategy opted for during both of these phases of state building. In Sri Lanka, prior to the British, the Portuguese (1505–1658) and the Dutch (1658–1798) had a presence on the island. However, compared to the British, the contribution of Portuguese and the Dutch for colonial state building in a systematic manner was insignificant.

In 1931, the British granted universal franchise to the island's population, an important milestone in local political development that had a direct influence on the trajectory of democratic state building in subsequent decades (Wilson 1988:11; Wickramasinghe 1995:229–36; Spencer 2008:613;). Throwing new light on the colonial liberal democratic practices and tools, such as the much celebrated Universal Franchise, Scott argues it became a form of organising colonial power and a form of demonstration of colonial political rationality aimed at producing effects of colonial rule (1999:25). Before this important landmark in political history, in 1815 modern state building in Sri Lanka was shaped by forging the administrative unification of the previously separately administered regions. In particular, the idea of a unitary and centralised state (as opposed to decentralised state), which was pursued by the dominant Sinhalese political elites in the post-independent phase of state building, is rooted in the above. Besides the structural and the institutional foundations laid during the British colonial period, factional local elite politics have played a significant role in shaping the trajectories and experiences of Sri Lanka's state building project; elite factionalist politics is believed to have its impetus in this institutional design created by the British. Despite the numerous conflicts amongst local elites during the independence movement,

indicating the differences between various elite groups in terms of ethnic, caste, religious and regional backgrounds (Roberts 1979; Jayawardena 2002), they were successful in forging a united front (De Silva 1987:222; 2007:1, DeVotta 2005:142). However, this unity was short-lived. Some argue that the divide-and-rule policy of the British, among other factors, was the impetus for causing the elites' disunity in this period (Wickramasinghe 2006:150). After independence, in the struggle for political domination and power, the underlying differences and tensions between the elites intensified. The strategies the elites devised to establish their political domination and to capture state power not only mobilised the masses in their favour, but was also used strategically to obtain loyalty, support and the consent of the masses for their rule. These strategies further emphasised the differences between the groups (ethnic and otherwise) and most importantly diverted attention and energy from state building to hegemony building. As much as the strategies they used, the conflicts among the elites and the conflicts they ignited among the population derailed any attempt made towards democratic state building (Shastri and Wilson 2001:6). This transformation came at the cost of a developmental state (Thiruchelvam 1984:192) and further encouraged and intensified elite conflicts, as the capacity of state capital accumulation that could have been used to build alliances by easily dispensing material incentives to the masses continued to be reduced. Overall, the strategies the elites devised led to enduring ruptures and fissures in the foundation of a post-independent phase of democratic state building.

These early developments and other social, political and economic developments in the subsequent period exposed a number of tensions between the state building and hegemony building that was attempted through coalition building by the political elites. Politics became dominated by the Sinhalese elite faction of the ruling class and attempts at consent building through strategies of manipulation and coercion were dominant. Given the numerical strength of the Sinhalese as the largest ethnic majority, coalition building with the Sinhalese community and the nature of the strategies used by the Sinhalese political elites, i.e., using and abusing state power, was of crucial concern for the minority communities. The direction of coalition building between the Sinhalese elites and the Sinhalese masses negatively impacted the political and economic aspirations of the minority groups and their hopes of building a democratic state where their aspirations, rights and the needs would be duly accommodated.

Even before independence in 1948, these hegemonic tendencies were evident (Wilson 1988:7). Early signs of these political tendencies and the subsequent conflicts can be explained by the divide-and-rule policy practiced by the British, the role the British colonial played in Sinhalese national affirmation and officially establishing the uniqueness of Sinhala civilisation, as well as remaining closed to the political demands of minorities, are notable examples (Wickramasinghe 2006:149–50). These practices and policy measures paved the way for open elite conflicts over domination and hegemonic control of the new state-in-the-making. Over time, these conflicts undermined the functioning of the liberal democratic institutional structure established by the British (De Votta 2005:152).

Elite political in-fighting over political domination and securing legitimacy among the majority lower-class masses gave impetus to new, but short-sighted, political strategies that shaped Sri Lanka's state building project (Shastri & Wilson 2001:6). On the one hand, these strategies sought to build political alliances with the masses of lower class background in the periphery to win elections and defeat rival elite groups. Setting the political aspect aside, some scholars have offered explanations for these strategies by placing them in the broader context of Sri Lanka's economic development and rural poverty (Pieris 1978:611–2; Dunham 1982:46).¹¹ Given the volatility of the political and economic conditions that the elite conflicts took place in, it seems that, at the beginning, the elites favoured political strategies of consent and consensus building. During the first three decades after independence, the elites who assumed state power seemed keen to pursue their power ambitions by following democratic values. Nevertheless, when and where the

strategies of consent building failed, use of force and threat of the use of force against those who did not comply with the elites became the preferred direction of politics; the latter tendency is widely visible in the late 1970s. Against the backdrop of the above two dimensions, this research finds that the overall political strategy pursued by the political elites gradually slid into a project of 'hegemony building'. Regardless of the various justifications offered by the elites on the numerous strategies they pursued, taken together, this research notes that these strategies laid a foundation for the specific direction of elite and national politics, i.e., hegemony building. For example, the elites use of identity politics, encapsulated in Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and the repeated promises made to establish a Sinhala-Buddhist state, are good examples that illuminate the cultural aspect of hegemony building that was being successfully injected into the state building project. Given the Sinhalese political elites' domination in national politics and in state power, these strategies and formulas bred tension, particularly amongst the minority communities. The Tamil community particularly felt this tension, embarked an armed conflict and a civil war. It is unnecessary to emphasise the tension this brought on the state building project.

The evolving political relationship between the Sinhalese political elites and the Sinhalese masses began to be marked by a number of other developments, amongst which was the emergence of an ethno-religious state that crystallised the Sinhala-Buddhist identity as the most profound (Brow 1990, 2009:311; Abeyratne 2008:394). This direction of state building largely played on the alliance building between the Sinhalese political elites and the Sinhalese majority, as well as the marginalisation and persecution of the minority communities in Sri Lanka. The nature of this alignment of political forces led to resistance, dissidence and opposition, especially from the Sri Lankan Tamils. During the later colonial period and the first few decades after independence, resistance to this direction of politics and state transformation was not expressed and challenged by not only Tamil elites but also the political elites representing other minority ethnic groups (Thangarajah 2003:17). However the Sinhalese political elites were able to assimilate the non-Tamil dissident forces by employing various strategies, including granting political and state patronage through devising and (ab)using numerous state policy measures. For example, there were various concessions and patronage¹² offered to the Muslim political elites and representatives of the Indian Tamils. As for the Eurasian population,¹³ the political elites encouraged outmigration to far away destinations, such as Australia, or simply assimilated them into the Sinhalese state through language legislation (i.e. Sinhala Only Act 1956). Such were the hegemonic ambitions of the Sinhalese elite faction that it was unwilling to settle simmering issues about political power sharing that existed before independence. In 1937, rejection of a legislative proposal made by G.G.Ponnambalam, a Tamil political elite served in the national legislative council, that demanded 50:50 representation of the Sinhalese majority vis-à-vis the minority groups in the national legislature is one good example in this regard (Wickramasinghe 2006: 144).

In the early 1970s, the dominance of Sinhalese political elites was confronted not only by the Tamils, but also by radical youth groups from the Sinhalese community. This period saw two oppositional struggles waged by Sinhalese youth, anti-bourgeoisie and anti-elite. Further, these events also called the elites' hegemony building strategies into question. The anti-state struggle was first launched as an armed insurrection in 1971 and again in a different political context from 1987–91. During both these events, the ruling Sinhalese political elites used coercive force to impose its will; the number of Sinhalese youth who were killed during these two events is still unknown (Moore 1993:593).¹⁴ In 1972, another struggle was launched by the Tamil youth, which over decades was to transform into a sophisticated military movement demanding a separate state (Uyangoda 2003:55). Again, it was continually suppressed using the military might of the state (Hoole 2001: x). These events transformed the image of Sri Lanka from a successful model of an emerging democracy in the 1960s to one of a hegemonic and brutal state (Kapferer 1988:29). As one scholar remarked, 'Sri Lanka is arguably one of the most violent of modern states' (Kapferer 2001:33).

For all the progress that has been made in understanding the complexities and challenges of state building in Sri Lanka, there are still gaps left in the literature, which are especially noticable when exploring the links between hegemony building and state building. Further, there is a significant gap left in identifying the tensions between the elites' hegemony building and democratic state building. It seems that the common practice of over-reliance on binary inter-ethnic frameworks (Sinhala-Tamil) to unpack the state, giving primacy to cultural-ideological differences between the Sinhalese and the Tamils (Kearney 1985; Brow 1988; Tennakoon 1988; Kapferer 1988; Jayawardena 2003) has been a barrier in detailed exploration of the above linkages. Though the dominant ethno-centric framing and ethno-centric theorisation of Sri Lanka's socio-political history and the state building has a relevance to the case of Sri Lanka, it has done little to illuminate the nexus of hegemony building and state building. A lack of attention to class and class-political struggles are significant in this regard. By capturing the wide range of processes and elite political strategies that are of non-inter-ethnic nature, one can examine what changed the trajectories of state building in Sri Lanka. Given the numerical strength of the Sinhalese in an era of representative democracy, and their prolonged domination of the national political scene and state power, it seems important to pay attention to the motivations, causes, patterns of relationship formation, alliance building and coalition formation among the Sinhalese majority, which has significantly contributed to the post-independent phase of state building.

The body of literature on state building in Sri Lanka also tends to focus on high politics and on elite politics. Though there is a substantial body of literature in political science, political sociology and anthropology that argues taking 'everyday politics', 'politics as usual' and politics of the margins seriously (Chomsky & Foucault 2006: xiv; Migdal et al. 2007), mainstream literature on Sri Lanka's state building has not contributed much in this direction. Though the analysis of the role of elites and the formal political processes in the post-independent phase of state building has currency in Sri Lanka, a context where a formal democracy still functions, albeit with many challenges, the electoral fate of the political elites still depends on the subalterns' political behaviour (ie. voting). Therefore, the subalterns and their politics in the forms of participation and resistance deserve detailed attention. In particular, a study of elite strategies that aims to overcome and diffuse subalterns' resistance, incorporate the subalterns into mainstream politics, to address and manipulate the subalterns' struggles for upward social and economic mobility through formal and informal means and the subaltern's participation in these strategies and processes would be important so that subaltern politics can be understood. In the case of Sri Lanka, where the majority of the voter base constitutes Sinhalese of lower class background who live in rural areas (World Bank 2011),¹⁵ away from the centre of national political decision making, an understanding of the ways in which they engage in national politics through everyday politics and how they are being integrated into the national politics dominated by the Sinhalese political elites are important aspects to focus on. In other words, this research suggests that, for understanding state building that was subsequently juxtaposed and taken over by elites' hegemony building, the politics of the subalterns is important, as much as the elite politics. Understanding the underlying patterns and ways in which the hegemonic political relationship between these two groups is formed under changing local and global political and economic conditions is important for the study of state building.

Against the above gaps, by answering the following research questions, this thesis sets out to build on the existing body of literature and fill the gaps in the current literature on state building in Sri Lanka.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the key hegemony building processes identified in Sri Lanka's state building project?

2. How does the dynamics in Sinhalese politics and the broader political and economic contexts influence these processes?
3. What were the main tensions between the hegemony building and state building in Sri Lanka?
4. How did they affect democratic state building?

1.4 Central Thesis Statement

‘The state building process of Sri Lanka has been a struggle for establishing the hegemony of the Right,¹⁶ a type of politics that rejects individual and social equality, opposes social integration of marginalised groups and appeals to xenophobic tendencies and engages in political projects to achieve it, in which the Sinhalese political elites and the broader Sinhalese community have played a decisive and an equally important role.’

1.5 Theories and concepts

State building, hegemony and state-in-society models are used as key concepts for the analysis of data collected for this thesis. In the following section, an outline of the basic definitional understanding of these concepts and the main theoretical underpinnings of them are discussed.

1.5.1 State building

There are different approaches and assumptions that underpin understandings of the state that also inform and influence understandings of state building. These theories range from Liberal to Marxist approaches, and from institutional, economic or developmental to cultural theories of the state (Jessop 1990:21–4; Migdal 2001:236–50).

A simple and narrow definition of state building would suggest a process of (exogenous and endogenous) interventionist strategies that are used to restore or rebuild institutions and apparatuses of the state. Hence, Fukuyama’s famous reference to state building as a process by which new governmental institutions are created and existing ones strengthened (Fukuyama 2004:17). Compared to Tilly, on a somewhat milder note, Fukuyama emphasised two dimensions and functions of the state and the effectiveness of state institutions. His definition covered important dimensions, but it still fell short when illuminating the interconnections between the state and society. As reminded by Tilly, state building is not always an innocent process, but, more importantly, a result of coercion and the use of coercive power by internal and external actors to create new, or strengthen, governmental institutions that facilitate the processes of war making, state making, protection and extraction. All are important ingredients of state building and functions of the state (1984:15), an aspect reflected in Migdal’s work (2001:11). Considering the strengths of Migdal’s approach, which finely blends the important works on state building (i.e. Fukuyama, Tilly, Weber), this research refers to state building to denote the various dynamic formal and informal processes and the shifting linkages between the state (or state institutions) and society (Migdal 2001).

1.5.2 Hegemony

In *Prison Note Books*, Gramsci used hegemony to talk about a wide range of issues pertaining to Italian history, politics, intellectuals, philosophy, literature and cultural problems (Hoare & Nowell-Smith 1971). Though the notion was originally used in a context of advanced capitalism (Hall 1996:416; Urbinati 1998:373), its applicability is now widely recognised in post-colonial contexts (Mouffe 1979:1; Sen 1988:32) and it is especially applicable in situations where state building projects are dominated by one political group.

In Sri Lanka, the term 'hegemony' or 'hegemonic state' is often used to refer to the ethnic and cultural dominance that has been exercised by the Sinhalese over the Tamils. Unfortunately, however, it is applied more as a catchword and in a limited sense. Contrary to this dominant practice, in this thesis the concept of hegemony is used to examine a series of multifaceted, inter-linked, subjective and structural processes that go beyond inter-ethnic relationships. This thesis aims to unpack a variety of the processes used for state building within the Sinhalese community that go beyond inter-ethnic relations. For an analysis of the circumstances leading to the hegemonic alliance formation between the dominant group (Sinhalese elites) and the subordinate groups of the hegemonic project (Sinhalese community), an application of the concept of hegemony allows the researcher to supersede the previous narrow inter-ethnic analysis of relations between Sinhalese and the Tamils that limited the potential detailed analysis of intra-Sinhalese political relations and class relations that have shaped state building in post-independent Sri Lanka.

There are many interpretations of hegemony. Initially, Gramsci used the term hegemony to weave his theory of politics and state.¹⁷ The supremacy achieved through domination is what Gramsci called 'hegemony' (Hoare & Nowell-Smith 1971:12). The underlying message is that the ruling class cannot rule through force alone, but needs ideas as well (Bates 1975:352). In addition, the hegemonic relationship between the dominant and the subordinate groups is established by the former winning active or passive consent of the latter. In this sense, hegemony is reached when political leadership is achieved through the consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularisation of the views of the ruling class (Bates 1975:352). Gramsci states that this consent is driven historically by the prestige (and consequent confidence) that the dominant group enjoys from its position and function in the world of production (Hoare & Nowell-Smith 1971:12). Further, when theorising civil society (within the hegemony theory), which Gramsci referred to as all the 'private organisms', for instance churches, parties, journals and media, he noted the importance of the role of intellectuals for hegemony building. The role of intellectuals is described as molecular fashioning of the social and political consciousness of the dominant class among the led (Bates 1975:353). In light of the role of the intellectuals, Gramsci stated that a failure to create hegemony is the failure of the intellectuals. In such a circumstance, the dominant class (political class) opting to use force and coercive apparatuses of the state will be observed.

The processes of domination that leads to hegemony coordinates the interests of various groups and the life of the state as a whole, in the course of which the political, intellectual and moral leadership of a particular historical bloc with a 'collective will', that is also called the 'the national popular', gets established (Hall 1996:423). Once hegemony is established, it can be seen in the intellectual, political, economic, cultural and moral life of the population. Gramsci also identified another step in the hegemony-building process, i.e., the formation of common sense among the subalterns. Common sense is comprised of the diffuse and uncoordinated features of a general form of thought, common to a particular period or a popular environment (Gramsci 1971:330n). Further, he argued that, despite the fact that common sense is neophobic and conservative, common sense also has a healthy nucleus of good sense that deserves to be made more unitary and coherent, as opposed to a chaotic and fragmentary nature (Gramsci 1971:328). In Gramsci's words:

Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is. At those times when a homogeneous social group is brought into being, there comes into being also, in opposition to common sense, a homogeneous - in other words coherent and systematic - philosophy (419).

By drawing attention to the concept of common sense, Gramsci draws a clear distinction between feeling, knowing and understanding – three important attributes that he finds lacking among subalterns already exposed to the hegemonising process (Patnaik 1988: 2).

Given the fragmented nature of Gramsci's work on hegemony, since his death there have been many different interpretations of it offered by scholars. Although they capture different aspects of the term, there has been no clear consensus on the distinction between domination and coercion, which are the two important ways in which supremacy of a social group or class could manifest. Hegemony is the element of domination exercised through intellectual and moral leadership. In practice, it is difficult to keep these two sources of power completely apart from each other. Any cursory look at the context of state building in Sri Lanka suggests that there has been a simultaneous application of domination and coercion. The former is applied to gather support and secure allies for the hegemony-building process, often by manipulation of the potential forces in the society, while coercion is used to suppress oppositional forces. In this sense, when understanding hegemony building, paying attention to the elements of coercion and manipulation is equally important. Further, understanding the potential and space for resistance and non-compliance, which is often dealt with through force, is important.

Using Hall's work on hegemony as a theoretical concept (1996:424) when referring to hegemony in this research, the following theoretical points are useful to remember:

- (1) Hegemony is a particular, historically specific and temporary moment in the life of a society based on a particular constellation of social forces. It is a rare moment in history and is unlikely to persist forever as it needs to be actively constructed and positively maintained;
- (2) It is a multi-arena and multi-dimensional phenomenon that needs to be constructed using a variety of subordinated alliances at the same time. In other words, the construction of hegemony requires mastery, which is created through winning a substantial degree of popular consent across the society as a whole; and
- (3) Hegemony is a representation of many social entities and does not belong to only one, such as the ruling class. It constitutes a historical bloc led by one class or by dominant faction that exercises its leadership over subaltern and dominated classes and wins them over with specific concessions and by compromises.

In the case of Sri Lanka, the tactics of manipulation and granting concessions has mainly been applied to the Sinhalese majority, whereas coercion was largely applied to the oppositional Tamil forces or to deal with periodic oppositional forces from the Sinhalese community. In the post-modern capitalist state setting, it is observed that consent is often being obtained without obtaining consensus, a strategy favoured by a dominant class whose primary interest is to keep society as fragmented as possible, which is wholly applicable in the context of Sri Lanka. In such a scenario, various ideologically motivated strategies can be employed to retain compliance and discourage effective challenges to the political and the economic system (Carroll 2006:9).

In this research, the term 'hegemonic state' is used to denote a situation in which the entire realm of the state and its apparatuses are controlled by one dominant alliance (in the Sri Lankan case, the Sinhalese political elites) who have obtained spontaneous, active and passive consent from subordinated groups or from an alliance of forces (the Sinhalese community) through a series of processes and strategies of manipulation and using force through domination of structural and super structural conditions. When applying hegemony to the case of Sri Lanka, several limitations can arise. First, there is the difficulty of distinguishing between political and civil society. This could also raise a dilemma as to what criteria should be applied to make this distinction. Second, in hegemony theory there is a tendency to overlook the subtle ways that coercion and force are utilised by political society, as there are instances where coercion and force is embedded in the strategies of manipulation. Therefore, it is not necessarily the obvious use of force, which often entails the use of the military to carry out violence. In the case of Sri Lanka, digging deeper

into the events and processes of indirect force and manipulation is required. This suggests the need for theorisation of violence based on a more philosophical and ethical understanding.

1.5.3 State-in-Society Model

To examine state building, this thesis applies Migdal's approach to the state and state building. This is considered to be a middle-level theory and its strengths lie in its capacity to situate the state (as a unique phenomenon) within a specific historiography where the interaction between the state and society can be examined (Migdal 2001). This is not too different from Gabriel Almond's view of the 'state', which he called 'the political system' (1965). Despite differences between Migdal and Almond in their use of terminology, they both offered a broad understanding of the state and state building. The way Migdal conceptualised state and society by making a thread between these two entities also complements Gramscian theory of hegemony, where political and civil society is brought closer to each other (1971). Besides these points of confluence and the complementary nature of the works of Gramsci and Migdal, this research applies the state-in-society model to capture the dynamics of power relations that are located in the struggles for domination and resistance by the two entities that constitute the realm of state and state building.

In the state-in-society model, the state is defined as a field of power, marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by the image of a coherent and controlling organisation in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory and the actual practices of its multiple parts (Migdal 2001:15–16). The state is constructed and reconstructed, invented and re-invented, through its interaction as a whole and its different parts. Importantly, it is not a fixed entity – its organisation, goals, means and partners and operative rules change as it allies with and opposes others inside and outside its territory. In other words, the state continually evolves or continually morphs (Migdal 2001: 23).

The state-in-society model emphasises processes of domination and change, and emphasises how power can be located in multiple locations. A focus on these processes allows the research to pay attention to the ongoing power struggles over rules that govern everyday behaviour between the stable and shifting coalitions of power. 'Processes' in this model denote politics; in simple terms, politics is understood as the process that decides who gets what and how (Leftwich 2004). Although Migdal does not explicitly use the word 'politics', the processes of domination and change he refers to are essentially political processes concerned with the 'power dynamics' that defines the rules of the game. These dynamics determine the way societies and states create and maintain distinct ways of restructuring day-to-day life and the rules that govern behaviour. Importantly, they also determine who benefits and is disadvantaged by the rules, and what rules unite and divide societies. At the subjective level, they also reveal the shared meaning that people hold about their relations with others and their own place in the world, which this research finds to be an important aspect for the study of state building.

Unlike dominant structuralist approaches, the state-in-society model draws attention to the role of human agency in figuring out rules and patterns of domination and subordination, and in constantly challenging and changing them (Migdal 2001:11). It is the nature and outcome of these on-going struggles that give societies their distinctive structure and character (Migdal 2001:12); therefore, since state and society are mutually constitutive, these processes also give the state a distinctive character. This understanding enables one to trace the nature of any individual state in a highly contextualised manner with attention paid to its unique complexities and the complexities of the general political context. By applying this model, this research intends to allocate equal attention to the dominant forces, as Gramsci assigned to the political society (state), the dominated and the ways in which political and non-political society interact and connect with each other.

In this model, it is not only the institutions and the rules – formal and informal – but the image and practices of the state that are important elements. In the state-in-society model, image and practice encapsulate ‘the field’, which highlights relationships in a multidimensional space in which the symbolic is just as important as the material. It assumes every field is a site of struggle over the definition of legitimate principles of divisions of the field. The field therefore actually becomes a ‘field of power’. When applied to the case of Sri Lanka, as much as the state building processes can be located in the material realm, it is also in the perceptions, discourses, symbols, rituals and images that are being used from the past and reinvented under new circumstances to be planted in the minds of the society that matter. Further, given the difference between the written rules and practices of the state, the emphasis paid in this model on these two aspects is helpful so one does not lose insight, particularly when interpreting field data.

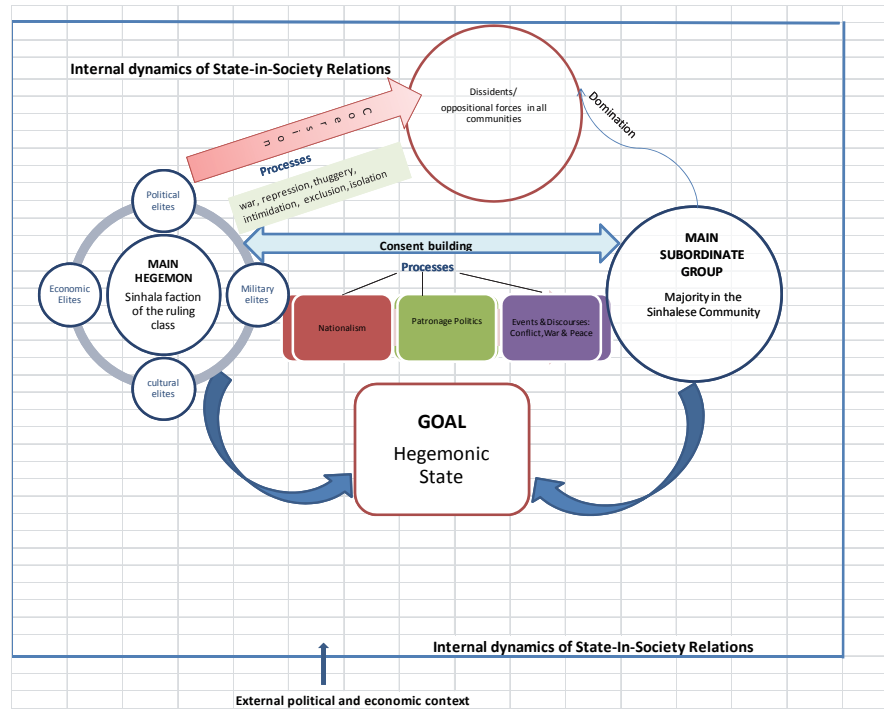
Image and practice can act in unison, but also take divergent paths; sometimes, they overlap and reinforce each other, at other times they are contradictory and mutually destructive (Migdal 2001:16). In general, image (which accommodates perceptions) of the state is a dominant, integrated and autonomous entity that, in a given territory, controls all rule-making, directly through its own agencies or indirectly by sanctioning other authorised organisations that do not abide by the circumscribed rules, such as businesses, families and clubs (Migdal 2001). Besides territorial boundaries, image encompasses other boundaries (i.e. social and political), separating state from non-state or private actors and social forces (Migdal 2001:17). Through image, the state is often separated from other entities, as well as elevated above them. Sometimes, the image promoted may only signify a particular set of interests. Therefore, state as the general representation of the commonality of people, deriving from their underlying connections, is challenged (Migdal 2001:17–18).

From time to time in Sri Lanka, particular images of the state have been elevated by the dominant forces to promote their interests. The various manifestation of the image of the state, such as a Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state, ethnic state, violent state and, more recently, security state, are useful examples in this regard. The image and the perceptions deliberately promoted or organically conceived by various practices (of coercion and domination) gives rise to numerous struggles. Further, these practices are often pitted against the image of the state (Migdal 2001:19). Through routine performances by state actors, state agencies and their various practices (symbolic) the chosen image of the state can either be reinforced or weakened (Migdal 2001:18). In both cases, the threat or actual use of violence is readily applied in situations of non-compliance (Migdal 2001). Multiple sets of practices can be carried out with certain alliances and social forces, sometimes going beyond official laws and regulations.

In this model, domination is an important element of understanding the state. To understand domination, analysis is proposed at two levels – a corporate unified level and a disintegrated level. To understand these two processes, it is essential to examine the reinforcing and contradictory practices and alliances in the disparate parts of the state (Kohli & Shue 1994:294). This research finds that the paradoxical quality of the state and its understanding of its dual terms of domination and change are crucial to any study of state and state building. Importantly, by highlighting the duality and the contradictory quality of the state, the state-in-society model challenges the dominant image painted by other approaches on the state (i.e. in general, the structuralist and historical-institutional approaches and, in the case of Sri Lanka, the inter-ethno-centric approach). These approaches tend to conceal the vulnerabilities of the state and, in the state building project, the dominant actors in it. The duality emphasised in the state-in-society model is extremely useful in understanding the seemingly scattered strategies separately employed by the dominant political elites, as well as finding the underlying thread of unification that these strategies represent. In the case of Sri Lanka, the struggle for hegemony of the Right is identified as the underlying thread of unification.

1.6 Analytical Framework

Diagram 1
Analytical Framework



The analytical framework of this study is built on Gabriel Almond's functional approach (Almond et al. 1960, 1966, 2004, 2007). His framework has helped to comprehensively capture the connections between the various processes and actors concerning state building in Sri Lanka. By highlighting these elements, this research was able to situate Sri Lanka's state building in its historically specific context.¹⁸ Further, this framework is quite useful for systematically organising and processing the complex data gathered on various processes of state building.

Overall, two main categories of processes used for state building have been identified: consent building and coercion oriented. Under these two main categories, four main processes of hegemony building are identified. In the main chapters of this thesis, these four main processes are dealt in a greater detail by capturing the answers to research questions 2, 3 and 4.

To understand the processes used for state building, locating the main actors who participate in these processes is important. In this framework, these actors are depicted in circles. The larger circles in the center of the framework denote the main actors, Sinhalese elite' faction (identified as the main hegemon group) and the smaller circles connecting the main circle depict the other sub-actors supporting them. The main circle in the middle to the right connecting the Sinhalese elite faction depicts another main actor, the Sinhalese community. The main relationship between these two forces is identified as consent building. In the case of Sri Lanka, three main consent building processes are identified: Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism; patronage politics at the political party level and in the state institutions level (depicted in middle square in the diagram); and events and discourse making on conflict, war and peace. These are depicted in three squares, connecting the two main circles. In the following chapters, by using the state-in-society model, these three processes are elaborated on in an attempt to find answers to research questions 1 and 2.

In this study, the hegemonic state is identified as the main goal pursued with the input of multifaceted processes. In Almond's framework, such inputs are categorised along formal and informal levels (Almond and Powell 1966:17). In the case of Sri Lanka, the boundaries between the formal and informal are blurred; therefore a clear depiction of formal and informal mechanisms was not pursued. However, in the main empirical chapters, the embeddedness of formal and informal character of the processes is discussed.

The arrow connecting the middle upper three circles and the circle of the Sinhalese elite faction denotes the relationship of coercion. However, it is important to note that the relationship of coercion is not limited to these two groups, but is also applicable to the other actors in this diagram. Considering the degree of prominence that these two processes have with the different actors identified in this diagram, the relationship is depicted where it is comparatively prominent.

By taking the main actors, alliances (hegemonies and subordinate groups), goals, internal and external political and economic contexts, consent building oriented and coercive relationships and the processes related to them, and the relationship they have with the hegemonic state, this thesis used this model to answer research questions 3 and 4. In the chapter concerning summary and conclusions (Chapter 6), they are discussed further.

1.7 Methodology

This research is a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiries are conducted through an intense or prolonged contact with the field. Qualitative research methods are also designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live (Kaplan & Maxwell 1994:30). Therefore, it allows the researcher to generate an understanding of a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context. Compared to quantitative methods, by placing the local actors as the centre of analysis, this research was able to gain important locally grounded insights on the subject matter. As Borlan (2001:6) reminds us, given the nature of data that is descriptive and interpretative, the data collection of this research had to be given primacy when examining individuals, groups and certain phenomenon in detail. The nature of this research required the exploration of such dimensions to answer the main research questions that have been posed. These dimensions largely belong to the subjective aspect of human action that can only be captured through a qualitative inquiry and a qualitative data collection method. As Patton states, 'qualitative data describes. They take us, as readers, into the time and place of observation, so that we know what it was like to have been there. They capture and communicate someone else's experience of world, in his or her own words (2002: 47).

1.8 Data Collection Methods

The data for this research was collected using multiple methods, constituting an extensive literature survey to gather documents written on the social-political history of the country, field interviews (January 2009–April 2009) and a process of field observations and reflections (January 2009–April 2009, May 2005–November 2007 and January–February 2011). Since the nature of the subject matter is highly contentious, highly debatable and can lead to numerous controversies, a multiple method approach was used in an attempt to build a more comprehensive and critical understanding on the area of inquiry, to validate and cross-check the data that has been gathered through variety of sources and methods. In this research, same epistemic value was assigned to all the data collected through these different methods and different sources.

a) Literature Survey

The data for this study was mainly obtained by consulting documents written on the socio-political history of the country. These documents covered standard academic texts as well as 'gray literature'. They constitute of locally and internationally published official reports (i.e, Central Bank reports, Reports from Ministries and Government Departments, Reports compiled by the World Bank and United Nations) and unofficial documents and reports of Non Governmental Organisations, Local and International Think Tanks, personal memoirs of political actors, political party pamphlets, election manifestos, opinion polls and internet blogs. The academic texts collected and consulted for this study represent a range of subject areas in the field of social science, namely; history, sociology, cultural and social anthropology, political science, economics, administrative science, cultural and conflict studies. The wide range of documents collected during the phase of extensive literature survey was reviewed before, during and after the fieldwork. The phase of document collection conducted while in the field enabled to access certain types of literature, mostly written in the local languages that were not available in the Netherlands. For this purpose, the researcher visited several libraries in the Kandy and Colombo Districts, including the main library of the University of Colombo, the University of Peradeniya, the Ceylon Room of the library of the University of Peradeniya and Colombo, the libraries of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies in Colombo and Kandy, the Library of the Social Scientists' Association, the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, the Nadesan Centre, the Marga Institute and the National Archives. In addition, the researcher also collected literature from two libraries belonging to two political parties and one alternative newspaper.

Due to the partly historical nature of the research, collecting and reviewing documents providing historical details of Sri Lanka was important. Such documents, especially those written before 1983, were collected during the above mentioned local library visits. By incorporating such materials the contribution and influence the subaltern academics have made in shaping the debates at provincial and village level politics were privileged. By so doing the researcher made an extra effort to strike a balance between the mainstream and the marginal. In addition, this phase of the literature survey was used to collect data on sensitive issues (such as corruption, military and para-military affairs) that were impossible to collect directly from the respondents in the course of the interview process.

In addition the researcher also conducted an extensive web-based survey to obtain data from e-based newspaper archives (i.e. www.infolanka.com, www.theacademic.org, www.lankanewspapers.com, www.colombopage.com) and scholarly and semi-scholarly literature produced by civil society organisations and local and internationally recognized think tanks (www.groundviews.org; www.wsws.org; www.transparency.org). Data on topics such as political corruption and post-war political developments that were difficult to gather through interviews were collected from these sources. E-based newspaper archives of The Sunday Times, Ravaya, The Sunday Leader, the Sunday Observer, Dinamina and Divaina were consulted.¹⁹ Three of these newspapers are English language newspapers and the other three are Sinhala language newspapers. These newspapers are generally considered as national newspapers, whereas Ravaya and the Sunday Leader are considered as radical and alternative newspapers. In Sri Lanka, politically unbiased newspapers are rare. Many of them are used by the political elite groups in state power and in the opposition to orchestrate the views of the political parties they represent. The major newspaper establishments in Sri Lanka are either owned by the political parties (ie. Upali Newspaper Inc. by the UNP) or by the government (usually orchestrating the views of the government of the day). Given this background, to ensure a balanced representation of these politically biased print media sources, a cross-section of the newspapers associated with different political parties was used to triangulate the data.

The data gathered from all the above sources were assigned the same epistemic value. Last not least, these sources helped gain insights into various discursive practices and discursive narratives on Sri Lanka's socio-political history and on their political actors and to gain a critical perspective on the subject matter.

b) Interviews

In order to fill the gaps found in the literature survey and also to gather data that were undocumented for personal and political reasons, twenty-six semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out. Potential respondents were identified during the first year of the study. The selection process involved a purposeful sampling of information-rich cases. Information-rich-cases are those that can offer substantial information about central issues of the inquiry and that can be helpful in gaining in-depth insights rather than empirical generalisation (Patton 2002:240). In this research, these twenty-six respondents were selected based on their expert knowledge of state building, politics and their direct and high level of involvement and contribution to Sri Lanka's political scene. Further, given their everyday engagement with the local reality and the locally grounded insights on the issues of state building and on the various debates concerning state building, the personal-political narratives they shared became an important and valuable source of data collection. Moreover, the majority of them has firsthand experiences working with the political regimes of the country and knew the political leaderships of these regimes in official and personal capacities. Having held important portfolios in the state institutions and civil society organisations, they were able to share information that was mostly undocumented. As shown in Appendix 2, the majority of the respondents represent more than one occupational category. Some of them have fluid political party affiliations. Given the multiple identities, expert knowledge and direct experiences as members of a several discursive communities, the information they shared on the subject matter were valuable.

The questions asked of the respondents were designed to explore their views on the historical and contemporary views on state building and politics in Sri Lanka, and to capture the various junctures, their and other's opinions on debates, perceptions and interpretations of politically significant events. The respondents were given the opportunity to express his (or her) ideas freely. A set of sub-questions that emerged from the main conversation were further probed to gather detailed information and insights on particular aspects. Although the order of questioning varied, the same sets of questions were asked to all respondents.

Each interview was scheduled as 90–120 minute sessions, though some took longer. On two occasions, the respondents were met with more than once because the first interview could not be fully completed due to the respondent's other commitments. In each interview, the first ten minutes were spent introducing myself, the researcher.

To avoid extensive debates on terminologies, the researcher allowed the respondents to use his (or her) own terminologies when answering the questions, seeking clarification of what they meant in the information and concrete experiences that they related to the researcher. By applying an interpretative approach, the researcher was able to immerse better in the respondents' world.

About 70% of the interviews were conducted in English, because of the researcher's lack of knowledge of the Tamil language, but also because of the respondents' preference to speak in English. A few preferred to speak Sinhala. This flexibility was important to help the respondents articulate their views more effectively. Since language has been an important cause of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and an integral element that has helped to define the nature of the state, negotiating the language to be used at the beginning of the interviews also helped me to gain trust. This also avoided any misinterpretation of the data and getting lost in translation.

At the time of the fieldwork, security conditions were such that a majority of respondents requested not to tape record the interviews, the researcher had to take handwritten notes. However, to avoid the possibility of losing valuable data, a full interview report was compiled after each interview, always on the same day. This helped the researcher to revisit the interview process while it was still fresh in memory.

c) Observations and Reflections

Observations are a substantial part of the database. Most of these observations were carried out over the course of fieldwork on highly contentious political events. Also the observations made on body language during the interviews were very helpful in gaining insights on emotional status. The field visit conducted in the first quarter in 2009 happened to coincide with the final phase of the war as well as with several provincial council elections that took place in a piecemeal fashion.²⁰ During the first quarter of 2009 closely contested elections to appoint members to the Central, North Western and the Western provinces took place. Further, during the same time around, campaigning for the provincial council elections for Uva and the Southern provinces that were held in August and October, respectively, had already begun. The numerous election campaigns were dominated by the theme of war and military victories in the battlefield. Drawing a distinction between war victories and election victories were hardly possible. Given this situation, observations were conducted onto the elections campaigns, televised debates, and cultural and political rituals conducted to celebrate the war and elections victories. The two subsequent short field visits paid to Sri Lanka in 2010 and 2011 helped to continue this observation process. National, regional and village level events organised to celebrate the military defeat of the LTTE were observed. It should be mentioned here that these three phases of field observations were carried out under markedly different political situations, which helped to draw comparative perspectives on different political scenarios. This observation process helped gain understanding of unspoken fears, suspicions, frustrations, hyper-vigilance of the environment, looking for a quick escape on certain topics and questions, bodily expressions of power or powerlessness amongst the respondents chosen for the interviews. As an 'insider', researcher's familiarity with local expressions and body language were useful here. The data collected through body language helped the researcher to understand the implicit messages communicated on political developments during this period, and also helped later to look for other sources of information on certain subject matters.

During the time in the field the researcher also collected valuable data while engaging in everyday interactions with other groups. For example, while in the field, the researcher was involved in conducting two workshops on peace building in Sri Lanka (see Annexure 2 for a brief outline of the content). Participants of the first workshop were in the 20–30-year-age group and from diverse backgrounds, in terms of their ethnicity, gender and areas of residence. They were all members of civil society and community based-organisations whose mandate was to encourage community-based approaches to conflict transformation and peace-building. The local and regional perspectives they shared on peace and conflict in Sri Lanka helped gain an understanding on local politics. The observations made during the workshops on the engagements of these groups on certain topics, such as electoral politics, war and peace was used to further build the database of this research.

The second workshop involved ten mid-career professionals (all male) from the government and NGO sector from different geographical areas of Sri Lanka. Most were from the eastern province. The personal insights they shared on the political situation in Sri Lanka and the bodily expressions made on certain topics helped the researcher to gain a better understanding of the public's feelings, attitudes and perceptions. These data helped to triangulate and assess other data gathered from the literature survey and the interviews. Most importantly the data collected dur-

ing this workshop helped to fill gaps in the literature and to gain insight in to the micro-level personal-political experiences.

1.8.1 Theoretical Orientation: Critical and Interpretative

The approach to data analysis combined critical and interpretative approaches. The critical approach evaluates and transforms the social reality under investigation. By recognising the possibilities and the capacities people have, this approach assumes people are capable of changing their materials and social circumstances (Orlikowski & Baroudi 1991). In a critical approach, the researcher plays a crucial role in bringing the restrictive conditions of the status quo to active consciousness. It also helps to focus on the issues of power and the asymmetrical power relations among various forces in society. Unlike the relatively obvious dimensions of power, exploring the deeply grounded hegemonic relationship that constitutes the state-in-society relations of Sri Lanka requires taking a critical approach to dig deeper into the manipulated consciousness (hegemonic processes) of the society. Also, by applying the critical approach, this researcher was able to examine state-society relations among the Sinhalese, based on a critical set of practices rooted in national and everyday politics. Needless to say, the latter is often taken for granted and escapes research focus. Given the strengths of the critical approach, the researcher was able to analyse and understand the deeper meanings of the various kinds of political engagements of the people, and be attentive to the possible alternative explanations of these political engagements.

In the interpretative approach, the researcher does not claim a neutral stand. Instead, he/she recognises that there is no direct access to a reality unmediated by language and preconceptions. In this research, although the role is primarily as a researcher and a scholar, previous personal and professional experiences concerning Sri Lanka cannot be ignored. Therefore, following the principles of the interpretative approach, the researcher was acutely aware of her role and avoided losing sight of the possible influences that previous experiences could have on this research.

1.8.2 Data Analysis: Mixed Methods

In the phase of data analysis, the researcher combined the analytical perspectives captured from the critical reading of the wide range of documents gathered during the literature survey with the data gathered from the field interviews and observations. A critical review of the documents was done by following the discourse analysis method. It helped uncover the underlying social structures that were played out in the texts consulted. In this process, categories, themes, ideas, views and roles within the written texts were identified. It also helped identify discursive discourses produced by various actors on the political history of the country. In this study, the complementary data to the document analysis was obtained from the interviews. These interviews were analysed by following a narrative analysis approach. Narrative analysis examines respondent's story and analyses how it is put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it draws and how it is persuades a listener of authenticity (Reisman 1993:2). Narrative analysis helped to uncover 'what was meant beyond what was said' and to explore the respondent's personal experience and perceptions of various issues relating to state building and politics, and most importantly to uncover how they make sense of events and actions in their life. The metaphors, ambiguous terms and jokes used by respondents were broken down to locate the context and specific local and cultural meanings they conveyed. These were rewritten in descriptive form under the relevant sections of each interview report. This data was interpreted taking into account the emotional expressions and body language observed during the interviews.

The interview reports were further unpacked by paying attention to the sequencing of themes within the narratives (holistic) and by focusing on both form (how it is told) and content (what is told). All the interview transcripts and answers given to specific research questions were coded,

some matching more than one code. Given the nature of the research, these multiple codes were recorded down because they initially made sense. This was done to facilitate further exploration in subsequent phases of categorisation and to eventually place them in the most suitable category. The next stage entailed a process of rough categorisation. This allowed the development of key patterns in the material that were relevant for the study and to identify links between categories, events, processes and actors. In this phase, data derived from the two-staged literature survey gathered during the two workshops and observations during fieldwork were also included to complete the emerging larger pattern of dominant themes that are organized as separate chapters, i.e., nationalism (Chapter 2), patronage (addressed at two levels in Chapters 3 and 4) and war (Chapter 5), and to draw connections between the different themes. All of this data helped to identify the relevant sub-categories, properties and dimensions within the broader picture of state building and elite-subaltern political relations. The themes and data for the main empirical chapters of this thesis were organised based on the sub-categories, properties and dimensions identified in this process. These are captured in the main themes, which are organised into chapters, and the sub-topics under each empirical chapter. A back-and-forth process of connecting the bigger pattern with the sub-categories, dimensions and properties was used to decide those that were most prominent and helped to explain the larger pattern. At the end of the process, to fill in the blanks, relevant data from the literature survey and observations were lined up under the chosen sub-categories, properties and dimensions.

1.9 Challenges and Limitations

The first phase of fieldwork coincided with the final phase of the intensified military operations carried out by government forces against the LTTE since the beginning of 2009. During the researcher's second visit to Sri Lanka, the war had come to an end, but state surveillance on the activities of researchers, journalists and others was established as a fact of life. Even seemingly distant political events made the data collection challenging. These circumstances influenced the sharing of information by key respondents and others. As already noted, respondents were identified before the first phase of fieldwork. On arrival, numerous adjustments had to be made due to unexpected circumstances on their side. Replacements had to be identified and a fresh phase of research was needed into their backgrounds. This was time-consuming, but crucial, as political allegiances and other alliances were shifting dramatically under the conditions of war and the electoral political environment of the time.

In the first phase of fieldwork, two election campaigns and a curfew had been imposed in Colombo after an air strike carried out by the LTTE, which meant that it was not possible to maximise time in the field. Being a researcher with past local affiliations as a University academic with significant collaborations with INGOs in the field of peace-building (the latter being considered by then an act of treachery), difficulties had to be faced in establishing rapport with respondents. Insistence from the respondents that the researcher share personal details (parental background, place of birth, marital status, spousal background, academic background and caste) created an uncomfortable atmosphere and frustration of not being seen as a researcher. Given the nature of this research though, these circumstances also provided further insights into the political situation. Last but not least, as much as the researcher considered her identity of being Sinhalese an advantage, at the same time, it also presented some limitations to this research.

1.10 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. This introductory chapter (Chapter 1) offers a literature survey, setting and justification of this study, a statement of the research problem, research questions and the methodology. The concepts, theories and analytical framework of the thesis are also

presented in this chapter. Based on the multiple sources of qualitative data that were treated with critical and interpretative methodology and analysed by using mixed methods, i.e., discourse and narrative analysis, this research identified four main themes concerning state building in Sri Lanka. These four themes are interpreted as the main processes used for hegemony building and state building in Sri Lanka. These four building processes are discussed in detail in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, under the chapters titled Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism (Chapter 2), Patronage Politics at the Political Party Level (Chapter 3), Patronage Politics extended through the Manipulation of State Institutions (Chapter 4) and Events and Discourses on Conflict, War and Peace (Chapter 5). The main body of each of these chapters is organised in a manner that answers research questions 2 and 3 of this study. Each of the chapters is intended to examine these four processes in detail, and the historical evolution of these processes under changing dynamics in economic, political and social life since late colonialism to contemporary times. In Chapter 6, a summary, the main findings and the final conclusions of this study is offered.

Notes

¹ This idea is expressed in Foucault's famous quote 'We need to cut off the King's head: in political theory that has still to be done' (1977).

² The 'Arab spring' can also be said to have given rise to a new blue print of state-building.

³ Roberts (1995, 2001, a historian), Abeyaratne (1998, an economist), Bandarage (2009, a political scientist) and Wickramasinghe (2006, a social historian).

⁴ Based on Roberts' categorisation, in this thesis political elites are referred to as a social group who have control of and access to political power, and those who are holding public offices that are socially valued and which yield considerable authority (1974:11).

⁵ Refer to David Scott (1999), *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* for a critique of the political rationality underpinning the introduction of the Universal franchise to the colonial society by the British rule in 1931. Based on Michael Foucault's work on governmentality Scott convincingly argues that modern democratic processes introduced to the colonial territories by the western colonial powers were a strategy to reorganise power and conditions conducive to extend colonial power. Scott points to the fact that the liberal democracy introduced to the colonies by using various instruments (such as universal franchise meant modernising transition from rule of force to rule of law that never yield in political equality between the colonial rule and the colonised. This argument of Scott can be equally applied to the local political elites who assumed state power in the post-colonial period by using the same instruments introduced by the British to reflect on the continued inequality of political relationship between the local political elites and the subalterns. In similar fashion in his seminal work, *Politics of the Governed*, Partha Chatterjee (2004) calls attention to the underlying colonial political rationalities exerted through Universalist ideals (i.e through instruments of modern universalist governance such as Universal franchise) to recognise the contemporary life of politics.

⁶ Refer to Bryce Ryans (1953) for a detailed account of the Sinhalese and Tamil caste system.

⁷ The first part of Mahinda Chinthana was presented with the same rhetoric during Rajapakse's campaign for the 2005 presidential election.

⁸ It has been estimated that, apart from Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Australia, France, USA, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and New Zealand, Canada alone is home to about 2–300,000 Tamils who fled due to the war (Crisis Group Asia Report May 2010:2).

⁹ OECD-DAC, 2008, 'State-building in Situations of Fragility: Initial findings', OECD, Paris, OECD-DAC, 2011, 'Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Fragility and Conflict: Policy Guidance', DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD, Paris, World Bank, 2011, 'From Violence to Resilience: Restoring Confidence and Transforming Institutions', in World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development, World Bank, New York, ch.3

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the concept, especially in the area of cultural hybridity, refer to De Silva, 2002.

¹¹ Both addressed the issue of land settlement and agrarian issues.

¹² In this thesis, the term patronage is used to denote a supportive exchange between two parties – patron and client – in an exchange of services that are beneficial for both parties. In this relationship, the patron provides inducements and rewards to clients and, in return, expects varying degrees of loyalty (Bearfield 2009:67).

¹³ In the early official census and statistics, Eurasians were categorised as a separate identity group. In the recent past they are counted under a category called ‘other’. For more on Eurasians in Sri Lanka, see Jayawardena 2009, 2010 and McGilvray 1982.

¹⁴ Moore has speculated that about 6000 were killed in the 1971 insurrection and about 40,000 during the second uprising (1993:593).

¹⁵ The Sri Lankan voter base comprises of a large percentage of rural population. Rural population is estimated to be at 84.9% (World Bank 2011).

¹⁶ In this research, the definition of Right and right-wing is adapted and modified from Betz 1994: 4.

¹⁷ It is often noted that, before Gramsci, the idea of hegemony was reflected in the works of Coerce and Marx. However, the terminology they used differs from Gramsci. Coerce and Marx used the term leadership, but with similar elements that Gramsci encapsulated in his term hegemony.

¹⁸ Almond found it useful for comparative purposes.

¹⁹ Sunday Times (English newspaper owned by Wijaya Newspapers Ltd, a publishing house of anti-governement stand), Ravaya (a Sinhala newspaper with a periodic anti-government tone) Sunday Observer (English newspapaer with a pro-governement stand), Dinamina (Sinhala newspaper, owned by government corporation called Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd, also known as Lakehouse newspaper) Divaina (Sinhala Newspaper owned by Upali Newspapers. Upali Newspaper Ltd. is owned by the family of opposition leader, Ranil Wiskramasinghe of UNP).

²⁰ In the past elections for the local governments and provincial councils were held on the same day. This practice has been changed recently. The elections are often conducted in piece meal manner surrounding major political events that are considered beneficial for the ruling party in state office.

2

Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism: Its trajectories of transformation and functions in politics of state building

Nationalism is not a thing, even an abstract thing, but a process, an implement...one does not take a position for or against a hammer, or a can opener, or any other implement. When used for murder, the hammer is no doubt a weapon, when used for building a house, it is constructive tool. Nationalism considered as the vindication of a particular culture is morally neutral; considered as a movement against national oppression, it has positive moral content: considered as the vehicle of aggression, it is morally indefensible (Horace B. Davis quoted in Chatterjee 1986:19).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss how Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism came to be conceived as a conscious and concrete consent building process and became an integral element towards alliance building by the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century. Further, this chapter will elaborate how Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism has been used then and in contemporary politics as one of the main means to pursue hegemony by the Sinhalese political elites. Lastly, this chapter will explore the numerous tensions the hegemony building attempted through Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and state building has created and how the hegemony pursued through Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism has created tensions on democratic state building in Sri Lanka.

2.2 Nationalisms and ethnic interpretations

Most literature on the history of nationalism in Sri Lanka directs the reader to the inter-ethnic nature of this phenomenon. While acknowledging its importance, however, this thesis raises the inadequacy of the dominant inter-ethnic framework applied for understanding nationalism. Especially within the focus of this thesis that explores hegemony building and state building, an explanation on class relations that precluded ethnic relations is vital. By closely examining the intra-ethnic relations among the Sinhalese majority, this study presents the nexus and tensions between hegemony building and state building. In light of the above, there is a need to revisit and re-problematise the question of nationalism as an important hegemony building process that was used for state building by the Sinhalese political elites with the participation of their main subordinate group: the Sinhalese majority. Such an analysis will enable to provide insights into and re-assess the level of influence that hegemony building has had in the democratic state building project in Sri Lanka.

The genesis of nationalism is roughly traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century with the emergence of a Sinhala 'consciousness' (i.e. becoming aware that Sinhalese are a distinct group of people) (Jayawardena 1987:2). This notion of collective ethnic identity was transformed during the late British colonial period into Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism; in its early form, the term 'religious nationalism'¹ was widely used to describe certain politically significant events that took place in Sri Lanka prior to the country's independence. This phase of history is also commonly described as a period of anti-Western nationalism or 'first generation nationalism'.² Post

independence, a more rigid form of ethnic identity formation became an important element of nationalism (Wickramasinghe 2006:45). The galvanising of identities into this rigid manner was a result of systematic categorisation procedures followed by the British colonial rule on the colonial subjects. The numerous categories of identity such as castes, races or ethnic groups were attempts to ‘describe something that had practical and conceptual coherence both for outsiders and observers’ (Wickramasinghe 2006). The various entitlements and the rights these various identities were granted made them instrumental and political (Wickramasinghe 2006). Some studies also stress that the formation of a collective ‘Sinhala consciousness’ by various local leaders towards the end of the nineteenth century subsequently resulted in the denial of the multi-ethnic character of Sri Lankan society. This, they argue, became a major point of tension among the Sinhalese and the Tamils (Jayawardena 1987:2).

On the other hand, as Nesiah suggests conditions for the emergence of ethnic-based consciousness among the Tamil population did not exist until much later in time. He notes that caste and other fragmentations among the Tamils were more important factors that hindered the development of an ethnic consciousness in this period (2001:12). As many respondents to this research shared, the emergence of Tamil nationalism in national popular politics in the early 1900s was a reaction and a response to rising Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and this reaction-based discourse is framed within the grievances thesis.³ However, a quick glance over popular discourses on Sinhala-Buddhist and Tamil nationalisms suggests that both having equally similar historical claims, grievances and competing claims of their real and perceived victimised positions. The entangling on these grievances-based nationalisms, particularly illuminated in political discourse, has successfully directed attention away from the hegemonic functions they fulfill for the political elites.

Following Sri Lanka’s independence in 1948, the mainstream political and intellectual discourse on nationalism began to be dominated by the subject of ‘ethnic’ nationalism, in which Sinhala and Tamil nationalism came to be often pitted against each other. This application is quite common and conforms to the overall trends in ethno-nationalist literature written around the world since the 1980s, in which ethnicity has been used as the main point of departure. Overall, the literature on ethno-nationalism is compartmentalised into four overarching categories: primordialist (historical and biological), constructivist (sociological), instrumentalist (elite and rational choice) and institutionalist (De Votta 2005:145). Since the early 1980s, the term ‘ethno-religious nationalism’ has become popular in the local academic vocabulary (Hettige 2000:21). For Hass ‘ethno-nationalism is best perceived in terms of collective interests of creating (or preserving) the optimal conditions for the existence of a group and maintenance of its identity’ (2000:27). In Sri Lanka, however, it is not only the existence and maintenance of group identity that was pursued, but the manipulation of ethnic sentiments by the political elites.

Since the early 1980s, ethno-nationalism has been linked directly to inter-ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups. Kapferer observes that nationalist forces of this era involved processes of personal and collective reaffirmation and rebirth; processes undoubtedly that influence the selections of historical myths of history, which are all about transformation, reassertion and rebirth that eventually become the reality (1988:xxi). He says ‘...the powers and dangers of representation in nationalist discourse in which the myths made into reflections of reality were also invested with a force for the remaking of the reality’ (Kapferer 1988). Inventing the past is an important strategy that facilitates the hegemony building process. As pointed out by Gramsci, hegemony does not always have to build on actual events; it can be built on discourses that could bring a certain experience closer to life. Therefore looking from the vantage point of hegemony building, through myth making and enacting a past whether it was real or imagined, Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism can be seen as a strategic act pursued by the dominant elites.

The period from 1983 was characterised by the onset of an 'inter-ethnic political conflict' between the majority-run Sinhalese state and the indigenous Tamils, which subsequently led to the civil war. In the fiercely competitive Sinhalese electoral political arena, the mainstream discourse of ethnic nationalisms became more susceptible to extreme political manipulations. This was not new to the island's high politics; in the late 1920s, the debates in the legislative council on the issue of universal franchise provide useful historical evidences in this regard (Jayawardena 1985:41). The benefits of using nationalist arguments and its potentials, as a trusted political capital and mobilisation tool that benefitted the political elites was clear. Such early developments in politics eventually led to open ethnic outbidding⁴ in political strategy (DeVotta 2005:143), which this research refers also as a right-wing character of elite politics. Over time, elites strengthened and propagated certain myths and constantly constructed and reproduced new ethno-nationalist realities as the political circumstances demanded. Rather than awakening a spirit of nationalism or finding an inclusive tone such as civic nationalism, elites attempted mass political mobilisation and early hegemonic alliance building by constructing and using of the ethnic nationalist discourse based on selective set of events and symbols, and the misinterpretations of history.

The overall body of literature on the discourses of nationalism pertaining to Sri Lanka presents multiple interpretations on the subject. This multiplicity is based on the origins, nature, agencies and functions of nationalism in politics and state building. Despite subtle variations, taken together, there seems to be a tendency at placing the ethnic fault line in the heart of these interpretations. By so doing, they have directly or indirectly endorsed the political discourse of ethnic nationalisms. At the same time, these discourses have also diverted the attention from the big picture of emerging state-in-society relations that was steadily falling meager in realising egalitarian values. Although there are some studies that captured various political uses of nationalism for hegemony building and state building, especially in contemporary times, revisiting these issues seems important. Because, all these processes and their contexts are dynamic, they could expose different propensities of elite politics and in the elite driven state building project over time.

The idea of using nationalism as a main hegemony building process that was found to be useful for short-term political gains for the political elites is uncontested in this thesis. However what needs to be brought back to light is the big picture of state building and the main political ideological direction in national politics this scenario presents. This research identifies the growing tensions between hegemony building and state building and the continued deviation from democratic state building as important elements of the big picture. It is also important to note that the latter is marked by deepening inequalities in the society – horizontally and vertically – and the prosecution of the marginalised and the minorities. These inequalities between the ethnic groups and within ethnic groups, classes,⁵ gender⁶ and urban-rural⁷ suggests deeper implication on democratic state building in Sri Lanka. Although the ethnic nationalism seems to be the commonly suspected cause of such inequalities, the real roots of these inequalities lie along the non-ethnic factors. Further, these non-ethnic roots and the signs of vertical and horizontal inequalities can be traced back to the colonial times. The documentations carried out by Jayawardena on the labour movement from 1890s–1930s provide important evidences in this regard. Her work suggests there had been important periods when class-consciousness and class related grievances took precedence over ethnic and religious emotions albeit the chauvinist propaganda that was popular since 1880s (1985: iv). Despite the availability of such evidences, by narrowly focusing on ethnic factor, some literature and the political discourse developed in the post-colonial period have successfully reproduced the ethnic nationalist discourse and painted the image of the state as a hegemonic-ethnic state. Besides, these discourses have also brought inter-ethnic relations to the forefront of the analysis. This has led to meager appreciation of nationalism discourse and the nexus and tensions between hegemony building and state building and the issue of deepening inequalities (vertical and horizontal) in the society. Also by focusing on Sinhala-Buddhist domination over the minority ethnic groups and their cultures, some studies have overlooked examining

the processes of consent and common sense creation processes pursued by the political elites by using the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist discourse among the Sinhalese. For this research, for an adequate understanding of the nationalism debate, placing nationalism as a main hegemony building process used for state building seems useful. In order to do so, unpacking the functions of nationalism beyond the ethnic interpretations and seeing it in relation to the means of state building and political coalition building seems essential.

Against this backdrop, this research is of the view that with or without knowing, especially by illuminating the ethnic aspect of nationalism, some in the middle class intelligentsia in Sri Lanka has also played an active role in advancing the political elites' hegemony building. As Gramsci noted, the role of intellectuals in creating and shaping ideologies of the society and achieving hegemony is unprecedented. Gramsci identified them in two basic categories – organic and traditional. He assigns the role of counter hegemony building to the organic intellectuals who are of lower class origin. In the case of Sri Lanka, contrary to what Gramsci observed, the organic intellectuals have also aided the elites' hegemony building. Further, due to the phenomenon of ethnic over-determination and the relentless intrusion of the conflict into everyday sphere of life, the scholars on Sri Lanka have been suffering from analytical solipsism (Venugopal 2011: 69) and have encouraged discursive practices in the processes of constructing and legitimising the political discourse of ethnic nationalism. These tendencies indicate the need of reflection and the need for scholars to radically re-examine their social locations and ideas (Bastian 2001:32). This research suggests that the discursive practices of scholars are also a reflection of the deep culture⁸ of the middle-class intelligentsia is associated with. In this sense, by confining to the ethnic fault line for examining nationalism, the middle class intelligentsia consciously or unconsciously has chosen to expose one type of inequality in the society based on ethnic identities. This approach disregards the other bases of inequalities (i.e. class) and the large picture of imbalanced power relations created during the hegemonic alliance formation attempted by the political elites in the wider state-in-society relations. It is suspected that, choosing such a harmful direction by the middle class intelligentsia not only allows them to enjoy certain privileges and patronage offered by the political elite counterparts. As Gramsci noted, the confluence of various forces or overlapping of spheres between the political society (the political elites) and the civil society⁹ (intellectuals) in hegemony building processes satisfies narrow interests of both these groups. As found in the case of Sri Lanka, the relationship between the political elites and the intelligentsia indeed have contributed for reproducing each others' political and social power.

This one-dimensional approach to the study of nationalism could also be the result of the application of western classical theories on the subject matter, especially the body of literature that emphasises the subjective and idealist conception of the nation. This genre of theories assumes nation as a product of the mind and an abstraction that emerges from the collective imagination (Berberoglu 2000: 207). Contrary to Marxism, western classical scholarship urges to bring ethnic and cultural phenomenon to the forefront by overriding concrete social formations such as class. Unfortunately these elements that often create homogeneous mass cultural categories are extensively used in identity politics and to pit cultural groups against each other. As Kedourie's work on nationalism suggests, even in Europe, such generalisations and the desire for homogeneity has been a trend since the early modern era and when nationalism was invented in the nineteenth century, it came to be consolidated (1960:9).

Choosing the liberal theoretical approach by the middle-class intelligentsia is considered not as a mere coincidence. As some harsh critics point out, in the context of Sri Lanka, the endorsement of ethnic essentialism embedded in the liberal approaches in the nationalist discourse by the local middle class intelligentsia, (who are referred to as 'beautiful souls')¹⁰ are considered as middle men of a global project that is designed to bring certain benefits to its proponents (Bastian 2001:33). The very existence of this local middle class intelligentsia in the global context as a

transnational bourgeoisie, whose networks and lines of flights overlap closely with the movement of global capital and of the western hegemonic state building project could be a factor for mainstreaming ethnic homogeneity in the nationalist discourse (Bastian 2001). Instead of engaging with rigorous social science, these associations have encouraged to replace their memoirs based on their cultural ontology and *habitus* (Bastian 2001). In addition to the Gramscian theorisation of political and civil society that mutually reconstruct each other, the literature survey conducted of the intellectual community on Sri Lanka's nationalism inclined to support the observations made by the critics of the anti-global capital movement as well. Besides, the ready application of classical theories of nationalism by some scholars, which is often devoid of detailed discussions of other sources of power imbalances and inequalities in the society, is unavoidable. These omissions and errors committed, whether they are consciously or not, is a fact that influences the shaping of the discourses of nationalism, political practices and the image of the state. In the case of Sri Lanka, by applying the western classical theories, the majority in the academic community has entered into the hegemonic coalition with the political elites and become the intellectual counterpart to the hegemonic politico-intellectual state building project of the dominant right-wing forces in it.

The question that remains unanswered so far is how and why the majority in the society did accept this ethnic nationalism discourse and became an important ally of the hegemonic project that is perceived to be benefitting the political elites and their elite counterparts. There are number of ways this state of affairs can be conceptualised. Based on the idea of hegemony, the element of manipulation by the dominant class in making ethnic nationalism a reality in life and using it as a powerful force of mobilisation of consent are interesting points to be noted. Besides, sanctions and use of threat and coercion for not complying with the alliance building pursued by the political elites is another plausible explanation. Also, the utilitarian effect of nationalism in meeting the material, ideological and symbolic needs of the Sinhalese-Buddhists whose social position is being elevated to a position of privilege and entitlements vis-vis- the other minority ethnic communities could be another factor. As Gramsci indicated, the belief, acceptance and participation of the wider society in consolidating ethnic nationalism could be the result of an ideological bond established between the rulers and the ruled that gives natural legitimacy to the rulers. In the subsequent section of this chapter, through an analysis of the ideological and material factors underlying the genesis of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism this point will be elaborated.

Similar to the observations made on the academic community in the South Asian region (Nigam 2001:20), this research finds that the various nationalism discourses on Sri Lanka favouring certain assumptions and particular epistemological positions of the scholars propagating them. These instances not only expose the deep cultural biases of the intellectual community but also having contributed in making the overall nationalist debate modular. Therefore, they have failed to take into account the important twists and turns, the suppressed possibilities and the unresolved contradictions in the nationalist discourse (Nigam 2001). As a result, by overlooking the developments pertaining to the formation of hegemonic processes in the wider state-in-society relations, the intellectual community has become important allies to these actors in these hegemonic processes, and has prevented themselves from forming a counter-hegemonic force to challenge and act against the hegemonic project pursued by the political elites.

Based on the observations made on the previous scholarly discourses and their shortcomings, this chapter attempt to build on the existing body of literature and re-problematise the question of nationalism in Sri Lanka within the framework of hegemony building and state building. By unpacking the 'twists and turns' Nigam pointed out in the nationalism debates, the following sections will focus on the dynamics in the wider state-in-society relations that has given rise to nationalism as an important hegemony building strategy that was used for state building by the Sinhalese political elites. In this regard, especially, by highlighting the class origins of nationalism as

the main point of departure of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism that provided initial impetus to the hegemony building between Sinhalese elites and the majority Sinhalese, the following section wishes to show the importance of class as a useful point of departure for understanding the contemporary ethno-nationalist discourse.

2.3 Class origins of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism

The main argument in this section is that the birth of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology is a class-based project and it was originally conceived as a calculated political project of the local bourgeois class in the colonial Sri Lanka. In the backdrop of the theory of hegemony that assigns an important role for class in hegemony building processes, this research finds the importance of illuminating the role of class in the nineteenth and early twentieth century that allowed one social class to manipulate the societal value system to create a particular world view through the ideology of nationalism that enabled them to legitimise and justify the (bourgeois) domination over other social classes. The early hegemony building between the Sinhalese elites and the Sinhalese masses can be best captured by exploring the class interests pursued by elites in the name of nationalism. This research also suggests that the contemporary manifestation of nationalism in the form of ethnic nationalism is an extension of this political project initially embarked by the local petty-bourgeois class during the colonial period, which passed through various intended and unintended trajectories. This bourgeois-led political project over-stressed the inter-ethnic nature of nationalism and downplayed the dynamics of power relations in the wider society and pursued undeclared hegemonic goals. This is especially notable in the area of class relations (Jayawardena 1985:36) and initial stages of hegemonic alliance formation around class relations. Without examining the class origins of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, no analysis of the discourses on nationalism and the functions of Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism as hegemony building is complete. This is especially relevant for unpacking the phenomenon of hegemonic state building and to unravel the tension between hegemony building and democratic state building. The current image painted of the state as an ethnic state has successfully concealed the important tensions between post-colonial democratic state building and hegemony building. Further it also has effectively concealed the emergence of right-wing politics and the domination of right-wing elite forces that influenced the paths of state building.

An important linkage has been established between the origins of nineteenth century nationalist ideology and the material base of the local bourgeoisie in the British colonial period (1815–1948). This linkage can be better explained by examining the economic base and the corresponding class interests of the bourgeoisie that became more explicit during the British colonial period. The British colonial period denotes occurrence of number of ruptures and fissures in the local power dynamics. During this period, the social, cultural and economic relations, and the traditional structure and dynamics of power relations between numerous local communities were transformed. During this time the local bourgeoisie embarked on a primitive form of ‘passive revolution’.¹¹ Against this backdrop, Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism developed, based on the threats posed by the colonial attempts to transform the feudal economic structure into a capitalist economic system that shattered the privileged economic and social positions of the local bourgeoisie¹² (Pieris 2006:156). In other words, the British colonial intervention in Sri Lanka upset the economic base, the main source of power of the local bourgeoisie. For the British, in order to realise their colonial capitalist interests, dismantling the pre-colonial feudal economic social structures were important. During this process, the economic base of the bourgeois and the social privileges they derived from the traditional feudal economic structure, and the traditional social order tied to it, was shaken. These structural changes began a phase of reordering of the economy and the society previously based on a complex system of service tenures and operated within a framework of feudalistic societal relations (Pieris 2006:3). To put it simply, these changes af-

affected the established pre-colonial exploitative feudal economic structure and traditional patterns of ownership of the means of production and the social relations of production¹³ that were based on the relations of domination and subordination of various classes that was arranged in a hierarchical order. Inevitably, these changes added new dynamics to the existing order and the dynamics of power in the society. Given these emerging circumstances, there is enough reason to suggest that the bourgeois struggling to preserve the traditional social-economic order or making efforts to derive benefits from the new order. None of these could happen without a convincing political strategy and alliance formation with the local community. As found in this research, the threatened economic situation and the prevailing economic relations that naturally justified the traditional relations of domination and subordination between the upper classes and the lower classes paved the way for inventing a coherent nationalist ideology, and a set of political practices and discourses. The political strategy the economically well-to-do upper classes sought entailed mobilisation and alliance building with the lower class masses through manipulative and coercive strategies that allowed the former to maintain the dominance of the bourgeois class under changing economic-political and social conditions.

The main strategy that the bourgeois class pursued was initially based on the new colonial capitalist economic structure and the unified administrative structure supported by the British. These two changes provided the traditional local bourgeoisie ample space and opportunity to launch various attacks against British rule. These anti-colonial attacks were strategically crafted to mobilise the local communities of all social backgrounds. As observed, these anti-colonial attacks took a number of forms, i.e., rebellions, conspiracies and armed struggles, and were mostly directed against the new taxes imposed by the colonial rulers (Jayawardena 2010:63, 147). These revolts were seen as symptomatic of a period of transition (2010:147). These incidents show that the colonial changes that touched the economic and political base life of the economic elites (bourgeoisie) sparked powerful reactions among them and that were joined by the rest of the population under the sphere of influence of the former.

In order to mobilise the masses, a parallel set of mobilisation processes and an appeal targeting the lower class masses was required. These could be formed either on the real ontological conditions of the poor masses or perceived or imagined conditions. The direction opted by the local bourgeoisie entailed highlighting the cultural differences between local inhabitants and the foreign colonisers. In literature, this phase of initial formation of the nationalist thought is identified as the first generation nationalism. Highlighting of the immorality of the westerners and the need to preserve the local culture from outside influence was emphasised. When formulating these anti-colonial mobilisation strategies, the differences between the local bourgeoisie and the lower classes were kept outside the horizon of nationalist politics. By implanting and kindling cultural and ideological sentiments, the local bourgeoisie was able to gather the support of the lower classes, and also preserve and legitimise their domination and privilege. Considering the pattern of traditional land holdings present at this time of transformation, Moore supports the argument by stating that the various changes brought by the British rule affected the economically dominant local bourgeoisie the most (Moore 1989:180). What is interesting to note about the coalition building between the lower classes and the economic elites of this period was the largely unquestioned support rendered by the lower classes to the bourgeois upper class. In Gramscian terms, this can be interpreted as a primitive stage of the development of the 'national popular'.¹⁴ There are several conditions that facilitated this development, of particular significance was that the majority population were peasants, readily influenced by the ideologies of the local chiefs, landlords and monks. This ideological manipulation came with the promise of restoring the pre-colonial status quo (Jayawardena 2010:45). As Gramsci stated, this also corresponds with the existence of the precondition of desire for common change by both classes. As accurately summed up by another scholar:

the peasants yearned for the old society, the only one they knew and understood and desired to return to their norm of life. And although it may not have been a very happy one, they readily accepted traditional society with its manifold defects as part of man's fate, in contrast to foreign rule and the new form of society... which brought unfamiliar distractions but no compensating advantages' (De Silva quoted in Jayawardena 2010:45).

When taking the structural transformations, changes and the struggles experienced by local communities during the British colonial period into account, it is plausible to suggest that the first seeds of anti-western nationalism were a result of the threatened economic interests and the traditional sources of social power of the local upper classes. Their economic, social and political frustrations (a degrading of their position as subordinates to the imposed colonial power hierarchy in the island) were translated into a language of cultural nationalism.¹⁵ This interpretation of the birth of cultural nationalism (with an anti-western manifestation) signals the emerging class-consciousness and the class-for-itself of the local bourgeoisie class. This class awakening was eventually translated into the language of an all-encompassing 'nationalist interest'. By providing the ideological, cultural, moral, economic and intellectual leadership for the staged struggle of the lower classes for restoring ancient glory, the local bourgeoisie began to influence the conscious of the peasant masses and successfully forged a politically important alliance with them. Needless to point to the fact that these strategies largely helped defend the narrow economic interests of the bourgeoisie in a staged expression of anti-colonial struggle.

The interesting question that remains to be answered in this regard is why did not before the British colonial intervention, did the oppressed and exploited classes not revolt against their local exploiters in the pre-colonial period? How and why only during western colonial rule, the lower classes rendered their subordination to the anti-colonial nationalist struggle led by their local oppressors? One reason could be due to the ways in which the pre-colonial societies were governed under a scattered layer of local chiefs that made mass mobilisation not possible and therefore making the conditions difficult for formulation of 'national popular'. Also perhaps, as Dewasiri has argued, the reason can be found in the policy of the previous colonial rulers, especially the Dutch, who maintained the traditional power hierarchies of the pre-colonial period that strengthened the privileges and economic power of the local chiefs (Dewasiri 2008: 211).

Based on these accounts on the nature of pre-colonial society and the symbolic relationships painted about a 'past' image of the society, it is not too difficult to grasp the creation and manipulation of the common desire for change of the lower classes by the economic elites for their own interests. The cultural importance given to the peasantry in a new circumstance must have appealed to them as well. If not either or neither of all the above, as Gramsci implied, rendering consent to the established order based on the deeply held belief that the rulers are indeed legitimate can possibly explain the situation (Lears 1985:569). Against this context, this chapter suggests rationalisation of the ontology¹⁶ of the local rural masses by the upper classes and developing this into a coherent ideology based on the image of 'glorious past and the local culture' having been an important element of the bourgeois strategy to safeguard their economic interests. It is subject to this understanding that this research finds mobilising the rural peasant masses to defend the economic-political interests of the upper classes that provided the first impetus for nationalism. From the view point of the state-in-society model, elevating the image of the majority of the society and the state (not in the sense of contemporary nation-state) by linking their identity with the discourse of glorious past, the bourgeoisie invented a set of practices in politics that laid the foundation for the ethnic nationalist discourse and elites' hegemony building.

2.3.1 Anti-Colonial Nationalism: bourgeois leadership

The following section further explores the class¹⁷ basis of the birth of cultural nationalism in the nineteenth century that has important bearings on understanding the hegemony building through

history and contemporary times. Application of class as the point of departure for examining Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism may not attract many cheers. In this regard, Robert's work on nationalism offers a possible contending approach to the approach taken on nationalism in this chapter. Robert's analysis is mainly guided by the elite theory in politics (1977: 381–406). This is not a surprising stand from a scholar of liberal theoretical affluence. Besides Robert's scholarly identity, for the purpose of the discussion of this chapter, the variant kinds of elites he identifies through a long and painstaking analysis to expose their multiple layers of identities (primordial and ascriptive)¹⁸ can be easily understood by using a simple class schema that illuminate the economic background. By choosing to apply class or elite theory depends on the nature of the research questions one poses. It is quite obvious, from the beginning to the end, Roberts is keen on using the concept of elites, who has a different purpose in mind than in this research.¹⁹ According to various contending approaches that can be taken to examine nationalism, neither Roberts nor the author completely rule out the relevance of application of class or elites as analytical concepts to investigate the various dynamics in the society of this period. For instance, in the same volume, when Roberts explains the origins of the temperance movement (which he argues as the main foundation of the Ceylonese nationalist movement), he labours enough to present the economic aspects underlying the British's excise policy and how this new act threatened the economic bases of the local capitalists that influenced sparking stern reactions from them against the excise policy (1977:383). By illuminating the economic aspect, he implies the threatened economic interests, (which this research would describe by using the term class interests), was articulated and communicated through a cultural lens with rest of the local population. Further he also points to the fact that ...it was those who lost financially had been the most vociferous critics of the government policy (1977: 383). Given the strengths, weaknesses and the focuses of the alternative approaches adopted by Robert and others, this research suggests that class and class interests were important factors what gave rise to Ceylonese nationalism. To support the class approach to nationalism, works of Jayawardena could be the best ally (2007). Meanwhile, this research also finds that for understanding the plethora of dynamics in elite politics of this period, sometimes a synthesis between class and elite analogies are helpful. This is a point qualified and emphasised by Obeysekera in a lecture given on Buddhism, nationalism and cultural identity (2002) that was also used in Robert's earlier works (Robert 1974).

Making the case of relevance of class for examining the birth of nationalism, the following section of this chapter examines the class base of the early leadership of the anti-colonial nationalist movement and to claim the importance of the linkage between the political engagement of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie in constructing the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology and the underlying class interests they pursued under the banner of nationalism. An example will be drawn by examining the background of the country's first and main architect of cultural and Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933).

Dharmapala developed his nationalist ideological project by drawing inspiration from his father, a furniture dealer and a member of the traditional local petty bourgeoisie. Dharmapala's father started his life as a clerk and believed in a rigid work ethos, the development of the country, reform of institutions, and the application of science to modernise the economy. Dharmapala also drew inspiration from the Calvinist ethos of self-discipline to transform Buddhism into an urban middle-class religion, a merchant ideology and a field of practice (Obeysekera quoted in Uyangoda 2007:v). He also seemed to have believed in creating two seemingly contradictory projects: creating an industrialised society based on the development of trade whilst at the same time maintaining the virtues of traditional society and its oppressive form of class and caste structures (including the subordination of women) (Jayawardena 1985:9). In the process of reinventing Buddhism mainly aimed at economic development and restoring Buddhist morality and righteousness, the urban Sinhalese learned significant lessons from Protestant Christianity (Seneviratne 1999:49). Dharmapala's nationalist ideology, based on Buddhism and peasant-centric glorious

past that was presented as a safeguard of country's local cultures and traditions from the Western colonial rulers, largely served the narrow interests of the bourgeoisie. In this research the emphasis placed by the bourgeoisie on safeguarding the traditions and pre-colonial societal order – in which caste, class and gender discriminations were firmly institutionalised – appears a strategy to retain the privileges enjoyed by the upper classes by hiding the forms of oppressions and exploitation under the umbrella of 'local culture'. As Chatterjee has keenly observed, these types of contradictions are frequent occurrences in 'eastern types of nationalism'(Chatterjee 1986:51). Eastern types of nationalism, simultaneously attempt to imitate and to be hostile to the alien models responsible for producing such contradictions (Chatterjee 1986:51).²⁰ Taking the above into account, this research shows that Dharmapala's anti-colonial western nationalist project was, on one hand, an attempt to secure and advance the narrow interests of the local bourgeoisie by a member of that class without losing the privileges that this class enjoyed in the traditional social and economic order. Somewhat contrary to my view, Seneviratne's account on New Buddhism in Sri Lanka seems to portray Dharmapala's efforts as genuine and they were aimed at reviving social and religious morality of the Buddhist society and to end poverty and stupidity of the Sinhalese (1999:35). This research is less convinced of Seneviratne's argument. This is evident from some of Dharmapala's public speeches²¹ that advocate violence and openly looking down upon other communities (who happen to be successful in trade), which does not resonate with the teachings of Buddha or corresponds with the characteristics of a Buddhist. An excerpt from one of Dharmapala's public speeches makes this point clear:

Aliens are taking away the wealth of the country and the sons of the soil where they to go? The immigrants who came here have other places to go to; the Sinhalese has no place to go to. It is just that the sons of the soil should suffer while alien enjoys... the ignorant helpless Sinhalese villagers is made a victim by the alien sharper who robs his ancestral land (Guruge quoted in Jayawardena 1985:12–13).

In another occasion, he says, '...from the day that the white man set foot on this soil, the arts and the sciences of the Aryan customs of the Sinhalese have gradually disappeared and today the Sinhalese have to kiss the feet of the dastardly Tamils...' (Quoted in Dharmadasa 1993:138).

In Dharmapala's brand of anti-colonial cultural nationalism, choosing Buddhism as its primary ingredient, particularly how the protestant form of Buddhism is linked to the class interests of the proponents of nationalism is interesting. The puritan values of discipline, hard work, punctuality and so forth preached by Dharmapala has been already accepted by the rising middle classes of this period (Seneviratne 1999:34), which clearly marks the linkage between the economic interests tied to the class. This is one reason as to why Dharmapala's economic mission was not embraced or became less popular among the majority of Sinhalese of lower class background living in the rural areas (Seneviratne 1999:57). Therefore it is not surprising why Dharmapala's economic mission did not reach its pinnacle as much his ideological mission among the lower classes. As Strinati suggests for accepting the leadership of the dominant classes by the subordinated classes of lower class origins, ideas, values and reasons of their own should present (Strinati 1995: 166). In the case of Sri Lanka all these conditions were present. However what is remarkable to note here is that how Dharmapala was on one hand able to mobilise the ideological sentiments of the lower classes in the rural areas through the nationalist project and rationalize it to this class and on the other hand gather support of urban middle classes through his economic project simultaneously.

Contrary to what Seneviratne implies, admirers and the followers of Dharmapala believe he has genuine interests in contributing to the moral and economic development of the Sinhalese, whom Dharmapala thought as losing the minds under the western influence. In this regard, this chapter would like to point out to the fact that, by choosing Buddhism and the Sangha²² as the agent of cultural nationalism Dharmapala contributed to the opposite, i.e., for the preservation of the economic dominance and the class interests of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie,

while successfully mobilising the lower class rural masses as well. In other words, a perfect unison of economically, politically and socially powerful upper classes embarking together on a mission of overcoming the threat of losing their status and privileges by making alliances with the least privileged was achieved. In this sense, the image of the ideal local culture of the past that Dharmapala painted through the idea of a 'righteous culture' was built on the terms of prevailed culture of subordination of the lower classes, lower castes and women to the authority of the local chiefs, upper classes, upper castes and patriarchy (Jayawardena 1985:9). This message is also clear in Dharmapala's eight-point proposal²³ aimed at rural development. In these proposals, the intentions of preserving the existing social hierarchies, legitimising a role of the *Sangha* and consolidating the position of rural petty bourgeoisie in all aspects of rural life is obvious (Seneviratne 1999: 57–8). Although at this early stage of the development of the nationalist thought there are enough evidences to suggest looming of right-wing culture in colonial politics, yet, it was still too early to predict how far the right-wing political culture will be pursued for right-wing hegemony in the future²⁴.

Dharmapala's brand of nationalism began with a focus on the Sinhalese, whom he referred to as the descendants of the pure Aryan race (Jayawardena 1985:9; Tambiah 1992:131). At a later stage he directly included the Buddhists in to this project. But, why Buddhism? Dharmapala, like his father, had received his education at a Christian missionary school. Despite his exposure to Christian theology, over years, he became increasingly preoccupied with Buddhism. In his anti-western nationalist ideology and the brand of cultural nationalism, Dharmapala took an explicitly radical theological position based on Buddhism. Taking such a position was a strategic decision of Dharmapala to address the ruptures and fissures created by the rapid spread of Western Christianity and to counter the rapid spread of western customs and lifestyles introduced in the island by the colonial rule. By this time, many in the colonial society felt these transformations therefore it was easy to mobilise them in favour of his project. These changes were not confined to the ideological or private sphere of life of the colonial society. They left a marked influence in the traditional agro-based feudal economic structure and the old forms of exploitative social and economic relations between local economic elites and their subjects. It is in this context, as Chatterjee rightly observes about the eastern-style of nationalism, that the case of Sri Lanka best fits in. The local bourgeoisie made a decisive effort to re-equip the nation culturally or transform it without losing 'the distinct identity' it held from the past (1986:2). This research observes, for the regeneration of culture and to maintain its distinctiveness, Dharmapala on the one hand reinforced the cultural identity of the colonial society and at the same time imitated the colonial Christian-inspired economic models and became hostile to these same models. This imitation and hostility could be the result of attempts made by the bourgeoisie to reap the benefits by following the colonial models in the economy and at the same time maintain the previously largely unquestioned traditional power hierarchies based on a feudal economic structure. Further, bringing Buddhism to the forefront of this struggle undoubtedly enabled the bourgeoisie to demonstrate their cultural distinctiveness vis-à-vis the colonial rulers and at the same time to counter-balance and undermine the emerging new local economic forces within the Sinhalese community that followed a western lifestyle and Christianity under the expanding colonial economic structure. Further, by reinforcing cultural identity Dharmapala could successfully mobilise the lower class masses too. However, initially, more than from the poverty stricken rural poor, Dharmapala received endorsement for his revivalist project from the well-to-do western-educated class and the urban elites, whose economic interests were at stake (Seneviratne 1999:49). The economic and cultural association between the emerging local comprador classes²⁵ and the colonial rulers was used as a criterion to exclude these segments from the nationalist project or to force them to join it.

Taking a radical theological position based on Buddhism was a calculated position to counter the emerging local Anglo-Saxon colonial capitalist class and its influence in transforming the tra-

ditional socioeconomic and political hierarchies in the island (Obeysekara quoted in Uyangoda 2007:v). By giving primacy to Buddhism, unsurprisingly, he obtained the support from the Sangha and the Buddhist laity. The clear role assigned to the Sangha in Dharmapala's revivalist project and the anti-colonial struggle aggrandised their role. This was also extended to the other types of indigenous leaders. Both the bourgeoisie and the local indigenous rural petty bourgeois leadership accepted the Sangha as the ideal choice and the mediating force between them and the lower class masses in the colonial society (Seneviratne 2007:89). In addition, in the new nationalist ideology assigning Sangha the role of the caretaker of the people opened the flood gates for hostile relations. This development inspired the monks to think of themselves as empowered political activists and eventually as entrepreneurs too (Seneviratne 2007:27). Since in classical Theravada politics, the role of the Sangha as an inter-class mediator is not out of the norm, in Sri Lanka they developed an institutional form of relationship between themselves and society, and played an active role as facilitators in transforming the social order (De Silva Wijeratne: 2006). For this reason, in a number of studies, the Sangha is identified as an important social entity and agent of change (Obeysekara 1979:288). In Sri Lanka, the archeological discoveries from the pre-colonial period support the existence of such an institutionalised role of the Sangha and reveal the degree of power they had in the traditional social order and their dominant status in the island's state of affairs (Warnapala 1993:217, Kiribamuna 1999:205).

Further, the various accounts of pre-colonial social hierarchy make special reference to the existence of a strong patronage relationship between the members of *Sangha* especially those who reside in urban areas and the urban Buddhist laity of the upper classes. For instance, the material wellbeing of the *Sangha* was dependent on state patronage and the patronage offered by the local bourgeoisie and petty bourgeois class (Wickramaratne 1995:192, 216). During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the upper class laity of elite roots served as the chief alms contributors (*Dayakas*) for this section of the *Sangha*. Together, these two privileged groups who became interdependent on each other played an important role in the everyday life of the lower class laity. Owing to this, under Dharmapala's nationalist project, formation of a strategic partnership between these social forces is unsurprising. This confluence of two powerful forces gathered economic, social, intellectual, cultural and moral dominance over the rest of society. This situation is in contrast to the role pursued by the monks of Vinayankalara School. The monks of this school continued to reside in the villages and engaged in village development work, with a selfless attitude (Seneviratne 1999:57). Over time, besides the cultural and moral leadership the former alliance claimed, the economic/material interests it pursued under the rhetoric of nationalism promoted a powerful hegemonic block, transforming the *Sangha* from an institution of Buddhist moral community into a social status of agrarian landlords (Gunawardena in Uyangoda 2007:v). The elaborate landholdings, an extensive bureaucracy to administer the land and peasantry, and the forging of close links with the ruling families and sub-ruling strata highlighted the key dimensions of the aspect of monastic landlordism of the past that came to be reinvented and endorsed in the symbiotic relationships reinforced under the nineteenth century nationalist project. In return for the patronage they received from the upper echelon of the laity, the *Sangha* was obliged to render its services to the former and help secure the political authority, state/political power and broker the religious and secular affairs of the lower-class masses in favour of the rule of the former.²⁶ With the spread of Christianity, the privileges enjoyed by both the *Sangha* and the traditional local bourgeois class were equally threatened (Gunasinghe 1996:237). In this circumstance, alliance making between the two for mutual gains and the open support for Dharmapala's mission that endorsed certain privileges and benefits is obvious.

Applying the Gramsci's ideas on hegemony and the conditions he pointed out as requirements for hegemony formation, this early phase of alliance building between various forces of upper, middle and lower class background around cultural revivalism not only entailed elements of manipulation, consent creation and consensus building but it also entailed the use of subtle coercive

strategies or threat of use of coercion for non-compliance. After considering the long-term implications for not joining Dharmapala's project, the urban westernised local elites and the comprador class forced themselves to join Dharmapala's project. It might have been obvious to these classes that under the changing state-in-society relations set in motion by colonialism and Dharmapala's counter project of cultural revivalism, they ran the most risk of losing many of the economic privileges they enjoyed in the past. In the long run, in order to secure and maximise their economic and social benefits, the new comprador class opted to join the nationalist bandwagon. Under the prevailing political conditions, changing the direction of loyalty might have been the most logical and strategic option available for them.

Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism built on these alliances became romanticised in colonial and post-colonial politics. More than anything else, the capacity it had in mobilising the lower-class masses turned it into a trusted tool in political coalition and hegemonic alliance building. Further, in the post-colonial period, Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism served as a tool of national political mobilisation and a vehicle of transforming the colonial bourgeois and petty bourgeois class into post-colonial national political elites. The moral essence injected by Dharmapala made the nationalist project sacred. Depending on the prevailing circumstances, it emphasised different elements, protecting and advancing the narrow interests of those who occupy positions of political power. Eventually for those who wish to make an impression in the national political sphere and for those who have higher ambitions of winning political office, embracing, protecting and advancing this project became essential. In most instances, the above was done in rhetoric than for real.

In the phase of reinvention and reproduction of nationalism by Dharmapala which set the direction of its consolidation in the subsequent decades, ethnicity gained prominence over religion. In Dharmapala's ideology, ethnicity was a secondary element. Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, increasing resource exploitation by the British, the continued expansion of foreign trade that was often monopolised by non-local trading groups (immigrant communities) and a false-fear aroused by the national leaders of a South Indian invasion influenced the gradual strengthening of the ethnic factor (Sinhala) in the nationalist discourse (Dharmadasa 1992:2; Uyangoda 2007:4). The emphasis laid on ethnicity in the nationalist discourse under the changing socioeconomic circumstances of this period was a strategy devised by the right-wing faction in the local bourgeoisie within the nationalist movement, whose economic interests were threatened by the foreign trading groups (mostly Indian and Muslim), and emerging economic and political power of Sinhala-Christian forces.

However, most conventional accounts of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism are silent on the underlying narrow class-based interests pursued by the upper classes during the Dharmapala period. Therefore the transition of the nationalism discourse from Buddhism to ethnicity left considerable ambiguities. Besides, explanations offered on the eventual combination of religion and ethnicity remains vague too. Also, since the beginning of the civil war in 1983, most debates have been trapped in the political discourse of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism that often tend to operate at super structural level, and have fallen short in illuminating the economic interests pursued by the elites and upper classes. These tendencies are equally well observed in informal conversations amongst the Sinhalese from the south of the country (where the majority Sinhalese live). Furthermore, currently there is hardly any attempt to re-problematise nationalism or develop fresh interpretations capable of exposing the hidden political-economic interests pursued by the political elites. Apart from the common sensitising effect of nationalist discourse due to its hegemonic influence, coercion and threat of use of coercion by the political elites on those who attempt to embark on such a project are identified as possible reasons for the above situation. Robert's work (1982) on caste in Sri Lanka tackles these aspects to an extent, yet, due to the application of a caste approach, class underpinnings and the economic interests of the cultural and economic

elites in the early nationalist project are not fully explored. From a distant angle, if followed David Scott's critical review of the conceptual terrains used to tell the story of transformation of Buddhism (as a response to his main opponent Malalgoda) during colonial times, possibility of arriving at a different interpretation of nationalism by illuminating the class interests was indicated (1996:7).

The omissions and the errors committed in narrating the nationalist history have depicted the birth and functions of nationalist ideology as a super structural affair and as the outcome of the struggle between the British colonial rulers and the local people is continued (Wickramaratne 1995:xii). In this narration, the creation of an homogeneous category of 'local people' conveniently overlooked other politically significant groupings, relationships of domination-subordination, hegemony building, most importantly class relations, and the various levels of unequal relations in the society is remarkable. This reductionist understanding seems to have acted as *a priori condition* in the political discourse of nationalism that rules out the importance and the relevance of other analytical categories, ie. class to (re)interpret nationalism. By claiming the intellectual and moral authority in the interpretation of local history, some circles closely linked to the political elites in the upper class discursive communities have successfully influenced the minds of the majority of Sinhalese, leaving no space for the emergence of alternative interpretations or critical questioning of the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist discourse as a hegemonic project. As a result, it makes the nationalist discourse sacred and an affair not to be questioned. During the interviews carried out for this research, which happened to coincide with the last phase of the recently ended civil war (May 2009), Sinhalese expressed a renewed sense of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, justified its need of existence and articulated its existence as common sensical (Field interviews R.1, 16 and 18).

As shown thus far, more than religion or ethnicity, class has been the founding principal of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. Michael Mann's observations on ethnic nationalism (2005) suggests that by elevating ethnicity, the class origins of nationalism or class as an important preliminary point of departure for analysis of nationalism came to be often ignored, therefore the class roots of initial hegemony formation was ignored too. Confining the nationalist debate to the symbolic/super structural levels, pursuit of narrow class interests by the bourgeois in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ceylon and the power interest of the political elites in the post-colonial period is being concealed. In other words, this suggest a situation where the dominant political discourse endorsed by some in the academia on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in politics²⁷ was narrated in such a way and used as a means to ensure gains for a few. One of the seemingly positive gains it achieved was bringing the vertically divided classes, castes and regional communities in the Sinhalese community together to mobilising them against colonial rule. During this process, the unequal and exploitative power relations between the foreign rule and the locals were exposed. On the flip side of this process, similar kinds of power dynamics among the local community and processes of manipulation for political and economic gains came to be hidden. Related to this development, this chapter argues that Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism was also used to paint a picture of a 'seemingly *united* local people against the British rule'. Most strikingly, despite its Sinhala-Buddhist character, initially the support extended by the Tamils for this project is emphasised too (Nesiah 2001:9). Given this background, it is correct to suggest that through the use of nationalism, the local bourgeoisies/upper classes of this period was able to pursue their ambitions of establishing cultural, ideological, intellectual and moral leadership over the lower classes of all communities and nurture exclusive forms of politics where the inequalities and exploitative relations between the locals and foreigners were highlighted. At the same time the nationalist project subdued the inequalities at vertical and horizontal levels and exploitative relations among the local population.

In the following section, a detailed account on how and why during various phases of development of state-in-society relations and state building in the post-colonial period, Sinhalese political elites continued to use Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a hegemonic alliance building process will be presented. Further, the influence of these tensions on democratic state building is presented too.

2.3.2 Marching towards independence: a search for new allies and new enemies

Contrary to the popular belief that the island's nationalist movement was instrumental in winning independence, many sources suggest that Sri Lanka's independence was not a direct outcome of the elite-led nationalist movement. Independence to Sri Lanka was more the British's decision to leave the Indian subcontinent (Nandi 2000: Chapter 8) and a byproduct of the massive Indian nationalist movement. Sri Lanka never had a vibrant or mass-scale nationalist movement (Nandi 2000). Many who openly support the military crackdown of the LTTE, especially the respondents of JVP and JHU affluence, are of the opinion that the current phase of war is the real struggle for freedom and sovereignty in the island. This interpretation implies certain political forces in the Sinhalese society seeking to establish a renewed narrative and open a new era of the Dharmapala's nationalist ideology, where Sinhala-Buddhist domination and the image of the victorious Sinhala-Buddhist nation state is reproduced.

The 'nationalist movement' in Sri Lanka was a lethargic movement carried out under the leadership of local upper classes (Wilson 1975:7). Initially, this movement had two main components: the cultural revivalist movement (explained in an earlier section of this thesis) and the political reform movement. Opposed to the cultural revivalist movement spearheaded by the petty bourgeoisie and traditional bourgeoisie (Dharmapala and his successors), the political reform movement was largely spearheaded by the bourgeoisie (comprador). The eventual combination of these two movements and the creation of one unified nationalist movement was an important political venture of the bourgeois leaderships of these two movements. As Swaris argued, this merger was aimed at securing their narrow class-based interests and to secure legitimacy for their moral, intellectual and political leadership over the rest of the society (1973:32). Another possible reason for this merger is the unfavourable image painted by the cultural movement of the leadership of the reform movement. The leadership of the revivalist movement often criticised the leadership of the reform movement as a close ally of the British colonisers. These criticisms generated a need to shake this 'culprit like image' of the leadership of the reform movement and the urgency to join forces with the cultural movement. This merger was also essential to redress the public image of the leadership of the reform movement that was publicly labelled as aliens and foreign to the local people (Swaris 1973: 2). On the road to representative democracy, such an image was damaging to the reformists.

Given this context, for mutual survival and to form a common elite solidarity front to influence the British, synthesising these two movements became an important step for the leadership of both movements. As Gramsci has pointed out confluence of different social forces happens when these forces have reasons of their own to come together so. It can be safely assumed that for the leadership of the cultural revivalist movement this merger became as important as for the leadership of the reform movement to maintain the unity of the already mobilised masses. This research suggests that this mutual need felt by the leaderships of both movements was a factor that enabled them to temporarily or superficially overcome their real and perceived differences. From a point of view of class, this merger also highlights their common goal of securing class domination and the common interest pursued in establishing the bourgeois-elite leadership as one unified front over the rest of the society. This step penetrated the cultural, ideological, moral and intellectual domain of life of the lower classes, as well as developing new dynamics in the state-in-society relations of this period. These developments laid the foundations for future poli-

tics and secured an important alliance by the bourgeoisie with the lower-class masses. However, this confluence of different social forces did not mean a complete wash away of all the other underlying tensions among the elites based on ethnic, religious, class, and caste, regional and urban-rural divisions. Importantly, what this situation suggests is when and where necessary to defend the interests and political power, the various divisions among the elites can be muted, and when the political competition and the other underlying tensions among the elites affect their preferred balance of power in national politics, elites using nationalism to overcome the damage these tensions create. Undoubtedly, by using the rhetoric of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, the elites justified their rule and gained legitimacy from the masses.

2.4 Post-colonial factional politics and the functions of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism

During the transfer of power from the British to the native population, the local elites (constituted of several class and ideological political factions: traditional bourgeoisie, colonial bourgeoisies/comprador bourgeoisie, Tamil, Sinhala, Marxist and Conservative) successfully claimed the political-intellectual, moral, cultural and economic leadership of the country. By then, by using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism they have already established their cultural leadership among the peripheral communities. Comparing Sri Lanka and Malaysia in terms of the nature of inter-ethnic bourgeois harmony at the time of Sri Lankan independence, Horowitz observes:

... no comparable mono-ethnic elite institution existed in Ceylon. Instead, a variety of elite colleges was established, largely in Colombo where both Sinhalese and Tamils were educated. As a result, although the two countries had approximated the same populations, the Malay and the Chinese political leaders in Malaysia were not on intimate terms, whereas the Sinhalese and Tamil leaders in Ceylon frequently knew each other well, having been to school together. It is fair to describe the Ceylonese elite at independence as genuinely intercommoned, sharing many common values. The same description would not apply to the Malayan elite at independence (1993: 2–3).

Furthermore, unlike in Malaysia by independence the Ceylonese elites had developed a bargaining culture in politics, a culture which had advantages over a culture that put a premium on personal relations (*ibid*). What Horowitz fails to point out in his analysis is who actually paid the real price for the bargaining culture of politics of the Ceylonese elites and what effect this implied 'progressive' culture of bargaining politics had on realising egalitarian political culture and a democratic state in the years to come. Despite this notion of elite solidarity and culture of bargaining identified by Horowitz, especially since the introduction of the universal franchise in 1931, the Tamil political elites (also of bourgeois class background) was increasingly marginalised by the Sinhalese political elites. This situation was aggravated due to the ways in which the British handled the looming factional conflicts. It is argued that the British largely left the fate of the Tamil political elites to be determined by the rival Sinhalese elites (Wickramaratne 1995:xi). The scholars who work on the development of constitution making in Sri Lanka often point to the fact that the western model of democracy left by the British encouraged a majoritarian politics among the local elites and eventually to perceive democracy as a winner-takes-it-all system (Coomaraswamy 2003: 152). To take a lead against the rival factions, all these factions began to appeal to ideological sentiments of their potential allies in politics. Given the ethnic composition of the population, new era of representative democracy began with the introduction of universal suffrage in 1931; Sinhalese elites used Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism to appeal to the numerically largest Sinhala-Buddhist constituency. In this process of mass incorporation of the Sinhalese-Buddhists into national politics, an elevation of Sinhala-Buddhist identity occurred and repeatedly promises were made in establishing a state where the rights and the privileges of Sinhala-Buddhists were guaranteed. As Mann points out, going overboard in this direction of politics using ethnic nationalism as

a mobilisation strategy denotes the dark side of democracy in the twentieth century (2005), to which Sri Lanka fell prey to.

During the early years of post-colonial national politics, political power and social prestige were intrinsically based on economic capital (Fernando 1973:364). After independence, the numerous attempts made to capitalise on the material resources of the state led to a number of overt elite factional conflicts and the superficial elite solidarity formed during the colonial period fell apart. By independence, the emerging ruling class constituted of various factions of the bourgeois class and upper class sub-fractions. This category can be further broken down into two main sub-fractions: colonial and local/traditional bourgeoisie (based on class), Sinhalese and Tamil (based on ethnicity), Goyigama, Salagama, Karava (based on caste), up-country-low country (based on regional origin).²⁸ Among all these various sub-fractions, the two class-based factions played an important role in party politics in the ensuing period. These two factions took centre stage in forming the political party system in Sri Lanka, where the present culture of Sinhalese electoral politics came to be rooted. In this regard, an elaboration of the evolution of these factions, the nature of their struggles in politics and the various strategies they devised and how these strategies influenced the path of hegemonic state building in the subsequent decades is important.

The colonial bourgeoisie faction²⁹ represented liberal conservatism in politics. By engaging in new opportunities opened during the long period of western colonialism (Portuguese, Dutch and the British), this faction triumphed economically. In Marxist terms, this faction could be called the comprador bourgeoisie³⁰ (Paulantzas 1973) and the local version of the *'nouveau riche'*. Their economic prosperity was mainly reliant on lightweight industries such as arrack renting, mining in the graphite industry and trade. The new wealth they acquired helped them to overcome their previous secondary or inferior position on the island's traditional socioeconomic hierarchy (Roberts 1982, Jayawardena 2007). Furthermore, members of this class mainly came from the southern parts of the country and specifically from the coastal regions. During the three phases of western colonial rule, these regions came to be commonly alluded as 'spoiled'.³¹ Also, in the contemporary everyday perception of people, those who come from these regions are not considered 'authentic' or authentic representatives of the island. For these reasons, the colonial bourgeoisie was often looked down upon, especially by the people from the upcountry regions who claim to be the authentic representatives of the island.³² In addition to this, the close connection that the colonial bourgeoisie class had with the British and their public admiration of western values, practices and mimicking of westernised behaviour raised questions about their legitimacy in politics and their ability to lead the masses. These attitudes were true during the period of the nationalist movement too. Especially the westernised social customs this segment of the elites practiced, the western attire they wore, the westernised lifestyle they pursued and the universal political ideologies they subscribed to, all became points of criticisms of their political and economic rivals. In public debates, these characteristics of the colonial bourgeois class were repeatedly emphasised. As a result, the colonial bourgeoisie ran the risk of getting socially and politically isolated from the rest of the local population. As Gramscian notion of hegemony asserts, the presence threat of isolation might have encouraged the colonial bourgeoisie faction to join hands with the traditional bourgeois class and follow the ideologies the latter propagated in national politics.

Amidst these social taboos and criticisms, towards the end of the colonial rule that generated many economic opportunities in the new economic structure introduced, thanks to the colonial economic expansion, the colonial bourgeoisie achieved a remarkable degree of upward economic mobility that they successfully invested to gain upward political mobility. Inevitably, these transformations affected the previous economic, social and political privileges enjoyed by the previously dominant traditional bourgeoisie and the rural petty bourgeoisie. These changes and transformations created various ruptures and fissures in the traditional order and upset the established

patterns in the balance of power among various social classes. Eventually, these developments began to manifest in the post-colonial national political sphere and set the stage for aggressive exploitation of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism by both factions to mobilise the masses on their behalf. At the same time, the ways in which national politics was developing, with a strong ideological underpinning, the economic prosperity of the colonial bourgeois class alone seemed not enough to successfully claim the political leadership.

In 1947, under the leadership of the colonial bourgeois faction, United National Party (UNP), the first national political party was established. UNP is a political party primarily based on conservative, liberal political ideologies³³ and liberal economic ethos. In Sri Lanka, even to date, all these aspects are closely identified with Western colonialism and new imperialism. The Western education the colonial bourgeois class received was a reason underlying their nature. The colonial economic structure and the financial capital they earned by taking part in the colonial economic structure facilitated them to pursue education in the West. As Fernando observes, in general, Westernisation embraced by the colonial bourgeoisie, which included radical changes in lifestyles and the adoption of a universalistic worldview, invariably resulted in a loss of identity with the masses that were still steeped in tradition, poverty and parochialism (1973:366). Therefore the grounds for legitimacy for leading the masses became questionable for the colonial bourgeois faction.

Despite the characteristics of the leadership of the UNP, it was hailed as a symbol of national unity. This is primarily due the fact that at the time of its founding it was represented by a number of communal parties (Arsaratnam Undated: 44). As Horowitz later observed, until the factional conflicts between the Sinhalese members of the ruling class reached their pinnacle, UNP was able to retain the loyalty of the Tamil bourgeoisie³⁴ (1993:4). It is correct to suggest that, besides the aspect of inter-communal unity, UNP was representative of the common interests of the bourgeoisie belonging to all ethnic groups. From the perspective of hegemony, breaking way of Tamil elites from the elite political coalition is an indication of future resistance from this break-away group to the hegemony building attempts of the Sinhalese political elites.

The history of the development of the political party system at the eve of independence reveals important dynamics of national politics, the main political agencies and state building in Sri Lanka. Many of these dynamics noted in the immediate post-colonial period are still prevalent and reproduced under various political-economic circumstances even today. What is certain is that over decades, these underlying dynamics in politics have paved the way for rigorous use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as an integral political strategy for hegemony building and political domination. From early on, as far late as the 1930s and early 1940s, when the mere ideological slogans fell short in addressing the economic grievances and the widening inequalities (vertical and horizontal) of the lower classes masses who possess the power of the vote, devising strategies (actual or rhetorical) to guarantee their upward economic-and social mobility was needed. However the strategies opted by the political elites were ill conceived for facilitating long-term capital accumulation to fulfill the needs of this segment of the population, who were mainly from rural-agricultural backgrounds. In the long term, the elites' inability to generate enough capital posed a threat for keeping their main support base. Therefore, when distributing state resources, the higher principles of inclusivity and equality were sacrificed. In other words, the politics of exclusion of one or/over the other was established, favouring one group over the other and institutionalizing vertical and horizontal inequalities. This political strategy was justified by using nationalist slogans and by patronising the majority Sinhalese-Buddhist constituency who were important for winning elections. The horizontal ethnic-based inequalities that excluded the Tamils and other minority ethnic groups were justified by using the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist slogans. This research looks more intently at the vertical inequalities this emerging relationship be-

tween the Sinhalese political elites and the Sinhalese majority created, which slowly cemented into a right-wing political culture.

2.4.1 Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as the vanguard of elite politics

Initially, the main political opposition to the colonial faction of the bourgeoisie came from one of its own sub-factions – the traditional/local faction of the bourgeoisie class. Following Jayawardene's approach to social stratification, this research identifies the traditional faction as those who earned their wealth and property, and owned means of production through economic activities not related to colonial economic expansion. This group was constituted of upper castes and the country's traditional land-holding class. In contrast to the colonial faction, members of the traditional/local class stemmed mostly from upcountry regions³⁵ and considered themselves to be the authentic representatives of the country's majority Sinhala-Buddhist population. Many of the notable members of this class belonged to the aristocracy and were various 'title' holders during the colonial period. In many cases, their power and authority was localised and confined to the villages and the rural areas, where a large proportion, (roughly speaking 90%) of the local population was concentrated. Before the introduction of the colonial capitalist economy, this faction benefited from the feudal agro-based economic structure and from the prevailing patterns of social relations of production. As the island's main land-holding class, this faction became the most dominant local economic force too. Further, over a long period of time, through the use of the feudal economic structure and the associated social and cultural practices that were essentially linked to the peasant economy and peasants' way of life, the traditional bourgeoisie had cultivated a vast network of patronage relationships with the local communities under them: the rural peasantry and the rural petty bourgeoisie. Therefore, the economic prosperity of the rival colonial faction of the bourgeoisie and the alterations taking place in the economic sphere threatened the previous power relations and this group of traditional power wielders. Despite these differences in terms of class and economic backgrounds, by the eve of country's independence, the traditional bourgeoisie had entered into a seemingly cordial relationship with the colonial faction bourgeoisie under the umbrella of the UNP. However, within a few years of independence, this relationship fell apart. This research suggests that one of the main factors for this disintegration of bourgeoisie solidarity of this period was class-defined, although the mainstream literature often argues otherwise. More precisely, this disintegration was the result of the limitations faced by the traditional bourgeois class in achieving further upward political mobility in the emerging political and economic opportunity structure. There are enough reasons to suggest that this situation was largely kindled by the overall approach taken by the UNP in politics and the immediate post-colonial state building project they sought to build on the liberal economic model and the ideology of political conservatism. Obviously, this approach was inspired and tied to the UNP's and its leadership's structural/economic base that disregarded the power base of the traditional bourgeoisie.

For both factions, the brewing political conflict over capturing state power and establishing one's political legitimacy and domination over the other, and mobilising lower classes and the fellow bourgeois factions were important. As will be explained in detail later, for mass political mobilisation a great deal of material resources was needed. Also needed for a successful mobilisation strategy, as pointed out in theory of hegemony, was a powerful element of ideology. It was under these dynamics of elite politics and the economic constraints they faced that the need for developing a full-fledged strategy for mass political mobilisation of the lower classes with a powerful ideology was needed. This became possible using and renewing the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism.

Until the early 1950s, the use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in popular politics was largely an affair of the traditional bourgeoisie. The rising powers of the traditional bourgeoisie and the

ability it demonstrated in mobilising the various groups under the indigenous petty bourgeoisies control made the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism appealing to the rival Sinhalese political elite factions as well. The kind of indigenous socialism³⁶ the Sinhala-Buddhist ideology was embedded in became a point of attraction to the rural masses. The credibility claimed by the traditional bourgeois faction by using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism encouraged its main competitor, the UNP to openly appeal to Sinhalese-Buddhist ethnic sentiments as well (Horowitz 1993:4). Learning from the Dharmapala era, the Sinhalese elite political leadership of both factions was convinced of the power and the robustness of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in mobilising the masses. The cultural aspect of nationalism constituted of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism is believed to have come into great ferment during the 1940s, which continued and produced under different political constellations until now (Seneviratne 1999:56).

In 1951, the Sinhalese elite political solidarity that was crystallised under the UNP started falling apart. The traditional faction broke away from the UNP and formed a new political party called SLFP. The SLFP was built on a few distinctly localised political goals around the class-based interests of the traditional bourgeoisie and their rural petty bourgeoisie allies. The founding father of the SLFP, Oxford educated Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike (S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike), was a former senior member of the UNP. However, from the very beginning, UNP's intentions in establishing a 'Senanayake dynasty' in politics were apparent (Jayaweera 2001:6).³⁷ Undoubtedly such a move would facilitate retaining party leadership and importantly state power in the hands of the new rich colonial bourgeoisie faction. This emerging culture of dynastic politics leading by the UNP upset Bandaranaike. Further, this development also hurt his personal political ambitions of becoming the party leader of UNP and his political fantasy of capturing the limelight of post-colonial politics. Although Bandaranaike was not the most direct economic beneficiary of securing a petty bourgeoisie defined political party and a political culture,³⁸ the political capital he could harvest by using the Sinhala-Buddhist identity of his main support base was enormous. Although there were factional conflicts among the elites, under Bandaranaike political, economic, cultural and class power came to be finely blended and became a force close to national popular. As witnessed in 1951 when Bandaranaike formed the SLFP, the party immediately became attractive to many who were excluded in national politics in the past. Importantly, his political coalition brought the Buddhist monks (*Sangha*), other radical nationalist Sinhalese-Buddhists and the Marxist-socialist political forces of this period together.³⁹ In the 1956 general elections, by claiming 39.5% of the total number of votes casted (www.lankanewspapers.com/news/election/general_election1956), they defeated the conservative Western-oriented UNP. The SLFP's party ideology was based on the promotion and encouragement of local and indigenous cultural values. The spiritual philosophy of Buddhism and the Sinhala language, the religion and the language of the majority of the population in the island, were given prominence. However, it is important to realise that by choosing this ideology/superstructure that represents exclusive set of cultural practices of the Sinhala community, whose very existence was based on rural agriculture-based economy that was dominated by the traditional and petty bourgeoisie classes, the SLFP served the interests of the powerful allies in its political coalition. Meanwhile, it also promoted a form of 'pan Sinhala-Buddhism nationalism' over other subaltern forms of solidarities in the Sinhalese community.

According to popular interpretations, the victory of Bandaranaike is a 'success story' of bringing the formerly divided Sinhalese political elites together and some segments in the Sinhalese society (Jayawardena 1985:68–9, Roberts 1995:298). Although there is some element of truth in this interpretation, Bandaranaike's victory primarily based on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist tone had counterproductive effects on Sinhalese politics. For example, in 1959, when Bandaranaike declared his willingness to accommodate the interests of the Tamils into this political project, the same forces that he gathered assassinated him. Besides, the Bandaranaike period reveals few other scenarios on politics. First of all, Bandaranaike's leadership defined by symbolic politics paved

the way for establishing the dominance of the traditional bourgeois faction and its close ally, the petty bourgeoisie, in national politics. Following the electoral defeat of the UNP, largely thanks to this new strategy of Bandaranaike, UNP also began to appeal to the same ideological, cultural sentiments in politics, thus attempting to counter-balance the political domination of Bandaranaike's inter-class coalition. By so doing, UNP sealed Sinhalese elite domination in politics. This development marginalised the influence of the contending Tamil elite faction in politics. Besides, it created a resistance among them for the merging hegemonic formation between the various forces in Sinhalese society. Further, these dynamics in national politics also paved the way for establishing a pan ruling class ideology based on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. As Horowitz explains:

...after the resounding victory of an SLFP-led coalition in 1956, the Sinhala Only legislation was passed, and Tamil civil servants were discriminated against on linguistic grounds. Rebuffed at the polls, the UNP responded by becoming as ethnically exclusive as the SLFP. When Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandaranaike attempted to diffuse the Sinhalese-Tamil tension by making a compromise agreement with the Federal party leader, SVJ Chelvanayagam, the UNP campaigned against it (1993:4).

Choosing Sinhala-Buddhism as the ideology of the ruling class by the bourgeoisie leaderships of both Sinhala political parties helped them to deconstruct their disadvantageous public image in politics and overcome the difficulty they faced in identifying with the lower classes. The evidences for this claim can be traced in the political debates dating back to the 1920s and 1930s in the legislative council. For instance, the arguments presented by the legislative councilors of Ceylonese bourgeois origin with regard to the implementation of a set of policies concerning land, peasant colonisation and state welfare can be interpreted as ways the bourgeoisie sought to restore their image among the distanced masses, whose economic plight is directly linked to the actions of the bourgeoisie. For instance, in addition to the British capitalists, during the colonial times, the local capitalist class profited from the British land sales policy. In other words, the local capitalist class has an equal stake in the issue of landlessness among the poor rural peasantry (Roberts 1977:447). As Roberts notes, perhaps in addition to the genuine concerns of the nationalist leaders who realised the importance of improving the well-being of the peasantry for realisation of political development (Roberts 1977:446), this research also suggests that the nationalist leaders beginning to focus on the poor peasantry (not to forget now empowered with universal franchise since 1931) was an element of the political strategy aimed at rectifying their previous actions. In this sense, it is not unusual for the bourgeoisie who are responsible for the plight of the peasantry and the rural masses to use Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism to woo them, especially when the majority of the peasantry and the rural masses were of Sinhala-Buddhist origins. The political debates in the legislative council since the late 1920s on the welfare state policy provides another convincing example to further suffice my argument here (Roberts 1977:476). In the late 1920s, it was largely the migrant workers from the plantation sector that benefited from the welfare policy of the British. Exemption from the poll tax was one of the important benefits they enjoyed. In addition, under the Minimum Wage Ordinance of 1923, a detailed criterion for wage payment under different categories of Indian immigrant labor was implemented. This Ordinance also made the plantation owners obligatory to provide quantities of rice for a subsidised price (Roberts 1977:477). In national politics, the trade unions and the Marxist political parties represented this segment of the workers. The leaders of the reform movement foresaw the dangers of granting universal franchise to the Indian immigrants who were undoubtedly inclined to vote for the Marxist parties, their champions. The eventual disenfranchisement of the Indian immigrant workers (1948) and demanding a welfare state policy for all therefore can be all related to this fear of Marxists threat. Therefore, regardless of the underlying political motives, the behaviour of the

political-economic elites on both these occasions were attempts to redress the past ills caused by their actions and a way of getting closer to the Sinhala-Buddhist masses.

In addition to the economic imperatives, during the colonial period, in order to economically profit from the colonial rule, many bourgeoisie had converted to Christianity (Jayawardena 2007:249). Converting to Christianity brought about obvious changes in their lifestyles that were different from the lifestyle of the masses. The aggressive launch of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in the national political sphere was essentially linked to this identity dilemma of the local bourgeoisie (brown *sahib* syndrome⁴⁰). By highlighting such differences, the traditional bourgeoisie in the SLFP hoped to take the lead in politics over the Western-oriented UNP. In light of the above, it seems that Bandaranaike was compelled to carve out a new political coalition, combining the elements of structure and ideological/superstructure of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism that became the highest expression of bourgeois class interests. This research also asserts that the trajectory of post-colonial politics shaped by the explicit use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in politics for the purposes mentioned above appealed to the masses and manipulated enough for rendering their intellectual, economic, moral and political subordination to the bourgeoisie. This phase of national politics renewed the political strategy and reinforced the pattern of alliance building initially launched during Dharmapala period.

The vertical class alliances formed by mobilising ideological sentiments also enabled the Sinhalese political elites to incorporate the lower classes into national politics and to increase elites' competitiveness in national politics. Taking a Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist stand in politics, Bandaranaike and the leadership of the UNP embarked on a dangerous path of promotion of exclusion of other communities. Kedourie who pointed out in his seminal work on nationalism in Africa, Asia and Latin America that this period was a project of the Left (1960:91). Given the origins and the interest pursued by using nationalism in national politics in Sri Lanka, the various phases of development of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist and nationalist rejuvenations, including that of Bandaranaike period, this research is inclined to point to the fact that Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism has always been a project of the Right.

In this political project, Tamils and other minority communities became increasingly isolated and became a subject of persecution. As stated by a number of self-identified politically moderates interviewed for this study, in 1950s, use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism by Bandaranaike in politics was 'not all that bad' and it seemed like a 'necessary step'. Their reasoning was grounded on the belief that Bandaranaike's initial intention was to bring the deeply divided Sinhalese together on one platform and then form consensus with the Tamils. However, it is evident that by using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as the main mobilisation strategy and elevating the image of the state as a Sinhala-Buddhist state, all done at the expense of the exclusion of the Tamils and other minority groups including the Sinhalese-Christians, the Sinhalese political elites created long-lasting divisions in post-colonial politics and pushing the state building project to a undemocratic path. Most importantly, the ways in which the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism was illuminated in national politics successfully took away the attention of the masses from the widening inequalities in the society that affected them the most. Although, it is true that even before the birth of the SLFP, there were deep divisions within Sinhalese society and the petty bourgeoisie often feeling politically alienated in bourgeoisie post-independent politics (Gunasinghe 1996:174). However, as majority of the respondents shared using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and symbolic identity politics to overcome their isolation cannot be justified. Because, rather than being a help use of Sinhala-Buddhist in national politics has created more misery. Also the often-repeated popular story of political isolation of the local petty bourgeoisie during Western colonialism and during the UNP's period of political domination only tells one side of the story. This isolation was a self-created situation by the petty bourgeoisie who willingly rendered their subordination to the hegemonic bourgeois political leadership. This relationship has its roots in the cultural re-

vivalist movement. In all these situations, association and disassociation from mainstream politics during various phases of colonial and post-colonial rule were all forms of political engagement. Although they seem passive in nature, in the long run, the implications of these seemingly passive political engagements have contributed to active hegemony building and hegemonic state building project⁴¹ led by the Sinhalese political elites.

2.4.2 Bandaranaike's politics: Left going Right

The ways in which Bandaranaike led his election campaign in 1955 are crucial for understanding the changed direction of the nationalist ideology and its future use in post-colonial national politics, the trajectory of state transformation and the tensions it created between hegemony building democratic state building.

Bandaranaike's political campaign kindled a series of ethnic, linguistic and religious sentiments in the majority Sinhalese, eventually led to a process of 'ethnic outbidding in politics (De Votta 2005:141). The rural petty bourgeoisie and other nationalist forces were eager to embrace this political culture and rendered their support to it. Ideas about local culture, local economic development, the prominence of the Sinhala language and promises made to reform the old English educational system by replacing it with a vernacular form of education were all attractive to them. Getting inspiration from this sensational as well as economically advantageous political rhetoric, the radical nationalistic forces demanded a restructuring of state institutions by giving priority to the vernacular educated classes. Their list of demands also included establishing Sinhalese supremacy over the Tamil people, who were perceived as the privileged during the British rule. These ideas and demands were not confined to political rhetoric alone. Later, they were translated into actual state policy and constitutional provisions and attempts were made to institutionalise Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony over the non-Sinhala-Buddhist communities. For example, the 1956 Language Act (known as Sinhala Only Act)⁴² became the highest expression of the hegemonic project pursued through Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, where the image, practice and discourse that constitute the state-in-society became to be collectively manifested through right-wing politics. The introduction of the First Republican Constitution in 1972 by his widowed wife who was the prime minister and the privileges it bestowed to Buddhism over other religions in the country provides an useful example of synthesis and continued persuasion of multiple strategies in the direction of hegemonic state (Coomaraswamy 1984:4).

Since Bandaranaike, the ruling Sinhalese political elites have successfully managed to employ the 'ethnic card' in politics (Jayatilleke 1991). This was particularly visible during the deteriorating economic conditions in the post-independence period, in which conflicts over access to state resources began to intensify and state resource distribution mechanisms began to be dominated and often mismanaged by the ruling elite factions. This research argues that the idea of scarcity and mismanagement of resource distribution is only one aspect of the problem. The other aspect of the problem is the scarcity of political imagination and vision of dominant Sinhalese political elites. In light of these observations, it can be safely argued that the use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism by the Sinhalese political elites advanced the hegemony building among the Sinhalese and sufficiently manipulated and moulded the political imagination of the lower classes in the Sinhalese community to advance their narrow political goals. This research further argues that this direction of politics having shaped the post-colonial state building project to establish Sinhalese domination, also forced the old and newly emerging rival political forces of leftwing orientation to embark on symbolic politics of right-wing propensity. In other words, this, albeit the self-identified image of being Left and Right, regardless of the other identities the various elite factions carried in politics, they together practiced one form of politics, i.e., right-wing politics.

Overall, the direction of politics after Bandaranaike raises several important questions as to why he did not opt for a class-based political strategy over an ethnic-based one. Given the brand

of indigenous socialism he espoused in politics, asking class-related questions seems valid. There are reasons to believe that, had he opted for a class-based strategy, he could have easily gained the support of the lower classes of other ethnic communities. Because, there are enough reasons to suggest that during this period, regardless of their ethnic identity, class-based grievances held currency among the majority of the population.⁴³ Considering the popular arguments and counter arguments, it is obvious that opting for an ethno-religious based strategy was favoured for the sake of convenience by the Sinhalese political elites. Further, this strategy was mainly aimed at counter-balancing the political legitimacy of the rival factions in politics, i.e., the UNP and the Marxist political forces.⁴⁴ Ultimately, the early factional conflicts of Sinhalese political elites and the strategies they used – by manipulating ideological sentiments and the economic struggles of the Sinhalese peasantry – provided an artificial symbolic refuge to the poor peasantry under the banner of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. The mass yet passive political participation encouraged of this largest segment of the society in the national political sphere has created many tensions between hegemony building and the democratic state building in Sri Lanka.

2.4.3 The ethnic caricature in politics and ‘classless’ Marxist politics: whose left?

In addition to the above two factions, there was another dominant political force in Sri Lanka, i.e., the Marxist-Socialist group. Their pioneer was Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) formed in 1935, which gave birth to a number of other breakaway Marxist/leftist parties. Taken together, the Marxist/left movement was a collection of political parties (LSSP and Communist Party –CP, mainly) that attracted members from both the bourgeois and lower classes. It drew ideological inspiration from the militant labour and trade union movements, which dated back to the wake of plantation capitalism in the nineteenth century. According to Jayawardena, that period was one in which class-consciousness was able to take precedence over ethnic and religious emotions (2003:17). In contrast to the position taken up by the bourgeois leadership of the reform movement that advocated limited voting rights, the labour movement promoted and supported universal suffrage. Further, it also advocated voting rights for Indian workers in Sri Lanka (Jayawardena 2003:21, Shanmugaratnam 2007:i). Given the nature of target constituencies, supporting the voting rights of these underprivileged economic forces were essential for party building. Despite a positive track record the traditional Marxist parties had, after 1929, entered into a path of communalist politics. Although the labour movements claimed to be left wing, its political leniency got clouded with right-wing tendencies.

The traditional Marxist forces in politics (from the 1920s to the mid-1970s) were another important elite faction in politics claiming to represent the interests of the proletariat. They saw themselves as the liberators of the Sri Lankan plebs (Wickramaratne 1999:252). Some even argue that if any group should deserve the credit for securing independence for Sri Lanka, it should be for the Marxists parties (Wilson 1979:1132). This political force with an explicit radical Marxist-socialist outlook was the only major ideological alternative to the emerging post-colonial national politics dominated by the UNP and SLFP. However, the leadership of all these three dominant groups belonged to the same bourgeoisie background (Fernando 1973:371). Contrary to the UNP and SLFP, however, in the popular political arena, the Marxist-socialists openly campaigned for the rights and welfare of the urban working class, the rural plantation workers and the plantation workers of Indian Tamil origin. Although, their numerical strength in politics was too small, they were able to secure a decent number of votes in the parliamentary election in the post-second world war period. For instance, in the 1947 general elections, LSSP, Communist party and Bolshevik/Leninists Party secured 21% of the total percentage of votes casted (Moore 1985:294), which allowed them to secure 19 parliamentary seats (Moore 1985:242). Despite some electoral victories, their influence in politics was marginal and mainly confined to the urban working class and to the southern coastal belt (Jayawardena 1974:3). This was partly due to the nature and the

structure of the Sri Lankan economy, primarily characterised by a large feudal agriculture sector, a small colonial capitalist plantation sector and a small light-industrial sector (Hettige 2000:20).

The structural features in the economy were not in favour of the left parties to retain their 'left' identity. Further, in the period after 1931, the Left going in the direction of the Right in politics seemed to have been influenced by several important political changes in this period. The enactment of a new constitution in 1931, Ceylon receiving the status of self-governance and introduction of universal suffrage to elect the members to the legislature (State Council) are few significant milestones in island's political history that had an influence on left politics to lean towards the Right. The massive negative economic performance of this period also had played an important role in the Left's rightwing political leniency. In the decade of 1930s, the country was hit by its worst economic crisis of all time and by a malaria epidemic in 1934. These two events created large-scale unemployment and left many people impoverished. As left-wing historians have shown, the combination of these two events affected the previous militant nature of the trade union and the vibrant labour movement in the island (Jayawardena 2003:27). On the one hand there was a marked improvement in democratic politics (hereby refers to the degree of space left for different political ideologies and ideas to prevail) and on the other hand hit by the economic crisis, pushed the leadership of the left movement to kindle right-wing politics, where communal identity politics came to be more crystallised. Under these structural constraints and against the backdrop of growing political competition for state power between the UNP and SLFP, the Marxist-socialist forces conveniently ignored class politics and joined hands with the SLFP. This move was justified on the self-fulfilling prophecy that alluded to SLFP as the only alternative force to the capitalist class with a progressive and anti-imperialist character (Jayawardena 1974:4) and as the main challenger of the pro-imperialist UNP (Shanmugaratnam 2007:i-ii). Although the numerous political factions gathered under different party labels, all of them increasingly subscribed to one ideology, i.e., the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology. In this unveiling new political alliance formation solidarity between several Sinhalese elites political factions reached its optimum level. In this regard, Marxists rendering their subordination to SLFP was the most significant. As a number of respondents of this research, particularly as referred by a party leader of a traditional Marxist political party, said: '...upon securing Ministerial portfolios in the MEP government (led by SLFP), the traditional Marxist parties simply abandoned class politics'. According to the contemporary critics of the traditional Marxist parties interviewed for this research, the pro-capitalist bias of the UNP was a simply good enough reason for the traditional Marxist parties to support the SLFP. According to them, in order to get closer to state power, the Marxists had to join the ethnic bandwagon of the SLFP. This situation again had important implications of hegemony building strategies of the dominant elite factions. For instance, Marxist accepting or subscribing to ethnic politics of this period was not necessarily through the manipulation of their consent; instead it denotes a situation where Marxists political parties becoming afraid of getting isolated or being left out in the emerging popular politics, even if was of a right-wing nature.

Considering the bourgeois background of the leadership of the Marxist political faction (Jayawardena 1974:6), that is not so different from the other two prominent political factions of this time, among other factors, choosing leftwing political ideology reveals the need of the Marxist political faction to distinguish themselves from fellow bourgeoisie counterparts in politics. Further, it also reveals the need felt by the Marxist faction to find a political identity that could easily reach to the lower classed masses. In doing so, appealing to urban workers over the peasantry or rural bourgeoisie (who were already in political alliances with UNP and SLFP) should not be overrated or misinterpreted as genuine attempts to address the grievances of the proletariat, as popularly claimed. This situation suggests that although there were plenty of signs on the possibility of formation and mobilisation of a broad cross-class alliance, the social, economic and political conditions of this period forced the leaders of left politics to embark on opportunistic poli-

tics and abandon their previously declared noble goal of ‘emancipation of the working class from exploitation’. By doing so, the Marxist forces contributed in maturing conditions for a rightwing political culture that underpinned the principle of inequality and persecution of the minorities. Further, the external conditions in the post-second world war period where socialism and Marxist politics were not so welcomed by the hegemonic liberal democratic political forces also seemed to have had an influence of this transformation of national politics. However, it is safe to state that the local Marxist political forces in this era betrayed their own cause, their constituency and left a distorted local understanding of Marxist politics, and pushed the local communities to rely on right-wing politics. This transformation in elite politics that informed the transformation of subaltern politics has had important bearings on the foundation of state building in the post-independent era.

2.5 JVP Marxism and JHU Chauvinism: turncoat Lefts aiding the Hegemony of the Right

Since the gradual demise of the influence of the traditional Marxist political parties, a number of smaller radical nationalist political parties have gained an important voice in national politics. Among these, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) are the most prominent. Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism, essentially a trait of right-wing politics, is a characteristic they share with the other main two Sinhala political parties.

At the time of its birth in the mid-1960s, the leadership of the JVP intended to fill the vacuum left by the traditional left parties. Even when compared to the solid strength achieved by the UNP and SLFP in post-colonial electoral politics, albeit numerous ‘political’ handicaps, JVP has been able to rise as an effective member of the post-colonial ruling class.⁴⁵ Since its formation, JVP has worked from within to achieve its main goal of establishing a Marxist-socialist state. JVP also continues to advocate a change to the post-colonial political system captured by the bourgeoisie and their capitalist state building project.⁴⁶ Clearly, until the early 1980s, the main competition to JVP was the perceived pseudo-nationalist project of the bourgeoisie (Samaranayake 1987:273).

Compared to the leaderships of UNP, SLFP and traditional Marxist political parties, in terms of class origination, the JVP leadership belonged to the rural non-bourgeoisie class. With this background, JVP claimed to represent the ‘oppressed’ (Uyangoda 2006:6). In its electoral propaganda, JVP also claimed to be the voice of landless peasants in the rural areas. However, following 1977, upon introduction of the open economy and the significant changes it brought to the traditional class structure, JVP modified its electoral appeal to include the members of newly formed class locations. This new appeal targeted the potential new class factions that were mostly of precariat nature.⁴⁷ The precariat class constituted a large number of casual employees whose employment security and social security were dependent on the dynamics of the global-local liberal economic actors, structures and processes. The launching of the open economy policy in 1977, that significantly expanded the private sector and the service industry, can be identified as other factors that influenced JVP choosing this direction of politics. It further tightened its anti-neo liberal hegemonic rhetoric and to effectively incorporate these new class segments to its political coalition has actively embarked on a new set of electoral strategies and slogans that further illuminate its right-wing ideological bias.

Overall, JVP’s declared ideological orientation in politics presents a political puzzle for many. As a self-declared Marxist-socialist party, advocating extreme forms of ethno-religious nationalism or chauvinism is one dimension of this, for example, the Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinist position that it takes in politics as a significant distraction from Marxists’ primary occupation in politics, that of the class struggle. In general, taking popular political stands on specific issues, such as nationalism to fashion political ideology of a political party with left orientation does not corre-

spond with left politics; rather it corresponds with rightwing politics. In this sense, although JVP proclaimed itself as a Marxist political party, succumbing to ethnic politics only favoured the building of narrow ethnic solidarity over class solidarity (Samaranayake 1987:277). For these reasons, majority of the respondents interviewed for this research who belong to other political party affiliations raised questions on JVP's self-declared identity as a Marxist-socialist political party. In their view, JVP did not stand by any Marxist-socialist ideals; highlighting JVP's confused political identity as one respondent, a leader of a traditional left political party, remarked: 'JVP is a peculiar animal'.

Compared to the privileges enjoyed by the dominant bourgeois ruling factions in politics, JVP' lacked access to exploit the resource base of the state. It is in this circumstance that they used Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism to get closer to power and mobilise forces around the party. Also, after the opening of the economy in 1977, as a small and distinct political actor (in terms of its class origin), that JVP used Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism to build political alliances with the lower class masses is notable. In many ways, giving prominence to the ethno-religious identity of the majority over class identity was a political short cut for the JVP. This short cut was essential, as the party had no access to state resources or the established state-sponsored patronage networks to build political coalitions. Also, the kinds of patronage networks and political clientelism cultivated by the UNP and SLFP by using state resources did not reach the rural youth, who constituted the majority of JVP's electoral base. Therefore, keeping their support and preventing them from drifting towards the main political parties needed a different strategy. In this structurally disadvantaged political-economic background, the party demonstrated an incapacity to fashion a progressive political ideology that could win elections. Therefore, more than its bourgeois rivals in politics, i.e., the UNP and SLFP, JVP adopted a more vigorous form of ethnic nationalism and aggressive persuasion of Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state. In terms of hegemony building, for various factors pointed out above, JVP's subscription to Sinhala-Buddhist ideology in politics denotes a success trajectory of hegemony building between the rival Sinhalese political elites and the elites with the Sinhalese majority.

Despite the two anti-state protests waged by the JVP in 1971 and 1989–92 in the name of saving the nation, later on JVP's chauvinist political ambitions became clear. During these two events, the state forces unleashing its coercive forces to suppress JVP seemed to have played a role in them gradually joining the hegemonic forces. Excluding the Tamil youth who aired similar grievances (and the Tamil community) from the 1971 insurrection further asserts their unwillingness to imagine a broader political programme of a leftwing foundation. Further, their inability also shows the degree of influence of hegemony building strategies used by the main elite political factions that kept forcing JVP to subscribe to their right-wing political ideology. The exclusion of Tamil youth could have been due to the nature of post-colonial political competition, defined by a zero-sum thesis. Another reason could be the 'magic logic' of numbers in representative democracy. The third possible reason of their exclusion can be explained along the grievance thesis: JVP's historical perception of Tamil youth as the main competitor for state resources and as a privileged entity during the British colonial period is important in this regard (Moore 1989:180). During a field interview, one present youth leader of the party shared:

...according to my opinion, there are no grievances for the Tamils. Their grievances are based on their interests. I agree with the root causes of this conflict before 1987. And I must say that as I think, there are no other new grievances after 1987. So I question, what are their new grievances? If there are new grievances then we should start discussions. There is no need for any discussions, because there are no new grievances'.

In contrast to this, in another field interview, a current parliamentary member of JVP replied, '...Tamil separatism is a distraction for realising the important class struggle and there are no ethnic-based grievances'. In his view, realising the class struggle will automatically take care of the

so-called ethnic conflict. As another JVP respondent pointed out, ‘... Tamils demands are based on Tamilness and historical grievances, both are unacceptable. If one is to accept the Tamils’ right to self-determination and recognise the armed struggle for a separate state, people from the Monaragala District⁴⁸ who are equally underprivileged in terms of access to state resources should also be fighting for a separate state’. Although in these two statements class was emphasised as the main preoccupation and the basis for resolving the ongoing conflict, in the arena of electoral politics the issue of class domination and class struggle had overtaken by the fiery ethno-nationalist propaganda. Besides, in electoral politics, JVP hardly make a distinction between the Tamil community and the LTTE or as Jayawardena points out, they make no attempt to distinguish between Tamils on a class basis or even on the basis of Sri Lanka and Indian Tamils. In Jayawardena’s view, these characteristics are synonymous with the ideology of Sinhala chauvinism, which regards all non-Sinhala, regardless of class, as aliens (1985:88). Also if the element of LTTE is left out from the Tamil community, JVPs belief on the Sinhalese historic genesis in Arya-Aryan conflict (Jayawardena 1985) further reduces its claim of being a party dedicated to class.

Considering all these different views expressed on JVP’s political ideology seem to point to several underlying political-economic imperatives. Further they also suggest the need for understanding JVP’s take on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in national politics beyond its fiery ethno-political rhetoric, party’s publicly claimed ‘love for the nation’ and their perceived need to protect the unitary nature of Sri Lanka from the Tamil secessionist movement, and the Indian and Western forms of neo-imperialism. In this regard, this research suggests that JVP’s Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism should be understood against the background of changing state-in-society relations, class relations, social formations⁴⁹ and the dynamics of Sri Lanka’s capitalist state development, and the political domination held by the right wing faction in the Sinhalese political elites. Further, this research also suggests that despite their proudly declared ‘difference’ in politics, in terms of their political location outside mainstream politics and the self-identified status of being the only viable alternative to the current corrupt political practices of the capitalists, use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a tool for party building and as a tool of political mobilisation reveals JVP’s lack of vision, strategy and the degree of party’s political underdevelopment. Importantly, taking a Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinist stand in politics also reveals the degree of party’s subordination to the ideology of the bourgeois faction in the ruling class and to their hegemonic right wing politics.⁵⁰ This research also finds that the more JVP attempts to differentiate itself from the SLFP and UNP, the more it subscribes to the hegemonic right-wing politics of the bourgeois dominated ruling faction, who during various junctures in politics in the colonial and post-colonial period, invented and reinvented Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology to pursue their hegemonic ambitions. Also it can be suggested that, by following Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism, JVP has effectively mediated to legitimise the ideology of the bourgeois Sinhalese elites’ among JVP’s lower classed constituencies. This is in complete contradiction with JVP’s much-promised project of political and economic emancipation of this class from the bourgeoisie domination, exploitation and the bourgeois state. In other words, this situation suggests JVP having rendered a valuable service to its rival bourgeois counterparts in elite politics in advancing the hegemonic political project under their leadership. This interpretation also allows one to claim that by subverting to Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and chauvinism, JVP has been functioning as the main mediator and the agent between the dominant bourgeois ruling faction and the lowest-class members in the urban and rural sectors, in popularising right-wing political project under the banner of left politics. By doing so, JVP has effectively closed the space for realising egalitarian politics and being a major obstacle for establishing a democratic state in Sri Lanka. Considering the gaps between what JVP claims as a class-oriented party and an alternative to prevailing elite politics and what it actually practices in electoral politics, it is reasonable to suggest that the extreme nature of JVP’s Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism makes a sham of its proclaimed intentions,

and uses its ideals as a strategy towards political survival and an attempt to muster votes in competitive electoral politics.

2.5.1 Hela Urumaya and the Newest Sinhala-Buddhist ‘*Karumaya*’⁵¹ in politics

Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) is a political party of recent origin, established in 2004. In national politics it takes a militant Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist stand. The Sangha faction in the JHU claimed themselves as the ‘bearer of Sinhala-Buddhist heritage’ and the ‘sons of the soil’. Buddhist monks and a powerful group of Sinhala-Buddhist intelligential laity of petty bourgeois origin mainly lead JHU. As Seneviratne observed, the monks in the JHU are ‘...becoming strident nationalists, not pragmatic nationalists whose social priorities could have been economic rather than ideological... in the end, that pragmatism and sober preoccupation with the economic were dethroned. Ideology was enthroned, holding the scepter of Sinhala Buddhist hegemonism’ (1999:336). JHU claimed to represent the interests of the majority Sinhala-Buddhists. The direct role they play in politics to realise the ‘Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state’ not only reveals the functions of Sinhala-Buddhist ideology in hegemony building, but also redefines the problematic of Buddhism in Sri Lanka (Uyangoda 2007:ix).

JHU’s imagined state building project included a detailed programme for the re-establishment of the ancient glory of pre-colonial Sri Lanka and its values based on the principles of Buddhism and Sinhalese culture (Roberts 2001:21; Uyangoda 2006:7).⁵² This vision gave prominence to the country’s rural peasantry and identified them as the main agents of state building. As a general characteristic of the Sri Lankan nationalist elites (Moore 1989: 180), from the very beginning, JHU seemed to suffer from the problem of locking into a particular interpretation of history in which the peasantry is treated as the historical and moral core of Sinhalese society. Also, in the mainstream national political debates often conducted via the mass media (televised debates and discussions in state and private television and radio stations), JHU made strong claims to vast areas of land in the eastern and northern parts of the country inhabited by the Tamils. While Tamils regarded these areas as their Tamil homelands, JHU claimed before colonial rule, these lands were sacred possessions of the Buddhist temples and therefore parts of the Sinhala-Buddhist cultural heritage and the Sinhala-Buddhist cultural triangle. This idea seems to be based on arguments made by the early nationalist leaders, particularly Walisinha Harischandra. In Harischandra’s opinion, this territory is considered to be part of a sacred city, granted by King Devanampiyatissa as the place for future Buddhist temples and monasteries known as *Viharagam* (Nissan 1997:37). By advocating these claims, JHU’s *sangha* faction was attempting to take the leading role in hegemony building and play the role of the main broker in realising the hegemonic state. This explicit claim made by the JHU revealed the political-economy underpinning Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in contemporary politics and the need to emphasise the economic interests underpinning hegemony building.

As a Tamil scholar and a political observer interviewed for this study mentioned, ‘...with parties like JHU (and JVP) the country is back to original Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism’⁵³. In his view, the major involvement of a powerful segment of the Sinhala-Buddhist intellectual intelligentsia⁵⁴ with JHU was a dangerous trend in recent politics. As many respondents shared, their role in promoting such chauvinist politics was not only altering the state’s ideological path but also distorting the teachings of the Buddha. For example, by providing manufactured Buddhist doctrinal justifications for killing and for justifying the end goal of Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state through the means of violence, war and killings has created some tensions in the society (Uyangoda 2007:2). From the point of view of hegemony building, this confluence of religious, economic, intellectual and political forces in contemporary times under JHU can be called as a renewal of the traditional hegemonic bond during Dharmapala and Bandaranaike times between these forces. When analysing the class background of the leadership and the initial voter base of

JHU (which is now declining),⁵⁵ it is not surprising to find the use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism by JHU to fulfill the class-based interests of the leadership and their political allies. This research finds that in many ways the current political coalition organised by JHU is similar to nineteenth century 'Dharmapala politics'. As one respondent to this research also noted, as was the case during Dharmapala times, despite their minority status in politics, JHU (and JVP) is effectively manipulating the sentiments of the majority Sinhalese by using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. Reflecting on the structure of the political system and the competition and cooperation between large and smaller parties, this respondent noted '...when the main political parties have to rely on extremist Sinhala political parties to secure a parliamentary majority, the main parties cannot offer concessions to the minority political parties. The problem in Sri Lanka is everyone wants mainstream politics, not peripheral politics. Therefore there is a tendency to use nationalism'. Another respondent noted, '...without an element of nationalism, today no political party or leadership can mobilise people'. According to the interpretation of this research of these views, these expressions denote the idea of conceiving a 'common sense' among the academic community on JHUs political behaviours. As Gramsci warned, this situation reflects the extent of the effects of hegemonising processes used by the political elites, not only over the economically, socially and politically marginalised classes in the society, but also over the educated segment of the society of all ethnic backgrounds. The two views noted above first expressed by a Tamil scholar and the second by a Muslim scholar respectively, denoted an important reality exposed by Gramsci in politics of hegemony building.

Another view expressed by a Sinhalese respondent claimed that compared to the lay leadership the *Sangha* leadership in the JHU is identified as the most corrupt and not being truly nationalistic. According to another Sinhalese respondent who strongly held the same view, the rejection of patronage offered by the ruling parties to the lay leadership of the party is a good enough reason to call them genuine nationalists. With the findings of this research, one is prompted to argue that the functions of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in post-colonial politics cannot be determined along obvious material exchanges that one witnesses in electoral politics. In the changing social, economic, cultural and political landscape, Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and its protagonists are able to tap into even more valuable non-material forms of political capital generated by it. As another Sinhalese respondent of Sinhalese ethnic background, whose view contradicts with the previous respondents, cited '...there are no true Sinhala-Buddhist nationalists in politics. But we witness true Sinhala-Buddhist nationalists being used in politics as 'curry leaves'. This is equally true for the Tamils too. Once the goals of the competing political parties are achieved, true nationalists are ignored. Today there are people like Champika Ranawaka and some people in the JVP who are identified as nationalists by a majority of the Sinhalese. This is not true'. Here, this research would like to propose a few different interpretations and likely future scenarios based on the analysis conducted on the different views expressed by these respondents and by following the current debate among the general public in Sri Lanka on the direct leadership of the *Sangha* in competitive politics.

Findings of this research suggest that although the *Sangha* has the potential to lead the moral and cultural leadership of the contemporary version of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, there seems to be a growing disapproval from the lay community of the new role *Sangha* has assumed in contemporary politics. What this situation could possibly suggest is an emerging crisis of the contemporary Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic bloc (in Gramscian, the historical bloc) and the legitimacy of *Sangha* as political leaders. This situation also depicts an underlying struggle for domination between the lay forces within and outside the Sinhalese-Buddhist elite faction in politics and the *Sangha*. In addition, this development also points to the urgency of realignment of forces within the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic coalition, in which, the lay and non-lay segments have to redefine their contributory roles in politics as individual forces and as one political block. However, the overall situation seems to suggest the potential of questioning the direct moral and cultural

leadership of the *Sangha* in future politics at national level and the direct economic role they openly pursue in the post-LTTE phase of state building. The strategies the *Sangha* and the lay leaderships will be devising to overcome the tensions on the nature of their roles will certainly influence the direction of the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism discourse as both these forces extensively rely on each other for staying in power and hegemony building. However, it is too soon to predict the future directions of this scenario. Nevertheless, looking from a historical point of view, the *Sangha* will be playing a crucial role in politics in Sri Lanka. However, the exact nature of their relationship with the lay leadership and in the hegemony building is yet to unfold. The future scenario will be determined on the kind of political strategies of contemporary JHU leadership and the degree of influence JHU could have in shifting alignments of various forces in the wider state-in-society relations and their ability to appeal to the struggles of these segments. It is unlikely that JHU and the *Sangha* in it will organise themselves as an anti-hegemonic force or a radical political opposition to lay elite right-wing political forces. It seems more beneficial to stay in the hegemonic coalition than leaving it. Because during the last several decades of national politics, the lay elite political leadership has established an ideological bond with the Sinhalese masses and through hegemony processes made them believe as the legitimate rulers.

2.6 Buddhism betrayed?⁵⁶: How and by Whom?

The reincarnation of JVP in the national political scene in the late 1980s, the embarkation of JHU in national politics in 2004 and their use of an extreme form of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism in recent politics have fulfilled a few important functions in the arena of electoral politics. Apart from obvious political party building, regime building and ethnic solidarity of the Sinhalese-Buddhists, at the macro, structural and institutional levels, and these chauvinist forces have played a key role in consolidation of the hegemony building among the Sinhalese majority. Further these forces have also popularised new tactics aiding the hegemony building strategy. At the micro level, influencing the personal and spiritual spheres of people's everyday life through *Bodhi-Poojas* and other rituals based on certain political interpretation of Buddhism is noted.

Since May 2009, the post-war state building endeavours are coloured by the extensive use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and chauvinism for further hegemony building. Resurfacing of the discourse of the old formula of an authentic Sinhalese cultural identity comprised of '*veva, dageba and yaya*' that was used during various phases of post-colonial politics of development (i.e. J.R. Jayawardene's Mahaweli development programme), is an important reincarnation in contemporary politics and hegemonic state building. In the past, this formula was proven to be highly successful in the regime-building efforts of J.R. Jayawardene (Jayawardena 1992:vii). As for the impact of the macro political discourse of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism on micro and personal level of life is concerned, there is a mixed picture of its success. For example, the recently failed efforts to introduce a ban on wearing mini-skirts, labelled an indecent dress code for a Sinhala-Buddhist woman is important. As reported by Lankabusinessonline on the controversy surrounding this attempt, '...Nimal Rubasinghe, secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, said that the government had received representations calling for a ban on wearing revealing clothing in public, though he declined to name the groups involved. "There have been complaints from various quarters about mini-skirts, but we are only considering them and no final decision has been taken' (<http://www.lankabusinessonline.com/fullstory>).

In post-war state building, the strength of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a hegemony building process is yet to be tested. The absence of LTTE, the main and projected historical enemy of the Sinhalese hegemony building and state building project, the declining trend of direct confrontational politics by the Tamils, the increasing trend of subordination of Tamil political elites and other minority political parties to the hegemony building steered by the Sinhalese political elites politics could work either way. Attempts to redefine a new set of functions for Sinhala-Buddhist

nationalism based on the memories of the old enemy is observed. In the past, bouncing back of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a hegemony building process during the times of introducing drastic changes to the economic, social and political contexts are noted too. Therefore, in the post-war period, introduction of a rejuvenated form of nationalism in national political theatre may not solely depend on the ethnic factor or inter-ethnic relations. However, the current phase of attempting to rejuvenate the role of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in politics, the dominant Sinhalese political and military elites are actively taking steps to institutionalise various state policies based on Sinhala-Buddhist formula. By so doing, the political elites in state power are taking preemptive measures to deal with likely anti-hegemonic forces. Based on the findings of this research, it can be stated confidently, in the post-LTTE era, rejuvenation of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist discourse in politics and re-elevating the image of the state as a Sinhala-Buddhist state are nothing more than attempts to keep the already mobilised hegemonic alliances intact and look for ways to gather support for the elites' hegemony building from the dissident and forces of resistance. In post-war Sri Lanka much of the success of this hegemonic project lies in the ability of the Sinhalese political elites to spread its hegemonic influence over the Tamil community that is currently going through a crucial phase of refiguring their role in national and regional politics.⁵⁷

2.7 Tamil ethno-nationalism: its functions in Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist politics

Any standard account of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism or Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a hegemony building and state building is incomplete without looking at Tamil nationalism. For that reason any account on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism or the discourses of nationalism in Sri Lanka often entail a detailed discussion on the Tamil nationalism and discourse of Tamil nationalism. However its representation within the dominant inter-ethnic framework is problematic and leaves gaps in examining it within its internal variations. However as Tamil nationalism evolved into a resistant movement, it acted as a counter force to hegemony building strategies of the Sinhalese political elites and hegemony building in the Sinhalese community.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Tamil nationalism was not the cause of the birth of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. Those who emphasise this line of argument point to the fact that the origins of Tamil nationalism as a form of cultural revivalism in response to the Christian hegemony in the nineteenth century (Wickramasinghe 2006:257). The pioneering works of Arumuga Navalar (1822–79) in Saivite/Tamil revival are cited as evidences to this claim. Initially, this cultural renaissance of the Tamils graduated as a movement useful to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the Ceylon Tamils from the Tamils in South India. All these developments took place at least fifty years before the Buddhist revival in the south of the country reached its pinnacle as a political force (ibid). But, closer to independence and in the post-independence phase of national politics, Tamil nationalism has played a role as an opposition to Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, in rejuvenating Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in the national political sphere and provided encouragement for advancing the Sinhalese hegemonic political project.

The next section of this chapter attempts to briefly explain the intersectionality and mutual reinforcing effect of Tamil and Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in politics, the former as an anti-hegemonic process and the latter as a hegemonic process. Further, this section will attempt to demonstrate how the nature and the trajectories of Tamil nationalism was used by the Sinhalese political elites to pursue the hegemonic political project and advanced the conditions to establish the political domination of Sinhalese right-wing elites.

Studies on Tamil nationalism are few and far between. Cheran suggests this situation reflects the general marginalised position of Tamils in the country (2001:3). Construction of the discourse of Tamil nationalism was not confined to the works of the Tamil scholars; it is an outcome of the works of Tamil scholars as well as of Sinhalese scholars who often emphasised the defensive and

reactive nature of nationalism.⁵⁸ There is a general tendency in the post-colonial mainstream political discourse of nationalism to emphasise the idea of competing Sinhala-Buddhist and Tamil nationalisms (Uyangoda 2000:64). As a result of focusing on antagonistic nature of two nationalisms, the numerous factional conflicts among the elite groups in both ethnicities over domination and hegemony building have rarely received attention (De Silva 2005:454–5). Further, this aspect of elite politics has been subdued as a result of application of the dominant inter-ethnic framework that highlights the actual and perceived cultural differences, irreconcilable differences in the primordial identities of the Sinhalese and Tamils.

The mainstream narrative of Tamil nationalism is generally articulated in a conventional manner by emphasising and analysing its defensive and reactive nature and focusing on the victimhood of the Tamils (Kearney 1985:904). Feeding the fears of the Sinhalese, these discourses often include the intimate relationship between Dravidian and Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism (Kearney 1985:903; Krishna 1999:61). As one politician contended, ‘...in this country the problem of the Tamils is not a minority problem. The Sinhalese are the minority in *Dravidastan*. We are carrying on a struggle for our national existence against the *Dravidastan* majority’ (parliamentary debate quoted in Kearney 1985:903). The idea of victimhood, the issue of territoriality, the nexus of Tamil militancy and Tamil nationalism and ‘Navalar centrism’, are a few important themes that are often highlighted in the Tamil nationalist debate (Cheran 2001:37). The victimhood narrative has been especially helpful in understanding the post-colonial origins and manifestations of Tamil nationalism and in gaining moral legitimisation of a possible new state born out of blood and sacrifice (Cheran 2001: 3–4). This notion was also emphasised in the literature targeting a global readership, the other major player in Sri Lanka’s political conflict (Roberts 2005:5).

Many public and scholarly discourses of the two nationalisms contend that Tamil nationalism as a factor that strengthened Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and vice versa. In the beginning, Tamil nationalism was articulated by the Tamil bourgeois faction (Roberts 2005:4). S.V.J. Chelvanayagam, Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Ponnambalam Arunachalam are of special importance. It is not only that they were of bourgeois origin but they were also from the *Vellala* caste.

Similar to the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist discourse, over decades, in the making and remaking of Tamil nationalism as an attempt for nation building among the Tamils and a resistance movement, serious omissions and author subjectivities were encountered (Cheran 2001; Roberts 2005). These omissions include: the works of the Jaffna youth congress; the main counteraction to the Navalar-Ramanathan tradition; and the anti-caste social movement in the 1920s that became active in the 40s and reached its zenith in the 60s (Cheran 2001:6). As Cheran further notes, ‘...it is ironic that the conventional Tamil narrative that often begins by recollecting events in the 1920s – the rift between the Tamil and Sinhala elite has completely ignored and erases this subaltern trends by privileging the Tamil elite discourse on nationalism’ (2001:6). This observation on the Tamil nationalist discourse is similar to the situation of the Sinhala-Buddhist discourse as discussed earlier in this chapter. Nevertheless, these omissions can be partly interpreted as discursive practices and confluence of elite forces from the political and intellectual community from both Sinhala and Tamil communities. By so doing, public legitimacy to the nationalism discourses of the respective political elite groups was obtained.

The literature written by Tamil scholars on the early period of Tamil nationalism provides evidence for the above claim, a claim that highlights the inter-ethnic elite solidarity during the early colonial period and its disintegration in the late colonial and post-colonial periods (Thiruchelvam 1984; Wilson 1988, 2000; Thangarajah 2000). In the early post-colonial years, Tamil nationalism gained form and momentum in a climate of grossly discriminatory policies and harsh repression by the Sinhalese state (Nesiah 2001:20). As one respondent to this research who attempted to trace the subaltern elements of Tamil nationalism shared:

...later in the years, Tamil youth took up arms against a particular system that maintains public power for the benefit of few. The Tamil youth were fed up with Tamil elites who played a double game⁵⁹ with them. The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact, the Dudley-Chelvanayakam pact could not stop them. They thought the Tamil elites are playing a double game. They go to Colombo and say one thing and once they secure power or win elections, they say something else to the people there. There is a saying 'idle mind is devil's playground' which was the case with the Tamils. Amirthalingam, Sivasubramaniam⁶⁰ lost their credibility, and then the fight began

Despite these different views expressed in the intellectual discourse of Tamil nationalism, based on the actual experiences of the Sri Lankan Tamil community, their continued systematic marginalisation from mutually acceptable political power-sharing and resource-sharing mechanisms in the post-colonial phase of politics were cited as important reasons for the birth of contemporary version of Tamil nationalism and LTTE militarism. These experiences were repeatedly emphasised by many Tamils based in Jaffna and Colombo whom the researcher interviewed for this study. As a Sinhalese scholar who attempted to note the incompatibility and the continued contending effect between the two nationalism '... while Sinhala nationalism is born out of the past, Tamil nationalism is born out of the present. But this does not imply that because it has emerged recently, Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism may be ephemeral. History cannot be reversed, the sequence of traumatic events since independence cannot be undone, and the nationalism that has emerged from such a cauldron cannot be put back' (De Silva quoted in Nesiah 2001: 20).

The mid-1970s marked an important trajectory for Tamil nationalism. From this period onwards, a forceful articulation of Tamil nationalism with a separatist overtone and launching of a systematic resistance movement was observed. This transformation was caused by the changed direction of the internal dynamics of Tamil politics of this period. The birth of the LTTE and launching of Tamil military nationalism can be cited as the main reason. This forceful embarkation of LTTE into Tamil politics resulted in the gradual disappearance of influence of Tamil elites in Tamil politics. As widely observed, Tamil youth militancy was not only a factor that altered the path of Tamil nationalism, it was also a factor that altered the path of Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony building and the overall political landscape of the country. In the popular discourse, Tamil militarism is also regarded as a factor that strengthened Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a hegemony building process among the Sinhalese that was effectively used for post-colonial state building as well. On the birth of Tamil militancy, Professor Sivathamby suggests three main reasons, which highlight the multiple historical locations it represents. Firstly, Tamil militant uprising is presented as a resistance force against the leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF),⁶¹ secondly, as a reaction to the oppressive acts of the government and lastly as a response to the repressive acts of the security forces (2004:15). Further, refuting some established notions of the origins of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka, Sivathamby also notes that Tamil militants learned their lessons from the post-colonialist, anti-imperialist and various liberation struggles of this period but not from any nationalist organisation based in Tamil Nadu, which qualifies it to be called as a militant movement of Marxist trends than a racial one (2004:15). Others who agree with this interpretation suggest that the very concept of Eelam⁶² and the main goals of LTTE were derived from the material conditions that pushed the LTTE to advocate for a more socialist equilibrium model for the new state (Shastri 1990:74).

As can be seen there are different views among the Tamils and the Sinhalese on the origins of Tamil nationalism and Tamil militancy. It is also observed that the scholars have difficulty in separating Tamil nationalism from Tamil militancy. What is commonly agreed in the south of the country where the Sinhalese majority live is that Tamil militarism changed the course of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and also played an influential role in militaristic transformation of the state and society. Perhaps a note of caution of such general statements is needed, because, such statements are based on internal dynamics of state-in-society relations only. However, after the early

1980s, when looking at the transformation of global state-in-society relations, there are other reasons underlying this direction of nationalisms in Sri Lanka. This research argues that Tamil militarism is only one important factor in the process of militarisation of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. As observed by Hardt and Nergi (2000), who placed the issue of nationalism in the wider geo-political context, this research is inclined to suggest that militarisation of both nationalisms in Sri Lanka is a manifestation of 'the Empire'⁶³(2000: 43–5). In Hardt and Nergi's thesis of empire, forces of globalisation generate a massive degree of political and economic deregulation, a marked decline in social and economic planning, an expansion of political fragmentation and the construction of more centralised structures of authority, and emphasised incidents of reaction and violence (2000:3). Therefore, nationalist movements are part of the forceful expression of the new dependency. In Sri Lanka, for example, by the late 1970s, local and global economic changes resulted in a major economic downturn and hardships, which affected both local communities and challenged the political elites. One of the common effects of this transformation was the alteration of the previously established political leniencies (Bastian 2001:2) and also the modalities of obtaining consent and consensus from the masses to the elites' rule.

Considering this mixture of local and global geopolitical realities and militant articulation of Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms in this period, this research argues that the strengthening of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist position and its forceful militaristic re-articulation cannot be solely explained along the local trajectories of Tamil nationalism and vice versa. Embarking on an aggressive path of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism was a way of countering the developing anti-hegemonic Tamil forces as well as anti-hegemonic forces within the Sinhalese community too. Of the latter, the ruthless suppression of trade union actions in 1981 by Jayawardena regime is of significance. The emerging new Tamil nationalist-military force was therefore a 'political bonus' for the political elites in legitimising their authority and aggressive persuasion of hegemony.

In addition to the above, the mainstream interpretation of the two nationalisms – the popular notion of competing nationalisms and mutual constituency effect of Sinhala and Tamil nationalism – is the result of several other factors. Since the 1980s the ignoring of local discourse and the application international theories is of importance. More specifically, the strict application of the iron law of ethnicity and the notion of resource conflicts are other examples (Bandarage 2009:5). These theories overwhelmingly focus on the culturally based ethnic differences and the resource-based inter-ethnic antagonisms. These ill-equipped theories ignore other dimensions internal to the discourses of Tamil and Sinhala-Buddhist nationalisms. Meanwhile the emerging egalitarian political/intellectual projects⁶⁴ launched by certain prominent segments in the Sinhala and Tamil intelligentsia and the continued calls they made for inter-ethnic harmony have also strengthened the mainstream political discourses of competing nationalisms and aggressive persuasion of hegemony building by using ethnic nationalisms. These calls seemed to have been influenced by the general trends of international discourse making that advocated peace and democracy. This mixture of discourses, the assumptions and objectives underpinning the discourses and discursive practices seems to denote Gramscian work on intellectuals and their role in fashioning the ideology of the ruling class⁶⁵ (Gramsci in Hoare & Nowell Smith 1971:12).

Since the late 1970s, in a general political context marked by deteriorating social and ethnic relations, subscribing consciously and unconsciously to the mainstream political discourse on nationalism become a profitable project for the Sinhalese elites and the Sinhalese subalterns. Writing on the intellectuals' subscription to this project, Roberts has shown, emphasising the inter-ethnic nature of nationalisms of this period as a legitimisation exercise embarked by certain members in the mainstream intellectual community who did not wish to be seen or be treated as traitors by their ethnic communities (Roberts 2005:3). This brings back us to the point of Gramsci's work on hegemony that emphasise that it is not only the manipulation, but role of coercion and the presence of threat of use of coercion playing a role in hegemony building. What is im-

portant to note in this regard is the lasting impacts left by the intellectual community by making certain choices under various dynamics in state-in-society relations of this period, especially on reinforcing a binary view of Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms and justifying the forceful political use of it in the elites' political strategy. Over time, as the Tamil military struggle for self-determination entered into a violent path, these discursive versions gained organic legitimacy and made common sense to the majority in the Sinhalese and Tamil community. The military events after the late 1970s were interpreted applying this inter-ethnic framework. As this research finds, the ethnic essentialism⁶⁶ articulated in Tamil and Sinhala nationalism gained immense currency because of the utilitarian effect it served in politics and scholarship. During the interviews the author had with the younger generation of scholars from the Sinhala community, there is hardly any willingness amongst the majority to understand nationalisms outside the inter-ethnic framework or study the element of hegemony embedded in it. This research regards this situation as a result of successfulness of rationalisation process of ethnic nationalism by the Sinhalese political elites. However, this research is mindful of the fact that, given the circumstance the interviews were conducted, (here referring to the imminent victory of the Government forces against the LTTE), apart from being manipulated, the fear of consequences for not subscribing to the political discourse at this time could have played a major role in expressing such views. Regardless of such distinctions between consent creation through manipulation, willing subscription and fear and coercion, both means comprise the overall strategy of hegemony building.

Predicting the future trajectory of Tamil and Sinhala nationalisms as hegemony building processes that have been used for fashioning the state building project, there are several points worth mentioning. After May 2009, the local political context is marked by the absence of the LTTE, the main anti-hegemonic force to the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony building. It is also noted that there is an absence of a meaningful opposition within the Sinhalese community to challenge the current post-war state building project firmly captured by the right-wing elite faction. It is also noted that the coalition building among the political elites in the Sinhalese community has taken a new strategic direction, by which state patronage is freely offered to those who comply with the ruling regime. This new strategy includes searching for a new enemy to pit against Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism that can best capitalise on the triumph of Sinhalese discourse of war for peace. As apparent from the numerous unfolding local and global scenarios, the Tamil diaspora and the western liberal international community are baptised as the new enemies of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state. The charges of war crimes against the current regime (constituted of a number of political parties from all ethnic groups and ex-LTTE cadres), are increasingly being used by the ruling political elites to give new momentum to Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in local politics that is likely to advance their edge in politics and hegemony-authoritarian building that seeks legitimacy largely through ideological hegemony.⁶⁷ Despite the economic hardships faced by many, the current attempts underway for the institutionalising of a new security state policy has been successful in commanding the consent (without consensus) of the majority Sinhalese. This research suggests it is largely thanks to the role of intellectual and the members of the civil society. As Chatterjee rightly observed, the role of civil society in South Asia in constructing the state and reproduction of statist projects has a long history, to which the national security is no exception too (1996: 284). According to the findings of this research, this renewed phase of unconditional and spontaneous consent extended to the political leadership (importantly across generations) will undoubtedly advance cementing the conditions for hegemony building and hegemonic-authoritarian state building. As witnessed already, the rise of any, even minor, form of opposition to this project is brutally cracked down by using the coercive apparatus of the state and various other repressive measures developed outside the realm of the legal state. Conversely, those who comply with the hegemonic project are rewarded with state patronage. There are enough incentives built in the state system and state practices for who comply and enough sanctions and negative consequences are implied for those who do not

comply. In light of above, there are enough evidences to suggest that the power of discourses of Tamil and Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism have not completely ran out of their steam in politics and politics of state building. These discourses will be modified, promoted or abandoned (if necessary) to produce and reproduce the conditions necessary to pursue the hegemonic state project and change the course of democratic state building.

2.8 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, in order to examine the case of Sinhalese political alliance building, hegemony building and state building in Sri Lanka, an adequate understanding of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a hegemony building process was examined. This chapter emphasised the need to include a non-inter-ethnic view of the historical development of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. For understanding of hegemonic formations found on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in the nineteenth century, this chapter argued in favour of the relevance of class and dynamics of class relations of this period. This chapter found that Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism has been invented as a key mobilisation tool by the dominant economic classes of the nineteenth century who struggled to secure their economic dominance from the colonial intervention. By using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology these economic forces not only fulfilled their narrow class-based interests and obtained legitimacy to their ideological, cultural and moral leadership, but they also successfully incorporated the subaltern masses into colonial national politics and built cross-class alliances, favourable for establishing their legitimacy in the post-independent period.

On one hand, Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism as a means of hegemony building among the Sinhalese showed success in bringing them together, on the other, this process generated adverse effects in building an egalitarian society and democratic state in the post-independent period. Establishment of vertical and horizontal inequalities and institutionalising these inequalities in the state structure and state-in-society relations are few effects worth highlighting. This chapter also showed that by using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and by giving prominence to ethno-religious identities, the dominant Sinhalese political elites have been successfully manipulated the economic and social struggles of the masses for upward social mobility and suppressed any discussion on the exploitive and manipulative relations between the elites and masses. This situation led to the creation of synthetic class solidarity, class-for-itself among the members of the ruling class and class-in-itself among the subalterns, by which the relationships of domination-subordination, manipulation and coercion were successfully claimed by the political elites. These cross-class coalitions formed based on ideology, worked in favour of the elites who were struggling to establish their political legitimacy in the subsequent decades. Given the hegemonising effect of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism among the majority Sinhalese, the dominant Sinhalese political elites turned it into a trusted mobilisation and hegemony building process.

With the use of Sinhala-Buddhism as a mobilisation strategy, Sinhalese political elites has been able to develop a common-sensical understanding of the state among the lower class masses as a Sinhala-Buddhist state. By embracing this notion of the state the masses draw ideological satisfaction, whereas the elites draw political and economic benefits. Further by surrendering the consent through elites' strategies of manipulation, coercion and threat of use of coercion, the majority of Sinhalese have actively participated in creating important conditions conducive for hegemonic state building and arrest drifting towards democratic state building. Although the masses believe the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state (will) serve/s their interests, this chapter shows that this project has brought adverse outcomes on their ability to make meaningful claims for the state dominated by the elites. As illuminated in the discussion on Tamil nationalism, when and where the hegemonic project pursued by the Sinhalese political elites is challenged and under threat, elites do not hesitate to unleash the state's coercive powers to deal with opposition. What is important to note in relation to theory of hegemony building is that the hegemony building in Sri

Lanka is equally constituted of manipulation and coercion that is applied not only to suppress and force consent to the oppositional forces in the ethnic minority groups, but also to such forces within the Sinhala community.

Taking stock of what Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism has actually achieved in terms of improving real living conditions of the masses, this chapter claims that as much as the Tamils, the broader Sinhalese-Buddhist community as a loser in this hegemony building process. On the one hand, the underlying principle of inequality advocated in Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and the effective use of it in realising manipulative politics has not left room or capacity to address the compelling issues pertaining to deep democracy in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, while the masses being manipulated or assimilated to the hegemony-building project through coercion and threat of use of coercion continually, the elite politics is increasingly capturing by the right-wing forces in politics. This development suggests that in future the broader nature of the state in its image, practice and discourse getting further consolidated according to the needs and interests of these right-wing forces and dangerously going in the direction of authoritarian-hegemonic state. Therefore, breaking down the hegemony building and exposing the real functions of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in politics has become a timely need and seems to be as the only way forward for building of a democratic state. In the post-war period, where Sinhala-Buddhist has gained new lease of life among the Sinhalese and absence of opposition to this project shows no sign of progress in the direction of democratic state building.

Notes

¹ Understood as a relationship of nationalism to a certain religious belief or dogma. In the context of nineteenth-century Sri Lanka, this relationship was often made between nationalism and Buddhism.

² Often identified with the nationalist struggles or struggles for independence waged in the colonial territories under the western colonialism.

³ Grievances theory focuses on ethnic and religious divisions, political repression and inequality as the basis of ethnic violence (Collier & Hoefler 2002)

⁴ Ethnic outbidding refers to an auction-like process in which Sri Lankan politicians strive to outdo one another by playing on their majority communities' fears and ambitions (De Votta 2002).

⁵ In this research definition of class is based on the simplest notions in Marxism. In Marxism class is mainly defined in relation to the ownership of means of production (land, capital). The broadly identified two classes – the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production and the proletariat, who provides the labour.

⁶ Refer to De Mel (2001) for a profound elaboration of the linkage between gender and nationalism in Sri Lanka. Her work challenges the dominant gender-blind lenses applied on the nationalist discourse in Sri Lanka. Her work illuminates how gender is mediated through the intersections of cultural productions such as Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and politics.

⁷ Galtung identifies eight such social fault-lines.

⁸ Galtung refers to deep culture as means that automated, forgotten, or displaced assumptions and attitudes residing in the collective unconscious, and to which individuals and groups, quasi 'axio-dramatically', fall back to when faced with deep conflict and crisis.

⁹ In contemporary discussions on civil society, it has a different meaning than Gramsci's. While Gramsci identified civil society as an element of political society, in contemporary debates, civil society is identified as an independent force.

¹⁰ By applying beautiful souls Bastian refers to those educated segment of the academia that place themselves above rest of the society, alleging the latter as lacking tolerance and of having racist tendencies (2001:32).

¹¹ Passive revolution refers to a situation whereby molecular changes progressively modify the pre-existing composition of forces and hence become a matrix of new changes (Gramsci 1971:109)

¹² In the colonial context and to a certain extent in the post-colonial context of Sri Lanka, the bourgeois class does not possess the same amount of wealth and ownership of the means of production of a bour-

geoisie in Western Europe. For this reason, sometimes the Sri Lanka's bourgeoisies are compared to the petty bourgeoisie class in Western Europe. In this thesis, the term bourgeoisie is simply used to denote a wealthy class that owns means of production (i.e., land and capital).

¹³Refers to mechanisms through which people obtain access to resources, and access to the social products produced from those resources.

¹⁴ In non-Marxian language, national popular would mean collective will. According to Gramsci, there are several preconditions required for the emergence of a national-popular collective will. The desire for a common change by the individuals and mass incorporation of peasant farmers bursts simultaneously into political life. The participation of the masses in political life is of vital importance for the development of a national-popular collective will (<http://neogramscian.blogspot.com/2011/01/what-is-national-popular-collective.html>).

¹⁵ Cultural nationalism means giving prominence to cultural factors (as opposed to civic nationalism that gives primacy to a 'general will') to fashion the nationalist ideology.

¹⁶ Borrowing from Kapferer, this research understands ontology as an orientation to the world and to existence by which these make sense; where ideology is understood as a reasoned, rational and conscious process: the deliberate taking up of ideas about the world and the systematic ordering of these ideas as logically coherent bodies of interpretation (Kapferer 1988:79).

¹⁷ Class model is defined by reference to a shared position in the organisation of production and a solidarity deriving from a consciousness of that shared position (Roberts 1974: no page number). For an elaborated scheme of the elite model consult the same source of reference.

¹⁸ First refers to the identities one is born into, the latter refers to the identities one can obtain.

¹⁹ His main focus has been to examine elite formation and their influence in the nationalist movement. My interpretation of his work suggests, within his elite schema, the concept of class is embedded.

²⁰ Chatterjee defines eastern nationalism as nationalism that is drawn into a culture alien to it. In his words, '...peoples recently drawn into a civilization hitherto alien to them, and whose ancestral cultures are not shaped to success and excellence by these cosmopolitan and increasingly dominant standards' (1986:23).

²¹ For the full volume his public speeches, refer to Ananada Guruge's 1965 book, *Return to the Righteousness: A collection of speeches, essays and letters of the Angarika Dharmapala*, Government Press, Ceylon.

²² *Sangha* is the Buddhist monastic order in Sri Lanka.

²³ For details of Dharmapala's rural economic development proposal, see Seneviratne 1999, chapter 3

²⁴ This point can be later elaborated by bringing examples from the contemporary times as well.

²⁵ Dharmapala constantly referred to them as idiots, meat-eating, whisky-drinking, superstitious people (See Seneviratne 1999: 35–6)

²⁶ Some argue that this is because the kings of Sri Lanka had their lineage to India. Therefore, having a firm social base to their authority was derived from the *Sangha* and extending state patronage to *Sangha*.

²⁷ By any means, do I wish to claim that there are genuine Sinhala-Buddhist nationalists in the country.

²⁸ For the various schemata employed to stratify the colonial society and the Ceylonese society until end of 1950s, refer to Roberts 1974.

²⁹ The colonial bourgeoisie is the class whose economic wealth is directly linked to the colonial expansion.

³⁰ The comprador bourgeoisie is a fraction of the bourgeois class whose interests are constrictively linked to foreign imperialist capital and whose loyalties are completely bound politically and ideologically to foreign capital (Paultanzas 1973).

³¹ During the Portuguese (1505–1658), Dutch (1685–1798) as well as British (1802–1948) colonisations.

³² This regional distinction is still prevalent in Sri Lanka. The people in the Kandyan areas (known as Nuwara Kalaviya) consider themselves superior to the people from the rest of the country. This is an important factor that is considered in politics as well as in marriage and the hierarchical ordering of the *Sangha*.

³³ Here meant the non-interventionist stance they take in the economic sphere.

³⁴ Under the section on Tamil nationalism, more details on the Tamil faction will be discussed.

³⁵ The founder of SLFP, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, is of low-country origin. His marriage to Sirimavo Ratwatte of up-country aristocratic origin elevated his low-country position. In Sri Lankan politics, strategic alliances through marriage are common as a way of enhancing social status.

³⁶ Refers to a phenomenon where universally known socialism that was adapted and adjusted to suit the local conditions.

³⁷ The Senanayake family belonged to Sri Lankan aristocracy from the time of British colonial rule of Ceylon.

³⁸ This electoral political coalition was called MEP and consisted of five social forces, i.e., *Sangha, Weda, Guru, Govi, Kamkaru* (Monks, indigenous Ayurveda physicians, teachers, peasants and labourers).

³⁹ The MEP coalition constituted of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Bhasha Peeramuna and Viplaavakaree Lanka Sama Samaja Party (VLSSP)

⁴⁰ Refers to the local bourgeoisie who act like their British masters. The literal translation of the term is the *Brown British*.

⁴¹ 'Passive' means lack of will and energy, and actions that are unresisting, submissive and complacent.

⁴² The Sinhala Only Act is a law that was passed in the Sri Lankan Parliament in 1956. The law made Sinhala, which is the language of Sri Lanka's majority Sinhalese community and is spoken by over 70 per cent of Sri Lanka's population, the only official language of the country.

⁴³ For statistics see Snodgrass in Hettige 2000.

⁴⁴ Some argue that since the time Tamil elites left the Ceylon National Congress two years after its establishment as a future mode of representation, the structure of the political competition and the pattern of political party formation has been exclusively ethnic. This had resulted in the party system revolving around competition between the two main Sinhalese parties for Sinhala votes on the one hand and the two main Tamil parties for Tamil votes on the other. This pattern continued until 1972 when the Federal party and the Tamil congress merged (Horowitz 1993:4).

⁴⁵ After the 1971 insurrection JVP was banned by the ruling regime, which led them to operate underground. In 1988 the Jayawardene government lifted the ban.

⁴⁶ This research understands that the fundamental interest of the ruling class is to reproduce its exploitative relations vis-à-vis the producing class. JVP joining the ruling class is marked by an important change in the overall structure of the ruling class as it created a non-bourgeoisie faction within its membership.

⁴⁷ According to Guy Standing 'The Precariat' is people living and working precariously, usually in a series of short-term jobs, without recourse to stable occupational identities, stable social protection or protective regulations relevant to them. He describes them as a dangerous class (2011).

⁴⁸ Monaragala District, located in the Uva province, is inhabited by Sinhalese, and is identified as one of the most underdeveloped and poverty-stricken districts of Sri Lanka.

⁴⁹ Social formation is a Marxist concept. There are several interpretations of this concept. It refers to the concrete, historical articulation between the capitalist mode of production, persisting pre-capitalist modes of production, and the institutional context of the economy that exploit and controls the capitalist mode of production (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2008) |

⁵⁰ I am grateful to Dr David Dunham, who pointed this out during a personal meeting.

⁵¹ In Sinhala, *Karumaya* is a burden or sometimes referred to as unfortunate state of destiny.

⁵² It is important to note that the *Sangha* is not a monolithic entity in Sri Lanka. Especially in the Sri Lankan political realm, *Sangha* is divided on a range of issues concerning secular life. One such issue is the participation of monks in politics (Seneviratne 2001).

⁵³ By 'original', this respondent meant the Bandaranaike period.

⁵⁴ They were Gomin Dayasiri, Champika Ranwaka, Suriyarachchi and Nalin De Silva.

⁵⁵ In the 2004 parliamentary general elections JHU secured nine seats, in 2010, they contested elections with the main ruling coalition, and its candidates secured a lesser number of seats than in the previous election <http://www.slections.gov.lk/general.html>.

⁵⁶ Inspired by Tambiah 1992.

⁵⁷ The latest attempt reported from Sri Lanka is the cabinet decision to mandate the Sinhala version of the national anthem in all parts of the country. Earlier, the North and the East could sing the Tamil version of the national anthem.

⁵⁸ For a detailed comparative analysis of their work, see Michael Roberts' 2005 book, *Narrating Tamil Nationalism; Subjectivities and Issues*, Vijitha Yapa Publications, Sri Lanka.

⁵⁹ By double game, this respondent referred to what these elites say to the people in Jaffna being one thing (promising to address the issues of the Tamils by using all the necessary means) and what they say to the Sinhalese political elites (appeasing and collaborating) in Colombo being another thing.

⁶⁰ Amirthalingam was a leading Tamil politician, Member of Parliament and the leader of the opposition. In 1989, he was assassinated by the LTTE. Sivasubramian is a contemporary of Amirthalingam and another leader in Tamil politics.

⁶¹ Tamil United Liberation Front is a political party organised in 1972 by several Tamil political groups, including the All Ceylon Tamil Congress. In 1976, TULF, or TUF was joined by the Federal Party. The TUF changed its name to the TULF and adopted a demand for an independent state to be known as the 'secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam.

⁶² Eelam is translated as separate state.

⁶³ Empire is a concept that attempts to theorise an ongoing transition from a 'modern' phenomenon of imperialism, centred around individual nation-states, to an emergent postmodern construct created among ruling powers which the authors call Empire (the capital letter is distinguishing), with different forms of warfare ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_\(book\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_(book)))

⁶⁴ Author means a project concerning a moral commitment to bring about equality of opportunity for material wellbeing and guarantee of descent standard of living. This project aims at reducing the inequalities based on access to resources and processes for acquiring resources. In other words, this means deep democracy (Kirby 2001:6).

⁶⁵ Gramsci identifies two categories of intellectuals, traditional and organic. An organic intellectual is a bourgeois scholar who has strong roots in his/her community, working to maintain links with local issues and struggles that connect to the people and their experiences. Traditional intellectuals imagine themselves as a separate entity and have no role in the political class struggle. This category of intellectuals has strong alliances with the dominant ideology and the ideology of the ruling class (Gramsci in Hoare & Nowell Smith 1971:12).

⁶⁶ Refers to making belief that ethnicity is the underlying and unchanging essence in nationalism.

⁶⁷ For a detailed discussion of this relationship, refer to Sim 2007 that analysed the case of Singapore.

3.1 Introduction

An approach to study the state that captures processes of interaction and the practices connecting the state and society is useful for unpacking the case of state building. These various processes connect multiple, seemingly distant struggles of various societal forces for determining everyday affairs of life. When deciding who gets, what and how (simply understood as politics), these struggles are being used for establishing domination, bring about change and determining the boundaries of political incorporation and negotiations. All these are important for directing the state-building project into, if not a specific direction, into multiple directions. Unfortunately the 'everydayness' of many of these processes and the attitude towards them as 'politics as usual' often ignore systematically studying them and in a detailed manner. In his theory of hegemony, Gramsci referred to this situation as 'common sense', a crucial step in hegemony building. Therefore, the scale of the influence of such processes on transformation of an entire web of state-in-society relations often goes missing in analysis.

In light of the above theoretical considerations illuminated in state in society model and Gramscian concept of hegemony, this chapter discusses the patronage system, directed by political parties, as a key hegemony building process used by the Sinhalese political elites that influenced the trajectories of state building in Sri Lanka.² This chapter will illuminate the role of patronage politics in political alliance building, consent building as well as state building and the tensions patronage political system has created in realising a democratic state in the country. By examining various dynamics in the state-in-society relations, this chapter attempts to show how patronage politics and the institutionalisation of the patronage system by the Sinhalese political elites have been aids for advancing the domination of right-wing politics. Although it is the economic underpinning of patronage politics that often captures attention, this chapter will show how it is an integral ideological part of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and the intricate relationship between the material and ideological basis of the hegemony building pursued by the elites. This relationship exposts what Gramsci always insisted on hegemony, that:

hegemony is not exclusively an ideological phenomenon. There can be no hegemony without the decisive nucleus of the economic. On the other hand, do not fall into the trap of the old mechanical economism and believe that if you can get hold of the economy, you can move the rest of your life... the question of hegemony is always a question of new cultural order... The notion of a historic block is precisely different from that of a pacified, homogeneous ruling class. It entails a different conception of how social forces and movements, in their diversity, can be articulated into strategic alliances (Hall 1988:145).

The discussion on patronage politics in this chapter is organised under two main periods, i.e., pre- and post-1977 period of state building, under which historical and empirical evidences gathered through field interviews and the literature survey are organised. The following sections of this chapter sheds light on various junctures in elite and subaltern politics during which party di-

rected patronage system came to be conceived as a strategy and an integral process of hegemony building and its influence in directing the trajectories of state building into an undemocratic path.

3.2 Patronage in the Sri Lankan Literature

Somewhat contrary to the take on the issue of patronage politics in this research that locates it as one of the main tools used for hegemony building by the Sinhalese political elites, the majority of the respondents of this research did not consider patronage as a useful phenomenon for exploring politics or it as an important element of the political strategy used for state building. They simply regard this phenomenon as an everyday aspect of politics or ‘that is the way we are and that is how things are’. This attitude can be best alluded to Gramsci’s point on common sensitising in hegemony building strategy. The same can also be explained along Bourdieu’s discussion on *doxa*. This aspect of common sensitising was famously encapsulated in Bourdieu’s own words as ‘... what goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned’ (1977:166). Given the everydayness of patronage politics and the low level of attention it receives in public discourse, in Sri Lanka patronage politics often goes unquestioned.

In contrast to the wealth of scholarship produced on patronage in Africa and Latin America, the contribution made by local literature on patronage politics does not seem to have reached the expected level of discussion. This gap in the local literature appears to be due to some internal and external conditions unique to Sri Lanka. As far as the internal conditions are concerned, the overemphasis of the ethnic and ideological factors in state building and politics in literature stands out. Also the tendency of focusing on high politics of the country’s ruling elites appear to have diverted the attention away from the political communication, inclusion and alliance formation mediated through political patronage between the peripheries and the centre (political elites). By paying equal attention to the centre and the periphery (ies), and the various processes that connect these two arenas at everyday level has a greater potential of illuminating patronage politics as a hegemony-building process that has been used for state building. In other words, instead of looking at state building through a lens of state and society where the hegemony building through patronage politics easily slips away from the big picture of politics, application of state-in-society model seems more appropriate.

Further, as far as the internal conditions are concerned, the emphasis laid on direct violence and use of state’s coercive mechanisms for state building seems to have played a role too. Therefore the seemingly softer and less harmful processes such as patronage politics pursued had hardly gained attention. For any focus on hegemony building, softer strategies targeting consent and alliance building and direct coercion are equally important. Focusing on direct violence could also be a byproduct of the overall experience of the state-in-society relations, in which, over time, a conscious or subconscious scholarly passion has been developed. Besides, the experiences of the intellectual community who had been subject to state’s direct violence, sparking an organic interest in (re)problematising the personal experiences of direct violence might have subdued the interest in exploring patronage politics as a topic of study. Lastly, as Gramsci pointed out, intellectual elites becoming members of the political elites project of hegemony building could be another reason as to why nuisance exploration of patronage politics in state building has received lip service.

As far as the external factors are concerned, since the early 1980s, a lethargic attention paid on patronage politics in the overall scholarship is observed. This lethargy is caused by dominant application of ‘iron law of ethnicity’ in the 1980s and its wider application for interpreting social conflicts and conflicts concerning distribution of resources in the developing world (Bandarage 2009:5). In this context of ethnic politics, patronage politics as a mere mobilisation tool was widely identified (Thiruchelvam 1984:189–9; Thangarajah 2003). However, the hegemonising

effect of this process does not seem to have fully unpacked. One of the reasons as to why the scholarly work in this period fell short in fully unpacking patronage politics could be due the optimism and shared prediction made on political patronage rendering obsolete in the face of rapid spread of political and economic modernisation and aggressive phase of state restructuring launched at global level in the late 1980s (Roniger 2004:353). In this period, the heavy focus laid on establishing the liberal state institutions and formal institutions as the ideal and the legitimate arenas of interest satisfaction may have been another reason as to why patronage politics received less attention.

Apart from the works of Brow (1988), Dunham (1983), Spencer (1990) and Swaris (1973) on some aspects on everyday patronage politics and the party directed patronage system, there are a few authors who have taken a renewed interest in patronage politics recently (Goodhand et al 2005, 2009; Korf 2010). However the body of work produced by the latter mentioned scholars mainly dealt within the context of ‘Tsunami politics’,³ which explores the linkages between patronage politics and international disaster aid distribution.

In addition to the first-hand data gathered through field interviews, this chapter relies on the observations made by Khan (2000, 1998), Piattoni (2000), Archer (1990), Keefer (2005, 2009), Shefner (2001), Tompson (2007), Van de Walle (2009), Epstein 2009, Hopkin (2006), Fox (1994) and Szeftel (2000) to get a general idea of patronage politics and ways in which it is being used and influenced state building and alliance building in different countries. Their works are considered as the fourth wave of research on the subject that specifically situate the issue of patronage politics in the debates on post-war state building, failed states, and problems of capitalism, governance, democracy and citizenship that has a relevance to the case of Sri Lanka. These studies draw convincing empirical examples from a number of countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East to demonstrate the importance of patronage politics in functioning of the contemporary political systems. Their works suggest the continued presence of patronage politics and its effects in shaping state-in-society relations and state building processes in contemporary times having a high degree of relevance to the case argued here.

3.2.1 Where did patronage politics come from?

In Sri Lanka, patronage politics is not a contemporary phenomenon. It has its roots in the pre-colonial times. During various phases of political transition in terms of colonial encounters with the Portuguese, Dutch and the British and after gaining political independence, the patronage relationships of the past continued to exist (Jayasundara-Smits 2010:31). Over time, these relations have transformed, heightened and graduated as important mechanisms on deciding who gets what and how. Contrary to the earlier phases of its existence, during the colonial and post-colonial periods, patronage politics came to be manifested in various forms all that were aligned to pursue political alliance building by the political elites. In pursuit of hegemony, its value as a process or a mechanism of mobilisation and consensus building with the lower classes, it has always perceived as a non-threatening component in the overall political strategy. However from the point of view of hegemony, patronage politics as a hegemony building strategy cannot be solely seen as an innocent or a manipulative process. As Gramsci pointed out, in any hegemony building process, there is an element of coercion and threat of use of coercion. In light of this theoretical formulation, when examining patronage politics as a hegemony building process in Sri Lanka, it should also deserve exploration of both these dimensions as pointed out by Gramsci. In the post-colonial period that is marked by various struggles of the elites at the centre for political power and economic struggles in the periphery under a challenging situation where state accumulation and economic growth has encountered significant challenges, patronage politics has become a point where these struggles and the interests have been harmonised. This situation endorses Stuart Hall’s emphasis laid on ‘impossibility of establishing hegemony with the decisive

nucleus of economic' (1988:145). As observed in this research, over decades, the initial potential patronage politics showed as a successful political incorporation and mass mobilisation strategy has become to be repeatedly adjusted and reproduced deliberately in pursuit of hegemony building.

There are different views expressed as to why patronage politics continued and established as an important linkage, practice and a process in politics, state building copoted by hegemony building and state-in-society relations. As pointed out by one respondent, patronage politics is so prevalent in Sri Lanka as a result of people's experience with colonialism. In his view, by the end of colonial rule there was a low degree of trust among the majority who he identified as traditional society on the modern liberal political institutional structures implanted by the British. As this respondent further elaborated, although these institutions were embraced by the elite political leaders as pillars of the modern state and symbols of modernity, the context and the conditions pertaining to Sri Lanka at the time of their establishment has produced a different result. Although Sri Lanka was considered a democracy when the British left, it was still a state in transformation and its society was largely a traditional society whose ways of political communication and participation were largely based on traditional and feudal ways. This view was partially shared by few other respondents, especially those who identified themselves as nationalists.

Towards independence, in the backdrop of uneven capitalist development in the country, there was reason to suggest that Sri Lanka remain a largely rural and traditional society. In this situation every day social relations and who gets what and how and why was negotiated through a web of patronage relations surrounding the rural agro-based economic structure. This was not a case especial to Sri Lanka. There are number of scholars who have observed the same trends in other contexts of post-colonial states. Their findings support the claim of the inevitable continuation of the traditional patronage networks of the pre-colonial periods and the strengthening of these networks in the post-colonial period. These scholars point out the absence of a developed market economy and lack of formal institutional mechanisms that could formally and effectively mediate the affairs in the large agricultural sector as a reason to why patronage networks became strong in the post-colonial period (Archer 1990:19, Boone 1994:109). In their view, as a result, during and after political transition took place from colonial to post-colonial phase, the earlier forms of interest aggregation and satisfaction continued. At independence, considering the structure of the economy of Sri Lanka, this research partly complements the above institutional reasoning given on the realising patronage system of this period. Adding another observation from developing political scenarios, this research also argue that it was also the nature of the struggles among various social forces in the society and the nature of political and economic competition between various factions in elite politics who were constantly in pursuit of domination, change and hegemony, during which these actors continued to rely on previous modes of interest articulations and interest satisfactions that strengthened and reinvented a more sophisticated patronage system aftermath independence. As Wickramasinghe states, negligence of peasant agriculture under the British colonial rule might have been another reason as to why towards independence a state-sponsored patronage system was inaugurated by the emerging local political elites (2006: 303–4). In an era of representative democracy, the political future of the emerging elites largely depended on the successful inclusion of the large segment of the peasantry to the national politics. Therefore state patronage offered to the peasantry appeared as a promising practical political strategy for the elites. The state-sponsored colonisation projects carried out in the dry zone from the 1930s onwards bears useful evidences in this regard. As pointed out, since then, other than the objective of increasing the paddy production (*ibid*), the colonisation projects carried out by all the successful Sinhalese political regimes having had political motivations aimed at mass political inclusion and hegemony building too.

The rest of this chapter is dedicated to explain the nature, how, why, which actors and to what degree that patronage politics in the post-colonial period has influenced in advancing the struggle for hegemony by those who assumes political and state power and what implications it left on the nature of politics the state and the political system.

Even after independence, agriculture remained the main source of livelihood of many people in the island. This was especially true of the majority, who continued to live in the interiors of the country, and thus made Sri Lanka a rural country (Moore 1989:180). Since pre-colonial times, the *Goyigama* caste (cultivator caste) enjoy a privileged social and economic position as the dominant caste group, and capitalised on the traditional social relationships they had cultivated with lower social groups (Jayawardena 2007:192). The only contender for their power was the new riche (colonial bourgeoisie) from *Karava* (fisher caste) and *Salagama* (cinnamon peelers) castes. *En route* to independence, particularly from the 1920s onwards, with the power of wealth, the traditional high caste members began to enter into electoral politics (Jayantha 1992:5). Despite their rhetorical support extended to local culture, values and traditions, most of them were attracted to western culture, at that time an essential factor of upward social mobility (Houtart 1976:16). As upper-class English educated locals, they were also attracted to the western mindset. However, the introduction of the universal suffrage in 1931 made the elites dependent on the lower class and lower caste masses in realising their political ambitions. As noted in hegemony building thesis, this situation denotes how neither economic power nor ideological power alone was enough for mass mobilisation and the need of a political strategy that combined both.

The new opportunities brought by the political space opened by colonialism invited these upper caste and upper class elites to join colonial national politics. To secure political power, they put their trust on the traditionally cultivated networks primarily based on kinship, caste and land-based village-centric social relations of production (Jayewardene 2007:196). The colonial treasury that was still under the tight control of the British could be another reason as to why that they embarked on this direction of mobilisation. This early development of a political strategy based on the traditional patronage networks successfully mobilised and incorporated the masses into national politics. However, as this research finds, these early forms of mass political mobilisation were overwhelmingly characterised by quantitative forms of passive incorporation of the subalterns into politics and not by qualitative/informed forms of active political incorporation. This situation suggests a large numbers of lower classes entering into politics without having an informed knowledge of meaningful ways of political participation and activism. This is a notable aspect of rural political development that has been captured by other studies as well. Moore's work on rural consciousness of Sinhalese peasantry provides significant evidence to this (1985:187). His works strongly indicate the easy embarkation to national politics of the rural Sinhalese peasantry in Sri Lanka is a result of the prevailing pre-colonial socio-political structure. In contrast to India, Moore also suggests that this structure allowed non-antagonistic mechanism of integration of the rural population into national politics and to the state as well as to develop more mild or submissive relationships between the elites and the peasantry (ibid). In view of this research, instead of paving the way for realising a mature democracy, the patronage strategy of political inclusion of the masses into national politics turned Sri Lanka into a mediated state.⁴ As Waldner says, state building mediated states face two imperatives. They are: a requirement to establish new political arrangements to organise expanded participation and devising some form of organisation of mass actors and structures linking those actors to the political system to control the participation of newly incorporated groups (1999:34). In the early phase of state building facilitated through patronage politics, presence of these two imperatives in Sri Lanka was evident.

It is widely recognised that the patronage networks of the pre-independence era operated around the *Mudliyar* system demanding a high local background as a pre-requisite for entry in to this system (Peebles 1973: 64–5). Although in 1946 this system officially ceased to exist, in the

post-independence political scenario of Sri Lanka suggests its unofficial continuation, practice, transformation and adjusting to address the dynamics of the political and economic context and the state-in-society relations of this period. In the past, *Mudliyar* families had major influence over the people in their localities as they had enough means to satisfy the livelihood and material needs of the local population (Obeysekara 1967:101). Even after independence, upon officially stripping off their status their influence did not disappear. In the era of representative democracy they could satisfactorily appeal to the sentiments of their dependents, the lower class masses. The social power they acquired in the previous phase easily facilitated them to rise to political power and claim the representative status of the local people. In order to secure political power the *Mudliyars* did not hesitate to use their large geographically concentrated traditionally established networks of patronage. In all accounts, those *Mudliyars* who remained in the rural sector successfully mobilised the masses under them and brought votes to the newly formed national political parties. By so doing, they demonstrated their power to influence those who were under their control, i.e., the minor headmen and other social groups.

Illangakoon, Dias Bandaranaike and Obeysekara (the traditional bourgeois), and Jayawardena, Senanayake and Jayawickrama (colonial bourgeois) are a few notable *Mudliyar* families who entered into the national political scene thanks to the patron-client relationships they established through the wealth and status they accumulated during the colonial period (Peebles 1973; Roberts 1979; Jayawardena 1987). As noted, the influence of the *Mudliyars* of new rich background surpassed the influence of the traditional *Mudliyar* families. The landholdings, wealth and administration offices they monopolised during the British period enabled them to emerge as the major dispensers of local patronage. The *Mudliyars*, both traditional and new, were able to dispense benefits such as employment and fringe benefits to workers on the estates, undertake construction projects on infrastructural facilities such as schools, hospitals and temples, make donations to charities and village elites, and offer protection to the village elites (Jayantha 1992:199). Since 1931, the pyramid of patronage networks they established has been used to mobilise electoral support (Jayantha 1992:200). As a respondent of this research pointed out, during most of the time in the post-colonial Sri Lanka *Mudliyar's* power was successfully translated into cultural, social and political capital in national politics (Field Interview R.14). These views suggest use of patronage as the main avenue of mass incorporation into politics, and the power relationship that it configured between the elites and the subaltern forces beginning to play a crucial role in determining the trajectory of politics and state building in the post-colonial phase.

In the urban areas, where there was no *Mudliyar* system in operation, the new entrepreneur classes filled the vacuum (Swaris 1975:77–8). With the urban working class these entrepreneurs formed an urban business-centric patronage network. Compared to their rural counterparts, these urban patrons were not of traditional high social status. However, their influence in maneuvering the urban votes on behalf of the bourgeois political elites were matching. All these dynamics in the merging state-in-society relations in the colonial period suggest a strong case for the reliance, existence and sustenance of traditional patronage relationships that became useful for the bourgeois political and economic elites to rise to political power. Until 1977, their political domination was apparent in the national political sphere.

From the 1940s onwards, Sri Lanka began to show signs of a looming modern nation. The emerging political party system is one important development related to this. In this period successful embracing of machine politics⁵ was evident. It showed all the positive signs required for the establishment of a modern state. However, as a few respondents of this study pointed out, which this research is in agreement with, in this emerging state and politics, Sri Lankan society was unable to completely overcome its past modes of interest satisfaction heavily relied on patronage relations (Field Interviews R.11 and R.16). Rather than rely on the state apparatuses to mediate the needs, conflicts and the demands of the society, in this period, the political elites

drifted towards patronage networks to secure political power and to decide who gets what and how. In this sense, it is correct to suggest that the political elites carrying the old patronage networks forward and adjusting them to fit within the modern conditions. This direction of political strategy created a somewhat hybrid political system that seemed promising in stimulating the political participation of the lower class masses in national politics. Throughout the post-colonial period, this process continued and the patronage political system became an integral element of the electoral political strategy. This is contrary to a number of studies of politics in Sri Lanka that focus on political developments in the first decades of political independence alluding to the importance of caste as the primary shaper of national politics (Jiggins cited in Jayantha 1992:4). Among various types of patronage networks of this period, caste-based patronage constitute powerful relations of domination and subordination, yet, it only constituted a small segment of the entire web of patronage relations of this period. However, depending on the demand at hand, the political elites and the political parties are never reluctant to tap into any kind of patronage networks, including that of caste. As explored by Jiggins, the role of the caste system in Sri Lanka's political scene provides a useful example in this regard (*ibid*).⁶

Although in post-independence national politics, caste served as an important factor in certain circumstances, it always seemed to have operated in combination with many non-caste-based factors. In Gunasinghe's words, 'the use of caste ideology by politicians for political gains was seen more as a protective fabric cushioning the poor peasant or the agrarian laborers from exploitative forces that cut across class divisions (1996:109). As he further argues, keeping caste consciousness alive in politics distracts peasants from the exploitative relationships (structurally and culturally determined) they have in the class hierarchy (*ibid*). Caste, he believes, is one of the divisive lines of demarcation that serve as an important political mobilising factor subject to the patron-client linkages embedded in them (Gunasinghe 1996:159). With regard to this interpretation, this research is of the view that 'caste' is the cultural justification provided to mask the unequal and exploitative social relations of production by which class contradictions and class dependency and submissive patronage relations are inherent. Caste, therefore, is one among a number of factors considered in electoral decision making and forging political allegiances in contemporary Sri Lanka. It is not the sole factor, as, in the words of one respondent interviewed for this research, 'people choose their political representatives and alliances by considering a number of complex factors; therefore there is no single factor such as caste that we can point out as the most important factor for voters to make their electoral decisions' (Field interview R.14). Other evidence gathered for this research support the importance of this scenario of multiple factors (Field interviews R.13, R.14 and R.1). As per the views expressed by the majority of the respondents of this research, non-caste based political clientelism played an important role in shaping post-independence political alliance making endeavours, and they all played equally important role on forging political loyalties. One reason as to why caste was not overexploited by the political elites for hegemony building and hegemonic state building is the explicit exploitative and oppressive nature of caste hierarchy and caste-based loyalties. Also as pointed out by some other scholars, modernity in Sri Lanka has successfully eroded traditional caste order and ambiguous presence of caste in political discourse (Wickramasinghe 2006:332). Therefore, gathering around political parties and use of any identity that sounds logical under the prevailing conditions by the masses to access the state resource base is not surprising. Further, time to time, as a result of assigning prominence to different identities during various periods of political transition and political alliance formations,⁷ counting on one identity to access patronage benefits was proven unprudent. Therefore, continued adaptation and usage of multiple identities became part of the strategy of the masses who sought patronage benefits. This development was able to bring major advantages for the political elites who are keen to use identity politics in their bid for political power and hegemony building.

This aspect of patronage-driven political context shows similarities with some other cases as examined by Lemarchand (quoted in Flynn 1973:68). Complementing the work of Jayantha and Gunasinghe, as per a few respondents of this research strongly suggested, the patron-client relations formed based on non-caste factors have become increasingly important in determining the outcomes of electoral politics and devising strategies for hegemony building (Field Interviews R.23, R.1, R.13, R.17 and R.19). This study finds that in the subsequent era of politics marked by elite factionalism, patronage networks becoming a central element of the political strategy for pursuit of political domination and hegemony. Needless to state that the underlying manipulative nature of the patronage system is all what was needed by the political patrons to reach their narrow political goals. Besides the obvious material benefits the certain groups received by entering into this system, the fear of exclusion and the real and imagined threat they foresaw in limiting their upward economic and social mobility by not subscribing to this system made the patronage system an integral element of political inclusion and communication.

3.2.2 Development of a political party system in post-independent Sri Lanka and the use of patronage for party building

Political parties often emerge as important channels for interest satisfaction in a democracy, and therefore play a key role in the development of the state. As Epstein observes, weakly institutionalised political parties can have a serious negative impacts on both governability and representation (2009:338). Further, political parties are also arenas for new contracts, new types of associations and provide important networks of communication and information (Weingrod 1968: 385). As Weingrod observes, political parties function as mediators and integrators between the society and the state, and also tend to award patronage resources as new avenues for political mobility. On a positive note, such awards have the potential for stimulating talent at various levels. However, as Weingrod observes, it is doubtful that all these positively framed outcomes will necessarily lead to political development in contexts where traditional patronage networks are widespread and governs everyday associational life. As he cautions, there is a chance in new states that are marked by above characteristics, which will lead to 'politics of development' in place of 'political development' (1968:398). Below, presented a practical example using the case of Sri Lanka that fully exposes this theoretical claim.

In Sri Lanka, the Donoughmore constitution⁸ (1931–947) paved the way for formal development of political parties (De Silva 1987: 221). Despite the initial attempts made by the local bourgeoisie in the legislative council to limit granting suffrage to the lower-class masses, in 1931, the Donoughmore commission granted universal suffrage to all in Sri Lanka. This had important consequences on emerging national politics. First of all, by extending universal franchise to the rural electorate that happened to be the main power base of Ceylon National Congress (CNC), whose leadership was British loyalist, undermined the labour movement and class politics (Wickramasinghe 2006:204). Secondly, it brought the bourgeoisie in the CNC closer to the rural masses and made them dependent on their votes to win elections. At the same time, as a result of abolishing the previous communal system of representation, the bourgeois political elites fearlessly competed against each other to be identified with lower class voters of various castes, class and ethnic background to secure political power. During this struggle for identity, popularity and votes, the bourgeois political elites made patronage relations an important element of the overall political strategy. Owing to these circumstances, it can be safely argued that the state-sponsored patronage system extended to the rural peasants that began in this period, later continued throughout providing the backbone of the patronage system all times.

Close to independence, in 1946, six significant political parties took part in national politics within the limited space offered to them by the British colonial rule. Of these, the Ceylon Labor Party, formed under the leadership of A.E. Gunasinghe, was the oldest. The Trotskyist LSSP,

established in 1935, was the most popular political party. The leftist and Marxist orientation of this party widened its appeal among the lower class. The origin of the LSSP is also dates back to the days of the catastrophic economic depression of 1929–1935, during which the party carried out impressive amount of work to bring relief to the urban working class who were the most affected. Also the tremendous amount of work it carried out to alleviate the poor conditions in the dry zone and in the fishing villages that were frequently hit by malaria and extreme weather conditions, made an impression among people. These conditions also triggered the introduction of the Donoughmore reforms (Jayawardena 1974:8) that undermined the influence of LSSP and leftwing parties in the coming years. As Jayewardene notes, the LSSP was formed to provide leadership to the anti-imperial struggle and the working class movement (1974:9). It became a nuisance to the British imperial rule in the island. The militant nature of its actions and the frequent strikes they carries out in the urban area was a concern for the British. The LSSP manifesto claimed attainment of national independence, the abolition of social and economic inequality and oppression arising from difference of class, race, creed or sex, and the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange as the main mission of the party (Jayawardena 1974: 29). However, the gradual decline of the ideological political competition between various political parties in the post-independence era, the LSSP eventually succumbed to patronage politics⁹ and left its Marxist-socialist political ideology behind (R.13).¹⁰ This development in politics signifies an important shift in politics in Sri Lanka. First, it is characterised by setting conducive conditions for the future rise of the hegemony of rightwing politics and the sad demise of egalitarian politics. From the vantage point of hegemony building, extension of universal franchise to the rural peasantry under the direction of Donoughmore reforms and state-sponsored patronage embarked upon by the right-wing leadership of CNC, forced the left parties to join the hegemony building attempts of the right-wing elite faction.

There are different interpretations available on this development in politics. De Silva, an intellectual who is known as a member of the right-wing hegemonic political project, remarks that from the beginning, the urban-centric Marxist leftwing-oriented political parties in Sri Lanka anyway failed to make an impact on the rural areas. At the same time, the Marxist political parties were also accused of being unsympathetic towards the religious, linguistic and cultural aspirations of the Buddhist activists (De Silva 2005: 610). Another scholar of more neutral reputation suggests the reason as the left-oriented political parties entangling in many ideological rifts among themselves, which made it difficult for the ordinary people to understand their politics, ideological stances and alliances (Moore 1997:1012). Supporting Moore's interpretation, another signaled out, '... the left movement which was born on the 18th December 1935 was a social reformist in origin... This was the beginning of the tragedy. It was the birth of series of betrayal, flights, enmities and destruction of hope' (Vimukthi 1970 cited in Wickramasinghe 2006:201). Regardless of the different reasons emphasised by different scholars, it seems that, from the beginning of party politics, the leftist and the radical egalitarian political projects (which theoretically should be espoused by the Marxists) were under severe stress in Sri Lanka. This situation was caused by lack of credible alternative avenues for the majority of the people in the urban and rural areas to better represent their interests and needs within the emerging state capture by the right-wing forces. When reading these developments, the role British colonial rule played in pampering the right-wing forces should not be out of sight too. In my interpretation, this combination of forces encouraged the people to become dependent on the traditional and emerging patronage networks enacted by the right-wing political parties and subscribed to the political trends of the dominant political forces in the centre. By doing so, the majority of lower class masses rendered their subordination to the bourgeois, elite, economic and political forces. As mentioned before, it had happened through a process of hegemony building where strategies of manipulation, consent creation, willing subscription and fear of losing out in the elites' political game. Although at the beginning, the right-wing political forces showed an interest in egalitarian politics and democratic

state building, sooner the elite political fragmentation made them easily abandon these goals. As clearly remarked by one scholar, ‘...The trajectory of the left, as movement and as an idea can also be read as the gradual decline in ideological terms of a democratic and secular project unable to sustain the assault of the hegemonic forces of Sinhala-Buddhist exclusivism’ (Wickramasinghe 2006:202).

After the first wave of political party development, it took a long time before a national level political party came into being (Jayantha 1992:5). The next wave of political party formation began in 1946, with the formation of United National Party (UNP). It was formed as the first non-Marxist political party in Sri Lanka with the hope of contesting in the first general election in 1947. The UNP blended the colonial and traditional bourgeoisie classes and cut across the ethnic divide. UNP was supposed to be a political party representative of the majority community, but at the same time acceptable to the minorities (De Silva 2005:602). The founding father of UNP, D.S. Senanayake who was a minister during the time of CNC (founded in 1919) extended invitations to local elites to join the new party (De Silva 1987:222). However, from the time of its origin, the leadership of the UNP tended to be concentrated in the hands of one faction of the bourgeois class.¹¹ Although it sent some initial signs of future intra-party factionalism, altogether, the birth of UNP is considered as a success story for mobilising the members of the bourgeoisie and various factions within the bourgeoisie (across all caste, ethnic and class divides (Gunasinghe 1996: 56). With the elite constituency of the leadership of the party, the UNP lacked deep links with the ordinary people living in the rural areas. Eventually, this obstacle was overcome by including the loosely organised cultural networks, namely *Sinhala Maha Sabbas*, brought by one of its founding member, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (De Silva 1995:532). Inclusion of the *Sinhala Maha Sabbas* strengthened the position of the UNP among the Sinhalese community (De Silva 2005:602).¹²

Even today, UNP is known as an elitist political party (Uyangoda 1993:7). As one leftwing respondent opined, the UNP is a ‘notoriously imperialist’ party (R.13). Theoretically, the UNP can be called as an internally driven political party,¹³ that is, according to Shefter’s theoretical classification, a political party founded by elites who occupy positions within the prevailing regimes (quoted in Piattoni 2003:19). In the case of Sri Lanka, the elite leadership of the UNP was already established under the last phase of colonial administration, which made it easier for some of its members to easily embark on careers in the post-colonial period. Further, using the privileges and powers they received during the colonial times, these members were also able to establish the political party. Therefore, as pointed out in Shefter’s theoretical premises of internally driven political parties (quoted in Piattoni 2003: 19) that this research finds similarity with the UNP’s background, UNP inherits the characteristics of a patronage orientation political party.¹⁴ In the case of UNP, among other strategies, the patronage networks established by the party leadership during colonial period were effectively used for consent building and alliance building.

However, programmatic appeal was not completely absent from the UNP. Its element of programmatic appeal was formulated around the development of the agricultural sector and addressing the issues concerning the peasantry, which is maintained even today. For example, even in the most recent election manifestos, the promise and continuation with its long standing political commitment to rural agricultural development can be seen (United National Party Election Manifesto 2000, Pieris 2006:202). Given the prevailing structural construction of the economy that was mainly constituted with a vast rural agricultural sector and the poor circumstance of rural poverty of the peasantry (Venugopal 2011:72), it is not only for the UNP, for any political party, having a programme concerning the rural sector seems sensible. Under these circumstances, UNP optimised its reach. Placing the plight of the peasantry and making the issue of agriculture top priorities in its list of political commitment was infused with a clear political agenda. This research suspects this direction of programmatic appeal has important connections to the already

established vast network of patronage relations in rural agricultural areas. These networks presented the socially isolated UNP with a massive opportunity to build the party by tapping to these networks and mobilising the rural lower class masses on be their behalf. Besides UNP being able to institutionalise the patronage system, by focusing on the peasantry and providing them with various subsidies, it played a major role in making Sri Lanka attain almost 90% self-sufficiency in food (Wickramasinghe 2006:304).

Voicing the plight of the peasants by the leadership of UNP can also be interpreted as an outcome of a decisive political struggle that UNP as a political party encountered at the centre. This struggle had two dimensions. One was the intra-bourgeoisie factional sentiment of the colonial and traditional bourgeoisie class, which questioned the legitimacy of the leadership of UNP of colonial bourgeois background. The second dimension is related to the horizontal elite political conflict that the party encountered with the leadership of the Marxist political parties. The latter was the only oppositional force to the right-wing UNP. From the early twentieth century, a few Marxist political groupings in Sri Lanka demonstrated their commitment to the issues of the urban working classes, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the rural petty bourgeoisie. Their political activities successfully integrated these numerically marginalised classes into mass politics through loosely organised trade associations (Gunasinghe 1996: 59–60). In the same period, the plantation Tamils were integrated into the colonial national political sphere through the activities of trade unions specifically set up to channel their grievances. As a result, by this time, the rural peasantry was the only significant social group that was not mobilised into the colonial political arena. As Gunasinghe notes, this was not due to favourable influence or redistributive justice as a result of colonial welfare state policies (*ibid*). It was primarily due to the lack of organisation and leadership among themselves. Under these circumstances, the UNP, who had ambitions to secure state power, could not ignore the temptation of the numerically important rural peasantry. The programmatic appeal they initiated towards the peasants, therefore, was a careful step taken under conditions of political competition and projection of likely future political scenarios in national politics.

In the first general election, the main opponents of the UNP were the urban-based Marxist political candidates, who voiced the rights of neglected urban labourers as well as the Indian-originated Tamil plantation workers (De Silva 1995:533). In its first election manifesto, as a way of undermining the voice of the Marxist political parties, UNP pushed itself seriously and openly to voice the plight of the peasantry (Jayawardena 1985:47–9). This trend in politics was not applicable to the UNP alone; this was an essential point considered by all the political parties established during this or after this period (Bastian 2003:203). Further, as Bastian points out, this initial step towards mass incorporation of the peasantry into national politics through political parties was due to the electoral strength of the rural society (1993:13).

Compared to the rival political parties, UNP had an upper hand in mobilising the peasants. Its leader, D.S. Senanayake, known to have held the 'iron hand' during the British colonial period. He was the chairman of the Land Development Ordinance Committee of 1935 (De Silva 1995:457), and the networks and the social prestige he cultivated in this position made it possible for him to translate them with the peasantry into political networks. This development shows, how from early on, state resources, power and employment became useful in cultivating and strengthening political capital and political alliances, and their value in linking the culturally and socially distanced centre with the periphery. The various projects carried out under the supervision of the Land Development Board made Senanayake a popular figure among the peasants. Because, the various land settlement schemes Senanayake supervised were distinctly biased towards the peasants (Samaraweera 1981:150). These state-sponsored projects formed a pool of powerful legitimising instruments and symbols for the central elite (Shastri 1990:62). This bias towards rural peasantry over other unemployment groups especially in the urban areas that were numerically

insignificant is also an indication on how traditional patronage ties in the peripheries could be re-adjusted through state office for future political prospects in the arena of machine politics.

Table 3.1
Major occupational groups in Sri Lanka 1921-1970 (% working population)¹⁵

Occupation	1921	1946	1963	1969/1970
Farmers, fishermen, hunters and related	62.4	52.9	52.6	50.8
Draftsmen, production process	11.5	9.9	19.8	20.2
Sales and clerical	6.8	7.9	10.4	11.2
Service and recreation	6.5	9.0	8.2	7.4
Professional, technical, managerial and related	2.1	2.9	5.5	6.0
Transport and communication	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.7
Miners, quarrymen and related	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.5
Other and unspecified	7.0	13.3	1.2	0.2

Source: Roberts, Michael (1979), Marga Institute, Colombo p. 443.

Table 3.1 illustrates the major occupation groups in Sri Lanka and the numerical strength each of these occupational groups held in an era of electoral politics. It shows that until 1970, agricultural groups constituted more than half of the total percentage of the working population.¹⁶ The statistics released in 2001 by the Ministry of Housing indicates that in the total population in 18 districts, the urban sector comprised of 14.6% while 80% were rural.

3.2.3 Dynamics of political party development and strengthening of mass political clientelism

In 1951, a decisive split in the UNP occurred, which marked the first signs of factional politics in the post-colonial period among the ruling class members.¹⁷ This split put Senanayake and his peasant-centric patronage network on one side and S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and his cultural networks on the other. Bandaranaike was of low country origin and he belonged to the traditional bourgeoisie class. He became increasingly dissatisfied with the UNP and the leadership of D.S. Senanayake who tightly controlled the party and favoured the colonial bourgeois faction in the party. Bandaranaike grew more disappointed when he began to realise Senanayake's future ambitions of promoting his son Dudley Senanayake as his successor in the UNP (Gunasinghe 1996:234; De Silva 2005:611). At the time of this realisation, Bandaranaike was the deputy party leader of the UNP and he was entertaining high political ambitions and fantasies of becoming the party leader of the UNP and the prime minister of Sri Lanka. However, due to the actions of Senanayake, Bandaranaike was compelled to leave UNP and form his own political party called Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) (De Silva 1987:223; Sabaratnam 2001:165–6) In addition to these personal reasons, it was also believed that Bandaranaike sympathised with the cultural sensitivities of the majority rural Sinhalese who he thought was not addressed by the westernised UNP. (De Silva 1987: 223, Sabaratnam 2001:167). The new party of Bandaranaike's became the party holding the centre between the UNP and the left (De Silva 1987:223).

SLFP is often identified as a more socialist-leaning political party. However, in the quadrant of political ideology,¹⁸ its true political biases seem to lie in the direction of right-wing politics. In the economic quadrant, it was more centre-left than right. Perhaps its leftist identity is based on the identity of its coalition partners. From its inception, SLFP catered to a wider rural base and had an expansive political strategy of mass political incorporation of the rural communities. Its mobi-

lisation strategy mainly incorporated an ideological element. The primary ideological orientation of the SLFP was Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism (De Silva 2005:610). It followed this direction because, at the time of its founding, Bandaranaike had to find an alternative political ideology that was distinct from the UNP. Moreover, this was a closer match to Bandaranaike's political base, which was mainly drawn from his previously established networks of relations, i.e., the communal organisations such as Sinhala Maha Sabha, Eksath Bhikku Peramuna and Sinhala Jathika Sangamaya (Sabaratnam 2001:161–2).

Table 3.2 uses self-descriptions provided by the contemporary party leaders of the two political parties highlighting their perception of main divisions. These self-perceived ideologies of two major political parties and what they actually practiced in electoral politics having had a major implication on the choice of strategy they opted for alliance building, which has had an implications on post-independent state building.

Table 3.2
Party profiles of UNP and SLFP

Name of Party	Founded	Self-description	Support base	Splits
United National Party (UNP)	1947	Nationalist Pragmatic	Entire population	1951, no major splits afterwards
Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)	1951	Socialist Nationalist	Teachers, doctors, farmers and workers	No splits

Source: Adapted and modified from IDEA (2007), *Political Parties in South Asia: The Challenge of Change*, International IDEA, Stockholm, p.72

By emphasising the ideological element of its political strategy, SLFP was able to attract many previously marginalised forces in the society, particularly the rural petty bourgeoisie. Members of this class were the rural power mediators with large established patronage networks in the interiors of the country (Moore 1997:1011). The political strategy for the mobilisation of this group required two elements: material and ideological. Material mobilisation was mainly about the distribution of state welfare provisions. By this time, the influence of the revivalist movement, begun during British colonialism, had on ideology was sustained in the political sphere that made it easy enough for the SLFP to mobilise them on this front. In other words, the ideological sentiments of this class and the rural lower classes were already internalised. In addition, during the first decade of independence, the rural petty bourgeoisie continued to view the UNP leaders as 'Brown Sahibs'¹⁹ and increasingly began to realise how different they are from their local rulers. The English dress code and the westernised lifestyles of the UNP leaders were a point of concern. Due to these factors, when in 1951 Bandaranaike established SLFP, his party had a direct appeal to these rural 'traditional' classes. This development in politics challenged the domination of UNP and its conservative politics.

Upon assuming office as Prime Minister in 1955, Bandaranaike's first task was to deliver on the promise he made during the election. He offered 'mass clientelist benefits' to the Sinhalese: the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 is one of the best examples of this regard. This Act paved the way for employment opportunities in the state sector for those who knew Sinhala. From the moment of its implementation, this act became a major point of contention between Sinhalese and Tamils. In the subsequent decades it sowed the seeds for the prolonged civil war in the island (Sabaratnam 2001:161–79). Implementation of this Act reflected both Bandaranaike's sympathy for the Sinhalese grievances that originated in the British colonial period and that continued under the UNP government. At the same time, the Language Act also demonstrated his political

shrewdness in identifying and linking the struggles of the periphery with his own struggle at the centre, and his ambition of forging a political front that could to break the domination of UNP in independence politics.

The Sinhala Only Act of 1956 was a boiling point in the ethnic political history of Sri Lanka (Sabaratnam 2001:179; De Silva 1993:283–8). Today, this act is often regarded as the official starting point of the current conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. In literature, non-ethnic or alternative interpretations of the language act are rare. Its implementation caused obvious discrimination against the Tamils, as shown by the declining employment of Tamils in the public sector and white-collar bureaucratic jobs. Therefore, the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 is primarily regarded as an ethnically motivated policy (Jayawardena 1985:59; Thangarajah 2003:21; Wickramasinghe 2006:271). However, the Language Act also has elements of mass clientelism or pork barrel legislation offered by the Sinhala ruling governments to a large segment of the Sinhalese population of lower class status that were facing numerous political challenges from both Sinhala and Tamil political contenders at the centre. It is further possible to breakdown the ethnic categories into class categories a different view of the act along the clientelism can be unpacked. For example, the enactment of the Language Act could easily have been an attempt by the Sinhala ruling class to politically incorporate another neglected segment in the Sinhala society. As Wickramasinghe's indirect remarks concerning the 1971 insurrection suggest (she referred to the JVP leaders of 1971 insurrection as 'the children of 1956'), the Language Act was targeted towards capturing a specific social group of low caste and low class background (Wickramasinghe 2006:243). As this research finds, the language legislation is a political incorporation strategy that was significant at two levels. Firstly, it successfully incorporated rural Sinhalese into the national political sphere, and secondly, it offered new opportunities for the competing political forces at the centre to expand their narrow clientele base.

The launching of the SLFP, the rise of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in national politics and the enactment of the Sinhala Only Act in 1956 can be explained by using the two imperatives drawn by Waldner on mediated states (1999:34).²⁰ Based on Waldner's imperatives, the political party development in the 1950s and the concurrent shift in the mobilisation strategies were geared towards organising and expanding political participation in previously excluded groups to provide some form of organisation for mass actors. Moreover, they can also be seen as attempts to both link those actors to the political system and to control their political participation. As found in this research, Bandaranaike's political strategy denotes both these imperatives. It is not only that the nature of political mobilisation and control of political participation introduced altered the future direction of state transformation and state building. Also, in view of state-in-society approach, the Bandaranaike period shows the strength of the political elites in the centre as one class in influencing the lower class social forces in the periphery and looming of a common strategy for hegemony building with the same ideological pinning. This confluence of forces and strategies denotes hegemonic formation among the Sinhalese, importantly gravitating around the Sinhalese political elites.

Bandaranaike's mass clientelist strategy in national politics proved its strength for mobilising different social groups along different social fault lines under either given or manufactured circumstances. It was also evident that some combinations of ideology and material incentives work better than the other. In this connection, use of mass clientelism as a mobilising strategy and a tool for political party building became more appealing to the political elites.²¹ The same has been observed by Piattoni and other scholars, who have examined the intersection of clientelism and mass mobilisation mainly in the West. Similar to the findings of this research, these scholars have also pointed out to the fact that the urgency of the situation faced by the ruling political elites at the time of mass political mobilisation determines whether or not clientelism will be their chosen strategy (Piattoni 2001:25). In Sri Lanka, during the first decade of independence, where a num-

ber of elite fragmentations and conflicts were present and struggles for upward social and economic mobilisation among various communities were intensified and openly fought, patronage politics informed by Sinhala-Buddhist ideology becoming the chosen main strategy of mobilisation. What was developing underneath this strategy was the advancement of right-wing politics. This type of politics and the strategies it often chooses does not allow for the realisation of egalitarian politics. As found in this research, this type of politics only advances vertical and horizontal inequalities in the society, making the state institutions function as secondary mechanisms of rulemaking, application and adjudication. It was evident during the first decade of independence; the hegemonising effect of the Sinhala ruling class largely informed by patronage politics did not advance the status of democracy, democratic politics or address the issues of structural inequality. Rather the hegemony building and the tools this project used created lasting tensions between hegemony building and democratic state building. As a minority of respondents of this study expressed, the path the ruling political elites opted was a narrowly defined political strategy that was capable of achieving only short-term political gains (R.11.14 and 16). The mass clientelist strategies embarked by the SLFP were also infused with Sinhala-Buddhist ideology and resulted in fragmentation of the society along ethnic lines and strengthening the hegemonic project of the Sinhalese political elites. Further this development in politics also gave rise to numerous anti-hegemonic forces, especially from the minority Tamil community and from those who felt out of political grace of the bourgeois elites.

This aspect of fragmentation of society along ethnic lines by elites is well documented in a recent report released by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). It describes the inability of both the UNP and SLFP to extend their hegemonic influence over the Tamil-speaking population in the country as a major factor for the development of separate ethnically based political party system in Sri Lanka (2007:39). Further, this report also points to this development having had created a permanent chasm in the political party domain in contemporary Sri Lanka (IDEA 2007:39). To quote, 'the identification of the two major parties in Sri Lanka with Sinhala nationalism further alienated the Tamil minority. The result has been the parallel development of parties – those of the Sinhala people and those of the Tamil people. Sinhala and Tamil nationalism fed on each other and grew. The political party stalemate continues even today' (IDEA 2007:39). Thus, in addition, this research also finds that the political competition among the Sinhalese political elites have also contributed in strengthening the ethnic based political party system and elite political factionalism along ethnic lines. As the elite political factionalism became intensified between the Sinhalese and the Tamil political elites and more importantly among the Sinhalese elite factions, party cum state patronage benefits were offered by the Sinhalese political parties assumed state power in a highly competitive manner. This trend in politics and party centric patronage system galvanized the ethnic based party system.

The more appealing clientelism (mass or personal) becomes as a political strategy, the more turbulent the circumstances under which mass political mobilisation occurs (Piattoni 2001: 24). This generic claim drawn on European experience finds similarities with the situation in Sri Lanka and with the other countries in the entire South Asian context (Bose 2004:111). Reflecting on South Asia's state building process, Bose points to the need for creating a broad legitimacy in the society to the political organisation as essential (2004:96). As this discussion on patronage system shows, in Sri Lanka, the strategies used by the political elites shows increase use of narrow forms of interest satisfaction. In this sense, it is correct to suggest that by so doing the ruling elites not only opted for building a narrow base of legitimacy to the political parties, an important institution in democratic state building, but also steered the state building project further away from democratic norms. It is observed that the actual political confrontations and the confrontationalist attitudes among the political parties in South Asia are important outcomes of relying on patronage politics by the political parties. These attitudes expand as the leaders of the ruling party amass wealth and use state patronage to augment support for the ruling party and to undermine

the opposition parties (IDEA 2007:46). Factional conflicts in high politics at the level of inter-ethnic elite conflict, rising Tamil armed movement in the early 1970s and the anti-bourgeois uprising led by Sinhalese youth in 1971 all reveal the political turbulences that was used for strengthening and institutionalising the patronage system, and the forceful assimilation of those who did not comply with this project. In my opinion, these looming factions encouraged use of patronage and making people relying more and more on patronage networks controlled by the political parties to access state resources. This dependency relationship was forged using manipulative tactics as well as might of violence. The frequent use of both these tactics made these tactics and the patronage system common sense among the masses and became acceptable strategy in politics.

3.3 Early processes of state building through ‘mass clientelism’

Mass clientelism occurs when features of the public decision-making process become tokens of exchange and is characterised by the use of impersonal means such as the passage of laws or implementation of measures that favour an entire category of persons (Piattoni 2001:6). In some recent literature, such situations are defined as pork barrel politics (Scott 1989:222).²² The previous section discussed one policy measure of this nature, i.e., the Sinhala Language Act of 1956 as tool used to dispense mass patronage to the Sinhalese community by the political elites. In the literature on the ethnic conflict, the language act and other similar measures are presented as examples of ‘ethnic favouritism’. Within the parametres of this research that investigates hegemony building and state building, the aspects of mass clientelism as a political strategy for hegemony building that created tension with democratic state building needs further explanation. The following sections have attempted to introduce certain policy measures that this research finds as examples of mass clientelism, which are used for hegemony building. The various circumstances and dynamics in the state-in-society relations that gave rise to these policy measures are presented.

Soon after independence, the UNP introduced The Citizenship Act of 1948, The Indian and Pakistani Residents Citizens Act of 1949 and the Parliamentary Elections Amendment Act of 1949. These policy measures deprived the great majority of Indian residents in Sri Lanka from their citizenship and franchise rights (De Silva 2005:605). From the point of view of hegemony theory, these policy measures can be well refereed as strategies of mass clientelism extended towards the majority Sinhalese. They can also be interpreted as use of administrative force by the political elites to send an important message to those who did not comply with the elites’ hegemony building project. As summarised by K.M. De Silva, these policies were adopted during the first regime of the UNP, under the direction of D.S. Senanayake, for two main reasons. The first reason he pointed out was to safeguard the interests of the Kandyans (Sinhalese) (De Silva 2005:605). As De Silva notes, the Kandyan Sinhalese experienced most of the negative effects of the introduction of the plantation economy during the British colonial period. They lost most of their lands to the plantation industry. The second was fear of creating an imbalance between the Sinhala-Kandyan voter base and the Indian Tamil originated citizens.²³ Granting citizenship rights and franchise rights to plantation workers of Indian Tamil origin therefore was not seen as a favourable circumstance for the ruling political elites (ibid). Findings of this research confirm that the enactment of these legislations can also be seen as an act of political incorporation of the economically marginalised and ‘traumatised’ Sinhala Kandyan peasantry through mass clientelism. Further this treatment of Indian labourers can also be seen as a manipulation of the Sinhalese majority to advance the political ambitions of those who were in power.

Qualifying further, for a ruling class dominated by the Sinhalese elites, incorporation of the Indian plantation workers into national politics was a distant dream.²⁴ At the outset, it was also seen as a less-profitable political project. Until the nationalisation of the foreign-owned planta-

tions in the mid 1970s, the Indian Tamil population in the plantation sector was under the solid political and administrative control of the foreign plantation owners. Therefore, the Sinhala political elites had extremely limited opportunities to penetrate to the plantation sector. Dispensing patronage in this sector was an affair of the western estate owners, who were the main patrons of the plantation workers. Therefore, there are reasons to suggest the insignificant position of the Indian Tamils in the national political constellation of this period.

But the nationalisation of the plantation sector since 1972 onwards under Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government changed this situation. The nationalisation process created space for political penetration of this group and opportunity for alliance building. This opportunity was well optimised by the Premadasa government by enacting a new legislation in November 1989 granting citizenship rights to a large number of Indian Tamils in the plantation sector. An analysis of the results of elections after granting franchise rights by Premadasa government suggests the political capital this group brought to Premadasa and UNP. Besides this turnaround of events also suggest the willingness of Sinhalese political elites to extend mass clientelism to previously excluded groups through state policy measures as a way of hegemony building. Moreover, during Premadasa period, the personal political situation he faced at the centre also seemed to have encouraged him to look for non-traditional forces for building political alliances.²⁵ This specific case of franchise rights of plantation Indians suggest the willingness of Sinhalese political elites to invent strategies of inclusion and exclusion, depending on the nature of struggles they faced. The political developments in the plantation sector since the 1990s provides fine examples as to how the Indian Tamil voters and their representatives became allies of the hegemonic project of the Sinhalese political elites and the clients of the Sinhalese political parties. Thondaman, the main representative of the Indian Tamil labour was aware of the Sinhalese political parties and the willingness of the Sinhalese political elites to solve the citizenship problems of the Indian Tamils under the emerging dynamics in the Sinhalese political theatre. He was also acutely aware of the difficulty of realising this policy measure under the harsh political competition between the UNP and the SLFP. In an interview he said:

... J.R. Jayawardena is the only Sinhala leader, who could do so. But, on the other hand, he will never permit Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party SLFP and opposition, to do it ... If Sirimavo were to try it, Jayewardene would rouse the majority Sinhalese passion and make it impossible for her to hand back the citizenship rights to the stateless Indian Tamils, originally taken away by D.S. Senanayake, the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka... The fact that President Jayewardene is the only Sinhala leader with the political shrewdness and acumen who could solve the stateless Indian Tamil's problem. He knows the political importance of the Indian Tamils' vote (Interview with T. Sabaratnam, available on virtual library).

It was known that since the date that plantation Tamils received franchise rights, in all elections, these Tamil laborers voted as instructed by Thondaman who jockeyed between the main Sinhalese political parties, UNP and SLFP that were in state power in a given period for receiving personal and group patronage for the Indian Tamil community. In other words, Thondaman guaranteed the millions of votes in the plantation sector to any political party who gives the most personal and communal concessions to him, to his political party and to the workers. Often, following Thondaman's direction, traditionally the plantation workers often voted for the UNP. Since recently after Thondaman's domination in the plantation sector came to be undermined by the new actors in plantation politics (lead by Chandrasekaran and other factions), the prolonged tradition of voting for UNP has changed. This situation has put the main Sinhalese political parties to concede to the competing demands of the rival political parties in the plantation sector and expand the scope of patronage benefits to their middlemen.

Standardisation of higher education under the government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike is another example worth citing. Although education was free from the 1940s, there were great dispar-

ities in terms of the facilities provided to schools in different regions in the island. As Bandarage observed in her recent study, traditionally, schooling in Sri Lanka was designed to serve the bourgeoisie and their interests (Bandarage 2009:61). However, when the new standardisation policy was introduced, it only sparked ethnic sentiments and generated debates on ethnic favouritism. However, the standardisation policy has a class and pork barrel orientation that sought to search for new political clienteles within the Sinhalese community (Bastian 1985:231). The standardisation policy significantly increased the number of enrollments made to the science-based faculties. The main beneficiaries of this change had been the Sinhalese bourgeois class. Therefore, this policy seemed to secure more opportunities in the field of science for children of upper class families because, it was only the children from this class who could pursue university education in the area of science, thanks to the state-sponsored facilities granted to the schools they were attending (Bastian 1985:231). Bastian interprets, rather than trying to achieve redistributive justice for the entire Sinhalese community, that the standardisation policy introduced concerning specific faculties in the university system was an attempt to expand the opportunities for upper class Sinhalese. As his analysis strongly suggests, although standardisation policy worked against the Tamil community, its main focus was to directly address the issues faced by the Sinhalese political elites, who were constantly attempting to devise new political strategies to keep the newly incorporated political forces (in this case, local elites in urban and semi urban areas) in their political coalitions. The less-known class nature underlying this policy seemed to have generated an important result in the direction of hegemony building. The standardisation policy was able to gather support from the educated Sinhalese of a particular class, who could be a potential ally of the elites' hegemony building that requires the legitimacy and support of the intellectual elites.

Similarly, awarding Buddhism the prominent place in the first republican constitution of 1972 is another act of mass clientelism used for hegemony building. In mainstream literature, this constitutional measure is primarily presented as a cause for ethnic divisions between the majority Sinhala-Buddhists and the Tamils (Coomaraswamy 2005:157). Besides the ethnic factor, this research shows the need of re-scrutinizing this event in politics against the backdrop of hegemony building and state building. Therefore, apart from the obvious ethnic factor, the special status provided to Buddhism in the 1972 constitution to be viewed as a strategic response devised by the Sinhalese political elites to include the oppositional youth forces that fearlessly fought against the elites' political rule and elites' political domination. Besides, given the mal-performance in states capital accumulation process of this period that became a major obstacle in sustaining the patronage system and dispensing material patronage benefits to the political allies from the lower classes, the constitutional provision also indicates a scenario of elites' subverting to strategies of ideological manipulation. Especially when considering the background of the rural youth, who were mainly Sinhala-Buddhists, who took up arms against the elites in the 1971 youth insurrection, it seems sensible to suggest that ruling elites attempting to appeal to the ideological sentiments as a way of diffusing their opposition. In the 1970s the economic performance of the country severely narrowed the opportunities to dispense material benefits to forge new patronage relations. At the same time, the material/resource limitations caused by the poor economic conditions in the early 1970s severely limited the ability of the political elites in power even to sustain the previously incorporated groups in to their camp of politics. In relation to the ethnic conflict, Jayathilake summed up this situation in following words, '... faced with the loss of political support due to unfulfilled promises and economic hardships, it is not surprising that Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government already elected on a Buddhist-Sinhalese nationalist platform chose to "play the ethnic card" even more strongly. Policies that equated Sinhalese nationalism with Sri Lankan nationalism [were] legally enshrined in a new Republican Constitution...' (1999:68). Apart from ethnic favouritism that this new constitutional provision advocated, it also served as a piece of pork barrel legislation targeting the Sinhalese. Similar to the outcome of the language act, as mentioned previously, the new constitution oppressed the Tamils and at the same time, took

care of the oppositional forces within the Sinhalese community. Although the new constitution did not address the youth's demands for upward social and economic mobility, it indeed seemed to have had an ideological appeal to this group. The provisions of the new constitution was indeed an important step taken to reestablish the political dominance of the bourgeois Sinhalese political elites and a step taken in the direction of establishment of the hegemonic political project of this class. Given the reasons and outcomes of the 1972 constitution, it can be safely argued that the new constitution privileged Sinhala-Buddhists over the rest of the communities, advocated and institutionalised vertical inequalities between ethnic groups. Given this picture, it can also be argued that the new constitution as a step taken in the direction of advancing rightwing dominance in elites' politics.

Further, the radical economic and social reforms that were implemented after the 1971 youth insurrection, i.e., the land reform laws of 1972, nationalisation of plantations since mid 1970s, state's accelerated control commanded over trade and industry and establishing a socialist state are all geared to seek new allies to strengthen the political camps lead by various factions in politics. All these national legislatures provide good enough indications of the urgency faced by the ruling regime of this period to find strategies to manage the already incorporated groups into politics in the previous period in a troubled economic situation. This could not have been possible by using the manipulative strategies alone. At first, for immediate crisis management, state's coercive force was used. As signalled by Gramsci, the ruling political elites were acutely aware of the impossibility of ruling through coercive might. Therefore looking for strategies that are of non-coercion was paramount. It is under this situation that the ruling elites pursued a plethora of state legislation that infused ideological and material rewards. For instance, the agrarian reform laws that were enacted in 1972 were a reaction to the 1971 insurrection that drove the land question and the priorities of rural development to the forefront of the power battle.²⁶ It was against this background that the ruling political elites redressed the issues in the agrarian property structure that was dominated by the economic elites in the form of land reform law. In its first phase of implementation in August 1972, the new law sought to take over the land plots held by individuals who exceeded the ceiling of fifty acres. In 1975, during the second phase of implementation, the SLFP government nationalised the foreign- and company-owned estates (Gunasinghe 1999:55). In Herring's view, all of these measures related to the land question were attempts to increase resources for the ordinary politics of patronage and partisan manipulation (Herring 1987:327).²⁷ This research also notes that these new laws as attempts to extend patronage to selected groups in the elite strata, who were important allies in the processes of hegemony building.²⁸ The above events once again reveal the elites' use of a mix of strategies that are soft and hard for persuasion of domination and hegemony. The soft strategies were exploiting state resources, enactment of state legislation and the inclination to use of populist ideological sentiments while the hard strategies were the use of coercion and the coercive apparatuses of the state.

In the absence of a stock of tangible material benefits, the political elites in state power had to invent alternative strategies to keep their clientele secure and look for new allies. Under these conditions the elites seemed to have replaced the strategy of 'feeding the stomach with feeding the mind' with Sinhala-Buddhist ideology. Under the new volatile economic-political circumstance, the Sinhalese faction of the ruling elites who successfully claim state power throughout the post-colonial period chose to serve the numerically advantageous mass clientele of Sinhala-Buddhist majority over the relatively smaller number of minority voters.²⁹ By this time, the Sinhalese political elites could easily rationalise their stance of Sinhala-Buddhist ideology in politics by citing the demands made by moderate Tamil elites for greater political decentralisation and the subsequent claim made by militant Tamil youth groups for a separate state. This reading of the situation is similar to the works on clientelism that suggest embarkation of new and old ideologies to fashion and justify the chosen level of interest aggregation in politics (Robinson & Verdier

2003:5). Instead of representing two opposed modes of mobilisation, this synthesis allowed ideologies and clientelism benefits (in the form of subsidy programmes and divisible benefits)³⁰ to be employed as the two faces of the same political game (ibid). The situation in the 1970s in Sri Lanka aptly explains this scenario and explains the aggressive persuasion of Sinhala-Buddhist ideological path for hegemony building and state building. Although this strategy generated somewhat positive results in countering the threat of rise of oppositional forces within the Sinhala community, it generated opposite outcomes among the Tamil community.

3.3.1 Challenges in retaining the old clientele: elite hegemony building at stake?

The networks of patron-client relations meant that local notables used their family ties to reward a key number of party supporters (Dunham 1983:78). However, over time, the embarkation of new political parties added new dynamics to the established structure of political configuration (two-party system) and a struggle for retaining the old clientele by the old political parties was inevitable. In Sri Lanka the entry of JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) into national politics aptly signifies this situation. JVP soon became a hindrance to the dominance and the hegemonic political project of the bourgeois elite politics. JVP was established during the late 1960s³¹ and started crystallising in national electoral politics in the 1980s. JVP was of an odd combination of Marxist and Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist orientation. It professed commitment to a fiery brand of socialism and was also strongly influenced by the main ideological strands of Sinhala nationalism (Pieris 2006:340). The cadres of the JVP, including its leadership, were primarily drawn from the low caste, rural petty bourgeois class (lower-middle class) and the proletariat. In Sri Lanka's political history, JVP has led two fierce armed insurrections against the elites' hegemony and the bourgeoisie state. The grievances articulated in the two insurrections are strong indications of the unresolved class contradictions in Sri Lankan politics and the bourgeois domination of state. During these two insurrections, JVP was able to draw considerable support from rural youth belonging to the oppressed caste communities in the margins of the Sinhala society. The JVP insurrection in 1971, in particular, signalled an important challenge faced by the elites' hegemony building project. It also signalled out of the level of political disintegration and vulnerabilities within the Sinhalese community and the prolonged extreme but covert class competition operating latently in the political system (Jayawardena 1985:84; Wickramasinghe 2006:235,240). The violent measures used by SLFP during the first uprising to suppress the insurrection and the subsequent ban imposed on the party which made it go underground until 1988 signified the need for strategies and the difficulty of managing oppositional forces to the bourgeois elites' rule and their domination. The brutal crackdown of the insurrection also denotes the readiness of the political elites in state power to use coercive power when the manipulation and consensual building measures fall apart.

With the institutionalised clientele networks of the bourgeois elites (alternatively under either UNP or SLFP-led political regimes), the JVP as a novice political party had to compete in electoral politics without any patron-client networks. The political leadership of JVP did not belong to the traditional land-owning class to cultivate such networks nor had access to state resources to disperse patronage required to mobilise voters on their behalf (Chandraprema 1991:74). Also in comparison to the Old left, which consisted of other Marxist political parties also led by members of the comprador and the traditional bourgeoisie class, JVP leaders only had a few advantages that are different from the bourgeois political elites. As Pieris observes, 'JVP's social base, which stemmed from the poorer strata of the rural society, was of great significance. JVP cadres are also distinctly from the torturable class³² and are accustomed to physical hardships that have built their capacity to live frugally' (1999:168). Based on these strengths, JVP chose class oppression as their main slogan for political mobilisation and to build their party. Their publicly advocated that the deep commitment to class emancipation of the proletariat was a hindrance to the traditional political balance and the bourgeoisie domination of politics. Their entry into the

national political scene suggests an attempt of awakening class-consciousness of the lower classes, possibility of the fragmentation of Sinhalese society along class lines and acceleration of political competition at the centre around the same clientele. However, appealing to class sentiments did not appear promising. The main reason could be, as suggested by some authors, in Sri Lanka's political scene, due to tutelary, custodial or paternalistic attitudes towards the lower classes, especially the peasantry, on the part of the administrative and political elites, there had been lack of effective representation of the class or occupational interests and there was no sense of class for itself among this segment of the population (Moore 1985:3, 5).

Under these circumstances, from the beginning JVP propagated an extreme form of Sinhala-Buddhist ideology. This was in complete contradiction to its claim of being a Marxist political party. Their chauvinist Sinhala-Buddhist stand in national politics eventually provoked the other main Sinhala political parties (including SLFP and UNP) to opt for a more rigorous ideological path, which eventually began to popularise the Sinhala-Buddhist ideological direction of the state (Chandraprema 1991:99). From a perspective of clientelism, JVP's ideological commitment to chauvinist Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism was a result and a response to the patronage system invented by the bourgeois political elites by using state resources. It is under these circumstances that JVP embarked on a bizarre combination of class politics and extreme form of ethnic nationalism. Further, it is correct to state that JVP's economic vision was leftwing whereas its political vision denoted extreme right-wing politics. Both these directions somehow must have seemed promising as per JVP's political calculations of the situation. However, over decades, their lackluster performance in national politics suggests their continued inability to earn the votes of the lower classes and challenge the patronage system and the hegemony of the bourgeois Sinhala political elites. Unable to offer material patronage benefits and beneficial clientelist ties to woo the voters in electoral politics, JVP did not have many options left. In JVP's political propaganda, Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism was used to denounce Tamil nationalism as well as to challenge the legitimacy of the bourgeois elites in national politics. On one hand, the strategy JVP opted was anti-Tamil and on the other hand, anti-bourgeois hegemonic. Later, by shedding the latter identity away, JVP became an important member of the bourgeois right-wing hegemonic political project and an important ally of the Sinhalese elites' anti-Tamil campaign. Trapped in the patronage politics of the ruling political elites at the expense of state resources, JVP had no other option other than appeal to ideological sentiments. Therefore while the main political parties that assumed state power distribute material benefits for their alliances and strengthened the material sentiments, the JVP patronised the ideological sentiments of the Sinhalese. The strengthening of patronage system from two different fronts, importantly that complemented each other, influenced the path of state building and hegemony building undertaken by the Sinhalese political elites. The struggle to capture state power meant capturing the control of the patronage system and the state resource base.

Since Kumaratunga's regime (1993), JVP has been a coalition partner in various SLFP-led governments. As a result, it has been able to access state resources to dispense material patronage benefits for their party supporters and establish limited patronage networks that are enough to guarantee their political survival. However, with the increasing participation of Tamil and Muslim political parties in coalition governments led by either of the two main parties, JVP's relative strength in politics became limited. Further, in 2006, a splinter group led by a former high-ranking member of JVP called the National Freedom Front (NFF) further underestimated its relative worth in Sinhalese politics. Since its inception, NFF has been a coalition partner of the Rajapakse government for which it received important state and regime patronage. Although, at the beginning, JVP was also partner of the same political coalition, in 2008, it withdrew its support to the ruling regime and lost access to state patronage. This experience of JVP led to a situation where they increasingly became marginalised in national politics. While the state patronage offered to the small coalition partners of the SLFP-led coalition governments has increased, JVP is

now faced with an immense challenge of retaining their traditional clientele. With the deteriorating economic conditions of its members, who are of lower classes (precariat),³³ to make an impact in electoral politics, JVP being able to appeal to ideological sentiments is not enough.

The next most recent contender for political power in Sri Lanka is the JHU. Launched in 2004 and led by Buddhist monks, its origins can be traced back to the birth of a political party in 2000 named *Sihala Urumaya* (SU). The support base of JHU is constituted with Sinhalese middle-class conservatives and the Buddhist youth. In terms of its political ideology, JHU maintains a Sinhala nationalist stance and advocates wiping out the Tamil tigers by force (Deegalle 2006:238). JHU was also publicly critical of the contemporary state structures, culture of politics and of the Sinhalese political elites (ibid). Further, it maintains the view that Sri Lanka's unitary constitution with meager devolution of administrative powers to the provinces is an adequate solution to the ongoing ethnic conflict. Their highest priority is establishment of a Buddhist state. Such views and right-wing ideologies are not too different from the other political parties. As a newest comer to the political party system, the ideological path JHU took signals a worrisome scenario for future direction of state building. Because, as a new political party launched under a different social and political circumstance, JHU was unable to make an impact on changing the direction of Sinhalese elite politics. Especially the role played by the Buddhist monks in promoting right-wing politics has reinforced and legitimised the idea of Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state project pursued by the lay political elites.

During the 2004 general elections, JHU secured 6% of total votes and five seats in the national legislature. Their rise in electoral politics posed a serious threat to the JVP, who also relies on the same voter base and uses similar political mobilisation strategies loaded with Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist sentiments. As one respondent of this research stated:

JVP and JHU both appealing to the ideological sentiments is not surprising, because the people have already developed strong affiliations with the UNP and SLFP. And these people hardly shift their party loyalties. These loyalties are formed on a mixture of material and symbolic patronage. In Sri Lanka there is about 20% of floating voters, so the entire political competition is about winning this 20% of floating voters. Winning this 20% is crucial for winning elections' (Field Interview R.10).

As far as the symbolic patronage is concerned, since 1960s, all the sub-factions in the Sinhalese faction of the ruling class to a certain degree subscribe to the above. Therefore, there are no especial gains a voter could achieve by supporting JHU, unless it is capable of delivering material patronage. Or it has to be situation where the voters are ready to settle down with symbolic politics. In view of this research, the latter is not an option for the voters.

Contrary to UNP and SLFP, both JVP³⁴ and JHU have the characteristics of externally mobilised political parties. According to Shefter, both these parties and their leaders have never occupied positions of power in the prevailing regimes (1994:5). As a result, contrary to the situation of UNP and SLFP, despite the high degree of formal response they have received in entering into democratic politics through the nominal democratic institutions and mechanisms they are faced with significant obstacles to enter into the political system that is largely based on the patronage system dominated by the UNP and SLFP. Meanwhile, both these parties are faced with significant difficulties in party building and alliance building. This is mainly due to lack of material benefits they have access to dispense to their potential allies. Currently, these potential forces are flocking around UNP and SLFP that assumes state power alternatively. Given the proximity of UNP and SLFP to state power and state resource base, it is only these two major political parties that are able to dispense enough material incentives with a view of alliance building and hegemony building. These strategies are considerably shrinking democratic space for political engagement and democratic means of interest satisfaction. Meanwhile it is also observed that to permanently eliminate JVP's and JHU's influence in politics who have become an obstacle for smooth persua-

sion of the hegemony building attempted by the elites' in UNP and SLFP, the latter are continually altering the democratic structures, rules and institutions of the state that facilitate their political participation. Besides, it is also noted that to undermine and force consent from JHU and JVP, the elites in the UNP and SLFP aggressively pursue patronage politics (Asian Tribune, 2011).³⁵ The observations made in the current context of Sri Lanka suggest that JVP and JHU and other minority political parties have no other options left other than subscribing to the hegemonic political project of the dominant elites. As externally mobilised political parties, JVP and JHU are unable to completely count on strategies based on materially driven patronage networks and programmatic appeals. As found by O'Gorman in similar situations elsewhere, political parties in this position are compelled by their political environment to mobilise and organise a mass constituency (2001:68) As found in other countries, smaller parties like JVP and JHU often face extra burdens in pursuing a mass constituency. For example, when the new political parties lack state patronage, they are less able to convince voters that they can really challenge the traditional parties (Archer 1990: 31–2). Therefore, the incentive for the voters to vote for smaller parties is reduced by public political speculation.

Since the mid-1990s, JVP (and since 2004, JHU) have opted for various strategies to overcome this challenge. One of the strategies they opted was becoming coalition partners to the UNP- or SLFP-led governments.³⁶ By participating in coalition governments, smaller parties like JVP and JHU have been able to introduce major variations to the existing political party systems (IDEA 2007:60). For state building, this development in politics that advances hegemony-building efforts of the elites implies expanding political party systems and the weakening institutionalisation of the political party system. Further, the empirical evidences gathered for this research finds that this direction of politics increasingly failing to address the needs of the constituencies and political party system becoming less accountable to the public. This unhealthy pattern of dependencies among the political parties (big and small) and with the voters encourages seeking individual patronage by the politicians. Nevertheless, this situation signifies the strengthening of alliance formation among the various competing sub-factions in the Sinhalese elite political faction. Moreover, as pointed out by a number of respondents, this alliance making is increasingly subject to the exchange of material benefits among political parties and the elites (such as ministerial portfolios with lucrative facilities, diplomatic postings, important positions in public-sector ventures and money given to individuals and for the parties). This has led to further lack of ideological debates in politics, and to unethical and corrupt political practices. In other words, the situation denotes strengthening of a horizontal patronage system and state building tilting towards a predatory state.

Coalition building is more likely, given the system of Proportional Representation (PR) introduced by J.R. Jayawardene. Initially it was introduced as a way to enhance the participation of minority political parties in politics. Since PR effectively prevents pendulum shifts in elections and tends to deny any permanent commitment to any political party, the underlying motivation of the PR system can be seen as a positive effect. Besides, this system also forces the political parties to seek consensus and form coalitions to come to power (Coomaraswamy 2005:167). On the flip side, as the number of small parties expands in the political coalitions and the demands they make for a larger share of patronage benefits, coalitions are getting more costly. This is a worrisome scenario for the main political parties that are faced with decreasing avenues to generate finances needed to dispense and sustain all the benefits these parties demand. As a number of other countries in South Asia have demonstrated, in the case of Sri Lanka, the cost of coalition making is met using state resources and corrupt practices. This is a conclusion validated by 90% of the respondents of this study and also by a recent report released by IDEA (2007:60). Further, the various demands made by the coalition partners to major political parties also significantly increase both the number of cabinet ministerial portfolios and the number of state sector employments. It is often the case that both these elements form the major portion of the deals ne-

gotiated between the parties, and are often being awarded to the key party cadres and their party supporters (Dunham & Jayasuriya 2001:16, Field interviews R.1,2,11,10,13,14,16,23,24,25). Costly coalition making also contributes to a decline in the material benefits offered to other social groups outside political parties and to those who have no significant political affiliations. In other words, the situation demands subscription to the hegemonic project of the ruling elites and its ways of conduct of politics. As one prominent constitutional lawyer in Sri Lanka summarised, 'today in Sri Lanka, politics is no longer about contest of ideas. There is a great deal of power of political patronage where the interests of some and few are looked after by political actors. This system of patronage politics has undermined the ideals of politics' (Field interview R.12). What this view suggests is the gathering of political forces around one political ideology, which this research suggests is a right-wing one. Further, it also suggests that this direction of elite politics is pushing the path of state building more towards right-wing direction.

These sentiments suggest that the successful operationalisation of patronage politics keeps the already mobilised forces satisfied as well as suppresses the rise of possible oppositional forces to elites' hegemony building. There are a few negative outcomes for this direction of politics. One is politics tilting towards right-wing hegemonic formation and the inequalities between various societal forces becoming deeper. Use of coercive force against those who do not consent to this project and elimination of oppositional forces by using violence should not be ruled out too. Further, these conditions are likely to deepen the democratic deficit and malfunction of the democratic institutions as the main mechanism of setting the rules of the game. This situation is also intensifying factionalism among the surviving smaller political parties. These will be mainly encouraged by the traditional main political parties, as a way of reducing the costs of coalitions. When the smaller political parties split, the traditional political parties do not have to fulfill the demands made upon them by the small party. Instead, they could easily offer lucrative individual patronage to individual splinters and smaller splinter groups from these parties. In the arena of electoral politics, these political developments could increase political and social violence. Currently, this trend (also known as Balkanisation)³⁷ is equally observed among the Sinhalese and more importantly among the minority ethnic political parties. A few examples are the breakaway factions of Hakeem, Ashraff, NUA in the SLMC and Karuna and Pillaian factions of the TMVP, and NFF of JVP.

In addition to the hegemony building, the development of patronage political system among the elites could also lead to sharpening of the state's ideological path. In Sri Lanka, the state's ideological path is often get re-emphasised when political parties attempt to secure the biggest share of material benefits by using Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology. In national politics, this strategy is mostly adopted by smaller parties like JVP and JHU. The ability of the main political parties to include or exclude JVP and JHU depends on the scale of political sacrifices they have to make to other non-Sinhala minority ethnic political parties. As the recent trends in politics of coalition making in Sri Lanka suggest, such deals can exclude JVP and JHU as long as they are able to receive the support of the ethnic minority political parties. This trend increases the value of ethnic-based minority political parties. Further, this research argues that this tendency encourages greater acceptance of right-wing politics among the minority and majority political parties. Further the minority political parties can easily opt for soft bargaining which will undermine the hard bargaining positions of the Sinhalese minority political parties. In light of these possible scenarios, in national politics, the influence of JVP and JHU those are solely dependent on Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism slogans for their political survival will face new tests by the voters. The consequences of this situation could affect all ethnic groups because the minority political parties entering into a soft mode of political bargaining and conceding to individual patronage benefits is unable to decisively address the major issues concerning the grievances of the entire ethnic group or help overcome the issue of horizontal inequalities they are faced with. At the same time, this trend will allow JVP and JHU to put more pressure on the ruling regimes prevent granting any

minor concession to the minority communities and at the same time increasing their ethnically based propaganda. However, this research is inclined to suggest that the latter trend in politics can influence the increase or decrease of the ethnic image of the state. Nevertheless, as observed in this research, the capacity of the ruling elites to advance the states accumulation process (that is tied to the external factors) could determine the direction of the hegemony building strategies, the hegemony project and the path of state transformation.

Given the above, JVP and JHU are simultaneously challenged by the ethnic minority political parties and by the main political parties. To enter into a competitive coalition making process, they have to drop/reduce or sometimes increase their public Sinhala-Buddhist demands voluntarily or at the request of main parties, and drop/reduce unrealistic material demands.³⁸ However, their ability to direct Sinhala-Buddhist sentiments to new directions still can be a factor of concern for the larger parties. If the major parties are able to ignore such developments or strategically incorporate JVP and JHU to the hegemonic coalition by offering patronage to the leaders of these parties, handling their ethnic rhetoric in politics seems easy.³⁹ At the same time, as proven in the past, use of coercion to suppress their voice is always an option. However, the outcome of these different scenarios will either facilitate a process of deconstruction or consolidating of the hegemonic political project. The capacity of a small group of elites in influencing the direction of state building cannot be completely ignored, especially predictable among the Sinhalese elites, who have been largely successful in influencing the political participation of the lower class masses by using different strategies. JVP and JHU's ideological propaganda can be easily sold to the voters who are faced with declining trickle down effects of material benefits from the political elites in power. However, in the new political context marked by the absence of the LTTE, a strong internal demand for Tamils' self-determination and the security state policy pursued by the Sinhalese political elites, the strength of Sinhala-Buddhism as a political mobilisation tool and a hegemony building process is yet to be fully tested. Regardless of the direction of politics may take in the post-LTTE period, what this research finds is that ethnic identity politics and the ethnic nationalist project pursued by the Sinhalese political elites have already derailed the possibility of democratic state building in Sri Lanka.

As gathered in this research, the strong patronage political system invented and successfully managed by the Sinhalese political elites show limitations of the society to make democratic and meaningful decisions concerning redistributive and important issues. As illustrated above, use of patronage politics as one of the main tools for hegemony building that has influenced the direction of state building under various dynamic conditions of state-in-society relations have made the boundaries between legitimate and democratic structures of the state blurred. Regardless, whatever the direction politics will take, it is certain that all these direction is likely to enhance the undemocratic character of the state, right-wing political culture and the vertical and horizontal inequalities in the society (Venugopal 2011:71).

3.4 Clientelism and state policies: how sacred is the sacred cow? From welfare politics to warfare politics

In Sri Lanka the state welfare policy is known as the sacred cow, denoting the sacred nature of the welfare system. In other words, this term suggests almost the untouchability and the danger of attempting to remove the subsidies distributed to the public under the state welfare policy (Kelagama 2000: 1484). There are a number of debates attempting to evaluate the main contribution of the state welfare policy. Against the backdrop of the ethnic conflict, among those who challenge the argument that abandonment of the state welfare policy as a way of promoting economic growth shows the need of continuation of the state welfare in promoting social peace (Dunham and Jayasuriya 2000:97). Placed within these numerous debates concerning the state welfare policy, the following section shows the implications of the continuation of the state wel-

fare policy that was used as a tool of political coalition building between the Sinhalese political elites and the Sinhalese masses on inducing the political conditions for the civil war between the LTTE and the Sinhalese-dominated state.

The history of state welfare policy and welfare politics can be traced back to the Donoughmore reforms in 1931. There are number of different scenarios that is said to have given rise to the welfare policy of this period. Until the late 1970s, the initial ideas of the welfare programmes were greatly influenced by the British social policy. In addition, the deteriorating living conditions of the local population are of significance. The depression in the early 1930s was an important event that hit the plantation system hard, which led to its almost-complete collapse. The scarcity of essential goods and widespread unemployment are also cited as important scenarios underlying motivations of the welfare policy of this period. Besides, the malaria epidemic of the mid-1930s also made the economic recovery extremely slow. In addition, the Second World War also plunged the economy and disrupted the normal pattern of external trade. Importantly, as a result of British taking part in the war, siphoned the resources out of the country making economic recovery challenging. It is under these scenarios that the need for rescue and relief came into being (Pieris 2006: 147). The relief and rescue measures were in the areas of education, health care, food supply and peasant agriculture (*ibid*).

After independence the welfare policy pursued by the British was followed by the local political elites. Apart from handing out certain essential items, such as a universal rice ratio, the welfare package included more opportunities in the educational sector, land grants, subsidised grain and fertilizers to peasant producers. Although the state welfare policies did not target a particular community it focused on occupational groups such as the peasantry or social group such as the poor or underprivileged (Wickramasinghe 2006:303). However, in practice, it ended up serving the Sinhalese peasantry the most (*ibid*). After independence, this initial colonial practice that was conceived under different dynamics related to global and local economic situation was continued by the political elites. There are contending views as to why the welfare policy was pursued and the reasons for its expansion in this period. As Pieris summarises, these views represent two different paradigms, one that emphasised the ‘third world development paradigm’ and the other that emphasised the differences of commitments in respect of local party politics (2006: 148). The first paradigm was conceived on the trends pertaining to the demography of the population. McCourt, who emphasises the noble goals of the welfare state policy, suggests that it is an injustice to accept the disillusioned view that welfarism is nothing more than a polite term for the mass distribution of patronage measures to individuals (2007:434). To quote McCourt, ‘it seems plausible to suggest that altruism combined with the ideology of Fabian socialism that dominated the formative independence period to produce a not wholly self-serving welfarist conviction that the State should provide, irrespective of the electoral benefits of so doing, which has at least contributed to the impressive basic human development statistics, such as life expectancy’ (*ibid*).

While acknowledging these two points of view, this next section will focus on the welfare policy in the late colonial period and after independence within the paradigm of elite political relations. As majority of the respondents of this study shared, after independence welfare policies became an arena for competition between different political parties and the government’s occupied office. Welfare benefits were put right in the centre of political debates as an effective political mobilisation strategy (Field interview R.1). Nevertheless given the other contending views on this matter, the welfare provisions around education, health services and food subsidies should be read in a broader context by carefully placing the elites’ political motivations as well as the numerous struggles faced by the majority community in the periphery. Although this policy orientation may have had its rational grounds that assert equity and efficiency (Abeyratne 2000: 20), this research is inclined to suggest that adoption of welfare state policies in Sri Lanka seems to have superseded such noble objectives. Other scholars who emphasise the element of political strategy

pursued through welfare state policy in the post-independent period suggest, this policy been used by the ruling class to strengthen patronage networks (Kearney 1973 and Wilson 1979 cited in Pieris: 2006:249). The authors, who have addressed the political aspect of welfare state policy, including Swaris, were not alone in arguing that welfare state ideology and the prolonged practice of welfare state policy in Sri Lanka were primarily political strategies. As Swaris suggests the Sri Lankan welfare state was paternalistic and used by the colonial bourgeois class as a way to legitimate their newly acquired political status that could be otherwise contested easily, socially and culturally by competing local political forces at the centre (1973:77). Complementing empirical data, Bastian sees the ideology behind welfarism in Sri Lanka tied to popular politics too (Bastian 1993:11). Further, given the Sinhalese peasant-centric basis of welfare policy in Sri Lanka, other than satisfying the economic and social needs of the Sinhalese peasantry whom all the political parties were dependent on, inevitably suggests other political motivations underlying it (Bastian 1993:11, Field interview R.8).

The welfare policy in Sri Lanka has been used as an instrument for political mobilisation and a source of dispensing state patronage to certain segments in the society. Moreover, its social consequences altered the path of state building and eventually became an integral element of the elites' overall political strategy aimed at hegemony building. Further it can also be seen that the welfare state policy systematically created a strong culture of dependency between the patrons (the political elites) and the clients (society at large). Over time, this development has been preventing the society making strong demands for de-politicisation of the state institutions, state policies and enshrining the principle of equity in resource distribution. As one respondent of this research observed, 'from the beginning, the state was politicised in Sri Lanka, people voted for welfarism as they gained material benefits out of it. Since 1931, upon receiving the universal franchise, the political identities were created based on "what we receive and what we get by giving mentality" (R.1).

In many parts of the world, state welfare policies adopted in the post-colonial period is identified as a strategy of dispensing mass clientelism (Hopkin 2006:16). Sri Lanka is not an exception to this situation. Although the welfare state policy was used an instrument of political mobilisation and manipulation of political participation, it did produce positive outcomes too. As any other form of mass clientelism, the benefits were enjoyed by the least privileged in the society. It is obvious that this segment of the population have little more than their vote to trade. As Shanmugaratnam points out, the welfare-oriented economic policies pursued by the Sinhalese governments (including the regime of J.R.Jayawardena in 1977) was not always aimed at benefiting the Sinhalese only. In his view, the import substitution policies of 1970–1977 benefitted the Tamil farmers in the North as well (1993:11, 13). Table 3.3 provides statistical evidences on the claims made on improvement of overall quality of life as a result of state welfare policy.

Table 3.3
Improvement in physical quality of life in Sri Lanka: 1946-1981

Year	1946	1981
Population (in 1000s)	6,657	14,487
Crude death Rate (per 1000)	20.3	5.9
Life expectancy (at birth, years)	42.2	69.9
Infant mortality (Per 1000 live births)	94	30
Adult Literacy (%)	57.8	87.4

Source: Pieris 2006:149, adapted by the author

The begging question on state welfare policy practiced in Sri Lanka is: who benefitted the most? Answers to this question shift along a timeline. According to this research, at the beginning of its implementation, welfare benefits reached the least underprivileged sections of the society and it was characterised by a vertical pattern of distribution of state resources. During this period, there was no Asian country had gone as far as Sri Lanka in the direction of granting welfare (Gunasinghe 1996:55). However, as the competition for state power began to intensify at the centre and as new shifts occurred in socio-political and economic contexts, this was no longer the case. Within an ailing socialist economy, Sinhalese political elites who captured state power used state patronage to nurture impersonal (mass clientele) and distribute patronage benefits to close political allies. Over decades, the continued practice of welfare policy targeting various social groups burdened the economy because the state accumulation of wealth was mostly spent on continuing the welfare system. However, the ability to sustain this direction of party building and hegemony building by exhausting the state resources in the backdrop of welfare state policy was dependent on the availability and the capacity of the ruling elites to generate capital. As Waldner notes when the coalition building with the masses that takes place in parallel to the transformation of state institutions and by using state institutions and state policies as artifacts of coalition building does not promote state building with economic development (1999:3). In light of his overall analysis, in the case of Sri Lanka too, the state welfare policy and the welfare state practiced as a primary tool of coalition building entrapped the political elites who devised it. Moreover, the highly competitive nature of the elite conflicts have compelled them to carry out this policy further and renew it over time under different dynamics in elite conflicts and state in society relations that directed the path of state building in a particular direction. In the case of Sri Lanka, this direction came to be marked by the promotion of inequality, right-wing politics, economic under development and elite predation of the state.

Growth and gradual demise of the welfare policy that reached the least privileged was determined on domestic as well as global economic conditions. As long as the local forces are concerned, in 1947 UNP proposed a mixed economy and introduced the Six Year Economic Development Plan (1947–1953) (Kelegama 2000:1480). This plan entrusted the state with large public expenditure mainly to be used for social welfare, free education, food subsidies and free public health services. As Kurian points out, although the plan included a commitment to develop the economic infrastructure and overcoming the structural shortcomings in the economy, nothing on the latter two issues was done (undated:2). Instead, until mid-1960s, the substantial amount of wealth accumulated by the national treasury by continually exploiting the existing economic structure, the ruling regimes managed to continue providing welfare benefits and even to expand the existing provisions (Kelegama 2000:1477). This was largely possible due to the advantages secured in foreign trade resulting from sudden positive shocks experienced in the world market. Such unexpected favourable conditions made Sri Lanka's cash crop products, for instance rubber,⁴⁰ attractive in the world market. A specific case in point was the local economic boom followed by the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–1955) (Lakshman 1987:11; Gunathilake 2000:134). This event removed many import restrictions imposed on Sri Lanka during the Second World War (Pieris 2006:179).

Unfortunately in the 1970s there was also a series of negative shocks⁴¹ suffered by the economy, which had an adverse effect on the overall financial situation of the country (Jayathilake 1999:61; Central Bank of Ceylon quoted by Pieris 2006:180). These negative economic shocks made the local economy vulnerable and affected the smooth carrying out of the welfare policy. The 1973 oil crisis also played a major role in functioning of the welfare state policy. These situations also seemed to have determined the nature and the scale of mass clientelism offered to various forces in the society and elites' struggle for generating the necessary finances to carry out the costly and ambitious welfare programmes promised during the election campaigns.

Table 3.4
Change in external resources 1945-1975⁴²

Year	US\$ Million	Rs. Million	Per Capita (Rs.)
1945	379	1260	189.3
1950	280	1100	147.6
1955	258	980	115.1
1960	114	422	42.7
1965	92	312	28.0
1970	68	197	15.7
1975	108	133	9.8

Source: Adapted (and modified) from Abeyratne 2000:28.

As shown in Table 3.4, since the late 1950s, the economy had begun to stagnate and decline (Lakshman 1985:18; Jayawardena 1985: 84; Wickramasinghe 2006:243). The country's reliance on the colonial economic structure, which the country continued to exploit, became increasingly insufficient to feed the booming population. This economic decline coincided with a steady increase in population growth in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s as shown in table 3.5, as well as with a dramatic increase in welfare expenditure to feed the growing population. As shown in Table 3.6, the welfare expenditures of the state were as high as 20–25% of the total budget allocations. The reason for maintaining such a high percentage in the total budget allocation is related to the political advantages these provisions had for the political patrons.

Table 3.5
Population size and rate of growth in Sri Lanka 1871-1981

Year and Date of Population Census	Average annual growth rate (%)
1871 March 27	-
1881 February 17	1.4
1891 February 26	0.9
1901 March 01	1.7
1911 March 10	1.4
1921 March 18	0.9
1931 February 26	1.7
1946 March 19	1.5
1953 March 20	2.8
1963 July 08	2.6
1971 October 09	2.2
1981 March 17	1.7
2001 July 17	1.2

Source: Department of Census and Statistics (2010), Population and Housing Survey 2010: 2

Table 3.6
Government expenditure on social welfare 1955-1975

Year	All social services	Education	Health	Food subsidies
1955	29.1	13.1	8.4	3.4
1956-1960	25.4	12.8	7.7	8.0
1961-1965	24.7	13.7	6.8	14.1
1966-1970	21.5	12.0	6.0	17.1
1971-1975	19.5	10.9	5.3	15.2

Source: Adapted (and modified) from Abeyratne (2000), p.30

In 1971, Sri Lanka, according a report released by the International Labor Organization (ILO) was living far beyond her means (Abeyratne 2000:34). The cause of this was not only due to the dedication of a large share of national earnings to provide welfare benefits but also because of the overwhelming attention paid to the development of rural agriculture and the various subsidies granted to this section. Besides the importance assigned to the agriculture sector and the importance of the peasantry in the island's politics (Moore 1985: 5), agricultural development was spurred both by the advice of the World Bank (WB) and the personal and political preferences of the ruling parties that came to office. On one hand, this direction of agricultural development as publicly claimed was aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in food. On the other hand, it is fair enough to suggest that it was also aimed at maintaining the vast patronage networks forged in this sector that successfully linked the political centre with the rural peasantry. It is not only that, as Waldner correctly points out from elsewhere, elites giving primacy to agriculture over industrialisation can be interpreted as an attempt to keep the local agrarian elites who are important allies of the national elites and subdue arising of any tension between the agrarian elites and the industrialists, which can be detrimental to the power of the national elites (1999:30). Further, as was the case in Waldner's analysis, in the case of Sri Lanka too, focusing on agriculture could have been an attempt to curtail the conditions favourable for the emergence of popular classes in the industrial sector who could no longer be controlled by the traditional patron-client relations (ibid). In this sense, it is correct to suggest that the elites' aversion for industrialisation was an element of political strategy to keep the lower-class masses disconnected from the global economic and class forces.

The underlying political motivations for the promotion of agricultural sector had led to paying a lip service to industrialisation. The aversion to industrialisation was, as Gunatillake notes, also the substance of a warning given by the WB mission to Sri Lanka in 1951. As reported from the WB, Sri Lanka received signals to delay industrialisation until the country reached the maximum potential in agriculture (Gunathilake 2000:135). The lack of focus on industrial development had its internal causes as well. Preferences, the political-economic vision of the political regimes of the period and the nature of elites' political competition at the centre that relied on the votes from the periphery are useful examples worthy of attention. Meanwhile, the private sector also needed state patronage because, as Gunasinghe points out, they operated within various quota systems and needed state permits and licenses (1996:184). These facilities were all handed over to the favourites of the politicians of the ruling parties (ibid). Complementing Gunasinghe, Herring also argues that the nationalisation of state assets and the various state controls introduced especially during the period of socialist economy were all part and parcel of clientelist politics that benefitted to extend the life of government in power and became a part of the strategy for raising funding sources available for patronage distribution (1987:327). The overall lethargic attitude towards industrialisation could also be interpreted as an attempt to curtail the support for the Marxist political forces of this period, whose primary constituencies had been the urban and rural

industrial working class. Besides, until 1977, the short-lived nature of governments whose term often run up to five-year period can be cited as another factor that hindered pursuing a long-term and a well-planned industrialisation plan. In confluence, all the above mentioned factors seemed to have resulted in less contribution from the traditional economic activities for economic growth, absence of new avenues for generating necessary finances and pressure to maintain high welfare expenditure, all of which doubled the burden on the economy (Abeyratne 2000:34).

Thus, even with declining financial resources and declining economic growth, most foreign exchange reserves were used to import consumer items (Abeyratne 2000:35). According to Herring, the country's elaborated and expansive set of welfare policies, disproportionate to its per capita income, made the official international development community call it 'premature welfarism' or a 'negative development model' (Herring 1987:325). Domestically, any attempt made to cut welfare provisions became an act of political suicide. For example, in 1953, when the UNP regime headed by Dudley Senanayake attempted to cut the consumer subsidies on rice, it affected Senanayake's popularity, sparked widespread protests and eventually forced his resignation (Herring 1987:326; Abeyratne 2000: 34). In Sri Lanka, this incident is nicknamed as 'rice politics' and 'belly politics'.

This 'welfare induced dependency syndrome' that is observed in Sri Lanka fits well with the ideal scenario of political clientelism driven by supply and demand (Piattoni 2001:16). During the first three decades of independence, the political elites used state resources to dispense (especially mass) patronage benefits and to secure political networks. Capturing state power gave them access to state resources to continue, dispense patronage benefits to the political loyalist and to the newly mobilised social groups as well as directly become a push factor for their struggles for political and economic hegemony. What underlies this nature of politics is the unequal treatment received by those who did not subscribe to this system. Simply stated, those who subscribed to the system would benefit and those who didn't would not. This development in politics encouraged a fearless competition between various political groups and peripheral forces. Play of identity politics, especially by using ethnic identity was one of the outcomes. This situation denotes the beginning of the struggle for a perceived 'fixed national pie' (Wilson 1988:49). Further, it is correct to suggest that identity politics was a factor of higher voter turnout, yet hampered developing a civic consciousness. The high voter turnout since independence is not due to increased political consciousness of the post-colonial society per se, but more a result of the need of various segments in the society to identify themselves with one or the other main political party who have access to the state resources that were vital for realising the material goals of the society. Further, high voter turnout, as both Pieris and the field data of this research caution, should not be misread as a sign of strength and resilience of the parliamentary form of government (Pieris 1999:191). In an overall political context built on mass clientelism, the high voter turnout was most likely to be related to patronage politics and the degree of manipulation of the consent of the lower class constituencies who are forced to vote to retain their share of resources and benefits. Thus, this direction of electoral politics has limited the quality of the political agency of majority in the country. As confirmed by a number of respondents of this research, even today, the expectation of receiving state patronage benefits is one important motivation as to why the majority in the Sinhalese community is eager to vote in elections (Field interviews R.1, R.2, R.5, R.3, R.4, R.10, R.11 and R.16). Moreover, complementing Waldner's findings on a few transitional economies (1999:34), it is correct to state that the official post-colonial Sri Lankan welfare policy was also used by the political elites to control and manage the masses incorporated into a volatile political context. It allowed the development of a politically submissive and dependent majority, enabling the political elites to establish their political dominance, and pursue hegemony by aligning the political strategy with the economic strategy and eventually capture the state. There is a connection that these developments have on the growth of the state sector and the state's increased role in the economy. This aspect will be discussed in the next chapter.

Despite the popularity of the welfare provisions and the welfare policy among the poor, it was only capable of eliminating the symptoms of poverty, while root causes and the structural imbalance in the economy went unaddressed (Abeyratne 2000:20). With such causes unaddressed, rural poverty continued. This pushed the poor to search for means for everyday survival. Rural poverty thus drove people towards patronage politics and suppressed demanding democratic functioning of the state institutions and organised political action to counter the practices outside the democratic state institutions. This situation points to the malevolence linkage between poverty, patronage politics, low political development, economic underdevelopment, hegemonic relations and a submissive culture. As in other developing countries (Grindle 2001:345), in Sri Lanka too, the poor bore the long-term economic, social and political costs incurred by the ruling elites for opting for the short-sighted politically profitable policies. At the same time, the poor have completely missed the point that the misery they live is partly their own construction and lack of their independent political agency. From the point of view of hegemony building, these conditions are ideal for persuasion of elites' political and economic hegemony.

3.5 The post-1977 period: state economic policies and transformation of the nature of the political patronage system

Jayawardene Regime (1977-1988)

As Flynn's seminal piece of work on clientelism argues, major transformations in a traditional context highly marked by patron-client relations and patronage/clientelist ties tend to be heightened during the transition to political independence (1973). This observation was made with regard to Sri Lanka too after 1977 when major changes in the economic and political fields occurred (Field interview R.13). In the post-1977 period, strengthening of patronage linkages and formation of new types of vertical and horizontal clientelist networks and clusters started. These developments stood in the way of democratic state building with increased social violence, growing inequality and elite capture of the state.

By the late 1970s, state accumulation was in severe stress, which meant the drying up of financial resources available to sustain the elaborate state-sponsored patronage system. This economic crisis cannot be divorced from parallel political developments of this period. High unemployment (over 20%), deteriorating social services, shortages of essential food items and the rationing/black marketeering of essential goods all contributed to the landslide victory of the UNP (Matthews 1987:92; Dunham & Kelegama 1994:8). The UNP election manifesto of 1977 stated, 'We will ensure that every citizen, whether he belongs to a majority or minority, racial, religious or caste group enjoys equal and basic human rights and opportunities' (UNP election manifesto 1977). In other words, the general conditions felt by the people were strategically manipulated by Jayawardene to reach his personal long-standing political vision.

In the 1977 general elections, UNP secured a two-thirds majority in the national legislature. It was the first time in history of Sri Lanka where a single political party was able to win a general election with such a vast majority (Bandarage 2009:72). In popular discourse UNP's election victory is referred as the realization of '*Badagostharavaadaya*'⁴³ of the voters. The literal translation of this Sinhalese verbatim is 'theory of the stomach'. In the backdrop of scarcity of essential food items, rations imposed on food items and long food queues during the previous government and UNP's promised open economic policy, the rival political groups interpreted the overwhelming pro-UNP voting behavior of the people as 'voting for the grain of lentil' (Sinhala verbatim is *parippu eteta chande dunne*). This sweeping electoral victory enabled the regime to introduce drastic changes, such as the second republican constitution of 1978, the executive presidential system and to switch the economic system from socialist to an open economy (Jayathilake 1999:65; Field Interviews R.13 and R.1). In light of Waldner's insight on mediated states, the above drastic

changes introduced by Jayawardena to the state's institutional profile can be interpreted as the realisation of the incapacity of the existing economic and political system to reproduce elites' status in the long run (1999:29). With this realisation, under the second republic constitution, Jayawardene introduced the system of executive presidency. The second republican constitution is known as the 'Gaullist constitution' (Wilson 1980: xvi; Bandarage 2009:95) as it was a mixture of powers in the French and British constitutions and some aspects of the constitution of the United States of America. In view of political analysts, the second republican constitution and the executive presidency were powerful instruments that could be used for the good and bad, depending on the personal qualities of the president elected (Coomaraswamy 2005:153, Field Interviews R.12 and R.9). Under the powers rendered to the executive president, he/she was made not answerable to the parliament, enjoyed a number of immunities, and was now longer subject to many checks and balances that were in the previous political system. In 1978 he became the country's first executive president. President Jayawardene, the chief architect of this new constitution, justified his new powers as the definitive path towards rapid economic growth, the way to attract foreign investment and also for the better working of an open economic system (Edrisinha & Selvakumaran 2000:105). In addition, by the introduction of the system of proportional representation (PR) in 1982, Jayawardene also changed the political system of Sri Lanka.

Given the short nature of governments in the previous era, his ambition of creating stable conditions under the new system was convincing. In addition to the economic justifications provided on the new constitution, he also argued the new constitution would also be facilitating the necessary mechanisms to end the ethnic conflict (Shanmugaratnam 1993:7).

As some scholars have observed, 'institutional choices are never made in a political and economic vacuum; they are often tailored to suit the narrower political and economic agendas of those making them' (Bastian & Luckam 2003:307). These changes were not abrupt; rather they were all part of the long-held political vision of J.R. Jayawardene (ibid: 2003:197). The various reforms introduced in 1977 and thereafter targeted patterns of resource allocation, distribution of benefits, securing UNP's political domination and settling of many 'old debts'⁴⁴ (Dunham & Jayasuriya 2001:3).

By continually pointing to the 1977 general elections as an overwhelming mandate that Jayawardena received by the voters for his vision,⁴⁵ he actually implemented his personal vision. The economic aspect of Jayawardena's overall vision seemed to have had wider acceptance among the general public who were living under compelling conditions due to economic mismanagement under the previous SLFP government. But the acceptance of Jayawardene's political vision that was finely embedded in his economic vision and the new state institutions had no public legitimacy (Coomaraswamy 2005:153; Bandarage 2009:95).⁴⁶ However, by emphasising on the economic aspect of the vision, Jayawardena justified the new political institutions. But, these new institutions were unable to transform the long-standing tradition of patronage politics and established patterns of interest satisfaction. In this sense, the new institutions and the constitution came to be used and adjusted to continue the old system and to meet the needs of the UNP to gain full control of the political machine. As rightly observed by Ron Jenkins, pushing through reforms requires a broad range of underhanded tactics (cited in Venugopal 2011:70), which the Jayawardena regime is no exception to. In the Jayawardena period, persuasion of authoritarianism, dismantling democratic mechanisms through new architecture of the state and state institutions, use coercion to contain the oppositional forces and trade unions,⁴⁷ co-option and corruption provides example for these tactics.

Under the new circumstances, the strategies used for cultivating patronage networks and relations were different from the SLFP. The open economic strategy Jayawardena pursued brought foreign investments and aid, which became the main sources of funding for the patronage system since. It is not only the patronage system; the availability of money also encouraged a system of

corruption as well. The new institutional framework facilitated both these systems. Meanwhile Jayawardene readily used the powers vested in him in the constitution as the executive president to make appointments to higher public posts in the government (Constitution of Sri Lanka Chapter VII, article 33, such as that of judges to the Supreme Court, the chief justice and diplomats. Jayawardene was quick to allocate these positions to close political party members and supporters of the UNP, his friends and political loyalists. In this way, SLFP-lenient bureaucracy was replaced by a UNP-lenient bureaucracy.

By exercising the executive presidential powers, Jayawardene also invented a number of new political traditions that encouraged open horizontal clientelist relations and political corruption among the political elites. One of these was the creation of a landowning class of politicians (Field interview R.2). As one respondent described:

President J.R. Jayawardene, who created this presidential system in 1978, acquired the best coconut land in the country as part of the concessions he should get from the Land Reforms Commission. He also permitted his ministers to exchange their worthless lands for valuable lands of the Land Reform Commission and permitted his landless ministers and government party MPs to acquire valuable lands of that Commission at a nominal price. This system has been followed by a greater or lesser degree by every governing party, which has come to power thereafter (Field interview R.2).

And indeed, since then, a number of incidents of state land grabbing by the politicians and by their political subordinates have been reported⁴⁸ (Field interview R.25). This situation illustrates how state resources have become increasingly a property of the ruling regime and important sources of regime building and political domination.

The new institutional structure also allowed the politicians to engage in other economically important transactions. As a respondent described anecdotally:

Jayawardene's political system is designed on the rules of Napoleon's war, under which a bonus system (*prasaada deemana*) was introduced. Under this system of "*prasada deemana*", whoever who wins a territory is entitled to use the resources as he/she wishes. In other words, this implies that, when a political candidate wins an election from a certain electorate he or she can use the resources of that area as they please. Jayawardene turned this system into a durable political strategy to make the president and his party to retain control of the territory over a long period of time (Field Interview R.2).

Moreover, ministers were made the sole authority to issue licenses to various business establishments such as radio stations, television stations, private transport facilities and liquor stores in their respective electorates. Consequently, after 1977 a large number of incidents have been reported in which Members of Parliament have engaged in financially and politically motivated transactions. According to some observations, none of the radio stations (which are about 25) operating in Sri Lanka today have obtained their licenses through formal means; they have all obtained licenses through political affiliations and political intermediaries (Field Interview R.2). As a result, these new political practices steadily cut important sources of national revenue and also increased the level of political interferences in economic affairs. (Field Interview R.2, R.13, R.14). As one respondent opined, presently, 90% of the intended state revenue fails to reach the national treasury (Field interview R.2).⁴⁹ Although some scholars argue that political clientelism and corruption of this nature help avoid bureaucratic red tapes, making decision making more effective to facilitate accelerated economic growth in some countries (Nye 1967:421), in Sri Lanka such avenues of accumulation are extensively used by the political elites on luxurious personal consumption and election campaigns.

During Jayawardene's regime, apart from clientelist benefits that were being distributed among the close political allies, an element of vertical distribution of clientelist benefits was observed too. These trickle-down effects were possible thanks to the large scale public sector investment

programmes (PSIP) launched by the regime. Large sums of money were borrowed as long-term bi-lateral and multi-lateral international development aid and loans. During Jayawardena's government these foreign aid, loans and the state resources primarily dedicated to launch the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project (1977–1984), an extensive housing development programme and other projects. These projects were effectively used to provide employment to the political loyalists of the party (Herring 1987:331; Moore 1990:352; Dunham & Kelegama 1994:16; Spencer 2008:623; Bandarage 2009:84.). To quote Spencer, who accurately sums up the situation of political clientelism in the arena of development during Jayawardene's regime;

... huge aid inflows mostly directed the big development projects discussed earlier and easily transferred into jobs and contracts which could be handed out to political supporters along the usual channels of party based patronage. In other words, beneath the rhetoric of liberalism and rolling back the state Sri Lanka experienced a minor Keynesian boom based on public works and bank-rolled by international aid flows. Because of the aid subsidies this expansion of public works – and public spectacle-politicians and the politically connected – prospered as never before (2008:623).

In the literature on Sri Lanka, these development projects are identified as sources of accelerating ethnic antagonisms between the Sinhalese and Tamils. When analysed through the perspective of political clientelism, the underlying political strategy of political domination and hegemony building is noted. However, it should be noted that the main beneficiaries of these projects were not all the Sinhalese but a particular segment of the Sinhalese society, majority of them been UNP loyalists or newly indoctrinated members of the party. As Dunham and Jayasuriya who study the politics of Jayawardena period and after argue, generally what is often pointed out as outcomes of the open economy are not a new phenomenon in Sri Lanka, they are rather outcomes of pre-reform structures of socio-political relations and networks of patronage (Dunham & Jayasuriya 2001:2). Further, they also note that the new development projects launched by Jayawardena had benefitted many middle- and lower-level political loyalists of the UNP regime, in terms of employment, state patronage for businesses and government contracts (Dunham & Jayasuriya 2001:5).

Further, under Jayawardena and since then, as far as the various points of transformations noted in the existing system of political patronage are concerned, the new patronage system was found to be reinforced at multiple levels, enabling trickle down effects to the lower strata of UNP supporters. One of the known examples in this regard is the introduction of the *chit system*, a system that operates on small handwritten notes issued by the MPs (Thiruchelvam 1989:189; Field interview R.19). Under this new layer of patronage system, a *chit* (handwritten note) could be issued by a MP of the ruling regime to any public institution, including public schools, ordering that institution to recruit their political subordinates for employment or, in the case of schools, to admit children of political loyalists. Later, it was reported, even to admit a child to primary school⁵⁰ a *chit* from the MP of the electorate became a necessity. These sophisticated clientelist practices, and new networks and clusters established under the UNP regime were well integrated to the state institutional structure. As a result, institutionalisation of politicisation of state institutions was inevitable. The political beneficiaries of various projects of this period were expected to demonstrate political loyalty by bringing votes to the party and by helping to organise election campaigns aimed at mobilising family members, neighbours, caste communities, institutions, and regional communities. It is not only that, as the case with trade unions, such as Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya (UNP-controlled trade union), they were also used for political oppression of oppositional groups. The best example in this regard is the use of JSS in carrying out the 1983 programmes against the Tamil civilians (Hoole 2001:152–61). In the post-1977 period, these developments resulted in the emergence of an identifiable group of political brokers. In Table 3.7, the difference between the political brokers before and after 1977 period is explained.

Table 3.7
Differences between traditional and broker clientelism

Forms	Scope	Durability	Intensity	Type	Reach	Resources
Before 1948 (Traditional)	Extensive (All inclusive)	Very high (Generational transfer)	Very high	All kinds	Vertical	Personal
After 1948 (Welfare State)	Selected es- sential goods and services	Medium (Regime oriented)	High	Votes for collective welfare benefits and ideological	Mostly vertical	State patronage
After 1977 (Broker managed)	Restricted (mostly elec- toral)	Low (One or more elections)	Low to High	Votes for personal favours	Mostly horizontal	Political party managed State patronage

Source: Archer, 1990: 34 (Adapted and modified by the author).

As the central government increasingly became under the control of the UNP, in most cases, benefits of these state-managed projects largely reached the UNP supporters (Gunasinghe 2004:100). The impact of this development could be traced on everyday social relations, especially between the ethnic groups. Also as the LTTE violently barred holding election or prevented the people in the Tamil areas from voting, for the Tamil community it became increasingly difficult to take part in the prevailing system of resource and benefit distribution. These developments resulted in the deepening of the horizontal inequalities between the Tamils and the Sinhalese, and vertical inequalities among the Sinhalese along political party affiliations. At the same time, the new situation solidified the integrated domination among the Sinhalese community and increased the party political consciousness among the Sinhalese. The changes brought during the Jayewardene period also gave rise to a number of new class locations (precariat class) in the traditional class hierarchy in Sri Lanka. These new classes were incorporated into UNP's political alliance by rewarding them with state-sector jobs (See Chapter 4), and other new forms of patronage that was facilitated by the market economy. Their electoral worth and political use successfully turned them into a successful small-scale business class, with a particular political orientation of rightwing attitudes. Use of government property such as occupying public road-side pavements as business premises and not paying any form of taxes were a few benefits they were entitled to. In return, these small businessmen performed election chores, such as putting up election posters on behalf of the patron, removing posters of other candidates from rival political parties, engaging in election canvassing, and organising and gathering people to attend election meetings. In the long run, these routine tasks enabled them to identify with particular ministers or certain electorates as their domain of power (Uyangoda 2008:5–6). In most cases, members of this class category exercised the authority of the MP as well. Direct participation in electoral politics of this group on behalf of the UNP has also increased election violence.

Besides this group, many scholars point out (Shanmugaratnam 1993:11,13; Gunasinghe 1996:189; Bandarage 2009:80) that the state/regime-sponsored patronage was extended to a number of Tamil business establishments. These establishments were mainly found in the Colombo area and were an extended concession for their UNP loyalty than their ethnic identity. In the public discourse, there are a few popular names of extremely successful Tamil businessmen who received regime patronage of this period. However, compared to Sinhalese business establishments that received UNP patronage, the number of Tamil establishments that received UNP patronage is lesser (Gunasinghe 1996:189).

Within the administrative structure, Jayawardene's regime also introduced decentralisation (these aspects will be discussed further in chapter 5). As a reformed administrative structure, the District Development Council was introduced in 1981 to address ethnic grievances and regional disparities (Coomaraswamy 2003:157; Bandarage 2009:73). However, along the way, DDCs also ended up becoming a political tool of the ruling class and the ruling regime (Bastian 2008:158; Spencer 2008:615). The DDCs were established in 24 districts, with a decentralised budget enabling districts to govern their own development (Coomaraswamy 2003:157). Elections to the councils were mainly targeted to assuage Tamil grievances (Wriggins 1982:171). Despite the seemingly good intentions of the President, the DDCs became a point of conflict between the upper ranks of the UNP party members and the President (Bastian 1993: 17) with decentralising of DDC funding for Tamil-inhabited districts being opposed by the former. The most plausible explanation for this reluctance could be the lack of political advantages in granting Tamils access to state resources,⁵¹ because by this time, the ethnic factor in politics had already become dominant in national politics. As Gunasinghe observes, by this time, whatever his/her political leanings or popularity might be, no Tamil candidate could win a majority in a Sinhala electorate and no Sinhala candidate could win a majority in a Tamil electorate (1996:159). In a broader sense, the effort for decentralisation can be seen as an element of the political strategy of Jayawardena that looked for ways to include the Tamils to his political project.

The system of Proportional Representation introduced in the second republican constitution of 1978 was to take care of certain problems that the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system of elections was posing to the further development of the economy in the direction of capitalism (Bastian 2003:196). The PR system is considered as a complete break (from the First-past-the-post) in the country (ibid: 213). The new scheme was different from the principle of simple majority, and it was indeed in favour of the established political parties and was a way to make use of the traditional support base (Warnapala 1979:181). The initially high cut-off point of 12.5% introduced in this system (reduced to 5% in 1982) was a definite setback to any minor political party and can be seen to as a way of keeping them away from the parliamentary process (Bastian 2003:211–12). Therefore, democracy in Sri Lanka began to face an increased deficiency, yet worked in favour of the political elites who sought their domination.

The PR system did encourage coalition politics in Sri Lanka; however, there were other consequences of this system. A majority of the respondents pointed out the PR system became an enormous economic burden to smaller political parties, as they required a vast amount of money to contest in elections. Moreover, since the list of candidates was controlled by the political party, the PR system also encouraged intra-party rivalries. Moreover, the system also encouraged authoritative party leaderships in political parties and intra-party clientelism, with those close to the party leadership often favoured and receiving more patronage. The PR system therefore was plagued by less accountability of individual politicians (known as the free-rider problem in literature), increased party control in politics, and an increase in corruption and low party discipline. These empirical findings and the observations made in Sri Lanka are similar to the findings of research conducted by Persson et al. 2003:959, Kunicova and Rose-Akerman 2005:573, and Chang 2005:716 in other developing countries.

In subsequent elections, Jayawardene's politically motivated institutional designs delivered UNP the anticipated electoral victories and solidified its political dominance. This direction of politics was an inducement for establishing the domination of right-wing faction in elite politics. The increased politicisation of the trade union movement, penetration of party politics to various large-scale trade unions such as *Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya*, unions in the transport board, port services, all affected the marginally surviving class solidarity among the working class (Moore 1990:366, Dunham & Jayasuriya 2001:6) that were the only potential forces left in the society to challenge this domination. They were all either ruthlessly crushed or strategically included in the right-wing political programme. In

Spencer's view, '...it (UNP) had established its control over key trade unions: it had enmeshed a substantial stratum of potentially influential people – from new business elites to more humble village school teachers and minor officials – in a skein of patronage and obligation' (2008:617). As Gunasinghe observes, the implantation of bourgeoisie ideology and right-wing political propaganda among the working class through the above measures, in which Sinhala chauvinism is a feature, sacrificed the class solidarity over an ethnic solidarity and subjugation to the bourgeois class (Gunasinghe 1996:176). Over the years, the politicisation of trade unions made the organised working class into a mere appendage of the regime (Field Interviews ???/). Further, as Gunasinghe describes, UNP also established small juntas in various trade unions that have the capacity to monopolise the official position of the union on various issues and deal with the oppositional forces within it. The leaders and the members of these juntas were often rewarded with individual promotions, individual bonuses and other perquisites from the state resources. It is also noted that, parallel to the political domination pursued by simultaneously applying various strategies (obtaining consent, manipulation of the consent by rewarding desired behaviours and use force to suppress and oppress oppositional forces) the path of state building began to tilt more to the right under Jayawardene's leadership.

The opening of the economy and the subsequent large sums of money that came into the country, the regime embarked on new modes of accumulation and distribution all helped to build a vast patronage network. Various developments of this period suggest the use of UNP-controlled patronage to establish its political dominance. The strategic use under the opportunities provided under the liberal economy and the uninterrupted international aid flow enabled the UNP to capture the state and access new ingredients to feed the political machine and take the full control of it, most of the time. This strategy seemed to have complemented the two political projects pursued by the Sinhalese political elites since independence, i.e., the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony building and establishing the political domination of rightwing forces.

The political machine controlled by the UNP for 17 years extended material rewards to various politically significant groups to maintain and extend control over its personnel.⁵² Compared to the favours offered for individuals' and families close to the political party, the occasional pork barrel legislations (for example, reform of the standardisation policy in the higher education sector in 1979) introduced by UNP regime as an important inducement for minority ethnic groups are marginal. Still, as Scott cautions in his findings on clientelism elsewhere (Scott 1969:43), in Sri Lanka the widespread corruption generated by the sophisticated state machine designed by Jayawardene should not be mistaken as random greed. Instead, outcomes of widespread corruption and horizontal political clientelism must be viewed as systematically introduced political mechanisms that were used to maximise electoral support and to overcome the possible challenges from the oppositional forces to its domination. As per the findings of this research, compared to the previous period, Jayawardena took several important steps in directing the path of state building into a different direction. However, this research suggests, in terms of creating favourable conditions for democratic state building that these steps had not contributed enough. The reasons for it can be identified along a range of domestic and international circumstances under which Jayawardena had to operationalise them. As far as the domestic circumstances are concerned, intensification of the ethnic conflict and state entering into a civil war with the LTTE in the north east that absorbed most of the surplus and the state accumulation brought by these structural changes liberal economic policy) is significant (Venugopal 2011:69). Moreover, the increased unpopularity of Jayawardena's economic policy that required using many underhand tactics and authoritarian type of politics (ibid) to contain the forces unleashed by the changes he introduced can be cited as other important reasons as to why the state-building project of this period assumed an undemocratic character.

Premadasa Regime (1989-1993)

Premadasa is regarded as a political innovator with tremendous organisational skills and shrewdness (Field Interview R.4). In the arena of national politics, Premadasa was the only highest ranked political figure in Sri Lankan political history that symbolically ended the monopoly exercised by the westernised English-educated Goyigama political elites and their domination of politics (Uyangoda 1993:6; Keerawella & Samarajiva 1994:169). Premadasa who was of a lowerclass used his background to make an appeal to the lower-class masses.

Premadasa used the opportunities provided to him on the margins of the power structure brilliantly and innovatively to pave the way for hegemonic project of the UNP from a different front. Premadasa's political projects focused on the problems of the poor. Considering his low caste and class background, this was a useful political strategy. He carried out several large-scale pro-poor projects such as the housing project. During Premadasa's regime (1989–1993), large-scale public-funded development and pro-poor welfare-oriented programmes such as *Gam Udama* (Village awakening), *Janasaniya* (strength of people) and national housing schemes (its main slogan was *bisata wabalak - hitbata nivanak*: roof for the head - relief for the heart) were launched. These projects were launched in an entirely different political context marked by events of a second JVP uprising and escalation of the armed conflict in the northeast (Uyangoda 1993:6). By targeting the poor segments in the society, Premadasa and the ruling party (UNP) managed to contain the anti-hegemonic forces that could arise from this stratum of the society.

As during the Jayawardene regime, the benefits of these state-funded projects were largely distributed among political party members and their political subordinates of upper and lower classes (Moore 1990:352; Dunham & Kelegama 1995:21). However, it is important to mention that the very nature of these projects (pro-poor oriented) enabled clientelist benefits to reach the lower-level political supporters of the UNP and strengthen UNP's political coalition. Before becoming the president, during Jayawardene's regime, Premadasa was appointed as the main supervisor of the National Housing Authority established in 1979 (then Premadasa was the prime minister). He undertook the task of constructing 100,000 living units before the end of 1983. This goal was extended after Premadasa became President, to complete building 1,000,000 housing units through direct construction and state-aided self-help programmes. In addition to the above, another housing programme began, which envisaged constructing 155 houses with electricity per electorate. He also bet on establishing 500 garment factories targeting employment opportunities for the rural poor. However he could only establish 300 factories. The labour conditions and the labour rights of those who work in the factories were severely limited, which was a requirement of the foreign investors of these factories.

However, most of these state-funded projects were effectively used to extend patronage to the political loyalists of the UNP and at the same time provided skimming operations for politicians of the UNP regime (Herring 1987:331). Thus all these state-sponsored populist programmes launched during Premadasa period became a burden to the fiscal balance of the country, and thus created shock-waves amongst economists due to the scale and the political priority assigned to them (Bastian 1993:13). In other words, this situation suggests a sacrificing of the economy to advance the political strategy opted by the UNP leadership.

By radically conceptualising and implementing pro-poor oriented welfare programmes, Premadasa was able to steadily build a strong power base in Colombo and also a strong rural constituency while being the nominal prime minister and housing minister under J.R. Jayawardene's regime (Keerawella & Samarajiva 1994:169). Needless to mention, the deep penetration to the lower classes in the geographical peripheries and the power structure created new balance of power among the political parties. Especially this strategy hit JVP's power base the most. In Uyangoda's view, 'Premadasa was more farsighted than any other politician in the UNP, who knew how to distribute immense state resources and even honours among loyalists as well as proletarian recruits in order to turn them into a solid

and devout support base' (1993:7). According to political observers, reinforcing of his power base through these state-funded programmes also, to a certain extent, contributed to the welfare of the poor (Dunham & Kelegama 1995:10). Most importantly, all these programmes were necessary for Premadasa's individual political survival. On several occasions, Premadasa's leadership was challenged by his own political party members, which included an attempted impeachment in 1991 (Uyangoda 1993:5; Bastian 1993:13; Dunham & Kelegama 1995:21). According to Premadasa, the attempted impeachment was an upper-class conspiracy against him (Uyangoda 1993:7), which suggests the underlying conflicts among the Sinhalese political elites in national politics. With the continued attempts made by the bourgeois faction within the UNP to dominate the party, Premadasa was somehow contributing to the political project pursued by the bourgeois members of the party and their right-wing political project.

The nature of the competition and the struggles Premadasa had to overcome in politics at the centre forced him to rely on the marginal groups. As a result, Premadasa implemented a sophisticated ruling party's network of patronage and control that reached even the distant villages. This network could hardly be distinguished from the administrative machinery that had enjoyed some autonomy in the past (Uyangoda 1993:8). These strategies gave rise to new patronage clusters connecting the lower classes with the center. This transformation of clientelist relationships during Premadasa's regime can be directly linked to the personal background of the President and the extreme pressure he faced inside the bourgeoisie-controlled UNP and national political arena. It is not only that, to survive in Sinhalese elite politics that was dominated by the bourgeois factions, Premadasa was not reluctant to include the JVP dissidents and the LTTE into his strategy (Hoole 2001:247). As far as the consequence of the relationship with the LTTE is concerned, it did not deliver what he expected, rather it led to his assassination in 1993.⁵³

During the Premadasa regime, the underlying vertical class conflicts among the Sinhalese resurfaced. The balance of social forces was reconfigured within the political party system. For example, UNP experienced a political crisis in terms of its long-standing class composition (Uyangoda 1993:6). This internal political crisis also renewed the long-standing political rivalry between the UNP and SLFP. The effects of the crisis could be seen at three levels; between the UNP and SLFP (continuation of the old class rivalry), between UNP leadership (Premadasa) and the upper-ranked upper-class political party members of the UNP, between UNP, SLFP as elite political parties and the JVP. At the larger societal level, this triple crisis brought the suppressed class-consciousness and conflict in politics and in Sinhalese society back into the public theatre. This resurfacing of class-consciousness and vertical class conflict was a good reminder of the fragility of their political dominance and the continued need to innovate new strategies to stay in power. In this challenging context, Premadasa could no longer command subordination through clientelism alone. The scale of fragmentation pushed him to resort to extreme forms of violence with the hope of regaining the social control and establish his political authority and UNP's political dominance.⁵⁴ Although Premadasa came to be known as a ruthless political leader who exerted state violence and use of paramilitary forces to deal with the oppositional forces, i.e., the JVP, his popular pro-poor programmes and the patronage somehow managed to secure some level of pardon from some segments in the society.⁵⁵ However all these developments began to further erode democracy and increase the scale of elites' subversion for more violent measures.

Kumaratunga Regime (1993 - 2004)⁵⁶

The personality of the executive president, the intra-horizontal clientelism and, more importantly, the specific struggles faced by each incumbent (personally and in his/her position) have the ability to shape the direction of the state building. The various strategies they devise to stay in power seem to push the direction of state building in a certain direction in which struggle for hegemony building is reflected. Similar to the predecessors, Kumaratunga period also denotes these charac-

teristics. This section of the chapter elaborates the strategies and tactics pursued by Kumaratunga to sustain patronage politics and corruption as impotent processes to reach her goals.

After securing a landslide victory against the UNP that had been in power for 17 uninterrupted years, Chandrika Kumaratunga came to power in 1994. Her People's Alliance coalition government (PA) was constituted of seven smaller political parties, under the leadership of SLFP (Bastian 2003:216). The coalition came to power by promising to accelerate economic development while improving welfare of the poor. Its election promises included introducing a dole to unemployed youth, a cash income supplement to low-income households, interest-free farm loans, various producer subsidies and a reduction in the price of fuel and abolition of income tax for private sector employees. PA's electoral victory was especially significant in areas where the majority of the population was predominantly rice-growing Sinhalese. Therefore, the election manifesto was especially attractive to the farmers. The manifesto promised a number of mass patronage benefits such as the restoration of the fertilizer subsidy for rice farmers (withdrawn in 1990 under the UNP regime due to WB pressure), writing off of outstanding farm loans held by the banks and establishing provisions for interest-free loans from the banks to farmers (Samarasinghe 1994:1028). These pre-election promises raised the expectations of all levels of the society and placed the new regime under pressure to deliver.

Further, PA presented itself as a party with a fresh and youthful leadership that stood for change. Moreover, citing the deepened democracy deficit established by the previous UNP regimes, it expressed a commitment to good governance and democracy. On the economic front, the new regime accepted the continuation of an open market economy and promised to make improvements to the system by avoiding political favouritism in privatisation and granting of awards of contracts to political loyalists (Samarasinghe 1994:1022). The new regime promised to overcome past inefficiencies in the state accumulation strategy by reducing corruption and waste in the public sector. Immediately after assuming office, PA came with an attractive proposal to reduce the number of cabinet ministers. Interestingly, joining the established political ritual of peace making, the new government expressed its hope to end the prolonged civil war and channel the resources spent on war towards development. Kumaratunga expressed her optimism on future peace dividends from the international community to achieve the above objectives (Samarasinghe 1994:1033).

However, the regime could not live up to the expectations it raised and it did not take that long for it to attract widespread allegations of political favouritism and large-scale cases of political corruption to set in. The PA regime largely counted on privatisation of state enterprises as its main accumulation and extraction strategy. Due to the political hoodoo privatisation gained under the previous regime, PA used the term 'peoplisation with a human face' as its slogan. It is clear that privatisation became its main source of political clientelism (largely at the horizontal level) and source of political corruption. Under this second phase of privatisation of national assets, a large number of profitable public sector ventures were sold to the political subordinates of the regime. Not only this, as Dunham and Jayasuriya observe, the rapid privatisation of public ventures such as the national airline, telecommunications, plantations and ports all enabled the regime to seek rents (2001:15). Moreover, based on the evidences collected in a recent report released by the Committee appointed to investigate the fraud and corruption in Public Enterprises (PEs)(COPE Report 1, 2006), certain vital public utility institutions such as the Ceylon Electricity Board, Ceylon Petroleum Cooperation and its subsidiaries and financial institutions such as the Central Bank and the Sri Lanka Insurance Company were all mishandled during the privatisation process in order to benefit the regime or close friends of the President. It is also reported in various newspapers that the outgoing chairmen and directors of these mismanaged public enterprises have been all appointed on the basis of political influence (Serving Sri Lanka Blogpost March 09, 2007).

Almost all the respondents of this research claim that privatisation in Sri Lanka is plagued by corruption, with politicians and high-ranking administrative officers buying publicly owned companies. The government of Chandrika Kumaratunga has also been accused of misuse of public funds for political and personal gains, especially by the president herself and the high-profile ministers and administrators close to the regime. One among many incidents that caught the public eye involved the President granting political favouritism to her close friend Mr. Ronnie Pieris by allowing him to engage in an illegal land deal (state owned) that earned him Rs. 60 million (Lankanewspapers.com, 26 January 2006). Moreover, as newspapers also reported, quoting the COPE Report 2, 2006, another land deal made by the President to favour a friend of hers amounted to one seventh of the total national revenue (Colombopage, 2007). In addition, during the Kumaratunga period, Sri Lanka also made major news headlines on incidents of mega corruption. For instance, involvement in Asia's biggest tax scandal as one newspaper reported, a number of private companies submitted false documents on VAT costing the Sri Lankan government US\$ 40 million in income, from 2002–2004 alone (Sunday Times, 26 January 2006). Given the nature of political rivalries among various groups, some of these allegations and the authenticity of the scales pertaining to these incidents of corruption can be questioned. However, as quoted above from the published sources, there are enough evidences to suggest the existence of large-scale political corruption having taken place during her period in office. Although the numbers pertaining to these incidents may not be true or sometimes cannot be officially verified, talk about these incidents in the public discourse and in the public perception, still matter. Further it is widely suspected and in opponent political camps it is being widely accused that the friends of Kumaratunga and the PA regime were the main beneficiaries.⁵⁷

Apart from these high profile cases of political corruption and political favouritism, according to the COPE Report 3, over a period of 13 years, about 98 state-owned institutions were privatised, benefitting neither the public nor the enterprises sold. Findings of COPE suggested that institutions such as Lanka Marine Services Limited (LMSL), Sri Lanka Insurance Company (SLIC) and most of the others were profitable ventures at the time of selling. As reported, all these transactions were closely related to politicians and supporters of the PA regime (Sunday Times, 3 June 2007). Therefore, it is hard not to believe privatisation under Kumaratunga was an attempt to raise funds to dispense political patronage, raise funds through corrupt practices by putting the state resources at stake that were all essential for staying in power.

Overall, due to the nature of struggles faced by Kumaratunga as an individual political leader and at a personal level in the SLFP and the PA regime (See chapter 6 for more details on these issues), Kumaratunga regime further changed the direction of the patronage system by shrinking the number of beneficiaries but increasing the value of exchange by using state power and executive powers in an excessive manner. This is a trend in politics informed by multiple struggles at the centre and the periphery that pushed the state to be further captured by the incumbent and his/her political allies as a way of holding onto state and political power. Despite her somewhat socialist leniency, the ways in which Kumaratunga engaged in patronage practices (many would not disagree to use the term corruption) became part of the strategy of establishing the right-wing political hegemony. However, the economic strategies Kumaratunga opted to generate financial resources to cultivate patronage networks and alliance building was firmly aligned with the right-wing economic strategy officially launched by Jayewardene. In many ways, although SLFP as a party known to be of centre-left orientation, during Kumaratunga period it fully conceding to rightwing politics. Although, initially she seemed to have managed to retain the leftwing political orientations, towards the end of her second term, conceding to right-wing politics was observed. But this trajectory needs to be understood within the local and broader global dynamics of this period.

Rajapaksa Regime (from 2005)

With the aid of Sinhalese nationalist political parties such as JVP and JHU, the current regime of Rajapaksa came to power in 2005. Due to the split in the SLFP (which has class and dynastic dimensions) during the last phase of Kumaratunga regime, Rajapaksa had to rely more on the backing of smaller political parties outside his own party. As a result, even the election manifesto (called *Mahinda Chinthana*) of the current president was written with the influence of these smaller Sinhala nationalist political parties and with a patriotic tone. (Field interview R.20). *Mahinda Chintana* states as Rajapaksa's vision for the future of Sri Lanka, 'To develop a man to safeguard his family, To develop the family to safeguard the village, To develop the village to safeguard the country, and To develop the country to win the world' (Mahinda Chintana 2005: 101).

The political struggle Rajapaksa faced with Kumaratunga and the split among party members left little room for Rajapaksa to trust his own party cadres or to rely on the support of the SLFP party members. This made him rely more on his own family and close political networks built in the south. By closely relying on his family members for governing, his regime is nicknamed *Rajapaksa & Company*. Assigning JVP and JHU a prominent place in national politics was both a result of his need for political survival and a strategy to incorporate marginal groups from the south (his main power base) into Colombo-dominated national politics. Under the new alignment of political forces at the centre, Rajapaksa government becoming right wing in its main ideological orientation was inevitable. In addition to the influence of his political coalition, going overboard in the right-wing direction was also an attempt to gather support from the lower classes in the peripheries. Preservation of the old order, going back to the authentic past, focusing on ancient codes of the rulers and ruled, all helped devise the new strategy. However, incorporation of marginal groups in the periphery often required distributing material benefits.

Although the goal of using patronage is similar under Rajapaksa, during his period, the previously established patronage system took a slightly different turn. In this period patronage system has become openly family-centric, which can be also termed as nepotism. Thus, Rajapaksa appointed his two brothers and a number of family members to key positions in the government. As a result, today, 70% of the total budget of the country is under the control of Rajapaksa family, his two brothers and other relatives of Rajapaksa family (The Economist, 7 June 2007). Besides, the right-wing political jump in ideological realm, like his predecessors since 1977, Rajapaksa also embraced right-wing economic measures to establish his dominance and authority in politics. He embarked on a number of new political projects aimed at regime building (in this case, also dynasty building) using state resources and state institutions. In November 2005, as per a report released by Transparency International titled 'Mega cabinet report', the new government appointed 26 ministries, 108 ministers (52 cabinet ministers, 36 non-cabinets and 20 deputy ministers). Many of these ministries were distributed as rewards of loyalty. In addition, the President himself held six ministries. The expenses of these various ministers, ministries and parliamentary members loyal to the regime are met by the public (Field Interview R.2).

The Rajapaksa regime is widely charged with high profile cases of corruption, nepotism and political clientelism. The first incident reported against the regime was 'buying off' the opposition parliamentary members to secure a majority in the parliament, by awarding ministerial posts and lucrative perks to them (R.2, R.8, R.3, Wickramasinghe 2009:4). Rajapaksa was accused of corruption when he was the Prime Minister, during the last phase of the previous PA regime, when the tsunami struck in December 2004 and the international community pledged more than US\$ 11 billion aid to the region. Of all the districts, Rajapaksa's electorate Hambantota was one of the most affected. Rajapaksa was accused in numerous newspapers of misappropriating nearly US\$ 830,000 in tsunami aid (BBC Sinhala.Com 2005; ReutersAlertNet 2007). 'Helping Hambantota' a project established by Rajapaksa, directed all the money that came in aid of the tsunami victims to three private bank accounts. According to numerous sources and an official report released by

the Auditor General, a sum of \$ 724,170 that was to be given to the affected families was used to provide benefits to families unaffected by the tsunami. One prominent lawyer and a head of a leading civil society organisation, Mr. Weliamuna, suspects that these tsunami funds were used for party political purposes and to build new houses to be given to people with political affiliations in the Hambantota District (www.Reliefweb.org).

These allegations were also confirmed by research work carried out in the post-tsunami period in Sri Lanka, which assessed the aid effectiveness of the country (Goodhand et al. 2005). The firsthand information obtained from the key informants revealed that many politicians at the national, provincial and local levels had used the aid money to increase their political capital amongst their constituencies, for personal enrichment, political patronage and to bolster their legitimacy (Goodhand et al. 2005:58).⁵⁸ However, after Rajapaksa was elected President in 2005, these incidents were not allowed to be investigated and called malicious political allegations (Transparency International, Beneficiary Perception Index: 6, AlertNet 9 Nov.2005). Rajapaksa's alleged involvement with tsunami funds points to an important direction in the recent regime building efforts in Sri Lanka and shed light on disaster aid as a new source for funding the patronage system. After exhausting internal state resources, and given the current tight conditions imposed by the international donors Rajapaksa was forced to look for new avenues to generate funding to maintain the patronage networks and stay in political power.

Under Rajapaksa, the policy he pursued on war was turned into the new exploitable areas. The widespread allegations reported in the military sector and the military-centric patronage system bears some evidence to this claim. A major scandal in the history of military purchases is linked to the president's brother, Gotabhaya Rajapakse, the defense secretary. He was reported to have engaged in a multimillion dollar arms purchase deal by deviating from the standard tender procedures. In Sri Lanka, such military affairs are not subject to public scrutiny. Also, military purchases do not come under the purview of the auditor general. Further, in Sri Lanka there are laws such as the Official Secrets Act of 1955 to prevent any investigation being conducted on the irregularities in the military (Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index 2008:301). As reported in newspapers, since President Rajapaksa assumed office, all arms purchases and all procurement related to the military was conducted through a company called Lanka Logistics, of which the president's brother is the chairman. After Rajapaksa assumed power, all the authorisations for military equipment were personally handled and all transactions directly made by the President's brother (Lanka newspapers 29 November 2009; Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index 2008:302). As reported by Iqbal Athas, a leading military correspondent in Sri Lanka and also according to other reports released by Transparency International, the brother of the President was responsible for buying four Mikoyan Mig 27 aircrafts for the Sri Lanka Air Force in 2006 for a much higher than normal price. The various reports confirm that the regime made a payment of US\$ 14.6 million to buy these old 'Mig 27' aircrafts which Sri Lanka rejected in 2000 as too old and unsuitable (Sunday Times, 3 December 2006). However, currently the President and his brother enjoy immunity from investigation of this scandal and other scandals, and the investigations begun by the CIABOC were also called off.

Apart from the above, a number of other alleged transactions involve Rajapaksa's brothers and friends of the regime. These transactions include the purchasing of cannons from Israel by the Sri Lanka Navy, with a discrepancy of 7 million US\$ (Sunday Times, 8 January 2006) If nothing else, the increase of military expenditure alone explains this situation. There are other studies that draw the co-relation between military expenditure under the guise of civil war and sociopolitical stability sought by the political elites. In this regard, works of Venugopal on military fiscalism in Sri Lanka can be used to strengthen this argument. He claims that since 1977, at a time of growing inequality and social tensions during the period of market reform, military employment alone has created conditions of sociopolitical stability (2011:71). The following two tables drawn

from two different sources show the statistical evidences for the increased expenditure in the military sector. Besides the purchase of military equipments, this increase is mainly due to the large-scale military recruitments and maintenance of a core of over 210,000 military troops. In 2009 alone, the percentage of military troops comprised 2.65% of the total labour force in Sri Lanka and there are plans unveiled to increase this number to 410,000 by 2015 (www.globalsecurity.org).

Table 3.8
Military expenditure (% of GDP) 2007-2010

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
% of GDP	3.3	3.7	3.5	2.8

Source: World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS>)

Possible reasons as to why there is a decline in the military expenditure in 2010 as a percentage of GDP could be due to actual decline in the military expenditure after the war and also due to the definitional problems highlighted in the World Bank report on what accounts as military expenditure and unavailability of data on certain expenditure that are not being directly categorised under the military budget, yet are used for military purposes. Besides, there are official reports that confirm the increase in the military budget in 2011 (US \$ billion 1.92) and 2012 (estimated at US \$ billion 2.1) respectively, an amount exceeding the total combined expenditure allocated for health and education sectors. This increase was justified by citing the need to pay off for the weapons bought during the 2009 war (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2011/nov2011/slec-n02.shtml> and AFP, October 18, 2011).

Table 3.8.1
Defence expenditure 2007-2011⁵⁹ (in Rs. million)

2007	2008 (Approved estimates)	2008 (Provisional)	2009 (Approved estimates)	2009	2010 (Approved estimates)	2010 (Provisional)	2011 (Approved estimates)
101,856	108,086	134,710	134,260	144,884	142,348	145,243	163,486

Source: adapted and modified from Annual Report of Central Bank of Sri Lanka 2008:136 and 2010:137.

It is also noted that against the backdrop of civil war and by using a specific policy on war, Rajapaksa successfully re-incorporated a large number of Sinhalese male youth from the rural areas into national politics and to his political alliance by offering state patronage to this group in terms of employment. This segment of the population largely belongs to the age group 18–30 years. The other characteristics of this segment of the youth is that majority of them are Sinhalese-Buddhists with only secondary-level education, and largely from Ampara, Traincomalee, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Monaragala districts. It is also noted that 23% of them came from the eastern province, where most of the Sinhalese population are second or third generation settlers in irrigation-based colonies such as Gal-Oya or Kantale (Venugopal 2011:73).⁶⁰ The initial statistical co-relations concerning this trend were well noted since 2000. Nevertheless, it is correct to suggest that this trend has become more pronounced during Rajapakse government, as a result of the political strategy he chose to stay in power where military sector played a major role. Fur-

ther this trend is also caused by the changed dynamics in state-in-society relations and in the political economy of this period.

Like his predecessors, aside from the military sector, the other sectors and the state property were widely misused by Rajapaksa to reward his allies and incorporate new allies to his coalition. Following examples bears evidences to this claim, a urea deal worth Rs.892 million made to the President's elder brother Chamal Rajapaksa who is the Agricultural Development Minister (Sunday Times, 26 May 2006). Also, according to the second report released by COPE, Sri Lanka lost Rs.600 million due to financial malpractices in another 20 state enterprises between July—December 2008 (COPE Report 3; Sunday Times 2009). Among these are the Foreign Employment Bureau, Sri Lanka Cashew Corporation, National Housing Development Authority, National Gem and Jewelry Authority, Export Development Board, the Building Materials Corporation, National Transport Commission, Associated Newspapers Ceylon Limited, Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation, Consumer Affairs Authority, and the Mahapola Higher Education Trust Fund. As per various estimations, these public institutions have lost Rs.1.5 billion due to corruption and malpractice (Gunaratne, 3 June 2007). Citing these recent developments, Professor Indraratne, a leading economist in Sri Lanka, estimates that due to petty and mega corruption in the public sector, the country has lost 2% of economic growth. He further notes that the rampant corruption in infrastructure projects are widespread both at the central and provincial levels.⁶¹ In most cases, it was revealed that by giving commissions or kickbacks to officials or elected representatives, the contractors got away with sub-standard work, pilfering inputs or not using specified materials (Lanka Business Online 13 Decmeber 2009).

Despite the scale and the gravity of the charges on corruption, nepotism and political favouritism against the Rajapaksa government, his two brothers and the regime, they all currently enjoy immunity. The prolonged euphoria of war victory after the defeat of the LTTE militarily in May 2009 under the political leadership of Mahinda Rajapaksa and the coordination skills of Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, the charges of corruption, nepotism and political favouritism against the regime seemed to have received pardon by many voters in the South. In my view, this became possible due to the strength of the strategies he pursued on the war that was centred on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. The decisive military success secured over the LTTE has renewed the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist standing of the regime among the Sinhalese. However, the situation of the economy in post-LTTE Sri Lanka and the much felt economic hardships in the periphery are challenging the regime to find new strategies to manage and control these already mobilised groups. The fall out with the Western donors who leveraged charges against Rajapakse government over war crime during the last phase of the civil war has made the situation challenging for Rajapaksa to fully capitalise on the situation because the expected post-civil war peace dividends and humanitarian aid, which he was initially counting on is not coming through. Hence, currently, the regime is attempting to keep Sinhala-Buddhist ideological sentiments alive in the absence of immediate security threats in the post-LTTE period and has embarked on a new symbolic political project by tapping into the cultural capital to generate political capital. When and where oppositional forces arise, the regime uses coercive forces to contain them and clear the way.

As with other previous regimes, the Rajapaksa regime is also marked by attempts to harmonise the struggles at the centre for political power and the struggles for economic development in the periphery. The struggles at the centre required maintenance of the patronage system and looking out for ways to invent new avenues for funding the patronage networks. For Rajapakse, the military industry and the 'war industry' have become the most promising avenues. In the absence of other sources of funding (i.e. Mahaweli funds, privatisation), integrating the military into his plans seemed almost inevitable. It is not only for Rajapaksa but for any other future political leadership in politics, defeating the LTTE was paramount for advancing their political projects of domination, and hegemony. For a long time, due to the activities of the LTTE, the Sinhalese political

elites could not successfully incorporate the Tamil community to their plan. By defeating the LTTE, Rajapakse overcame this obstacle. The military might he used and demonstrated in the final phase of war was used to send a clear message to the other oppositional forces.

Against the above backdrop it is correct to suggest that under Rajapaksa, the majority Sinhalese received state patronage through different channels. The renewed Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist state project under Rajapaksa and the ideological patronage is of special significance. The material patronage offered to the Sinhalese youth in the military in terms of employment complemented the ideological patronage efforts. The military victory against the LTTE in May 2009 enabled the regime to justify this ideological path to the majority of the Sinhalese. As a result, even in the absence of the LTTE and its military activities, the Rajapaksa regime is able to reconstitute and secure the falling integrated domination achieved among the Sinhalese. Further, the latest political developments in post-war Sri Lanka suggest successful incorporation and mobilisation strategies targeting the minority factions in elite politics. In this new scenario, Rajapakse is increasingly using state and regime patronage. While this strategy has incorporated many elite factions to Rajapakse's project, there are still a few left behind. Use of coercive strategies to deal with the latter forces is frequent. In addition, self-imposed censorship and isolation has become the chosen strategy of other forces within the Sinhalese elite group (political, economic and intellectual). Their strength to overcome the coercion and to organise as a decisive oppositional force will determine the new direction of political strategies and transformation of politics and the state in the post-LTTE period. Already, the excessive patronage used in the forms of ideological and material rewards has been successful in absorbing many in the political circles to Rajapakse's political strategy and resulted in the formation of a significant change in electoral and political alliance formation. The right-wing politics this alliance propagates is moving the state of Sri Lanka further and further away from the radical egalitarian political project, making it a state captured by the regime and the incumbent by deepening the crisis of democracy deficit.

3.6 Concluding remarks

The data gathered for this chapter firmly supports the use of political patronage as an important process used for hegemony building and state building. Institutionalisation of this system through political party system has decisively transformed the nature, image and the perception of the state and politics in Sri Lanka. The hegemonising effect of this process and building of commonsense on patronage system are well represented in everyday common expressions, such as *muttiya allanawa* (holding the pot underneath) and *pandama allanawa* (torch bearer). The clients are known as *pandamas* (literal translation is the one who carries the torch). Among the older generations *danna kaawuruth nedda?* (Is there anybody you know?) and *ethulen kaawahari allaganmwa*⁶² (catching someone from inside) denotes the everydayness of this phenomenon in politics and state affairs. In all these cases, immediate and future ambitions of exchanging favours – material and non-material⁶³ – are intuitively and mutually understood.

This chapter demonstrated how patronage politics has been used and adjusted during various stages of political-economic development and various developments in ethnic relations. It also showed that the patronage system was primarily used as an important arena for reproducing status and political power of the political elites and the political parties they represent. Further it also showed that the patronage system is being formulated and executed through Sri Lanka's political party system and through major state policy formulations, policy and institutional changes and reforms, by which patronage system has been elevated as the main intersection between the Sinhalese political elites and the majority Sinhalese in the peripheries. Over decades, the patronage political system has become an integral element of the political strategy of the elites whereby the political strategy has been successfully interwoven into the economic strategy. In the short run, this direction in politics were able to generate funds to function the patronage system that was

used for incorporating the masses into politics, enabling management and security the previously established political alliances. By maintaining patronage politics as one of the important *habitus* and structure in politics and by institutionalising it in the domain of the state, the Sinhalese political elites have been able to manipulate as well as force the consent of the masses to this system and successfully produce and reproduce the conditions conducive to establish their political and economic domination. Given the underlying principle of inequality this system upholds (primarily on political party affiliation, ethnic identity) in resource distribution, the state building has been steadily tipping towards an undemocratic path. Further, by dressing the patronage system as the most reliable mean to meet the material/resource needs, majority of the population has become increasingly dependent and subservient to the political elites.

It is also found that although the patronage political system is primarily economic in its outlook, in the political realm, it has been playing an important role in strengthening a specific political ideology, which this thesis identifies as the right wing. With regard to this economic-ideological connection, two points can be pointed out. One is when the material resources for maintaining the patronage shrinks, in order to keep the political alliances intact, the political elites have the tendency to increasingly rely on ideological forms of mobilisation, such as Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. The second point is, as the patronage system is inherently built on the principle of inequality in resource distributions (*vis-a-vis* the absence of a fair system of resource distribution developed on equitable basis) the main beneficiaries in this relationship, the majority Sinhalese, have become increasingly protective of the patronage system. However it is noted that by entering into the patronage system by allowing their consent and the real struggles for upward social and economic mobilisation to be systematically manipulated and sometimes in the face of fear of force and exclusion from the benefits, the majority in the Sinhalese community have not been able to develop long-term meaningful strategies to meet their resource needs. Under the deteriorating economic conditions, the material benefits they receive are becoming lesser. However the elites' strategy of using right-wing political slogans and enacting right-oriented policies seem to temporarily satisfy the sentiments of the majority Sinhalese.

Until 1977, as Hopkins observes in similar contexts elsewhere (Hopkins 2006:9), this research shows that in Sri Lanka too, the Sinhalese political elites in state and political power have used the state to sustain the patronage system and distribute rewards to their political allies. The expansion of the economic and social role of the state and launching of an extensive welfare state policy has facilitated this process. In particular, the welfare state policy was used to manipulate and channel state resources in exchange for political support. Pursuing welfare state policy as a mass clientelist strategy in this period generated positive and negative outcomes. One positive outcome is the high human development achieved in society due to the vertical distributive nature of welfare benefits. One negative and a long-lasting outcome is the political culture of dependency created in the society. Further, increasing factional conflicts among the political elites are another related outcome. Such intense factional conflicts, as empirical data on Sri Lanka shows and as Waldner argues citing similar contexts, often enticed by those holding state power to use the state welfare policy to seek more allies from the lower classes (Waldner 1999:33). With such political advantages embedded in the welfare state policy, as the case of Sri Lanka demonstrates, the political elites of this period were keen on continuation of the welfare state politics by sacrificing long-term economic and political development of the country. As far as the negative consequences of this strategy have on political development of the society is concerned, extensive targeting of the lower classes as qualifiers to receive material benefits have aggravated their lack of capacity to make binding claims to the state (Waldner 1999:33). Hence, they have contributed for the nurturing of a highly particularistic system and become highly atomised subject, whose relation to the state is largely based on political clientelism. As a result, the other interests these social groups might have as members of a social class or a functional group were effectively destroyed. An important by-product of this situation is the contemporary vertical and synthetic

class solidarity among the majority Sinhalese community and heightening of their ethnic consciousness. By combining the material reward system with the ideological hegemony process in which Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism is made an integral element, the Sinhalese political elites has been able to secure authority, domination and advance the hegemony-building process. The ideological element in this strategy has been able to achieve the above at a lower financial cost. Another notable transformation that took place in patronage system in the post-1977 period is the emergence of an identifiable layer of political intermediaries/brokers. These brokers were from a different social background than the traditional brokers of the Bandaranaike era. Majority of this new broker are the owners of casinos, drug cartels, underworld groups, temporary labourers and short-term workers in the urban, mostly illegal, settlements. Their economic survival was solely dependent on the political patronage and the new set of right-wing economic policies unveiled in this period. Their intermediary role in mobilising forces on behalf of their political patrons and successful implementation of the hegemonic right-wing political project of the ruling regimes of this period was essential. These political brokers became instrumental in disarticulating and disaggregating the periodic demands made for state reforms by progressive forces in the society and to control and eliminate the anti-hegemonic forces. Their entrance into the political sphere and the political immunities they enjoyed from the political elites contributed to the increase political and social violence in the society. Eventually, their role in politics began to negatively affect the authority, legitimacy and hegemony of the political parties and the political elites.

Since 1977, after the end of the official welfare policy, having exhausted the stock of state resources and faced with difficult economic conditions due to external factors, the Sinhalese political elites were forced to look for new strategies to generate resources to maintain the patronage system. In this period privatisation of state assets, securing large-scale loans and aid for development projects and expanding the military industry are few notable areas where these strategies can be located within. These new strategies created several tensions on state-in-society relations and created tensions in the direction of democratic state building. In order to deal with these tensions and the societal forces that stood in the way of the strategies pursued by the political elites, use of coercion and coercive state apparatuses was widespread. The combination of coercion, further institutionalisation of the patronage system (this aspect of patronage is dealt in detailed in the next chapter) as well as the institutionalizing of undemocratic principles in the state structure and practice through various reforms and policies diverted politics towards authoritarianism. The period of Jayewardene especially signifies this direction of politics and state building. The drastic policy and institutional changes brought by Jayawardena in the post-1977 period (and the various institutional and constitutional changes introduced to the political system until 1992) aligned the patronage system in a way to distribute the benefits at horizontal level. This direction visibly benefitted those who were in the upper rungs of the political and economic hierarchy. Compared to the pre-1977 period, in the post-1977 period the new strategies devised by the political elites to generate political capital, in which financing the patronage system were an important element, was an inducement for realising right-wing political culture and aligning the state building project with right-wing hegemony building attempt. Besides, the synchronisation of the local and global right-wing politico-economic forces of this period has also been a factor behind rising violence and frequent use of coercive forces of the state against the social forces that resist and challenge realizing the hegemonic political project these local and global right-wing forces pursued

Notes

¹ This chapter interchangeably uses the terms patronage and political clientelism. Historically, in political science, clientelism often took a folk meaning (Weingrod 1968:379). A contemporary survey of scholarly work undertaken on the subject of clientelism suggests that it has been predominantly an area of inquiry for scholars of comparative politics and institutionalism (Evans et al. 1985; Piattoni 2001). This is a decisive departure

from the previous anthropological writings of clientelism, which mostly concentrated on investigating the relationships between the landlords and peasants, and placed its attention on the issue of inequality in patronage relations (Weingrod 1968:379). Anthropological studies on clientelism were largely dominated by the concept of traditionalism. In contrast, patronage is tied to the study of institutions, organisations and formal networks such as political parties, state institutions and various major state policies that seek to use public institutions and public resources to meet political ends. Moreover, in comparative politics, clientelism is employed to understand how favours of various kinds are exchanged for votes, in the era of democratic politics (Weingrod 1968:379; Fox 1994:153; Szeftel 2000:427; Hopkin 2006:9).

² Not to forget the importance of keeping in mind the discussion on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism.

³ 'Tsunami politics' refers to the ways in which politics of distribution and redistribution was conducted after the disaster in December, 2004.

⁴ A major characteristic of the 'mediated state' is the elite rule through an alliance with local notables. 'Unmediated state' refers to a state in which institutions replace notables to link state, economy and society (Waldner 1999:2).

⁵ Scott defines the characteristics of machine politics as follows: the selection of political leaders through elections, mass universal adult suffrage and a relatively high degree of electoral competition over time usually between parties, but occasionally with a dominant party (Scott 1969:222).

⁶ There are recent trends observed, suggesting bouncing back of caste politics in national and provincial council level too. Refer to Michael Roberts, Caste in modern Sri Lanka politics at http://transcurrents.com/tc/2010/02/caste_in_modern_sri_lanka_pol.html and Lakruwan De Silva, Fonseka arrest and the Govigama-Karawe caste equation in Sinhala society at http://transcurrents.com/tc/2010/02/fonseka_arrest_and_the_govigam.htm

⁷ In the case of Sri Lanka, transition from colonial and post-colonial state (1948), socialist-welfare economy to open economy (1977), parliamentary form of government to Executive Presidency (1978) is few events worth drawing the attention of the readers.

⁸ For a discussion on the commission and the issues and debates in the Legislative Council on granting universal suffrage, please see Wickramasinghe 2006:124–48.

⁹ Also ethnic politics as discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁰ The respondent is a high-ranked Leftist political party leader who has been in national politics for more than 40 years in Sri Lanka.

¹¹ The only exception to this rule was the election of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who became the party leader as well as the President of the country from 1989–1993.

¹² The aspect of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism of UNP is explained in detail in Chapter 2 on functions of nationalism.

¹³ Shefter distinguishes externally mobilised parties as political parties that are founded on programmatic appeals to attract voters. Parties that are of this nature are also characterised by the inclusion of socially excluded groups to the mass political party structure to overcome barriers for entry into the political arena. As he further notes, externally mobilised political parties tend to be patronage free (Quoted in Piattoni 2001:19).

¹⁴ The opposite category of political parties is called externally driven parties. This latter category of parties is founded on programmatic appeals (Piattoni 2003:19).

¹⁵ For a comparison between the occupational groups between this period and since 2000 to 2010, please refer to Annex 3 in the thesis.

¹⁶ The significance of the agricultural sector in Sri Lanka has not changed much even after various reforms have been introduced in the post-colonial phase of economic development. According to labour force statistics in Sri Lanka in the first quarter in 2010, the employment in agriculture is 33% of the total labour force. This report also observes that there is a segment of the account workers 49.7% and contributed family workers of 73.5% all engaged in the agricultural sector that compose a large percentage of the agricultural sector in Sri Lanka (Department of Census and Statistics 2010:2).

¹⁷ This research borrowed sociological definition on faction from Nicholas. In this thesis a faction is an overt conflict within a group, which leads to increasing abandonment of cooperative activities (Siegeal and Beans quoted in Nicholas 1977: 71).

¹⁸ Based on the Nolan chart of political ideology.

¹⁹ This term is widely used in the South Asian subcontinent to refer to westernized local elites.

²⁰ In this book, Waldner explores the linkages between state building and economic growth in late developmental states. His main argument is that the late developmental countries are faced with twin process of state formation and industrialisation and ways in which elites incorporate the masses into politics gives rise to different institutional profiles that affects the economic growth. In this thesis, Waldner's findings are taken further to show how falling economic growth is influencing elite power and status reproduction that in turn strengthening patronage politics and hegemony building that sacrifices democratic state building.

²¹ In Chapter 2, Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology is discussed as another important mobilisation strategy unleashed together with patronage.

²² As Scott observes in the United States, pork barrel legislations often provide inducements for ethnic groups as a whole, it is also capable of serving individuals and families (Scott 1969:222)

²³ Besides these interpretations, the link between the Ceylon Indian Congress and their left-leaning voting behaviour are also of importance (De Silva 2005:605).

²⁴ According to statistics on ethnic group distributions, in 1946 Kandyan Sinhalese constituted 25.8% and the Indian Tamils constituted 11.7% of the total population (Roberts 1979: 97)

²⁵ For details see: <http://www.slections.gov.lk/pdf/1982%20Presidential.pdf>

²⁶ For a detailed discussion on the land reform and agrarian change in Sri Lanka in the 1970s, read G.H.Pieris 1978.

²⁷ A handful of scholars, for example, Bastian (1985), Bandarage (2009), and Jayawardena (2005) have analysed this situation by taking the overall context into consideration.

²⁸ However, in literature it is rare to find a non-ethnic interpretation of this constitutional move made by the Sinhalese ruling class, in a particular time in history. It should be noted that the ethnically charged scholarly interpretations of such policies are partly due to the work carried out by Tamil scholars as well as Sinhalese scholars under the conditions of intensified ethnic competition after independence (Edrisinha 1999:169 in Rotberg, Thiruchelvam 1999:197, Thangarajah 2003: 27, Wickramasinghe 2006:183, De Votta 2000:62).

²⁹ Sinhalese constitutes 74% of the total population of Sri Lanka. On this point, the author questions what would have been the strategy of the ruling class if Tamils were the numerical majority or represent at least 50% of the total population in Sri Lanka.

³⁰ Section 5 of this chapter discusses this aspect in a detailed manner.

³¹ It operated underground after being banned after the 1971 insurrection.

³² Graham Greene in his famous classic, *Our man in Havana* (1958) used the term 'torturable class' to refer to those is expected to be tortured, whose rights can be violated and who have sympathy from others.

³³ According to Guy Standing, the precariat is an outcome of liberalisation that underpins globalisation. In his view it is a new class-in-the-making. The characteristics he attributes to the precariat are internal divisions, bitter factions, presence of multitude of insecure people, living bits-and-pieces lives, in and out of short-term jobs (May 2011, Policy network).

³⁴ After the insurrection of 1971, JVP operated underground until J.R. Jayawardene released the JVP members who were put behind the bars. After 1989 JVP began to operate within democratic political frameworks. As a result of the change of electoral system by Jayawardena (Proportional Representation System) and the subsequent changes made by President Premadasa to decrease the cut-off point from 12.5% to 5%, all the minority political parties, including JVP and JHU have been able to influence the electoral outcomes.

³⁵ The most recent example of this situation is the attempt to bring another amendment to the constitution to change the proportional representative system to the former first-past-the post at the level of local gov-

ernment elections. Currently the constitution bill pertaining to this amendment is being withheld until then? (<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011>)

³⁶ JVP and JHU are ideologically close to the SLFP, and they significantly differ from the economic policy of the UNP. Therefore, it is very unlikely that JVP and JHU will enter into coalitions with the UNP. So far in the history of coalition making, UNP has been able to secure the support of the minority political parties that represent the ethnic minorities in Sri Lanka (Muslims, Tamils- upcountry and Ceylon Tamils).

³⁷ In its original use the term Balkanisation refers to the number of successor states of the former Yugoslavia. In present day, Balkanisation is used as a pejorative term to characterise fragmented and self-defeating social systems. In the context of Sri Lanka the term Balkanisation is used to refer to the framgemntary nature of political parties.

³⁸ Sometimes main political parties also use JVP and JHU to undermine the bargaining power of the ethnic minority parties, by allowing these parties to increase their ideological demands when the demands made by the minority parties are not in compatibility with the main political parties.

³⁹ The other strategy would be to use violence and simply eliminate them physically and silence their voice.

⁴⁰ Due to the increased demand on rubber during the Korean War from 1950–1955, Sri Lanka experienced a favourable economic condition. This situation is known as the Korean economic boom.

⁴¹ The most disastrous event out of all was the oil crisis in 1970s.

⁴² The Rupee values are in constant Rupee values, deflated by import price index (1945=100). These figures are also adjusted for changes in import prices and the increase in population (Abeyratne 2000:28).

⁴³ The suffix*vaadaya* in this term equals to ‘ism’ in English

⁴⁴ 1977 elections brought UNP to power after 13 years. The electoral victory was used to suppress the SLFP as well as other oppositional groups.

⁴⁵ This vision was a blend of economic, political and socio-cultural. In terms of social and cultural aspect of his vision, Jayawardene was committed to the establishment of a *Dharmishta Samajaya*, meaning righteous society.

⁴⁶ As Fukuyama suggests, institutional reforms should have a strong demand from the society to be able to function successfully (2004:47). Fukuyama also points to the fact that the public legitimacy (perceived legitimacy, at least) of state institutions is an important aspect for successful state building (2004:34). The legitimacy of the Second Republican Constitution is still being questioned in Sri Lanka because it was brought into effect overnight (on a Friday night), which deliberately no time left for public debate of the new constitution (Coomaraswamy 2005:152–3).

⁴⁷ The full report on the 1980 strike and its aftermath is compiled by S. Nadesan Q C. The use of new legislation and the political motivations underpinning the assault on trade union action is well documented (http://www.naturesl.lk/pdf/ar/THE_1980_STRIKE_AND_ITS_AFTERMATH.pdf)

⁴⁸ The newest attempts of land grabbing by politicians are being reported in the Eastern Province and the post-war areas in the North (Sunday Times, 2009).

⁴⁹ The percentage expressed by this respondent can be an exaggeration of the situation. The official reports and statistics released by the Department of Inland Revenue acknowledge the general challenges pertaining to collection of taxes in the country yet silent on political corruption and the practices mentioned by the respondent as a cause for loss of revenue.

(<http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.lk/publications/PReports/PR2009.pdf>). For most recent details that confirms accumulation of wealth through corrupt deals and initiatives launched to investigate the undisclosed wealth refer to the <http://www.tisrilanka.org/?p=9646>.

⁵⁰ In Sri Lanka there is a major competition for admitting children to a school. Although the education is free, not all the schools have same facilities. Therefore the parents are even ready to pay bribes to the education authorities and the school principles. It is observed that the newly married young couples choose to rent accomodation near a better school to make sure that their ‘children to be born’ have access to better education facilities.

⁵¹ Moreover, the budgetary allocations under DDC to the north and east were less than the allocations given to the districts where a majority of Sinhalese lived. This became a point of contention between the Sinhala and Tamil parliament members, which ultimately led the Tamil members to boycott the DDC elections and refrain from taking part in the operationalizing of DDCs in the Tamil areas.

⁵² These findings are similar to the findings of the studies conducted in the United States of America (Scott 1969:43).

⁵³ Further reading on the relationship and the consequence of this relations between LTTE and Premadasa, please refer to Hoole 2001, chapter 17.

⁵⁴ Due to the challenges that came from the various Sinhalese forces, Premadasa began to work closely with the Tamil political groups and with the LTTE.

⁵⁵ For a detailed account of Premadasa period and the aspect of state violence, refer to Gunasekara 1998; Chandraprema 1991 and Hoole 2001.

⁵⁶ After Premadasa was assassinated in 1993 by a suicide bomber during UNP's May-day rally, Wijetunga became the interim President for one year before Kumaratunga assumed office after elections in 1994. Kumaratunga is the daughter of former Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

⁵⁷ Unless these incidents are questioned in the parliament by the opposition, these incidents go uninvestigated. It is suggested that since all the regimes in power engage in similar corrupt practices, sometimes deals are made between political parties not to investigate each other, as they all can be victims of their own strategies.

⁵⁸ In 2005 and 2006, the researcher has also worked in the tsunami-affected areas extensively, from North (Jaffna) to the South, including that of the Hambantota District. During a need analysis conducted in the Hambantota District in the educational sector, many of the participants from the District confirmed this information.

⁵⁹ These figures should be read against the overall context of high inflation experienced during this period. From 2004 until 2012, Sri Lanka Inflation Rate averaged 10.3600% reaching an all-time high of 28.2000% in June 2008. This figure is calculated based on the changes in the annual consumer price index (<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/sri-lanka/inflation-cpi>).

⁶⁰ Although this study does not extensively deal with the issue of gendered nature of patronage politics in the military and gendered inequalities in the elites' hegemony building strategies pursued in Sri Lanka, the statistics presented in this chapter explains the above linkages. For detailed critical studies that explore intersections of gender and war in Sri Lanka, see Neloufer De Mel 2007 and Malathi De Alwis 1998.

⁶¹ The author had a personal communication with the Chief Financial Officer in one such infrastructure project called *Maga Neguma* (a road development project), which was also cited in a number of cases of corruption. This project was initiated and conducted under the personal supervision of President Rajapaksa.

⁶² The first expresses the intent of forging a patronage relationship to get something done and the second expresses the determination to pursue such a relationship directly with an identified patron or indirectly by involving several others connected to one or several patronage networks) and the depth of its institutionalization in the state apparatuses and internationalization by any average citizen.

⁶³ This could be helping the distanced patron to find a domestic aide.

4

Sources of funding for patronage: Use, abuse and manipulation of state institutions¹

Politics in Sri Lanka has been described as a ‘consuming passion’, but a passion that may boil down to no more than the question of ‘who will be employed by the Ceylon Transport Board as the bus conductor (Jupp quoted in McCourt 2007:433).

4.1 Introduction

Institutions play a central role in constraining behaviour, shaping preferences, goals and strategies, and even identities (Waldner 1999:19). It is established that mass incorporation into politics that happen before or simultaneously with the elaboration of a national administrative system, that system is likely to be based on patronage politics and patronage appointments (ibid:24). The case of Sri Lanka’s state building and state institutional profile development can be well located within the above observation. Especially based on Waldner’s research findings that illuminate an important linkage between the level of elite conflict, timing of mass incorporation into politics and paths of state building (1999), this chapter wishes to demonstrate how the struggles and factional conflicts of the Sinhalese political elites during various phases of state building have encouraged them to (ab)use and change the states institutional profile for cultivating patronage politics. In general, the state institutions play a direct rule by enabling the political elites to link the state, economy and the society (Waldner 1999: 24). This chapter will elaborate how the entire state institutional structure is being used as an important arena for political party building, coalition building and hegemony building by the Sinhalese political elites in state power. Needless to emphasise how such a situation become an impediment for building a democratic state.

There are a number of studies on Sri Lanka that attempt to understand the role of state institutions in shaping it’s state building project and the use of state institutions for consent building by the political elites. The majority of these are critical of the state institutions. The central points of the recent critiques are increasing inefficiency of state institutions in delivering basic public services, the uncontrolled expansion of the state sector and the mammoth costs related to its maintenance (Hulme & Sandaratne 1996; Samaratunga & Bennington 2002:87; De Alwis 2009; Samaratunga 2011). Similar to the observations made by the World Development Report (Evans & Rauch 1999:748), the local researchers identify patronage politics as a worrisome development in the state institutions that have derailed democratic state building in the country (Ranugge 2000:51; IDEA 2007; De Alwis 2009:57).

The most important work on patronage politics in the state institutions carried out so far are by the scholars of ethnic conflict and civil war like Thiruchelvam (1979, 1984), Uyangoda (1994), Wilson (1979), De Votta (2002) and Shastri (1990). In light of the development of the ethnic conflict, these scholars have dedicated much attention to study the transforming nature and the impact of the state institutions on ethnic relations and vice versa. As a result, their works tend to repeatedly and explicitly establish the linkages between the transformation of the state institutions in the post-independent period and the beginning of the island’s ethnic conflict and protraction of it (Thiruchelvam 1984: 185–95; Mathews 1986:33; Thangarajah 2000:127; De Votta 2005:145–7). Given the nature of the theoretical orientation underpinning these studies, examining patron-

age politics in the state institutions primarily along the inter-ethnic framework has been prioritised. However, since these studies are not broadly orientated theoretically, the strength of their work in answering broader questions concerning the linkages between patronage politics in the state institutions as a hegemony building process used for state building and non-ethnic dynamics in Sinhalese state-in-society relations responsible in realising this direction of politics is under researched.

This chapter wishes to expand on the previous contributions made on this topic and to argue that the dominant Sinhalese political elites has continually (ab) used, altered and manipulated the state's institutional structure and the practices of the state institutions to build and finance a sophisticated party-based patronage system to pursue coalition building that are of consent building and coercion orientation. Further this chapter argues that the institutionalisation of patronage system has been an important and integral element of the overall political strategy of the Sinhalese political elites who were faced with decisive issues of state accumulation. To reach this argument, this chapter examines the linkages between the dynamics in the state-in-society relations especially among the Sinhalese in the post-colonial period (pre and post 1977) and the various political, social and economic struggles encountered by the ruling elites at the centre for retaining and dominating state power and various societal forces in the peripheries. Given the dominant role of the Sinhalese, whom this research considers as the main collaborative force of the political elites and to their attempts of hegemony building, this chapter mainly analyses their motivations, and the ways in which they participated in institutionalising patronage in the state structure that directed the state building in an undemocratic direction.

4.2 State institutions under the British: a quasi-patronage?

For any examination conducted on the transformation of the state and the state apparatuses, understanding the structure, functions and the underlying principles of the state institutions in the colonial period is important. Besides the indispensability of the colonial period as the main point of departure for understanding various contemporary trajectories of state building in Sri Lanka, the common belief held by the locals, with whom this research also tends to agree with, is that the state structure and the institutional changes introduced by the British has been key for (re)shaping the state building project in the subsequent decades. For the purpose of comparison between the colonial and post-colonial state transformation, and to trace the continuity and the strengthening effect of patronage politics as an important political practice in the state structure, the following section wishes to briefly draw attention to the state's institutional structure established during the British period and to discuss how the developments of local elite politics during this period have pushed the political elites to use the emerging state structure to cultivate patronage networks and political alliances beneficial for advancing hegemony building.

The evolution of the colonial bureaucracy under the British colonial period served to advance imperial objectives. The structure of the state was centralised in nature, designed in this manner to maximise revenues and maintain law and order in the colony. Eventually, parallel to the expansion of colonial rule, the colonial bureaucracy also expanded significantly. This development swelled the bureaucracy with periodic waves of recruiting specialised officers as consultants and technicians. Their services were crucial for implementing various projects aimed at developing infrastructure (Oberst 1986:166). Further, this also contributed to the development of local administrative and technical skills.

Later, to further systematise the functions of the colonial bureaucracy, a set of regular government agencies were established (LaPorte 1970:159). These departments were responsible for executing various development projects and were collectively responsible for facilitating the smooth functioning of the colonial machineries of extraction and exploitation. As Warnapala notes, the expansion of the government administrative structure was a result of the great expan-

sion of the public works. In his observations, during the period 1850–1910, a number of departments increased to forty. In response to the increasing population, economic development and a change in the ideas of colonial responsibility are few other reasons cited for the expansion of government structure in the subsequent period (Warnapala 1972:133). In addition, there were structural variations introduced to the colonial administrative apparatus, i.e., the system of village committees. Their role was primarily to improve irrigation. These structural changes altered the natural evolution of the administrative structure and laid the foundation of the modern system of local government in the island (Collins 1951:86). Contrary to popular belief, Collins argues that the latter structure of local government was not a British invention. In his view, the system of village committees was a reincarnation of the pre-colonial village committee system known as *Gam Sabhas* (village councils). It is also noted that a similar structure of administrative tier was also implemented in the urban areas and towns, which bore similarities with the local British administrative structure during this time period (Collins 1951: 86).

In the early 1830s, the local elites became interested in serving in the colonial bureaucracy and demanded that opportunities be opened for them in the colonial civil service (De Silva 2007:535). Initially, the British rejected these demands outright (*ibid*). In 1833, on the recommendations of the Colebrook-Cameron commission, the British opened the Ceylon civil service to the natives. The Colebrook-Cameron commission stated that, ‘the public service should be freely open to all classes of persons based on their qualifications, the exclusive principles of the Civil Service should be relaxed and means of education should be held out to natives whereby they may in time qualify themselves for holding some higher posts’ (Collins 1951:68). There are a few messages sent to the locals in this statement. First, it implied the readiness of the British to open opportunities for the locals to join the civil service. Most importantly, it also implied the importance of locals acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to serve in the colonial state service. The second criteria were already applied to the colonial bureaucrats. For instance, the British who served in the colonial bureaucracy were expected to be experts in administrative laws and functions (Oberst 1986:166). In addition to technical skills, a good knowledge of politics in the colony was a requirement too. When maneuvering within the parameters set by the legislative political apparatus, the requirement of knowledge in politics was considered essential (*ibid*).

The Donoughmore reforms (1931) signify a landmark in the island’s institutional history. These reforms changed the political landscape of the island. In addition to the introduction of the Universal Franchise, the reforms broadened the opportunities for the locals in the (British) Ceylon Civil Service. On a positive note, some argue, broadening the service to the locals successfully stimulated the managerial and technical capacities of the local elites and the knowledge and skills they acquired became useful for building of the post-colonial state apparatuses (LaPorte 1970:159). In view of this research, by targeting the local elites and by demanding specific skills and a knowledge base, the colonial rule hindered the opportunities for non-elite communities joining the state bureaucracy. In other words, the inequalities among different groups in the society were made explicit and officially recognised. However, the numerous changes introduced, especially the new rules of examination for recruiting officials limited the number of local elites entering the state service (Collins 1951:100) and they might have encouraged competition among the local elites.

Besides, those who were educated at leading western educational institutes and those who belonged to the upper crust of the colonial local society were favoured for recruitment (Fernando 1982:364). The recruitment criteria of this period implied the requirement of adherence to social values similar to the British. There was less focus on how the new local recruits actually performed in office (*ibid*). These observations suggest the colonial bureaucracy fostering an externally oriented value system and a system of patronage exclusively benefitting the British or British-minded local elites. This kind of patronage led to an important paradox. On the one hand, this

practice and attitude of the British implicitly attempted to mold the attitudes and patterns of thoughts of the local recruits in adherence to the colonial rulers and on the other hand, it was an invitation to disregard the higher principles of neutrality and anonymity in state service (Fernando 1982:363). As this research observes, this paradox seemed to have generated two contradictory expectations by the British: first, promotion of ideological subordination among the local elites to the colonial rule and to the social and organisational value system it represented. Second, it also demanded them to perform the administrative duties following the Weberian principle of impersonal rule. The inherent contradiction in these two expectations came to be strengthened by other changes introduced later, such as reducing the salaries of the local recruits, withdrawing the special entitlements, i.e., the pension scheme, and the gradual lowering of the standards to recruitment (Collins 1951:70).

When the local elite recruits began to demonstrate the required level of competency in all domains (in terms of skills, knowledge and ideological subordination to the British colonial rule), the initial recruitment policy underwent a serious change. This new change of the recruitment policy was an element of the overall political process undertaken by the British in preparing Ceylon for future self-government. In 1937, recruiting the British recruitments and the Europeans to civil service were completely stopped (Collins 1951:102). This policy generated several advantages for the British and for the local elites. On one hand, it saved on the high costs related to foreign recruits and on the other hand, it expanded the number of local recruits in the state bureaucracy. The statistical evidences pertaining to the gradual increase in the number of local recruits from 1920 to 1950 bears evidence to this.

Table 4.1
Europeans and Ceylonese, including the others in the Ceylon Civil Service

Year	Europeans	Ceylonese and others
1920	79	11
1930	83	55
1940	49	81
1950	10	124

Source: Collins 1951: 102.

The reforms followed by Donoughmore Commission (1931) also expanded the number of local ministers and the number of departments within the ministries. All these changes encouraged a structure and a culture of centralised decision-making, in which the power of the local elites took new heights (Wijeweera 1989: 228). There were a number of implications that these early developments in the institutional apparatus of the state had on elite politics and the direction of state building in the subsequent decades. On one hand, these changes were instrumental not only for fashioning the institutional apparatus of the future state but also instrumental in setting certain dynamics in the state-in-society relations in the late colonial period and the early post-colonial period. Further, they also generated conditions for the local elites to dominate the emerging state.

Considering the nature of the political competition among the emerging local political elites, especially since the introduction of the Universal franchise (1931), elite politics drifting towards politicisation of the central state apparatus is not a surprising development. This development is more visible in the ensuing period, especially when the local elites assumed office in various ministerial portfolios. Seven of these ministerial portfolios were filled through elections and the rest through nominations. By using their office, the local elites gradually began to invest in patron-

client relationships with the rural masses. Needless to mention the political capital such relationships could add to have an edge in the elite political competition. As some others have also observed, the new interdepartmental committee system introduced in this period, which coordinated the skills and talents for various projects also encouraged certain types of loyalties in the emerging state's administrative structure (LaPorte 1970:159). Particularly, for those who got elected to positions and those who wished to get re-elected in the future, forging such loyalties might have appeared important. The public offices these elites held presented them with ample opportunities to interact with the local communities whom they had had a distanced relationship previously with (This point was elaborated in chapter 2 on nationalism). Having access to state resources and being the intermediaries between the subalterns and the British rule these local elites were able to successfully intervene in local affairs, mostly related to resource distribution. Their interventions were helpful for solidifying new networks of patronage relationships (Wijeweera 1989:288).

In the backdrop of growing competition for political power and access to state resources in an era of representative democracy, the numerous changes introduced by the British to the state's main institutional apparatus became an arena of competition and manipulation. This space was strategically used by the local elites, in pursuit of political power, domination and authority.

Despite the local elite's attempts to politicise the state institutions during the colonial period and other gaps, such as promotion of elites in the state service encouraged by the British, minority of respondents of this study who had served in the Ceylon Civil Service still regard the overall quality of the colonial state bureaucracy as the best (R.????). More than half of the interviewees noted the level of impartiality and neutrality the state institutions maintained under the British rule in the field of service delivery as remarkable. This is a view confirmed in some literature too (Oberst 1986:166). Although the presence of patronage politics in the colonial state institutions may seem remote, for understanding the trajectories of transformation and the overt politicisation of the state bureaucracy and the state apparatuses that became an integral part of elites' bureaucratic hegemony building in the post-independent period, this history is important.

4.3 The state apparatuses as sources of finance for patronage politics: 1948-1977

During the first few years of independence, the political elites in state power did not make many changes to the state bureaucracy and the structure of government left by the British. The Soulbury Constitution continued to give the primary direction for governance; therefore until the mid-1950s, the state apparatus was regarded as an extension of the colonial model. The motivations for maintaining the colonial state apparatus could be the result of two factors. Firstly, it was beneficial for the elites who have had already established themselves in the upper hierarchy of the bureaucracy and the government. Therefore, they saw no immediate need to change the prevailing structure. Secondly, despite all ills, the elite political competition in this period was relatively at ease. As Horowitz remarks, at independence, the Ceylonese elites were genuinely inter-communal and shared many common values (1993:3). In addition, instead of a culture of conflict, there was also a bargaining culture of politics established among them (*ibid*).

In the first decade of independence, the structure of the government was slowly expanded. For instance, the departmental system introduced during the British period was slightly modified. In this period, it was re-categorised in the following manner: departments dealing with regulatory functions of administration and those dealing with functions relating to economic development (Warnapala 1972:134). However, the elected representatives were always keen on expanding the departmental activities because such an expansion enabled them to make an impression on their constituencies and boast about their stake in social and economic development (*Ibid*). Further, in

1948, a few new departments such as the rural development, information, social services, town and country planning, census and statistics, parliamentary elections and planning were introduced. Some of them had branches in the regional, divisional and village levels (Warnapala 1972:134). After 1956, with the extension of the responsibilities of the state in the area of economic and social development, the departments of agrarian services, coconut rehabilitation, Kandyan peasantry rehabilitation and cultural services were established. In the subsequent period, a plethora of committees, at regional, village and divisional level were introduced too. In terms of the overall performance of this growing administrative structure in meeting the economic and social needs of the population concerned, they gave mixed results. Some argue the overlapping of functions and role of various bodies and confusions over the responsibilities between different departments having created a mess (Warnapala 1972:135). Perhaps this emerging disorder and partial dysfunctionality can be explained along Foucaudian functionalism that throws light on instrumentality behind chaotic development and the agendas such situation served (cited in Venugopal 2011:69). Despite the positive outcomes these bodies contributed in terms of economic and social development especially in the rural areas and in the agricultural sector, this expanding administrative structure was not without an element of alliance building and establishing legitimacy to elites' rule. For example, the patronage system that it nurtured provided thousands of jobs to political allies. Against the backdrop of elite political competition for state power and political domination, there was room for interpreting favouring one group over the other on the basis of political loyalties generating anxieties and tensions between the competing political alliances.

A few respondents of this research volunteered that, until the mid-1950s, the quality of the state bureaucracy established by the British remained somewhat intact. According to them, in the 1950s, politicisation and political patronage in the state bureaucracy was taking place at a marginal level; they saw a small percentage of local English-educated elites as the main beneficiaries of the system. One important reason for the less-politicised character of the state bureaucracy of this period was the respect marked by the political elites for the legal safeguards outlined in the Soulbury Constitution against politicisation of state services. The Soulbury constitution established a special act and a special commission, later called the Public Service Commission (PSC) to prevent this direction of politics creeping into the state bureaucracy (Warnapala 1974:165). The public service commission scrutinised the processes of appointment of public officials. When appointing bureaucrats to higher offices, this processes required the scrutiny of the national legislature. These measures helped to maintain the high quality of the state officials and the impartiality of the public service delivery mechanisms. For these reasons, as previously cited from the field interviews, the local communities had high regard for state services and perceived government service as a place where status, social prestige and authority could be reached (De Silva 2007:535). Such perceptions made the apex of the post-colonial state's administrative structure the object of ambition of country's educated classes (Ibid). This perception seemed to have planted the seeds for 'white collar job syndrome' and the 'state employment syndrome' among the local educated segments.²

There are numerous interpretations on the radical transformation of the state bureaucracy in the ensuing period where patronage politics became more wide spread. Among the respondents, the majority seemed to agree to the fact that since 1956 and thereafter, an identifiable patronage system in the state apparatus was getting stronger. As some respondents pointed out, this transformation of the state bureaucracy is associated with the increasing need felt by the new political elites (of bourgeois origin) to adjust the colonial bureaucratic structure to meet their political needs. There are a few respondents who did not completely rule out the pressure faced by political elites in meeting the growing demands made by the masses for state resources and employment, in which the state sector became critical. These culmination of factors seemed to have encouraged the political elites on the one hand to introduce new strategies to reach out to the masses, who could be potential political allies and on the other to put pressure to maintain the

original organising principles and structure left by British to maneuver within the existing structure to address the struggles of the local communities for upward social and economic mobility. The statistical evidences pertaining to the increased demand for state resources in terms of employment and education by youth population of this period suffice this claim. It was estimated, in 1953, 18% of the working age population was unemployed (Politicus 1972:260). Unemployment and indebtedness were a significant issue in the rural sector. Given the importance of rural electorates in winning elections, the struggles of the rural population became a point of concern for the political elites. However, there were certain limits in the basic economic structure that was largely dependent on the three major export crops in addressing the needs of the growing population (Lakshman 1987:11). The major attempts, such as Ten Year Economic plan introduced in 1959, under the guidance the MEP government, aimed at alleviating these compelling conditions were not successful either (Politicus 1972:260). The reasons for its failure are mix of local and international factors (Lakshman 1989:107).

In addition to the population boom and the massive resource demand this boom generated, the changing face of state institutions in this period also has a connection with the intensification of the political competition and the struggle for political power at the centre among the elites has been an important factor (Politicus 1972:263–6). The birth of SLFP and the traditional Marxist political parties beginning to gather around SLFP can be seen from this time on. Following the large picture of elite politics in the 1950s, this research is more inclined to suggest the struggles fought at the centre for political power was a powerful factor that influenced the politicisation of the state apparatus of this period. There is enough evidence to suggest that the struggle at the centre for political power and domination required pursuit of a political strategy in favour of building new political alliances and coalitions with the wider society. As Lakshman has observed, the numerous economic benefits given was a strategy to achieve political acceptability and dominance of those who ruled (1987:12). Embarking on a massive social democratic welfare state in this period is another element of this strategy (Venugopal 2011:60)³. Given the centralised nature of state institutions and the dependency created between the communities in the peripheries and the central state for accessing resources, the new state structure and the policies left ample room for the political elites in state power to exploit the state structure. For the political elites, continuation of the British-left institutional structure and the Weberian rules of bureaucracy became an obstacle for reaching their narrow political goals.

In such an environment, it was an attractive option for the political elites to use the state apparatus to pursue their ambitions. Given the importance assigned to the state as the primary controller and distributor of resources by pursuing a socialist path of governance and economic development, the political elites who were in state power was able to successfully harmonise their power struggles in the centre and the struggles in the periphery for upward social and economic mobilisation. In addition, this research also suggests that the use of state bureaucracy and apparatuses for coalition building enabled the new political elites to legitimise and consolidate its political power in a systematic and an institutionalised manner. But all these strategies and the gains of the political elites came with a huge price tag on democratic principles of state building.

Thus, as the struggle for political power and domination began to further intensify, especially between the UNP and SLFP, the state bureaucracy began to be openly politicised. The use of state apparatuses and resources by one faction dominant in political power frustrated those who were in the opposition. In the ensuing period, given the advantage of use of state apparatus for political coalition building, this strategy became the favoured norm in politics by all the rival elite groups. This instrumental use of state bureaucracy in building new political alliances and to successfully incorporate the lower class masses into national politics was promising.

Below are a few concrete examples that further illuminate the above claims. The involvement of the Members of Parliament (MPs) in the local resource distribution mechanism steadily nur-

tured politicisation of the state bureaucracy. Although the MPs involvement could be justified as 'constituency service', however the overall nature of this resource distribution and the scale of allocations they received went beyond simple constituency service. Further, assigning role of the unofficial ombudsman for MPs to deal with resource-related matters, matters were politicised and the role of the ombudsman was politicised too (Wijeweera 1989:292). Given the importance of the MPS in resource allocation, the local communities collectively as well as individually sought state resources, in terms of welfare provisions and employment through the elected members. This situation created a strong supply side for patronage politics in the state services (Wijeweera 1989:292). This supply-and-demand-driven relationship between the local communities and the MPs often made the written rules in the state bureaucracy difficult to be followed. It is not only that, the acceptance and active participation of the society in this process made it difficult to resist and reverse this direction of politics. Eventually this system encouraged electoral rivals among the communities.

Consequently, by end of the first decade of independence, the politicisation of the state bureaucracy displaced the Weberian rule and British-trained bureaucratic elites with anglicised political elites (Wijeweera 1989:291). In terms of its implication on state-in-society dynamics, it can be safely argued that access to state resources depended on the proximity of an individual or the communities had with the local MP belonging to the ruling party, creating political divisions among the communities and making them disregard equality or basis of need as a principle of resource allocation. One respondent, who had served in the state bureaucracy for decades and a keen observer of these developments, noted that, 'since the late 1950s, the structure and the quality of the bureaucracy established during the British colonial rule have been undergoing tremendous transformation'. Another respondent who had served his entire career in the highest ranks in the Ceylon Civil Service, expressed his disappointment of this transformation, 'the public service has changed tremendously; it is a complete turnaround of what it was before. Today people depend more on politicians than on public servants to get their services done; political patronage is the answer to everything'. These statements from those who have been in the public service signify two scenarios. One is the genuine concern of those who have served in the state bureaucracy over the politicisation of the bureaucracy. Second is their concern over the loss of power, prestige and status of the bureaucratic elites to the political elites. Below are two important struggles that illuminate these two interpretations (1) the conflict between British-minded local elites in the state bureaucracy and the new ruling class and (2) intra-bourgeoisie factional conflicts over state power and political power at the political centre. Both these were instrumental in institutionalising patronage in the post-colonial state and creating enabling conditions to extend the domination and hegemonic influence of the political elites over the bureaucratic elites and the rest of the society. The details related to these two conflicts and the official justifications provided by the political elite groups in the ruling regimes are discussed too.

4.3.1 Resistance and struggle for political hegemony: Elite civil servants vs. political elites

Towards independence, the British paved the way for the upper classes to enter the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service by relaxing the recruitment criteria. From the point of view of the new ruling class, the British bureaucracy and the civil servants recruited during the British period were *alien* to the local context. For instance, during the British period, meritocracy and ideological subordination to the western bureaucratic values were the basis for recruitment of civil servants, who commanded superiority over the ruling class in the first decades of the post-colonial period (latter held office through a mandate from the common people) (Ranugge 2000:53). According to the political elites, the upper-classed English speaking bureaucratic elites were insensitive and insufficiently close to the local communities, therefore unable to understand their issues. They also

pointed out that, during public service delivery, the civil servants were not ready to follow the advice of the political elites (presumably the latter assumed that they were closer to the public). The politicians' attitudes were felt by the civil servants as damaging to their image and as undermining their credentials. This implied 'unresponsiveness' of the public servants was not necessarily based on ideals, ideology, or public expectation, but on expected personal and political loyalties to the politicians and to the government of the day (Wijeweera 1989:292). By promoting such views, the new ruling class attempted to portray the civil servants as barriers for reaching out to the public, which created tensions between the politicians and the elite bureaucrats (Samaratunga & Bennington 2002:93). However, the findings of this study show that the basis of these tensions had little to do with the quality of the civil service, and instead it was more an issue between the political elites and the state bureaucrats over control, legitimacy and authority.

In the post-colonial period, the shifts in power relations between the bureaucratic elites and the political elites created tensions not only at the high level, but also at local community level (McCourt 2007: 433). For instance, when dispersing state resources and services, groups that voted for a particular government/regime with the expectation of exclusive state patronage did not always tolerate the impartiality of the state bureaucrats. These community sentiments threatened the legitimacy and the authority of those who assumed political power. Perhaps such situations encouraged the politicians/regimes of the day to bring more reforms to establish their domination and create a more politically subservient state bureaucracy. From the point of view of hegemony building, these reforms can be regarded as new level of strategies drawn by the political elites to punish and frustrate the bureaucratic elites who did not comply and consent the political elites' goals. Politically motivated transfers and other kinds of punishments on the bureaucratic elites are good examples in this regard.

As De Silva observed, during the first few years after country's independence, the political elites could no longer ignore the sentiments of the voters too. In many ways, by this time, Sri Lanka's politics and the outcomes of parliamentary elections has already become a matter of personal significance, both to the politicians and to the communities (Quoted in McCourt 2007:433). Compared to the situation of the political elites, the bureaucratic elites who had already secured permanent employment enjoyed a comfortable situation; the political elites were in a more vulnerable situation, as they were dependent on the voters. As the pressure built up on the political elites assumes state office to deliver services to their support bases, the reluctance of the state bureaucrats to cooperate with the political authority and follow the politicians' instructions appeared as a great concern of the politicians. The tension between the politicians and the state bureaucrats of this period sparked numerous reforms in the state bureaucracy, all aimed at undermining the role of the bureaucrats, mostly brought about in an ad-hoc manner. Pointing to the vested interests of the politicians, the civil servants rejected and resisted the changes proposed by the ruling regimes. In this scenario, for the political elites, politicisation of the state bureaucracy was a strategic and lasting option available to deal with the situation. By so doing, the political elites and the ruling regimes in state power hoped to consolidate their authority, domination and legitimacy over the bureaucratic elites and rest of the society (Wijeweera 1989:292).

For example, regardless of the periodic resistance came to the orders of the political elites from the bureaucratic elites (civil servants), the various governments that came to office during the first three decades after independence introduced around a total of 30 reforms to the state bureaucracy alone (De Alwis 2009). All these reforms were directed, at least partially, to bring down the powers of the civil servants and to enhance the power and influence of the political elites in the state apparatuses and affairs of the state. Analysis of the deliberations of the Wilmot Perera Commission Report (1961)⁴ provides important clues on the underlying motivations of some of the reforms concerning the state sector of this period. In addition to the official justifications provided on the implementation of the much controversial Language Act of 1956 (also

known as Sinhala Only Act), the report stated that the post-colonial state bureaucracy was suffering from elitist composition and warned against the negative consequences of the prolonged association of the state bureaucracy with the country's colonial past (*ibid*).

Interestingly, by comparing the state bureaucracy with the colonial past, the report appealed to the cultural and moral sentiments of the majority. The report compared the structure of the state bureaucracy to a hierarchical caste system (Wijeweera 1989:289) but recommended eliminating the influence of the remnants of the colonial bureaucracy. Further, the commission report also pointed out to the fact that the history of the British bureaucracy and the underlying foundation of it had been the indigenous village headmen system that strictly limited it to the local families of high social status. This line of argument fitted well with the Prime Minister Bandaranaike who was the main figure behind the Language Act of 1956. He was keen to point out to the fact that due to the limited capacity of the state bureaucracy dominated by the a few English-educated class, over 90% of government jobs were restricted to the 10% of Sri Lankans who spoke English (De Alwis 2009:140). Taking this context into consideration, the Wilmot Perera commission report argued that the prevailing system of recruitment to the state bureaucracy entrenching privileges, corruption and suppression of upward social mobility of the bulk of the local communities. Much to the dissatisfaction of the officials in the state bureaucracy, the report doubted the ability of the traditional bureaucracy of handling the new economic ventures embarked by the new regime. By making a connection between the bureaucrats and the colonial past, and highlighting the inequality of access to the state service, the commission report contributed to paint a negative image of the bureaucracy and those who serve in it (Khan 2002: 84). By so doing, it helped the political regime to elevate the image of the political elites and their legitimacy in governing the state. This research finds that what went unnoticed from the scenario is the nurturing of another hierarchical system, of promoting the political elites to the top layer in the administrative hierarchy similar to a new caste system.

There were a number of positive and negative consequences related to the implementation of the deliberations of the commission. On the positives, some argue that it eliminated the feudal character of the public service and opened it up to a broader cross-section of the society (Wijeweera 1989:289). However, as the respondents of this research who served in the Civil Service and those who expressed skepticism on the motivations of the early reforms introduced to the state bureaucracy, the opening up of the civil service to a wider section of the society was an outcome of the growing political struggles at the centre. In their view, state reforms were aimed at mobilising forces especially from the lower classes in favour of them. Using the state reforms (not only administrative, but also economic and political), the state structure and the entire state apparatus was made the most promising and strategic arena that could mobilise the lower classes for building political alliances. Given this background, it is not too hard to speculate that those elites in state power were keen to introduce reforms to the state institutions by enhancing the role of the state where political elites play a crucial role. This line of interpretation that calls the underlying motivations of the reforms into question also allows one to suggest the overall political strategy of the ruling regimes of this period having an element of manipulation of the struggles of the periphery for the benefit of the centre.

By comparing the transformation of the direction of involvement of the state institutions and the rules of the state institutions upon implementation of the recommendations of the Wilmot Perera commission, a respondent who had served in the state service opined that the reforms not only abolished the Ceylon Civil Service, importantly it marked the official process of institutionalisation of patronage politics and the plight of public administration. For example, one retired senior civil servant anecdotally recalled 'immediately after reforms, those recruited by the politicians through back channels were the ones who failed the civil service entrance examination' (Field Interview R.4).

4.3.2 Financing patronage through Socialist rhetoric and the politics of state reforms

This section focuses on the several processes that led to the institutionalisation of patronage politics through socialist state policy under the SLFP-led governments. As previously mentioned, politicisation of the state bureaucracy and manipulation of state institutions for coalition building by the political elites has had important linkages with the changing dynamics in the state-in-society relations, elite power relations during the first three decades after independence, as well as the population boom that began in the late 1930s.

After independence the intense factional conflicts among the political elites compelled the ruling regimes in state power to look for ways to incorporate the masses into politics and build alliances with them that guaranteed their political survival. However, this alliance building and political incorporation of the masses required extending certain privileges and concessions. It is under such a circumstance that the compulsion to continue the socialist state policy and uphold the socialist state seemed attractive. As noted elsewhere (Waldner 1999:33), political elites choosing to capitalise on socialist rhetoric and socialist oriented policy measures by enacting various institutional and policy arrangements reflect the elites' urgency and need to retain in political power that gave Sri Lanka a distinct institutional profile based on socialism. What is interesting to note in this regard is the scale of sacrifice political elites made on the long-term economic development of the country.

For example, in the early 1950s, the ruling regimes were challenged to find ways to retain their political power. Considering the importance of the youth, in terms of the numerical strength and the social power they possess, the ruling regimes were also pressured to find avenues to provide employment for the increasing number of vernacular-educated local youth.⁵ For example, in 1953, 65% of the population acquired a high literacy rate, but there was a high unemployment rate (Politicus 1972:260). In 1969 alone, 10,000 university graduates were found to be unemployed (Politicus 1972). In the English-speaking public sector, the vernacular educated (mostly) youth had limited opportunities or prospects of employment (De Alwis 2009:139). Meanwhile, for this group, fulfilling the requirements in the private sector employment was difficult too. In any case, given the size of the private sector, it was too small to absorb all these unemployed youths. The high literacy rate became a problem vis-à-vis the number of employment opportunities available in the public sector. This situation continued and even aggravated in the subsequent decades. It got worse under the socialist economic policy, when the state sector became the main actor in economic development, capital accumulation and resource management and distribution. Lakshman suggests the culmination of various issues concerning this period (i.e. economic performance,⁶ high education, unemployment, high political awareness, and frequent regime change) that gave birth to the social welfarism and socialist state policy in this period fell short in addressing all the issues in hand (1987:15). As he further notes, which this research is in agreement with, the various policies enacted by the SLFP-led regimes that governed the country during most of the years since independence until 1977 served very little to fulfil the interests of the society; they were largely elements of a political strategy SLFP led governments pursued to sustain the bourgeois-elite dominated state (Lakshman 1987).

In the backdrop of this situation, one can easily see state institutions becoming the centre of attention of those who wished upward social and economic mobility and those who wished to retain and attain state power. Therefore, for the political elites forging political networks and alliances by using state institutions was tempting. Due to the limited opportunities and the limitations imposed by the prevailing economic structure and the vulnerability of the state economy towards external shocks (Lakshman 1987:10) that did not allow the political elites to devise a solid strategy for political mobilisation of the masses, reproduce their political power and status, defining a new strategy by illuminating the role of the state institutions seemed promising to reach their political objectives. Given the struggles the various elite factions were faced at the centre for

retaining political power, the strategy they had to devise had to have components targeting more and more alliance building with the lower-class masses. It is under these developments that the distinct struggles between the centre and the periphery (for political power and for upward economic and social mobility, respectively) came to be harmonised through the state institutions that created enabling conditions to realise and sustain patronage politics in the state sector. It is against this backdrop that patronage politics as a practice and a main mechanism of state resource distribution with the intention of coalition building and political mobilisation became appealing and a crucial element of the overall political strategy since independence. However, the existing structure of the state institutions and the state system was a constraint to expand the patronage system. Therefore, the ruling elites constantly altered and expanded the state structure and manipulated the new and old state institutions to meet their political goals. The numerous reforms implemented in the state sector by all the governments that came to power in this period provide useful examples in this regard. Below are a few examples that illustrate the linkages between the reforms in the state sector, the struggle for power and domination at the centre and their implications on institutionalising patronage politics in the institutional domain of the state.

In addition to the various administrative reforms, political elites who held office brought numerous other reforms. One good example is the establishment of public enterprises (PEs). There are different interpretations on the motivations underlying their establishment. The official interpretations often justifying the PEs point to the commitment of the political elite faction (SLFP) in state office towards the socialist state policy. The need for transforming the colonial economic structure to better address the local needs has been pointed out as the reasons for establishing the PEs within the socialist economic policy. Rejecting such official justifications, Lakshman remarks, given Sri Lanka's primary characteristic of the state as a bourgeoisie state, various structural and institutional characteristics, descriptive titles and policy stances implemented by SLFP were widely used to camouflage the true nature of the state (Lakshman 1987:15). In light of Lakshman's observation, this research is inclined to suggest that the introduction of PEs was one of the attempts to satisfy the interests of the capitalist class closer to the ruling SLFP government yet officially presented as a necessary initiative for realising the socialist state that benefits the poor masses. There are other complementary arguments presented by other scholars rejecting the official discourse on the PEs. Their arguments point to the fact that PE was established with the intention of capturing the commanding heights of all aspects of the economy by the state. De Silva who is an advocate of the latter interpretation is keen to justify his interpretation by drawing a comparison between the outcomes of the PEs and the declared motivations. For him, failure of PEs was a result of the gross mismanagement and inefficiency caused by the unqualified political appointees by the regime. It is largely as to why the PEs fell short in delivering on the promises it made on economic growth (De Silva 1987:258). As he further argues, due to the reasons pointed out earlier these state companies became places of corruption, political favouritism and political revenge (*ibid*). Somewhat agreeing with De Silva, Warnapala also notes that by introducing the PEs as well as subsequently by nationalising the essential services, the SLFP governments under its official socialist economic policy fulfilled its political agendas by punishing the public servants who supported rival political parties through the means of transfers, dismissals, stopping promotions (Warnapala quoted in De Alwis 2009:142). Warnapala is of the opinion that the nationalisation of bus transport under the SLFP was intended to punish the private bus companies that contributed substantial amounts of money to the UNP election fund (*ibid*). Given this backdrop, it is correct to suggest that the state sector and political patronage instilled by the political elites in the state office was not only used for political mobilisation of the masses in the periphery, at the same time it was used to force the others to accept the political project of the ruling elites. In this sense, as pointed out by these scholars, patronage politics, constituted with elements of manipulation, consent creation, consent obtaining and coercion, qualifies it to be called hegemonic in its primary orientation.

There are other examples that show how the political parties that assumed state office of this period introduced various changes to the state institutions to bypass the checks and balances in the public sector to dispense patronage benefits for coalition building. The abolishing of the examinations to recruit the *grama sevakas* (village headman) is one early example. Under the new rules introduced for recruitment, the *Grama Sevakas* were appointed on the recommendations of the MP in the area (Wijeweera 1989:293). Given the authority of the *Grama sevaka* on everyday village affairs, especially in the area of resource distribution at village level, appointing them on MPs' recommendations seemed to have double-edged goals – taking control of the entire village administrative structure by the political party in power and the other is using the *grama sevaka's* official position to mobilise village-level forces to build political coalitions. In 1973, a similar change was introduced concerning the service delivery in the state sector. In this instance, during a phase of reorganisation of the consumer cooperative networks, SLFP government in power replaced the previous system of elected board to the cooperative bodies. Besides, based on the nomination of the MP, SLFP also introduced and appointed a new management tier. In the similar fashion, the members of cultivation committees and agricultural productivity committees were all appointed on the recommendation of the minister to the local MP (ibid).

All these reforms and changes were justified by the ruling elite faction in state power on socialist stances and by emphasising the need for strengthening of the state and the apparatuses of the state at all levels. In addition, due to the importance assigned to the role of the state, the governments that came to office did not provide enough incentives to develop the private sector. This made people dependant more and more on the state sector. Besides the aspect of patronage, there are different interpretations concerning the underdevelopment of the private sector of this period. One is in line with the official position advocated by the SLFP governments in power against capitalism, often and openly naming capitalism and capitalist development as an illegitimate form of accumulation (Moore 1997:336). In Moore's view, besides the absence of industrial capitalism among the local bourgeoisie class, one of the major reasons underlying this situation has been SLFP's reluctance to destroy the power of its main constituency, the rural *Goyigama* caste of Buddhist-Sinhalese and the rural elites (ibid). Therefore, development of the private sector was discouraged by attacking the principle of capitalism it entailed and calling capitalism as alien to cultural -Buddhist values of the majority of local population and exploitative process. This in turn legitimised SLFP's interests in establishing and nurturing state-owned corporations with donor money from communist countries. Given the background of the UNP and its international support base, the main rival of SLFP, joining hands with international socialist forces seemed to have been the best strategic option available. Despite the hype around the state-led economic growth and industrialisation, those industries started with donor money from the socialist block eventually began to run on loss, which had much to do with patronage politics in these industries. Warnapala has asserted that many of the state-owned industries of this period were established based on political criteria. The patronage appointments made to these industries led to gross mismanagement of them and places of regular political interferences (1974).

Another interpretation points out to the fact that in this period, the insufficient level of capital available for the growth of the private sector as the cause of underdevelopment of the private sector. This interpretation also emphasises that there was a general lack of enthusiasm among the political elites in state power in investing in the private sector. Therefore, under a socialist economic policy and socialist rhetoric of development, it is not surprising that the capitalist class showing no enthusiasm in investing in the private sector. As some others point out, there were deliberate state policies brought by the ruling SLFP to paralyze development of the private sector. For instance, introduction of the State Industrial Act of 1957 is cited as a good example in this regard. Under this act, a number of new state-managed industrial corporations were established (Wijeweera 1989:289 such as state banks, a public transport board, wholesale and retail import and export agencies, state insurance cooperation, aviation services, a plantation agriculture

board, and industrial production corporation. Under the Second Five-year plan enacted by the SLFP that was in state power in 1971, some of the newly established co-operations went beyond the industrial sector. They were also extended to the service industry as well. In fact, until liberalisation of the economy under UNP government in 1977, these state-owned service agencies held complete monopoly in the service industry. Although the official aim of establishing the state corporations was often cited as to make profits and to strengthen the capacity of the state accumulation process, the outcomes of these corporations suggest otherwise. Respondents who had worked in the public service pointed out that these state-led establishments were deeply enmeshed in nepotism and favouritism, and were places that generated short-term political gains. In their view, these state-led industries suffered from lack of financial autonomy and were established to generate employment for political allies of the party in power. The political capital these industries brought to SLFP was remarkable. However, from the point of view of patronage politics and alliance building, by using these industries, the SLFP governments in power were able to gather enough support to stay in power and keep their rival UNP out of power. Furthermore, from the view point of hegemony building, the above discussed measures seemed manipulative and of consent building orientation, and non-subscription to these new rules of the game posed a threat to those who did not comply and those who resisted.

Presumably, the underdevelopment of the private sector might have put pressure on the ruling political elites to further exploit the state sector in distributing state employment and state resources to their allies and potential allies. There is room to suggest that the pressures mounting for state resources from the periphery in an increasingly competitive political environment further pushed the political elites in state power to further institutionalise political clientelism in the state apparatuses. Given the lack of conditions for generating state capital that could have been used for reproduce power and status of the ruling elite groups, state patronage was turned as the most viable option for political mobilisation and hegemony building. In this period, the new power relations established in the state sector made large inroads into the autonomy of the state bureaucracy (Karunaratne 2000:176). These changes significantly expanded both the public sector and the hegemonic power of the state bureaucracy under the tight control of the political elites in state office. Table 4.2 shows the steady increase in the number of employees in the public sector in the first three decades after independence. These statistics complement the arguments presented above on the linkage made between expansion of the state sector and patronage politics and the observations and the opinions of the respondents who had long served in the public sector.

Table 4.2
Growth of public service, number of employees (1948-1980)

Year	Population (millions)	Government	Local Government	State Corporations
1948	7	109,854	n.a	Negligible
1958	9	222,940	15,000	n.a
1973	13	341,805	27,000	167,000
1980	15	399,840	44,427	755,558

Source: Wijeweera 1989:297.

Note: Co-operations are either government-funded establishments or semi-government establishments

However, sustaining this direction of politics required more state reforms. At certain point it also required the elimination of barriers imposed by the Soulbury constitution. In 1972, by bringing a new constitution, the SLFP-led government in power overcame this barrier. For example, the first republican constitution of 1972 granted powers to the cabinet ministers over appoint-

ments, promotions and transfers of the public servants. One example, recalled by a respondent of this research involves the health care sector:

there were many qualified assistant medical practitioners in the island, but after granting powers to the cabinet in 1972 to appoint medical practitioners, they were only recruited from the electorate. The list of medical practitioners was selected based on the electorates and then went to the ministry. This system not only reinforced patronage politics in appointments, it also began to cultivate masters in the public offices. For instance, those who joined the service with the blessings of the politicians acted with superior status (Field Interview R.4).

4.3.3 The ghost of socialism: the institutionalisation of political patronage

There are differences of opinion as to whether the period of socialism and welfare policy regime was used for political alliance building through nurturing a system of patronage politics. In Sri Lanka, based on the parallel developments of the growth of the state and growth of patronage politics, there is evidence to suggest so (McCourt 2007:11 and 2006: 234, Richardson undated: 21). As the majority of respondents of this research shared, during the period of socialist state, the public sector became a heaven for political patronage.

The success of the governments in this period largely depended on their performance in the economic sector. The economic downturn experienced in the early 1970s and the anti-state youth movement led by the JVP that highlighted the compelling economic struggles in the periphery has important bearings on the politicisation of the state institutions. Under this hard economic situation, the inability to generate enough material resources to dispense patronage for political mobilisation and political incorporation of the masses, especially the youth from the periphery, reliance on the state institutions and state resources became increasingly profitable for the political elite in political power. By officially adopting a socialist state policy, the SLFP governments of 1956–1959, 1965–1970 and 1970–1977) completely captured the state apparatus and used it for dispensing state patronage to their allies. As Gramsci pointed out in hegemony theory, this material and ideological mix of strategy indeed qualifies to be called as a strategy of hegemony building, rather than simple coalition building. Coming under pressure from both the political and economic fronts, the SLFP governments took initiatives to restructure the state institutions and the economy, which brought the entire economy under state control and assigned the state sector a leading role. This policy direction extended the role and the size of the state sector considerably (Jayasekara 1977:208). This direction of political strategy gave opportunities for the ruling elites to manipulate the struggles in the periphery, in service to the attempts to overcome power struggles in the centre and space for reproduce their power and status. By saying so, this research does not completely dismiss all that the ruling political elites did for development of the economy. However, the point this research wishes to highlight here is how the state economic policy in this period was strategically aligned as an important part of the overall political strategy of alliance building and hegemony building.

Theoretically, in a socialist system, the state assumes the role of primary actor of economic development. It controls the economy and assigns various roles and functions to the various state apparatuses to reach its political and economic objectives. Fulfilling these roles requires an enlarged state apparatus and a state bureaucracy that can play the vital role of the primary distributor of goods and services. The goods and services controlled and distributed by the state are essential for sustaining everyday life. In Sri Lanka, these aspects of the role of the state was used by the political elites in power to galvanise the primary basis of state building with the intentions of alliance building and hegemony building. Examples can be given to show this confluence of strategies and interests. During the socialist state policy carried out by the UF government, the state held the monopoly of purchasing and distributing most of the essential products (Richard-

son Undated:3). Many of the policies implemented in this period were the renewed efforts from the previous periods. For example, the history of monopoly control of paddy and guaranteed price scheme goes back to 1950s (Richardson 4). In order to facilitate this renewed process, in this phase of socialist state policy, the UF government established new state controlled institutions and enacted a number of laws and reforms. The Paddy Marketing Board (1974), establishment of a new body of cooperative wholesale stores to promote compulsory purchase scheme and the Coconut Development Authority (1971) with the intention of controlling the essential imports are a few examples in this regard. In addition to the declared goals of economic development, these establishments and laws were used to employ political supporters and provide access to state subsidies to the political allies of the government. The attention brought towards socialist ideology made the patronage politics diluted. For instance, the much popularised anti-western slogans of this period such as ‘economic liberation from foreign domination’ all had an outward orientation. By drawing attention to the aspect of foreign domination, the internal relations of domination and subordination between the political elites in power and the rest were kept out of sight. What is important to note in this regard is the degree of correspondence that these anti-western sentiments had with the general aspirations of the SLFP’s main support base (Lakshman 1987: 15), the Sinhala-Buddhist rural petty bourgeoisies, who are also the defenders of the bourgeois state.

There are other instances where nationalist ideological slogans overtook the aspect of patronage politics, i.e., the nationalist undertone of the Business Acquisition Act of 1971 (Kelegama 2000:1479). This act allowed the State to absorb private industries that had more than hundred employees. In this wave of nationalisation, private industries such as British Ceylon Corporation and the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mill were nationalised (De Silva 1987:258). This series of nationalisation of assets commenced with the enactment of the Land Reform Law, No. 1 of 1972. This law imposed ceilings on private ownership of land and provided for the setting up of a Land Reform Commission. The commission was vested with powers to acquire privately held land in excess of the ceilings (Bastian undated:10). Three years later, the scope of the reform was extended through the Land Reform (Amendment) Law, No. 39 of 1975 under the provisions of which land held by public companies were nationalised. Upon nationalisation, these large-scale ventures were turned in to sources for dispensing political patronage to SLFP supporters (Richardson undated:2–3). It was reported that the nationalisation process provided an ever-expanding number of white-collar jobs in the state sector for political supporters of the ruling elites as well as added a number of paralysing administrative bottleneck (ibid). Among the recommendations, the report urged the government to take seriously its commitment to efficiency in the public sector by eliminating political patronage as a primary basis for employment and cutting ‘hidden subsidies’ to senior public officials (ibid).

A minority of respondents of this research shared that these political appointees became subordinators of the ruling regimes as well as the mediators and guarantors of delivering votes to their political patrons. Compared to the nature of patronage during the British rule that still required considerable level of skills and knowledge, in the post-independent period the state-led patronage system took an opposite turn. On the one hand, the nature of state-led patronage system nurtured by the political elites in state power nurtured a more clear system of rewards for their political allies as well as a system of threat, warning and punishment for the others.

In Table 4.3 the transformation of the nature of the relationship between those serve in classical and welfare systems of bureaucracy is captured. The role of the welfare bureaucrats as social reproducers and their relationship to the political elites in power is indeed a relationship of subordination-domination based on the ability of the government/political elites in power to dispense patronage in the institutional realm of the state.

Table 4.3
Types of Bureaucracies

Classical Bureaucracies	Welfare Bureaucracies
Classical Bureaucrats	Welfare Bureaucrats
Professionals/Intellectuals	Professionals/Intellectuals
Corps	Social reproducers
Workers	Workers

Domination \longrightarrow Subordination

Source: Hoff, 1985:221.

Further, during the period of socialist state policy, patronage networks established at the upper level of the state bureaucracy were evident between the ruling political elites and the public servants in the upper hierarchy of the state bureaucracy and the officials in the lower levels (Moore 1997:346–8). Given the basis of patronage relationship as an important criterion of recruitment, these political appointees staying away from the symbolic politics of the ruling regime is doubtful. These high level state bureaucrats appointed as secretaries to the ministries, heads of the government departments, statutory bodies and state enterprises were also capable of influencing organisational behaviour and the large number of people working under them. Given these circumstances, it is plausible to assume that these high-ranked state bureaucrats been able to connect their regional and village networks with the main political networks operated by the ruling faction/regime in power. Given the proximity these appointees had to political power and authority that are useful in accessing state resources and welfare provisions and the dependency of those who are in the periphery on them, they seemed to have possessed a great degree of influence in spreading the ideology of their political patrons among the forces in the periphery. It is in this light that some argue the ideology of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism gained wide currency in state-in-society relations and in the official state policy of this period (Moore 1997:337).

In this research it is found that there are a number of consequences related to the manipulation of state's institutional structure by the political elites in power for alliance and hegemony building through an elaborative patronage system. Strengthening inequalities in power relationships is one such consequence. In this period of state building and political alliance building, power relationships were mainly found on political affiliations. Those who had closer relationship to the political elites and to the party in power became more powerful. Their proximity to state resources was shorter than the others. In addition, the particularistic and unequal access the patronage networks established by the political elites and their bureaucratic subordinates enacted in the overall domain of the state, especially in the arena of material resource distribution came to be seen as a legitimate practice. Besides, development of a culture of resistance for any form of reforms in the state institutions that threatened the privileges and benefits enjoyed by the politically appointed bureaucratic elites and their lower ranked officers is another consequence. Due to the instrumental role the bureaucratic elites play in promoting the regime's political ideology, political elites were also reluctant in initiating reforms that fully undermined their worth and authority.

As Moore claims, the political networks forged by the ruling political elites with the corporation of the bureaucratic elites with the lower classes seemed successful in establishing important vertical cross class alliances and institutionalised inequalities among various political groups. According to this research, such a scenario shrinks space for different political opinions and ideolo-

gies to survive. More than the political ideologies, the forceful establishment of the patronage system through the state demanded people to subscribe to this system of the ruling elites that inherently bred political favouritism. This direction of political participation was an encouragement for right-wing political culture in the society where custom and tradition was illuminated under the socialist rhetoric and strategically used to secure the privileges of a few. This claim endorses some of the observations made by other scholars, who argue that the official socialist economic state policy in this period was never left wing (Lakshman 1987:15). What was seen in this period was a considerable harmonisation of the economic policy and the political motivations through the passage of politics. Further, this research observes that this nature of politics had a tendency for fragmentation of the ruling elites and hasty coalition building among them. The elite fragmentation occurred as a result of the increased competition among the political parties and elite factions to capture the state and the resources entirely. The hasty coalition building they opted for short-term gains was largely a result of seeking access to state resources to secure political positions through shortcuts by compromising higher political principles. The fragility and the short-lived nature of coalition politics of this period was the final outcome of this situation. This research finds that this short-lived nature of politics had a tendency to resort to rightwing politics, positioning itself anywhere between centre-right and far right in a spectrum. These developments in the overall political sphere further abused and manipulated the state institutional structure and created tensions between alliance building for hegemony building and democratic state building. The socialist leftwing political principles often heard in the elections platforms of this period therefore were mere political rhetoric and manipulative politics either aimed at gathering forces from the periphery for political coalition building or to punish those who held a different ideology. As majority of the respondents pointed out, the socialist stand the SLFP governments echoed in this period are mostly done to satisfy its leftwing coalition partners, whose partnership was essential for the SLFP to consolidate its power. Given such motivations, this research suggests that by favoring one group over the other, based on the political loyalty they had towards SLFP, SLFP encouraged the principle of inequality in social and political relationships that came to be institutionalised in the state apparatus by adjusting and manipulating the state institutions. This practice of politics can be seen as a barrier in realising egalitarian politics. Instead, the nature of the patronage system and its modus operandi was an inducement for creating conditions in pursuit of the hegemony of the right in politics under the wings of the left politics.

What is missing in most analyses of the transformation of the state bureaucracy and the state sector, and in the studies on the history of ethnic conflict of this period is a detailed analysis of party-directed patronage in the state sector. Instead, these studies only highlight the increase in the number of 'Sinhalese appointments' and the impact of Sinhala patronage on inter-ethnic relations. This treatment of 'Sinhalese appointees' as a monolithic category omits any serious examination of patronage politics along the political party affiliations. As half of the respondents interviewed for this research (who have first-hand experience working in the state sector of this period) confirmed, for them as insiders, the 'other' origins of political patronage was obvious.

As discussed above, the underlying reasons for the politicisation of the state bureaucracy in the period since 1948–1977 corresponds with the numerous social and economic struggles experienced by particular social forces in the periphery and the political elites in the centre. As Migdal reminds us in the state-in-society model, the numerous struggles experienced at the centre and the peripheries influence the organisation of the state, its goals, means and partners and operative rules. Along this line of thinking, this research believes the aggressive promotion of patronage politics through the state institutions and the constitution (and the reforms concerning these two domains) by constantly adjusting and manipulating the institutional structure of the state by using socialist, cultural and welfarist rhetoric has been an important element of the political strategy designed by the country's ruling class to pursue political and economic hegemony. This direction is indeed a short-sighted strategy (Warnapala 1974:147). Further, the various reforms introduced

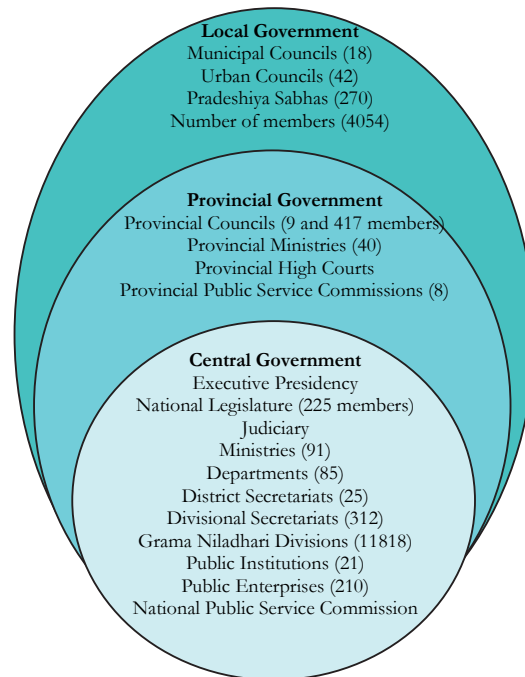
to the state institutions in this period transformed the image of the state as a patronage state and laid important grounds for reinventing and sustaining patronage politics as an important practice in the society. The power patronage politics demonstrated in harmonising the struggles in the centre and the periphery and manipulating the rules of the game over scarce resource distribution played an influential path of state transformation. In view of this research, these dynamics set stage for further abuse and manipulation of the state institutions in the subsequent phase of state building, and was an inducement for derailing the democratic state building in Sri Lanka.

4.4 The ghost of liberalism: patronage politics in the state institutions in the post-1977 period

The following sections of this chapter elaborate on a few chosen examples pertaining to the further use, abuse and manipulation of the state apparatus in the post-1977 period for political coalition building and hegemony building by the ruling elites. These examples will be used to argue that the political elites who assumed state power in this period further nourished the patronage system through the passage of state bureaucracy/state sector in pursuit of their hegemonic political ambitions. These examples will also help to establish the argument that the patronage system as a whole operationalised through the state apparatus was an aide in advancing the struggle for hegemony of the right. In the pre-1977 period, due to the popular following of the socialist political ideology by the ruling elites, the underlying struggle for hegemony of the right by the Sinhalese political elites in state power was not so obvious. Below given a few examples that shows how the intensity of the political and economic struggles faced by the ruling political elites and the masses in the peripheries in the post-1977 period made both these groups increasingly reliant on the state institutions. These examples are also being used to suggest the continued abuse of state institutions by the political elites resulting in establishing bureaucratic hegemony.

The diagram below depicts the structure of the government today. In the following sections of this chapter, several examples will be presented to demonstrate how the state administrative structure in the post-1977 period came be to this elaborate and certain challenges in the arenas of politics and economy of this period have given rise to certain new tiers of the overall administrative structure of the government. In the rest of this chapter, there is a discussion of how this new administrative and state structure is used by the political elites in power for maintaining their political alliances, add new forces to strengthen their coalitions and reproducing conditions for patronage political system to reproduce political power and elie status.

Diagram 2
Structure of Government (as of 2008)



Source: Based on data in De Alwis 2009.

In the post-1977 period, the political elites that assumed office required a different set of strategies to hold on to power and build alliances that allow them to stay in power for long time. These strategies were manipulative and coercive in orientation. Amongst, the changes introduced to the state structure, to the entire institutional apparatus of the state and to central resource distributive mechanism controlled by the political elites in power are noted. All these changes not only were used for financing the old system of patronage that favoured the allies of the ruling elites and to absorb new allies to their political camp, but were also used to punish those who resisted and did not comply with the system. For those who complied with the system and supported the ruling elites, rewards often came as state employment. Considering the state of the economy and the diminishing stock of exploitable resources available for maintaining the loyalties of the already mobilised forces, using the government/state sector to provide jobs to their political supporters is not surprising (ABD 2004:i). The observations made on fresh crops of patronage appointments in the state sector after every election in the post-1977 period bears empirical evidences to this claim (McCourt 2007:432). One of the important political factors underlying this trend was the immediate need faced by the ruling elite faction to consolidate its dominance in politics through institutional means. The notion of the responsibility assumed by the political elites in power as patrons in meeting the needs of their political allies, whose loyalty is largely based on instrumentality can be seen as attempts to establish and gain legitimacy to their rule with consent and consensus. However, major successes and failures can be pointed out in reaching the goal of 'rule through consent and consensus'.

In a competitive political environment the instrumental role these allies could play in consolidating political power and in pursuit of hegemony is important. However to further qualify this argument, the broader picture pertaining to the state-in-society relations and the main struggles

faced by the political elites and the social forces in the peripheries needs to be brought into light. These struggles and the strategies elites devised to overcome and harmonise the struggles at the centre and the periphery to institutionalise patronage politics in the state institutions became an important element of the political landscape of this period.

Soon after being elected in 1977, as a party that was out of state power for seven years (1970–1977), UNP was determined to secure its political domination over the entire state apparatus and society. Learning from its political predecessors, UNP had developed an acute awareness of the strengths of the state institutions in mobilising forces on their behalf and the durability of financing the patronage system in doing so. However, the end of the UF rule already exhausted state institutions exhausted for this purpose. Therefore, use, abuse and manipulation of the state institutions had to be done with a different political strategy. Given the grim picture of the exploitable stock of state's financial resources for alliance building, massive changes and modifications to the state's infrastructure and the administrative structure still looked promising for coalition building and political mobilisation.

Unlike its predecessors, UNP was determined to bring drastic changes to the state apparatus to consolidate its authority and domination in politics.⁷ To justify its political agenda, UNP strategically used the widespread disappointments of the public of the SLFP's economic performance. Besides, being right wing in political and economic ideology, UNP also assigned the state a new role under the new politico-economic strategy it pursued. The overwhelming mandate UNP received in 1977 general elections (UNP won 2/3 majority in the national legislature) enabled them to capitalise on the public sentiments to introduce the drastic changes in the structure of the state and its institutional apparatuses. Soon after election, the UNP government summed its mission under two slogans, an open economy (*nidabas arthikaya*) and a righteous society (*dharmishtha samajaya*).⁸ From the point of view of Gramscian theorisation, this new two-tier strategy was constituted with important ingredients of hegemony building, i.e., the sound economic basis and an ideology with strategies for consent building and coercion. On the economic agenda, it is observed that the economic agenda of Jayawardena was pushed through underhand tactics and through a phase of free-market dictatorship (Venugopal 2011:69). What is important to note is that both these slogans were also carved in the image of the state and the practice of the state. The accelerated Mahaweli development scheme launched by the UNP best explains this combination (Spencer 2008:621). Given the alignment of political and economic forces in the international context in favour of liberal economic policies of this period, which was very much in line with UNPs, especially Jayawardena's long-term economic vision, the new government was easily able to define a new role for the state institutions without jeopardising its vision and the mission. However, the state and its institutional profile needed a significant upgrade and finances. Contrary to the approach of the previous government, during the Jayawardena period, the necessary financial means were sought from foreign sources. The foreign loans and the large sums of foreign aid received for the Mahaweli scheme became the main source of financing these institutional changes and the party-directed patronage politics in the institutions (Spencer 2008:623). All these fulfilled the criteria of consent building. In addition to the consent building, simultaneously Jayawardena was not reluctant to use coercion and the coercive arm of the state to threaten, force and eliminate those who stood in his way and his plan.

The various reforms and changes introduced during UNP's 13-year rule and the relational outcomes of these changes vis-à-vis the growth of patronage politics in the institutional domain of the state bear examples of this trajectory. Following are few examples that demonstrate use of strategies of manipulation and consent building that contributed to the extension of the patronage system in the realm of the state.

Amongst several drastic changes, the introduction of the Second Republican Constitution (1978) is of utmost significant. In the view of the majority of the respondents and as for the find-

ings of the political observers, this new constitution not only changed the direction of politics but also the trajectory of state building (Warnapala 1974:156–8). There is a common perception among the academia and the general public that the Second Republican Constitution paved the way for aggressive path of institutionalisation of political patronage. By using the provisions of the new constitution, UNP swiftly replaced the SLFP-lenient bureaucracy/state sector with a UNP-lenient state bureaucracy/state sector. The numerous provisions in the new constitution significantly altered the style and content of the public administration and shifted the power dynamics in the entire state bureaucracy and the state apparatuses. Following are key examples that are worth citing that denote the changed direction of the state institutions and patronage politics, upon introduction of the new constitution. One of the major changes it brought about was shifting the centre of power from the Parliament to the President's office. In other words, with the introduction of the new constitution, the more-diffused or party-centric patronage system become directly under the President. This shift marked new trajectories of patronage politics and patronage system in the state institutions in Sri Lanka. Table 4.4 below offers a summary comparison between the first and the second republican constitutions that capture the shifts of dynamics of power in the state apparatus.

Table 4.4
Comparison between the First and the Second republican constitutions

Aspect	First Republican Constitution (1972)	Second Republican Constitution (1978)
Supreme Instrument of State power	National State assembly	President
Head of State	President (Nominated by Prime Minister)	President (Elected by people)
Head of Government	Prime Minister	President
Legislative power	Parliament (bicameral)	Parliament (unicameral)
Executive power	Cabinet of Ministers	President
Judicial power	NSA exercises through courts	Courts established under the constitution
Highest judicial appellate body	Supreme court of Sri Lanka	Supreme court of Sri Lanka
Determination of Number of ministers and assignment of subjects	Prime minister	President
Appointment of ministers	President on the advice of the Prime Ministers	President
Appointment of Public Officer	Cabinet of Ministers	President (18 th amendment)

Source: Nanayakkara 2006: 426-7 (adapted and modified by the author).

The second republican constitution removed various checks and balances of the political system, allowing the President to re-align the power relations in the domain of the state structure. Further, by replacing the role of the Parliamentary Select Committee and increasing the powers of the Executive President, the new constitution paved the way for the President to influence the appointments made to the higher apex of the state bureaucracy and politicise these portfolios. The direct presidential appointments to high public offices completely overrode the power and authority of the national legislature (Wijeweera 1989:294). These institutionalised measures made the entire state bureaucracy and the state apparatus revolve around a double axis of personalised rule of the president and the MP. The latter did not have any independent power. This new balance of power brought by the second republican constitution required the administrative actions of the state bureaucracy to align with the new politico-magnetic field (*ibid*). In this regard, it is

needless to mention the fate of those who opposed this direction of politics. There are numerous examples where the muscle power and the metal power of the state been used against those who opposed this new political project. As Venugopal observes, during this period, the onset of the civil war in the north and east also served the interest of the regime and was used to push Jayawardena's agenda (2011:70).

As majority of the respondents of this study shared, the executive powers of the President were used for achieving numerous other purposes such as cultivating a close knitted patronage network and a group of henchmen among the party members. Use of executive power for appointing MPs and allocation of the ministries as pleased by the president are examples of this regard. These appointments were done under the personal scrutiny of the president and a few inner party henchmen close to the President. The nature of constitutional powers assumed by the president and the way these powers were used by the president (Jayawardena of UNP from 1977–1989) created new hierarchies inside the political party and in the overall domain of high politics. These new hierarchies established a new layer to the existing patronage pyramid at the horizontal level. The strong personality of President Jayawardene and his iron fist in politics in dealing with the intra-party level successfully eliminated or silenced all the oppositional forces within the party too.

There were other changes facilitated by the new constitution that enabled the UNP government to make decisive inroads in to the autonomy of the state apparatuses, all gave rise to new avenues within the state structure to facilitate patronage politics. Involving the ordinary MPs in the state's administrative matters through the system of District Minister (1978), re-establishment of the Public Service Commission (1978), DDC (1980) and privatisation of Public Enterprises (PEs) are arenas where MPs role was enhanced. Altogether, these measures institutionalised the parliamentary electorate as the base unit of administration. As this research finds, these reforms clearly restructured the state and the state institutions to consolidate UNP's political domination to re-incorporate the various social forces to UNP's political networks and to diminish the importance, replace/adjust those segments in state bureaucracy that were still of SLFP leniency. These changes led to the open politicisation of the state bureaucracy/sector (Warnapala 1974:164-166). Further, as a majority of respondents of this research observed this transformation encouraged further enlargement of the public sector and tightened the grip of the regime in power.

Table 4.5
Percentage distribution of employed population by employment status - 2009⁹

Employment status	Total No.	Percentage
Employee	4 377 728	57.6
Public	1 175 925	15.5
Private	3 201 803	42.1
Employer	199 958	2.6
Own account worker	2 216 537	29.2
Unpaid family worker	808 190	10.6
Total	7 602 414	100

Source: Department of Census and Statistics 2009:16.

Taking the lead from the UNP, alterations in the institutional context and the constitution to form political alliances and establish political domination of the ruling elite factions were contin-

ued by all successive political regimes. These changes further centralised the state administration and expanded the role of the state, which is quite contradictory to the open economic policy embarked upon in 1977. This was echoed by a majority of respondents of this study, and Table 4.5 bears statistical evidence to their claim.

As witnessed by majority respondents, it is not only in the state sector that continued to expand; the semi-government institutions also expanded in its size as a result of increasing the number of patronage appointments in this period (see Table 4.6). Although the official number of employees in the state sector began to decline after partial and full privatisation of government entities in the post-1977 period, at the time of privatisation these institutions were already filled with large numbers of workers, most of whom were political appointees (Samaratunga & Bennington 2002:94). The reports released by the Department of Census and Statistics confirms that after a few rounds of further privatisation of state institutions, a large number of employees continued to remain in the semi-government sector.

Table 4.6
Distribution of Semi-Government sector employees by Status of Appointment 2001-2007

Year	Permanent	Temporary
2001	330 549	39 801
2002	251 125	20 986
2003	225 671	18 220
2004	215 974	15 545
2005	221 661	14 796
2006	206 222	20 084
2007	218 000	17 441

Source: Department of Census and Statistics 2007.

Note: decline in 2002 is due to the closure or privatisation of some institutions in the semi-government sector.

On the level of skills of the state sector employees, a number of respondents of this study pointed out that due to the ready recruitment of the unskilled allies of the party in power, these workers could not perform productive functions in the state sector. For the political elites in power, especially recruiting unskilled youth to unproductive positions in the state sector did not matter, as the goal of recruiting these unskilled youth was to help foster political alliances. Also, as other scholars have pointed out, there are other motivations behind these recruits, such as using them to diffuse potential political unrest that is detrimental to the hegemony building of the political elites (Hettige 2010).¹⁰ Considering the above, it is safe to argue that although these unskilled labourers were not making a productive contribution to the development of the economy, their placement in the state sector was politically strategic and immensely useful for the political elites.

The most worrisome scenario related to political patronage in the state sector was the financial costs involved in maintaining this system. In 2009 alone, out of Rs.618 billion earned as tax revenues, a sum of Rs.356 billion was paid as salaries and wages to state workers (LBO 2010). Given the situation that the majority of these state sector employees were political appointees who did not contribute to any productive process in the economy, the finances spent on their salaries were purely benefiting the political elites. In addition to the salaries, a large number of employees in the government and semi-government institutions who held permanent employment status were entitled for an additional fringe benefit package. These benefits include in-service and after

service benefits. For example, a pension and access to state funds, housing and educational loans from state banks for lower interest rates, educational scholarships and health care coverage for the family members. As for a recent official report released by the Central Bank, out of every Rupee collected as taxes, salaries and pensions of the employees in the state sector absorb 0.576 cents (ibid). However, when all the costs related to the other benefits of public service officials, the actual cost of the public sector worker is much higher than the official figures released by the bank. Further, unlike private sector employees, the state employees also enjoy a tax-free salary and a pension. This means, spending large sums earned by taxation of private sector employees to maintain the employees in the state sector with no substantial contribution from them to the economy. Ironically the percentage of the contribution of the public sector employees is as low as 20% to the total earnings of the economy (ibid).

Given the male-dominated nature of the political system, the main patterns of political alliance building and the ways in which patronage benefits distributed among the political allies and potential allies through the use of state sector not only bred inequalities between various political factions, between private and state sector workers, youth and elderly, urban and rural population, but also between genders. The statistics in Table 4.7 and 4.8 related to the gendered inequality of the patronage system in the state sector well corresponds with the general patterns in Sri Lanka politics and the state building project dominated by a masculine culture of politics (Kearney 1981:729; Kiribamuna 1999:71; Kodikara 2008).

Table 4.7
Public and private sector employment: male and female distribution 1998-2008 ('000)

Sector and Sex	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Private Sector</i>											
Male	1666	1799	1866	1907	1969	2003	2128	2182	2016	2100	2023
Female	815	818	837	874	926	920	1022	950	976	907	924
<i>State Employment</i>											
Male	566	567	534	547	555	561	518	538	565	561	621
Female	310	309	311	317	320	325	331	359	390	408	449

Source: Ministry of Labour and Manpower 2009: 80

Table 4.8
Distribution of Semi-Government sector employees by sex 2001-2007

Year	Total	Male	%	Female	%
2001	370 350	256692	69.3	113658	30.7
2002	272111	205056	75.4	67055	24.6
2003	243891	181099	74.3	62792	25.7
2004	231519	169553	73.2	61966	26.8
2005	236457	172579	72.5	63878	26.9
2006	226306	164011	72.5	62295	27.5
2007	235441	171394	72.8	64047	27.2

Source: Department of Census and Statistics 2007.

Note: decline of number in 2002 is due to the closure or privatisation of some institutions in the semi-government sector.

In addition to the general aspect of patronage politics in the public sector, the findings of this research suggest there is a gendered nature of the patronage politics in the state institutions. This gendered pattern of patronage relations is essentially a right-wing tendency in Sri Lanka's male-dominated elite political culture that further strengthened the direction of state building on an unequal foundation. This gender bias in patronage in the state sector bred and legitimised unequal relationships among the young working-age population and favoured males' access to state resources over the females. To further elaborate this argument, below presented are some evidences on this causal relationship.

Patronage political relationships in the state sector (in terms of employment) are largely male-dominated and this trend is in consistency with the overall male-dominated nature of politics and the patriarchal culture of Sri Lankan society. As noted by a respondent of this study,¹¹ compared to the number of male candidates, female candidates contesting in electoral politics is generally very low (R.????). Since independence, this low degree of participation of females has been a trend in politics (Kodikara 2009:18–19).¹² One important cause of this trend in politics could be the level of direct violence in electoral politics that discourages women taking part in electoral politics as candidates. In addition, as the previous respondent pointed out, the traditional social roles and the gendered cultural expectations of male and females has also been a barrier for women to contest in electoral politics. In the current President's 2005 presidential election manifesto, this domesticated view of the Sri Lanka woman is explicit. 'A woman provides a solid foundation to the family as well as to the society. She devotes her life to raise children, manage family budget and ensure peace in the family...I will arrange to increase the number of nominations of women to a minimum of 25% of the total number of candidates in respect of Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities' (MahindaChinthana 2005 ;13–14). In the 2010 version of the manifesto, the president further limits the political participation of women to community development (Mahinda Chinthana: Vision for the Future 2010: 23). Although, in several clauses of these two manifestos there are pledges to treat women equally, they tend to uphold a low perception of women in politics and in general.

The above observations made on the women's experience in politics and perceptions of women in official policies explains enough to establish the causal link between the high level of participation of men in direct politics and male-centric patronage system established by the political elites in the state sector. Also upon the introduction of the PR system and the establishment of larger electoral areas, the link between the MPs and the constituency became distant. In this new environment, the contesting candidates were unable to cover the entire electoral area by themselves. The electoral campaign became more expensive and required greater resources in terms of finances and man power for campaigning. In this situation, political elites became more and more reliant on their patronage networks. Considering the empirical evidences related to the overall electoral political culture and the structure of electoral competition characterised by a strong supply-and-demand-driven relationship between the political elites and the male constituents, who often perform the role of the campaign aides and party organisers, increase use of state resources and abuse of state sector to reward those who support the political elites appears inevitable.

Given the background of the male-oriented electoral political culture, it is not surprising that the political elites offering patronage benefits in the state sector, especially as state employment to their male allies. As demonstrated in Tables 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 the high percentage of male employees in the state sector in the temporary/unskilled category, a category that requires no sophisticated set of skills or professional knowledge could be result of the gendered nature of patronage in the state institutions. As Table 4.9 shows, in the public sector there is a higher number of employees in the lower-level occupational categories as well. These numbers corresponds with the views expressed by majority of the respondents of this research who suggested a large number of political appointments in the state sector, taking place at the level of elementary occupa-

tions and in the categories such as clerks, messengers etc. As of 2007, in the semi-government sector alone, the number of employees in the lower-level categories has reached as high as 53590. As Table 4.10 shows, the number of employees in the categories of non-executive and minor employment in the public sector is in the increase.

Table 4.9
Total employment in each sector from 2005-2009

Sector	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Total employment including Eastern province (mn)</i>	6788	7005	7042	7175	7140
State workers share %	13.2	13.4	13.8	14.9	15.2
Private sector %	46.2	42.1	42.7	41.1	42.1
Employers %	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.0	2.7
Self-employed %	29.7	30.8	30.4	30.3	29.0
Unpaid family %	8.1	10.5	10.3	10.8	11.0
Unemployment %	7.2	6.5	6.0	5.2	5.7
Central Government	850321	887674	937494	990410	1047041
Semi Government ¹³	253922	258049	259116	261318	266543
State workers	1104243	1145723	1196610	1251728	1313584
<i>Net Increase</i>	9329	41480	50887	55118	61856
Taxes (Rs.mn)	336829	428378	508947	585621	618933
Salaries	138603	175031	214160	239078	271229
Pensions	46782	58006	68822	74920	85139
<i>Total</i>	185385	233037	282982	313998	356368
<i>As a share of Taxes %</i>	55.0	54.4	55.6	53.6	57.6

Source: LBO 2010

Table 4.10
Distribution of number of Semi-Government employees by major occupational group 2007

Major occupational group	Total
Senior Officials and managers	15212
Professionals	16130
Technicians and associate professionals	26768
<i>Clerks and related workers</i>	65576
<i>Services and sales workers</i>	22671
<i>Craft and related Workers</i>	14336
<i>Machine operators and related workers</i>	21158
<i>Elementary Occupations</i>	53590

Source: Dept. of Census and Statistics 2007

Table 4.11
Distribution of Semi-Government sector employees by institution 2007

Institution	Total Number of Employees
<i>Sri Lanka Transport Board</i>	35196
<i>Sri Lanka Samurdhi Authority</i>	25566
<i>Ceylon Electricity Board</i>	14300
<i>Sri Lanka Ports Authority</i>	13665
<i>National Water Supply and Drainage Board</i>	8768
Sri Lanka State Plantation Cooperation	6579
Janatha Estate Development Board	6473
Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka and Agencies	4739
Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited	3402
Road Development Authority	3305
Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.	3196
Airport and Aviation services Ltd.	2992
Ceylon Petroleum Cooperation	2686
State timber cooperation	2633
State Engineering Cooperation	2555

Source: Dept. of Census and Statistics 2007

Table 4.12
Public sector employment 2007-2009

Category	2007	2008	2009
Executive and professionals	343491	347824	347212
Non-executive	557585	603825	656515
Minor employees	295534	300079	309857

Source: Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka 2010: 18

The gendered pattern of political participation in electoral politics has had negative impacts on the recruitment of females in the state sector and semi-government institutes.¹⁴ This picture of low female state sector employees does not correspond with the picture of high-level female educational achievements (Gunawardena 2003). Besides the male-oriented patronage system in the state sector, alternative explanations on the lower number of educated females in the public sector could be a result of them joining the private sector, where meritocracy is usually applied. Besides, it could also be the fact that the private sector employment, mostly being concentrated in the service industry and in the garment industry, favours employment of women. The latter is in conformity with the patriarchal culture of Sri Lanka, in which working women are still looked down upon or undervalued in the labour market.¹⁵ There are other reasons as to why the employments offered in the private sector to the educated males generally being lower (Venugopal 2011:72). The historical perception held by the private sector of Sri Lankan male youth being rebellious (or trouble makers) could be another reason for the lower appointment rate of males in this sector. Interestingly, the same argument can be used to suggest that the thinking of private sector of women being submissive, dominated and easily exploitable.

The statistical evidences presented on various aspects of state-sector employment and the linkage between patronage politics and state sector employment, including the gendered nature of patronage politics in the state sector helps to illuminate several other causal connections that are important for understanding the direction of state building in the post-1977 period as well. These statistics bear evidence of the presence of a right wing and male-dominated political culture in the country, with the elite encouraging a male centric patronage political system at the state institutional level. The data in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 on recent trends in unemployment in Sri Lanka show that the percentage of male unemployment is considerably lower than the female unemployment. Given the high percentage of female education achievements (in 1989, 42% of the university enrolments were female, in 1999 it was at 52% (De Soysa 2000), the high percentage of male employees in the state sector is quite an interesting situation that demands further discussion. With the onset of civil war, according to the most recent accounts on employment in the military sector, there is a strong indication that the military sector absorbed the majority of unemployed rural youth, and the Sinhalese political elites using the military and the civil war as a major source of patronage to the Sinhalese rural youth. Data in Table 4.15 makes this connection clear and will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

Table 4.13
Unemployment (2003-2008)

Year	Male	Female
2003	6.0	13.2
2004	6.0	13.2
2005	5.6	1.07
2006	4.3	9.8
2007	4.3	9.0
2008	3.6	8.0

Source: Department of Labour, Selected Labour Statistics in Sri Lanka (various years)

Table 4.14
Registered unemployed female graduates (1994-2001)

Year	Total	% Female
1994	11364	49.5
1995	10460	58.1
1996	4660	62.0
2001	25515	63.1
2004	40014	65.4

Source: Gunawardena (2003)

Note: These figures exclude Northern Province

It is also observed that over years, in addition to prominent state establishments, a number of government and semi-government establishments have also turned into important sources for generating conditions to sustain the patronage system. As the table 4.9 indicates, there are a number of institutions in the semi-government sector where a high number of employments are

noted. This could be due to these institutions having had become vulnerable to political clientelism. Among these, the Transport Board, Samurdhi Authority, Electricity Board, Ports Authority and National Water Supply and Drainage Board top the list. As some other scholars have pointed out, the trade unions established in all these state institutions are well linked to the political parties and are controlled by the political patrons (Biyawila 2007; Spencer 2008: 617). By politicising the trade unions, the political elites have been successfully able to diffuse dissent or oppositional voices in the state sector. By so doing, the elites have been able to obtain the consent and the loyalty of the public sector employees to their rule, dominate and capture the entire state apparatus and make it work according to the power desires of the elites.

Table 4.15
Ethnic composition of occupational categories of males 18-30 years of age

	Public (%)	Military (%)	Private (%)	Casual (%)	Business (%)	Farming (%)	Total Employment	Count*
Sinhalese	63.2	97.1	61.2	60.5	63.9	75.5	65.5	1796
SL Tamil	20.3	1.4	23.0	25.6	13.0	21.3	21.6	593
Indian Tamil	0.5	0.0	2.8	3.0	1.4	1.6	2.2	59
Muslim	15.6	1.4	12.4	10.1	18.5	2.1	9.9	270
Others	0.5	0.0	0.7	0.8	3.2	0.0	0.9	26
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	2744
Count	212	210	575	1020	216	440	2744	

Source: Venugopal 2011:73

4.4.1 Other recent trends: mega cabinets and increasing horizontal patronage

The expansion of the public sector and political patronage system in the state sector is also associated with the recent phenomenon of mega cabinets. In particular, since 1994, this trend in politics is observed. For instance, the Fourteenth Parliament of Sri Lanka has 61 cabinet portfolios and 34 non-cabinet portfolios. In comparison to previous parliaments this is an enormous increase. The main reason for this incremental nature of cabinet portfolios is the changing nature of coalition politics in the country and the patronage distributed to the coalition partners as ministries. This trend is especially noted since the introduction of the system of proportional representation (PR) that came into operation since 1989 (Nanayakkara 2006:434). In the Sri Lanka's electoral political sphere, PR system is inclined to produce more unstable coalitions or broad alliances (ibid). Another outcome of this system is the increasing the chances of survival of small-scale political parties and increase of their relative worth in electoral politics. On the flip side, this system hardly allows a single political party to form a government. Given this situation, the main political parties often have to seek the support of the smaller political parties to form governments. In Sri Lanka, the participation of small political parties in coalition politics comes with huge price tags.¹⁶ These can be monetary and non-monetary, and include ministerial posts at cabinet and non-cabinet level. Consequently the coalition formation increases the size of the cabinet (Samaratunga & Bennington 2002: 103), a cost borne by the public. These costs, in addition to the regular salary and pension (an entitlement when completing a mere 5 years in service), include a lucrative housing allowance, tax-free vehicle permit(s) (whereas a private citizen has to pay 200–300% in taxes to buy a car), a handsome petrol allowance, et cetera. Along the various cabinet portfolios granted for the political party members, the main party is also liable for granting cer-

tain number of employment to the party supporters of the smaller parties entering the main coalition. This has been a factor for the enlargement of the number of employees in the public sector.

For instance, when in 1994 the PA government had to search for new coalition partners to survive in office, a number of patronage benefits were offered to its junior coalition partner, JVP (Keethaponcalan 2008:73). In exchange for support, the JVP demanded the ministerial portfolio of airport and aviation and eventually they settled for a non-cabinet portfolio under the Ministry of Airport and Aviation. However, after assuming office, the JVP non-cabinet minister began to recruit hundreds of unemployed party supporters to this ministry. Lanka Business Online claimed that 'since 2004, JVP has absorbed tens of thousands of unemployed graduates into the state sector' (LBO 2010). According to various reports compiled by LBO, in 2006 alone, 71,323 staff members were added to the state sector; in 2007 new recruits reached 107,505 and in 2008 reached 129,135 (LBO 2010). Similarly, in 2009, thousands of excess employees swelled the staff of highly unionised state establishments such as the Sri Lanka Transport Board and Sri Lanka Railways (Ibid). This trend of massive absorption of employees to the state sector is possible only due to political clientelism. This conclusion is shared by several respondents and has been also reported in the local newspapers (Daily Mirror 2010). Table 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 provide the latest statistical evidence of this trend under the present ruling UNFP regime.

This trend, especially obvious since the mid-1990s, let small political parties like the JVP, NFF, SLMC, JHU and TMVP employ thousands of their political allies in the state sector. Ironically, this happened after the political appointments of the previous UNP government was heavily criticised during the PA's election campaign. Despite such charges against the UNP, within months of winning that election, the numbers of cabinet and non-cabinet positions in the government and the public sector skyrocketed. This development was completely in contrary to what was promised in the PA's election manifesto. One of the important points of attraction of the manifesto had been the reduction of state expenditure by reducing the number of ministerial posts and political appointees in the state sector (Daily Mirror 2010). This was clearly not the case as the new government added numerous cabinet and non-cabinet ministers and also absorbed hundreds of supporters of its coalition political parties and their relatives as public-sector employees. Some were recruited as personal staff of the ministers or special management assistants of the Minister. During President Kumaratunga's second term, more such positions were created, as she was compelled to enter into a coalition pact with the JVP in order to save her government from collapsing. By so doing the ruling elite faction was not only able to build new alliances and renew the old political alliances that are paramount for consolidating its power and domination, but at the same time these strategies were used to punish the oppositional groups and force their assimilation to the ruling party.

The expansion of state-sector employment of this period also corresponds with the political economy of war. In 2008 alone, 53,164 personnel were recruited into the national security sector (LBO 2009). As for the ministry of finance, the salaries in the defence sector increased from Rs. 73.5 billion in 2008 to Rs. 88.8 billion in 2009. There is evidence pointing to the vertical mass clientelism offered to the Sinhalese-Buddhist rural youth in the defence sector (at the lower level of military hierarchy as soldiers). By 1997, the military sector alone comprised one in five of all government employment that grew from 30,000 (1982) to 250,000 (2002) (Venugopal 2011:71-73). In addition at the highest military ranks, a horizontal system of patronage and corruption is clearly observed.

Based on the general patterns identified so far on public sector recruitments in the post-1977 period and as shared by majority of the respondents of this research, this research suggests that the material benefits exchanged through the passage of state institutions helped consolidate the power, domination and authority of the elite factions that came to power. Further it is also observed that contrary to the stable loyalties established by use of state-led patronage system during

the pre-1977 period, in the post-1977 period, the nature of subordination and loyalty rendered by the political appointees in the public institutions to a particular political party, elite faction or a government in power (patrons) has been increasingly becoming flexible. This flexibility in terms of political loyalty is related to several political developments in this period. First of all, it relates to the nature of overall politics that is increasingly marked by fluid political alliances at the top level. Secondly, it is related to the adaptive nature of the political appointees, whose primary focus has been to strategically maneuver their public political loyalties to survive in their employment and safeguard the material benefits they enjoy. Recent studies have also observed that the flexibility effect of the public officials is not limited to the political appointees, but also among a small number of employees that are recruited to state employment with no political patronage. In De Alwis's interpretation, it is due to the fact that their position or the post they hold getting immersed in politics and consequently these employees also learning to react what surrounds them in a political way (2009:100). Besides, this research suggests that the element of coercion and fear entailed in the patronage system also played a major role in behaving this way. Given the extensive and the sophisticated nature of patronage system embedded in the entire realm of the state, these non-political appointees were faced with the threat of losing their employment, their hope of climbing up in the career and receiving other benefits. In an environment where forging patronage relations with the political elites in state power has become the determining factor, fulfilling the expectations of the state sector employees outside party politics cannot be realised. During a couple of years of engagement by the researcher with a group of public servants¹⁷ who had held high ranks in the ministry of national integration and in various divisional secretariats in the Anuradhapura district, these officials vividly described how difficult it was for them to perform their duties and to stay out of party and regime politics. Based on their experiences, sometimes faking political loyalty in favour of the political party in power was the only way out. This strategy adopted by the public servants suggest the acute awareness they have developed of the political conditions surrounding them as well as the necessity they felt for developing various coping and adaptive strategies to secure their employment. Given this behaviour and strategies of the non-political appointees in the state sector, it is correct to suggest, regardless of the medium of appointment, the force underlying the patronage system and the ability of the political elites to assimilate the public sector employees to their rule being tremendous. Further this situation also suggests the power and domination established by the the political elites in the state sector and the bureaucratic hegemony they command in the state apparatuses in making the public servants a permanent subservient class to the elites' rule.

In addition to use of state institutions to finance the patronage system, there are many other instances where the state policies were also used and manipulated to finance the patronage system in this period. According to one political observer and a critic of UNP:

...adopting an open economy (since 1977) did not result in creating a vibrant production economy in the country. Instead, the open economy controlled by the UNP regime allowed a number of its supporters to engage in small-scale businesses buying and selling goods such as selling imported apples and oranges along the roadsides or selling clothing items on the pavement (Field Interview R.1).

The type of livelihood opportunities created for the lower classes in the open economic system enabled the UNP and the successive regimes to systematically disperse patronage benefits to the lower classes of the society and the lower-ranked party supporters. The benefits they enjoyed were tax concessions or paying a blind eye for not paying taxes and allowing use of state resources. By so doing, the political elites in power have been successfully able to reach out to a large number of marginal segments of the society. Although the patronage exchanges were largely illegal in nature, for the political elites who controlled the state and determine the rules of the game, the political alliances they forged with this segment of the society was beneficial. Given the dependency the elites created in maintaining the main livelihood of this segment of the popula-

tion, their loyalty to the ruling elites was always guaranteed. Together with the lower-ranked political allies in the state institutions, as majority of the respondents shared, these lower-class petty businessmen became used by those in power to carry out their political work (i.e. election campaigning, trade union activities) (see also McCourt Undated:17).

4.4.2 Devolution of power: centralisation of decentralisation and decentralisation of patronage in the state sector?

This section of the chapter attempts to show how the political elites in power used various policies and plans of decentralisation of state administration to actually consolidate a centralised state system that was used to strengthen the existing patronage system at a new level of state administration. This section also wishes to show how the political elites used decentralisation of state administration to create a decentralised patronage system by which consent building and political alliance building with the masses in the periphery was facilitated.

The positive influence devolution of power can generate for the settlement of the ethnic conflict and regional economic development are widely accepted (Gunatilleke 1995:i). In Sri Lanka, in reality, the various attempts made to devolve power in resolving the ethnic tensions and finding a regional mechanism for resource distribution have been disappointing. On the contrary, the devolution of power had become another arena to finance the political elites-led patronage system.

Some of the early attempts towards devolution and decentralisation of power are the District Political Authority, the District Minister System and the Decentralised Budget System. In the past, these were introduced as mechanisms to deal with specific events (i.e. food crisis in 1970s) and later were made permanent structures of the state apparatus.¹⁸ Even during the pre-1977 period, each time a new layer of government administration was introduced, it ended up being part of the political strategy for political domination and hegemony and aided in strengthening the existing patronage system (Warnapala 1974:173). To demonstrate how the various decentralisation exercises post-1977 was used for maintaining the patronage system, below is an elaboration of the experiences of the District Development Councils (DDC) in 1981, the system of provincial Councils (1987) and Rural Divisional tier of administration are presented as convincing examples.

In 1981, the UNP government in power introduced DDC. On paper it was presented as a necessary step for resolving the ongoing ethnic conflict. The main administrative functions assigned to the DDC was granting approval for the annual development plan for the district and supervising its implementation. However, the DDC system was introduced without establishing any separate administrative machinery for its independent functioning. Therefore, the successful operation of DDC largely depended on its ability to use the existing state bureaucracy of the central government (De Alwis 2009:173). DDC's continuous dependency on the central government made it a 'dead letter' (Ibid.175). Besides, since by the early 1980s, in a period marked by eroding of the neutrality of the state bureaucracy, the activities of the DDC were inevitably consumed by the existing culture of patronage.¹⁹ The encroachment of patronage politics in the DDC was especially visible in infrastructure development projects. Such early signs of patronage politics surrounding DDC became a matter of disappointment among the moderate Tamils who had enthusiastically supported its design and implementation (Wijesinghe 1991:46).²⁰ Like any other state reform, DDC largely helped the Sinhalese political elites to gain more power over bureaucrats on matters related to district administration and make use of this new tier of the state to sustain the party led patronage system (De Alwis 2009:175).

The Provincial Council system (PC), introduced in 1989, provides another example of how the political elites in power introduced and used another layer for the state administration at provincial level. The official establishment of the PCs was facilitated by The Indo-Lanka agreement

of 1987. This agreement was signed with the expectation of reaching political settlement of the ethnic conflict. Under this new system of administration, the province was made an important unit of regional administration. PCs were vested with province-related routine administrative functions that had previously come under the authority of the central government (Bastianpillai 1995:25). Under the 13th amendment to the constitution, on a number of important matters, PCs were also given both administrative and financial powers.²¹ From the standpoint of the characteristic feature of a federal state, the Provincial Government was not a subordinate entity to the central government (Nanayakkara 2006: 432).

The members to the PCs were chosen through elections. As has been the case in the past, the involvement of electoral politics in PCs was bound to undermine the neutrality of this new level of government. Consequently, the PC structure provided new spaces for political clientelism and political corruption at provincial level. This is partly because the provincial governor, who is an appointee of the executive president, was vested with powers and responsibility in regard to finance and personnel matters (Nanayakkara 2006:432). Further, despite the legal provisions was to separate the principal public service and the political centre, the senior civil service positions were filled with the officials seconded from the all-island services whose ultimate career prospects remained with the centre (Ibid). In light of these two provisions, it is not too hard to see the degree to which this new administrative structure could be used and manipulated to serve the interests of those who were in the centre, and the availability of a new opportunity through the PC system for cultivating new political alliances and generating new sources of financing patronage politic at the cost of the state.

As also noted, over years, the gaps and the confusions created between the PC system, the centralised state bureaucracy and the central government have further strengthened politicisation of state administrative mechanism and corruption at provincial level.²² The gaps found on various issues, especially the on subject of land use and soil conservation in Provincial Council Act was often pointed out as an issue of poor drafting of the concurrent lists (Nanayakkara 2006:433). This research suggests, given the importance of state land that has been traditionally used by the political elites in state power to dispense patronage, the seemingly technical errors needs careful interpretation.

Besides, few of the respondents who are keen political observers, commentators of national politics and importantly past contestants of the Provincial Council elections also pointed out to the fact that the provincial council elections was not only a space and opportunity to cultivate patronage networks and alliance building but also as an important source of political corruption. In their view, the newly drawn boundaries of the electorate, which was considerably larger than any administrative unit, was bound for fostering *priori* patronage networks and corruption between the candidates and various business groups in the province. In this regard, a number of individual cases were pointed out by participants of this research who had carried out extensive research on the linkage between election campaign financing and corruption. From the list of examples pointed out, there were plenty of cases where the campaign costs were earned from the individual donors or a small group of donors, mostly drawn from the business groups in the provincial electorate.²³ Despite the abundance of empirical examples available to prove these transactions, given the low level (absence) of intra-party democracy in Sri Lanka, there is no way of tracing the exact sources of campaign funding (FES 2008:51). Further, given the fact that all the political parties were engaged in this practice, there is no room for questioning of such transactions by each other. In this regard, a few respondents of this research pointed out that in many instances campaign funding was generated through pre-emptive corrupt transactions between the candidates, political parties and the members of the business community. If and when the candidate wins elections, those who funded his/her election campaign enters into a process of fulfilling *apriori* obligations and promised favouritisms. Although such interactions and exchanges

are widespread, in the public discourse, the politicians and the alleged business groups often deny such exchanges.²⁴ Further this practice in politics has become so commonplace among the general public that they pay scant attention to the issue. In sum, the malfunctioning of the PCs in public service delivery is an outcome of the nature of electoral politics that is being strategically used by the ruling class to pursue their power ambitions (Samaratunga and Bennington 2002: 94). For these reasons, in the local vocabulary, the provincial council system is often referred to as the 'White Elephant'. In view of the findings of this research, it is correct to state that the PC system is a white elephant that brings prosperity to the political elites and their subordinates in the system.²⁵

The Rural Divisional level (*Pradeshiya Sabha*) of state administration was another administrative structure that was used and manipulated for financing the patronage system. Similar to the Provincial councils, the representatives of *Pradeshiya Sabha* are also chosen through elections. Despite the low monthly salary a member of the *Pradeshiya Sabha* receives, that is estimated at around Rs.10,000, due to the political capital this office brings there is a great level of competition to secure office at this level of state administration. The reason for this competition as one respondent of this research, a keen observer of political corruption noted, has direct bearings on clientelism and political corruption. In the words of this respondent:

However in a developed Pradeshiya Sabha close to Colombo, for instance, Kaduwela, the chairman is earning about Rs.1-2 million per month by engaging in corrupt practices. There are a few questions that need to be raised in this connection. First of all, other than contributing to the public good will, what is the real motivation of the candidates contesting for Pradeshiya Sabhas?, especially for such a smaller salary. Let's say out of good will a candidate wants to contest in the Pradeshiya Sabha elections; still the other question this situation raises is where does the money come from for the election campaigns and how he/she is going to repay the money when s/he knows that he/she makes only Rs.10,000 a month? (Field Interview, R.2).

Another respondent, a leading political party member and a former contestant of the parliamentary general elections, pointed out to the fact that a candidate contesting for a *Pradeshiya Sabha* in the suburbs of greater Colombo area need to spend about Rs.3-4 million for one election campaign. As this respondent pointed out, considering the number of elections conducted within the same electoral cycle at various levels of state administration, political parties are unable to provide funding and resources for all the candidates contesting from the party list. In Sri Lanka, the candidates who contest for *Pradeshiya Sabha* are relatively poorer and often have no finances of their own for electioneering. Given this situation, if the candidate is already a popular figure, fewer finances are needed from the party or from candidate's personal resources. However, the majority of the candidates enlisted by the political parties for the elections at this level of government structure are quite the opposite. The personal observations made by the author that complement the views shared by a minority of respondents of this research, considering the amount of money spent for campaigning, forging *apriori* obligations and corrupt relationships with well-to-do segments in the area or with those who have future vested interest in the area have become the only way out.

In addition to establishing *apriori* patronage and corrupt relations, in order to overcome the financial constraints on electioneering, individual political elites and their parties have opted for a number of new strategies. For example, in addition to looking for sponsorships from business groups in the area, during the recent elections, the political parties are increasingly seeking to enlist 'popular' figures as their party candidates. Their placement in the party list is determined based on the level of their popularity and the geographical area where his or her popularity is established. For example, it is easier for a cricketer representing the national cricket team to contest elections from a party list and enter into national politics (i.e. general elections). His chance of winning the election for a political party is perceived and proven easier than a regional beauty

queen winning at the national elections.²⁶ This new strategy allowed the political parties and individual candidates to capitalise on candidates' established public popularity at a lower financial cost. As a result, instead of candidates with a track record of political activism, actors and actresses in popular local soap operas and movies, beauty queens, famous singers, cricketers and medal-winning athletes are increasingly taking the political centre stage. For instance, in the 2010 southern provincial council election, several such 'star candidates' contested and got elected. The same was observed during the western provincial council elections held in 2009. In this election, a number of popular figures from cinema and sports contested and easily won seats for their respective political parties.

4.4.3 Unreformability of the state sector

Since the early 1990s, with the advice and assistance of the UNDP, ADB and WB, three identifiable phases of state sector reforms have been carried out. As some note, the enthusiasm for these reforms, which had arrived 'like waves on the ocean' receded faster than that it came (McCourt undated: 5). 'Meanwhile the recommendations concerning the increase of salaries were embraced with glee... [m]ore important recommendations were glossed over... [and] [w]hen it came to biting the bullet, the political will evaporated' (Wijesinghe quoted in Mc Court Undated: 5). In addition to the reform resistance of the state sector employees, majority who are political appointees, failure of producing the stated results through state sector reforms are results of the deliberate actions of the political elites in preventing them being realised.

Rare exceptions of the above picture have been reported during the short-lived government of UNP in 2002/2003. During its brief period of office UNP attempted to bring various reforms to the public sector. This was implemented on the demand of the IMF, which was engaging in country's overall fiscal restructuring strategy (Venugopal 2008:8). Among these reforms, freeze hiring, encourage voluntary retirement and removal of thousands of temporary workers were significant. Although these reforms eventually managed to reduce the workforce in the public sector by 10.5%, they were vigorously protested by the ministers within the UNF government, who were losing the ability to offer patronage in the state sector (Venugopal 2008: 8). This situation denotes important scenarios about the patronage system in the state sector. First it shows that it is not only that the public servants who are reform resistant, but also the political elites. It also shows that although sometimes the political leadership of a party is willing to implement reforms, there is lack of support from the other party members in implementing reforms. This situation also shows that the degree of reliance of the lower-party members on the public sector for their political fortunes. At the same time it also demonstrates the lack of financial capital, strategies and ideas within the political parties that will enable them to win elections. If it is not any of the above reasons, this situation at least demonstrates a situation where political elites rely on easy paths for winning elections and mobilise support.

Observing the outcomes of the New Public Management (NPM) process that attempted to influence the prevailing power relationships in the state sector and the relationship between the state institutions and the political elites, some scholars have pointed out to the fact that the success of the proposed reforms and restructuring in the state bureaucracy largely depends on the good will of the politicians and the bureaucrats (Samaratunga 2002:90). Further it is also expressed that political elites would be the main beneficiaries if these reforms were implemented (ibid). In Sri Lanka when it comes to state reforms, the preference is often given to certain reforms that give the 'appearance of change' without jeopardising the agendas of politicians and the bureaucrats (Samaratunga & Bennington 2002: 90). Thus, there are situations in which the ruling regimes/ ruling class only choose to enact specific elements in the overall series of reforms that helps secure their current fundamental discretionary privileges (ibid). This was the case with the NPM during UNP rule, where narrow and politically motivated practices won over the stated

principle of minimal governmental interference in service provision and the concomitant market philosophy (Samaratunga & Bennington 2002:87). At micro level, these reforms helped individual bureaucrats to gain new skills and increased competencies, but, as rightly observed in the wider context of NMP reforms, the often cited massive failure of NPM was due to the absence of conditions of substantive democracy in the contexts of its implementation (Box et al. 2001:617).²⁷ In addition to the above points, this research would also like to point out the fact that whether there are reforms, partial reforms or no reforms, political elites would be the clear winners of the game.

In this history of repeatedly failed meaningful state sector reforms, and constant manipulation and abuse of state institutions for financing the patronage system by the political elites in power for political alliance building, collective and effective measures taken to dismantle the patronage system in the state sector has been rare. According to the majority of the respondents interviewed for this research, the recent 17th amendment to the constitution that was passed with a 2/3 parliamentary majority in 2001, initially was perceived as being a successful attempt to dismantle the patronage system in the state sector, celebrated especially by the members of the civil society. Receiving 2/3 parliamentary majority brought a sense of joy and achievement for the people of the country as the amendment addressed a number of issues related to the politicisation of state institutions. For example, under Article 41 B of the amendment when appointing members to key positions in the state bureaucracy, the approval of the consultative committees was made mandatory.²⁸ These consultative bodies are constituted of the political party (coalition) in power and the oppositional political parties. Election Commission, Public Service Commission, National Police Commission, The Human Rights Commission, The Permanent Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption, the Finance Commission and the Delimitation Commission are a few important institutions that came under the scrutiny of the consultative committees. When making high-ranking appointments in these bodies, especially the approval powers vested with the opposition leader was considered as a significant improvement. Further, contrary to the previous political practice of President having the constitutional and executive powers to appoint judges to the Supreme Court, Appeal Court and high courts (Abeyratne & Shanthasiri 2009: 5), the 17th Amendment also granted approval powers to a set of consultative committees over important appointments, such as the Chief Justice and the judges of the Supreme Court, President and the judges of the Court of Appeal and members to the Judicial Service Commission.

In addition to the above, under the provisions of the 17th amendment, constitutional measures were established to separate all the high-level appointments from the electoral cycle. In theory, these measures should serve positively in rescuing the state institutions from politicisation. However, in practice, the outcome of the reform process painted a different picture. These were results of a number of intentional gaps left/ or built into the amendment. For instance, the provisions of the 17th amendment are not applicable at the level of Provincial Councils. Therefore, political appointments at this level of state administration could continue.²⁹ Besides, the amendment is also silent on the issue of the limits on the number of provincial ministries and ministerial appointments. Similar to the national level, this loophole became an encouragement for creating *jumbo cabinets* at the provincial level too.

Therefore, in many ways, the provisions in the constitution and the 17th amendment of the constitution separating powers of various arms of the governing structure and the depoliticisation of the state bureaucracy only fulfilled the theoretical blueprint of a formal democracy. In actual practice, by deliberately manipulating the constitutional measures, the political elites in state power further politicised the state institutions to advance their political goals. Even most recently (2011), by passing all the constitutional measures, the Executive President delayed appointing members to the Constitutional Council and took swift steps to fill all the key positions in the highest apex of the state apparatus in a unilateral and politically partisan manner. Also, in September 2010, the UPFA regime introduced another amendment to the constitution; the 18th

amendment. The new amendment overruled all the provisions of the 17th Amendment. Interestingly, the 18th amendment was also passed with a 2/3 majority's approval in the national legislature. This same 2/3 majority secured for contradictory amendments explains several points pertaining to politics in the country. At one level, being able to get the approval of the same parliament for two contradictory amendments is a sign of strength of solidarity of the political elites, regardless of their rhetorical differences in the public political stage. Further it also demonstrates the power and the capacity of the political elites to collaborate when their grip over the state apparatuses is under threat. Also, as pointed out by other political observers, this research also holds the view that securing a 2/3 parliamentary majority for the 18th amendment was not a costly affair for the political elites. As revealed from the main public discourse, to pass this amendment, the UPFA regime offered significant patronage benefits to minority political parties and to those who crossed over from other main political parties.

The patronage system and political corruption at the highest level of politics conveniently facilitated through the state institutions and by manipulating the constitution denotes short sightedness of the political elites, who would go as far as possible to even change the national legislations to secure political power, domination and authority. It also shows that the power goals of the political elites are reached through manipulation of the state structure and the ethical content of the state. Another implication of this scenario is further capturing of the policy process by a few political elites and the widening of the gap between the political society and non-political society on important issues concerning state reforms and state restructuring. Extending short-term clientelist concessions to the fellow political elites for buying out political loyalties has being contributed to fast disappearance of meaningful oppositions in political decision making.

In light of the observations made above, it is correct to suggest that although the officially declared goals was de-politicisation, the numerous state reforms brought by the political elites to the s have only contributed for more politicisation. De Alwis who has systematically analysed the public sector reforms carried out during the period from 1950–2005 finds that the case of Sri Lanka aptly demonstrates the inability of the state sector reforms to be successful without commensurate change in the overall political system (2009:210). The hegemonic alliances forged between various forces in the society and among the the political elite groups have together if not completely at least to a larger degree closed the space and opportunity for demanding any meaningful interventions for state restructuring and dismantle the patronage system legitimised and institutionalised in the state. Besides, the top-down nature of the reforms that were often being pushed by the international financial institutes in collaboration with the ruling elite groups prevented any meaningful demand for genuine reforms by the local communities. Therefore the state sector reforms often gave the ruling elites more space and strategic options to further solidify and sophisticate the patronage machinery to advance their hegemony building attempts. Meanwhile, for the Sinhalese societal forces that became closer to state power through the Sinhalese political elites, continuation and strengthening of this system of patronage system in the state sector is important for their political and economic survival. The benefits they receive from this system are short term and need constant manoeuvring between various conflicting elite factions and periodic political loyalties. At the same time, in order to gain benefits from this system and secure the already gained benefits, these Sinhalese societal forces are willing to change their loyalties. Given this nature of political behaviour, rather than political ideologies and principles, political mobilisation of the Sinhalese happened based on the instrumentality of the political relationship between elites and the rest. Needless to mention, such a system is bound to disregard merit and other higher criteria of political competition. In other word, such a system is bound to favour one group over the other based on party political criteria. The inequality of the social relationships that the patronage system ingrained in the state structure only created divisions and conflicts in the society and among the elites. Since independence these developments in politics and state building in Sri Lanka showed many tensions between hegemony building and democratic

state building. Further, the state building process increasingly got under the wings of the right-wing elite and societal forces, who were not reluctant to initiate and support any political project that enabled them to secure their benefits and privileges.

4.5 *Ape (our) Syndrome, fluid identities and fluid politics*

The state assuming the main role as the distributor and guarantor of resources under the socialist and welfare policy could be an important juncture on post-colonial state transformation in its structural and ideological realms. This research finds that the local syndrome of *looking after us* (Sinhala verbatim is *salakanawa*) that is being used in everyday social and political exchanges is an important manifestation of this situation. This syndrome was seen throughout the post-independent period, yet it seemed to have reached its peak during the period of official welfare state and had taken different manifestations in the post-1977 period. In the post-1977 period, *looking after us* syndrome appears to operate at more personalised and closed political-relations level. The *looking after us* syndrome largely operates at material level. Since independence various degrees of this *looking after us* syndrome was projected on the political elites and the state bureaucrats. Upon diffusing the power of the bureaucrats by successfully reforming the state bureaucracy and creating conditions to bureaucratic hegemony, eventually the political elites who completely captured the state apparatuses assumed the role of 'sole provider'. This transformation steadily created a structure and culture of inequality in the state, where majority of the Sinhalese subscribed to. Thus, as one respondent of this study noted, the popular notion of *ape rajaya* (our regime) explains the political dimension of the hegemonic relationship between the political elites and the ruled. As this respondent also shared, this notion of *ape (our)* is valid as long as the political elites, the regime or the government in power provides welfare and patronage benefits.³⁰ As observed in this research, initially this *ape(ness)* was formed on the basis of a wide range of social fault lines.³¹ Along the way, as the political elites began to decisively capture the entire state apparatus through reforms and coercive strategies, party-based fault-lines became prominent..

Over time, especially in the post-1977 period, the *ape* sentiment did not follow a linear logical direction. The *ape* sentiment conceived during the previous regime, based on 'strong' political party affiliations and loyalties have become more flexible. This flexibility became equally applicable on the part of the patrons, individual clients and larger clienteles as well. Given this scenario of frequently and easily jockeying between political parties by the patrons and the clients relying on multiple fault lines to access state resources have become an acceptable and tolerated political practice.³² Depending on the momentary circumstance, use of multiple fault lines to access state resources and state employment has become an important adaptive strategy of the clients. This flexibility of the clients seems to have a reinforcement effect on the political behaviour of the patrons. On the part of the patrons, entering into superstitious and fluid political alliances with fellow elites and nurturing a horizontal system of patronage is one of the outcomes. However, this study observes, by entering in to a system of patronage on the basis of flexible political loyalties, the clients in this relationship encouraged their political patrons to continually search for permanent conditions to reproduce their power, domination, authority and hegemony building strategies. This research proposes that it is under the above conditions that the political elites (main patrons) are forced to look for permanent avenues for financing the patronage system, where use, abuse and manipulate the state institutions has become the most promising political strategy. Given the condition when the political parties and the elite faction in state power fail to deliver benefits, the readiness of the clients for switching allegiances easily encourages the elites rekindling identity politics and right-wing politics. It is found in this study that the actual and perceived inequalities of different identity groups are being illuminated and attitudes of superiority of one group over the others are strategically used by the elites to stay in power. Any resistance or opposition to this direction of politics is punished by using the states coercive power.

It is found in this research that the above mentioned developments having had a strengthening effect on the symbolic politics between the political elites and the societal forces. In the case of Sri Lanka, in a context marked by limited economic growth and economic development that continually limits the state resource based that can be used for the distribution of patronage benefits, the limited material benefits people receive from the political elites in state power in exchange of their vote and approval of their rule has been a powerful factor of strengthening symbolic politics. The best example that can be provided in this regard is the degree the Sinhalese ruling elites has been able to gather support for the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist discourse. It is also in the same vein the systematic exclusion and the horizontal inequality strengthened between the Sinhalese and the Tamils can be explained too.

4.6 Concluding remarks

The findings of this chapter strongly suggest that politicisation of the state institutions and the institutionalisation of the patronage system in the state apparatuses in the post-independent period has been a deliberate and an important element of the overall political strategy of the political elites, who lacked imagination and enlightened strategies to overcome intense elite struggles over establishing political domination, authority and legitimacy, and continued reliance on patronage politics for mass incorporation into politics and political alliances building with the masses. This research observed that the political patronage has conceived, operationalised and sophisticated under various dynamics of social, economic and political relations in the country. Of significance is the political struggle of the political elites whose political domination and pursuance of hegemony building was constantly threatened by the fellow elite factions. Besides, the struggles for upward social and economic mobility faced by the masses in the periphery under a stagnating economy was another important factor. Under such an environment, the political elites had opted for strategies of manipulation and harmonisation of their struggles the struggles in the periphery for upward social and economic mobilisation through a system of political patronage institutionalised in the state system. By doing so the political elites have been able to reconstruct and reproduce their political authority, legitimacy and preserve a social and political order that work in their favour,³³ and manage to control the masses incorporated into politics and build new political alliances. However, these political strategies and the system of patronage in the state system and in the apparatuses of the state came at the cost of democratic state building. This conclusion is equally applicable to the period before and after 1977, regardless of the fact that the declared state policy pursued by the political elites being socialist or liberal. This is because the system of patronage politics built on political favouritism, political manipulation, curtailment of active political participation of the masses and active citizenry. Further, the unequal treatment that this system encouraged among different social groups has impeded democratic state building based on an equitable society and allowed elite capture of the state through building state bureaucratic hegemony.

This chapter also found out that the patronage system in the state was able to deliver short-term political gains for both the patrons and the clients, and it was a smokescreen to hide the inability of the Sinhalese political elites to generate credible and equitable strategies for distribution of state resources and to find meaningful ways to incorporate the lower-class masses into national politics. The systematic efforts geared towards institutionalisation of patronage politics in the state apparatuses and instrumental use of patronage system in the state structure for political coalition building by all the ruling elite factions has given rise to tensions between democratic state building and elites' attempt for hegemony building. Many of the above observations made on the patronage system and tensions it created on democratic state building in Sri Lanka are not unique to Sri Lanka alone. From the point of view of the political economy and rational choice theory,

Grindle has pointed out that this has been the case in many other developing countries too (2001: 349).

In light of the findings of this chapter, it can be safely concluded that the various measures taken to transform the state institutions by the Sinhalese political elites and the politicisation of the state institutions has been instrumental for political mobilisation, consent building and forging political alliances with the lower-class masses as well as to curtail arising of dissent and opposition to the elites rule and to their political legitimacy. Use of patronage system in the state institutions has enabled the political elites to advance their bid to establish bureaucratic hegemony. However the consent building through dispensing patronage benefits by using the state sector and state resources has not realised in consensus building among the divergent forces in the society. This gap between consent and the consensus poses considerable challenges in realising hegemonic ambitions of the elites in full.

This research clearly identified Sinhalese community as the main beneficiaries and the main clientele of the patronage system institutionalised in the state apparatuses by the Sinhalese political elites. However, as Grindle cautiously reminded us, ‘when and where appropriate the forces are not completely out of power to punish their provider’ (2001:351). Given the fact that Sinhalese being the numerical majority that constitute the major segment of the population, the pressure on the political elites to manage this segment of the incorporated masses in politics seems to have become a daunting task. Under the structural constraints imposed by the economy and in the state accumulation processes, continuation of dispensing patronage benefits through manipulation of the state structure to keep the political loyalties of the Sinhalese intact has become an enormous burden on the political elites. The necessity the political elites in state power feel to continuously adjust the state institutions and policies to uphold the patronage system to cater to the needs of these mobilised masses that could turn into potential oppositional force requires variety of strategies and policies that are of right-wing orientation.

It is also found out that the patronage system gravitated only around the majority Sinhalese, therefore failing to include the Tamils. Therefore, for the dominant Sinhalese political elites to succeed in their hegemony building strategy, a strategy to include the Tamils and other marginal forces stands crucial. However, the ways in which the patronage system has transformed the institutional profile, ethical content of the state and the political culture in a decisive way that keeps on excluding societal forces. Those who are excluded from the system becoming resistant to the hegemony building attempts of the political elites are unavoidable. As witnessed in the pre and post-1977 period, such resistances are managed by using the states coercive force.

Notes

¹ In this chapter the term institutions refers to as the official establishments that structure the state, i.e., the bureaucracy, police, defence forces, public education entities and judicial system (De Votta 2000:57).

² This phenomenon is still prevalent among the university students especially those who are from the rural areas of the country. Another outcome related to this public view of the state bureaucracy is the highly competitive environment of education, where many strive to gain employment in the ‘prestigious’ state sector where power and authority is contained.

³ This aspect was discussed in detailed in the previous chapter

⁴ The task of establishing the commission was to lead the Salaries and Cadres Commission (known as the Wilmot Perera Commission 1958–1961).

⁵ The unemployment rates in 1963 was 7.3%, in 1969–1970 at 13.9%, in 1971 at 18.7%, in 1973 at 24% (Central bank reports quoted by Jayaweera 2000:147)

⁶ According to Lakshman during the first two regimes in post-independent Sri Lanka, there was a improving commodity terms of trade, improved import capacity and favourable positions in external assets were present, that were used for the benefits of the society (1987:11–12).

⁷ According to De Alwis, there were 12 reforms implemented from 1977–2005.

⁸ For more on the elevation of the image of the state in terms of symbolism, read Spencer (2008) and Tenakoon (1988).

⁹ These statistics do not include the military sector.

¹⁰ Youth uprising in 1971 and 1989 are previous examples in this regard.

¹¹ This respondent has number of years of experience working at village and provincial level to encourage female political candidacy at local government elections in the central province.

¹² Sri Lanka often boasts for producing the first world female prime minister (Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1960). For a detailed survey and the number of women in the national legislature, provincial councils and local government, refer to Kodikara (2009).

¹³ Semi-government establishments are partially owned by the state.

¹⁴ One reason for the higher number of male workers in the private sector is due to demand for jobs that required long working hours and night shifts that are generally done by the males.

¹⁵ For a detailed discussion on the gendered aspect of the labour force, see De Soysa.

¹⁶ During Chandrika Kumratunga's presidency, S. Thondaman of CWC was given Rs.350,000 million for taking part in the coalition. In addition he was also given the Chennai agency of Sri Lankan Airlines.

¹⁷ The author worked as a consultant and a trainer to implement a training programme for divisional secretaries and assistant divisional secretaries in the Anuradhapura District on good governance. 30 officers belonging to those two categories and the Government Agent of the district took part in this programme. This project was a joint initiative of the USAID and the Ministry responsible for affairs of Local Government.

¹⁸ For a detailed account of the public sector reforms, see De Alwis (2009).

¹⁹ There are several reasons for the overall failure of DDC, like the lack of genuine participation in formulating development plans, domination of village level elites and ex-officio, MPs (De Alwis 2009:175)

²⁰ It is known that money allocated for the districts where Tamils are the majority was not welcomed by some close followers of Jayewardene in the UNP.

²¹ For details, read Wickramasinghe 2008: 291–7.

²² PCs undertake activities which had earlier been undertaken by central government ministries, departments, corporations and statutory authorities (The Provincial Councils Act No 42 of 1987, <http://www.priu.gov.lk/ProvCouncils/ProvincialCouncils.html>)

²³ In Sri Lanka there is no culture of philanthropy where individuals can make open donations for elections campaigns of a party. For further reading, see Stiftung 2008.

²⁴ The donation money never appears in the official reports of these business groups. As suspected widely, such donations are often reported under different budget lines in the annual accounts.

²⁵ In Buddhist jataka stories, a white elephant symbolises the impregnation of Princess Mahamaya (mother of Lord Buddha). In Buddhist culture, a white elephant is a symbol of greatness and prosperity.

²⁶ For instance, in the southern provincial council election in 2010, the national cricket star Sanath Jayasuriya represented the ruling UNF as a candidate for Matara district, his hometown. Jayasuriya secured 74,352 votes in absentia, as he was playing a game in the Indian Premier League during the elections. In the same election, TV show host, model and film star Anarkali Aakarsha also won a seat for the UNF. Others famous individuals in politics are former Cricket captain Arjuna Ranatunga (national legislature), Ms Rosie Senanayake in the Western Provincial Council (former Mrs World Winner), Ms. Susanthika Jayasinghe (Olympic Silver medalist) who contested for general elections in 2009.

²⁷ Among number of other attributions, substantive democracy entails a process that rekindle a public discourse about the purpose of collective action, accepting role for citizens and public administrators in Shaping the future (Box et al 2001:611; Bastian & Luckam 2003)

²⁸ Please refer <http://www.priu.gov.lk/Cons/1978Constitution/SeventeenthAmendment.html>, for more details.

²⁹ <http://www.priu.gov.lk/Cons/1978Constitution/SeventeenthAmendment.html>

³⁰ In Sri Lanka, in everyday usage, it is observed that majority of people think that state, government and regime are the same. Therefore the different political regimes that come to office are seen as the state as well as the government.

³¹ These could be based on ethnicity, caste and region as well.

³² Change of governments in the post-1977 period were 1977–1993 (UNP), 1994–2002 (SLFP-led coalition), 2002–2004 (UNP-led cabinet), 2005–today (SLFP-led coalition).

³³ These are key characteristics of conservative politics (Giddens 1994:28).

5.1 Introduction

In world history, a vast body of literature is dedicated to understand various aspects of conflict, war and peace (Ramsbotham et al. 2009). Over time, this trio has had different aspects emphasised and different conceptualisations pursued (Ibid). These literatures have essentially shaped the intellectual, political and societal discourses and actions. More importantly, the actual events surrounding the above trio and the numerous discourses they sparked have contributed to understanding politics, processes and directions of state formation, state building and state transformation, to which Sri Lanka is no exception.

Research on violent conflicts during the last three decades has paid an enormous amount of attention to the *conflict* in Sri Lanka. Majority of conflict studies in the post-cold war era are believed to have been influenced by the works of Federick Bath on ethnicity (cited in Tambiah 1989). As a result, the works pertaining to post-cold war conflicts are largely inspired by inter-ethnic frameworks. Following this trend, the conflict in Sri Lanka began to be dominantly identified as a conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils (for a critique of this thesis, see Hennayake 1993; Abeyratne 2004; Bandarage 2009). Domestically, this early ‘business of labelling’ was supported and promoted by dominant political forces in the ruling class and reproduced the phenomenon of ‘ethnic conflict’ to reach their narrow political goals. Besides deliberate political projects, use of state media to propagate the idea of ethnic conflict by the Sinhalese political elites was remarkable. The repeated application of ethnic-based frameworks in the local as well as the international scholarship, over time seemed to have contributed to shaping a hegemonic understanding of this reality and a political discourse. However, this chapter notes, application of narrowly defined inter-ethnic framework to analysis of the conflict in Sri Lanka was not accidental, but was sometimes (sub) conscious discursive practices of some right-wing forces in the academia that had become allies of the hegemonic political project of the ruling Sinhalese political elites. This research also finds that over decades these discursive practices have given birth to a manufactured and manipulated societal understanding of the situation and the phenomenon of ethnic war.

On the topic of war and conflict in Sri Lanka, there are enough empirical evidences available and scholarly literatures written before the 1990s (Jupp 1978; Jayawardena 1984, 1985; Tambiah 1989), forcefully suggesting the importance of incorporating the local and global dynamics of politics¹ into any rigorous analysis to determine their influence over the trajectories of post-colonial state building in Sri Lanka. This research finds that, along the way, these early contributions based on rigorous social science was systematically marginalised and displaced by the mainstream political and politico-academic propaganda machine often orchestrated through state media that conveniently set their focus on a set of key events that helped advance the interests of their proponents.

The global literature on peace, meanwhile, has identified a number of variations of peace (Galtung 1969, 1996; Lederach 1997, 1999). These variations have undoubtedly raised important questions of theory and praxis of peace. They have also contributed to expanding understanding

of different aspects of peace and have provided inspiration to explore its associated phenomena,² such as peace agreements, peace processes, spoilers in peace, positive and negative peace, (neo) liberal peace and justpeace. When compared to the scourge of war and the damage caused by violent social conflicts in the twenty-first century, the impact of the above literature is marginal or insignificant. However, as this research observes, this literature continues to flood both local and global research agendas and policy directives.³ The views expressed by the majority of the interviewees of this research confirm the above tendency.

Wars, in contemporary global literature, can be divided broadly into inter-state and intra-state (Collier et al. 2003; Fearson & Laitin 2003; Sambanis 2004; Ramsbotham et al 2009:119–20; Murshed 2010). The category of intra-state wars, also known as civil wars, has occupied centre stage in politics since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. Both these categories of war offer a structural-functional and state-centric explanation of war. Moreover, they have been inspirational for a number of local and global debates calling attention to the linkage, the interdependency and impact of war-making and state building and vice versa (Tilly 1975, 1985, 1990; Herbst 1990; Sorensen 2001; Theis 2005; Nieman 2007; Taylor 2008; Helling 2010).

For this research, the work of Charles Tilly has special relevance. Although Tilly's main thesis presents a useful analogy to connects war risking and state making with organised crime⁴ that is originally drawn from the European experience, its applicability to the case of Sri Lanka is significant. Tilly famously argues that banditry, piracy, gangland rivalry, policing and war making all belong on the same continuum and all such actions are intrinsically linked to the economics of state building, by which the capitalist economic system plays a central role (Tilly 1985:170). Besides, Tilly also draws attention to the aspect of coercive exploitation that allowed the European state makers and entrepreneurs to consolidate their power and expand the territories under their rule that were used for further extraction and capital accumulation. Although, back in time during state formation, the above processes did not intend to make states, in the contemporary times, the same processes are being used by the elites in state power to consolidate their political power and sustain patronage systems needed for hegemony building under difficult circumstances posed by civil war conditions. Instead of using banditry, gangland rivalry and piracy, in the current context, the political elites pursue similar goals by using organised militaries, a more legitimate form of coercive power under the auspices of the nation state. Besides, there are other literatures in economics that argue that the civil wars in contemporary times have a negative impact on enhancing states' fiscal capacity and accumulation process, therefore rather than aiding state building, (civil) war making especially in developing countries pose a threat to state building (Chowdry and Murshed undated: 1; Murshed 2010: 14). These studies are also helpful in explaining the failed case of democratic state building in Sri Lanka and the elites' attempts at co-opting state building for hegemony building in the guise of war.

Although Tilly claims that his analogy was grown out of the concerns and worries over the increasing destructiveness of war, the expanding role of great powers as suppliers of arms and military organisation to poor countries and growing importance of military elites in contemporary times (ibid), at the same time, Tilly's claim could be used for establishing the legitimacy and functionality of war in configuring and consolidating the modern state (Doornbos 2006).⁵ In spite of the moral dilemmas Tilly's claim could cause, in light of the data gathered for this research and given the relevance and the applicability of Tilly's analogy to the case of Sri Lanka, this chapter wishes to exposit how the civil war⁶ (as well as attempts of peace making) from 1993 to 2012 has been used by the political elites for creating and advancing the conditions necessary for producing and reproducing their political power and status. Further, this chapter also attempts to demonstrate, under particular configuration of local and international coalition, how the phenomenon of total war and war for peace discourse was used by the ruling elite faction as a powerful tool of hegemony building and state building. Besides, this chapter attempts to draw attention

to the aspect of patronage embedded in the nexus between war making and state building in Sri Lanka. This chapter will also lead to the understanding the post-war dividends such as protection, security and other material benefits as promised by the Sinhalese political elites during the war in exchange of support, loyalty of the masses as an extension of the existing elite controlled patronage system under a new reality brought by the war.⁷

Given the above theoretical considerations and empirical evidences gathered on Sri Lanka's state building efforts that was dominated by the theme of war, a phenomenon that dominated much of its post-independent period of national political scene (since 1983) and the role it plays in elites' hegemony building and Sinhalese state building, this chapter wishes to examine the actual events of war, peace and conflict as well as the various complementary and sometimes contradictory official discourses presented by the political elites in power on the above trio to demonstrate how the Sinhalese political elites used these aspects for hegemony building and state building. Especially by following Foucault's 'analysis of discourse' (Chomsky and Foucault 2006: xiv), this chapter will examine the various official and public discourses of conflict, war and peace since 1993 and the roles and functions they played during three governments in hegemony building between the Sinhalese political elites and the majority Sinhalese.

Moreover, another theoretical reason as to why the discourses on war, peace and conflict are brought into light is as Gramsci noted in his theory of hegemony building, it is not only the direct brainwashing of the masses that facilitates hegemony building, but also certain tendencies that are set off by the dominant forces with the aim of germinating certain public discourses that make some form of experience readily available to consciousness while ignoring or suppressing others (Lears 1985:577). In the context of Sri Lanka, use of discourses on war and peace by the political elites for alliance building with the Sinhalese masses who live outside the actual war zone has been an important element of the political strategy. Given the geographical distance and physical separation the majority Sinhalese who largely live in the southern part of the country has with the actual war zone in the north and east, germinating various discourses and use of them in political strategy enabled the ruling elites to make the 'distanced' war a reality in the life of Sinhalese. Further, by so doing, the Sinhalese political elites were able to successfully obtain and manipulate the consent of the majority in the south for the war and for a new architecture of state building that was supposed to guarantee protection of the Sinhalese and their interests while expanding the elites' capacity to extract state resources.

Using works of Tilly, Gramsci and Foucault this chapter attempts to offer a systematic analysis of the state-in-society dynamics and multiple struggles faced by the ruling elites in the centre in terms of securing and consolidating their political power, and the society in the periphery for upward social and economic mobility, where war, conflict and peace are being reproduced at different scales and levels, and during specific periods of recent history. For this investigation, this chapter chose to examine the periods from 1994–1999 ('Peace by peaceful means' under President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (PA), 1999–2002 (the co-existence of political peace and limited war under President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (PA), 2002–2003 (from limited war to neo-liberal peace under Ranil Wickramasinghe (UNF) and 2006–2009 (war against terrorism, war for peace and total war, humanitarian operation under Mahinda Rajapaksa (UPFA)). This period provides excellent opportunities to gain insights on the changed direction of political strategy in elite politics that capitalised on the events and discourses of conflict, peace and war for the purposes of hegemony building and state building.

5.2 Kumaratunga and the agenda of peace by peaceful means

The Presidential election in 1993 marked an important juncture in Sri Lanka's post-1977 political history. The SLFP-led coalition government (PA or People's Alliance) headed by Chandrika Bandaranaike-Kumaratunga was able to defeat 17 consecutive years of UNP domination of state

power. In its election manifesto, the PA presented an attractive economic agenda (Venugopal 2008:3). This agenda received wide support from the local entrepreneurial class and from the rural poor as well. It promised the rural poor a number of subsidies important for the survival of rural agricultural communities (Samarasinghe 1994:1022).

Overall, and making an impression on both the urban and rural population, the election manifesto pledged to improve good governance (Samarasinghe 1994:1034). As pointed out by many political observers, governance became an important consideration after the Bonaparte regime of Premadasa (1989–1993), during which the country experienced thousands of deaths of its youth, disappearances, and open breaches of law and order. Kumaratunga's election manifesto also promised to end the war and bring peace. A number of prominent people view this peace agenda as the most important point in her election manifesto (Jayasuriya 2005:40). However, peace was only one among many other promises. This research warns against interpreting Kumaratunga's election victory solely as a mandate for peace related to the so-called ethnic conflict.

During the period of 1994–1999, for different societal forces, 'peace' had a number of different meanings. Thus, during the elections (and in reference only to ethnic and armed conflict with the LTTE) 'peace' was presented as an end state scenario. It was also presented as the means to reach a number of other social-economic and political goals, including economic growth (Kelegama 2000:1480).⁸ Using multiple definitions of peace, Kumaratunga's election campaign was able to aggregate support from all the communities that suffered from various forms of violence. For instance, it could derive political benefit from violence during Premadasa's regime including both state-led direct violence, violence committed by the JVP (Chandraprema 1991; Hoole 2001:246–55) and the increasing brutality of structural violence, whether related to the economic situation (see Eddleston et al. 1998 on suicides in Sri Lanka to see links between structural and direct violence; Jayasuriya 2005:26) or to the status of governance (Samarasinghe 1994), and in fact from the overall culture of violence. These links led a number of social, political and economic forces in the country to commit their vote and support for Kumaratunga in the elections.

Kumaratunga emerged as a symbol of political unification, bringing together socialists and liberal-capitalists and bridging the political ideological gap. Although her election campaign carried a socialist lenient overtone, upon assuming office she was compelled by both domestic and international economic and political realities to follow the same path as the UNP: a liberal economic agenda (Dunham & Jayasuriya 2001:9–10). For example, Kumaratunga continued the controversial process of privatisation of national assets. Her early disregard of the promises made during the elections was a clear sign of problems related to the issue of state capital accumulation. To deflect criticisms against privatisation, her government redefined the terminology by calling it 'privatization with a human face' or 'peoplization' (Knight-John & Athukorala 2005:419).

Kumaratunga's economic agenda was largely shaped by a group of liberal-minded elites and business elites (Venugopal 2008:i). Kumaratunga is known to have shaped her policy in response to the support received from this group, including both her pro-political negotiation for peace and her re-conceptualisation of the discourse of conflict, war and peace using the slogan 'peace by peaceful means'.⁹ Further, because Sri Lanka was a developing economy with substantial debt,¹⁰ Kumaratunga's agenda for peace by peaceful means was not entirely a local political construction but also coincided with international political ideologies and realities, including the Agenda for Peace (Boutros-Ghali 1992) and the global multilateral financial institutions and western donor countries' aggressive promotion of a market economy and hegemony of the Right (Paris 2004:5). Further, Kumaratunga's strategy of peace seems to have been influenced by a specific set of ideas from international multilateral financial institutions meant to accelerate the growth of global capital, which were tied to a fresh set of theories on internal armed conflicts or civil wars in developing countries (Collier et al. 2003: v). These theories posited that internal armed conflicts in developing countries impeded their efforts towards a favourable environment

for the expansion of local-global markets, resource flows and the local and global wealth production. Thus when Kumaratunga had to seek the assistance of the international community, they expected her to begin political negotiations with the LTTE, a process for which she invited Norway as the facilitator.

However, an in-depth understanding of the agenda of 'peace by peaceful means' during her first term (1993_2004) requires exploration of a few other dynamics of the period.

There were the struggles faced by the ruling elites and the political parties they represented. Findings of this research suggest that in the early 1990s and at the centre of politics, these struggles were two fold. The first was restoring the legitimacy and the authority of the political elites. These had been seriously undermined by the Bonaparte politics of the Premadasa period, fear politics of JVP under the Premadasa government and most importantly due to the entrance of new actors from the underworld and local gangsters in the local political scene (Uyangoda 2008:73) who created blurred boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate authority in politics.¹¹ The second, at a more micro-meso level, was essentially about gaining and renewing legitimacy and authority for individual and personal rule of the political leadership. As this research shows, both these aspects are finely reflected in Kumaratunga's agenda of 'peace by peaceful means'. The latter level of struggle, which Kumaratunga personally faced as leader of the PA and as the party leader of the SLFP, also had influenced the determining her agenda of 'peace by peaceful means'.

On her side, the legacy of her parents (both being ex-Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka and her father being the founder of SLFP) was definitely an added advantage when the young Kumaratunga re-launched her political career first in left politics and then in national politics. Also her marriage to the famous film actor turned Left politician, Vijaya Kumaratunga, and the political party they together formed called Sri Lanka Mahajana Peramuna (SLMP) was another advantage Kumaratunga had. In the initial years of operation of SLMP, it embarked on a political dialogue with Tamil political forces, including the LTTE, with the hope of enhancing mutual understanding and bringing about a political solution to the Sinhala-Tamil conflict. The principles the party stood for in resolving the minority political issue made SLMP popular and acceptable for the Tamils and Tamil political forces. It irritated President Premadasa of the UNP and in 1988 eventually resulted in the daylight political murder of Vijaya Kumaratunga.

The political murder of Mr. Kumaratunga is linked to President Premadasa as well as the JVP (Samarasinghe 1994:1021). After her husband's assassination, Chandrika Kumaratunga was absent from the local political scenario for two years and lived abroad with her two young children. Until re-entering the political scene in 1991,¹² she played an insignificant role in national politics, with her brother Anura Bandaranaike becoming more active in the national legislature and in SLFP party politics. Kumaratunga returned to national politics in 1991, taking over the deputy leadership of SLFP and in 1992 succeeded her feeble mother Sirimavo Bandaranaike (world's first woman Prime Minister) as the party leader. Her success made some old party stalwarts in the SLFP and especially her brother Anura unhappy, with a rift occurring between the two political siblings. This resulted in Kumaratunga taking control of the party with her mother's blessings and Anura leaving the SLFP and joining the rival UNP (1994–2000). The back and forth mudslinging between the two siblings in the national political theatre not only exposed the dilemmas of individual political leaders¹³ but also provided free entertainment to the general public ('gallery politics').

In 1993, Kumaratunga received 68.4% of the vote (www.slections.gov.lk) when the People's Alliance first won the Western Provincial Council elections and then the Presidential election. Kumaratunga became Chief Minister following the Western Provincial Council elections, and upon winning the General election in 1994 she became the Prime Minister. In 1995, she assumed the office of the Executive President (Samarasinghe 1994) and in 1999 was re-elected. By secur-

ing these victories, Kumaratunga surprised her political skeptics within SLFP and outside the party by proving her ability to bring victory to the SLFP that was struggling to establish their domination in politics after being suppressed for 17 years under UNP's consecutive political domination. This rash of election victories also increased trust that Kumaratunga could deliver on the promises she made during the election campaigns. During this time, in the eyes of many voters, both with and without strong political party affiliations, Kumaratunga was seen as the hope of peace and prosperity. In general, she was expected to restore the political-moral order in the country that was running disarray. The high esteem she was held from all ethnic groups lent Kumaratunga's agenda of 'peace by peaceful means' further reinforcement.

5.2.1 Kumaratunga challenged: crisis in the coalition

The 1993 PA government was constituted with the SLFP as its leader and nine other smaller parties, many of them being left-leaning political parties. Following the general election, the PA was able to form a parliamentary majority in the national legislature by securing seven seats from the SLMC.¹⁴ At this time, SLMC was the only political party formed to address the issues of minority Muslims. Until 1993, its influence in politics had been regional and was mainly confined to the Eastern Province, where Muslims live side by side with an equal percentage of Sinhalese and Tamils. The support of the SLMC was obtained by entering into a number of agreements with the leader of the Muslim Congress, M. Ashraff. This, as Keethaponcalan described, was a significant change in coalition politics during Kumaratunga's first term as the President. Keethaponcalan finds, under Kumaratunga SLMC leader, Ashroff, was made the new 'King maker' in national politics. Earlier this title was given to S.Thondaman, leader of CWC, who often secured many concession and patronage benefits to the Indian Tamils in the hill country and personal patronage to him by jockeying between SLFP and UNP (2008:3).

Apart from the Muslim Congress, numerous other Tamil political parties also extended (sometimes conditional) support. In order to secure this coalition government, all parties in the coalition received state patronage. This state patronage offered to the coalition partners and for Kumaratunga's close circle of friends was widely criticised by the general public (see chapter 3 for more details). This criticism centred around Kumaratunga both going back on the promises made to the voters during the campaign and also failing to reduce of cost of government. Despite the lucrative Ministerial posts offered as a bargaining chip, Ashraff who eyed on more benefits to the Muslim community, to SLMC and personal patronage also often joined these other rival critics of Kumaratunga. It is not only the criticisms, given the vulnerable political conditions Kumaratunga faced, the SLMC leader also challenged the PA government and issued threats of withdrawing support of his party.

The various demands put forward by the SLMC leadership became increasingly aggressive, creating tensions between the SLMC and other minority political parties within the PA government that put Kumaratunga under enormous pressure (Keethaponcalan 2008:4). These events helped create a turbulent political context in which a victory in at least one area of people's concern (settling the ethnic conflict and the armed conflict) became ever more important for Kumaratunga as a way to silence the critics and to sustain the support of the public. These circumstances seem to have both influenced and reinforced the PA's decision to embark on and continue a process of political negotiations with the LTTE in an attempt to avoid or forestall political troubles that Kumaratunga and her PA government foresaw and later actually experienced. This situation demonstrates how the need for peace and the discourse of peace became even more important for Kumaratunga when her political authority and domination of PA was challenged by the rival political elites.

5.2.2 Negotiations with the LTTE (1994-1997): internal political party dynamics

As promised in her election campaign, during her first term as President, Kumaratunga embarked on political negotiations with the LTTE. This negotiating effort was widely regarded as courageous, especially at a time when the LTTE carried out a number of high profile political assassinations (i.e. President Premadasa in 1993, DUNF leader, Gamini Dissanayake in 1993, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991).¹⁵ Some observers also held the view that these peace talks were entered into by the LTTE in 1995 on an exploratory basis, as a way to enhance their political status and to preserve both the military and quasi-state in Jaffna (Schaffer 1999:138). Also as shared by some delegates present in Kumaratunga's negotiation team, the PA government also had other political-military-economic considerations to enter into negotiations. Whether this is true, false, or partially true, this chapter suggests that for Kumaratunga negotiating with the LTTE was a necessity to counter the political and economic pressures from her rival elites in the other parties and from within the SLFP.

However, the dynamics of national politics and various military actions carried out by the LTTE during negotiations made peace and a political settlement increasingly difficult. This was made worse by the economic burden of the protracted civil war. In addition, Kumaratunga was personally challenged to prove her credentials in the terrain of peace, not only for the survival of her government but also to save her personal political career. A rumor about her ambition of securing the Nobel Peace Prize by settling the conflict in Sri Lanka were widespread and was indicative of the desperate need she felt to enhance her political capital (De Silva undated :3) . The above circumstances meant that delivering peace and peace dividends were not options for Kumaratunga, rather they became political compulsions.

According to half of the respondents of this research who regard themselves as moderates in Sri Lankan politics, Kumaratunga's 'peace package' was the most advanced and progressive effort taken to that date by any Sinhalese political leadership in the country to address the ethnic conflict and civil war using genuine political means. One Tamil respondent, a leading lawyer, a scholar and an ex-commissioner of the Human Rights Commission shared, 'I should credit the efforts of Chandrika with reservations. ...Chandrika was genuine in finding a solution. For example, she was even ready to accept the Post-Tsunami Joint Operation Mechanism (P-TOMS)'. Another high-ranked Tamil civil servant described, 'Chandrika was a democratic leader, and she did not go too far in the extremist end'. Analysing the shifting discourses and various mental frameworks supporting peace and war that were used interchangeably in electoral politics in the South, another Tamil scholar and political commentator also credited Kumaratunga by pointing her out as the only Sinhalese political leader able to liberate Sinhalese people from the war mentality. Further, according to this respondent, Kumaratunga also effectively worked on creating space for peace with state sponsorship by backing new peace projects such as *Saama Balakaaya* (peace solidarity groups), *Sudu Nelum Vyaparaya* (white lotus movement), *Sama Thawalama* (peace caravan) and by establishing new state structures such as National Integration Program Unit (NIPU) at the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs. In addition to these projects enhancing the symbols of peace, during her first term, with a view of settling the ethnic conflict, Kumaratunga simultaneously embarked on a process of constitutional reforms. In 1997, this process of constitutional reform, widely known as the *political package*, produced the introduction of a draft constitution. In 2000, during her second term, Kumaratunga presented an updated version of the draft constitution of 1997 to the national legislature. Although it is important to note the highly militarised context in which the majority of the interviews of this research took place that could have influenced the opinions given at the time of fieldwork in the first quarter of 2009, by taking the stock of multiple peace initiatives undertaken by the Sinhalese political leadership, all the respondents belonging to Tamil and Muslim communities expressed a reserved appreciation of Kumaratunga. The majority of the Sinhalese respondents (who have no strong or declared political affiliations) concurred also saw

the initiatives embarked upon by Kumaratunga as both positive signs towards a permanent political solution at ending the war and, more importantly, as a positive breakthrough in Southern politics where construction of an ethical state has been emphasised.¹⁶ As a female Sinhalese respondent recalled, 'even today, we can be happy about Chandrika's time; if not peace, at least the symbols of peace were there, and even federalism which was a dirty word in the Southern political discourse, became more accepted among the people'.

Quite in contradiction to the above public views and general appreciation of Kumaratunga, in 2002, the leadership of the LTTE remarked in his Hero's Day speech '...for the Tamils and the liberation tigers, Chandrika is no goddess of peace. We consider her a hardliner who bets on a military solution ... in our eyes Chandrika is a warmonger' (Prabhakaran's Hero's Day speech, quoted in Rajanayagam 2009:91). This view was equally shared by some regional leaders of the LTTE in civilian administration in Jaffna District, whom the researcher had contact with during the period of peace negotiations under UNF government in 2005.

Further analyses of the Kumaratunga period suggest that she was able to make both federalism and political negotiations more acceptable in Southern politics and also to make international mediation acceptable to the local communities and the LTTE. This was a genuine change from both the Jayawardena and the Premadasa regimes, during which, for a number of reasons, the controversial role played by India in Sri Lanka's conflict made any form of intervention by an international third party extremely sensitive and unwelcome. During the Jayawardena regime, the JVP and other small-scale Sinhalese nationalist political parties were vocal in rejecting foreign intervention.¹⁷ The JVP rejected outright any international engagement, since this would raise associations with their painful experiences during the second JVP uprising during the Premadasa period, when India deployed the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) in the war zone; the role played by the IPKF left lasting painful memories. This sentiment is especially strong among the Tamil population in Jaffna. For the JVP, more than the sufferings of the Tamils in the hands of the IPKF, it was the Indian regional hegemony and speculation concerning an Indian conspiracy to expand in Sri Lanka that determined their resistance (Wijeweera 1986: 156–8). As a result, during the Premadasa regime, JVP unleashed series of island-wide protests against IPKF involvement that ended up Premadasa using state's coercive power for wiping out hundreds of JVP members.

During this event, Premadasa also granted the Sri Lankan police and security forces vast powers to handle the situation 'effectively'. The reaction of the JVP to these state actions was to kill and threaten those who served in the military forces and in the police as well as their family members.¹⁸ During this period, as many as 40,000 people are estimated to have died (Moore cited in Spencer 2000:125). Huge losses in the JVP's high ranks, and the painful experiences of surviving JVP members continually strengthened its opposition to any form of external intervention. Any form of external intervention was ruled out by the JVP's by aligning their opposition with the general capitalist and anti-imperialist ideological stance. However, during Kumaratunga's second term from 1999-2005, by becoming a partner for her coalition government and becoming a member of the ruling elites, JVP joined the moral bloc for peace under Kumaratunga's leadership. Until JVP left the coalition government it muted its earlier anti-peace sentiments and showed great deal of tolerance on the Norwegian role in Sri Lanka's conflict transformation processes.

5.2.3 PA, the beginning and the end of peace by peaceful means

The negotiation efforts launched in 1994–95 can be considered as a political breakthrough for Kumaratunga, but in the long run the capital generated by the initial cessation of hostilities declared by the LTTE was short lived. Various aspects of these negotiations shifted the dynamics in domestic politics and elite politics. Initially the negotiation process generated a pro-peace and

pro-federalist feeling and gathered the support from various previously divided societal, economic and political forces; overall, the degree of success in establishing a permanent force or an alliance for peace was marginal.

While Kumaratunga launched a peace campaign, she also had to embark on a decisive military campaign to deter the subsequent opposition from the LTTE. Under Kumaratunga's political leadership, government forces secured numerous 'politically valuable' victories in the battlefield. The effective use of state media and private media to illuminate these victories and bring these victorious experiences closer to the Sinhalese living in the south were all elements of political strategy to secure her power at the centre. As much as these military victories helped mobilise some forces in the society in her favour, they also affected the peace-process negatively because of an intensification of longstanding UNP-SLFP struggle for state power. One manifestation of this was the intensification of the clash of personalities between UNP leadership Ranil Wickramasinghe and Kumaratunga. In this personal rivalry both leadership attempted to use the LTTE and tried to negotiate with the LTTE to take an edge on each other. Although there were attempt by a British parliamentarian, Liam Fox to negotiate a pact of political cohabitation with Wickramasinghe and search for a bipartisan solution to the ethnic conflict, it did not generate any meaningful outcome to the personalised elite political rivalry between Kumaratunga and Wickramasinghe (Bandarage 2009:161). The main clauses of the pact were meant to develop cooperative environments in which to address important issues nationally. Although the Liam Fox agreement appeared fine on paper, in reality, it had no success. For instance, when Kumaratunga presented the draft of the new constitution in 1997 and 2000, going against the pact the UNP did not extend its promised support to Kumaratunga, although the draft constitution presented to parliament claimed to have incorporated the changes proposed by the parliament select committee appointed on Constitutional Reforms, in which UNP also took part (Edrisinha 1999:170).

The military actions and reactions of the LTTE in the north made southern politics and Sinhalese elite politics even more vulnerable. Although Kumaratunga had good intentions, at different stages of political bargaining the LTTE stymied her. As this chapter finds, during this period, the developments in the battlefield in the north and in the political front in the south are interlinked and functioned complementarily. For example, from time to time the LTTE put pressure on Kumaratunga's government by entering into military actions that hurt her political-peace plans popular in the south. The initial glimpses of success gained during the negotiations in mobilising the Sinhalese south quickly began to fade and contributed to mounting dissatisfaction of the Sinhalese south when the negotiations with the LTTE became difficult due to LTTE's actions. The actions of the LTTE rapidly disintegrated Kumaratunga's moral bloc for 'peace by peaceful means'. Meanwhile, the LTTE declared Eelam War 3, launching heavy military attacks in the north, sinking valuable Sri Lankan naval crafts and shattering any hope of peace as Kumaratunga ordered a major offensive. The overall situation demanded Kumaratunga to embark on a different strategy and to justify her new strategy of peace that involved military measures based on the end goal of peace. By implementing this strategy the LTTE were in the end completely driven away from the area as government forces regained the control of Jaffna peninsula. Initially, this turnaround of events brought extra (southern) political capital to Kumaratunga and to her ailing government. Further as these military victories were joyfully celebrated in the south with state sponsorship, they greatly affected the previous moral stance on peace by peaceful means and changed the discourse of 'peace by peaceful means'.

Despite the initial victories, at the end of Eelam War 3, in the overall list of wins and losses, the performance of the government forces became marginal. For example, even after capturing the Jaffna peninsula, the area came under siege as a result of a series of offensives carried out by the LTTE under the code name, *Oyada Alaigal* or Unceasing Waves (Keethaponcalan 2008:17). With the successes gained by the LTTE in the military front, it also entered into an aggressive

path of attacks, particularly targeting economically important areas in the South. Among these attacks, the bomb blasts carried out on the Central Bank of Sri Lanka killed about 100 persons and the attack on the international airport in Sri Lanka in 1997, hit the economy hard. Based on the estimates of International Alert (IA), the expenditure and output lost due to the war was over Rs. 1443.52 billion (International Alert). Apart from the economically important targets, in 1997 the LTTE also carried out an attack on the sacred Buddhist site, the temple of the tooth in Kandy, sparking outrageous reactions in the south. All these attacks and counterattacks carried out by both parties steadily undermined Kumaratunga's negotiation efforts and cast doubts on the promised peace. In this highly militarised environment Kumaratunga had to work hard to keep the already mobilised forces for peace and securing their support over war.

Seizing the opportunity at hand, the political opponents of Kumaratunga and the PA government rallied the public, encouraging Kumaratunga to officially and publicly change her policy of 'peace by peaceful means' to 'peace by limited war'. Instead, pressures from her opponents and the southern polity pushed Kumaratunga and her government to sacrifice valuable state resources for a war, going against the warnings of her military advisors who offered no credible guarantee of a victory over the LTTE. In addition to the tangible state resources used up for the war, Kumaratunga also sacrificed the moral bloc she created for peace. This new direction of strategy was shocking as it was a complete turnaround of the previous policy. This change of circumstance, in terms of material and subjective realities hurt the ordinary Tamils the most. As far as the material conditions are concerned, the government increased nation-wide check-up operations, making the PA government even more unpopular among the Tamils. Further, in 1999 an unsuccessful attempt on Kumaratunga's life was made by the LTTE (in which she survived but sustained serious injuries and became blind in one eye), by which she won some sympathy from the Sinhalese south. It was not enough to gather enough support as Kumaratunga hoped. Meanwhile, in 2000, the government's main military base in Elephant Pass was captured (Sambandan 2000).

Thus, the intense military confrontations and heavy losses incurred by the government in its 'limited war' strategy placed a heavy burden on the country's economy. At the same time, the constitutional package worked out for a political settlement by the PA government became an increasingly difficult sell in the south. This situation and the general environment faced by Kumaratunga that lacked and limited other options provided fine opportunities for Kumaratunga's political opponents to undermine her leadership and her political credibility.

5.2.4 Kumaratunga's second term and majority-minority politics

In her second term, Kumaratunga also experienced a similar series of decisive challenges from her rival elites. These came from within the SLFP and from the coalition partners of PA. For example, she faced enormous criticisms from the SLMC leader, MHM Ashraff (Keethaponcalan 2008:4), who believed that the issues of Muslims should deserve the same level of attention as the issues of minority Tamils. The immediate threat to the PA coalition government to which the SLMC was an important member to was averted by the sudden demise of Ashraff and the subsequent conflicts occurred with the SLMC over the future leadership of the SLMC. Meanwhile, capitalising on the intra-party squabbles in the SLMC, Kumaratunga secured a working majority in the parliament. After much personal persuasion, she managed to establish Mrs. Ferial Ashraff, the wife of late Ashraff, a complete novice to national politics, as one of the co-party leaders of SLMC. Under Mrs. Ashraff's influence SLMC continued to support the PA government and prevented the falling of the government. However, this was not to last. Within the SLMC, another faction led by Rauf Hakeem, the deputy leader of the SLMC, challenged Ferial Ashraff's leadership. Initially both factions extended their support to the PA, later, the Hakeem faction (known as National Unity Alliance or NUA) crossed over to the opposition, affecting the balance of power in the national legislature and making the PA government a parliamentary minority. Fol-

lowing Hakeem, a number of ministers and other members in the PA government (altogether nine members including the General Secretary of the PA) crossed over to the opposition and joined hands with the UNP.

Taking this opportunity, the UNP planned to bring a no-confidence motion against the PA government (Keethapongalan 2008:79).¹⁹ It also gained support from the Ceylon Worker's Congress and another minority Tamil party that crossed over to the opposition following these dramatic political developments. These changes sent a clear signal to the PA that it might lose the no-confidence motion. The only disadvantage for the UNP was the backing of President's brother, Anura Bandaranaike to the SLFP. By the end of 2000, the combination of elite conflicts in southern politics as well as the ongoing military battles in the north gave rise to a new political constellation in the national legislature and in the national political scenario. This new constellation was unfavourable for PA government's survival.

Capitalising on all these opportunities in hand, on 3 August 2000, UNP unleashed its final move against the PA by opposing the Constitutional Bill of 2000 presented by Kumaratunga to the national legislature. Their reasons included the threat that the new constitution bill posed to the unitary status of Sri Lanka. As shared by a few other respondents interviewed for this research, the UNP claim was more 'a tune played to the gallery' and according to them (especially those who were close observers of high politics of Sri Lanka) the actual reason the UNP opposed the 2000 Constitutional Bill was UNP unwillingness to extend a new lease of life to the ailing government. The UNP stance was met with disappointment by Kumaratunga, as her morally charged speech during the parliamentary debates on the new constitution bill of 2000 shows:

Today is indeed historic. It is a special day in the history of a great people, with a history of over thousands of years. This Constitution is designed to end the ethnic war, which totally destroyed the lives of the people of this country, a war which has been a curse impeding the forward march of this country. I ask whether the UNP, which deepened the ethnic crisis and caused it, at least now, on behalf of the country, can they not act in mature manner, when our Government has taken the responsibility, at the risk of our lives, to establish a permanent peace, thereby putting an end to this war, which was started under the patronage of the UNP Government, by killing, and burning the Tamil people and destroying their property, on five occasions between 1977–1983? If the UNP members here today, like a pack of jackals, it is a major concern for me as to how can they form a responsible government in this country? (Somasundaram 2000:181)

The only way to avoid facing the no-confidence motion was to suspend parliament and call a general election, which, without a parliamentary majority, Kumaratunga was compelled to do in 2001.

As this chapter finds, during the Kumaratunga period due to the shifting political dynamics and the new military balance, bringing peace was important for a number of reasons that cannot be divorced from the general political realities and specific challenges faced by the ruling regime and the ruling elites of the country. For example, like for her predecessors, Kumaratunga could use either war or peace to generate powerful political capital, to secure credibility and legitimacy for her policies, and for her continued presidency and party leadership. Therefore, it can be argued that, winning either peace or war is desirable and losing either brings disastrous outcomes either for the political leadership personally or to the political party or the coalition in office. It is correct to suggest that Kumaratunga sought the much-needed political capital or war or/and peace, during her two terms in office, sometimes simultaneously and separately, by using whichever approach fit prevailing political-economic circumstances the best. It is not to be forgotten that the bottom line of shifting approaches means playing with values and moral stances of the society and manipulating them for political gains. Further it should also be included that these shifting discourses and taking deliberate political action to pursue these strategies, the ruling elites have manipulated the consent of the Sinhalese on a nationally important issue.

However in all these approaches, negative peace seems to be the morally and politically desired end result, which cannot be divorced from the desire for state power, political legitimacy and elites' struggle for hegemony building. As one respondent, a high-profile political figure closely linked to the UNP leadership, shared as to why the reasons why UNP opposed the 2000 constitutional bill that also denotes the reality of Sinhalese elite politics, 'for political parties, it's a matter of staying in power. I think reality changes when you are in power. You get isolated. When you are a leader, you automatically become a political celebrity. How you think changes with power in your hand. For example, for Chandrika, it was all about staying in power'. Below is an excerpt from the reply speech made by the Opposition leader, Ranil Wickramasinghe in parliament to the previous speech of President Kumaratunga, which further explains the realities of power politics.

... on the 20th July, we were informed by the Government of the matters raised by the Tamil parties. A joint meeting of the UNP Parliamentary group and the UNP Working Committee was held on the 27th July to consider the transitional provisions to retain the executive presidency for a period of six years. At this meeting, it was decided that the UNP could not agree to this provision since the government and the UNP had already agreed to the abolition of the executive presidency in accordance with the government's Constitutional draft in 1997. This was conveyed to the Government by the UNP delegation. Thereafter, the government unilaterally decided to present this bill to parliament, to repeal and replace the existing Constitution. This bill retains only part of the agreements reached between the government and the UNP. Some of the important areas of consensus have been changed unilaterally. Furthermore, several issues, which have not been discussed during these meetings, have been included in the Bill... (Somasundaram 2000:283).

Analyses of the contents of these two speeches explain how the elites' desire for power and domination is articulated through the passage of state policies, conceptualised and legitimised within the nationally important issue of war and peace.

5.2.5 Political turmoil in the south and the context of the general election in 2001

The general election in 2001 was the second general election held within two years. Looking at the popularity of the PA regime in the 1994 elections, many political commentators doubted that in the near future the UNP would return to power (See Table 5.1 for a comparative analysis of the percentages of votes received by UNP, SLFP and SLFP with its alliances in four general elections between from 1994–2004). However, they were ignoring the gradual negative political and economic performance that had occurred since 1994. Dissatisfaction with the PA had been mounting steadily as a result of its failure to deliver on the promises made during the previous elections, especially for not fulfilling the promises made on economic development and peace dividends. As Table 6.1 depicts, in 2001 SLFP's share of total votes including the votes of its allies were as low as 37.19%. This explains a number of dynamics and few cardinal characteristics of local electoral politics during this period, inspired and strengthened by short-sighted simplistic 'give and take mentality' of the voters, and the pressure faced by the Sinhalese political elites in state power on delivering its promises in the short run. As some suggest, PA's defeat can be well linked to the insensitivity to the social consequences of economic mismanagement that resulted in high inflation. (For details See Table 6.2 for rising cost of living, withdrawal of subsidies and dwindling unemployment for the young (Uyangoda quoted in Jayasuriya 2005:65) as well as for backtracking on visionary idealism and ethnic politics (Ibid).

Table 5.1
Votes (percentage) secured by UNP and SLFP, General Elections 1994-2004

Year	UNP % Votes	SLFP % Votes	SLFP and Allies % Votes
1994	44.04	48.94	50.74
2000	40.22	Na	45.11
2001	46.86	Na	37.19
2004	37.83	Na	45.60

Source: adapted and modified from Jayasuriya 2005:138.

Table 5.2
Colombo Consumers' Price Index (CCPI) & Greater Colombo Consumers' Price Index

Year	All Items	Rate of Inflation	Food	GDP deflator, 1996=100
1991	1131.5	12.19	1220.3	62.50
1992	1260.4	11.39	1366.0	68.76
1993	1408.4	11.74	1519.4	75.28
1994	1527.4	8.45	1654.1	82.29
1995	1644.6	7.67	1768.1	89.20
1996	1906.7	15.94	2107.6	100.00
1997	2089.1	9.57	2336.9	108.67
1998	2284.9	9.37	2592.1	117.83
1999	2392.1	4.69	2695.4	122.98
2000	2539.8	6.17	2815.8	131.18
2001	2899.4	14.16	3244.7	147.3
2001	3176.4	9.55	3589.9	159.59

Source: Price Indicator of Sri Lanka (http://www.ices.lk/sl_database/price_indices/ccpi.shtml) (Adapted and modified by the author).

Note: Although the rate of inflation shows an improvement during the Kumaratunga period, the skyrocketing trend of food prices shows a worrisome picture.

As this research finds, this dissatisfaction with PA and Kumaratunga was only one aspect of this reality. For the majority Sinhalese in the south, more than the backtracking on visionary idealism as some argued, the dissatisfaction with the government grew as private-sector investment stalled. Further confluence of factors such as experience of direct violence and everyday economic hardships brought by the unwinnable war's huge social and economic costs were other important factors. The costs of war were in part paid during PA rule through a 'defence levy imposed on private business, which was in addition to the existing GST (Goods and Services Tax). Although it was the private businesses that bore these new taxes, they strategically diverted their costs to the consumers, which in turn increased the burden on the people and tremendously affected business.

The entrepreneur class that constituted the peace bloc of Kumaratunga, despite the positive steps taken to incorporate the private sector to build the economy with state patronage, remained skeptical about the PA's militarised agenda. In the PA agenda on paper, the private sector was treated as the engine of growth, but in practice, this was disappointing (Venugopal 2008:4). Also, traditionally the entrepreneur class favoured the economic principles followed by UNP admin-

istrations. They were not, this author suspects, fully appreciative of the fact that by the mid-1990s the SLFP had abandoned its socialist economic outlook, but aware that the type of state bureaucracy nurtured under the PA government operated in the old mindset. Moreover, entrepreneurs saw the PA as dragging its foot on implementing a fully-fledged liberal economic plan that assigned the private sector more responsibility. Thus, the initial interest expressed by the local business community was lost, as they saw no economic benefit. Under these circumstances, during the 2001 election campaign, the entrepreneur class switched their support to the UNP. This situation explains the conservative stance of politics preferred by the PA regime that was struggling to retain its political dominance and its uncompromising behaviour towards this class. Further it also shows that the order of priority of the political elites who put collecting votes from the majority Sinhalese-Buddhists who can be easily bought with ideological and symbolic politics, before economic development.

5.2.6 Saving Kumaratunga: the PA-JVP memorandum in September 2001

The self-proclaimed nationalist JVP was then convinced to enter into a pact with a PA desperate to stay in power. In this way, the JVP capitalised on the expanding political feud between SLFP and UNP and was able to actively take part in government affairs as a member to the ruling coalition. In other words, the JVP, which otherwise had no chance whatsoever to form a government on its own, used a new episode in the traditional UNP-SLFP grudge surrounding the threats of impeachment and no-confidence motions to taste state power. Also, the JVP was acutely aware of the opportunity this presented to expand its support base by using state patronage. It had observed how, from 1994 to 2000, the SLMC and EPDP were able to use their ability to deploy patronage as coalition partners to consolidate their power bases and advance their ethnically based claims on a number of nationally important issues. Moreover, the JVP must have calculated that by becoming a coalition partner it could also counter the rising influence of other minority parties. They were particularly aware of the imminent threat posed by the SLMC. The JVP's temporary suspension of its traditional anti-bourgeoisie criticism of the SLFP thus makes sense in the context of this new constellation in national politics.

The pact between the two parties, the MOU, was effective for one year from September 2001 to 2002. The main areas of JVP's concern reflected in the MOU were issues related to democratisation, growth of the capitalist economy, the continuation of the privatisation of state assets by the PA and reduction of government expenditure. All of the clauses in the MOU, as Keethapongcalan notes, were similar to the clauses of JVP's election manifesto and within its general line of propaganda (2008:76). Two side agreements concurrent with the MOU prevented the JVP from launching any course of action that directly destabilised the PA government and committed the JVP to extend necessary support for the continuation of the PA government to gain stability in Parliament. Numerous additional side agreements the PA was pressured by the JVP to accept included one preventing the PA from sharing political power based on minority ethnic lines. In the views of the UNP, members of the business community and minority political parties, the MOU and related agreements did more harm to the country than good, particularly the JVP-imposed clauses on the devolution of power and the anti-LTTE negotiation stance. The pact thus became unpopular among many who wished to see an end to the war through a political settlement.

Clauses of the MOU were accepted by the PA knowing its inability or lack of will to implement them. Thus, after four months, both parties realised they were unable to manage a fruitful and mutually beneficial partnership, and eventually the JVP pulled out of the agreement. The end of this cooperation triggered another general election in 2001. As soon as the political cohabitation fell apart, the JVP began both to exert pressure on the PA and to mobilise the public against political negotiations and the Norwegian intervention in the conflict. According to a number of

those interviewed for this study, JVP's fall-out with the PA in 2001 was due to the unreasonable demands they claimed in exchange for support. As one veteran leftwing political party leader observed, the nature of the JVP became even more apparent during this period: 'JVP is not left; it is a "peculiar animal", fanciful in its demands, "ultimatis" and with no transitional approach to politics. Their vision is guided by proposing what cannot be done, resist any reforms, play flesh and fowl. They are left in appearance, but they are chauvinists, repressive, undemocratic and violent'. According to members of other political parties, JVP's initial cooperation and later opposition to external inventions during the PA regime can be only understood within the logic of political survival.

It appears that this small political party with a sophisticated propaganda machine was particularly effective among rural and certain lower-middle class urban pockets. Its identification with the PA, and its agenda of peace and economic development might have, in the long run, threatened the core identity of the JVP as a Marxist-nationalist political party and its need to stay out of political projects of the bourgeois ruling class that is a partner for advancing the global hegemonic project of the 'New Right'. Therefore, the advantages of being a partner to the government might have appeared unfavourable to attaining their ultimate goal of capturing state power as a single political party vis-à-vis the horizontal patronage they receive as a minor coalition partner.

Thus, the PA lost public support in several constituencies in the south. This coincided with its unpopularity among the Tamil community in the North as a result of its economic embargo there, and criticism from Tamils living in other parts of the country whose mobility was affected by increased security measures. Together, these developments explain the intrinsic linkages between peace, economic wellbeing and political stability in national politics. Meanwhile there is another range of uncontrollable variables that also influence the fate of all governments, and in this case, the UNP seized the opportunity to mobilise the voters and eventually to capture state power. What this research finds interesting is the ruling elites betting on the moral values of the society to pave the way for capturing political power, using contradictory moral stances and values towards achieving peace, and this being the behaviour of Sinhala-Buddhist elite leadership of the country where the majority is Buddhists, who are supposed to practice non-violence.

5.3 The 2001 general elections: the people's verdict dismissed!

Until 5 December 2001, when the parliamentary general elections were held, President Kumaratunga repeatedly appealed to the public to give her and the People's Alliance a clear mandate. She stressed the importance of winning a clear majority in the elections for the effective functioning of the government. Her appeals denoted the frequent bitterness in UNP-SLFP and Wickramasinghe-Bandaranaike personal antagonistic relations. As Uyangoda (applying a Freudian psycho-analytic approach) points out, there has always been a 'narcissism of minor differences'²⁰ (2000:71-2) undermining any mutually supportive role. Given these conditions, Kumaratunga needed an outright win for her political coalition to avoid a situation in which UNP led the parliament as she continued as Executive President.

However, the election results forced Kumaratunga as the Executive President to work with the United National Front-led Cabinet (constituted of UNP, SLMC, CWC and dissidents of PA) led by her arch-rival Ranil Wickramasinghe of the UNP. As stated by many political analysts, this was one of the rare occasions in politics where voters gave a clear verdict to the factionalised Sinhalese political elites to develop a common vision and a bi-partisan approach to the compelling issues in hand. The victory of UNP can also be interpreted as an attempt by the voters to redirect attention to their own social and economic struggles. Their supporting Wickramasinghe's peace platform is intrinsically linked to the peace dividends his approach hinted out. However, owing to the underlying factional conflicts, a government in which the UNP and PA had equally important stakes, did not inspire confidence in the local and foreign investors.

5.3.1 2002-2003 political negotiations with the LTTE under the UNF government: experimenting (neo) liberal peace

In 2001, the leader of the UNF, Ranil Wickramasinghe, who secured the support of a few minority political parties, claimed victory on the peace-economic development platform. The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) consisting of four Tamil political parties also supported the UNF. The support extended by the TNA was contingent upon willingness to hold negotiations with the LTTE. The UNF accepted the support and agreed to hold settlement talks with the LTTE. This was, as a number of UNP members interviewed for this research claimed, consistent with the UNF's belief in political power sharing. Similar to Kumaratunga, UNF was also motivated to engage with the LTTE for other reasons. From a global-local perspective, the approach UNF took towards the LTTE and country's economic policy was fully in line with the prevailing global hegemonic political project of the new Right.

Within the UNF, the UNP leader framed the conflict in Sri Lanka differently from his predecessors. He viewed the situation as a 'North-East war' and emphasised the economic need for settling the conflict. Besides, Wickramasinghe also faced significant pressure from the international community to choose this direction of strategy. His approach of 'liberal peace' was inspired by the global peace agenda dominated by the new right (Uyangoda & Perera 2003:4; Stokke & Uyangoda 2010:1). This mix of internal and external dynamics came to be solidified after the 9/11 attacks, and specifically with the global campaign of the 'war on terrorism'. Given these conditions, both the UNF and the LTTE entered into political negotiations. Some point out that this phase of political negotiations was based on the theory of a mutually hurting stalemate (Zaartman 2001:8).²¹

The negotiation initiative of Wickramasinghe was built on the foundation laid by the PA government that extended the role of Norway as the facilitator.²² Although this phase of negotiations managed to attract an enormous level of attention from the Western countries, soon the nationalist and rival local political forces were less welcoming of this initiative. Even before the signing of the ceasefire agreement with the LTTE in 2002, rival political forces (mainly the PA, JVP and EPDP) mobilised opposition among the public. There were also factional conflicts among the Tamil political forces at this time, including conflicts between the EPDP and its political arch-rival TNA (known as the LTTE proxy) whether to support UNF or not.

As usual, in the south, opposition to a ceasefire was based on a prediction that it could only lead to the establishment of a separate state in the north. With the covert blessings of the PA, in 2002–2003, massive demonstrations against the ceasefire agreement were organised by the JVP. This and the related propaganda carried out by the JVP and the other usual political archrivals of Wickramasinghe, slowly yet successfully shifted the previously established pro-negotiation public opinion in favour of an anti-negotiations stand. What was interesting to observe during this period was the actions of Kumaratunga, who during her first term successfully mobilised the southern polity in favour of a negotiated political settlement now mobilising the same forces against it under UNF's leadership.

Those who publicly criticised the MOU signed between Wickramasinghe and the LTTE leadership brought attention to both the usual suspicious and factional political environment and some of the technicalities in the MOU. For instance, on the issue of technicalities, there was wide criticism against Article 1, which committed the suspension of state military actions against the LTTE (see CJPD 2006:428-29 for a copy of the MOU). The JVP, SLFP and the other opposition parties criticised the clause on suspension of military actions by the government forces, claiming that the government was aiding the LTTE to rearm freely. This argument found support among southerners, who recalled similar instances during the previous failed negotiation and the scale of violence experienced upon collapsing of negotiations. In addition, liberal human rights groups and loosely organised 'apolitical technical oppositions' in the south and north opposed the nego-

tiations by citing the issues of constitutionality and legality of the MOU. They felt the MOU violated two major fundamental provisions. First, they felt that the Prime Minister lacked the constitutional authority to enter into any agreement pertaining to war, since such powers are constitutionally vested in the hands of the Executive President. Second, they also believed that signing a MOU with a group that was not only armed but had been banned under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) of 1972 as a violation of the PTA. Although certain political groups caused difficulties, by using Norwegian communication channels, Wickramasinghe managed to get the LTTE to agree to attend the negotiations, by providing assurances that the internal ban would be lifted 10 days ahead of negotiations.

This MOU also faced criticism from a number of other interest groups that claimed to have non-political status in Colombo or in the north and northeast. For instance, Colombo-based human rights organisations pointed out that by entering into the MOU, the Sri Lankan government legalised and legitimised LTTE's self-proclaimed position of being the 'sole representative' of Sri Lanka's indigenous Tamils. They also argued that the MOU automatically disrespected the claims of other Tamil groups, especially the moderate Tamils, who also claimed to represent the same constituency but channelled their demands through democratic means of representation and political engagement. By painting a worrisome picture these human rights groups that took high moral grounds, also accused the UNF of deliberately trying to eliminate alternative, moderate, democratic and liberal Tamil groups, who often suffered in the hands of LTTE's brutal de-facto state. Further, they predicted that the MOU would eventually enable the LTTE to impose totalitarian rule in the north and east. For them, the MOU signified Government's deliberate acceptance of LTTE's violation of regional minorities' human rights and the discarding of democratic means and pluralism in politics. The signing of the MOU, for them, symbolised the government paving the way for 'totalitarian peace' and nurturing LTTE as a fascist organisation (Uyangoda & Perera 2003:21).

Further complicating the situation in the south, the LTTE refused to begin the proposed political negotiations until the proscription imposed on them during the PA regime was lifted (this was imposed after attacking the sacred Buddhist site, the Temple of the Tooth in 1998). LTTE pointed out to the fact that their status as a banned organisation was unacceptable and a cause for undermining their status as the sole representatives of the Tamil people. Different groups in the country received this argument of LTTE differently. For example, the theorists of conflict resolution quickly jumped on board and filled the theoretical dilemma posed by this situation. They quickly cited internationally used academic jargon, i.e., 'parity of status' and emphasised the theoretical need of lifting of the ban as a successful foundation for a successful process (Uyangoda 2007). Meanwhile, unsurprisingly, the opposition political parties, including the SLFP engaged in their usual destructive politics, urged the ban be continued. The PA, previously which had worked tirelessly to secure the ban domestically (and eventually internationally in 2006 when the LTTE was listed as an international terrorist organisation in Europe, United States and in a number of other western countries) might have calculated lifting the ban on LTTE as a cause of decreasing its future political capital. Therefore their vehement opposition to the MOU and to the negotiations was unsurprising.

On 10 April 2002, to rescue Wickramasinghe, the LTTE leadership made one of its rare televised appearances. In it, Prabhakaran suggested a way out of the war. A key point of his speech, one that took various political forces in the south by surprise, was his expressed willingness to seek a political solution to end the war. The LTTE leader strongly hinted that a political framework based on autonomy and internal-self-determination would be an acceptable settlement. This move of the LTTE leadership was in contradiction with its past tradition of hard bargaining based on the controversial Thimpu Principles.²³ It was the first time, in the history of the conflict that the LTTE publicly declared its readiness to accept a settlement that only partly met the first

four Thimpu principles (recognition of Tamil as a separate and a distinct nation, recognition of a Tamil homeland and guarantee of its territorial integrity and the right of Tamils for self-determination (Uyangoda & Perera 2003:31). On the part of the LTTE, this expression of willingness to shift its political position from conditional negotiation to principled unconditional negotiation was a welcome gesture for the UNF government. However, this move of LTTE leadership sparked mainly negative reactions in the South, as people who readily digest the JVP and PA political propaganda, continued to turn against the UNF, further intensifying and fragmenting the elite politics and the southern polity.

5.4 Working around politics of peace: re-shifting the discourse

Thus, with a few blessings, the LTTE and the UNF government entered into political negotiations with a mutually accommodative understanding of peace. They were careful to define the conflict in non-controversial ways. From the LTTE perspective, the conflict was both a national question and a problem between the Sinhalese and the Tamil nations. From the UNF government's point of view, as mentioned previously, it was a 'war in the North and the East'. These seemingly politically neutral, non-comprehensive definitions agitated critics in the south even further, because accepting the UNF's definition meant limiting the phenomenon to a mere war in the North and the East, diluting or even hiding deep-rooted aspects of the conflict. As a result, it became obvious that the very conceptualisation of the conflict was a threat to certain political forces whose political survival largely relied on a different reality. In this regard, nationalist political parties like the JVP seemed to be the most hurt, politically.

Further in terms of re-conceptualising and re-making of the national discourse, LTTE and the UNF agreed and shared a particular conception of peace that is both pragmatic and limited. As Uyangoda observed, their notion of peace entailed a political engagement to achieve '*what is possible*' (Uyangoda & Perera 2003: 26). Based on this limited pragmatic thinking, initially both parties stepped into negotiations leaving aside the contentious issues such as constitutional reforms, power-sharing arrangements, etc. Therefore, from the very beginning, both parties were very evidently interested in conflict management rather than conflict transformation. From the government's point of view, the primary focus was to secure a limited peace agenda by deliberately limiting the emergence of unfavourable trajectories, that is, by de-linking the ethnic conflict from war and violence. Therefore, of the range of possible issues, the UNF initially selected only a few concerning consequences of the armed conflict and it was keen to develop a step by step approach to manage the conflict through a number of interim phases. As per the technical experts on conflict negotiations, this kind of an approach usually allows the parties to address one issue at a time (Uyangoda 2003:4). The UNF government saw the possibility to make incremental progress as a better option than aiming only for a permanent solution. By following this strategy, the UNF government expected to open space for the institutionalisation of a political process in which, at a later stage, all the parties could design alternatives.

As Uyangoda points out, the aspect of peace and the framework of negotiations employed by the UNF can be regarded as a 'peace deal' (2003:4). The main aim of this 'peace deal' was to manage the conflict within a framework acceptable for the international custodians of the peace process. Its negotiation framework, as Uyangoda's analysis of its technical aspects suggests, from the very beginning, largely ignored the political conditions required from the broader society for the negotiations to succeed (2003:29). However, as the interviews conducted for this research makes clear, there was little belief in the possibility of reaching such a wide consensus in an extremely polarised Sinhalese polity, which had developed the political *habitus* of opposing each other's endeavours.

5.4.1 Shifting opinions: international actors and new faces of nationalism in Sri Lanka

As mentioned, the external conditions that developed in the aftermath of 9/11 gave a crucial role to international actors in the 2002 negotiations. These actors were warmly welcomed in a variety of capacities by the UNF, despite its acute awareness of past negative experiences related to international involvements in domestic political negotiations.²⁴ As a result, the process became largely characterised by the overwhelming involvement of the international community (Goodhand 2006: 215–19). In addition to Norway, which was assigned the most direct role as facilitator, communicator and mediator, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and Japan were the main custodians of the 2002–2003 negotiations.²⁵ The American, British, Canadian and the Japanese governments sent their individual representatives to Colombo to assess the progress of the peace process. In addition, a few notable international multilateral organisations, such as the IMF, ADB and WB also began to work closely with the parties involved in the negotiations. Further, the United Nations and its agencies, which had been working in Sri Lanka for some time, also began to adjust their project activities in line with the needs and concerns emerging from the post-ceasefire context. For the UNF, this overwhelming international involvement was essential to legitimise the process and to secure financial commitments necessary for delivering the promised peace dividends. This is evident in the role assigned to the international custodians in the post-conflict economic recovery and the efforts geared towards reconstruction of the war ravaged areas (Goodhand 2006: 218–21).

This involvement of international custodians was heavily criticised by political parties and a few vocal members of the local academic community (Bastian 2003:149–50; Rajasingham-Senanayake 2003:129–30). Therefore, in 2002–2003, the idea of international actors hijacking the issues of war, peace and conflict in Sri Lanka became the dominant subject in the national political discourse and among the polarised local academic community. International involvement was often labelled as an experiment of ‘(neo) liberal peace’. The role of Norway in particular was heavily criticised by the nationalist political parties, spearheaded by the JVP. The multilateral financial institutions also became targets of these criticisms (Rajasingham-Senanayake 2003:112).

In theory, despite the oppositions, with the main parties to the conflict showing considerable mutual distrust combined with a willingness to open a political front to negotiate, there was a chance that the international actors with their technical skills, supposedly neutral communication and valuable financial resources would be helpful in finding a settlement. The ability of the external actors to offer ‘carrots and sticks’ to encourage accountability in the behaviour of the parties is of significance. However, when international actors happen to be or perceived to be the primary designers of the peace plan and the new exclusive political constellation for peace in an extremely sensitive political context, they equally carry the risk of undermining the local knowledge, local political forces and their ambitions in power politics. Faced with such real life issues in politics, instead of gathering and mobilising the polity, the negotiation process and the UNF government increasingly became isolated from the rest of the society. As majority of the respondents of this research pointed out, the UNF and Wickramasinghe became increasingly ignorant and insensitive to local political realities, thus he clumsily provided opportunities for eagerly waiting spoilers to destabilise the negotiation process.

As this research finds, the so-called neo-liberal peace approach of the UNF government conceived a new form of nationalism specifically around the issue of peace negotiations and conflict transformation, during which the struggle for establishing moral dominance of one faction over the others in the ruling elites was evident. This officially embarked neoliberal peace approach during Wickramasinghe period, according to a few people interviewed for this research that identified themselves as Sinhala-Buddhist nationalists, welcomed international actors unconditionally and was thus opposed by them during the 2002–03 negotiations. Attempts made by international custodians of the peace process to establish new institutional and market structures that satisfied

the needs of the global hegemonic capitalist project and the local bourgeois/right-wing (economic terms) elite faction in power was, in their view, the most worrisome scenario. According to them the economic power and domination pursued by the UNF by using the issue of peace as an excuse was unacceptable. In this sense, the international forces were identified as coalition member of the New Right and their local counterpart; the UNF were thus seen as using the neo-liberal peace framework and the theatre of peace²⁶ to implement the neo-imperial economic and political project of the global west and help advance establishing the hegemony of the Right. As this research finds, the above views provide evidence of the emergence of new forms or the fresh articulation of anti-western nationalism. Further, a critical assessment of above debates not only reveals the political-economic agenda of the international custodians but also of the strategic use of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist project under a new environment by oppositional groups who were struggling to establish their political domination and legitimacy.

Besides the political discourse, the international scholarly critics and a number of local discourse makers essentially argued that the neo-liberal framework endorsed by the UNF government did not have the capacity to address the deep-rooted structural issues of the conflict. They argued that the new set of institutional arrangements proposed by international multilateral institutes to settle the conflict in Sri Lanka was harmful and would undermine the state's sovereignty (Bastian 2003:149–50; Rajasingham-Senanayake 2003:129–30). By picking up these points, the so-called nationalists sparked fresh debates on Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, post-colonial national self-determination and neo-colonial resistance. These localised morally and ideologically charged debates brought additional political capital and cultural capital to the oppositional groups. As shared by a respondent of this research who is an active member of the SLFP, Wickramasinghe's economic development proposal "Regaining Sri Lanka", tied to the peace process, was strictly developed based on a neo-liberal peace framework aligned with the political and economic project of the international multilateral institutions (or the so called Washington consensus) and was insensitive to the needs and aspirations of the local communities. As another respondent, who is a Western-educated theoretician for a nationalist political party, shared, 'Ranil and his cultural, social and economic background are not local; he (and also Chandrika, during 1994–2004) did not allow Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism to exist; instead, they told the people to be Sri Lankan'. As shared by a reputable economist among my respondents, the UNF's 2002–03 negotiations sought technocratic solutions and disregarded local knowledge and participation. The fact that this complaint is repeatedly raised in both academic and political circles suggest that the situation is best described the serious technical flaws of the neo-liberal peace framework as well as the factionalised nature of the intellectual and political forces in the country.

Thus during the first phase of negotiations, UNF and the LTTE were unable to hold the proposed nine rounds. It was limited to six rounds of formal talks. Furthermore, during the last three rounds of formal talks, many tensions developed around security issues and demands were made for accelerating the north and east rehabilitation work, status of parity, and so on. In March 2003 the negotiation process permanently stalled when the LTTE withdrew, citing not having been invited to the international pre-donor conference organised in Washington D.C as the immediate reason for its withdrawal. As tit for tat, the LTTE later boycotted the donor conference held in Tokyo, during which the agendas of reconstruction and development of north and east were discussed. LTTE's engagement was of paramount importance for Wickramasinghe, not only to challenge his opponents and the critics of the negotiation process but also to access US\$ 40 million aid pledged during the Tokyo conference that was strictly tied to the progress of the negotiation process.

From this period onwards, complementing the negative political developments, a number of unpleasant events occurred in the battlefield, with the SLMM finding that the LTTE committed a large number of ceasefire violations.²⁷ Reportedly, during this period the LTTE carried out 119

assassinations, engaged in 253 abductions of children, 579 abductions of adults and 1743 child recruitments (www.peaceinsrilanka.org/negotiations/slmm-statistics). LTTE ceasefire violations put enormous pressure on the UNF government. These ceasefire violations were largely reported from the Eastern province and covered a range of violent acts, including all those mentioned above and also the killing of Muslims in the area and extortions. These actions of the LTTE provided ready ammunition for critics in the south, who opposed the negotiations and also accused Wickramasinghe of being a traitor to the country.

From the fourth round of negotiations the cordial relations between the parties began to wither away, especially when discussing Muslim-Tamil relations in the East²⁸ and the removal of high security zones. Cordiality was also disrupted by various naval confrontations instigated by the LTTE that provoked the Sri Lanka Navy to react. Hence, outside the negotiations, Kumaratunga, the Executive President vested with powers to declare war and peace, ordered counter attacks on the LTTE. Altogether, these incidents on the military and political fronts raised questions about both the motives of the LTTE and the rival approaches of Kumaratunga and Wickramasinghe.

When analysing the ways in which political forces supported or opposed the UNF political initiative in 2002–2003 and comparing this to the reactions of social and political groups during similar initiatives in the past, it is clear that it was not the various conceptualisations, theories and frameworks of the UNF that finally failed. Instead, it was largely the nature of politics in the country, particularly in the south that contributed to derailing the negotiations. Although some respondents emphasized that it was not the conditions for political negotiations with the LTTE that caused negotiations to fail, but absence of general democratic political conditions in the country that failed the negotiations. Based on these sub-conclusions, the absence of favourable political conditions in the polity and the democracy deficit in domestic politics is what kept this national issue unresolved and the ruling regime from finding a national policy for a political settlement. This deficit of deep democracy is a long-standing issue in the politics of the country, and periodically gains momentum around events of conflict, war and peace. Thus, against the backdrop of negotiations of 2002–2003, it would be reasonable to suggest that taking a path of pro-political negotiations or anti-negotiations by the elite factions in state power and periodic shifting opinions for and against the war and peace as political and economic situations demands were none other than a means to continue a familiar notion of politics.

5.5 Kumaratunga strikes back: from liberal peace to limited war

Concurrent with the setbacks in the 2002–2003 negotiations, the tensions between President Kumaratunga and Premier Wickramasinghe set in motion a dramatic political scenario surrounding the issue of internal power sharing arrangements. These tensions, raised by Kumaratunga around issues of power sharing were part and parcel of the internal power struggle and the personality clashes between the two leaders. After a few rounds of open conflict with Kumaratunga, in February 2002 the UNF was given control of the ministries of finance, defence and media. This, the UNF government claimed, was important for the resolving of the North-East war. Thus on one hand, the actions of the UNF can be interpreted positively, because taking control of these Ministries allowed it to have access to the necessary resources to conduct negotiations with the LTTE. However, UNF, in taking charge of these Ministries, also undermined Kumaratunga's powers as the Executive President.

Further, the LTTE began to aggressively demand the withdrawal of government forces from the high security zones, citing the urgent need to resettle Tamil civilians and normalise life. However, the UNF government was not ready to concede to this demand and was supported by several anti-LTTE political groups, such as Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP). As warned by the EPDP, withdrawing troops from Jaffna would only lead to losing the government's control over Jaffna peninsula and paving the way for the LTTE to gain control over the entire region by

force. The Army Commander, General Sarath Fonseka viewed this as foolish, citing the dangerous consequences of such a step when the LTTE was neither demobilised nor disarmed. His opinion was also reflected in an international report compiled by retired Indian Army official Sathish Nambiar.²⁹ However, although the Premier oversaw the activities of the Ministry of Defence, on three separate occasions government naval forces conducted massive defensive attacks on the LTTE naval vessels and boats under the direct direction of Kumaratunga, who as the Executive President was the Commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Her efforts were supported by hardliners in the navy, for instance, Naval Chief, Admiral Daya Sandagiri. These naval confrontations systematically undermined UNF's negotiation efforts (Wije Dias 2003). Thus it was a situation where one part of the government undermined what another part did.

Around the same time, the LTTE began to aggressively demand establishing the proposed Interim Self Governing Administration (ISGA) in the Northern Province. They could not overcome the pressures exerted by southern political forces, and Wickramasinghe could not commit to this demand. Meanwhile, the LTTE presented its own proposal of the future ISGA,³⁰ sparking anxiety and criticism from various groups in the south as well as among anti-LTTE Tamil political parties. For these critics, the LTTE proposal was in complete contradiction with the ISGA proposed by the Government. Critics based in the south and north claimed that the ISGA proposed by the LTTE was the first stepping-stone towards establishing a separate state.

Capitalising on growing criticism against the negotiations under the UNF government, especially the directions these were taking toward consensus for establishing the ISGA, in November 2003 President Kumaratunga declared a state of emergency and took control over three vital Ministries: Ministry of Defence, Interior Affairs and Mass Communications.³¹ The immediate reason behind the takeover was claimed to be the UNF's appeasement of the LTTE and the dangers posed to national security by the concessions already made to the LTTE by Wickramasinghe. At this point, the Norwegian government and other co-chairs of the negotiation process suspended negotiations and left Kumaratunga and Wickramasinghe to solve the immediate power crisis. This withdrawal of international facilitators left Wickramasinghe handicapped in terms of negotiating with the LTTE. Meanwhile, the LTTE also expressed its disappointment in UNF's inability to make any credible commitments to them. Reflecting on the 2003 political crisis, later in 2005 Wickramasinghe recalled, 'the President took over the Ministry of Defense and dissolved Parliament, making it impossible for my government to effectively manage the peace process any further' (Wickramasinghe 2006:9).

Following these events, in January 2004, although the previous pact between the PA and JVP had failed, during the 2004 election and for a period afterwards, the SLFP willingly entered into a new agreement with the JVP and together formed the UPFA. This did nothing to temper JVP rhetoric. For example, during the election campaign, in a firebrand speech, JVP's propaganda secretary, Wimal Weerawansa hinted the possibility of a future total war. Such hard-line JVP opinions were tolerated by the SLFP, as the political advantages of such propaganda were mutual. During this election campaign, the JVP also came out strongly against any future negotiations with the LTTE. JVP propaganda pushed the LTTE to react after the election, by rejecting any form of negotiations with the UPFA.

In the elections, the UPFA secured 105 seats out of 225 in the national legislature. Since the number of seats won was not enough to secure a parliamentary majority to form a government, the new situation ultimately led to the establishment of a hung parliament. With the defeat of the UNF in the elections, JVP also began to mobilise people by criticising the 2002–2003 negotiations. These criticisms were well received by voters, who were disappointed that the UNF had failed to deliver on the promised peace dividends.

Following the same fate of the previous alliance, the UPFA survived only a few months. As reported by various sources, JVP demands became increasingly unacceptable to Kumaratunga.³²

Moreover, JVP's behaviour in the ruling coalition also created divisive tensions between the SLFP and JVP party members that eventually made Kumaratunga dissolve the parliament and call another general election in April 2004.

5.5.1 Complexities, threats and opportunities: tsunami politics

Adding further complications and further opportunities to refigure politics and paths for peace or war, in December 2004, giant Tsunami waves struck Sri Lanka. This affected the east and South, but hit the north the hardest. In this disaster, more than 30,000 people are estimated to have died (Goodhand et al. 2005: 22). The tsunami caused immense financial and infrastructural damage,³³ and brought pressure from the international community, which wanted Kumaratunga to work together with the LTTE and other groups in the north and the east to address the immediate needs of the people in these areas and to accelerate the recovery process. This catastrophe pushed the state and international actors to search for a mechanism to address the suffering of the people, i.e., Post-Tsunami Joint Operation Mechanism (P-TOMs) signed on 23 June 2005.

In the south, the usual politics were undermining Kumaratunga's effort towards implementing the P-TOMs. During this period, managing the relief funds and how they were distributed provide useful insights into politics that succumbed to patronage being clearer (Jayasuriya 2005:xx). To protest the P-TOMs, JVP withdrew its support of Kumaratunga. Further, for two consecutive weeks, JVP held a number of public rallies, attracting a massive number of protesters. Simultaneously, JVP also filed a legal case against the implementation of the P-TOMs, and the Supreme Court declared the P-TOMs unconstitutional and suspended most of the clauses. The decision of the Supreme Court helped the JVP to accumulate more political capital and shine in politics once again. Meanwhile with the defection of JVP, Kumaratunga announced the next Presidential elections in November 2005.

5.5.2 Complexities, threats and opportunities: the split in the LTTE

'A nation has no permanent enemies and no permanent friends, only permanent interests.' Lord Palmertson

While the crisis in southern politics was marked by a number of incidents that further polarised the southern polity and the factionalised ruling class, an unexpected development took place in the Tamil military-political balance. In March 2004, LTTE suffered a major split. This divided the northern and eastern command of the LTTE into two factions. The split was interpreted in various ways by the media (Fernando 2011). The most popular reasons cited were that the eastern LTTE cadres were mistreated and discriminated by the northern command and discrimination. Further, it was felt that money from abroad was not fairly divided with the East and that the soft line taken with the SLMC during 2002–2003 negotiations had destabilised the authority of the Eastern command.

Much to the joy of the south, the split in the LTTE posed a serious threat to its claim that it was the sole representative of the Sri Lankan Tamil community. As per a recent US diplomatic cable released in Wikileaks, the defection of Karuna from the LTTE was allegedly linked to Wickramasinghe during the peace process (quoted by Fernando, cable dated 15 March 2004 in www.asiatribune.com). Undoubtedly, for the majority in the south and for the Sinhala faction of the ruling elites, Karuna's defection was a welcome gesture and also a rare opportunity and serendipity in politics. They made Karuna entered the national political scene, first as a Provincial Councilor and subsequently as a MP in the Rajapaksa Government that came to power in 2005. In exchange for support for the UPFA in elections in the eastern province, Karuna was granted political immunity for various atrocities committed in the past. Most recently, in April 2009, under the direction of President Rajapaksa, Karuna was appointed as the Deputy President of the

SLFP. As highlighted in numerous newspaper reports, Karuna's support of Rajapaksa played a major role in the 2008 decision of Rajapaksa regime to embark on a total war against the LTTE and in the LTTE's defeat in May 2009. Reminiscent of the proverb, 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend', Karuna became an important Rajapaksa ally from 2006, undermining the influence of previous 'king makers' in politics. Karuna's entry into national politics increased polarisation and fractionalisation, not only among the post-LTTE re-emerging Tamil national politics, but also among of the Sinhalese political elites.

5.6 The rise of Rajapakse: from total war to victor's peace and dynastic politics

Towards the end of Kumaratunga's tenure as the President, her position as the party leader within the SLFP was challenged. Although some predicted her brother Anura Bandaranaike would receive the party nomination for the 2005 presidential election, Rajapakse was also eyeing it. Additional tensions within the SLFP arose as Kumaratunga attempted to prolong her tenure by manipulating the dates of her swearing into office of her second term.

This internal party crisis gave rise to two factions within the party. One faction supported aristocratic Bandaranaike leadership, whereas the other faction demanded a non-Bandaranaike leadership, and supported a Goyigama from the low country, Mahinda Rajapaksa as successor. This newest political crisis within the SLFP was another reminder of the underlying class, regional and family conflicts in national politics and the grounds of elite political factionalism. Interestingly, the conflict increased intra-party political competition and gave rise to new waves of alliance formation with extensive use of material patronage, both offered to the members of the SLFP and to other political parties. These efforts of alliance building brought significant material benefits to minority political parties and small-scale Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist parties. With the patronage received these political parties were able to further build these parties and secure new alliances renew the old political alliances.

Both Kumaratunga and Premier Rajapaksa actively sought allies to mobilise support within the SLFP ranks on their behalf. Both also actively sought alliances outside the party. Much to Kumaratunga's and her allies' dissatisfaction, Rajapaksa managed to secure support from various factions within and outside the SLFP, capturing the party leadership and securing party nomination for the Presidential elections. Among the factions outside the SLFP supporting Rajapakse were small Sinhala nationalist political parties (the JVP and JHU). They, together with a few other minority political parties, helped Rajapakse run for Presidency. However, due to Kumaratunga's presence within his own party Rajapaksa was isolated and therefore increasingly relied on his own family members for support.

Rajapakse's 2005 election manifesto, the *Mahinda Chinthana*, laid down a framework for addressing numerous local issues. As shared by one of the current advisors to the President interviewed for this research, since Rajapakse's party refrained from supporting him, *Mahinda Chinthana*, was drafted with the help of the JVP and JHU. As one respondent who is among the top brass of JHU proudly claimed, '...at that time, there was no party to help Mahinda even to draft his election manifesto, there was no money to run for elections, only the JVP and JHU helped him'. Because of the influence of the JVP and JHU, *Mahinda Chinthana*, a number of other respondents (whose self-claimed status was as unbiased individuals) claimed had its foundations in Sinhala-Buddhism. Further, *Mahinda Chinthana* and the future policy directives of the Rajapakse administration were based, in view of a significant number of respondents, on an anti-negotiation platform propagated by the nationalist political parties. This meant that the agreement reached by Rajapakse, JVP and JHU embodied an explicit denial of the claim to an exclusive Tamil homeland, rejection of the P-TOMs and of the ceasefire agreement.

In support of Rajapakse, the anti-negotiation sentiments and critical views of 'peace by peaceful means' initially embarked by Kumaratunga were re-launched by JVP and JHU. Besides, shooting two birds with one stone, these two parties also highlighted and criticised the aristocratic and bourgeoisie domination of national politics of which both Wickramasinghe and Bandaranaike were living examples. As observed in this research, sharpening such sentiments in politics was helpful in elevating the stock of cultural capital of the small political parties with petty bourgeoisie and proletariat orientations. Painting a patriotic picture of Rajapakse by emphasising his personal and political roots in rural Hambantota District allowed the JVP and JHU to effectively harmonise the struggles of the centre and the periphery by mainly appealing to the rural masses. This also created a new wave of sub-regional southern nationalism in the country. This type of campaigning also strengthened Rajapakse's voter base by arousing regional rivalry between the rural south and the urban-capitalist Colombo and its suburbs (home for both Wickramasinghe and Kumaratunga and their main constituencies).

It led, interestingly, both during the election campaigning and thereafter, to Rajapakse as well as the JVP and JHU comparing him to King Dutugemunu and calling Rajapakse as the '*Dakune ape kena* (Our Southern Man). This, especially the *Dakune ape kena* sentiment in the national political platform, is essentially a form of sub-conscious expression of political economy of southern nationalism. Moreover, this sense of sub-nationalism began and expanded since the UNF government that also demonstrates the class bias of emerging sub-nationalisms in this period (Jayasuriya 2005:87). Further, the sense of *ape kena* feeling is inseparable from the expectations and the attempts made by lower classes living in margins of society to redress their need for identity, that had found no place in the UNF government and its neo-liberal outlook. This need of identification essentially linked with the unfulfilled social-political-economic interests of these classes. In the election manifesto of Rajapaksa, these interests were rearticulated through an indigenised moral lens. For instance, in the preamble of the manifesto and in various sub-sections of *Mahinda Chinthana*, appealing to the village-centric virtuous society and virtuous state was repeatedly emphasised.

With this support from various traditional and non-traditional allies, Rajapaksa won the presidential election with a narrow margin. Thus, as a close ally of Rajapaksa and another respondent who is a senior member of the national legislature opined, it was not only the nationalist political forces in the South that helped Rajapakse win the 2005 presidential election, but also the leadership of the LTTE.³⁴ He received 50.29% votes, with Wickramasinghe receiving 48.43% (www.slections.gov.lk). Rajapakse's narrow victory suggests the difficulty of ignoring the strength of Wickramasinghe and his allies (who despite losing elections for nine consecutive years were worthy opponent in national politics). Moreover, the results of this election also raised questions concerning the impact on electoral outcomes of 'floating' or 'swing' votes and concerning voters' behaviour. Perhaps, as one respondent pointed out, when it comes to elections, the vote bases of the main political parties are somewhat stable, and the main battle is for the 20% of floating votes. Or, somewhat complimenting the earlier view, as another respondent suggested, while attempting to debunk the myth about 'majority politics', 'in all the respects, politics in Sri Lanka is an affair of (various) minorities where a minority gets to decide who wins'. However, this research warns that these statements should be viewed in a context in which the political party in power and the conditions in the economy often carry out other kinds of violations.

This is in part why the policies of the new coalition Rajapakse had put together drastically differed from the previous regimes, especially in terms of the directions that it eventually took to address the issue of war and bring peace. Those who were tired of waiting for peace dividends under Wickramasinghe and Kumaratunga moved to support the JVP, JHU and Rajapakse, this time favouring the policies of 'war for peace' and 'war against terrorism' and post war-peace dividends or a *windfall*.³⁵ Thus, in a Gallup survey, 88% of respondents expressed confidence in Ra-

japaksa in handling a peace process to end the war and the conflict (Srinivas and Crabtree 2006). Meanwhile, it is possible to suggest that LTTE is being accused of having supported Rajapaksa, having misjudged the ability of Rajapaksa's coalition taking a path of a total war. Initially, similar to previous occasions (i.e. during Premadasa period) by supporting Rajapakse, LTTE might have expected to buy time to rearm them. However in this case, the political strategy of the Sinhalese political elites outran the LTTE's military strategy.

5.6.1 Rajapaksa and the saga of the All Party Representatives Committee (APRC)

In mid-2006, under the direction of Rajapakse, the All Party Representatives Committee (APRC) was established to find a political settlement to guarantee the rights of the Tamil minority (www.peaceinsrilanka.org). Establishment of the APRC was quite contradictory to the election rhetoric of Rajapakse and his allies. The primary aim of the APRC was to forge a peace-bringing consensus among all political parties. At the beginning, its deliberations included many political parties, but the UNP withdrew to protest the President's decision to induct rebel members of his party (Karuna)³⁶; the JVP also walked out, demanding that the committee be dissolved. Despite these desertions and the questions of legitimacy they raised, the APRC continued to work. As agreed by many respondents of this study, including those who move in the inner circles of the Rajapaksa regime, APRC is only a drama playing for the international community. A high-ranked UNP member interviewed for this research, 'APRC is a hoax'.

Similar views of the APRC were expressed by a number of other respondents, who called it Rajapaksha's puppet. The APRC is, respondents said, pressurised by the Rajapaksa administration to present as its findings Rajapakse's pre-determined solutions. For example, in 2007, its long overdue interim report merely recommended the full implementation of the 13th Amendment of the Constitution.³⁷ This garnered protest from the JVP, the LTTE and the UNP, the latter claiming that implementing 13th amendment would only harm the unitary status of the country. Some respondents who have close relations with the chairman of the APRC shared that the interim report did not include the committee's original conclusion, which was more far reaching. They alleged that the recommendation given to fully implement the 13th Amendment was the President's pre-decided solution. As this chapter is being written, the final report of the committee is yet to be released, and neither the general public nor the political forces have much enthusiasm. Given the various views expressed by the respondents of this research, the public discourses and the personal observations made by the author, it is probably correct to state that the APRC has become a forgotten affair to many and for the ruling regime another attempt to gather support from internal and external forces and finances useful for alliance building. In general, it is correct to state that APRC is a useful footnote in Sinhalese elite politics. Behind the APRC drama, Rajapaksa as expected by many respondents was to make institutional changes that established his political domination and power over his rivals. For example, as the leader of the Muslim Congress, Rauf Hakeem stated in 2009, during an interview, '... for certain, this (APRC) was only a mirage and nothing tangible would happen even after the next Presidential election... Frankly, I do not expect President Mahinda Rajapaksa to publicly take a position, until and unless he gets a fresh mandate in an island-wide Presidential or Parliamentary election' (Sunday Leader 2009). Other political parties and vocal political personalities share similar sentiments. Further, in this research, some respondents viewed seeking a political solution agreeable to all the political parties' unnecessary and futile. They see the APRC process as a waste of time spent devising a *new solution* that will not be implemented, and instead called for democratisation of the State and the restoration of democratic principles and values. This, they pointed out, is inconsistent with the way in which post-war Sri Lanka's politics operates under the political, military and muscle power of President Rajapaksa and his allies, and thus no strong demands addressing the issue of the democracy deficit is likely.

In 2009, upon gathering support from many forces within and outside the Sinhalese community, Rajapaksa government defeated the LTTE militarily. In order to gather support for his strategy, Rajapaksa used extensive state patronage³⁸ and terrorism to make political alliances with numerous Tamil political parties including the TNA to force compliance or silence the oppositional groups. After the war, instead of seeking a consensus-based settlement, Rajapaksa unveiled a series of institutional and constitutional changes. On the surface level, these changes seem to have been aimed at establishing victor's peace and reinforcing the Sinhalese domination of the state. However, it is clear that the underlying motivation of these changes were to establish Rajapakse's personal and family authority and domination in elite politics.

5.6.2 Total war and military defeat of the LTTE: triumph of the discourse of Sinhalese hegemony

Despite the anti-LTTE and anti-negotiation stand taken by Rajapaksa, a delegation of his government met with the LTTE in Geneva with the assistance of the Norwegian facilitators. The most important immediate reason for going to Geneva was the continued violation of the LTTE-GOSL ceasefire agreement signed in 2002 (Rupasinghe 2006:45). As predicted by number of political observers, the initial agreement reached in Geneva, aimed at cessation of hostilities, ended rather quickly.

Inspired by the European Union's decision (much to the dissatisfaction of the LTTE) on 30 May 2006 to enlist the LTTE as a terrorist organisation and to pressure them to seek a political settlement to the conflict (Nesan 2006),³⁹ the nationalist parties in the Rajapaksa government began to call for eradication of the 'Tiger terrorism'. JVP and JHU organised massive propaganda campaigns in favour of such a direction, making links between local Tiger terrorism and the international war against terrorism. As these local and international developments harmonised, Rajapaksa was pushed to go to war with the LTTE. Considering Rajapaksha's support base in the national legislature at that point, for example the JVP's commitment of 30 seats to the coalition government, it was unthinkable for Rajapaksa to go against the demands of his supporters. The influence of JVP shifted the public opinion in favour of war.⁴⁰ The pressure exerted by JVP and the prevailing international circumstance, all provided a context for the government to enter into a military campaign against the LTTE. What is ironic about this period is Rajapakse being able to form a politico-moral bloc in favour of war, joined by Sinhalese-Buddhist intelligentsia. The latter provided a manufactured Buddhist doctrinal to justify and legitimise the foreseeable war. Some dominant factions in the Buddhist Sangha, especially those from JHU legitimised this moral bloc through symbolic politics by conducting various rituals island-wide, such as Bodhi Pooja (sacred offerings and prayers to Buddha), blessing the President and cursing the enemy. This new alliance termed the military action carried out in the north as a 'humanitarian operation' to save the Tamils from the LTTE brutality.

Among the respondents, many believed that at the beginning, President Rajapaksa was not ready to go for a costly all-out war, preferring a low-intensity military campaign against the LTTE which could provide political capital through occasional military successes in the battlefield. Perhaps, as could be argued, through such means, Rajapaksa expected to silence his critics and brush aside the alleged links he had with the LTTE during the 2005 election. On one hand, these views suggest the blurring of boundaries between war, conflict and peace in Sri Lanka and on the other hand they suggest the success of the attempts of the ruling elites to delink war and conflict. This deliberate shifting of the political discourses and the moral stances sometimes legitimising peace by peaceful means, war and the military means suggests the successful manipulation of the moral stances of the society, acceptance of the elites rule by the subordinated groups and the power of political elites to influence the masses.

It can also be suggested that the smaller Sinhalese nationalist parties like JVP and JHU have played a most vociferous role in shifting public opinion in the direction of war and since 2005 towards the plan of a total war. The drastic shifts in public opinion since 1994 were not autonomous decisions of the people, but a manifestation of the strategy of the hegemonic struggle of the Sinhalese political elites in general. Further this research argues that since the everyday experiences of people was surrounded by the numerous discourses and actions justifying war and military action, it shaped their moral stances on it. Whatever the case, as majority of the respondents in this research also indicated and as was observed by the author, from the beginning of 2009 there was an observable shift in public opinion in the south in favour of a 'final war'. Confidence in the military was, as concluded in a Gallup poll conducted in this period, as high as 92% (Naurath, 31 August 2007). This shifting of opinion can indeed be linked to the euphoria created by the state media around numerous victories in the battle field. Overall, this repositioning of public opinion within a relatively short span of time suggests that the public support for total war corresponds with the conscious shifting of the national political discourse by the ruling elite faction in favour of such a move. This research finds that these shifts at subjective level were in correspondence with the deepening of the economic struggles in the periphery and the political struggles at the centre for power and domination by one elite faction over the others.

Domestic support for war also coincided with a shift in the positions of the international actors too. Perhaps, after the Geneva talks, the international community seemed to have begun to see the LTTE as an impediment to any kind of political solution. This conjuncture of local and international opinion also allowed Rajapaksa and his allies to manipulate the situation and begin a full-scale military assault against the LTTE. Along the way, a political compulsion was created for Rajapaksa and his military advisors (mainly his brother, an ex-Lieutenant in the Sri Lanka Army) to enter into a full-scale war and to emerge as the victor.⁴¹ The strengthening of the 'psychology of winning' among the majority in the south intensified pressure. Various media, state, private, local and international, have vividly described this. Following are few examples in this regard.

The war is not far off. The strip of sand where the Tamil Tiger rebels are holed up with thousands of civilians is an hour up the coastline, but this is as close as reporters can get without government approval. We have no such permission, and are forced to turn back. This has been called a war without witnesses (Stuart Bell, 10 May 2009, *Sunday Leader*).

The current military hold up in the North now with a mere four square kilometres to be cleared is due to some difficulties in terrain coupled with harsh weather conditions but that would in no way daunt the prospect of reaching the anticipated photo finish, top government officials believe. The government is of the view that end of May would see an end to the island's civil strife. According to Military Spokesperson, Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara there are no new challenges but the troops are moving ahead with extreme caution in a bid to prevent civilians from being harmed. In warfare, it is pointless to give deadlines. There are diversions, tactical withdrawals, wins and defeats. All these factors are common to all parties to a conflict. The war will soon end, insists Nanayakkara (Dilrukshi Handunnetti, 10 May 2009, *Sunday Leader*).

No time for ceasefire: time yet for surrender - President. We have at no time gone for a ceasefire. We will not do so now. There is no time for that now. In the five or six days remaining we have given the opportunity for the LTTE to lay down their arms and surrender to the Armed Forces and, even in the name of God, free the civilians held by them (Ministry of Defence, 30 April 2009)

If Another 1000 civilians break out of captivity. Defence sources have reported in that over 1000 civilians broke out of the conflict zone at the Mullaittivu end over 24 hours, ending noon, May 11. The LTTE sentries, initially overwhelmed, recovered and opened fire on the fleeing civilians (Ministry of Defence, 19 May 2009)

'Rajapaksa may be keen to broaden his Sinhala support base rather than providing a constitutional solution,' says V Suryanarayan, South Asia expert... Sri Lanka's State television station announced on Monday that Tamil Tiger rebel Chief Velupillai Prabhakaran has been killed, and the army commander said the last pockets of rebel resistance have been cleared from the North (V.Venketaraman 19 May 2009, *Times of India*).

LTTE International Head KP Pathmanathan as issuing a statement of surrender on May 17 which stated, 'We have decided to silence our guns. However as the LTTE received no confirmation regarding the final surrender arrangements from the military desperate cadres mounted a last ditch attempt to break out of the no-fire zone on May 17 by crossing the Nanthikadal lagoon at which point a majority of them were killed and the LTTE came to a final end. However the report states that several senior LTTE leaders were massacred by the Army in subsequent mopping-up operations and that LTTE political wing leaders B. Nadesan and S. Pulidevan and their wives were gunned down by troops while holding white flags and attempting to surrender on May 18. The report offers no conclusions on the final fate of Pirapaharan's wife and his daughter Dwarka. It however highlights inconsistencies in reports from the government regarding developments in the final days and hours of the war and offers its version as the clearest and most accurate account of events' (14 June 2009, *Sunday Leader*).

Meanwhile, complementing the elites strategy of total war, the LTTE was waiting for a major offensive to draw the attention of the international community to the catastrophic human cost of the war (Uyangoda 2007:4). Thus this situation as some referred as "logic of circumstance"⁴² of most parties, locally and internationally, guaranteed a favourable environment for a dirty war between 2008 and May 2009, with embedded political opportunism, that killed more than 30,000 people. As stated by a respondent who is a keen observer of local and international dynamics of this time period, in this new phase of total war under the Rajapaksa government, the LTTE seemed to have misjudged both international and regional responses.⁴³ Further, the same respondent shared that LTTE seemed not to have expected the elite political and military leadership in southern Sri Lanka to embark on an all-out war, sacrificing all its valuable resources and disregarding the international concerns over the catastrophic humanitarian consequences. As one Tamil respondent said, Rajapakse going to war with the LTTE cannot be divorced from the realities of politics in Sri Lanka, since 'the political capital embedded in war is enormous and no one using war and military victories for accumulation of political capital in electoral politics can be blamed'. Superseding Tilly's thesis that war makes the state, the case of Sri Lanka suggests that war not only makes states but also makes individual political elites triumph in politics.

As observed in this research, when total military victory against the LTTE was in the vicinity, there were constant open attempts of harnessing of the political capital of war by numerous political forces and their intellectual and ordinary allies in politics. Further, there were new, strategic and symbolic ways launched by the local and regional political elites to include the voters living in the far away corners in Sri Lanka where there is a great deal of physical distance with the areas where the actual war is taking place. One interviewee from Kandy district shared how extraordinary these strategies were, saying:

These days there is a 'Ranaviru business'⁴⁴ going on. For example, poor villagers in Doluwa in the Central province were forced to contribute with Marmite for the soldiers fighting in the war. This order was given by the Chief Minister in the Province. The people who were contributing to this were sufficiently manipulated. They think not contributing with Marmite is an anti-Sri Lanka and anti-patriotic act. Also, these people were made to think that if the war is not won, that they will have to jump in the ocean.⁴⁵

The irony of this statement is that neither the war nor the ocean is near this community.

A few notable individuals in national political theatre interviewed for this research also openly supported the war efforts of the Rajapaksa regime, and did not forget to blame the groups advocating anti-war sentiments in the country and those who supported the peace initiatives of Wickramasinghe and Kumaratunga. As one high-ranking JHU member angrily remarked:

... the so called peace discussions held in Colombo by ICES, CPA, SSA and NPC left us out. The idiots like Keerawella, Sara, and Uyan were bribed by NIPU. Also the Berghof initiative called ONE TEXT even excluded JHU, while having LTTE representation in it. ... There is a manifest antipathy towards Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. Flawed articles were taken as articles of faith. Rhetoric was changed later by CPA. Earlier these people said the government cannot defeat the LTTE. Now they are silent. All these are Catholics; they have a hidden agenda.⁴⁶

Similar attitudes were shared by other respondents who are members of JVP and JHU, indicating further polarisations and fragmentation of the Sinhalese political elite group in Sri Lanka around the already finished war. Moreover, as can be seen in the above statement, the feeling of exclusion (self-imposed exclusion?) in national politics cannot be limited to superstitious political coalitions and the actual or perceived roots of the conflict by different political forces. They seem to stem from perceptions of deep-seated class conflicts. Thus, the imminent military victory of the government also seemed to have rekindled anti-political solution sentiments in the South. Moreover, the further polarisation of political society provided a new lease of life to old political conflicts between self-identified nationalists and non-nationalists and those nationalists dubbed 'turncoats'. This situation was reflected in a comment made by one young respondent with a JVP background, who quoted John F. Kennedy with sarcasm, '*ada jayagrabanayata piyavaru ganawanak innawa, parajaya hariyata anatha daruvek wage?*' (Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan).

These trajectories of war, peace and conflict cultured by domestic and international political and economic conditions undoubtedly had influenced the new directions of politics and state building in the country. The alliances gathered in favour of total war and the eventual triumph of discourse of total war has greatly influenced the moral-ethical content of the post-war state of Sri Lanka. Here, Rajapakse's subsequent embarkation on the path of 'war for peace' is an important trajectory of state transformation and state building. This trajectory of transformation of the State especially in its moral domain is in complete contradiction as a country with a Buddhist majority. The political strategy Rajapaksa took to address the struggles he faced in elite politics by capitalising on the issue of war, peace and conflict exposes the Clauzawitzian problematique of 'war (in this case conflict and peace) as the continuation of politics by other means'. The various actions, strategies and policies used by the Rajapaksa government during and in the post-LTTE era firmly indicate a grand political strategy (blessed with little serendipity), developed to retain political power, legitimacy and struggle for hegemony building in politics dominated by the far-Right ruling elite groups. Their attempt of building the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state seems to benefit them the most.

5.6.3 What is next? State (re)building by military doves and persecution of peace hawks

There are a few important landmarks in post-war Sri Lanka. The statements below captures the various dynamics developed in this period that has important implications for state building and the direction of elite politics in the future.

Now the war is over, Tamil people must be given freedom to live. We should not contribute towards creating a situation that can give birth to another Prabhakaran. We should not allow the country to go on the wrong path. If this happens I am ready to correct the path, leaving behind my uniform (Excerpt from a speech delivered by Former Army Commander General Sarath Fonseka in Washington, reported on 27 October 2009, Sri Lanka Guardian)

A number of factors helped sweep him to re-election victory on Tuesday: his fiery rhetoric and sure popular touch; his emphasis on his role in last year's war victory; and ordinary people's sense that their streets are simply safer than they have been for the past 30 years because of the defeat of the Tamil Tigers (Charles Haviland, BBC News 29 January 2010).

Entitled 'Sri Lanka War-Crimes Accountability: The Tamil Perspective', the cable from the Colombo Embassy was written 11 days before the poll that saw President Mahinda Rajapaksa defeat General Sarath Fonseka, his erstwhile war ally now in jail... 'While regrettable, the lack of attention to accountability is not surprising. There are no examples we know of a regime undertaking wholesale investigations of its own troops or senior officials for war crimes while that regime or government remained in power... In Sri Lanka this is further complicated by the fact that responsibility for many of the alleged crimes rests with the country's senior civilian and military leadership, including President Rajapaksa and his brothers and opposition candidate General Fonseka' (Bryson Hull quoting US diplomatic cables, posted in Wikileaks, sent by the US Ambassador in Colombo, H.E. Butenis, 2 December 2010, Reuters)

The data collected for this research indicates that post-war Sri Lanka is not free of dangers inspired by deeper polarisations in political and non-political society based on the events and new discourses on conflict, war and peace. In the post-war context, the new and old rivalries in elite politics negatively influence determining the paths of state building. Especially, the renewed sense of regional sub-nationalism inspired during the phase of war for peace under Rajapaksa in the south and the deepening of the democracy deficit under the Rajapaksa regime paints a worrisome scenario for state transformation. As a respondent of this research with no open political party association noted, 'today people like war, they focus on a set of selected events'. In the words of an academic with a UNP background who was interviewed for this research, 'in 2003, there was a muted sense of security, under that context people supported peace. But today in the context of heightened security the same people support war'. Pointing to the direction of politics and strength and the support secured by the Sinhalese political leadership thanks to the war a Marxist parliamentarian observed, 'in general the Sinhalese are happy about the LTTE defeat'.

Such statements on the one hand demonstrate the space and opportunity for gathering and mobilising societal forces within the Sinhalese majority and on the other, the likelihood of further polarisation of opinions of the top brass of politics, fragmentation of the society, deepening inequalities and open attempts of capitalising on the contribution made by individual political elites and groups during the war. These statements also suggest that diffusing oppositional forces to the new path of state building the possibility of use of coercion and re-occurrence of violent social and political conflicts. However it is important to note that the strength of such oppositional forces is contingent on number of factors, especially related to the degree of democracy deficit feeling by the society, progress made on economic and political development.

Numerous dynamics unveiling in the post-war period point to 'square one of politics' in which the elite conflict over political and state power and the deepening democracy deficit is obvious. However, at the time of writing this chapter, the direction these political developments point to are gloomy. The LTTE's defeat and the new political-moral alliances secured by the Rajapaksa regime with the previous pro and anti-LTTE Tamil political parties and with the Sinhalese extremists seem to have effectively dismantled the oppositional forces. Besides, the strategy and the action pursued by this new alliance is also shrinking space for meaningful political action by other forces. Meanwhile where the political strategy is not enough to deter the resistance of the oppositional forces, the ruling elites in power are increasingly using the coercive powers to deal with them. Based on the data collected from the majority interviewed for this study, a new ruling class headed by a Rajapaksa dynasty consolidated on the war victory is steadily creating another brand of politics, in which kith and kinship and 'Bonaparte politics' are the main characteristics. The post-civil war developments suggest dangerous signs of rising of authoritarianism under Ra-

japaksa and an elite politico-military rule. This prediction is already reflected in the processes and strategies used for securing election victories in the post-war period by the UPFA (i.e., 2008, 2009 and 2010) under the leadership of Rajapaksa at provincial, regional, district and national levels. Further, the passing of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution,⁴⁷ which removes the duration on the term of office of the Executive President, provides another example to. Besides, a constitutional process initiated by the President to change the current electoral system in favour of the regime in power through introducing the 19th Amendment to the Constitution⁴⁸ provides another convincing example in this regard. Both of these, together with Rajapaksa's re-election in January 2010 are important milestones towards long-term power. The above mentioned and political actions taken by Rajapakse are all aimed at reaching pinnacle of political and state power. Unfortunately these strategies are unaffected by the local and international community concerned about widespread allegations of human rights abuses, charges of war crimes, securitisation of the state, nepotism, media censorship and curtailment of freedom of speech. Regardless of what this strategy will achieve for Rajapaksa, the general principles underlying the overall strategy are identified as far-Right direction of politics of post-war Sri Lanka.

As the political destinies of his predecessors have proven, in the long run, winning a war may not be sufficient to survive in political power. As has been historically proven, when the struggles of the periphery for social and economic development deepens, a mandate given by the voters for peace or war under a specific context becomes less important. Also as observed in this research, already in the post-LTTE period, euphoria of war victories are fast diminishing its magical powers in a context of looming economic hardships. Unless otherwise opting for 'rule by military might and coercive power', before the euphoria of war victories completely vanishes away, the promised post-war dividends must be delivered to the societal forces especially for those who stood by Rajapaksa to survive. Majority of the respondents of this research already casted doubts and raised questions on the ability of Rajapaksa to wage the 'war on development and economic prosperity' with the same coalition that supported him in winning the war against the LTTE. In light of this dilemma, a young JVP member warned, 'things can go either way. Due to the economic hardships faced by the country and people, sometimes, even Ranil can get elected. Ranil is the image of the liberal consumerist society'.

This chapter showed that after eliminating the LTTE, which had been portrayed as a long-standing common enemy of the majority Sinhalese – the umbilical cord that tied the Sinhalese political elites and the Sinhalese majority together – the conditions in politics and economy poses great difficulties for the political elites in harmonising the political power struggles of the centre and the economic struggles in the periphery. This situation may increase the use of direct violence and state repression to curtail the demands of the society for social and economic development. This plausible scenario in post-war politics is likely to threaten the struggle for hegemony building by the Sinhalese political elites. However, there are strong signs of early realisation of this likely scenario in politics by the current elite faction in state power. The already embarked combination of security state model and military-dynastic model of governance (Rajasingham-Senanayake, 27 February 2011) and the politico-military rule pursued are few signs of attempts to refigure the balance of strategic elements of the hegemony building strategy. The ways in which the international community responds and engages with the political elites and the general situation in the country also seems crucial for shaping the future political landscape and the trajectory of state building. Whatever course of action the current ruling elite faction will take in mustering their domination and authority in politics, in the name of settling the ethnic conflict will definitely influence the trajectory of state building, because the so-called ethnic conflict was never a simple ethnic conflict. It was a costly manifestation of the political conflict of the Sinhalese, the factionalised Sinhalese ruling elites and the long-standing democracy deficit in the country. Further it also points to the underlying right-wing hegemonic tendencies in national politics. The strategies, ingredients and the processes that the current ruling elite faction use for its own survival in the

name of post-war *whatever* will soon receive a verdict from the various social and political forces in the centre and in the periphery.

5.7 Play of discourse or play of morality?

In the last two decades, conceptualisation and re-conceptualisation of conflict, war and peace, and the shifting discourses on the above trio has added important dynamics in fashioning the trajectories and the strategic content for state building in Sri Lanka. Following Clausewitz's famous quote on war, in which he claims war as continuation of politics by other means, this chapter suggests that in the case of Sri Lanka, it is not only war, but also conflict and peace are politics by other means. As discussed in previous sections of this chapter, apart from the actual events, the multiple and sometimes contradictory political discourses pursued by the Sinhalese political elites have been important ingredients of coalition building and state building.

This research observes that since mid-1990s, by combining a range of material and subjective realities internal and external to Sri Lanka, the dominant elite factions have not only constructed a series of discourses on the above trio, but also used them to generate political capital. Besides, this research also identifies that these discourses having manufactured and communicated new moral values in the society. Following Van Dijk, who reminds that discourse communities are not only mere political groups but are also socio-cognitively formed groups that share their shared knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values with a wider society (1993), this chapter claims that the series of competing and contradictory discourses presented by the country's political elites generated and communicated competing and contradictory moral values on the issue of conflict, war and peace, and under different state-in-society dynamics effectively used them to reproduce the social, political and cultural conditions necessary to maintain their political dominance and advance struggle for hegemony.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the political discourse making on conflict, war and peace in Sri Lanka did not take place in isolation. They were essentially built on the nature of elite-subaltern politics. Further, the deteriorating economic performance of the country (Kelegama 2000:480) and the aggressive dismantling of the social welfare state since the early 1990s (Dunham Undated:3) and the pendulum shifts in political discourses and the public opinion are identified as other important conditions responsible for the political situation in the country. Apart from the traditional tools of patronage politics and Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, this chapter suggests, especially since mid-1990s, that the events and the discourses of war, conflict and peace having been used by the Sinhalese elites, regardless of the fact which faction they represent, for capturing state power and advancing conditions for political domination. Needless to mention, this strategy having had a lasting impact on realising a new strategy of state building and hegemony building, which in view of this research caused major tensions for democratic state building. Following Foucault's idea of power and knowledge of discourses (Foucault 1972 cited in Philips & Jorgensen 2002), this chapter asserts that regardless of the contradictory nature of the discourses constructed by the political elites during the period from 1994–2009 having played a crucial role in constructing the social world and manifesting the truth in the society. Importantly, this chapter asserts, the military defeat of the LTTE and the triumph of the political discourse of the Total War for Peace in 2009 under Rajapaks coalition in politics that justified and pacified war has strengthened the hegemonic relationship building between the Sinhalese political elites and the majority Sinhala-Buddhist society.

5.8 Concluding remarks

By applying Tillian analogy on European state making that illuminates the significance of war in state building and by further building on Gramscian theory on hegemony, this chapter showed

that the events and various complementary and contradictory discourses coined by the Sinhalese ruling political elites on conflict, war and peace from 1993 to date, have been used as powerful tools of hegemony building. Further, this chapter shows that the events and the discourses of war, peace and conflict have not only been used for hegemony building but also have significantly contributed in unveiling a new architecture of state building in the post-war period. This chapter shows that this new architecture of state building continues to patronise the Sinhalese masses that are the main subordinate group of the Sinhalese political elites and the most important force for consent building. Besides, this chapter also showed that the elites using war for offer patronage to the Sinhalese masses in return of the support they rendered for the war. The patronage benefits received by the Sinhalese were mainly in the form of employment, especially in the expanding military sector (See table 4.14 in the previous chapter) and as promises and guarantees made on protection and security.

This chapter shows that especially after eliminating the LTTE in May 2009, the current Sinhalese ruling regime has been able to direct the path of state building into a new direction with the consent and the approval of the majority Sinhalese. This new architecture of post-war state building is designed to allow for the ruling elites to maximise their power ambitions. As presented in this chapter, the various discourses found by the Sinhalese political elites on war, peace and conflict were not mere discourses they essentially corresponded a set of moral values that has been serving as important determinants of the subjective path of contemporary state building. Findings of this chapter also showed the eventual triumph of the discourse of total war for peace under President Rajapaksa is being increasingly used to redefine and readjust the rules of the political game to address the elites power needs, to redress and renew political alliances and the political relationship between the Sinhalese elites and the Sinhalese masses. This chapter found that the above have strengthened the old tensions and have given rise to new tensions on democratic state building in Sri Lanka. In this new scenario, the Sinhalese political elites and the Sinhalese majority have been able to develop a new moral and ethical⁴⁹ domain for the post-war state that justifies the domination and hegemony of the Sinhalese and repression of the oppositional forces to this direction of politics.

This chapter also showed that in post-civil war Sri Lanka, the pressure on the political elites is mounting to deliver on the promised post-war dividends. The current global and local political-economic conditions have posed a major threat in translating the promises made during the war to real benefits. Under this scenario, the political elites in state power are increasingly betting on manipulative strategies and new moral values based on the past war victories and the new found indigenised notion of moral values officiated and institutionalised in the formal and informal institutions, cultures and practices of the state. So far, these strategies have found an appeasement and patronising effect among the Sinhalese. At the same time, in the name of national security and protection, the elites are using the same strategy to redress their legitimacy, justify the elimination and neutralising oppositional forces to their rule and to the new architecture of the post-war state building that benefits them. Lastly, given the above scenarios in politics this chapter claims that the new boundaries in politics, political alliances and the new moral values invented by the political elites based on the war victories showing strong indications of further capture of post-war state building by the right-wing forces in politics.

Notes

¹ This chapter uses politics as derived from Harold Lasswell, in his classic work, *Politics, who gets what, when, how* (1958). Lasswell suggests politics as the study of influence and the influential (quoted in Leftwich 2004: 6). This research adheres to combined explanatory approaches entailing structure and agency dimension in politics (more details on these two approaches separately see Leftwich 2004:6).

² For example, works of Bell 1999, 2006; Hartzel 1999; Stedman et al. 2002; Wallesteen 1997; Darby & McGinty 2000; Darby 2001; Stedman 1997; Galtung 1996; Lederach 1999; McGinty 2008; Richmond 2006,

³ The concept of positive peace refers to a situation where structural inequalities leading to violent conflict is addressed, whereas negative peace refers to a situation where absence of direct violence. Just peace refers to a situation where it is not only the conditions of positive and negative peace is met, but importantly where justice is delivered to the parties involved in the violent conflict.

⁴ Tilly refers to war making as eliminating or neutralising the rivals outside the territories where power holders and wielders have clear and continuous priority. State making is referred to as eliminating or neutralising the rivals inside the territories. According to Tilly, in addition to the above there are two other functions that states fulfill, i.e., protection (understood as eliminating and neutralising the enemies of the clients of the power holders and wielders) and extraction (understood as acquiring the means of carrying out the first three activities (1985:181).

⁵ Another main criticism of this thesis is it not being connected with theories of the internal constitution of societies and governments (Giddens 1994:229).

⁶ Refer to Paul Collier (2003,2002), Ted Robert Gurr (1993) and Syed Mansoob Murshed (2010) for an elaborate understanding of contemporary civil wars. These authors use the thesis of greed and grievances to explain various aspects of contemporary civil wars.

⁷ Given the limited space in this thesis this chapter partially exposits the aspect of political party driven patronage system nurtured in the guise of war in Sri Lanka. However this research understands that the linkage between war and patronage system warrants a thesis length attention. The works of Rajesh Venugopal on military fiscalism (2011) throws some light on this linkage. For an economic explanation on how civil wars limit state fiscal capacity and being a factor for encouraging patronage systems that benefits only a few, see Chowdry & Murshed, Undated

⁸ In the years 1987, 1988,1989, 1991, 1992 the economic growth of Sri Lanka was at rate of 1.5,2.7,2.3,4.6 and 4.3, % respectively (Central Bank of Sri Lanka cited by Kelegama 2000).

⁹ Premadasa also carried out talks with the LTTE; however they were a less public affair.

¹⁰ At the end of 1995, the total amount of national debt was estimated at Rs.289,410 Millions (IMF 2001:79).

¹¹ Details of this situation are explained in Chapter 3 in relation to patronage politics of this period.

¹² She started a short-lived new political party called Bahujana Nidahas Peramua.

¹³ For a scholarly discussion on this aspect please read Volkan 2004.

¹⁴ Others who extended support to PA were a Tamil MP of the Up-Country People's Front and three Tamil parties representing the Northeast.

¹⁵ In 2005, the LTTE assassinated the Foreign Minister of the PA government Mr Kadiragamar.

¹⁶ Gramsci defines ethical state as one that tends to put an end to the internal divisions of the ruled and to create a technically and morally unitary social organism.

¹⁷ JVP's political position on the framing of the conflict was shaped by Mr Rohana Wijeweera, the leader of the JVP in the 1960s. According to Wijeweera, the problem in Sri Lanka is rooted in the class issue rather than on the issue of ethnic identity. According to the JVP, when class emancipation is achieved, the problems of self-determination of Sri Lankans will be solved naturally. Therefore, in JVP's thinking, there is no special attention or a process needed to address the so-called ethnic conflict. Following this logic, even contemporary members of the JVP was quick to blame the Tamil nationalist project and the armed struggle of the LTTE for distracting the struggle of the entire Sri Lanka in achieving self-determination in its post-colonial phase of state building.

¹⁸ Due to these reasons during this time period Sri Lanka recorded the highest incidents of violence and killings. However, it is also known, it is not only those who took part in these anti-state activities that got killed, but also thousands of innocent civilians who had no connection to these events. Under the umbrella of state of emergency, many other political scores were believed to be settled by various groups.

¹⁹ Instead of a widely speculated impeachment motion against the Executive President, UNP brought a no-confidence motion against the Chief Justice, who was a political appointee of the President.

²⁰ In *Civilization and its discontent* Sigmund Freud refers to the ways in which insignificant differences among people, who are otherwise alike, form the basis of feelings of strangeness and hostility between them. According to Uyangoda's analysis the two leaders of the UNP and SLFP (PA) also faces this paradox in politics, where the real differences of them have begun to diminish, while symbolic and personal differences have become belligerently salient (Uyangoda & Perera 2003: 70–1).

²¹ According to Zaartman, mutual stalemate refers to a situation when a party will pick the alternative which it prefers, and that a decision to change is induced by increasing pain associated with the present (conflictual) course (2001:8).

²² Advent of Norway to the context of Sri Lanka was largely borne out of a personal invitation by the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister to the Norwegian Ambassador to Sri Lanka in 1997.

²³ For an analysis of the Thimpu Principles, see http://www.sangam.org/ANALYSIS_ARCHIVES/Edirisinghe.htm.

²⁴ The role played by India as the mediator of the 1987 peace process and the bitter memories it created in the aftermath of the failed peace talks facilitated by Norway in 1997 are significant.

²⁵ Norway's support for peace processes in the Middle East, Guetamala, Colombia and elsewhere, Norwegian participation in a number of international peacekeeping operations, as well as the fact that Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo, all have contributed to Norway's reputation as a country of peace.

²⁶ According to Paris, neo-liberal peace endeavours are based on two paradoxes: the nature of democracy and capitalism. In his view these are essentially competitive systems of political and economic management. Therefore, relatively cohesive groups in societies that had been traditional rivals over ethnic, social, political, economic or resource issues tend to remain in conflict within a new context of elections where groups compete for votes and in the market where competition for resources, contacts and consumer is tense. Further, Paris concludes that the neo-liberal political and economic reforms introduced by powerful actors to domestic institutions as remedies to civil conflicts have not been able to either reduce or eliminate internal conflicts. Further in some cases, such reforms have further destabilized the domestic environment, a situation more applicable to the third world States (For a detailed account see Paris 2004). Lipchutz is another critic of the neo-liberal peace thesis. His main argument is that neo-liberal settlement could only bring the warring elites to the negotiating table (Winter 1998:5-19).

²⁷ According to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission during the period from 2002–2007, LTTE has committed 3830 ceasefire offences and 351 offences by the Government forces (www.peaceinsrilanka.org/negotiations/slmm-statistics)

²⁸ SLMM leader was later included in the talks and signed a bilateral agreement with the LTTE leader to resolve the issues.

²⁹ More details of the report can be read at <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cnotes2%5Cnote174.html>

³⁰ The ISGA proposal of the LTTE at <http://www.idpsrilanka.lk/Doc/Related%20Articles/ISGA.pdf>

³¹ Later Kumaratunga also took over few other important state bodies that generate large sums of revenue for the government, like the National Lotteries Board. As reported, during 2002, under the UNF the lotteries board had generated 940 million rupees but only 470 million rupees was put in the President's Fund (Dias, 2003).

³² JVP was demanding the portfolio of Ministry of Mahaweli Development. The work of this Ministry is closely tied to the agricultural and rural areas of the country, both these constitute JVP's main voter base.

³³ Estimated at US\$ 1.5 billion (Goodhand et al. 2005:22).

³⁴ In 2007 there were numerous newspaper reports published by Rajapaksa's ex-confidants Sripathi Suriyaarachchi and Tiran Alles for providing LTTE with Rs.15 billion to prevent Tamils in the north casting their votes. The electoral results from the north of the country provides clear evidence that people under the LTTE control have not casted their votes. During this time period, many predicted Wickramasinghe would win the elections provided that the Tamils vote, as their political leniency is suspected towards the UNP and Wickramasinghe over Rajapaksa, who contested elections in alliance with JVP and JHU, the nationalist political parties.

³⁵ Murshed refers to windfall as an unexpected source of income, which can arise either because of a surge in external assistance, a sudden increase in the process of existing natural resources (2010:178). Like both Kumaratunga and Wickramasinghe who bet on the surge of reconstruction funds after securing a peace agreement, Rajapaksa seemed to have expected a surge of reconstruction funds by ending the war by military means and the catastrophic humanitarian situation a large-scale military action will lead to. For an economic explanation on the political economy of reconstruction with a view of redistributive issues and inequality, refer to Murshed (2010:81–83).

³⁶ Rajapaksa secured the support of 17 parliamentary members of UNP, including its deputy party leader, Karu Jayasuriya. All these members received important Cabinet Ministerial portfolios in the Rajapaksa's government.

³⁷ The 13th Amendment of the constitution established the Provincial Council system in Sri Lanka in 1987 as a part of the Indo-Lanka Agreement.

³⁸ As discussed in the previous chapter, state patronage in this period exclusively offered to the Sinhalese male youth as army recruits suggests the heightening of the patriarchal nature of the patronage system during the war as well as important intersections of gender, class and generation. These aspects warrant further research and if not a thesis length, at least a chapter-length elaboration.

³⁹ Following the ban, the EU member states froze LTTE's financial assets and prohibited the provision of fundraising directly or indirectly to the LTTE, and enforced a travel ban on LTTE officials (Nesan 2006).

⁴⁰ As a number of respondents pointed out, in general, at the time of fieldwork, a large number of Sinhalese people still seemed to be 'okay' to find a political settlement and waging a total war with the LTTE. According to an opinion survey conducted in the whole island (excluding the Northern Province) in 2008, the violence of war has been cited as the top priority to be addressed in Sri Lanka (Irwin 2008:3). According to 60% of the Sinhalese interviewed for this survey, continuation of violence of the LTTE was mentioned as a very significant problem faced by the country, whereas 73% of Tamils recognised the ongoing war as the main problem faced by them (Irwin 2008:5). According to the opinions expressed by the Tamil respondents of the same survey, escalating violence during 2006 and 2007 was a major concern of them as an ethnic group (Irwin 2008:5). Also see www.gallup.com/poll for more opinion surveys conducted in Sri Lanka between 2006–2010 on the issue of conflict, war and peace

⁴¹ In local propaganda Rajapaksa was compared to King Dutugemunu. According to an epic story in Sinhala Vamsa stories King Dutugemunu defeated the Tamil king Elara in a final battle and unified Sri Lanka.

⁴² Term borrowed from Uyangoda.

⁴³ During the last phase of war the UK alone is reported to have supplied new military equipment to the government. In 2009 the UK government has issued eight arms licenses to Sri Lanka (www.caat.org.uk).

⁴⁴ *Ranaviru* is the Sinhala word for war hero.

⁴⁵ Doluwa is a small village situated in the hill country, far away from the actual conflict zone and from the coastal areas.

⁴⁶ The acronyms and short names refer to government and civil society institutes that dedicated their work in promoting peace in Sri Lanka. The individual names mentioned in this statement are names of a few academics who are known as pro-peace allies of previous governments.

⁴⁷ The 18th Amendment to the Constitution broadly include repealing Presidential term limits, repealing the Constitutional Council, and giving the President more power over commissions, including the National Police Commission.

⁴⁸ As reported in the newspapers the 19th Amendment will introduce a hybrid of proportional representation and first-past-the-post systems. Further, it will also reform the 13th Amendment to enable a measure of power from the centre to the provinces and, thus, from the majority to the minorities. As reported the government also plans to reduce the number of constituencies from 160 to 140 via a re-demarcation process. As suspected all these changes is geared to secure maximum politico-electoral advantage to the UPFA and to ensure an adequate parliamentary majority for Rajapaksa for a long time to come (Gunasekara 2010).

⁴⁹ The moral and ethical domain of the state is built on the idea of values. Values is understood as qualities that are worthy of esteem, which generate principles to guide us in our thinking and actions and standards against which we judge ourselves and others. Normal and aspirational values are another important distinction to be taken into consideration. In this chapter the references made to moral values and ethical state is based on the aspirational values. Aspirational values are values that are closer to notions of ideals, goals and visions and are values that are sought rather than assumed. They provide yet to be realised direction for life and society (Rayner 2003).

By keeping in mind that ‘...to trouble oneself with the task of dealing with something that has been adequately dealt with before is superfluous, a result of ignorance, or a sign of evil intent’ (Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Bajjah quoted in Chatterjee 1986:1), this thesis re-problematizes the case of state building in Sri Lanka. It posed four main research questions that were aimed at identifying the key hegemony building processes used in Sri Lanka’s state building project and examined how the dynamics of Sinhalese politics influenced the founding and shaping of these hegemony building processes, as well as the state building project. Furthermore, this research attempted to identify the main tensions between hegemony building and state building to understand the influence of such tensions on democratic state building in Sri Lanka.

Given the importance of the historical and contemporary challenges faced in Sri Lanka’s state building efforts, which was marked by a number of incidents of violent social conflicts, in particular the civil war which lasted for twenty-six years (1983–2009), this thesis identified the relevance of re-problematizing the issue of state building to pay closer attention to the politics underlying Sri Lanka’s state building project, the main actors and the nature of political relations implicated in the hegemony building processes used for state building. Further, while finding answers to the main research questions, this research emphasised the need for an understanding of the changing dynamics of broader state-in-society and political-economic relations, as well as the various trajectories of historical and contemporary Sinhalese elite politics.

This thesis mainly used data gathered from a series of field interviews conducted in Sri Lanka in 2009 and 2011 and a preliminary survey conducted from 2005–2007. These field interviews were conducted with the aim of gathering primary data on the perceptions and experiences on politics and state building from a selected group of individuals who play an active role in Sri Lanka’s politics. By complementing the primary data gathered through the field interviews with secondary data gathered from an extensive literature survey and a process of observation, this thesis argued that state building in Sri Lanka has been juxtaposed and taken over by the struggle for hegemony of the right, in which the Sinhalese political elites and the broader Sinhalese community have played a decisive and an equally important role.

This thesis identified four main hegemony building processes for state building in Sri Lanka: Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism; patronage politics at political party level; patronage politics at state level; and the events and discourses on conflict, war and peace. Although the aspect of patronage is obvious in the second and the third hegemony building processes identified in this research, which is extensively dealt with in Chapters 3 and 4, this thesis emphasises the importance of patronage politics entailing the hegemony building processes of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism (Chapter 2) and events and discourses of war, peace and conflict (Chapter 5). In the latter two processes, the aspect of patronage politics is manifested in the form of ethnic-identity politics. Besides ethnic identities, in the events and discourses of war, peace and conflict, patronage politics is also identified along political party identities. Given that patronage is traced in all the four hegemony-building processes identified in this research, this thesis shows that patronage politics is a central

theme underlying the hegemony building and state building processes. Moreover, this study showed that the patronage political system constitutes a significant part of the overall political strategy devised by the Sinhalese political elites in their attempt at political alliance building and consent building, which was launched at several levels, including material and ideological, and through the political party system and state apparatuses. This thesis found that, at any given time, all these levels are being operationalised simultaneously. Historically, when political elites assigned importance to patronage politics and used it as a trusted strategy and key tool of political incorporation of the lower-class subalterns into national politics, this thesis found that the political elites in state power compromised the economic development of the country, as well as the political development of the masses. Complementing Waldner's work on statebuilding in late development countries (1999), this thesis also shows that, since an early stage, a result of using patronage politics as the main tool of political incorporation of the Sinhalese masses from a lower-class background by the factionalised political elites is that post-independent state building repeatedly encounters significant challenges in consolidating a solid foundation for economic development and state capital accumulation, as well as realising egalitarian politics and a democratic state. Further, by illuminating the agendas, actors and the narrow political and economic interests pursued by using the patronage system, this thesis showed that Sri Lanka's patronage political system is significantly denoting right-wing politics that are designed to widen social inequalities.

By bringing patronage politics to the forefront of the analysis, which is often taken for granted or treated as a phenomenon of politics, this study was able to highlight the actors and the role they played in building hegemonic alliances, which has concretely and negatively shaped the path of state building. By doing so, this research was able to equally highlight the role played by the political elites and the subalterns in realising and sustaining an undemocratic path of state building. This study showed that, historically, the patronage system as a political strategy of mobilisation and consent building has been functional and effective in harmonising the struggles of the elites and the subalterns, by which the Sinhalese political elites have been able to temporarily overcome their struggles for political power. Further, it also finds that the elites have failed to build a democratic state that benefits the entire society. Institutionalisation of the patronage political system in the state system by the political elites is a specially significance outcome. Further, although patronage politics are primarily seen as an innocent tactic used in elite politics, the social, political, cultural and economic exclusion that it gives rise to in the society as a whole systematically paved the way for advancing right-wing politics among the elites and the subalterns.

Although, in this thesis, the four hegemony building processes identified are discussed separately, in actual practice these four hegemony building processes operate complimentarily and constitute the key elements of a grand political strategy aimed at hegemony building by the Sinhalese political elites that embraced by the majority Sinhalese. Also, since late 1970s, rather than serving the interests of the Sinhalese masses, who are important allies of the hegemony building pursued by the Sinhalese political elites, the main four hegemony building processes have largely served the material and power interests of the elites. A lack of internal and external political-economic conditions to reproduce the elites' power and status contributed to the intensifying of the elites struggle for political power at the centre. Further, the above developments have important bearings on the frequent use of coercive force by the elite factions, against each other and against their subaltern dissidents. This thesis shows that the four hegemony building processes are being used and advanced by the factionalised Sinhalese political elites to redress their political legitimacy, obtain and create consent, and build consensus with various competing and conflicting societal forces in the majority Sinhalese community. It is not only that consent building and alliance building through manipulation is being utilised, as the findings of this research suggest, but that these four hegemony building processes are being equally used to force compliance, suppress and persecute the oppositional forces. In this sense, the research shows that, when taken together, the hegemony-building processes denoting a combination of varying degrees of vio-

lence, identified at the structural, direct and cultural levels, and the struggle for realising the hegemony has consolidated the dominance of right-wing forces that are causing major tensions between hegemony building and democratic state building.

As far as the main outcomes of the use of the four hegemony-building processes, this thesis shows that none of the processes have had a positive impact on realising egalitarian politics or democratic state building. Rather, the research shows that these processes have encouraged passive and less meaningful ways of political participation for the majority Sinhalese and the curtailment of their capacity to challenge or redirect the state building project into a more democratic direction that could better enable them to overcome their struggles for upward socio-economic mobility. Also, this thesis shows that, instead of promoting an egalitarian political culture and an egalitarian society, these hegemony building processes identified and the functions they fulfil in politics effectively promote the principle of inequality in social, economic, cultural and economic relationships in society.

Although in the current body of literature on Sri Lanka's experiences in state building, this aspect of inequality is widely recognised at a vertical level, mainly along inter-ethnic relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, this thesis finds that the hegemony building processes have strengthened inequality at the horizontal level among various groups within the Sinhalese community. However, this thesis also shows that, due to the effect of common sensitising, the legitimacy of an unequal society and continued justifications offered for the ontological condition of inequality experienced by various groups in the Sinhalese society by the political elites, the long term prospects for realising the socio-economic struggles of the majority Sinhalese subalterns on an equal footing are poor. Further, the detrimental effects of this state of mind of the Sinhalese affects all the communities. Precisely, in terms of class relations, this situation is forcing the majority of the Sinhalese community to act in the spirit of the class in itself and allowing the political elites to act in the spirit of class for itself. The mentality of class in itself among the Sinhalese subalterns further galvanises the elites' political strategy of divide and rule, not only along the ethnic boundaries, but on other social faultlines as well. These developments increasingly challenge the realisation of an egalitarian political culture, a project that could benefit the subalterns the most, and cultivation of favourable conditions for actual democratic state building.

In contrast to the dominant and hegemonic inter-ethnic approach applied to the study of state building in Sri Lanka, this thesis shows the importance of examining intra-ethnic, social, economic and political relations to understand the case of state building in Sri Lanka. Given the importance of the Sinhalese community as the island's numerical majority, this thesis showed that, for any understanding of state building, as much as the inter-ethnic politics between Sinhalese and the Tamils must be discussed, a close examination of intra-Sinhalese politics is essential. In particular, locating the power struggles of the Sinhalese political elites at the centre, as well as the socio-economic struggles of the Sinhalese living in the peripheries, under changing local and global circumstances helps to form an understanding of state building in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, this thesis showed that, as much as the major political events in high politics and elite politics is necessary for a detailed understanding of the case of Sri Lanka's state building and hegemony building, it is important to study the subalterns, subaltern politics, the motivations and the ways in which the political integration and political participation of the subalterns is being configured. By highlighting the role of subalterns in general and in elite politics, this thesis attempted to draw attention to the role (regardless of it being active or passive) of subalterns in state building. By doing so, rather than locating the subalterns as passive spectators of elite politics and limiting their identity as victims of the state and elite politics, this thesis illuminated the role they play in transforming the state and hints at the potential role they could play in redirecting Sri Lanka's state building project towards a democratic path. In order to realise the lat-

ter, subalterns should disembark themselves from the right-wing politics of the political elites. At present, there are no signs of transformation of subaltern politics in this direction.

This thesis also showed that in order to understand contemporary state building, the relevance of taking detailed accounts of the historical context of everyday forms of political participation and political incorporation of the Sinhalese society, and the ways and forms in which they continue in contemporary times. One good example that is emphasised in this thesis is the evolution of the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist ideology in the nineteenth century under the British rule and the changing dynamics of class relations in this period. Investigating the historical context pertaining to the genesis of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism also brought another important observation to the forefront, i.e., the usefulness of class as an analytical category for the study of state building and hegemony building in Sri Lanka. The application of class in this thesis for understanding the genesis of contemporary political discourse on ethnic nationalism is found to be contrary to the mainstream approach. However, by bringing class back into political analysis, this thesis challenged the dominance of ethnicity and ethnic essentialism applied to studies of Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, this thesis showed that the use of class and class relations for examining the case of contemporary state building experiences in Sri Lanka needs to develop a sophisticated class schema that takes contemporary global economic and political changes into consideration.

The important implications of the findings of this study are threefold. First, neither hegemony building nor state building in Sri Lanka can be understood separately. The process of hegemony building and state building shows an important overlap with each other and they operate in unison with blurred boundaries between the two. In other words, the findings of this research suggest that state building in Sri Lanka is hegemony building and vice versa. Second, given the strength of the Sinhalese community as the island's largest numerical majority in an era of participatory democracy, this study shows the importance of examining the struggles, and actual and perceived dilemmas the majority Sinhalese face under constantly changing local, regional and global political and economic circumstances. It is in this context that an adequate understanding of broader state-in-society relations that inform the elites' political strategies and their temptation and deliberate attempts at replacing and presenting state building projects with the much-desired project of hegemony building, and the various hegemony-building processes presented in the name of state building can be adequately evaluated. It is in the same vein that the struggles of the political elites and the political strategies they devise to pursue their political goals by incorporating the majority Sinhalese can be understood. These conditions, taken together, can help explain the trajectories of state building and state transformation, as well as the trajectories in politics that is increasingly capturing by right-wing forces. Third, post-9/11, in international policy-making circles, state building is dominantly understood as an exogenous and mechanical process that attempts to (re)build the political institutions and (re)write the rules of the political game. This thesis shows that state building also requires an understanding of complex local processes that are material, subjective, historical and contemporary, local processes that are aimed at addressing everyday social, political and economic relations of the competing and conflicting societal forces concerned. In this regard, this study recognises the need to pay an equal level of attention to all such processes and their connections. The findings of this thesis imply that relational dynamics cannot be completely understood and dealt with only within the parameters underlying democratic political institutions, formal democracy and within the boundaries of the written rules. One must also examine the level and degree of existence of substantive democracy, historically and in contemporary times, politics taken for granted and politics as usual, such as patronage politics that operate inside and outside the state institutions at the micro, macro, familial and community level. This study also suggests that capturing these aspects requires a trans-disciplinary approach to state building.

One of the most interesting contributions of this study is the attempt to highlight the importance of disaggregating the state and the state building processes by privileging relational dimension of state building. This disaggregation is found to be a useful way of finding the connections between many parts that constitute the state, as well as locating the power relations and the various kinds of struggles in everyday relations, personal, community and large group levels; the different sources they are derived from, the nature and the utility of these power struggles and the dynamics these relations form with various societal forces under different circumstances must also be examined. Understanding these different disaggregated parts individually and as a whole creates the potential for understanding the state, society, various manifestations and the future major propensities underlying state building.

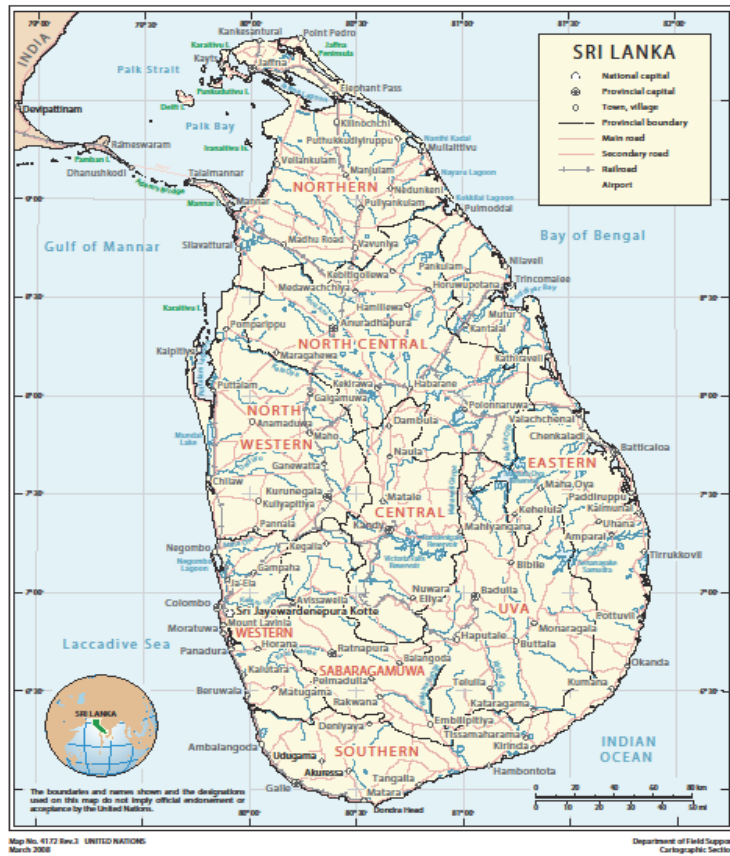
The results of this study have several policy implications. It is not only in situations of controversial and conflicting inter-ethnic relations, especially in the context of civil wars and post-war scenarios, where subtle hegemony-building efforts taking place at the intra-ethnic community level could be a factor for directing state-(re)building projects to a violent path and conceiving an undemocratic system of governance. Further, this study highlights the need for examining policies aimed at state building in state-in-society relations in the broadest manner possible, by locating different types and scattered sets of social, political and economic engagements that inform the elites overall political strategy of alliance building and state building. In other words, the findings strongly suggest paying serious attention to the possible spaces and opportunities available for political elites in power in ill-conceived or nominal democracies to opt-out from democratic state building to pursue hegemony building by using right-wing politics that serves their narrow power interests.

Further, as observed since the early 1980s, this study shows there has been a continued over-determination of inter-ethnic identity and ethnic essentialism in international policies that is found to be only partly applicable, therefore there is a need of reconsidering and calling into question its effectiveness in studies of Sri Lanka's state building. The plethora of ill-conceived policy blue prints found on binary inter-ethnic relations and continued illumination of need to get rid of the state's coercive behaviour should be re-evaluated, as this thesis shows that the above are causing more harmful results, such as widening the gulf between the Sinhalese and the Tamils community, reinforcing ethnic essentialism in social discourse, creating a lack of awareness of real causes underlying the present undemocratic nature of the state and lack of inducement for forging broad social solidarity amongst the masses across ethnic and other divides. Further this study also shows that illuminating the adversarial inter-ethnic relations in top-down policy measures gives more space for the Sinhalese ruling elites to justify their manipulative strategies and sell ethnic-identity politics to advance their narrow political goals.

Although this study briefly mentioned the importance of class as a useful concept to study state building, due to various limitations it did not focus on it. Nevertheless, in future studies a systematic application of class is recommended, as it has direct relevance to the social actions leading to an overcoming of the struggles of upward social and economic mobility of the masses and the realisation of an equitable society. Lastly, given the importance of class as a broader social identity and the egalitarian goals it seeks in politics, it has great potential for cutting across narrow ethnic boundaries and redirecting state-building projects by the majority of the population towards a more profound democratic state.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Map of Sri Lanka



Appendix 2
List of key respondents (information rich cases)

Respondent No.	Academic/ Researcher	Politician or a high-ranked member of a Political Party	Journalist	Active member of Civil Society	Govt. Official (current/former)
R. 1	X	X			X
R.2			X	X	
R.3		X		X	
R.4					X
R.5	X			X	
R.6	X			X	
R.7	X			X	X
R.8	X			X	
R.9		X		X	X
R.10	X				
R.11	X			X	
R.12	X	X		X	
R.13		X			X
R.14	X			X	X
R.15	X			X	
R.16	X				
R.17	X			X	
R.18	X				
R.19	X			X	X
R.20		X	X		X
R.21	X	X	X		
R.22	X	X	X		X
R.23		X	X		X
R.24				X	
R.25					X
R.26				X	

Appendix 3
Training syllabus

1. Introduction to the Art of Conflict Transformation
2. Introduction to Coaching: Context, Theory, Practice
3. Self-Analysis
4. Advanced & Applied Conflict Transformation
5. Conflict Sensitivity in Development Work
6. Designing peace building projects
7. Result-based monitoring of peace-building projects

Appendix 4*Distribution of percentage of employment in the main sectors in the economy (2000-2010)*

Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services
2000	36	23.6	40.3
2001	32.6	23.9	43.5
2002	34.5	22.4	43.1
2003	33.6	23.3	43.1
2004	33	24.8	42.1
2005	30.3	26.3	43.3
2006	32.2	26.6	41.2
2007	31.3	26.6	42.1
2008*	32.7	26.3	41
2009*	32.5	25.5	42
2010*	32.5	24.6	42.9

*These figures exclude the Northern and Eastern provinces.

Source: Sri Lanka Labor Force Survey, Annual Report 2010, available at http://www.statistics.gov.lk/samplesurvey/LFS_Annual%20Report_2010.pdf (page 14)



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