Governing a Sri Lankan higher education institution across the colonial difference

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**i. Abstract**

This study explores colonial and neoliberal governmentalities through semi-structured interviews with students and faculty at a for-profit transnational institution of higher education in Sri Lanka. The institution is partnered with University of London (UOL), which for a century has overseen the education of students in British colonial territories. UOL continues to govern the conduct of students and faculty in 80 institutions of higher educations across the global south, mostly through annual examinations that constitute the entirety of assessment. UOL examinations are a singular mechanism that displace educational authority from institutions and lecturers while rendering classroom teaching unnecessary. The results of this study suggest that UOL secures its authority over educational spaces in the global south by governing students as “external,” classrooms as merely auxiliary spaces in which “distance education” takes place, and lecturers as unnecessary. Students and faculty form subjectivities around the absence of lecturers, assessment, or university. These deficits reify the need for UOL’s intervention and, more broadly, the coloniality of knowledge production.

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**iii. Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank those who gave their valuable time and perspectives in the form of interviews. You made this research possible. I sincerely hope that this study benefits you and other University of London students and lecturers, recognized and unrecognized. I would also like to thank Dr. Murat Oztok, who led me through the challenges of my first interview-based study. Thank you Dr. Ishara Mohammed, whose ayurvedic treatments made it physically possible to transcribe the interviews. Thank you Venerable Dr. Bhikkhuni Kusuma, whose guidance made this spiritually possible. To my mother and father, Catherine and Steven Golding, thank you for the freedom and support you have provided to me. To my mother and father by marriage, Rebecca Perera and Frank Gunasekara, thank you for welcoming me into another way of understanding. Thank you Florita Gunasekara, my wife. Without you, I would not have begun or completed this journey.

**iv. Publications derived from doctoral work**

Golding, D. (2020). Forward. In *Escaping the Whirlpool,* Venerable Bhikkhuni Kusuma. Colombo: Buddhist Cultural Centre.

Golding, D. (2019). “The Darker Side of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*: Coloniality in Modernist Cinema.” *Postcolonial Studies* 22 (3): 303-324.

Golding, D. (2019). “Rocko’s Magic Capitalism: Commodity Fetishism in the Magical Realism of *Rocko’s Modern Life*.” *animation: an interdisciplinary journal* 14 (1): 52-67.

Golding, D., & Kopsick, K. (2019). “The Colonial Legacy in Cambridge Assessment Literature Syllabi.” *Curriculum Perspectives* 39 (1): 7-17.

Golding, D. (2018). “The Colonial and Neoliberal Roots of the Public-private Education Debate in Sri Lanka.” *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 16 (1): 145-174.

Golding, D. (2017). “Border Cosmopolitanism in Critical Peace Education.” *Journal of Peace Education* 14 (2): 155-175.

**1. Introduction: The “wicked” politicization of education in Sri Lanka**

The debate on private transnational higher education is one of the most pressing issues facing Sri Lanka today. On October 29th, 2017, the Sri Lankan Government dissolved what had been the country’s only private medical university, the South Asian Institute of Technology and Medicine (SAITM). The decision came after years of protest and controversy surrounding the quality of education provided at SAITM, as well as its deeper implications for the Sri Lankan education system. Since SAITM’s establishment in 2008, it had been the target of protest and criticism from the Inter-University Students’ Federation as a threat to Sri Lanka’s system of free public higher education (Fernando, 2009; De Alwis, 2014; Kanakarathna, 2017a), and from the Government Medical Officers’ Association (GMOA) as depreciating the country’s medical standards (Hettiarachchi, 2012). These protests and debates continued across the country for nearly a decade, elevating the controversy of SAITM into a symbolic struggle for the future of the country’s system of public higher education (The Sunday Times, 2016; Hiru News, 2017). The GMOA and the Ceylon Teacher’s Union organized multiple national strikes of medical and educational professionals to protest the privatization of education in the country (Jayawardhane, 2017; Mallawarachi, 2017b). Students faced serious consequences for participation in anti-SAITM protests, including being subject to tear gas and water cannons deployed by police (Kanakarathna, 2017b; Mallawarachi, 2017a), arrests (The Sunday Times, 2017b, 2017c; Sri Lanka Mirror 2017), and loss of government scholarships (Wickramasekara, 2017). When the Government of Sri Lanka decided to dissolve SAITM in 2017, it was seen by some as validating the public heritage of Sri Lankan higher education. However, it was seen by others as a mostly symbolic victory, since the broader privatization of Sri Lankan higher education seemingly marched onwards.

The struggle over SAITM backgrounded crucial policy debates for the country’s future. The Government of Sri Lanka had taken a cautiously supportive stance on SAITM until its 2017 decision. Like many for-profit institutions of transnational higher education, SAITM was initially unaccredited by local agencies, instead deriving legitimacy from overseas partners like Nizhny Novgorod State Medical Academy in Russia and the University of Wolverhampton in the UK (Jayaweera, 2009). In its early marketing material, SAITM touted the opportunity to earn “a foreign degree” (The Sunday Times, 2009). The University Grants Commission (UGC), which is the governmental agency charged with the accreditation and oversight of the Sri Lankan higher education system, formally recognized SAITM as a degree-granting institute in 2011. Its newfound status was challenged in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka in a case that was ultimately dismissed (The Sunday Times, 2012). When the Government of Sri Lanka announced the dismantling of SAITM in 2017, it floated the possibility that the institution would be reconstituted as a non-profit university. Excess revenue would be allocated to scholarships, which in Sri Lanka play a significant role in enabling access to higher education for low-income students (Gunawardena, 1990). The government also announced that it would “make available, through financial institutions, subsidized student loan schemes to eligible students from low-income families to meet the cost of tuition and fees” (The Sunday Times, 2017d). Although the plan for SAITM’s reopening never came to fruition, these decisions indicated that the Government of Sri Lanka considered the issue of private transnational higher education not just as a question of the quality of education, but also the purpose of education.

This study investigates the influence of colonialism and neoliberalism on higher education in Sri Lanka by conducting interviews with students and faculty at one of the country’s most renown for-profit transnational higher education institutions. The institution, which will be referred to by pseudonym London Institution of Higher Education (LIHE), is partnered with University of London (UOL). Education at LIHE is colonial in the sense that it is directed by British educators within UOL, an institution that itself has an extensive history of colonial education in Sri Lanka and elsewhere (Whitehead, 2005). It is neoliberal in the sense that it utilizes supranational knowledge economy networks to generate profit from a privatizing education system (Canaan & Shumar, 2008). The neoliberal knowledge economy that enables LIHE and other transnational education institutions is inseparable from the modern/colonial world system (Mignolo, 2003). Thus, UOL’s neoliberal approach to education must be situated within its colonial history.

The SAITM controversy was a flashpoint that emerged from centuries of transnational education in Sri Lanka, during which UOL played a central role. Sri Lanka was colonized by the Portuguese in the early 16th century, by the Dutch in the 17th century, and by the British in the late 18th century. Although the Portuguese and Dutch were somewhat interested in education as a form of cultural intervention in Sri Lanka, particularly through missionary work, it was British colonialism and its administrative state that implemented an extensive system of colonial education (de Silva, 2005). In 1921, the colonial government of Sri Lanka established Ceylon University College (CUC), which prepared students to take external UOL examinations (Warnapala, 2011). CUC administrators expressed concern that UOL’s single-examination assessment reproduced a ‘bias in the curricula that resulted in the retardation of the indigenous languages and scientific development in the country’ (Warnapala, 2011, p. 43). Even before neoliberal development had privatized a significant portion of higher education in Sri Lanka, UOL’s examinations were criticized for reducing CUC to ‘a mere coaching institution where students purchased instruction’ (p. 47). As the country transitioned to independence, Sri Lanka dismantled CUC and established the University of Ceylon. Their explicit intent was to decolonize the higher education system by decoupling it from British transnational education.

Since then, transnational education has found new significance in the vision for Sri Lanka to become a regional “knowledge hub” similar to Singapore and Hong Kong. In 2006, this vision coalesced as part of then-president Mahinda Rajapaksa’s 10-year national development plan, *Mahinda Chinthana*. It called for a number of education reforms, such as the strengthening of quality assurance and performance assessment regimes within its public education system, along with vocational training and partnerships between educational institutions and the private sector to ensure graduates are “employable.” In his updated *2010* *Mahinda Chinthana*, President Rajapaksa elucidated a vision for Sri Lanka as a “knowledge hub” in which transnational education providers would train the workforce for employment with foreign-based multinational corporations. Invoking Sri Lanka’s two-thousand-year history as a center of Buddhist scholarship, President Rajapaksa promised to solve the contemporary education crisis, which in his eyes is the:

result of insufficient and ineffective education systems of the past, we were creating a large number of unemployed graduates, leading to their being subjected to tear gas, tyre pyres consequent to the evil politicization of their problems by certain wicked persons. (Rajapaksa, 2010, p. 9)

In other words, the problem was simply employment. Any linkage with politics or the demos was motivated by evil. By locating student discontent in the labor market rather than the demos, President Rajapaksa would align national interests with the objectives of educational businesses and other private firms, thereby securing a social future in which education would serve to economize the political.

The reinvention of Sri Lankan education would not involve efforts of the state alone, but rather would be a collaborative project between state and private actors. President Rajapaksa specified that Sri Lanka’s new role as a knowledge hub would entail “a new educational framework that will provide liberal thinking, broad dialogue and opportunities for entertainment instead of the present system that confines the undergraduate to lectures, assignments and examination,” because “universities should not be factories that create technicians for employment” (Rajapaksa, 2010, p. 52). Nevertheless, efforts towards fulfilling his vision of a knowledge hub have “given greater prominence especially to the fields of Science and Technology, Information and Communication Technology, Skills Development, and Research and Development in Applied Sciences” (Samaranayake, 2016, p. 28). This aligns with President Rajapaksa’s (2010, p. 53) intention to “promote the establishment of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) through international institutions to create new employment opportunities for the youth.” As exemplifying the role of business process outsourcing to the Sri Lankan knowledge hub, London-based bank HSBC trains Sri Lankan employees to perform various outsourced business operations in collaboration with the Chartered Institutes of Management Accountants (CIMA), also based in London. CIMA has an extensive network of education-providing partners in Sri Lanka, with over 13,000 students as of 2015 (Daily News, 2015). The Sri Lanka Association of Software and Service Companies (2013) heralds this collaboration between CIMA and HSBC as a sign of Sri Lanka’s increasing prominence as a global knowledge hub. The proliferation of for-profit firms offering technical and business degrees is visible throughout Colombo’s landscape, where billboards advertise degree offerings from dozens of transnational education institutions. The private higher education institution on which this study focuses, LIHE, holds a prominent position among Sri Lanka’s higher educational spaces.

LIHE is a for-profit transnational education institution in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It enrolls approximately 1,000 students, the majority of whom are matriculated with UOL. Most students are enrolled in business or law programs. UOL (n.d.-c) categorizes them as “distance learning” students. For each course in their three-year bachelor’s degree program, they take a single annual written examination of three hours in duration, which constitutes the entirety of assessment. UOL provides students and lecturers with the same materials: subject guides for each course of 100-250 pages in length, past examination papers, and supplemental online materials. Subject guides include “Essential Reading” and “Further Reading” sections consisting of academic articles and books. Students are not given access to any academic databases, and the LIHE library has very few of the books listed. The facilities at LIHE’s nonresidential one-building campus are simple, with the majority of space occupied by classrooms. There is little space for recreation outside of a library, a computer lab, and a small eating area in a parking garage with ping-pong tables. Although lectures do not assess students, classroom attendance is mandatory. According to administrators at faculty meetings, around 90% of LIHE lecturers are part-time, and 10% are full-time administrative faculty.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with students, faculty, and administrators of LIHE to investigate education at the confluence of neoliberalism and colonialism in Sri Lanka. LIHE instantiates not only UOL’s network of mostly-southern partner institutions, but more broadly transnational education governed at a distance by colonial and neoliberal expertise. Subjectivities at LIHE, therefore, likely form through an interplay with colonial and neoliberal governmentalities (Kalpagam, 2000b; Scott, 1995; Rose, 1999). UOL does not directly govern lecturers or classroom teaching; instead, its examination results circulate as currency throughout an “economy of merit and fault” (see Foucault, 2007, p. 173) between students, faculty, and graduates, as discussed in Section 4.4 of this dissertation. UOL examinations are mechanisms of governmentality in the sense that they “structure the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). They shape the desires, affects, dispositions, judgements, and practices of subjects, and therefore can be understood as the “conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1994, p. 237). Although UOL governs primarily through “the power of the single figure” (Rose, 1999, p. 205) potentiated by annual examinations, the resultant subjectivities cannot be understood by analyzing the content of curricula or assessment. Instead, UOL’s governmentality can only be explored by attending to its contact with subjects, which this study undertakes using semi-structured interviews.

This research is intended to be relevant not only for the global population of students and faculty whose conduct is governed by UOL, but also for broader questions about governmentality at the intersection of neoliberalism and colonialism. Neither SAITM nor LIHE can be understood through the critical frames typically cast on neoliberalism in higher education studies. Instead, an approach to governmentality must be employed that considers Sri Lanka’s overlapping histories of colonialism and neoliberalism. Foucault’s (2003, p. 27) emphasis on “capillary” power and corresponding effort to “understand power by looking at its extremities, at its outer limits” is suitable for spaces of modernity in which governing actors take concern, at least to some extent, for the population in its entirety. In the global north, neoliberalism reconfigures relations at the capillary level, placing in peril the very existence of demos and society (Brown, 2015; Kiely, 2016). Brown fears the implications for subjectivities under neoliberal desocialization:

Why would peoples want or seek democracy in the absence of even its vaporous liberal democratic instantiation? And what in dedemocratized subjects and subjectivities would yearn for this political regime, a yearning that is neither primordial nor cultured by this historical condition? (Brown, 2015, p. 18)

Reflecting on the desocialized role of the neoliberal university, she asks, “what does such a transformation in the education of the many mean for the promise of popular sovereignty, as well as for the practices of liberty and equality at the heart of liberal democracy?” (Brown, 2015, p. 181). Although public universities in Sri Lanka have played a limited role in “the education of the many,” they have long excluded the majority of the population, instead serving as the avenue for a small portion of the urban middle class to secure lucrative government jobs (Warnapala, 2011; Golding, 2018). Rather than being shaped by governmentality at the capillary level, subjectivities in Sri Lanka and other spaces of coloniality are mapped by gradients of inclusion and exclusion that resemble a more arterial topology of power, as I argue in the next chapter. How does arterial power shape the neoliberal university in Sri Lanka, along with its governmentality, subjectivities, and democratic purpose? By what mechanisms does governmentality reproduce the coloniality of knowledge production at the periphery of the global knowledge economy? These questions will be addressed by situating LIHE and UOL within the modern/colonial world system, in both practical and epistemological terms.

**2. Theoretical framework: Colonial and neoliberal governmentalities**

This study uses the concept of governmentality as a framework to understand the circulations of observation, knowledge, control, practices, incentives, and discourses that flow through University of London (UOL), the degree-granting body that partners with educational institutions mostly located in the global south. This includes the institution in Colombo, Sri Lanka that is the focus of this research, to which I refer by the pseudonym London Institution of Higher Education (LIHE). Both UOL and LIHE are understood as fluid “assemblages,” theorized by Deleuze and Guattari (2005) as networks of highly mobile connections that link ideas, discourses, actors to form solutions to territorialize corresponding “problem spaces.” This contrasts with liberal conceptions of the university as a space in which national discourse negotiates issues of greater social significance, researchers produce public knowledge, and students gain a sense of citizenship and an ability for critical inquiry. UOL of course does not relate to its lecturers and students around the world through any social contract, or even through formal pedagogical relationships typical of education in the global north. LIHE itself is not concerned with faculty research or professional development, and lecturers do not design curricula or assess students. Instead of being bound by the rigid formal relationships of the liberal arts university, participants at LIHE opt to integrate into the assemblage of UOL education as self-interested subjects: LIHE as a profit-seeking firm, lecturers as paid professionals, and students as both consumers of education and workers competing in the labor market. Such integration is always dubious, subject—at least on paper—to formal and continual suspicion, audits, and assessments to gauge whether the conduct of diverse actors aligns with UOL’s objectives. By intervening upon the practices of lecturers, students, and ideas at key nodes of the assemblage, UOL is able to produce legitimating discourses, which in turn articulate with broader assemblages such as contemporary Sri Lankan political issues, international education, and the global knowledge economy.

**2.1 Contemporary colonial governmentality**

Theories of governmentality have been used by a number of scholars to analyze colonial relations as constituted by points of contact between subjects and technologies of the self (Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava, & Véron, 2005; Kalpagam, 2000a, 2000b; Morgensen, 2011; Scott, 1995; Stoler, 1995). However, as Fimyar (2008, p. 12) observes, “in education policy studies there is a clear gap in research that adapts governmentality to a non-Western context.” This adaptation requires reflection on the colonial order of knowledge, reconsideration of Foucault’s theories of governmentality, and a critical examination of the ways in which colonial governmentality can be understood. For this undertaking, Foucault’s work is acknowledged as a crucial starting point for the study of governmentality without being sanctified as entirely authoritative. This approach was reflected in Rose’s (1999, p. 4) envisioning of his own work as having a “looser, more inventive and more empirical” relationship with Foucault’s theories. Rose justified his position by agreeing with Foucault’s own claim that his analysis of governmentality “is not in any way a general theory of what power is” (2007, p. 1). In the same vein, my contextually-specific theorization of UOL and LIHE is underpinned by a reading of Foucault that historicizes governmentality within the modern/colonial world system (Mignolo, 2000). In Foucault’s genealogy of “the population problem,” he focuses almost exclusively on the population as a geographically and racially European body. For his theories of governmentality to be relevant to the majority of the world’s population, including the population involved with LIHE, they must be explicitly located within European colonial thought. In particular, the technologies of power that Foucault theorized within the space of the “population problem” must be understood within the problem space of the majority population, which is the problem of understanding and conducting the conduct of the colonized. Foucault’s theories are useful to the analysis of Sri Lankan education inasmuch as the modernity with which they engage is fundamentally connected with coloniality. To mark Foucault’s governmentality as a governmentality of modernity compels inquiry into the mechanisms and processes by which governmentality structures the colonial subject.

Colonial governmentality is not a mere historical concern, but rather it remains a prolific apparatus of power. The colonial difference continues to amplify the inequalities of contemporary developmental and neoliberal relations. Accordingly, Mohanty (2013, p. 968) identifies “post-” scholarship, such as postcolonial, postfeminist, and postintersectionality theory as characteristic of a neoliberal intellectual culture that “domesticates power differences, transforming systemic projects of resistance into commodified, private acts of rebellion.” These forms of scholarship portend the “threshold of disappearance” upon systemic analyses of heteropatriarchy and colonialism. Mohanty defends these “modernist” analyses, territorialized onto geographies and identities, against the neoliberal cosmopolitan emphasis on mobility. She suggests caution when translating theories across the colonial difference, which too often involves a “flattening” of place-based knowledge and a globalization of Eurocentric neoliberal values. Considering her reflections, the study of London Institution of Higher Education (LIHE) and University of London (UOL) should be seen as geographically specific to one institution and historically specific within a particular colonial and neoliberal moment. Such a study must not presume to exist within a universally postmodern or postcolonial moment, but instead should address colonialism and modernity as active currents of thought and power.

Colonial governmentality is particularly useful lens for the study of international education, which as both an institution and a space of knowledge contestation has been instrumental in reproducing the colonial difference. Rodríguez (2012) identifies colonial violence as an ongoing constitutive process of the neoliberal US academy. He is critical of the tendency for neoliberalism to be addressed as the central problematic within higher education. Neoliberalism represents one modality that imbricates with many divergent technologies of control that reproduce the coloniality of power in the US university. By situating neoliberalism within broader colonial histories, “scholarship that rehistoricizes regimes of incarceration, war, sexuality, settler-colonialist power, and gendered racist state violence . . . constitutes a radical reproach of institutional multiculturalism and liberal pluralism” (Rodríguez, 2012, p. 812). The multicultural and pluralistic discourse surrounding UOL’s “international education” therefore must also be rehistoricized within colonialism. In Sri Lanka, colonial and neoliberal governmentality operate in conjunction with one another to continually remap the colonial difference, the boundary between interiority and exteriority, the global and the local (Scott, 1995).

If Foucault seeks to trace the emergence of the modern governmental state, then it is this modernity that must be considered in both spatial and temporal terms. Mignolo (2000, p. 722) understood modernity as emerging within a “modern/colonial world—that is, located chronologically in the 1500s and spatially in the northwest Mediterranean and the North Atlantic.” Like Foucault, Mignolo understands the Christian and secular state not in opposition to one another, but rather as a reconfiguration of power relations. This *orbis christianus* was reworked into secular cosmopolitanism, which were “two different faces of the same imaginary—the imaginary of the modern/colonial world as an interstate system regulated by the coloniality of power” (Mignolo, 2000, p. 730). He writes that “the first global design of the modern world was Christianity,” which incorporated colonized populations into the imaginary of the *orbis christianus* (Mignolo, 2000, p. 721). Governmentality, according to Foucault, is also an “absolutely global project” that seeks to constitute a population as the target of its intervention (2007, p. 117). Foucault gives little consideration to the unequal forms of inclusion within this population, since he primarily addresses modernity as an era rather than a spatial arrangement. By contrast, Mignolo provides an insightful analysis of the ways in which the colonial difference is reproduced as inclusion and exclusion. Debates circulated throughout the pastorates of Christian missionaries regarding whether indigenous people in the Americas were human­—and thus whether they could be included, what that inclusion meant, and how it related to rights and citizenship (Mignolo, 2000). The indigenous population was a space constructed and contested by various authorities regarding how the circulations within the indigenous population encompassed as a territory of the security apparatus could be subsumed by the *orbis christianus*. The imperial and papal sovereigns merged into a benevolent and governmentalized “religion-state” when they finally brought the indigenous population into the flock by acknowledging “the rights of the people.” Territories mapped as colonial became seen as deficient, in need of the universal truths contained by a cosmopolitan modernity centered in Europe. A specifically colonial governmentality, with mechanisms and modalities distinct from what has been called “neoliberal governmentality,” is important to understanding UOL’s colonial relationship with Sri Lankan educational spaces.

Locating the mainstream theories of governmentality within northern modernity opens a number of theoretical possibilities. One postulation could be that the mechanisms of power identified by these theories are only applicable in the global north, because they were inextricably connected with northern and modern social realities and thought. This must be true to some extent if we are to accept Foucault’s notion, expanded upon by Rose, that governmentality is not a fundamental “nature of power” but rather involves an imperfect confluence of various historically specific techniques, procedures, practices, affects, rationalities, and ethics. Another theoretical avenue could involve comparative postcolonial studies to seek precisely that universal “nature of power” that may be suggested by mainstream governmentality theory. While tempting, this research makes no such effort for two reasons. Primarily, the social scientific pursuit of universal truths has historically been an instrument employed by white men to center the experience of the male colonizer (Lewis, 1973; MacKinnon, 1982). Secondarily, the idea that power has an intrinsic nature is likely contrary to the very methodology of governmentality studies. Another response to the location of mainstream governmentality studies within northern modernity, and the approach undertaken in this research, is to trace the various ways in which governmentality operates across the colonial difference in order to reproduce and delineate both modernity and coloniality. UOL’s mechanisms of governmentality translate across the colonial difference, with LIHE as a nexus of connectivity between the global south and the global north, unemployability and expertise, coloniality and modernity.

Foucault’s work has been critiqued for the Eurocentrism of various theoretical aspects of his work, including those of imperialism (Spivak, 1999), history (Pesek, 2011), sexuality (Stoler, 1995), and spirituality (Siisiäinen, 2017). Said (2000, p. 196) is particularly critical of Foucault’s pretensions of universalism, expressing concern that Foucault’s “Eurocentrism was almost total, as if ‘history’ itself took place only among a group of French and German thinkers,” showing “no real interest in the relationships his work had with feminist or postcolonial writers facing problems of exclusion, confinement, and domination.” Schaub (1989) even contends that despite the influence of “Eastern” religions in Foucault’s thought, particularly in his discussion of monasticism, discipline, and pastoral power, the manifestation of this influence is constrained to subtext. Indeed, Foucault’s (2007) lectures on governmentality focus explicitly and exclusively on Christian practices, although he makes a passing note about the similarity between Buddhist and Christian asceticism. Foucault (2007, p. 149) acknowledges the Eurocentrism of his analysis when he names “the entire Western world from the thirteenth to the seventeenth and eighteenth century” as the site of “struggles over who would actually have the right to govern men, and to govern them in their daily life and in the details and materiality of their existence.” Rather than examining the struggles between coloniality and its resistance, Foucault (2007, p. 298) argues that governmentality emerged in negotiation between a plurality of European states without acknowledging that these states were united by their shared interiority within the modern/colonial world system. He treats coloniality as not only exterior to Europe but also peripheral, as though the relationship were simply what he calls “commercial utilization” rather than a negotiation of conduct and counter-conduct. Thus, Foucault (2007, p. 103) concludes that since governmentality functions to ensure the “balance of Europe,” it is an instrument of peace rather than an instrument of war. Foucault says that the shift towards governmentality was enabled by “the abundance of money,” which he explains not through colonial dispossession but rather through “the expansion of agricultural production.” His apparent lack of concern with the world outside of Europe leads him to explain tensions between sovereignty and governmentality during the 17th century as mainly occurring in various socioeconomic crises within Europe. He does not situate within the colonial difference the tensions between sovereignty as the governing of subjects and as the realization of natural law, the latter of which European philosophers, colonial administrators, and settler colonists understood to be white supremacy. For Foucault, the sovereign’s constitutional objective was to consolidate its own power, in contrast to the governmentalized state that secures circulations and conducts the conduct of the population. However, the colonial state governmentalized while delineating the exteriority of modernity at which its topologies intersected with indigenous, subaltern, and anticolonial networks of power, which suggests a more complex relationship between mechanisms of security and sovereignty.

Colonial governmentality should not be viewed as merely an adaptation of European practices and rationalities to the colonial context, but rather as instrumental to the emergence of governmental practices in both spaces of modernity and coloniality. Rose (1999) argues that the governmentalization of the Indian state provided a crucial laboratory that produced new epistemes and technes for governing. He continues that the question of conducting conduct was particularly important when governing across the colonial difference because:

Given the geographical distance between the colonies and the metropolitan European centres, government was inescapably ‘at a distance’ in a rather literal sense. That is to say, to govern the colonies it was necessary to shape and regulate the self-government of those who would govern. (Rose, 1999, p. 111)

Kalpagam (2000a; 2000b) gives a more nuanced spatial analysis of colonial governmentality. She argues that the expansive distances through which colonial governmentality operated also affected its function in more qualitative ways:

The colonial career of the modern state in India forces us to rethink the nature of colonial governmentality, the link between population and national wealth in the colonial context . . . Colonial governmentality was not merely governance from a distance, but was fundamentally one in which governance by the modern State sought to supplant earlier forms of pre-modern rule through the autonomous rationality of the government. In doing so, the colonial state not only had to contend with extant cognitive frameworks and the associated practices of rendering the terrain of governance intelligible and readable in a manner suited to the political rationalities of pre-modern rule, but also encountered the difficulties of introducing an universalistic framework of knowledge into a colonial order of difference. (Kalpagam, 2000a, p. 419)

Colonial governmentality thus extended throughout a space of contestation between epistemes and technes at the exteriority of modernity, the universal moral inclusion of modernity, and the exclusions that delineate the colonial difference. Kalpagam (2000a, p. 420) navigates this paradox by arguing that governmentality “in the colonial context did not seek to create the citizen-individual, i.e. the individual as bearer of rights, but an individual who by being forced into a new sphere of commercial exchange would become the Homo economicus of the market economy.” The colonial-governmental subject participates in neoliberal cosmopolitanism to the limited extent that disparate levels of political and cultural inclusion are addressed through inclusion within the global knowledge economy.

A key distinction between the governmentality of modernity and the governmentality of coloniality is the role of inclusion and exclusion in pastoral power (Foucault, 2007). The delineation of the colonial difference comprised an ongoing project to pronounce who and what was included in modernity, which legally expresses itself as a cosmo-polis inhabited by fully-human individuals imbued with rights (Mignolo, 2000). For Kalpagam (2000a), pastoral power was important to colonial governmentality in that the colonizer assumed the shepherd’s superiority and fitness to direct the conduct of the colonized. Similarly, in observing colonial governmentality in South India, Pandian (2008, p. 93) connects the designation of the population as a “flock” with the colonizer’s dehumanization or “animalization” of the colonial subject, which both projected a savage nature onto the subject and necessitated the intensive management of their conduct by the “pastor,” in this case the fully-human colonizer. According to Rose, governmentality during this period played a vital civilizing function to tame the animalistic impulses of the subject:

For much of the nineteenth century, one pervasive objectification of the subject of government was an impulsive, passionate and desiring creature, who was civilized and made amenable to moral order by the action of the will and the inculcation of conscious self control and habits of responsible self-management. (Rose, 1999, pp. 43-44)

This idea conforms to Foucault’s (2007, p. 181) understanding of pastoral pedagogy as aiming to save the souls of the subject through a totalizing disciplinary power, a “teaching [which] must also pass through an observation, a supervision, a direction exercised at every moment and with the least discontinuity possible over the sheep’s whole, total conduct.” The notion that pastoral power, as exercised by the Church, reached into the “secret inner truth of the hidden soul” (Foucault, 2007, p. 183; see also Petterson, 2012) may be partially relevant to colonial contexts in which discourses of civilizing and salvation were essential in justifying colonial rule. Indeed, Rose (2000) argues that the colonizer territorialized the colonies as a space of biological difference, in which the colonized subject was seen as biologically degenerate, socially uncivilized, and requiring the governance of the metropoles.

Although colonial governmentality was spatially extensive and individually penetrative, the agency of the colonized must be taken into account. Freire (1996, p. 25) begins *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by stating that humanization is “the people’s vocation… constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation.” As governmentality operated to define the knowledges and practices of the colonizer as modern, it simultaneously constructed the savagery and dehumanization of the colonized. Pastoral power within spaces of coloniality therefore did not function as Foucault theorized from spaces of modernity, in which governmentality exercised a totalizing concern over the conduct of a population whose humanity was never in question. Sander (2016) posits an understanding of pastoral power that is more applicable to coloniality. He adopts Hombi Bhabha’s notion of “third space” to distinguish “space” from “place.” Place has a certain homogeneity, he argues, which renders it uncontested or uncontestable, whereas a space is heterogeneous, pluralistic, and thus a territory in which multiple agents and forms of power compete (Bhabha, 2004). Sander (2016, p. 9) then contends that “the traditional tactics of pastoral power within Christian communities are very much challenged by religious pluralism because these tactics are linked to a homogenous religious territory,” rather than to the heterogeneity, hybridity, and syncretism through which spaces of coloniality are formed. Inclusion of the colonized into the flock is therefore never total or hegemonic, but always partial and contested. Partial inclusion has, at various historical moments, characterized Sri Lanka as a colonial territory, Sri Lankan educational space as a training ground for administrators at the frontier between coloniality and modernity, and the Sri Lankan economy as a periphery of global knowledge production (de Silva, 2005). UOL’s governmentality mechanisms may operate for the partial inclusion of students, lecturers, and LIHE itself.

Addressing inequalities of inclusion enables a framework for governmentality that is far more applicable to spaces of coloniality. Cooper (1994, p. 1533) observes that “power in colonial societies was more arterial than capillary—concentrated spatially and socially, not very nourishing beyond such domain.” Reflecting on Cooper’s geography of colonial governmentality, Pesek (2011, pp. 46-47) argues that the study of governmentality within colonial contexts requires an acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of power techniques applied, since “Foucault is rather assuming that governmentality is characterised by the accomplishment of single or at least a dominant political rationality.” Pesek contrasts Foucault’s focus on singular, dominant governing rationalities and resultant subjectivities with their more multiplicitous and disparate manifestations throughout spaces of coloniality. Such disparities include those between the space of the Christian pastorates governed by European missionaries and the spaces of violence governed by colonial military officers, or between the spaces of extractive production integrated into transnational flows of capital and spaces of subsistence mapped as incurably savage and of no particular value to the colonial economy. The arterial topology of colonial governmentality is arranged through overlapping mechanisms, rationalities, and practices that gradate disparities of interiority and exteriority across the colonial difference (Mignolo, 2001). This spatial heterogeneity of colonial governmentality remains pertinent to contemporary coloniality. A striking example of the unequal spatialization of contemporary colonial governmentality is provided by Kooy and Baker (2008, p. 376), who posit Jakarta’s water supply as demonstrating postcolonial governmentality in that “access to different types of water supply infrastructure has been deployed both to define residents of the city as ‘modern’ or ‘in need of development’, and to rationalize exclusion from ‘modern’ water supply services.” This governmentality of difference is significant in the context of this particular study, since LIHE is governed as a liminal space between the interiority and exteriority of UOL.

Since colonial power was exerted onto an open, exterior frontier, mechanisms of security were essential in segmenting coloniality into spaces of differential inclusion. This simultaneous incursion of control and classification of the population became central to the way in which mechanisms of security perpetuated colonial power: “Colonial governmentality with population as its target, needed the population to be enumerated, spatially demarcated and classified according to a whole range of attributes thus transforming what were once fuzzy communities into enumerated communities” (Kalpagam, 2000b, p. 51). By “enumerated,” Kalpagam is referring to the colonial state’s production of demographic and statistical knowledges that constituted the population and subjected it to the universalist, scientific objectivity of the colonizer’s gaze. These segmented and enumerated communities became a vital space for contestation. Along these lines, Arnold (1994) finds a number of apparent discrepancies between Foucault’s theories on disciplinary power and the practical penology of colonial India. First and foremost, the colonization of the Indian body, soul, and conduct was met with far more resistance than in the governed subjects imagined by Foucault. Foucault saw counter-conduct as “the same phenomena in reverse, from the negative or reactive side” of pastoral power (2007, pp. 193-195), even distinguishing between reformist counter-conduct that aims to change the mechanisms and/or objectives of governing and “resistance to power as conducting.” However, he overlooks the more influential role resistance could take in circumstances such as colonization. The late colonial prison system of India occupied a problem space defined by the colonizer, namely the modernist civilizing project. British colonial administrators saw the autonomy of the Indian prisoner—in cooking their own meals, performing administrative duties, and producing mundane necessities of life—as indicative of chaos that could only be ordered through a forced redirection of the prisoner’s productive efforts towards regimented “hard labor” that resembled factory work. At the most capillary level, prisoners were governed by an informal power structure involving trade, politics, and culture. The openness of the space of coloniality meant that governmentality continually discovered and reacted to practices of resistance and other forms of counter-conduct that it struggled govern.

Colonial governmentality did not attempt to enclose individual prisoners within a panoptic institution governed by mechanisms of discipline. Instead, colonial power experimented with new mechanisms of security, whose origin Foucault historically identifies as the European town expanded by the project of modernity to an extent that it could not be enclosed within walls. Mechanisms of discipline were intensified within planned and controlled enclosures, whereas mechanisms of security allowed the governemental structures of the town to expand into preexistent “flows of water, islands, air, and so forth,” (Foucault, 2007, p. 19), which also include flows of people, animals, seeds, goods, currency, and ideas. To theorize colonial governmentality, security is perhaps a more suitable framework than discipline because the colonial subject lives within a web of power relations far beyond the conceptual or material grasp of the colonizer. As exemplified by Arnold’s historical penology of colonial India (1994), Foucault’s preoccupation with the emergence of security in modernist Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries situates their economies within larger systems of mercantilism without acknowledging the fundamentally colonial nature of the mercantilist economy. Foucault (2007, pp. 346-352) describes governmentality as capturing flows within the population that are characterized by a certain “naturalness,” thereby “integrating foreign countries into mechanisms of regulation that function within each country.” Despite the overlap between the “naturalness” of the population and the “naturalness” of the primitivist imaginaries that the colonizer mapped onto the colonized subject, Foucault does not sufficiently acknowledge mechanisms of security as a power negotiation between the project of modernity and the project of coloniality. Additionally, he notes the interdependence of conduct and counter-conduct without inquiring into the forms of counter-conduct that resisted colonial governmentality, which were likely grounded in understandings of power distinct from the pastoral power of European Christianity. In light of these shortcomings, Arnold (1994, p. 159) suggests that colonial governmentality operates within the body of the colonized as “an area of contestation between different understandings of the body, involving competing claims to speak for the body of the colonized and for its material, social and cultural needs.” Therefore, the totalizing subjectification that Foucault understood as governmentality’s site of intervention must be reconsidered as a fragmented contestation between the expanding territories of colonial governmentality. Educational subjects at LIHE are not navigating some sort of rigid or holistic disciplinary system. Instead, LIHE is merely one site at which entrepreneurial subjects continually pursue mobile transactions and connections with educational institutions, examiners, administrators, lecturers, other students, and potential employers.

Rose (1999) examines the prison as a site of not just mechanisms of discipline, but also mechanisms of security. He emphasizes the blurring of institutional boundaries as a key characteristic of what he calls the “control society” emerging through neoliberal governmentality. He gives the example of “decarceration” during the late 20th century, which entailed the expansion of carceral technologies beyond the prison in the form of community policing, community psychiatry, and a tendency to favor parole over long-term incarceration. Rose specifies that decarceration does not diminish carceral control, but should be “understood as a blurring of the boundaries between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ of the system of social control, and a widening of the net of control whose mesh simultaneously became finer and whose boundaries became more invisible” (Rose, 1999, p. 238). Security operates through permeation and gradation rather than enclosure and discipline.

UOL likewise expands control through a global population by blurring its institutional and geographic boundaries. UOL (n.d.-c) organizes its website by the “ways to study,” which include “distance learning,” a “local teaching institution,” and “on campus in London” at a member institution. In this case, “distance learners” include both those who receive no instruction, and thus are the students most external and loosely affiliated to the UOL system, as well as those who study at a “local teaching institution.” The latter are matriculated under the same “University of London Worldwide” registration process as distance learners, but pay additional fees to a local institution to receive instruction. Finally, studying “on campus in London” entails an entirely distinct registration route than UOL, meaning that students physically attend courses at a UOL member college. Significantly, the latter students receive instruction from lecturers who are afforded the authority to determine curricula and assess students, and thus are not subject to the single-examination assessment model of the UOL. In the University of London system, “Worldwide” signifies a population partially outside the institution, excluded from the domain of modern expertise in which lecturers are granted full authority over their courses. To explain the paradoxical status of “Worldwide” lecturers, who are most peripheral to the University of London system and afforded no pedagogical authority, colonial governmentality must be seen as an assemblage of divisional and selective processes of inclusion, divided not only geographically and demographically but also in its particular mechanisms of freedom that shape the colonial subject.

Colonial governmentality often employs unequal and contradictory forms of inclusion. Rose (1999, p. 71). indicates that “many of these experiments in the conduct of conduct of those who were the subjects of rule were first tried out in the colonies, where the relationship between discipline and freedom were attenuated at best.” This reflects the colonial subject in Sri Lanka, which was simultaneously incorporated into the economy through disciplinary mechanisms and excluded from political participation. During Portuguese rule during the 16th and 17th centuries, the metropole and its administrators remained mostly external to political power in Sri Lanka, instead establishing geographically concentrated economic enclosures over key resources such as cinnamon and pearls by constructing a trading fort in Colombo and securing naval trade routes (de Silva, 2005). The greater population under the three Sri Lankan sovereigns did not particularly interest the Portuguese crown, except for the small section of the population directly involved in the production of goods that the colonizers identified as valuable for the mercantilist economy. Thus, the Catholic missionaries of the Portuguese were less concerned establishing a pastorate among the greater population than with converting the individual sovereigns who could facilitate access to economic resources. This often exacerbated animosity towards Portugal and Catholicism amongst the population, especially since the Portuguese continually demolished Buddhist and Hindu temples (de Silva, 2005). Portuguese colonialism did not seek to establish a polity with recognized cultures and rights under which the totality of the population and its circulations could be conducted. Instead, it included the population only as biopolitical resources to be extracted from, as bodies to be statistically accounted for and productively conducted. This exemplifies colonial governmentality in that, as Kalpagam (2000a, p. 433) indicates, colonial governmentality was concerned with measuring the “labouring” and “non-labouring” segments of the population, yet differed from modern governmentality in that “the colonial State did not consider population itself to be wealth, and hence aspects such as education, health, and nutrition that figure so prominently in contemporary development discourses were in fact quite marginal.” Scott (1995, p. 204) brings attention to this extractive governmentality as a precursor to a broader “colonial governmentality . . . in which power comes to be directed at the destruction and reconstruction of colonial space so as to produce not so much extractive-effects on colonial bodies as governing-effects on colonial conduct.” The shift primarily involves a change in “colonial power's point of application, its target, and the discursive and nondiscursive fields it sought to encompass.” Scott goes on to say that in Sri Lanka, the narrative of modernization brought into focus the behavior and beliefs of the population, made visible by technologies of “public opinion,” which until then had not been of interest to the colonial administrative state. The cultivation of a modernized political rationality within Sri Lankan subjectivities “put in place a public sphere in which only certain kinds of knowledges and not others could circulate with any efficacy,” which were the knowledges of secular expertise produced within the spaces of British colonial education. This sphere of political knowledge is both participatory, in that it gives some consideration to the Sri Lankan population’s subjectivity, but also exclusionary, in that it maps differences between modernity and coloniality onto the terrain of the population’s conduct and beliefs. Therefore, by participating in for-profit transnational higher educational institutions such as LIHE the student accesses the exclusive knowledges and practices that give claim to modernity, a modernity that is ascribed value according to its usefulness to the global knowledge economy.

Colonial governmentality operates between local institutions of transnational higher education and their partner institutions in the global north, in this case between LIHE and UOL. But it also continues to shape the terrain of power and knowledge in which these institutions exist, segmenting the population according to their economic resources, cultural capital, and their labor potential for the global knowledge economy. It now appears that the differences produced through the coloniality of power did not resolve with legal and political decolonization. The population was not unified under the banner of national development and the rights of citizens, but rather has been further stratified by the neoliberal form of development that inserts itself into colonial frames. Venn sees colonial power as continuing in a form:

affiliated to the logic of war and centred on the tactic of a dominating power to legitimize its acts of appropriation of wealth and consolidate its rule by ensuring its monopoly of violence, to a power which is concerned with constituting individuals and populations within the framework of practices of normalization, disciplining, regulation, constitution and exclusion that apply to a community or social body conceptualized in the form of the nation-state. (Venn, 2007, p. 113)

He continues by arguing that neoliberal development is “motivating a shift towards this colonial (and feudal) form of power, characterized by the relation of externality between the state and certain categories of people,” particularly as it involves “the segmentation of the nation into diasporic or multicultural composites, the dismantling of the welfare state, the different role of the state in the global geo-political economy, and the individualization of responsibility by reference to the governed” (Venn, 2007, p. 117). Colonial governmentality works to renegotiate the relationships of responsibility between state and society within the problem space of “development.”

**2.2 UOL as a mechanism of development**

From within the colonial difference emerged an assemblage of new technologies of governmentality that became known as “development.” This reframing of late colonial relations marks the initial incursion of University of London (UOL) into Sri Lanka. Throughout its approximately hundred years of involvement in Sri Lankan education, UOL has undergone significant changes that reflect reconsiderations of the practical and epistemological characteristics of development. These include three important transformations: 1. UOL repositioned its interventional domain from public to private universities; 2. The arts, humanities, and sciences were gradually abandoned in favor of business and legal studies; and 3. Disciplinary mechanisms tightly bound to the colonial state gave way to new techniques of governing conduct within the universities, which were based on mobile and voluntary relationships. As argued in this section, the University of London has enacted these reforms to reconfigure the terrain of difference mapped by colonial governmentality, and in particular which segments of the population are included in its education and what that inclusion signals.

The boundaries of inclusion and exclusion traversed by colonial governmentality were negotiated during the initial discussions to establish the country’s first institution of higher education, Ceylon University College (CUC), which prepared students to take UOL examinations. At the center of these debates was the question of whether CUC would offer Oriental Studies, a field that both valued the “Orient” as a worthy object of scholarship and subjected the Oriental imaginary to an otherizing European gaze that continually combed ancient histories to locate its pure form (Gaeffke, 1990). The British colonial governor at that time, Robert Chalmers, advocated in favor of an Oriental Studies program at the new University College. His efforts should not be seen as a liberatory effort towards decolonizing Sri Lankan knowledge systems, particularly since that same year the 1915 Ceylonese Riots broke out, to which Governor Chalmers responded by overseeing “the policy of severe repression, reprisals, and the instances of indiscriminate shooting of villagers” with the aim of curtailing a decolonial uprising (Jayawardena, 1970, p. 232). Within a few months, CUC was founded with departments that spanned the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. These included the Department of Sanskrit, Pali, and Sinhalese; the Department of French and German; The Department of Classics and Philosophy; The Department of Geography; along with departments for other Western and Eastern languages, social sciences, and the hard sciences (Warnapala, 2011).

From the beginning, UOL’s role in governing Sri Lankan education was contested in terms of the colonial difference. Even with the inclusion of Oriental Studies subjects, the principal of CUC, Professor Robert Marrs, expressed concern that in regards to economics and history “the London examinations naturally do not, nor are they ever likely to include any reference to local history, conditions, or circumstances in either subject” (Warnapala, 2011, p. 57). CUC’s primary function was to train colonial administrators, since “administrative services had been the chief source of employment in the colonial territories and the higher educational institutions primarily catered to this demand” (p. 117). The prominence of liberal arts subjects signaled an effort to instill government administrators with the sense of citizenship and public service necessary for work at state institutions. CUC therefore coincided with the movement towards national development and the constitution of an independent Sri Lankan nation. At the same time, UOL’s Eurocentric curricula aligned emergent forms of postcolonial citizenship with the objectives of the modern/colonial project. Citizenship in post-independence Sri Lanka did not necessarily involve the sort of total inclusion of the population that Foucault theorized in his notion of the governmentalization of the state and the deployment of disciplinary power at the capillary levels. Instead, it reflected the arterial power of colonial governmentality in that a small elite maintained exclusive access to CUC education. The adaptation of “the content and method of teaching in all subjects, especially in Arts subjects,” was necessary to “provide more access to the upper rungs of the administrative cadre” and to prepare them for the Ceylon Civil Service Examination (p. 51). At the same time, this “Westernized middle class” maintained their exclusion within the arteries of power by opposing Oriental Studies and local languages as media of instruction within CUC, thus limiting the extent to which the CUC curricula was decolonized and accessible to the majority population. Sri Lankan educators and politicians stressed the implications of British-led university education in terms of national development, arguing that “the foreign content of curricula oriented towards the London University examination . . . [represented a] bias in the curricula that resulted in the retardation of the indigenous languages and scientific development in the country” (p. 42-43). The commissioners of the Ceylon University College Administration Report of 1927-1928 expressed concern that the University of London’s control over curricula reduced the purpose of education to mere vocational training and served to “stifle initiative and originality in the student” (as cited in Warnapala, 2011, p. 61). This motivated the acting principal of CUC in 1939 to advocate for a more prominent role for Ceylon History and Oriental Studies because “the special economic problems of Ceylon appear to offer the most fruitful fields of research in this country” (Ceylon University College Administration Report of 1938-1939, as cited in Warnapala, 2011, pp. 61). Calls to decolonize the Ceylon University College were voiced by educational:

“nationalists” [who] regarded a university as essential to “national existence” . . . The major premise of their case for a Sri Lankan university was that external examinations conducted by British universities were a poor substitute for a real university education in an indigenous university. (de Silva, 2005, p. 514).

In 1942, CUC became the University of Ceylon, signaling that it would terminate its affiliation with the University of London and begin to grant its own degrees. As a colonial institution, the University of Ceylon continued to operate in the explicit interests of the metropole until Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 (Warnapala, 2011).

UOL’s involvement in colonizing Sri Lanka fits within a broader development framework enacted by the British Crown. Development was the culmination of British colonialism in that “the United Kingdom government cannot really be said to have evolved a coherent or consistent colonial policy until it enacted the 1929 Colonial Development Act” (Abbott, 1971, p. 70). The 1929 Colonial Development Act sought to address the issue of unemployment in the colonies by developing agriculture and industry in a way that would, in turn, benefit the British economy. Although UOL did not operate under the explicit purview of the Development Act, it territorialized a similar problem space of unemployment. It posited its own solution, the training of colonial administrators, which facilitated the objectives of the Development Act by preparing the legal and political functionaries necessary to govern the extractive economy.

After the closure of CUC and the withdrawal of University of London from Sri Lanka, the political and legal decolonization of Sri Lanka was managed through the discourses and policies of national development. In the first decade of independence, the Sri Lankan state made an effort to understand and care for the concerns of the national population, which was required for pastoral power to operate. Some of the revenues from the postcolonial plantation export sector were directed into a poverty alleviation scheme that imported foodstuffs to distribute throughout the Sri Lankan population (Kelegama, 2006, p. 39). This approach reflects some defining characteristics of development theorized by Escobar. Escobar (1995) sees early developmental relations as territorializing an emptied problem space that is defined by lack or absence. Developmental discourse mapped “poverty” as an absence that spanned the majority population of the Third World. Escobar situates the problematization of poverty within late colonial relations of “development,” and particularly “the social,” a space which could only be modernized through the intervention of experts from the First World. The centering of “poverty” within the problem space of development unifies myriad efforts, from the cultivation of crops to the maintenance of infrastructure to teaching and learning, under a single metric and solution, both of which are monetary. Malnutrition in Sri Lanka was not addressed as a result of the colonial reordering of food production, which would have likely necessitated the dismantling of the plantation export economy, but rather by a national scarcity to be overcome through national development by intensifying plantation export production and importing food from abroad. The monetization of agriculture disregarded the agricultural knowledge that had been developed in Sri Lanka over thousands of years, and supplanted it with the specialist knowledge of agronomists and economists. By developmentalizing the Third World, social problems were posited as technical snags that required the expertise of the economists, engineers, and educators of the global north. Northern experts were thus seen as the sole proprietors of the scientific disciplines and knowledges of modernity. The Third World had knowledge as well, but it was marked by the “lack” that defined the Third World as premodern and impoverished.

The centering of poverty and employment as a problematic of education in the global south remained relatively consistent throughout the neoliberalization of development discourse and practice. Tikly (2001, p. 157) argues that colonial education laid the foundation for neoliberal education “by providing indigenous labourers with the basic skills and dispositions required by the colonial economic and administrative systems.” He goes on to say that the contemporary marginalization of the global south in international education is a direct result of both the Eurocentrism of colonial pedagogy and the limited, arterial inclusion of the population into its knowledge economy. Similarly, Rose (1999) connects the governmentalization of “the social” as a field of expert intervention with the monetization of human activity. He discusses how the free market of labor was established through interventions such as the erosion of land tenure and the criminalization of gambling, thereby restricting the population’s ability to subsist in ways other than wage labor. This led to the problematization of poverty through the New Poor Law of 1834, which instated workhouses for the poor (Rose, 1999). At these workhouses, the poor learned the discipline of alienated labor and gained a particular form of freedom, the freedom to sell their labor on the free market. However, the totalizing enclosure of the disciplinary workhouse is applied only to subjects whose labor capacity is deemed valuable, which excludes the majority population in spaces of coloniality. The relationship between governmentality and poverty should be reconsidered in light of the arterial topology of the Sri Lankan knowledge economy.

UOL resumed its provision of Sri Lankan higher education in the early 1990s when it partnered with LIHE. It is noteworthy that this new partnership was with a private institution and primarily sought to prepare students for private employment, distinct from the prior affiliation with a public university that prepared students for work as colonial administrators. The shift reflected the desocialization that neoliberal development has entailed, in which the previously demarcated “social” is fragmented into an array of competing market actors (Fraser, 2003). The field of intervention upon which CUC acted was precisely this notion of the social, which was reflected in the predominance of Oriental Studies and social science departments that served to instill a sense of civic responsibility in students and engage them with curricular content relevant to the needs of Sri Lankan society. This is in stark contrast to the UOL degrees conferred to LIHE students today, over 80% of which are either law or business degrees. Unlike CUC, students at LIHE cannot obtain degrees in local languages, philosophy, history, nor geography. Instead, social science degrees conferred by UOL in Sri Lanka are now limited to economics, international relations, and international development, which are pursued by a small number of students compared to those in business and law. While some social science graduates of LIHE go on to pursue employment in the public, IGO, and NGO sectors, the overwhelming majority of business and law graduates pursue employment in the for-profit sector. These changes to the UOL’s modality in Sri Lanka reflect the neoliberalization of development, which has desocialized the problem space of Sri Lankan employment in the sense that it is no longer a social problem to be addressed through government policy, but rather an individual problem addressed by transnational private partnerships that provide opportunities to entrepreneurial, responsibilized market actors. Rose (1999, pp. 100-101) contextualizes the formation of the social within coloniality, arguing that the colonial project distinguished “nations” and “cultures” from one another, thereby constituting a multiplicity of populations that were mapped as “the social.” He suggests that in the contemporary era, this designation of the social is either disintegrating or expanding so wide that it no longer refers to a specific group or scale. Therefore, describing the role of the university within “Sri Lankan society” is likely less relevant than dissecting the particular elements of LIHE as an assemblage with which market actors voluntary establish mobile relationships. This would involve exploring the various mechanisms that conduct flows of students, lecturers, observation, assessment, knowledge, and legitimacy within and beyond the educational space. Therefore, this present study does not suggest that what is experienced within LIHE indicates a shift that can be generalized to all of the global south or Sri Lanka. Instead, the educational modalities within LIHE collaborate and contest with external modalities, such as those of public universities, non-traditional professional certification institutes, and institutes with US and Australian university partners.

The desocialization of development does not suggest that late colonial forms of national development were entirely discarded. Many of its epistemes, technes, and discourses were destatized in the era of neoliberal globalization. The 1950 World Bank Colombian Report, which Escobar (1995, p. 25) presents as exemplary of early development efforts, “furnished a detailed set of prescriptions, including goals and quantitative targets, investment needs, design criteria, methodologies, and time sequences.” The definition of poverty as a technical issue at the center of development activity enabled the numericization of diverse social issues, which was necessary for the application of disciplinary mechanisms throughout populations of the global south. Escobar contends that by defining development as a technical problem, “principles of authority were in operation. They concerned the role of experts, from whom certain criteria of knowledge and competence were asked” (p. 41). Education played a fundamental role in the technicization of social problems within the global south because it:

entailed the establishment of institutions capable of generating such a knowledge. The ‘tree of research’ of the North was transplanted to the South, and Latin America thus became part of a transnational system of research. As some maintain, although this transformation created new knowledge and capabilities, it also implied a further loss of autonomy and the blocking of different modes of knowing. (Escobar, 1995, p. 37)

As the space of modernity globalized its knowledge economy, it displaced the legitimacy of local knowledge through exclusive claims to universality, objectivity, and scientificity. Escobar (1995, p. 36) argues that “technology thus contributed to the planetary extension of modernist ideals… [and was] seen as neutral and inevitably beneficial.” The colonial and postcolonial interventions of UOL in Sri Lanka must be contextualized within this epistemology of expertise.

Developmental relationships have tended to mark education as a problem area that requires principally economic forms of intervention. According to Tikly (2001, p. 159), the “crude economism” at work in development education encapsulates the open-ended potential of the postcolonial moment and imposes new restrictions on discourses of both development and education. In analyzing the shift in governmentality techniques from colonial to neoliberal education, Tikly begins with disciplinary mechanisms within colonial education. He argues that the disciplinary mechanisms of colonial education continued into the postcolonial era “in that it extended the modernist, economic imperative of schooling through the gradual expansion of formal education at all levels in the post-independence period” (Tikly, 2004, p. 189). This limited inclusion in the realm of modernist knowledge “was a necessary precondition for the subsequent spread of global governmentality,” which for Tikly is the network of flows by which actors of the global north implement disciplinary technologies to govern education in the global south. Although Tikly’s identification of colonial mechanisms of discipline within neoliberal development are particularly insightful for reconsidering governmentality from the perspective of coloniality, he appears to overlook the role of mechanisms of security in both colonial and neoliberal governmentality. Security is perhaps a more suitable framework to analyze the governmentality of knowledge within spaces of coloniality because it involves minimal interventions within main arteries of power, rather than intensive discipline at the capillary level.

Security appears to be a more apt framework than discipline in the analysis of UOL for a number of reasons. UOL does not design the institutions that it governs, nor does it apply matrices of disciplinary mechanisms directly upon the lecturer and student populations. Discipline is not imposed within a strictly delineated and enclosed space, as with the classical liberal university. Instead, UOL sees potential fields of intervention throughout a vast, open frontier of higher education in the global south. Rather than structuring a disciplinary grid of restrictions, prescriptions, and controls, UOL offers to amplify the aspirations of preexistent institutions in the global south and attract voluntary affiliation by capturing the conduct of diverse institutions within UOL’s globalizing circulations. The target of governmentality shifts from the intensive conduct of conduct to the careful delineation between inclusion and exclusion, which is significant both in terms of colonial governmentality and pastoral power. The promise to incorporate populations in the global south within a “flock” led by a northern institution is essential to narrating colonial intervention with the language of development. Escobar (1995, p. 25) notes that early development discourse resonated with undertones of “salvation,” echoing the colonial Christianizing mission. Pastoral power territorialized the majority world as a problem space, thereby bringing its population into the flock, under the ethical and technical guidance of a cosmopolitan, scientific universalism that operated across the colonial difference. In this way, UOL resembles an international development organization, which are often nongovernmental but which govern the population by promising to guide them towards progress. The secularized form of pastoral power that UOL employs is based on the construction of northern knowledge as the knowledge of expertise. Gamage (2016) has argued that the preference for Western scholarship amongst social scientists in Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries results from the internalization of colonial oppression within the “captive mind” of the scholar. The educational space at LIHE is captive to UOL’s mechanisms of governmentality that reproduce the colonizer’s regimes of thought, including its values, affects, pedagogies, and curricula.

Rose (1999, p. 8), like Foucault, understands the formation of truth to be a crucial undertaking of governmentality. On one level, a significant mechanism of control that UOL exercises is the reproduction of the particular truths contained in its curricula and examinations. These truths are posited as expertise to be transmitted from content developers within UOL to the external student population throughout the global south. Like most transnational educational institutions, UOL asserts that the knowledge transmitted through its educational system is truthful, objective, and thus attains the cultural neutrality that legitimizes its claims to offer an “International” or “Worldwide” education. On another level, UOL governs the educational activities around its curricula and examinations by conducting the way in which students learn, interpret, and process authoritative texts. It is through this governmentality that discourses and statistics reinforce qualitative truths about UOL’s education, which are necessary to the premise that UOL contributes to the development, rather than the underdevelopment, of its target population in the global south. Governing truth and knowledge is essential for UOL to ensure that its legitimacy continues to circulate throughout the institutions that constitute its system. The legitimacy of education is an important problem space that transnational education institutions intervene upon. Tikly (2001) gives consideration to not only what he calls the “functional” role of colonial education in the global division of labor, but also to the legitimizing role that has become increasingly significant with its neoliberalization. International education purports to smooth over the inequalities exacerbated by neoliberal development, apparently providing an entry points into more central geographies of the global knowledge economy. By doing so, the neoliberal discourses of market freedom, labor participation, and consumer citizenship territorialize the problem space of poverty, in turn reinforcing the notion of a global meritocracy.

Tikly’s (2004) analysis of neoliberal education as fundamentally colonial contributes greatly to the study of transnational education in the global south. For Tikly, neoliberal development represents a new imperialism in that it dissolves the problem space of the social as the site of intervention for the postcolonial state and its national development policies. The newly privatized and governmentalized roles of education in neoliberal development “serve to place non-western inhabitants of low income regions and countries discursively where contemporary globalization places them economically and politically” (Tikly, 2004, p. 180). This delineation of the Sri Lankan educational space as peripheral to the global knowledge economy is what this present study intends to explore. LIHE operates at the nexus of various social problematics, including education for employability and the global knowledge economy’s requirement for educated middle-managers in the global south. Tikly, however, gives little attention to precisely what the pastoral power of international education is guiding students in the global south towards. As an empirical basis upon which to theorize the relationship between development and governmentality, Watts (2003) traces the conduct and counter-conduct of populations in the oil-rich Niger Delta, particularly the inscription of a governable indigeneity upon segments of the population during colonialism, and the reclamation of that indigeneity to resist the extraction of petroleum in the name of development. He connects the mapping of governable spaces through mechanisms of governmentality to the contestation of exactly *whose* modernity is realized and by *what* form of development. Similar questions can be raised about UOL and LIHE: Whose knowledge is being reproduced, and towards what end?

Sidhu (2007, p. 203) raises a similar question when he asks, “If globalization is imagined as flows, then what exactly is flowing across transnational education spaces?” He situates the prominence of transnational education in the global south within the rise of “new developmentalism” promoted by large intergovernmental organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. In contrast to national development, which sees the state as the primary actor of development, new developmentalism aligns the conduct of a multitude of nonstate actors with national development objectives through governmentality mechanisms. New developmentalism reworks the “civilizational grid” upon which the colonizer mapped arteries of power by “dividing populations according to the level of advancement of their civilization” (Sidhu, 2007, p. 208). New developmentalism uses languages of expertise to make “claims of political neutrality and scientific legitimacy,” which masks the fact that “their political-epistemic foundations are informed by neoliberal notions of market value and neocolonial ideas about difference, progress, and development” (Sidhu, 2007, p. 208). Transnational education plays a crucial role in new developmentalism in that it selectively extends arteries of power and governance throughout key population sectors of the global knowledge economy’s peripheral locations. In new developmentalist discourses of transnational education, audit mechanisms are invoked as a solution to the quality assurance issues that are imagined to arise when educational legitimacy is translated across the colonial difference. Sidhu (2007, p. 220) points out that “audits of transnational education programs have consistently raised concerns that without exposure to research and staff development opportunities, casual teaching staff will be stymied in facilitating the higher order critical thinking skills associated with university-level study.” This echoes Varman, Saha, and Skålén’s (2011) concern that neoliberal education in India fosters an “uncritical pedagogy.” The failure to promote critical thinking could signal a lack of quality in neoliberal education. Conversely, in the context of transnational education, it may suggest that the very definition of educational quality in the neoliberal university is shifting away from critical thinking and towards other, more auditable criteria that align with the objectives of new developmentalism. This present study aims to uncover what exactly is flowing between LIHE and UOL through conduits of governmentality.

Examining governmentality at LIHE enables a nuanced interrogation of the way in which the neoliberal knowledge economy is governed across the colonial difference. It entails a more micropolitical mode of analysis than that of Tikly (2001), who sees structural adjustment programs as the fulcrum between colonial education and neoliberal development. In particular, he argues that policy reforms involved in structural adjustment programs regard the population as human capital, a concept that contributes to the assemblage of transnational education for global economic competitiveness. There is little question that structural adjustment programs have been key mechanisms through which the vision of neoliberal development was realized and legitmized throughout the policy laboratories of the global south, including in Sri Lanka (Kelegama, 2006). Trade and financial liberalization have enabled the reconfiguration of colonial education systems into globalized and privatized spaces of human capital development (Tikly, 2001; 2004). However, they have had little direct impact on the actual curricula, pedagogies, and experiences within the educational space. Instead, structural adjustment and other macroeconomic neoliberal policies have opened new spaces of market freedom, new circulations of ideas, students, and capital to be captured through mechanisms of governmentality and security. Those circulations are rarely the targets of direct intervention by Bretton Woods institutions and other proponents of neoliberal policy that have long been the focus of critical scholarship on neoliberalism. Instead, they flow through educational spaces like LIHE, which are governed not by the state or intergovernmental organizations, but rather by market actors that form mobile and contingent associations regulated through mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality.

**3. Methodology: Researching governmentality, researching subjectivities**

This study conducted semi-structured interviews with students, faculty, and administrators to analyze governmentality at London Institution of Higher Education (LIHE), a transnational education institution in Sri Lanka. It sought to understand the experiences and affects that arise through interviewees’ relationships with LIHE and University of London (UOL). What does it feel like to study or teach at an educational institution that is governed for profit across the colonial difference? Sidhu et al. (2016, p. 1509) identify a gap in research on transnational education in that “while education scholars have provided some account of these institutional shifts in Asia their analysis fails to engage with the textured and grounded transformations in the spaces and subjectivities of globalizing universities.” Foregrounding the voices of interviewees provided insight into the subjectivities formed around UOL’s governmentality. Extensive consideration of interviewee language, narrative, and disposition enabled the problematization and destabilization of the developmental and neoliberal rationalities that UOL employs to justify its colonial intervention.

Centering the voices of interviewees meant that the study focused on governmentality as experienced from within the spaces and subjectivities governed, rather than governmentality as formal policy mechanisms. This decision was made in consideration of the arterial power and technologies of security through which colonial governmentality operates, and particularly that power is less formalized and enclosed than with disciplinary mechanisms, as discussed in the previous chapter. It also stems from my four years of lecturing at LIHE, during which I frequently encountered feelings of voicelessness and marginality and in myself, colleagues, and students. As an educator from the global north, I am at risk to uncritically accept UOL’s claim to be providing education, expertise, or anything else of value to Sri Lankan educational spaces, and to regard faculty and students as recipients of this colonial-developmental support. This study therefore sought decolonial resonance in Rose’s call:

what is to be destabilized, what we are to try to think beyond, are all those claims made by others to govern us in the name of our own well-being, to speak for us, to identify our needs, to know us better than we know ourselves. (Rose, 1999, p. 59)

A significant challenge that presented itself to me throughout my time lecturing at LIHE is that of regarding LIHE not as a mere provider of UOL education, but rather as a space of higher education that is constituted by autonomous elements, and that has now come under occupation by a British colonial education institution. To this end, I strove for a historically situated analysis by continually reflecting on the critiques made by Sri Lankan academics regarding UOL, which led to the removal of UOL from the country. These criticisms were accessible to me primarily through the exhaustive and critical scholarship the late Professor Wiswa Warnapala (2011), who served as the Deputy Minister of Higher Education of Sri Lanka and later as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Although as a foreigner I have far less at stake than the Sri Lankan scholars who have critiqued UOL throughout its history, their analysis is invaluable in the effort to challenge UOL’s claim to provide, rather than govern or extract, knowledge and expertise in Sri Lanka.

This research reconsidered Rose’s ethics of freedom from the perspective of coloniality. To apply these ethics to studies of governmentality, Rose proposes to:

positively value all strategems, tactics and practices that enhance human beings’ capacities to act; correlatively it would subject all that reduces such capacities to critical scrutiny. Further, it would evaluate practices in terms of the extent to which they accord those caught up within them the capacity to judge, accept or transform the practices that subjectify them. (Rose, 1999, p. 97)

Yet as far as the monolithic category of “human beings” goes, Rose gives little regard to the coloniality that enables subjectivities of modernity. He speaks distinctly as a consumer within modernity when he, in formulating a methodology for governmentality studies, questions:

the price that modern freedom exacts from those who lack the resources to practise it: those ‘others’ in relation to whom our freedom is always defined. It would ask if there were ways in which we could become experts of ourselves without requiring submission to an image produced by entrepreneurs or a truth produced by authorities. It would ask if there were ways of practising freedom that did not fix us through a hermeneutics of identity, did not entail the forlorn attempt to consume our way out of our dissatisfactions, but were open, inventive and questioning. (Rose, 1999, p. 97)

How does this relate to southern educational spaces that may function primarily as sites of production in which value is created and extracted, and only secondarily as sites of consumption that provides value to customers? Is this lens useful from the perspective of “those who lack the resources to practice it,” rather than from the perspective of Rose’s consumptive “our” that governs the “other?” The authoritative truths that UOL circulates are substantiated by a century of colonial governmentality. Interview research at an institution like LIHE should therefore attend to narratives and counternarratives that circulate through the subjectivities governed according to colonial and neoliberal rationalities.

Interviews sought faculty, student, and administrator perspectives on the developmental relationship between UOL and LIHE. Solórzano and Yosso (2002, p. 26) emphasize that research based on “critical race theory challenges the traditional claims that educational institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity.” However, UOL does not make these “traditional” claims; it does not allow lecturers to assess students no matter their academic or professional merits. UOL instead capitalizes on colonial racial inequalities, and provides little opportunities for its disavowed faculty. This heightens the imperative “that the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination,” which enables the problematization of developmental “deficit storytelling” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, pp. 26-31). The legitimacy of UOL contends with that of colonized institutions such as LIHE. UOL necessitates its interventions by reproducing the illegitimacy of southern faculty, a strategy this research intended to oppose.  By foregrounding the narratives of interviewees, this study reconsidered and reinterpreted UOL’s neoliberal-developmental rationalities.

I specifically avoided methodologies such as surveys, scales, or other instruments of “data collection”; in other words, research that would render some particular aspect of collective life numerable and therefore visible, measured objectively and therefore meaningfully. UOL is just one of many northern institutions that govern education in the global south by creating “an illusion of research and intellectual reasoning through their multitude of data from different sources and through a large number of instruments” (Dahlstrom, 2009, p. 169). Dahlstrom thus suggests that educational theorists oppose the “neoliberal superficiality” of quantitative and market-based analyses by attending to “individual and institutional needs for narrative space and agency to be able to interpret what is happening beyond the surface” (p. 170). As a foreigner who had only lived in the country for about five years, my analysis was at an increased risk of succumbing to superficiality. Quantitative methods, particularly when applied in spaces of coloniality, often engender ahistorical analyses (Herskovits, 1960). Were I to have treated the interviewee perspectives as “data” and coded them using quantitative methods, it would done little to help situate subjectivities within the colonial history of higher education in Sri Lanka and its relation to the contemporary political milieu surrounding private educational institutions. I did not want my methodology to parallel UOL’s claims to understand education at LIHE by collecting data that informs governmentality across the colonial difference. Instead, the value of my research was predicated on the extent to which I became integrated into LIHE and participated in its educational spaces. My understanding of interviewee perspectives would be indelibly influenced by my experiences teaching at LIHE. My approach was therefore qualitative in its attempts to situate the voices of interviewees within their institutional, political, and historical contexts.

Interviewees comprised of nine students, four lecturers without administrative duties, three administrative faculty members who also lecture, and one top-level administrator. “Top-level administrator” could refer to LIHE’s Chairman, President, or CEO. Some interviewees were selected purposively to ensure this distribution, along with proportional representation of gender. Others were be selected using the snowball method. They were sampled from the law, business, and social science UOL programs at LIHE. To be eligible for an interview, students had to have been concurrently enrolled at LIHE; that is, they must have attended classes to take the UOL examinations for the academic year of 2017/2018. All interviewees were of Sri Lankan origin except two students. Four interviewees, which included both students and faculty, were simultaneously pursuing degrees elsewhere. All faculty had completed UOL undergraduate degrees at LIHE. To preserve anonymity, interviewees had been numbered and quoted using the code STU for students, LEC for lecturers, ADF for administrative faculty, and TLA for top-level administrators. This study also drew from notes I had taken throughout four years of lecturing at LIHE, which I cite as NOTES.

Interviews were conducted at a public or quasi-public location of the interviewee’s choosing in the greater Colombo area. They were approximately one hour in length, although some were shorter or longer depending on how much the interviewee wanted to share. Considerable attention was given to the affective qualities of interviewee’s experiences, particularly in relation to LIHE, UOL, and their education as a whole. Questions were asked about classroom pedagogies, study strategies, feelings of affiliation towards both institutions, the legitimacy of UOL’s intervention, and their personal vision for their education. Interviewees’ demonstrated interest in particular questions was interpreted as signaling narrative centrality of particular themes, and was thus more likely to prompt further discussion. Questions were asked in a way that could have appeared somewhat neutral, with the intention of lessening the effect of my own opinions on initial responses. However, I occasionally offered short opinions on topics already discussed during interviews. This helped to build trust, gave interviewees a chance to pause and listen, and resisted colonial claims to objectivity by making candid my own subjectivity (Mullings, 1999). This was particularly important when interviewing students, since LIHE students were often concerned about the approval of lecturers.

My personal role as a lecturer at LIHE carried some benefits and risks to this research. LIHE lecturers like myself had access to an educational space that is unavailable to the public, providing us with unusual insight into the processes, practices, and circulations that are usually obscured in neoliberal education. As the only foreign lecturer ever employed by LIHE, I was in some sense an outsider to the institutional, cultural, and political context. This necessitated that I acknowledge the limitations of my perspective. Otherwise, I risked assuming the role of a distanced colonial observer that has long been centered in anthropology, development, education, and other social sciences (Lewis, 1973). It would be both ironic and unjust to claim the very same universalism that enables UOL’s colonial governmentality. My perspective was only useful inasmuch as I had been actively engaged with students and colleagues at LIHE. Another risk was that students could feel reluctant to share their perspectives with a lecturer at their institution. This risk was mitigated by three factors. Firstly, as an adjunct lecturer without administrative authority, students generally did not perceive me as someone closely connected to LIHE who could affect their enrollment status. Secondly, as a UOL lecturer without pedagogical authority, I did not assess students at all, so there were no repercussions in terms of marking or grading. Finally, I attempted to strike an informal yet critical tone in interviews, with questions that clearly invited critical discussion such as “what is the role of the LIHE administration beyond collecting fees, scheduling lectures, and maintaining the facilities?” The necessity of establishing a critical space for discussion meant that interviewee anonymity was of primary importance.

Collectively, the interviews revealed some contours of subjectivities formed through UOL’s colonial and neoliberal governmentality. Studies of governmentality should not approach education as a “ready-made object” to be analyzed through the measurement of “institutions, practices, and knowledges in terms of the criteria and norms of an already given object,” but rather as constructed through “the movement by which a field of truth with objects of knowledge [is] constituted through these mobile technologies” (Rose, 1999, p. 118). These truths configure the topologies of subject, society, and educational institutions. They structure fields of affects, dispositions, aspirations, and possibilities. However, they often contrast with “present truths” cognized and embodied in daily practices, “introducing a kind of awkwardness into the fabric of one’s experience, of interrupting the fluency of the narratives that encode that experience and making them stutter” (Rose, 1999, pp. 19-20). Where in UOL’s rationalities are these fault lines and points of weakness? The power of governmentality to occupy southern spaces of knowledge production, circulate colonial truths, and colonize subjectivities is at stake here:

We do not want this truth. We do not want to be held in this system of truth. We do not want to be held in this system of observation and endless examination that continually judges us, tells us what we are in the core of ourselves. (Foucault, 2007, p. 201)

**4. Results: Governmentalities at LIHE**

The technologies of colonial governmentality operating between London Institution of Higher Education (LIHE) and University of London (UOL), alongside the developmental governing rationalities that legitimate them, imbricate with multiple and distinct mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality. These rationalities were often reflected in the voices of interviewees, providing the topology of governmentality that structures this chapter. At their points of intervention, however, these same governing rationalities were often destabilized, reconfigured, or opposed by interviewees. Accordingly, their perspectives reflected coloniality in distinct ways, yet were also broadly characteristic of neoliberal subjectivities. Similarly, they were specific to LIHE yet indicative of UOL’s global system of colonial education.

**4.1 The destatized for-profit university**

One of LIHE’s defining characteristics is the reduced role of the state in providing and governing its higher education, which makes neoliberal governmentality a useful framework for its analysis. Interviewees generally echoed the sentiment that “countries where free education is reliable, you can ethically be against private education, because it’s exorbitant. But I think in a country like Sri Lanka, you feel like you have no choice but to get a private education,” since placements in public universities are remarkably scarce (STU3). In Sri Lanka, a mere 9% of those who take entrance examinations for public universities are admitted (Liyanage, 2014). Since governmentality theory decouples the act of governing from the state, Rose (1999) finds it particularly suitable for understanding neoliberalism. He observes that the neoliberal state governs not by providing public services but by influencing private providers through “setting targets, promulgating standards, monitoring outputs, allocating budgets, undertaking audits” (Rose, 1999, pp. 146-147). Rose cautions that the decentering of the state as a governing actor does not signal a diffusion or democratization of power, but merely the practice of “new techniques of control, strengthening the powers of centres of calculation who set the budgetary regimes, the output targets and the like, reinstating the state in the collective body in a new way and limiting the forms and possibilities of resistance.” Along these lines, Doherty (2013) recommends that studies of governmentality in education explore the techniques and practices that connect the governmental rationalities of the neoliberal state with educational experiences at the capillary level. However, if neoliberal governmentality employs the privatization of regulatory functions, then LIHE provides a case study of an intensively privatized governmentality. In Sri Lanka, the educational activities of private higher education institutions are completely unregulated by the state because those institutions do not use the word “university” to describe themselves (Fielden & Varghese, 2009, p. 74). This absence of regulation has prompted Samaranayake (2016, p. 30) to call for “an Accreditation and Quality Assurance Board . . . to monitor quality in both state and non-state sector providers of university education” in Sri Lanka. In the case of LIHE, educational governance is not undertaken by the state, but rather by UOL. UOL’s Teaching Institutions Recognition Framework (TIRF) mandates that partner institutions operate according to local law, but in the context of Sri Lanka this law relates to LIHE only as a business (University of London, n.d.-b). The disappearance of the state in regulating education at LIHE prompts a reconsideration of the way in which the state is approached in theories of neoliberal governmentality.

The governmentalization of the state was enacted through the practice of statistics and demography, which rendered diverse circulations within the population visible and governable by translating them into numbers (Kipnis, 2008). Rose (1999, p. 228) details the history of the numericization of political decisions in the US, arguing that it generated “a new plane of reality… a public habitat of numbers.” By contrast, the habitat of numbers that governs conduct at LIHE is entirely private. LIHE’s numbers appear to be of no concern to the Sri Lankan state beyond its profits, taxation, land tenure, and other regulatory mechanisms that all businesses typically navigate. This is not surprising when considering the colonial and developmental history of numbers and numericization. Just as the colonial metropole justified its remote governance by measuring and delineating sectors of the population according to modernity and coloniality, development organizations have long intervened into the global south by generating an intergovernmental habitat of numbers about poverty and other social spaces problematized by development discourse. Moutsios (2009) traces the neoliberalization of education in the global south that has been facilitated by intergovernmental organizations like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Such actors have subjected national education systems of the global south to an extensive framework of quantitative performance indicators, signifying that the “production and comparison of performance data have become crucial tools for reform in many education systems; quantitative comparative data provide scientific support to what has been diagnosed as a problem and they legitimise the measures proposed” (Moutsios, 2009, p. 471). The same intergovernmental organizations have established a global policy framework that encourages trade and financial liberalization, along with educational privatization. As Marginson observes, for-profit transnational higher education is enabled “by permeable national borders, the transience of global networks and the flaky borders of the global field; and lacunae in the governmental regulation of cross-border relations and room for spontaneous association this creates” (Marginson, 2008, p. 313). Although this is the global policy climate in which UOL and its mostly for-profit partner institutions thrive, further consideration of LIHE’s particularities is necessary.

In the case of LIHE, the privatization of the habitat of numbers is more pronounced because the governing actor is not an intergovernmental agency, but rather UOL. It is important to note that although UOL is legally a public institution, its annual grant from the Higher Education Funding Council amounts to approximately 5.5% of its total revenue (University of London, 2017, p. 14). Its largest revenue source is tuition fees and contractual revenue from overseas partner institutions, suggesting that it is best categorized as privatizing and/or quasi-public (see Hossler, 2006). UOL considers itself a “services business” that instrumentalizes a “commercial business model” (University of London, 2014, p. 13). Under this model, UOL aims to “develop services in order to realise commercial opportunities” and thus “enhance our brand,” generating “additional income from new customers and new markets” (pp. 15-21). In terms of revenue generation, “International Programmes are a major source of income for the University. There are both opportunities and threats as the market for distance education is increasingly competitive” (UOL, 2017, p. 11). Education in the global south is seen as a market space in which UOL enhances its competitiveness and meets “the needs of our stakeholders” by “creating innovative solutions and making a series of key investments to respond to the changing needs of students,” who constitute its consumer base. UOL aligns overseas partners with its marketized educational vision by stipulating in its TIRF, the principal document that explicates UOL’s regulatory guidelines for partner institutions, that Teaching Centres incorporate into their “missions, aims, and values [a] marketing plan for the University of London programme and budget,” including “marketing materials” and “marketing strategy” (UOL, n.d., pp. 5-9).

Interviewees often saw UOL as a profit-seeking institution. One faculty understood UOL’s partnership with LIHE as motivated by “an economic aspect, a business aspect to it, as well. In terms of numbers, they benefit. They deliver quality education and they also expect that it’s an investment. More students means more financial profit as well” (ADF3). Another observed that “UOL is a revenue-making venture mostly” because it is “heavily marketed and profit-oriented,” choosing single-exam assessment “because they’re minimizing the budget and trying to cash in as much as they can” (LEC 3). Students sometimes objected to UOL’s apparent focus on profit. Instead of feeling like a UOL student, one felt “definitely an LIHE student, because the only time you address UOL is when you’re paying the fees, which is through the online system, and when you’re accessing the Virtual Learning Environment” (STU6). This means that with UOL, “sometimes you feel like they don’t care. It’s just a degree that’s being handed out” (STU5), which reflects the neoliberal conception of education as an individual investment to enhance the human capital of student-customers. Another interviewee believed it was unfair that as an “external” UOL student, “we have to do everything by ourselves, and we are still paying the same” (STU2). During one faculty meeting, a top-level administrator strongly criticized UOL’s raising of fees and relentless pursuit of “collecting more money,” which cut into LIHE’s profits (NOTES). UOL’s commercial business model sometimes gives the impression to students and faculty that it is more concerned with revenue than education.

Even more frequently, interviewees critiqued LIHE’s own profit motivation without explicitly connecting it to UOL’s marketization of its education. Many echoed the blunt assessment that “I don’t think the higher-ups actually care about the lecturers” (STU1). Almost all lecturers and students understood the administration’s role to have little to do with what was taking place in the classroom. In terms of education, this meant that “the higher-ups wouldn’t actually care about what you get, as long as they get the money” (STU1). The administration has “no sort of student interaction. It’s limited to their operational duties” (STU4). This spurred resentment that was reported by almost all interviewees: “everyone is rebelling against the management. I don’t think any student likes the management” because the administration opposes the interests of students by frequently restricting access to study spaces, along with the fact that “with information, they’re not very open” (STU4). One administrator echoed UOL’s transactional discourse by emphasizing “quality in the sense of what you’re offering to the students for the price they’re paying,” yet as far as efforts the LIHE administration is taking to improve educational quality, “none come to mind other than being more strict about mock exams” (ADF1). LIHE’s constitutive purpose to generate profits leads to lax admission criteria in that “we have to grow. We have to be a profitable institution as well. We have to take in students who have two Cs, three Cs, all of that” (ADF2). UOL’s commercial business model, when translated across the colonial difference, encourages partner institutions to sideline educational quality in favor of profit.

The revenue-generating focus of UOL and LIHE shapes a built environment for extraction, in contrast to neoliberalizing universities in the global north that increasingly feature built environments designed as spaces of consumption. Giroux describes the northern university campus as embodying:

the visceral and visual triumph of consumer culture, given how campuses have come to look like shopping malls, treat students as customers, confuse education with training, and hawk entertainment and commodification rather than higher learning as the organizing principles of student life. (Giroux, 2014, p. 116)

In Sri Lanka’s private higher education institutions, the marketization of education is also reflected in campus architecture. However, most are spatially arranged according to logics of mass production in a way that makes them more comparable to export processing firms than consumer experiences. This resemblance is especially striking in the case of LIHE, which in 2018 began operating courses in a new building while the premises were an active construction site (NOTES). Construction workers operated power tools while dangling above the main entrance from suspended scaffolding, below which students and faculty flowed in and out of the building. The hallways were covered in rubble and populated by construction workers who climbed ladders and unloaded materials into classrooms. During this time, there was no electricity in the building. Many students expressed their bewilderment to peers and lecturers. Such hazardous conditions would have hardly been tolerated by northern student-customers or the legal structure ensuring their safety. Particularly telling is the design of the new building, which features no outdoor space other than a driveway and parking lot. Spaces for student life are extremely restricted, consisting of a small underground basement cafeteria mostly limited to snack foods and a sterile library with no computers or places where talking is allowed. Almost the entirety of the floor plan is dedicated to spaces of production from which profit can be extracted: Modular classrooms separated by partitions that can be removed so that a single lecturer can teach over one hundred students at a time. The new campus “has the feel that LIHE is only making this building so they can give out their rooms to other people to use as a way to make money, other than for lectures” (STU4). They saw the building as “general purpose so that you can shift it around” (STU4), likely a reference to “the modular wall system” (LEC1) that enables classrooms to be temporarily repurposed for other profit-generating activities, such as the administration of Cambridge International Examinations for international schools (ADF2). Space for studying or leisure is extremely limited. In the final month before the 2017 UOL examinations, spaces that had been previously used for studying were allocated to secondary school examinations. Students reported considerable difficulties to find study space during that crucial time. Completely absent here are the “student commons designed in the image of shopping centers and high-end entertainment complexes” that Giroux criticizes (2014, p. 122). Rather than a space of mass consumption, the architecture of LIHE is distinctly one of mass production, preparing students for futures as worker-citizens at the periphery of the global knowledge economy. Its built environment primarily functions to support revenue extraction for both LIHE and UOL.

As a destatized higher educational space, the partnership between UOL and LIHE reconceives the relationship between the university and its population in terms that preclude the social contract, or even a shared sociocultural space. It cannot be said that the Sri Lankan state is problematizing the social space occupied by international education, nor are they “diagnosing” and prescribing a set of solutions as is typical in neoliberal governmentality (Rose, 1999, p. 57). In fact, the Sri Lankan state has tended to quarantine its most severe outbreak of educational controversy by framing the SAITM issue as a question of the quality of medical education, thereby responsibilizing medical professionals, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis. This ensures that the Sri Lankan state is not charged with addressing or regulating the problem of international education, instead leaving it to the governance of transnational nonstate networks. Brown argues that the shift from government to “governance signifies a transformation from governing through hierarchically organized command and control—in corporations, states, and nonprofit agencies alike—to governing that is networked, integrated, cooperative, partnered, disseminated, and at least partly self-organized” (Brown, 2015, p. 123). The idea that the separation of government from governmentality reduces its hierarchical structure is predicated on the assumption that society is in closer proximity to nonstate actors than state actors. That assumption clearly does not apply to LIHE, since UOL governs across the colonial difference. Nonstate governmentality likely operates in distinct ways at such geographic, cultural, and political distances, which will be demonstrated by a closer analysis of its particular mechanisms.

**4.2 From the social to the communal**

LIHE benefits from and reproduces the desocialization of Sri Lankan higher education, as discussed in the theoretical framework of this research (see also Fraser, 2003). It is pertinent to ask, then, what relations are structured by UOL and LIHE, and what topology they form if not one that centers the social function of the university. Whereas discipline relies upon the individualization of the subject, governmentality employs a “set of mechanisms that, for the government and those who govern, attach pertinence to quite specific phenomena that are not exactly individual phenomena, even if individuals do appear in a way” (Foucault, 2004, p. 66). The specific points of circulation at which governmentality mechanisms intervene are crucial to the formation of the individual and collective subject. Governmentality thus deeply influences the community values that circulate throughout its “economy of merit and fault” (p. 173). Rose sees the “community” as a domain with heightened significance to the desocialized subject of neoliberalism. He draws from Bhabha in his understanding of the community as a “third space” between government and subject, a “space of *emotional relationships* through which *individual identities* are constructed through their bonds to *micro-cultures* of values and meanings” (Rose, 1999, p. 172; see also Bhabha, 2004). LIHE’s particular educational micro-culture sits at the nexus of multiple broader milieus, such as those of British education institutions, the Sri Lankan upper-middle class, Maldivian expatriates, the Colombo youth, the English-educated, and numerous others. The particular emotional relationships, thought regimes, and educational technes within LIHE to some extent reflect the negotiation of values between these various constituencies. This is particularly evident in the conception amongst LIHE students and faculty that, like other primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions of transnational education, LIHE represents an ethnically and culturally pluralistic alternative to the public education system, which is largely segregated by racialized religious categories. However, the community that emerges does not claim to represent or benefit the majority of Sri Lankan society. In a very real sense, it represents an exclusive, privatized micro-culture whose values are influenced more by UOL than by the Sri Lankan state. In light of Rose’s theorization of the shift from the social to the communal, it is possible that Sri Lanka’s fragmented educational landscape is no longer viewed as a coherent “educational system” with an intrinsic connection to Sri Lankan society. Indeed, one interviewee counterposed LIHE with Sri Lanka’s social-democratic state:

Our country is a social democracy, right? Citizens want to promote these socialist and communist ideas where they want to see equality everywhere, but it’s a patriarchal society so women are oppressed but equal, and they don’t want private education because that benefits the rich. In our country, I think around three-hundred thousand people sit for their final high school exams, A-Levels, and only one-hundred thousand-something people actually pass the exam, which means that they’re all eligible for a public university education. But only twenty-five thousand of them actually get into public universities. What about the ones who actually passed and couldn’t get in? What about the ones who failed? If you actually want to promote communist or socialist ideologies in the country, to promote equality, what would happen to those who couldn’t get an education? (STU1)

Nevertheless, public discourse in Sri Lanka does not generally regard the fragmentation of the Sri Lankan educational terrain as the fracturing of society, but rather as a mosaic of opportunities whose very multiplicity enables the market and labor freedoms of the entrepreneurial neoliberal subject. Thus the fact that LIHE students are governed by UOL—which is in turn governed by the British state—is regarded in relation to an education model in which interlocutors form affiliations with international institutions that enhance rather than undermine the capabilities of Sri Lankan society.

However, UOL and LIHE are not expressly concerned with Sri Lankan society beyond their student-customers. A careful reading of the University of London’s Public Benefit Statement suggests that its consideration of the public includes students at overseas partners institutions only in a very limited capacity. It details a number of public benefits that are only accessible to those physically in the UK, such as “fellowships and scholarships, prizes, and chairs and lectureship funds as well as a range of other awards to assist students and researchers within the member institutions and central academic bodies” (University of London, 2017, p. 18). Its “events programme, which comprises a wide range of seminars, workshops, lectures and conferences” is similarly inaccessible to the majority of its students in the global south, along with its “gym, the largest swimming pool in central London and a venue for live music events” (University of London, 2017, p. 19). In the only paragraph that explicitly mentions overseas students, it claims a number of degree opportunities represent its commitment to public benefit, including “MScs/MAs in Poverty Reduction; Applied Educational Leadership and Management; Environmental Management; Livestock Health and Production; Clinical Trials; Epidemiology; and Infectious Diseases; BAs in Theology; English; History; Philosophy and Classics, and the LLM and LLB degrees.” None of these degrees are offered at any UOL partner institution in Sri Lanka except for the LLB and LLM programs. In its Public Benefit Statement, University of London promises that “where the benefit is to a section of the public, the opportunity to benefit must not be unreasonably restricted by… the ability to pay fees; and that people in poverty must not be excluded” (University of London, 2017, p. 18). This presumably does not apply to Sri Lanka, in which the tuition and fees of a three-year UOL degree at LIHE amounts to over 18 years of income at the country’s median per capita income (Department of Census and Statistics, 2016, p. 9). Nowhere does UOL’s Public Benefit Statement discuss the public implications of the educational privatization that its partnerships often engender. LIHE likewise does not discuss its social role in its publications or marketing materials except its by-laws, which aims to develop “civic-minded citizens” through a strict code of dress and conduct for students, since according to the by-laws the “enforcement of disciplinary policies is a way of educating students to become conscientious members of society” (NOTES). When asked about who benefits from the education taking place at LIHE, almost all interviewees emphasized students’ individual rewards, particularly in terms of receiving an education that would be otherwise inaccessible to them, and enhancing their labor market competitiveness. One administrator, however, highlighted that within “all these sectors… a lot of organizations benefit from us, from our graduates” by naming a series of Sri Lankan for-profit thinktanks at which graduates are currently employed (ADF2). The conception of LIHE’s activity as labor citizenship also rationalizes lecturer labor:

They really got the best of the alumni just doing it out of a sense of social service or attachment to the institution. You’re entirely dependent on the goodwill or the benevolence of the lecturer, the interest of the lecturer, to make sure that the student benefits from their education. (LEC2)

A sense of consumer citizenship also motivated LIHE students, especially in making demands from LIHE administrators for better facilities and support. One student observed, “we actually pay for those facilities—and sometimes those facilities aren’t given to us—whereas in the public sector, it’s free, so most of the facilities are given to you” (STU7). These discourses align with neoliberal rationalities that posit an alternative role for higher education; one in which the university is an enclosed community whose exclusive purpose is to enhance the human capital and labor market competitiveness of its customers.

As a community, LIHE is governed by UOL, suggesting that the social purpose of higher education is reworked for colonial aims. The transnational nature of the LIHE community prompts further reflection on the precise colonial and developmental dynamics at work. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) examine the ways in which development institutions in Indian communities are localized through governmentality mechanisms imposed by “national” offices. Localized institutions are seen as limited in scope and expertise, whereas national and international development organizations are spatialized as above and around the local in that:

institutions of global governance such as the IMF and the WTO are commonly seen as being simply ‘above’ national states . . . the ‘global’ is often spoken of as if it were simply a superordinate scalar level that encompasses nation-states just as nation-states were conceptualized to encompass regions, towns, and villages. (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002, p. 990)

UOL similarly spatializes itself as a “Worldwide” institution whose “global reach and reputation” stems from “our unrivalled network of member institutions” (University of London, 2014, p. 5). University of London (2014, p. 7) boasts that “London is the global hub for academic excellence and the University of London is a renowned mark of excellence,” but clarifies that its physical location in London does not detract from its global spatialization: “While our roots are in London, we have a national and global reach through our academic work and have a brand that is the envy of others.” By contrast, UOL localizes its students in a peripheral imaginary: “Wherever you are in the world, you can gain a valued qualification from the University of London” by studying at a “local teaching institution” (University of London, n.d.-a). It imagines students to exist “wherever,” in “every corner of the globe,” looking towards University of London at the center of the globe with envy and aspiration. Ferguson and Gupta observe the irony that “the agents of localization were precisely those entities—the Indian state and multilateral aid agencies—that claim for themselves geographies and interests that are national and universal” (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002, p. 988). The spatial inequalities reproduced by UOL support Ferguson and Gupta’s (2002) proposal for a conceptualization of “transnational governmentality” through which spaces of development are ordered hierarchically, across the colonial difference, through verticality and encompassment. The spatialization of LIHE as a community encompassed by UOL’s transnational governmentality was reflected in the perspectives of many interviewees who spoke disparagingly of LIHE as inferior to UOL, or as “just a franchise, like McDonald’s” (STU4). One lecturer had the impression that “UOL is much bigger than LIHE could ever be. I think it’s a symbiotic relationship, but it’s one that certainly favors UOL more than LIHE” (LEC4). By enrolling and entering into a peripheral community within UOL’s transnational domain of governance, students incorporate peripheral subjectivities that are potentially dissonant with many students’ central upper-middle-class location in Sri Lankan society.

The desocialization, encompassment, and vertical subordination of the LIHE community has profound implications for the role of students and faculty. The student at LIHE is not a member of an academic community in the traditional sense of the word. To earn the marks necessary for their degree, they are not required to conduct research beyond prescribed texts, nor are they encouraged to write or formulate original arguments. Their vocation as students is defined less in terms of sociocultural empowerment and more as the empowerment of their labor capacities. Lecturers are not afforded such position in LIHE’s community, particularly since they are not on formal contracts due to an unspecified “legal issue,” according to one administrator. LIHE has no academic community because a university “is a community whereas here, people do not know each other. They come for lectures and then they go. Also, they have no facilities for them to stay” and “no opportunity for lecturers to get professional advancement” (TLA). One lecturer argued that for LIHE to develop an academic community, there:

needs to be a more sustained engagement if that community is to be created. The only reason I have socialized or engaged with some of the other lecturers is because I knew them in some other capacity before, but there is nothing at LIHE that incentivizes that either. By standards of even state universities and other institutions, LIHE is one of the most poorly paid. You’re paid poorly by the hour only for the hours that you teach, not for the hours that you mark papers, not for office hours. In fact, they’ve kept restricting the number of hours you can teach. It’s even less than when I was a student. (LEC2)

Without formal affiliation with UOL, lecturers are inscribed by the community only through their informalized labor relationship with LIHE. Their value is called into question even more than many university faculty at northern neoliberal universities, since faculty members at UOL partner institutions are seen as absent of the expertise necessary to perform even the most basic functions of lecturers, such as marking assignments. In contrast to the liberal university’s engagement with the social, which implies a direct relationship with the nation and state, UOL’s engagement with separate localized communities enables a nonstate transnational governmentality that is shaped unequally by verticality and encompassment. Without the social functions of the liberal university, LIHE’s community is characterized by absence and disappearance. As Rose (1999, pp. 167-196) argues, governing actors of communities legitimate their influence not through the social contract, but rather through claims to exclusive expertise. LIHE, as a peripheral community, is relegated to the exteriority of UOL’s authority. The inequalities of expertise that secure its exclusivity are reproduced through UOL’s system of inscription which structures an arterial topology of power.

**4.3 Inscription and pastoral power**

Governmentality demarcates its interventional domain by identifying and measuring a population and its “relationship to the set of forces: the size of the territory, natural resources, wealth, commercial activities, and so on” (Foucault, p. 323). Likewise, UOL establishes the territory of its global “ecology of expertise” through a mechanism of “inscription” (Latour, 1986; Ong, 2008). Rose (1999, p. 37) defines inscription as the “material techniques of thought that make possible the extension of authority over that which they seem to depict.” By inscribing institutions, classrooms, and students as within the territory of UOL, circulations of educational conduct are captured and incorporated into a visible, governable domain of intervention. Rose understands inscription to be essential to the establishment of “centers of calculation”:

Events must be inscribed in standardized forms, the inscriptions must be transported from far and wide and accumulated in a central locale, where they can be aggregated, compared, compiled and the subject of calculation. Through the development of such complex relays of inscription and accumulation, new conduits of power are brought into being between those who wish to exercise power and those over whom they wish to exercise it. (Rose, 1999, p. 211)

Inscription is particularly pastoral in its operation, since “identification is a pastoral method of ‘calling the sheep into the flock’” (Foucault, 2007, p. 153). UOL invites all educational institutions who wish to join the flock to submit an application for affiliation. By doing so, the prospective partner institution indicates their intention to “abide by the ‘International Programmes agreement with recognised centres’” and to inscribe their institutions as UOL institutions, their students as UOL students, moving in the direction of UOW’s pastoral guidance (University of London, 2013, p. 10). Their incorporation into the flock is ritualized through regular audit to ensure adherence to TIRF requirements, including the stipulation that “The University of London provision is seen as an important part of the institution’s academic activities” which must be communicated through a specific “marketing strategy for the University of London programme” (University of London, n.d.-b, pp. 5-9). Incorporation into the UOL system thus requires partners to move and transform in concordance with UOL’s pastoral power, which guides the flock towards profitability.

Inscription is particularly important for UOL because of the transnational nature of its colonial governmentality. Traditional liberal universities typically feature a physical campus, bestowing an immediately visible legitimacy onto the circulations of conduct within its domain. For example, if a course were delivered in a classroom at the University of Colombo, and delivered by a lecturer employed by that same university, few would doubt whether that course is legitimately under the domain of the University of Colombo. This reflects the immediate relationship between the liberal public university and the society upon which it intervenes. The micropolitical process of inscribing human bodies as members of a flock or population is often less contentious when the governing actor is the state. Some obvious exceptions include when the population in question is subnational, such as “the poor” or “the criminal,” or when it is exclusionary, as with the case of stateless peoples. Inscription within populations that are formed through nonstate transnational linkages, however, are often more fluid and tenuous. UOL inscribes students of *other* institutions as *their own* in an attempt to resolve the fragmentation of the student identity through a careful delineation between spaces of governmentality and spaces of autonomy.

The inscription of UOL institutions and students renders its education as a valuable private commodity. Rose (1999, pp. 240-241) says that the new control strategies emerging from disciplinary mechanisms consist in large part of “circuits of inclusion.” He locates the beginning of inclusion through technologies of identity, which “identifies the bearer with a virtual identity—a database record storing personal details—whilst at the same time allowing access to various privileges.” UOL constructs its population through the inscription a student number upon a student and the inscription of formalized relationships upon partner institutions. Until 2018, these formal institutions were divided into “Affiliate Centres” and “Registered Institutions,” although they have since been rebranded as “Recognized Teaching Centres,” signaling the reduction of their academic conduct to teaching. These technologies of identity and the self determine “conditional access to circuits of consumption and civility, constant scrutiny of the right of individuals to access certain kinds of flows of consumption goods: recurrent switch points to be passed in order to access the benefits of liberty” (Rose, 1999, p. 243). Accordingly, students present identification cards to security guards before entering the LIHE premises so that it can be determined whether they are currently enrolled and whether they have payed their fees. Students undergo a similar identification process when entering the examination hall to validate the connection between their physical body with their virtual UOL identity. These circuits of inclusion and identification are now further digitized, since the new building that LIHE constructed and moved into in 2018 also features fingerprint scanners in each classroom. Such inscriptions of identity demarcate an arterial topology of power. They define ways in which students are “external,” classrooms exist in mere “partner institutions,” and lecturers are almost entirely unrecognized.

Interviewees almost always saw UOL degrees as a valuable inscription. Students are drawn to “the recognition. Having a UOL degree is a pass for us to many jobs, especially NGOs, anything to do with social sciences. It’s an added advantage, having a UOL degree” (STU8). Locating legitimacy in UOL often meant displacing it from LIHE: “The degree I have is the only thing that matters. What I have is a UOL degree, whether I studied for it on my own, at LIHE, or at another place” (ADF1). The emphasis on UOL’s inscription often conflicted with feelings of affiliation:

I don’t think there’s any point where you feel like they’re actually helping you in any way other than just giving you your certificate. Most of the time, you have to figure it out yourself. You depend more on your LIHE lecturers than whatever material UOL gives you. You don’t really feel a part of UOL. (STU6)

One student, when asked whether they feel more like an LIHE student or a UOL student, responded, “neither. My goal is to just finish, get my qualification, and start working” (STU7). LIHE thus takes on the role of “a means to an end. We want the degree, but we have to put up with LIHE” (STU4). The end goal is a UOL-branded degree:

They’re going to ask you where you got your degree from. You got it from UOL. If you want that power . . . it is a two-way transaction given the fact that students voluntarily enroll in this program . . . it’s that LSE branding. The University of London branding means a lot. (LEC4)

The transaction here resembles the social contract: students agree to be assessed by UOL in exchange for the inscription of UOL’s legitimacy upon their personal brand. In exchange, the student cedes expectations of what many interviewees referred to as a normal “university experience,” resigned to the status of an “international student” in what is, for most, their own country, receiving a “distance education” despite the fact that learning takes place in a physical classroom.

LIHE’s uncertain purpose often troubled students and faculty. During a faculty meeting, a top-level administrator stated that student attendance is low because LIHE lacks “ownership” of the students whose primary inscription is that of UOL (NOTES). LIHE’s lack of student ownership provided a rationalization for UOL’s use of single-exam assessment “because we’re international students. It’s easier for them to give us a paper at the end of the year and just mark it” (STU3). Interviewees often referenced “distance” or “international” education to rationalize UOL’s minimal assessment and absence of feedback. From the perspective of many students, however, since “you only deal with the study material and the exams, you definitely feel removed from the whole UOL” (STU1). A few students felt that LIHE provides more of a community than UOL: “I think more of an LIHE student. That community feels closer than thinking of myself as a UOL student. I sometimes forget that I’m a UOL student” (STU3). Another student echoed that, in relation to UOL, “we’re very disconnected” (STU4). The contingency with which LIHE inscribes students also mobilized aspirational dispositions: “I would like to be a UOL student. That’s what you’re aiming for. I don’t want to be an LIHE student” (STU4). To explain such aspirations, one student pointed to “the colonial upbringing. We have a high regard for anything British. UOL is a UK university, so my parents were like, ‘it’s a good university’” (STU8). However, the inscription received by LIHE students is unmistakably a mechanism of colonial governmentality, serving to reproduce inequalities of legitimacy between modernity and coloniality. Their aspiration to be inscribed by “LSE branding” is unobtainable except for a note on their UOL degree certificates, which reads “having registered and passed the approved examinations conducted by LSE has this day been admitted by UOL to the degree of” (NOTES). Nevertheless, LIHE students sometimes refer to themselves as LSE students (STU5, STU8, NOTES). This informal affiliation is encouraged by LIHE, as evident in a national newspaper advertisement boasting that “degrees are provided at LIHE with the academic direction of LSE, which is ranked number two globally for Social Sciences” (NOTES). UOL’s degree inscriptions are characterized by their limitations: “international” students attend a physical campus yet receive only a “distance” education, expecting little more from UOL than an annual examination marked by LSE, who does not inscribe their degrees.

UOL employs a form of inscription structured by the limited and unequal topology of arterial power, governing LIHE as an assemblage of unequal elements according to disparate rationalities. LSE is a central inscription reserved for spaces of modernity; UOL is the arterial inscription bestowed mostly upon those in spaces of coloniality. Since UOL governs across the colonial difference, its particular form of inscription must employ the “beneficence” with which pastoral power clothes itself, which is a beneficence that promises both sustenance and salvation (Foucault, 2007, p. 126). The primary inscription that establishes UOL’s beneficence of knowledge is that of “distance education,” which spatially connects its central expertise to the “flock” which it governs. Like other UOL partner institutions, LIHE is inscribed as a “Teaching Centre” to indicate that lecturers are not sources or providers of knowledge, but instead additional recipients of education at a distance. Lecturers thus sometimes saw themselves in contradictory terms. One felt disconnected from UOL, although professionally referred to a UOL inscription: “I just don’t feel connected to the University enough to call myself a UOL lecturer. I put it on my CV: UOL” (LEC3). However, most lecturers experienced affective incorporation into UOL despite their lack of inscription. One faculty member, when asked if they feel like a UOL lecturer, responded:

I do, in the sense that I’m very familiar with the course material, the examiner commentary . . . I feel like a lecturer because after a while, you understand the University’s own DNA, what kind of ideological bent they have towards certain subjects, so you become intimately aware of the academic mindset. (LEC2)

How can lecturers feel like educators when the institution governing their conduct does not recognize their role? This discordance was elucidated by another:

I wouldn’t say University of London in London, but I would say I’m part of the University of London International Programmes which teaches in Sri Lanka . . . I don’t get paid by the University of London, so I don’t want to tell people I work for them. But I do get paid by LIHE, which is entrusted to execute the program on their behalf. I would be comfortable saying I’m a lecturer for the International Programme, which is managed by LIHE, which is the intermediary that pays me. (LEC4)

Lecturers commonly reported such feelings of belonging to UOL, despite their lack of formal UOL inscription. This dissonance within both faculty and student subjectivities reflects disparities between governing rationalities throughout UOL’s arterial topology, which it then attempts to rectify through a colonial instrumentalization of translation and numericization.

**4.4 Translation and numericization**

The capturing of Sri Lankan educational space and its incorporation into the domain of UOL enables a number of interventions that align the conduct of LIHE, students, and lecturers with its broader objectives. Foucault (2007, p. 99) distinguishes governmentality from discipline in that the former “is not a matter of imposing a law on men, but of the disposition of things . . . of employing tactics . . . arranging things so that this end or that end may be achieved through a certain number of means.” In neoliberal governmentality, this arrangement is formed through “translation mechanisms” to connect governing actors with the capillary points at which the population’s conduct is conducted, and thus “alignments are forged between the objectives of authorities wishing to govern and the personal projects of those organizations, groups, and individuals who are the subjects of government” (Rose, 1999, p. 48). It is through these mechanisms that policies put in place by UOL are then realized in its partner institutions located in disparate countries, regions, and cultures, and even in institutions that are not formally partnered with UOL but who aspire to be.

UOL’s most formalized translation mechanism, the TIRF requirements, represents a set of rather loose and interpretive guidelines that standardize practices, affects, and legitimacy across the colonial difference. However, the requirements detailed in TIRF do not function to conduct the conduct of partner institutions. Instead, they exist because “for UOL, is necessary for their maintenance. They have to say that they audit the Teaching Centres, and then have some reports, but I would say it’s useless” (TLA). This is also evidenced by the fact that other than the top-level administrator, the LIHE administrative faculty interviewed were not aware of TIRF. UOL’s TIRF and its requisite audits “amount to nothing at all” (TLA). Nevertheless, they discursively render conduct at partner institutions as governable and translatable. Translation is perhaps most apparent in the specific requirement that partner institutions ensure that “The mission, aims and values of the institution are consistent with those of the University of London International Programmes” (University of London, n.d.-b, p. 5). The powers of alignment embedded within this requirement rests not in its specificity or the strictness with which it is enforced, but by the breadth of conduct that it implies. Similarly, Sidhu et al. (2016) analyze the ways in which a “governmental assemblage” of circulations and practices construct the “internationality” of the East Asian university by recruiting international students and directing the course of their education. Their “focus on assemblage highlights that it is not the properties of constitutive elements that generate the whole but rather the manner in which they interact, the way in which they are *ordered in relation to each other*” (Sidhu et al, 2016, p. 1497). The analysis of a higher education institution as an assemblage is remarkably applicable to the context of UOL, especially in light of its arterial inscription that carefully delineates its constitutive elements from one another. However, the particular elements of UOL’s assemblages and their relationships are significantly different from the globalizing East Asian university seen in Singapore. This difference is multifaceted, but is underscored by the source of LIHE’s internationality being the northern geography of the degree-granting university rather than the international geography of its student body or any other claim to cosmopolitanism available to southern institutions. What is most salient about Sidhu et al.’s observation is that transnational higher education operates through flows and mobile connections instead of the rigid institutional structures of the liberal public university. LIHE is mostly barren of the extensive internal governance structures, formal regulations of student conduct, and procedures for the administration of faculty. Governmentality is instead operating across the vast distances of UOL’s encompassed domain. Translation mechanisms rearrange the complex transnational relationships and academic roles of lecturers and students, aligning them with UOL’s objectives. As UOL’s objectives themselves shift with the flows of the global knowledge economy, its partner institutions must also be prepared to adjust their alignments to the requirements of ongoing audit mechanisms, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. In terms of UOL’s translation mechanisms, the aforementioned TIRF requirement that is effective because the vagueness of its alignment lends itself to a certain fluidity that is characteristic of nonstate neoliberal governmentality, the “mobile and ‘thixotropic’ associations” arranged through translation (Rose, 1999, p. 50).

At the pedagogical level, UOL’s single-examination assessment translates the conduct of experientially, culturally, and geographically diverse subjects within its domain into a singular metric. It delineates important from unimportant knowledge, motivates specific study behaviors, influences classroom pedagogies, informs the hiring and evaluation of faculty at partner institutions, enables independent study degrees, and performs the minimum assessment necessary to inscribe UOL’s legitimacy upon human capitals. By inscribing students with a single three-hour assessment for each course, the examination numericizes conduct year-round. Almost all interviewees reported that both lectures and independent study are dominated by “question-spotting.” Question-spotting is a strategy in which students analyze previous examination papers, which are provided in UOL’s Virtual Learning Environment, to predict the questions or topics that are most likely to reappear. One student detailed:

I spend all my time question-spotting. I’ll draw a table with the probabilities of each question, and then divide my time into a time table. Let’s say I have three months to study; I’ll break down each month and segregate this month to study this. (STU4)

They had found their method to be effective because “the questions are very fixed. You can always predict questions. (STU4). Some interviewees expressed concerns that this form of assessment had narrowed the scope of their education because:

you’re not thinking of getting knowledge based on everything the course is trying to teach you. You’re trying to get knowledge based on what can get you the pass mark or the highest mark. We do this all the time. In all our subjects, we find the pattern in the exam and target, because it’s best. (STU6)

Almost all interviewees reported that in preparing their lessons, lecturers “have already question-spotted for us. That’s how they teach you” (STU4). One students believed that going to lectures was “quite important, because your lecturers would also give you certain tips and tricks, hacking the questions” (STU7). Typically, “100 percent” of teaching relates directly to the examinations, because “the teaching that you do has to be examination-led” (ADF3). Another lecturer detailed that two months into the eight-month course, “we’ve done enough lessons that we can do exam questions. We do exam questions from October until April continuously,” punctuated by three mock exams (ADF1). Many interviewees expressed concerns about examination-focused teaching: “I don’t know if it should be this way, but past papers are the most helpful thing for students closer to exams” (LEC3). Not only does assessment based solely on examinations undermine the depth of education, but it introduces strong elements of luck into student results:

There can be situations where you actually study for four areas perhaps—despite the fact that you’ve been told always not to pick and choose certain topics—but you actually do that, and you’re lucky at the exam, and then you get all those four areas. Then you get sixty marks or seventy marks, but it doesn’t really reflect your understanding of the whole topic or area. So I don’t think examinations are a good way of assessing students’ knowledge and skill. (ADF3)

Question-spotting is ostensibly discouraged by UOL, and thus its practice constitutes counter-conduct. However, both students and lecturers saw question-spotting as an optimal response to the economy of merit and fault structured by UOL examinations. Question-spotting therefore represents governed counter-conduct that lecturers and students engage in together. By inscribing LIHE as a “Teaching Centre” that is external to UOL, and thus one that they govern only to a limited degree, UOL enables the translation of education, and all its pedagogical possibilities, into a single number.

Just three hours per course, UOL’s annual examinations translate a year of educational experience into a singular, highly efficient and intensively inscribed performance. Many interviewees struggled with this sense of temporal displacement: “This loose affiliation system with the exam right at the end, it does not create a system that incentivizes students to be in constant learning mode the way the assessment system will in the US” (LEC2). Instead, “you wait until the last moment and you cram as much as you can, try to get maximum payoff” (LEC3). However, during the weeks leading up to examinations, many students reported being unable to access study rooms which were being used for primary and secondary school examinations. During this crucial time, one student balanced their own intensive studies with helping others:

I had first years come up to me and ask me how to study, and a lot of these basic questions that they were asking me, in March. They just had a month. I had notes to give them which they could have memorized and gotten through, so that was okay, but technically March was quite late to figure something like that out. (STU6)

Students frequently reported exam-related emotional distress. One specifically connected depression with the content load of yearlong courses: “It was during the last few months that we were basically learning them for the first time. There were so many chapters to study. I was stressed out and depressed” (STU8). To address this problem, they decided to “shortlist the ones I’m good at and read more on that.” One interviewee reported taking the examination despite being ill and unable to eat. During the examination, they were “seeing black spots all over. I was shivering because my fever had gone up higher” (LEC1). The extreme temporal concentration of assessment leads to the general sentiment among interviewees that “the pressure of studying for that one exam is pretty cruel” (LEC4).

UOL examinations appear not to perform a pedagogical role, but rather are a mechanism of governmentality that provides the currency for UOL’s economy of merit and fault. Focusing on a British university, Raaper (2016) identifies the standardization of student assessment as a technology of governmentality that forms neoliberal subjectivities within lecturers. Whereas the numerous regulations on student assessment described by Raaper reflect a more disciplinary governmentality, UOL governs partner institutions through a singular and minimal intervention that reflects mechanisms of security rather than discipline. One lecturer offered a nuanced deconstruction of UOL examinations:

I’m still a fan of the system in the sense that it’s a very difficult proposition for UOL, because you are having extremely low entry requirements, but then you also claim to have a degree that is of the highest standard. If you don’t have an exam that is tough, or is not very easy to pass, then you have a problem because you are going to undermine the very standard you claim to maintain. In that way, the exam system where they set the exam and mark the exam is the simplest, probably most cost-efficient way of maintaining that standard. If you had, for example, coursework marked by your lecturer at LIHE, they have no oversight for everything that I mentioned up until now. LIHE provides no oversight, and they provide no oversight, so it falls into this grey area of how the marking would happen. You expose the integrity of the system the moment you move away from exams. (LEC2)

They continued that without centrally-marked exams, UOL would need “much more stringent requirements on the level of oversight their affiliates provide, or they have to provide that oversight themselves. For example, the selection process, minimum qualifications for lecturers; None of these things really exist at the moment” (LEC2). Examinations thus govern the fuzzy boundaries between Teaching Centres and their lecturers, faculty and their students, securing important circulations and overlooking those deemed less significant.

In addition to unifying a diversity of classroom experiences under a single metric, UOL examinations also unify a diversity of institutional experiences throughout the global south. Translation often occurs when “political forces instrumentalize forms of authority other than those of ‘the state’ in order to ‘govern at a distance’ in both constitutional and spatial senses” (Rose, 1999, p. 49). Rose (1999, p. 212) identifies numericization as a complementary mechanism for governing at a distance, since numbers are “powerful ‘fidelity techniques,’ means for ensuring the allegiance of those who are distant to decisions in a centre.” They align the conduct of students with lecturers, lecturers with local institutions, and local institutions with UOL. Since UOL operates globally in diverse sociocultural contexts, numbers are instrumental in creating uniformity so that experience in extremely dissimilar contexts can be compared and weighed against one another, rendering them “translatable” to one another (Rose, 1999, p. 206). It is notable that Rose specifies the roles of translatability in census-taking and numericization in the construction of the colonial population. Numbers reduce the diversity of educational conduct and experience into visible, measurable, calculable, comparable, auditable, and actionable data that circulates throughout UOL’s ecology of expertise. They can be employed to either politicize or depoliticize a problem space, the latter occurring when governing actors legitimate their unilateral authority by reifying their location within centers of calculation. The problem is thus despatialized in the sense that it is no longer contestable by subjectivities within that governable domain, but rather is a technical problem to be addressed by objective, scientific, data-driven expertise (Rose, 1999, pp. 198-199). Numbers depoliticize the translation of UOL’s alignments through governmentality mechanisms, reconstituting colonial and neoliberal inequalities of expertise as culturally-neutral and universally-applicable best practices. They also provide the substance within which audit cultures can govern educational conduct.

**4.5 Audit culture at LIHE**

Like many universities undergoing neoliberalization in the global north, LIHE is gridded by mechanisms of visibility and audit that legitimate UOL’s governance. However, UOL’s audit mechanisms differ in that they appear less concerned about the “conduct of conduct,” in the Foucauldian sense, than about inscribing numerous peripheral educational spaces as governable. TIRF and “their quality assurance audit is not valid at all” (TLA). Audits at UOL partner institutions thus do not resemble the emergent “audit society,” which Rose (1999, p. 154) sees as “a society organized to observe itself through the mechanisms of audit in the service of programmes for control.” A similar notion is that of “audit culture,” which constructs the neoliberal subject as an auditee who measures:

themselves and their personal qualities against the external ‘benchmarks,’ ‘performance indicators’ and ‘ratings’ used by the auditing process. An audit society is one where people are interpolated as auditees, where accountability is conflated with elaborate policing mechanisms for subjecting individual performance to the gaze of external experts, and where every aspect of work must be ranked and assessed against bureaucratic benchmarks and economic targets. (Shore, 2008, p. 281)

With specific regards to governmentality in the neoliberal university, Shore (2008, p. 281) identifies the self-disciplinarity of audits as enabling their expansion from a mere accounting practice into a governing rationality that mobilizes the self-responsible subject: “Whereas earlier audits required teams of inspectors making costly visits, the new ‘lighter touch’ approach now requires that organizations review and police themselves, a system sometimes referred to as ‘regulated self-regulation.’” This lighter touch is evident in the two forms of audit to which UOL subjects partner institutions, the Institution Periodic Review (IPR) and the Institution Annual Monitoring (IAM). The IPR is conducted every three to five years and begins with a partner institution’s submission of a self-evaluation along with financial documents. Then, UOL representatives conduct a “meeting with faculty members (teaching staff)” and engage in “observing selected classes for all programmes” (University of London, 2013, p. 14). The IAM processes is conducted annually, and consists entirely of self-reporting, which then forms the basis of UOL’s judgment as to whether they are complying with recommendations previously made during the IPR, as well as any new recommendations. This “regulated self-regulation” gives the appearance of autonomy and exteriority to partner institutions. Beck (2009, p. 9) illuminates a crucial question of power dynamics when he describes the contemporary emergence of a “world risk society” in which risks are managed as “an internal problem of apparently self-enclosed social systems.” Paradoxically, “every attempt to manage the complexity of risk creates the need to fall back on abstractions and models which give rise to new uncertainties.” He identifies a “structural conflict built into the communicative logic of risk,” which is a conflict over between “those who run risks and define them versus those to whom they are allocated” (Beck, 2009, p. 9). As the authority to define risks and the power to govern them is concentrated upwards, their location is dispersed downwards throughout the population. UOL governs partner institutions as “Teaching Centres,” institutional spaces that are located towards the exteriority of arterial power and are therefore contingent and severable from the pastoral domain of governance. UOL maps diverse risks throughout the conduct of partner institutions, lecturers, and students with its “Institutions Assurance risk register, which enables the monitoring of any risks associated with each recognised centre and the management of this risk” (University of London, 2013, p. 18). Institutions added to the register are deemed “higher risk” and thus subject to “close monitoring and regular review.” The decision to add an institution to the risk register is based on “internal factors such as student numbers, student performance, staffing suitability and turnover, facilities and resources as well as external factors such as country stability and government recognition.” UOL’s mechanisms of risk and audit take little concern with the conduct at partner institutions, yet they play an essential role in rendering educational spaces exterior yet governable.

A key mechanism in this dissemination of risk is the contractualization of principal-agent relationships. Olssen and Peters observe that “Agency theory (AT) has been widely used in the economic and social restructuring programmes in OECD countries, including Britain, America, Australia and New Zealand” as a modality to align professional conduct with the organizational objectives using “a range of monitoring, information eliciting and performance appraisal techniques” (2005, p. 320). They go on to argue that these governmentality mechanisms permeate the neoliberal university in order to conduct the conduct of research and teaching. Although they specify the northern focus of their research, they do not speculate as to how neoliberal governmentality may operate distinctly in universities of the global south. Particularly relevant to the colonial potential of audit culture in transnational higher education is Rose’s (1999, p. 154) observation that audit culture “creates accountability to one set of norms . . . at the expense of accountability to other sets of norms.” Audit culture can therefore function as a displacement of indigenous practices, epistemologies, or concerns. LIHE is not accountable to Sri Lankan society or culture in the sense of the public liberal university. Instead, it is merely accountable to UOL auditors.

Accounting plays an integral part in governmentality as it has been applied in spaces of coloniality. Kalpagam (2000b, p. 41) generally notes that “the pre-colonial reckoning of worldly affairs was less objectified and quantified. It is only with the colonial practices of governance that measurement and quantification assumed predominance.” Rose (1999, pp. 200-202) more specifically argues in his “social history of numbers” that numericization became more instrumental in the governmentalization of the population when policing and statistics imbued a calculability and rationality upon the modern state, and thus the colonial state. Kalpagam (2000a) also sees accounting as central to colonial governmentality in 19th and 20th century India. She explores a number of disciplinary and security mechanisms that enabled the transmission of standardized accounting as a knowledge and practice to colonial India. These include the incorporation of a population into the colonial economy using minimal but efficient oversight; the statistical visibilization, formalization, and capturing of economic activities; and the displacement of pre-colonial knowledges and practices through the commodification and accounting of increasingly diverse activities within the population.

A number of scholars have noted that New Public Management, which is a broad school of management theory that regulates principal-agent relationships through audit, commodifies the minutiae of academic life by subjecting scholars in the global north to continual and intensive oversight. In this way, “managers who make higher education ‘efficient’ and ‘transparent’ by exercising constant control over the faculty are represented as the form that ‘accountability’ to taxpayers and consumers takes in the former public domain,” discourses which buttress such practices against concerns about academic freedom (Lorenz, 2012, p. 609). The deprofessionalized academic in the neoliberal university is stripped of the responsibility to critically reflect upon their research and teaching in order to ensure that their conduct has a positive impact on the public. Instead, their conduct becomes visible and “transparent” to professional managers, who ensure that their conduct is “efficient” and “accountable” to the desires of student-customers. Accordingly, the neoliberalization of the university involves a “shift from collegial or democratic governance in flat structures, to hierarchical models based on dictated management specifications of job performance in principal-agent chains of command,” which serves to “erode traditional conceptions of professional autonomy over work in relation to both teaching and research” (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 325). Olssen and Peters point to a number of particular performance indicators that erode the professional autonomy of academics, including volume of income from externally funded research, customer satisfaction of students, and the degree to which courses offer skills that render graduates employable. Lorenz (2012, p. 614-615) postulates that neoliberal management techniques take on a more hierarchical form in the public university than in the private sector precisely because administrators with little scholarly knowledge must wrestle legitimacy and authority away from the faculty of academic specialists. Administrators practicing New Public Management avoid critical negotiations between the subjectivities and perspectives within the faculty by imposing their own definitions of “efficiency” and “quality” in an authoritarian manner that Lorenz (2012) likens to state communist rulership. In a certain sense, UOL’s form of faculty management is even more authoritarian because it sees lecturers at partner institutions as suffering from a near-total lack of academic expertise, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and thus severely restricts their authority. In another sense, UOL is further removed from the educational spaces that it governs, with a lighter touch that could be described as more indicative of security mechanisms rather than disciplinary mechanisms.

The technologies of neoliberal governmentality that scholars have located within northern universities make extensive use of disciplinary procedures to conduct educational conduct. To consider the ways in which this differs from the context of LIHE, it is worth revisiting Foucault’s distinction between discipline and security:

the law prohibits and discipline prescribes, and the essential function of security, without prohibiting or prescribing, but possibly making use of some instruments of prescription and prohibition, is to respond to a reality in such a way that this response cancels out the reality to which it responds—nullifies it, or limits, checks, or regulates it. (Foucault, 2007, p. 47)

Unlike the neoliberal university of the global north, the conduct of LIHE faculty is mostly absent of disciplinary governance. It lacks the extensive array of prescriptive disciplinary mechanisms such as journal impact factors, grant income targets, dissertation supervision metrics, and other key performance indicators that typify the neoliberalizing university (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Instead, UOL governs by structuring incentives—examination results for students and their lecturers, and TIRF requirements for institutions—which direct conduct towards UOL’s objectives. The TIRF requirements often identify targets of intervention without prescribing specific conduct, a looseness that broadens the possibilities of UOL’s governmentality. For example, the requirement on “Learning Environment” concerns facilities, physical security, classrooms, and accessibility, although it does not mandate a certain number of classrooms, standard of security measures, or type of facilities. One TIRF requirement that is particularly demonstrative of security is that “the institution maintains regular contact with the University of London and informs the University whenever changes occur at the institution, which may impact on its recognition” (University of London, n.d.-b, p. 6). The nature of contact is open to interpretation, but the domain of intervention is specified as changes within partner institutions and the objective is specified as the preservation of UOL’s recognition. The focus on recognition demonstrates preoccupation with perceptions of legitimacy. In contrast to the prescriptive disciplinary mechanisms of the northern university, this requirement functions to simply visibilize the conduct of partner institutions in broadly interpretative terms. Similarly, another TIRF requirement states that the institution must “participate satisfactorily” in UOL “annual monitoring activities” and “periodic review activities” (University of London, n.d.-b, p. 9), maintaining the auditability of partner institutions. Many of the requirements outlined in the TIRF requirements appear disciplinary in nature, such as “Performance review and enhancement activities are in place for academic staff” and “teaching and learning approaches offered are relevant and appropriate to the level and subject being taught” (University of London, n.d.-b, pp. 10-11). However, these same requirements are so vaguely worded and loosely enforced that they constitute disciplinary power only to a very limited degree. Instead, their functional purpose appears to be capturing conduct to establish a particular governable domain as legitimately affiliated with and regulated by the University of London. Perhaps the best example is the requirement that “The University of London study materials and syllabus are central to all teaching and learning activities” (University, n.d.-b, p. 11), apparently overlooking the irony that the University of London directly concerns itself with classroom conduct only once a year for the duration of a single three-hour exam.

Perhaps the most direct and powerful metrics produced in UOL’s audit culture are the annual examination. They are so central to the UOL experience that partner institutions are not necessary for students to earn degrees; they are merely optional and auxiliary institutions. The power of the UOL examination represents “the power of the single figure,” a “particular potency of those numerical technologies that can reduce the complexity of experience to a single comparable, quotable, calculable number” (Rose, 1999, p. 205). Students never receive any commentary, suggestions, or justification for the marks awarded, rendering the process of its calculation obscure and thus uncontestable (see Rose, 1999, p. 208). Brown (2015, p. 130) has similarly argued that “as governance ‘responsibilizes’ each element in its orbit, it eliminates from view the stratification and disparate positions of these elements—the powers producing, arranging, and relating them.” The lack of qualitative feedback suggests that the examination functions less as a pedagogical instrument than as an instrument of downward responsibilization and upward invisibilization, uncontestable and apparently neutral precisely because it is barren of any human characteristic. The single figure of the examination results also enables the auditing of lecturers and partner institutions on the same basis. LIHE as a case study may provide insight into the pedagogical deficiencies of audit culture, which Rose (1999, p .153) critiques on the basis of its “apparent transformation of the subjective into the objective, the esoteric into the factual masks somewhat the weak knowledge base—the uncertain status, inescapably partial vision, lack of evidential support, history of failure, vulnerability to changes in fashion and convention.” Its study may also have implications regarding student responsibilization for neoliberal subjectivities in arterial topologies without significant cultures of audit.

**4.6 Responsibilizing students**

The arterial inscription employed by UOL governs its “external” students and faculty as self-responsibilized subjects. Self-responsibilization is a vital governmentality mechanism that motivates the subject to undertake their education as an enterprise. Foucault traces its origin not in the rise of neoliberalism during the latter half of the twentieth century, but to the very core of the relationship between the modern state and population:

what particularly strikes me as essential and typical is that when we look at the very heart of police . . . we see that it is education on the one hand, and then the profession, the professionalization of individuals, on the other; it is concerned with the education that must train individuals so that they can have a profession, and then the profession, or at any rate, the type of activity to which they will devote themselves and be committed to devote themselves. So, we have a set of controls, decisions, and constraints brought to bear on men themselves, not insofar as they have a status or are something in the order, hierarchy, and social structure, but insofar as they do something, are able to do it, and undertake to do it throughout their life. (Foucault, 2007, p. 321).

Professionalization is therefore a pedagogical processes that shapes conduct through arranging fields of possibilities. It directly governmentalizes *doing*, aligning that doing with broader structures while simultaneously embedding that doing deeply within self-identification.

Almost all interviewees reported expanding career opportunities as a primary motivation for affiliating with LIHE and UOL. Rose (1999, pp. 162-164) notes that social rights have become increasingly tied to employment, not being granted by the social contract but earned through integration into the workforce. He writes that the unemployed have become responsibilized for their own lack of employment through the narrative that unemployment stems from a deficiency of initiative and entrepreneurship, and a disinclination to consistently acquire new skills to meet the demands of the flexible work economy. This is reflected in the discourse that public university students in Sri Lanka are responsible for their own employability, and that by receiving free education without gaining employment they are accessing a good that they have no right to. Goonasekera (2013) argues that in Sri Lanka, “‘free education’ is no longer a tool of prosperity . . . these students should maintain their momentum on education in the university and excel their careers and enter the highest social strata in society.” Instead, he laments, they choose public protest over studies and end up with “so called ‘jobs’ in the government sector.” Similarly, David (2017) bluntly states that in Sri Lanka, “gratis university education has given birth to a generation of student hooligans who do not value what society gives them.” The privatization of higher education in Sri Lanka is therefore posited as a solution to deficiencies in employability. By treating higher education as a private investment rather than a public good, responsibilized students pursue their own professionalization with an entrepreneurial spirit, enabling not only their sources of income but their political participation as worker-citizens. UOL’s single-examination assessment, adjunctification, and “lighter-touch” governmentality encourages subjects to see their affiliation with LIHE as contingent to professional careers. All part-time faculty interviewed reported being simultaneously employed elsewhere. Likewise, many students saw LIHE as supplementary to other professional engagements. One student, who balanced International Development studies at LIHE with an internship at an intergovernmental organization, felt that “because I was working and studying, I didn’t have that full college experience at LIHE. My only aim was to finish class and go home” (STU7). Although they found the course content to be relevant to their work, the schedule meant that “I didn’t have much time to study during the year, so it was just cramming last moment. What actually did help me was doing past paper questions.” UOL thus provides an auxiliary investment opportunity with which the entrepreneurial and self-responsibilized neoliberal subject enhances their human capital alongside other professional pursuits.

LIHE’s appeal is bolstered by a discourse of graduate “employability” rather than “unemployment,” which proliferates throughout Colombo’s educational culture. This discourse reflects a depoliticization of unemployment and a subsequent responsibilization of the graduate for their own unemployment. The issue is not framed as social, but rather as personal, as a question of their own (employ)ability. This explains former president Mahinda Rajapaksa’s (2010, p. 9) argument that students and graduates protest due to “the evil politicization of their problems by certain wicked persons,” problems which must then be recast as individual. Along these lines, Samaranayake (2016, p. 25) warns that a “high degree of politicization in the universities which are currently the base for insurrectionary politics” is hindering efforts to make Sri Lanka a global knowledge hub. He postulates that such a knowledge hub would require a depoliticized student who focuses on personal transformation rather than social transformation. The “graduates themselves are not willing to join the private sector as it is a competitive field where job security depends on performance,” a voluntary exclusion that is furthered by their lack of “proficiency in English, personality and social standing which most graduates who come from rural backgrounds are yet to acquire” (Samaranayake, 2016, pp. 26-27). Samaranayake goes on to include “career development learning, experience (work and life), degree subject knowledge, understanding and skills, generic skills and emotional intelligence… self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem” as requirements for the Sri Lankan workforce to adapt to the global knowledge economy” (p. 23). This argument echoes prominent features of public discourse surrounding graduate unemployment in Sri Lanka, locating the cause of unemployment within the responsibilized subject, which is their personal lack of job skills and self-discipline.

In this context, LIHE presents self-responsibilized students with an opportunity to increase their employability in the private sector, develop themselves as human capital, and gain access to a local elite that is shaped by the global geography of arterial power. Responsibilized students enter a principal-agent “partnership” with LIHE (see Rose, 1999, p. 142). Like many young adults in Sri Lanka, LIHE students are a population at risk for professional skill deficiencies, private unemployability, public employment, and public protest. Since they represent a middle-class minority, this risk is rerouted to private universities and mitigated by the new avenues of opportunity they present. As with most neoliberal institutions of higher education:

students do not pay to be taught a discipline by professionals who have proven expertise and subject knowledge based on professional criteria. Instead, students pay for the end product of education: a degree or other qualification, the investment of which will bring them profits on the labor market. (Lorenz, 2012, p. 622)

The deemphasis on teaching quality and the emphasis on employment outcome is amplified by UOL’s deskilling of LIHE faculty. It supports the findings of a study of an Indian business school Varman, Saha, and Skålén (2011), which found that administrators, lecturers, and students understood the purpose of their education to be job placement, with academics and learning taking on a merely obligatory and symbolic role. In that study, students evaluated job placements according to “a hierarchy based on money overlaid with a postcolonial hierarchy” that privileged employers of the global north (Varman, Saha, & Skålén, 2011, pp. 1171-1173). LIHE is similarly a site at which self-responsibilized students develop their human capital by accessing both postcolonial and neoliberal forms of power.

Sometimes, the emphasis on student responsibility over lecturer expertise was reflected in classroom pedagogies: “We were not being taught. We were just told to read the subject guides in class, and there was no lecture” (STU5). Another student reported that “they’ll be like ‘okay, here’s the reading for today.’ So you sit and read” (STU9). However, many students and lecturers said that for most classes, a more dynamic yet examination-centric pedagogy was typical. Therefore, whether students need to come to class or not:

comes down to curiosity and inquisitiveness. Some students are blessed with that, and they will teach themselves. Some students are not like that; they need the impetus to learn. Do they need to? No. I start every class, every year, by saying this is a self-study program. The subject guide, if you read it, is written like a lecture. (LEC3)

Students accordingly responsibilized themselves for their studies, with many even choosing to study at home instead of at LIHE. At one point, second-year students were banned from the study rooms “because everyone just had their own discussion, their own mini-lectures. Some people wanted to study in the quiet while others needed to discuss openly” (STU4). Students often relied on one another for academic and administrative support.

One student interviewee in particular suffered from the risks transmitted through responsibilization. As a prospective student, they began contacting LIHE by telephone from their South Asian country of origin. LIHE administrators would put them “on hold for maybe 45 minutes, 30 minutes sometimes, making an overseas call. They put me on hold, they sometimes hang up the phone, so I didn’t get the information” (STU9). Specifically, “they never told me that the study mode is this way, it’s only exams, when I first enrolled.” They reflected that if they would have been informed of that, “I would have stayed back home and just paid UOL and not gone to the lecturers, do the self-study, distance-learning thing. Now I feel like I’m doing that, and just paying LIHE for the visa” without getting a university experience. They “don’t feel like it’s a university” due to “the place itself, the learning environment, the mode of study, and the way they assess us. Basically everything.” Reflecting on their previous undergraduate studies in a Southeast Asian country, they criticized that with UOL, “you’re only preparing for the exam. Back at my other university, I was doing assignments, and a final year project as well. There were a lot of other activities along with the degree. A lot of presentations, quizzes,” which meant that their education “was more interactive.” They contrasted the campus at which they studied, which featured outdoor space and recreational areas, with LIHE, in that:

when I come go LIHE, I feel like I want to get out of there right after my lectures. I want to get home quick. It’s much more strict, and there isn’t space, or maybe it’s the environment, the ambience and everything. It’s more like a prison school system. (STU9)

UOL’s confluence of student responsibilization and institutional exteriorization means that it assumes no responsibility to provide anything to students other than examination marking. Thus, “there is no need for the person to go to LIHE. If you just pay to UOL and just stay home,” it would be more cost effective (STU9). Having been responsibilized for the financial risks, they reflected that “the experience that I had [at the Southeast Asian university], and the current experience I have here, is totally different. I feel like I’m paying a huge amount of money and just going for a very few hours. It’s not worth it.” UOL’s severe responsibilization of students means that, for many, there is no university at all.

The self-responsibilized “distance education” student does not need to attend classes. Therefore, in regards to attendance, “closer to the exams it drops, perhaps because they have already chosen the topics that they’re going to do, or maybe they want more time to manage their own studies” (ADF3). Many students made comments such as “my close friends and I haven’t gone for lectures in months” (STU1) or “I’ve gone for zero lectures this year. I went for only one lecture last year” (STU4). This is common amongst students, which one administrator refers to as “dropouts” in that “they’re still enrolled at LIHE, but they don’t end up going for lectures and they do it by themselves. To me, that’s like dropping out. That means LIHE is not doing their job properly” (ADF1). The same interviewee also responsibilized lecturers and students themselves for low attendance: “Sometimes the way you teach might not be what’s working for them. Sometimes they don’t want to come when they’re not prepared.” Contrary to UOL’s inscription of LIHE as within its domain of governance, interviewees rarely responsibilized UOL for the education taking place at LIHE. They often reported receiving little help from UOL, which is “slow to answer. I think that was a common problem with a lot of students” (STU5). Instead, students took charge of their own administrative duties. Many referred to a former LIHE graduate who had previously worked as an administrator for a few years. Although they has since left their position, students still frequently contact them for guidance on topics such as:

If we fail a compulsory subject, do we get our degree, or do we have an option of resitting? Those questions were all answered by [them], because UOL takes too long to respond and the LIHE administration isn’t that great at answering questions. (STU6)

Student self-responsibilization is supported by UOL’s requirement that partner institutions report students with attendance lower than eighty percent, which would disqualify them from the examinations. Yet despite overall low attendance at LIHE, administrators report on average less than one student per year because “it wasn’t that much of a big deal. It was not really 80 percent we looked at. Something really bad, like maybe 20 percent attendance” was the point at which LIHE would report it to UOL (ADF2). Their counter-conduct was justified “because it’s on the side of the students. They spend a lot on their education, and it’s not fair for them to be removed.” By limiting attendance reporting requirements to students below a threshold, UOL invisibilizes the problem of attendance while projecting an illusion of standardization, thus navigating the dissonance between inscription and self-responsibilization.

In one sense, the LIHE student is responsibilized as a consumer-citizen whose choice of institution represents an exercise of their market freedom. Rose (1999, p. 65) says that neoliberal freedom paradoxically involves interventions to ensure that institutions are optimally administrated as well as interventions “to transform people into consumers who can choose between products.” Along these lines, UOL (2013, p. 4) states that one purporse of its TIRF is to “provide students with information and guidance about the choice of institutions offering tuition support for University of London International Programmes.” The casting of market freedom as social freedom gives the appearance that the Sri Lankan consumer of higher education is enriched by the presence of any and all international education providers, since they represent additional options and opportunities for social mobility. However, the proliferation of private for-profit education redefines the educational system as a privatized space that includes only those who can afford it. The problem of higher education is thus relocated within the upper-middle class, and the rural and working classes who have historically represented a significant population within the Sri Lankan higher education system are redirected into other problematics, such as those of vocational training or poverty. Taking the arterial shape of colonial governmentality, the freedom previously represented in free public education is now bifurcated into separate fields of possible action: the freedom of the upper-middle class to choose their higher education institution and the freedom of the rural and working classes to pursue livelihoods that do not require a four-year degree such as line work in export processing manufacturing. The source of freedom shifts from the state to the global economy, and the freedom of the individual subject is reworked from national political citizenship into global consumer citizenship.

**4.7 Responsibilizing lecturers**

Responsibilization, as a profoundly constitutive technology of the self, greatly influences the conduct of lecturers at LIHE. Olssen and Peters note that the shift from liberal to neoliberal governmentality marks a distinctive reconceptualization of the role of the academic:

Under liberal governmentality, the ‘professions’ constituted a mode of institutional organization characterized by a principle of autonomy which characterized a form of power based on ‘delegation’ (i.e., delegated authority) and underpinned by relations of trust. Under neoliberal governmentality, principal-agent line management chains replace delegated power with hierarchical forms of authoritatively structured relation, which erode, and seek to prohibit, an autonomous space from emerging. (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 324)

These contradictory governmentalities have led to discordant expectations on academics. Shore (2010) examines universities in New Zealand as exemplary of the emerging “schizophrenic university,” a term which describes the dissonant roles placed on the university by the global knowledge economy and its political advocates. He lists the multiplicitous expectations that the state of New Zealand places upon its universities, including those of generating human capital, providing fora for the pursuit of truth, and empowering a national culture. Because of these competing responsibilities, “New Zealand academics, as in the UK, are now subject to more forms of accountability, surveillance and competing priorities than almost any other public service professional” (Shore, 2010, p. 21). This neoliberal governmentality “disguises government intervention through complex funding formulae and a network of new intermediary bodies whose professed independence from government is often highly questionable” (p. 22). By eroding professional autonomy and the spirit of disinterested inquiry, research activity is rendered governable and commodifiable not only by state, but also by nonstate actors. This highly disciplinary form of neoliberal governmentality corresponds to research universities located towards the core of the global knowledge economy. Some context-specific reconsiderations of responsibilization, however, are necessary to understand how it operates amongst lecturers at LIHE.

In stark contrast to New Zealand’s government, the Sri Lankan government takes no apparent interest in the pedagogies or research within private institutions of higher education. The responsibilization of lecturers within audit culture at LIHE plays a distinct role from that which typifies the neoliberal university. Reflecting on the potentially homogenizing analysis of “the neoliberal university,” Morrissey (2015, p. 618) is careful to situate his research “in a publically funded university in Western Europe that is more broadly happening under a neoliberal regime of public management.” His interviewees expressed their experiences as individualized competitors within a research economy assessed through frequent reference to key performance indicators such as funding and research output. He concludes that the research activities in that particular university was being increasingly subject to the values of capital. Amit (2000) draws similar connections between panoptic governmentality in the neoliberal university and the commercialization of research. By contrast, the research activities of LIHE lecturers are not reported to either LIHE or UOL, and thus have little bearing on performance assessment. The productive capacities of these lecturers are not valued or capitalized to any extent. Instead, LIHE and UOL locates profitability specifically within the tuition and fees of student-customers. Lecturers are individualized similarly to those of Morrissey’s study, but in a minimally-monitored way that ensures customer satisfaction through student surveys and the legitimation of educational quality through examinations. The responsibilized lecturer is subject to a streamlined performance culture, limited entirely to students’ examination results and lecturer evaluation forms.

In addition to performance monitoring mechanisms, lecturers are responsibilized through the informal nature of their employment with LIHE. Rawolle, Rowlands, and Blackmore (2015) find that in universities whose research activities are undergoing marketization, the contractualization of faculty positions contributes to the responsibilization of academics by subjecting their research to more stringent and numerous mechanisms of governmentality. In the north, contractualization results in an intensive audit culture, which reflexively furthers the so-called “flexibilization” of the workforce. Audits on contractualized labor forces “amplify and multiply the points at which doubt and suspicion can be generated” and workers are “constantly assessed in light of evaluations, appraisals, achievement of targets and so forth—under the constant threat of ‘down-sizing,’ efficiency gains and the like” (Rose, 1999, pp. 155-158). Fraser (2003) places the efficiency of labor flexibilization alongside that of just-in-time export manufacturing and the fluidity of governance relationships in neoliberal globalization. Brown (2015) also highlights labor flexibilization in her own US-based university when she gives an account of the responsibilization of academic departments for disbursing employee benefits. She argues that, in the case of her department, this devolution of responsibility has shaped “a flexibilized, unprotected and poorly paid labor force” (Brown, 2015, p. 132). At LIHE, the colonial difference magnifies the distance between power and responsibility in that lecturers are without the typical authority granted to university faculty. LIHE lecturers are informally employed through precarious arrangements, in absence of any written contracts, that typically yield the lecturer less than 100 US dollars monthly per course taught. As a result:

I like teaching, which is why I do it. But I’m not closely integrated with the institution in any way. As a visiting lecturer, you usually come after hours, the office is closed, you do your lectures, you sign the book, and go. You have very, very little interaction with the administrative staff. It’s just more for things like payments or booking a room. There’s no strong integration at all. (LEC2)

LIHE’s part-time lecturers, who constitute 90% of its faculty according to administrators at meetings (NOTES), are so contingent as to be scarcely there at all.

The inequalities of expertise structured by the UOL system engender additional mistrust within the precarious contractual relationships between partner institutions and lecturers. Connell notes that the neoliberalization of Australian education has caused a “de-professionalization of teachers. Teachers’ capacity to make autonomous judgment about curriculum and pedagogy in the interests of their actual pupils is undermined by the system of remote control,” a system that is “operated by funding mechanisms, testing systems, certification, audit and surveillance mechanisms” (Connell, p. 108). By contrast, UOL’s “current system of affiliates is a very loose system of affiliation. The UOL system is designed in such a way that even if you didn’t have a lecturer, that’s okay” (LEC2). The expendability and lack of autonomy of lecturers at LIHE was underscored in a 2018 meeting between UOL representatives and LIHE lecturers. The UOL representatives informed lecturers that they plan to greatly expand the content of the UOL Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for all Economics, Management, Finance and the Social Sciences programs. The intention of the project is to “train the trainers as well as the students,” reducing lecturers to the role of mere “trainers” and presupposing their lack of expertise (NOTES). The UOL representatives repeatedly stated that lecturers “cannot do the same things as they have before,” but instead will now merely “add value” to VLE content. Likewise, students “cannot ignore anything on the VLE.” The representatives gave numerous lighthearted reassurances that the jobs of LIHE lecturers were safe and that they were not being replaced by automation. One lecturer present at the meeting later reflected that when the representatives said this, “they gave a little wry smile, didn’t they? That bastard” (LEC3). The message of the representatives, however, was clear: lecturers at the newly-rebranded “Teaching Centres” will play a merely auxiliary role in the pedagogies within UOL classrooms.

UOL representatives also expressed mistrust towards lecturers at partner institutions when it was audited by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), a British nongovernmental organization. The QAA noted that UOL justified a single annual exam as “as an effective means of preventing academic misconduct,” marking academics in the global south as intrinsically untrustworthy (Quality Assurance Agency, 2011, p. 18). QAA acknowledged that this resulted in “little formative function,” on which some students “commented unfavourably,” although it recommended no specific changes to address the issue. Lecturers at UOL Teaching Centres not only require “training” in order to “add value” to UOL’s digital content, but they also cannot be trusted due to a dearth of academic integrity.

The focus on teaching rather than research, coupled with the marketization of students as customers, bestows a special significance upon student evaluations of lecturers. Brown (2015, p. 197) notes that “because teaching is delinked from research . . . quality is increasingly measured according to consumer satisfaction, that is, popularity with students, themselves increasingly oriented by return on investment, whether in the form of entertainment or the enhancement of human capital.” Likewise, lecturers at LIHE are assessed once or twice annually by evaluation forms from students. Although copies of these evaluations are available to lecturers upon request, they are not synthesized into reports and the results are not discussed with lecturers, suggesting their role is not pedagogical but rather a mechanism of responsibilization. The deployment of surveys amongst the UOL student population may, on one hand, suggest the democratic promise of numbers. On the other hand, it responsibilizes lecturers while delimiting critiques of UOL according to questions of efficacy and quality, excluding deeper questions about the legitimacy of UOL, its power structures, or its colonial nature. It also redirects customer dissatisfaction from other modes of resistance, such as student protest, public communications, or disenrollment. Most significantly perhaps, it redirects responsibility for the student experiences with UOL and LIHE to the individual lecturers themselves.

The responsibilization of LIHE lecturers has a particular pedagogical role in regards to the colonial nature of neoliberal governmentality. In New Public Management, the university administration:

is shielded from all risky activities in the outside world; its sole and exclusive responsibility is control over the faculty. Should anything go wrong in the outside world—for instance, that the education consumers fail to turn up in sufficient numbers . . . then the faculty are always responsible and can be judged for it. (Lorenz, 2012, p. 622).

This judgment introduces risks, vulnerabilities, and mistrust relating to the tenuous expertise of lecturers in the global south. Brown connects downward visibilization with upward invisibilization by identifying the “disappearing act” through which “governance facilitates and imposes responsibilization, but the powers orchestrating this process are nowhere in discursive sight” (Brown, 2015, pp. 133-134). UOL examinations simultaneously responsibilize LIHE lecturers for student performance and dispossess them of basic pedagogical authority. Accordingly, some LIHE lecturers responsibilized themselves for advocating their own disposability:

I always go on the principle that lecturers should be unimportant. I tell my students all the time, especially . . . before the exam: If this is not useful for you . . . stop coming for class, don’t waste your time. I think it’s just an unfortunate fact of how teaching happens in Sri Lanka in primary and secondary school. Lecturers become very important here simply because students are not used to working without guidance. You have to deal with the kind of socialization, cultural aspect of it. (LEC2)

Their sense of responsibility motivated their adherence to the content in UOL course guides because “if you’re trying to do right by your students, that’s what the exam is going to be based on. If you have no control over the exam, I don’t feel like you should be messing around too much with what you’re teaching” (LEC2). Lecturers often felt that it was their responsibility to relinquish pedagogical control to UOL.

While the pedagogical figure most visible to students is the lecturer, pedagogical authority is retained by a distant and invisibilized center of calculation. Even in the global north, where lecturers are typically afforded far more expertise by their administrators than UOL lecturers in the global south, the intersecting demands of multiple key performance indicators has limited the autonomy of academics in delivering courses and conducting research (Craig, Amernic, & Tourish, 2014; Shore, 2008). Blackmore (2009) argues student evaluations of Australian academics encourage a “pedagogy of performance [which], in terms of its universality, disallows and negates diversity of need and the approach of situated pedagogy that requires professional judgement, autonomy and dialogical communication” (Blackmore, 2009, p. 866). The erosion of academic freedom and dialogical communication at LIHE is further amplified by the planetary distance of the colonial difference across which curricula is unilaterally imposed and assessment is conducted. As with the universities of the global north, 90 percent of lecturers at LIHE comprise a contingent labor force. This is similar to what Shore (2008, p. 282) theorized as a “reserve army of marginal and casually employed professionals” whose contractual affiliation with the academy is subject to continual suspicion and assessment. LIHE lecturers conduct their courses in consideration of their precarious continuity and the fact that the “curriculum’s merits are now calculated in terms of what is most visible to external scrutiny: tangible, transferable and marketable skills” (Shore, 2008, p. 290). If UOL’s governmentality translates its objectives into lecturer conduct, then the direction towards which their pedagogies are being conducted is a marketized education of the desocialized subject.

**4.8 Educating the desocialized subject**

UOL self-responsibilizes students and faculty subjectivities at LIHE, encroaching upon social responsibility as a discourse, affect, and governing rationality. In the neoliberal political rationality, “government is not identified with the public, but only as an alternate market actor. Citizens, meanwhile, are rendered as investors or consumers, not as members of a democratic polity who share power and certain common goods, spaces, and experiences” (Brown, 2015, p. 176). Brown (2015, p. 191) observes the imbrication between the formation of the neoliberal subject and the emergence of educational and professional culture that “does not celebrate inventors of vaccines, advocates for peace, revolutionary leaders . . . it celebrates Hollywood or sports celebrities, creators of Apple, Facebook, Netflix, or eBay.” Given that private transnational education in Sri Lanka has catered to “a professional class during and after the colonial period. Some elements of this class imitated and adopted western life styles, values and identities” (Gamage, 2011, p. 36), agents of neoliberal culture have considerable potential to mobilize its aspirational identities, particularly in subjectivities throughout coloniality.

LIHE provides a lens into the governmentalities that form the desocialized neoliberal subject in South Asia. South Asia’s educational spaces are often purposed as an emergent laboratory for the most intensively desocialized and neoliberalized forms of education. Tilak (2008, p. 459) predicts that “the commoditization of higher education would terribly weaken governments’ commitment to and public funding of higher education, and promote a rapid growth in the privatization of higher education,” along with the curricular changes implied by the privatization of the objectives of higher education. He observes that these changes are “already being experienced in countries like India, with an increase in demand for engineering education, management education and areas like fashion technology, and with a falling demand for the natural and physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, languages” (Tilak, 2008, p. 460). Varman, Saha, and Skålén (2011) support this notion by connecting economic neoliberalization with the increased prominence of both private higher education institutions and business education curricula in India. Students at the tertiary business school which they studied generally had a limited understanding of the social issues faced by marginalized populations in India. For example, one student in their study analyzed the recent rise in farmer suicides as a result of laziness and the pursuit of financial compensation that the Indian state offered to families members of farmers who had committed suicide. Varman, Saha, and Skålén (2011) point out that the student’s analysis demonstrates a neoliberal subjectivity in which social problems are located within individualized and responsibilized subjects. LIHE is also a site at which subjectivities are desocialized through governmentalities over educational spaces.

LIHE students follow three-year programs entirely focused on their major of study, which for approximately 80% of LIHE students is business and British law, with the remaining 20% pursuing degrees in the social sciences (NOTES). Without any general education requirements and few options for electives, there is little trace of the “liberal arts education generalized across society” that once instilled “the ideal of democracy . . . as the demos was being prepared through education for a life of freedom, understood as both individual sovereignty . . . and participation in collective self-rule” (Brown, 2015, p. 185). Higher education, which Warnapala (2011) discusses as historically instrumental in constituting the Sri Lankan demos, is repurposed in the vision of the neoliberal economy rather than the democratic society. The desocialized subject has been labeled by Deleuze (1992) as “dividual,” signifying that the subject is internally divided by multiple and sometimes overlapping enclosures of control. Rose concurs with Deleuze’s theory of “societies of control” in which the “dividual” subject is fragmented according to diverse mechanisms of social control that expand beyond the traditional frontiers of the disciplinary institution. Therefore, “*perpetual training* tends to replace the *school*, and continuous control to replace the examination,” resulting in “continuous forms of control, and the effect on the school of perpetual training, the corresponding abandonment of all university research, the introduction of the ‘corporation’ at all levels of schooling” (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 5-7). Deleuze’s warning was perhaps prescient of UOL’s system of partner institutions as a culmination of the neoliberal project towards the “abandonment of all university research.”

Aligning with the aspirational and social-entrepreneurial affects that typically relate the neoliberal subject to a desocializing demos, some students and faculty found social engagement in professional or semi-professional arrangements contingent to those with LIHE (LEC4). These included teaching, work for nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations, and supreme court litigation. Interviewees often located LIHE’s points of social intervention at sites of employment. For example, one administrator said that in addition to benefitting students, “a lot of organizations benefit from us, from our graduates,” listing three local for-profit thinktanks for which many graduates have worked (ADF2). Students often used education and personal connections obtained at LIHE to become involved or employed in IGOs and NGOs. One student chose to study at LIHE because they offer degrees in the social sciences in which “you can criticize, you can analyze” topics ranging from history to current affairs. After a year of studies, the student “felt like it has changed the way I look at things” (STU8). They recounted that while attending a conference jointly organized by the United Nations Development Program and the London School of Economics, “when I was giving my opinion, I felt like I had a lot to say and that had a substance in it. People took me seriously. That’s because of the education I got within the last few months. I had a lot to share from what I learned” (STU8). Connections gained at LIHE frequently enhance the value of graduates’ human capital on the labor market. One lecturer reflected on their simultaneous employment and a large international nongovernmental organization: “I’ve also had a great experience in employing—in my other job—employing UOL graduates because they understand the principles of taking a lot of information and then making sense of it” (LEC2). Interviewees sometimes discussed their studies and/or teaching as motivated by a sense of social responsibility resonant with cosmopolitan ideas. One balanced studies at LIHE with work at an IGO: “I don’t have that view of saying I want to make a difference in Sri Lanka. Although Sri Lanka does have a million problems, it’s not about saving Sri Lanka , it’s about saving the world” (STU7). Yet despite their aspirations to enact global change, they affirm that LIHE’s value is expressly that it “gives me the qualification I require to get the job I require.” These dispositions render educational spaces as sites of degree inscription, and only secondarily as democratic spaces for critical social discussions. Political participation is refashioned into employment, the subject transitioning from a member of a demos to a human capital inscribed with technical expertise. UOL’s developmental intervention is therefore informed by neoliberal subjectivity, reflecting that “democracies are conceived as requiring technically skilled human capital, not educated participants in public life and common rule” (Brown, 2015, p. 177).

Many LIHE graduates found employment in the for-profit sector, particularly in business process outsourcing firms where they perform accounting, communications, and marketing functions for British clients. The affects, technes, and cultural codes they had become familiar with through UOL found utility at their new jobs. This was commonly lauded by interviewees, such as one who wished that UOL education had even “less focused on academia and more focused on practical skills. Globally, that’s a transition that’s happening. Most of these big IT companies, IBM for example, are hiring engineers without engineering degrees but who went to coding camp for six months” (LEC4). Their perspective overlaps with neoliberal subjectivity, which extends the disposition that “academia is so abstract and removed from the real world” (LEC4). LIHE students are therefore subject to a dress code intended to “create an image for LIHE, where they come in professionally dressed, properly dressed, and have some level of discipline,” because “if they go on shabbily-dressed, it’s not going to have a good impact on the public for LIHE” (ADF2). As a desocialized space, LIHE classrooms are spaces of subject formation in which social responsibility is distilled into professionalism and employability.

The desocialization of Sri Lankan higher education has corresponded with the defunding of state institutions, including universities, and the resultant desocialization of education (Warnapala, 2011). Samaranayake (2016) echoes a popular sentiment when he points to social sciences and liberal arts programs in Sri Lankan universities as failing to produce “employable” graduates. Conversely, Gamage (2016) sees the social sciences as an essential critical voice in Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries. He argues that in South Asia social scientists are subject to the “captive mind” of internalized oppression stemming from the colonial order and the continued Eurocentrism of social science. He calls for South Asian academics to “to develop an indigenous Sociology—or for that matter Social Sciences—that enable us to comprehend our own problems and [devise] solutions” (Gamage, 2016, p. 10). This effort is inhibited by UOL and other agents of neoliberalism like the World Bank, which advocates for “the establishment of institutions of technical and vocational training while it inhibited the promotion of educational contents related with ‘pure’ science, arts or humanities” (Moutsious, 2009, p. 474). It funds “only binary secondary education systems and only if sufficient emphasis was to be on the teaching of technical skills.” Moutsious argues that as neoliberal policies open educational markets to global capital, national education systems are being fragmented into technical problem areas that are deterritorialized from the social and reterritorialized by northern expertise. The policies in question overwhelmingly favor technical and vocational education over socially-oriented liberal arts curricula, thereby aligning the periphery of the global knowledge economy with the labor needs of the core in the name of developing “human capital.”

By enacting a pedagogy for human capital, UOL renders the educational spaces at its partner institutions as an enclosed resource from which profit and authority can be extracted. The corresponding subjectivities are aligned with global capital rather than with any society. Most interviewees criticized the Eurocentrism of UOL education. Thus, in LIHE’s undergraduate programs in law, “we only follow the English legal system” (ADF1). Sri Lankan law is only mentioned when “students ask sometimes. Sometimes, one hour into it, people get a little bored, so you make a little anecdote.” UOL’s colonial history provided a rationality for its Eurocentric law programs in that “the Sri Lankan legal system is based mostly on the English legal system,” (ADF1) which meant that “ultimately you’re teaching some of it as well, but not directly so” (ADF3). One lecturer was troubled by this Eurocentrism, yet rationalized it through the necessity of standardization:

What we teach here is UOL, the law in UK. It’s difficult for Sri Lankans to develop a program for their own, because it’s the UOL degree that we do. It’s not anything local. That’s probably why they impose—and also maintain—standards. (ADF3)

Similarly, social science programs were “very European-centered. To get the mark, you need to put those statistics in, those countries in. You could mention Sri Lanka, but you had to first mention a European country” (STU6). For one group of friends at LIHE, UOL’s Eurocentric curricula was “the first thing we talked about in our first year at LIHE” (STU1). One interviewee described UOL’s guide for the social science subject they teach as presenting a “very masculine, white, Eurocentric approach” (LEC4). Another described the course content as “only focused towards the West and Europe” (STU9). A nuanced critique was given by one student, who argued that UOL is “Eurocentric” in:

the knowledge aspect, the history, everything. It’s a British university, but the world is so globalized now. Maybe you should at least explore it from another perspective. They go with just the Enlightenment and that stuff. But there were similar stuff happening in Eastern countries. There were similar knowledge bases that don’t really come from the West. With international relations, if you’re looking at something like classical realism, the UOL curriculum would be very Greek, with Greek philosophers. But I’m pretty sure there were Chinese philosophers, like Sun Tzu. (STU3)

UOL curricula tends to regard Sri Lanka as “not even a speck on the map,” and is limited in its local applicability because “you can’t understand an Eastern country through the same framework” (STU3). This governing rationality informs the practice and constitutes the objective of UOL’s pedagogy of central examinations; Sri Lanka is practically irrelevant in the context of UOL’s globally-encompassed domain of governance, and therefore LIHE students and faculty should regard it accordingly. Most interviewees were strongly critical of UOL education because “the Eurocentrism is there. Sometimes you read it and you’re like, ‘but we don’t feel that way.’” This is problematic because “their view is definitely what we’re supposed to be working towards” (STU5). One interviewee posited an overlap between UOL’s Eurocentric curricula and the broader culture of private university students in Colombo: “The modules are very Eurocentric. People who come to LIHE are already more Westernized, Europeanized, than most others in the country” (STU1). This engenders colonized subjectivities:

If you are in a system of power where British education is well-regarded, it becomes almost silly to resist from a pragmatic sense. In a principled sense, this is not great. So many decades after colonialism, you’re still looking to a British-centric system of education . . . they still don’t really acknowledge colonialism . . . These are not things that the British system acknowledges. As a postcolonial state, that is not ideal. (LEC2)

The sentiment that UOL’s Eurocentrism is nearly invulnerable to resistance indicates a colonial current in neoliberal governance, which “promulgates a market emphasis on ‘what works,’ it eliminates from discussion politically, ethically, or otherwise normatively inflected dimensions of policy, aiming to supersede politics with practical, technical approaches to problems” (Brown, 2015, p. 130). Although most interviewees problematized UOL’s Eurocentrism, UOL itself does problematize its Eurocentrism at all. When UOL subject guides do acknowledge its Eurocentrism, it’s generally to defend the eminence and universality of European thought, like one which introduces international development by stating that “the ideas featured here predominantly originated within Western traditions of thought. We make no apology for this.” UOL therefore reflects the argument made by Sidhu et al. (2016, p. 1504) that the globalization of the East Asian university deterritorializes its previous functions of “establishing language in relation to the componentry of nation, culture and identity.” UOL both exploits and reproduces the privileging of European thought in colonial education.

By depositing European knowledge into colonized and emptied recipients, UOL enacts banking education at a global scale (Freire, 1997). Its exams feel “like rote learning in a sense. They feel like O-Levels and A-Levels all over again because it’s an exam at the end of one year” (STU3) Some students echoed the notion that that classes are:

all lecture-based. You’re not asked to learn. You’re not asked to explore. It’s very fixed. It’s just a tuition class where a teacher is a transmitter and you’re just a receiver. There’s nothing else, that’s the only relationship. It’s like a master-slave sort of a thing. You have to obey. (STU4)

UOL examinations package course content, academic research skills, and critical inquiry into a single metric. The metric’s focus, however, remains on the writing practices favored by UOL examiners. One interviewee, reflecting on years of experience with UOL exams as a student and lecturer, highlighted “UOL’s requirements of form over substance” (LEC4). This lecturer taught a rigorous exam-writing structure to help students achieve marks of “seventy-plus [which] is that so-called critical awareness space.” The method itself began by defining key terms in the introduction, suggesting that UOL examiners favor the definitiveness of epistemological objectivity over a plurality of open-ended and critical subjectivities. This reduces “critical awareness” to the reproduction of the formal writing elements sought by UOL examiners. Rather than discovering capacities of critical inquiry, a student in the class recounted their struggle with the lecturer’s “very set structure and [unwillingness] to let go of that structure. If you don’t fit into that structure, you get deeply criticized for it. That obviously affects you mentally” (STU8). The supplantation of student knowledge and creativity with European-defined practices of knowing and expressing reproduces the internalized oppression of colonial banking education, emptying the student of agency and impeding critical expression (Freire, 1997). UOL assessment is unusually antithetical to dialogical pedagogy in that students receive only one number for each examination, without any written comments or even marks for individual exam questions. The “substance” attenuated by UOL examinations includes not only course content, but also the critical dialogue that once imbued the public university with democratic purpose.

LIHE students are responsibilized for engaging critically with their courses. The most effective method to achieve high marks is generally seen to be studying past examinations to anticipate questions and preparing answers using UOL subject guides. Further effort, such as reading academic articles or investigating local case studies, produces mixed results and often does not augment scores received. As one lecturer summarized:

I’ve had students who conform really closely to the subject guide, who don’t read anything else outside . . . I’ve had students who’ve gone above and beyond, always reading outside the subject guide . . . Both sets can do quite well and both sets can do quite badly. (LEC4)

The student affects governed through UOL’s single-examination assessment also steer lecturers towards examination-focused pedagogies. One student pointed out that lecturers mostly adhere to the subject guides, primarily teaching “to help you as best as they can to just get the mark” (STU6). The student discussed one lecturer who encouraged students to conduct their own research study, noting its deviance from the expectation to teach for examination results: “that is not in the curriculum, we are not supposed to do it, it doesn’t affect our exams, but that was something our lecturer wanted us to do so we could learn how to conduct a basic research.” This leads many students to students see lecturer knowledge as unnecessary beyond examination preparation: “I leave out what lecturers teach me, and I study according to the papers” (STU4). Lecturers censure themselves accordingly. When asked about whether they discuss Sri Lankan law in their class, one lecturer said, “I try to avoid it as much as possible . . . because I don’t think the [examination] questions that are being asked would relate to any national law” (ADF3). Interviewees usually felt comfortable—though not particularly rewarded—for using material outside of UOL’s subject guides, such as one who “as a student, I know I was never penalized for bringing in commentary outside my reading list. I did very well on those papers, which tells you the university is not resistant to that” (LEC2). Exam-focused study that engages with texts beyond the subject guide was somewhat common, although it was not seen to contribute substantially to examination scores, and thus was limited to a marginal role in their education.

UOL’s responsibilization of students for their own critical inquiry and personal development led many interviewees to question UOL’s role altogether. One student who balanced studies with part-time employment and freelance work did not study until two months before examinations, when they “started taking my studies seriously. I planned my studies in the end of March” by requesting leave from their employer. The condensed approach made them question, “do I really need this in the real world?” They elaborated:

There are certain things that I felt like will not be quite useful, because I spent a lot of time cramming names, memorizing lists of scholars. I felt like, is it worth the time? Is it worth the effort that we put into exams? In other universities, you have fifty percent assignments and then one exam. This was one goal. It’s the deciding factor. Either fail or pass, that’s what will decide your future. It’s not fair . . . The system needs to be changed, revised. (STU8)

One lecturer reflected upon their time as an LIHE student unsure of what they wanted to study, and wished they had a liberal arts education to explore new topics and “to cultivate a full human being” (LEC3). This echoed a student’s aspirations for a “holistic education. It’s something that can really help me make a change in the system. It’s not just getting a degree and getting a job” (STU3). Transformative educational experiences were often counterposed with UOL’s single-examination assessment:

I need to change. I feel like listening to others, and their input, and their opinions, it makes you think. I know it might not be useful for exams, but as a person it helps you think differently, be more tolerant, and look at the other side. (STU8)

Although interviewees often desired transformative educational experiences, their studies were mostly occupied by examination preparation. This reflects the neoliberal shift in higher education by which programs lose their role in providing a holistic liberal arts education for critically-minded citizens, and instead become repurposed into job training centers (Baltodano, 2012). UOL thus governs partner institutions with what Giroux (2014, p. 140) calls “the calculating logic of the corporate university . . . [which] undermines the development of public spaces where critical dialogue, social responsibility, and social justice are pedagogically valued.” UOL examinations effectuate a shift towards neoliberal pedagogies, away from those of classical liberalism in which the formation of the liberal subject relied upon governmentality mechanisms that allowed teachers to peer into “the specific inner world of each child to be governed” (Rose, 1999, pp. 77-78). UOL’s governmentality discourages students to aspire for personal or social transformation, instead orienting them towards employability in the global knowledge economy.

**4.9 Maximizing legitimacy**

As argued in this chapter, the governmentality mechanisms at work in LIHE and the greater UOL network differ from those that typify neoliberal govenrmentality in northern universities, in that they are almost entirely unconcerned with the observation and numericization of research and teaching. Governmentality in northern universities intervenes upon research and teaching because these areas of conduct represent lucrative commodities when captured and translated into the language of capital, which is numbers. However, UOL’s governmentality appears to have very different points of intervention: the conduct of partner institutions in a broad sense, and student examination results in an exceptionally narrow sense. These two circulations are less directly commodifiable than student-customer satisfaction surveys and faculty research activities. Since governmentality is involved “in the perfection, maximization, or intensification of the processes it directs, and the instruments of government will become diverse tactics rather than laws” (Foucault, 2007, p. 99), the question arises as to what particular circulation does UOL primarily seek to maximize, if not merely circulations of capital?

LIHE and other partner institutions of UOL navigate a paradoxical terrain that renders them even more “schizophrenic” than the northern universities analyzed by Shore (2010). LIHE is not a university but a “Teaching Centre,” encompassed within the UOL’s domain of governance while remaining outside its formal organizational structure. Its lecturers do not have full academic responsibilities but merely “add value” to digital content. Its students are formally enrolled, yet their attendance in class has no direct bearing on assessment. Mechanisms of inscription, translation, audit, and responsibilization reconcile these paradoxes and establish the legitimacy of the mobile affiliation between LIHE and UOL. This would also explain the extremely “light touch” of UOL’s audit culture, since it establishes the minimal observational presence necessary to enable circulations of legitimacy: the legitimacy of UOL in the eyes of students, the legitimacy of lecturers in the eyes of LIHE, and the legitimacy of LIHE in the eyes of both UOL and the consumer market of transnational higher education. This is typical in transnational higher education, in which a northern “university can minimise the risks of setting up abroad by seeking a local partner that has a better understanding of the local environment. In doing so, the university can convey an image of legitimacy” (Wilkins & Huisman, 2012, p. 9). Thus, governmentality mechanisms simultaneously align UOL’s interest in maximizing legitimacy with that of partner institutions while maintaining a fluid partnership that can be severed to protect UOL’s legitimacy from risks.

In the context of destatizing systems of higher education, perceptions of legitimacy are important in educational regimes of thought. Rose (1999, p. 29) describes a “regime of enunciation” as a space in which truths are contested, “an agonistic field, traversed by conflicts over who can speak, according to what criteria of truth, from what places, authorized in what ways, through what media machines, utilizing what forms of rhetoric, symbolism, persuasion, sanction or seduction.” Since colonial governmentality intervenes precisely upon regimes of thought in order to legitimate the intellectual authority of the colonizer (Cohn, 1996), UOL has a pronounced stake in the circulation of legitimacy throughout subjectivities at partner institutions. Kipnis proposes that in comparing various audit cultures, “an analysis of the ‘relations amongst political and other actors’ is more important than one of the regimes of truth speaking” (Kipnis, 2008, p. 275-289). This makes sense in light of Kipnis’ focus on governmentality in Chinese audit culture because in that context, the bureaucratic state takes an extensive concern for conduct in schools. However, regimes of truth and the circulation of legitimacy discourses are primary points of intervention in the context of privatizing and transnationalizing higher education in Sri Lanka.

UOL’s legitimacy to govern Sri Lankan educational space has its roots in British colonial education and the resultant contemporary preference for foreign degrees (Warnapala, 2011). According to Rose and Miller (1992, p. 186), governing actors inscribe reality with titles, numbers, and other forms of information, which are then concentrated in “centers of calculation” that have “the capacity to engage in certain calculations and to lay a claim to legitimacy for their plans and strategies because they are, in a real sense, in the know about that which they seek to govern.” UOL employs mechanisms of governmentality to inscribe Sri Lankan educational spaces as its own domain of expertise, establish itself as a center of calculation from which authoritative decisions can be made, and thus maximize its colonial legitimacy. Inequalities of expertise grant a certain ethical legitimacy to UOL as well, since “the legitimacy and sustainability of neoliberal governance derives from a host of discursive reinventions that call on new strategies and knowledges, using new configurations of humanitarianism, freedom, empowerment, and choice” (Sidhu, 2007, p. 221). For UOL, these new configurations form a neoliberal episteme in which student-customers at the periphery of the global knowledge economy empower themselves as global citizens by training to be fluent in British regimes of thought.

The desire for participation in the global knowledge economy also aligns student conduct with UOL’s objective to maximize legitimacy. Security seeks to fulfill and amplify desire which, “if one gives it free play, and on condition that it is given free play, all things considered, and thanks to a number of relationships and connections, it will produce the general interest of the population” (Foucault, 2007, p. 73). By population, Foucault is mostly referring to the population of a nation as it relates to the state. In the context of LIHE and UOL, the population in question are those who relate to LIHE and UOL in some way: administrators, lecturers, current students, prospective students, etc. The “general interest of the population” of LIHE interlocutors then, is to enhance the perceived legitimacy of LIHE, and likewise with the global population of UOL and its perceived legitimacy. The desire to receive an education perceived as legitimate compels students to subject themselves to foreign curricula and examinations. This governing rationality was elucidated by one lecturer. When asked why UOL faculty should mark examinations instead of LIHE faculty, they responded, “since they have the right to set the guide, set the standards, set the requirements, then the corresponding obligation seems quite reasonable that they ought to mark it” (LEC4). In terms resembling a (de)social contract, they explained “that right exists because students want LSE to have marked their papers.” In other words, UOL mobilizes the aspirations of students in educational spaces of coloniality, securing institutional rights and legitimacy within UOL. UOL seeks to govern circulations of desire and legitimacy, which are not prescriptions of conduct as in disciplinary power, but rather are amplifications of symbolic and cultural capital throughout the field of market freedom in which laboral and consumptive choices are made.

Legitimacy is formed between students, lecturers, LIHE, and UOL in a negotiated and assembled space, liminally situated between subjectivities of modernity and coloniality. It is instrumentalized by UOL as a translation mechanism between the power of colonial education and aspirations for interiority, and thus operates within the subjectivities and affectations that travel and conflict throughout coloniality. Mok (2007, p. 438) cautions that when analyzing Asian universities, “we should not simply understand internationalization merely as following the American or Anglo-Saxon standards and practices.” Doing so would carry the risk that “if we copy policy practices without proper adaptation and careful contextualization, we might easily fall into traps of recolonization, resulting in reproducing learning experiences that may not really fit the specific cultural and political environments in the East.” To support his argument, he focuses primarily on the corporatization and marketization of East Asian universities in their competition for prominence in international rankings. While higher education in Sri Lanka has intensified its adoption of northern standards and practices to orient itself towards the global labor market, it has done so primarily through encouraging the growth of private-sector institutions rather than marketizing its public universities. Global rankings do not figure into the calculations of private institutions of higher education in Sri Lanka because they are apparently unobtainable. Instead, internationalization is enacted in Sri Lanka through direct relationships of governmentality to ensure that local for-profit institutions capture enough legitimacy to market their degrees to students. Mok (2007, p. 445) expresses concern that “most of the universities in East Asia are bounded by the global standards or international benchmarks dominated by the Western academic paradigms.” In Sri Lankan for-profit higher education, the influence of the West is not indirect, diffusive, or imitative, but rather through direct and formal governance partnerships upon which local institutions rely for legitimacy. This suggests that governmentality mechanisms in Sri Lanka’s transnational higher education institutions are crucial mechanisms by which northern universities govern partner institutions across the colonial difference. If neoliberal market “competition may produce a vicious cycle in which teaching-oriented universities are becoming lower tiered universities whereas research universities are going more elitist and privileged” (Mok, 2007, p. 443), then the complete absence of research at LIHE situates the institution on the periphery of the global knowledge economy. LIHE’s peripherality lends a precariousness to its legitimacy, which subjects it to a particular form of colonial and neoliberal governmentality that constricts its autonomy with the presumed benefit of ensuring a baseline adherence to British educational standards.

To reconcile its dissonant roles and paradoxical instrumentalization of legitimacy and illegitimacy, UOL underwent rebranding in 2018. Prior to 2018, UOL’s global distance education programs were known as “University of London International Programmes.” In 2018, they “rebranded” their product by dropping “International Programmes” from the title, which represented an effort “to clearly demonstrate that the University of London is the degree awarding body for our distance and flexible learning programmes” (University of London, 2018). In other words, UOL sought a branding that suggests equivalency between degrees earned on campus and in overseas partner institutions, therefore enhancing the perceived legitimacy of the latter. To communicate its rebranding to the public, UOL published a press release that quoted the praise of one alumnus, who celebrated that they could “finally drop ‘International Programmes’ from my CV so as to avoid awkward questions and reactions from the employers who doubt the amount of effort I had to put to earn my BSc” (Rai, 2018). The rebranding coincided with a simplification of its recognition framework for partner institutions; Institutions that were once tiered as “Candidate Centres,” “Registered Centres,” and “Affiliate Centres” would now be unified as “Recognized Teaching Centres,” which was intended “to explain the relationship the University of London has with teaching centres around the world, which students can turn to for additional teaching support, whilst studying for their University of London degree” (University of London, 2018). The explicit reduction of the role of partner institutions to sites of “additional teaching support” underscores the synergy between augmenting the legitimacy of its degrees from the global north and depreciating the perceived ability of its academics in the global south. LIHE officials asked UOL about the reasoning behind the change of status to partner institutions, to which:

there was no proper answer. They did not want to answer correctly, which left us room to guess their opinion, which we expressed: “Is this the reason why you have done that?” We told them, “we know the reason why. Now, UOL of policies have changed. It is only the vestiges of prestige. You are looking for money for your survival, so you need more and more people. You want to get more and more partners at the expense of the quality.” (TLA)

Although LIHE’s top-level administrator opposed UOL’s supposed quality and expanding scope, other interviewees often rationalized UOL’s centrally-marked examinations with discourses of quality: “They want to maintain the quality of the program. They want to have more control over it. They don’t know how well the lecturers are here, like, what are their qualifications” (STU9). They continued that:

there are a lot of other institutions all over the world. I feel like they’re also competing among each other. If they allow lecturers to mark it within the institution, maybe they could be more lenient, and the institution’s overall rating could go higher. (STU9)

Like LIHE’s top-level administrator, this student saw market competition between partner institutions as possibly dissonant with UOL’s quality discourse. For another administrator, “the UOL program runs in so many different countries, they can’t guarantee quality control if they allow the lecturers in each country to assess the students and give 20 percent of the marks” (ADF1). Local lecturers cannot assess students because “we’re not trained in any way” to do so. Additionally, “most of us are visiting lecturers so we don’t really have the time.” UOL’s audit-based governmentality, which expands from the colonizer’s suspicion of the colonized, converges with LIHE’s profit-motivated adjunctification to siphon expert status from lecturers.

**4.10 Extracting expertise**

UOL encompasses Sri Lankan educational space from above in a way that does not constitute a public in the liberal sense. Instead, its interventions upon southern educational institutions employ governmentality mechanisms typical of neoliberal development. In particular, they reflect a “generosity of expertise” (Rose, 1999, pp. 92-93) in which experts impart a language of understanding onto the “petty engineers of human conduct,” such as lecturers. This is a key mechanism through which subjects are rearranged according to technical knowledges, professional skills, and centrality in the global knowledge economy. Rose writes that various “knowledges of the self” produced by experts and disseminated amidst the population bind human freedom to particular regimes of thought and conduct. The notion of a “generosity of expertise” is highly relevant to LIHE because its relationship with UOL is governed by inequalities in perceived expertise, legitimacy, and authority. However, at LIHE these “knowledges of the self” are far more limited than the “molecular” interventions into “desires, affects, and bodily practices . . . connected up with ‘expert’ ways of understanding experience, languages of judgement, norms of conduct” (Rose, 1999, p. 92). Instead, subjectivities at the periphery of UOL’s partner network are only partially inscribed as governable at all. By rendering students as “external,” classrooms as “partners,” and lecturers as invisible, UOL extracts expertise from its colonized educational spaces and relegates its southern educational spaces to a colonial exteriority.

UOL encloses southern educational spaces in order to capture and commodify their circulations of expertise. Almost all interviewees saw lecturers as experts in that “LIHE maintains its quality through its lecturers” (LEC4). In general, lecturers are “very highly qualified alumni: the ones who got firsts and did master’s abroad” (LEC2). Regarding lecturers for the law program, “almost every one of them does practice law, so they are experts in their fields” (ADF3). Almost all LIHE lecturers were employed or professionally engaged with multinational corporations, national political offices, the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, IGOs, or big international NGOs. Most students reported lecturer quality as a key factor in choosing their educational program, signaling that LIHE captures the expertise generated elsewhere—mostly in NGOs, IGOs, and for-profit firms—and thereby furthers the legitimacy of UOL. By retaining assessment authority, UOL transforms the broad professional, legal, and academic expertise of faculty into examination expertise, an extractable resource that flows from its European origin as naturally as UOL claims knowledge over its encompassed and colonized educational domain. Connell (2018, p. 3) observes that “the global South is as vital a source of raw materials for the knowledge economy as it is for the material economy. It yields data” that is aggregated in northern centers of calculation. This means “intellectual workers in the global periphery are pushed towards a particular cultural and intellectual stance.” As UOL aggregates data on examination performance at partner institutions around the world, students and faculty are externalized into ignorance and left speculating which knowledge will earn approval from their British assessors:

There was no one to tell you it was right, except for me I was able to accept it when me and my sister did the same subject. She wrote the way she wrote, I wrote the way I wrote, and we got the same result. That was my guiding line to know that whatever’s strong for you works. (STU6)

One lecturer criticized UOL examinations as “good enough assessment” (LEC4) by repeatedly invoking the phrase “form over substance” to describe the pedagogy that it encourages. They continued, “my job is more like filtering. I filter these materials and tell them, ‘don’t waste your time on all this, but you have to read this stuff.” Another lecturer instructs students, “for these chapters, focus on these readings, but maybe forget those ones” (LEC2). Whereas the deskilled teacher of neoliberal education in northern institutions might be placed in an applicator’s role, the teachers deskilled by UOL’s colonial education are seen as mere filters.

UOL privileges examination expertise over other forms of knowledge to construct the ignorance of LIHE lecturers, which justifies the displacement of pedagogical agency. One lecturer completed an MPhil at Oxford, and then continued to a course in the same discipline at LIHE. They reflected that when teaching their students, they would mostly discard their Oxford-influenced perspective because “a fairly different set of theorists are employed there, but I wouldn’t bring that into this. I would teach the one that’s in the subject guide, because that’s what the students are going to be assessed on” (LEC2). UOL therefore instrumentalizes mechanisms of new public management that wrestle educational authority from lecturers (Lorenz, 2012). In neoliberal education, “teachers’ capacity to make autonomous judgment about curriculum and pedagogy in the interests of their actual pupils is undermined by the system of remote control” (Connell 2013, p. 108). UOL’s remote control across the colonial difference empties the capacity of lecturers in southern spaces to produce original knowledge. The resultant vacuum of expertise both justifies UOL’s intervention and centers examination expertise. Examination expertise is economized as a currency of merits and faults that circulate throughout UOL’s student and faculty populations. Having studied previously at LIHE:

as a lecturer, it really helps because you can pass on your experiences to them. You also have an idea of when the syllabuses should finish, what areas should I touch, what areas should I make them do more questions on, that sort of thing. It’s really helpful. Plus, we use our lecturers’ experiences for our own teaching as well: The way that they’ve given their notes, the way they do their presentations. (ADF2)

The privileging of examination expertise over other forms helps explain why almost all LIHE lecturers are former students. By recasting the southern classroom as a site whose purpose is to reproduce examination expertise, UOL orients the conduct of educators across generations as it simultaneously exteriorizes them.

Students and faculty widely reported that UOL examinations and the question-targeting approach they encourage are detrimental to the quality of their education. Almost all interviewees believed that education at LIHE would be improved with at least some assessment authority. One problematized UOL education as “very exam-centric, which means students aren’t focused about learning the subject. They’re more interested about getting good marks,” and suggested formative assessment that would be “less marks-oriented or results-oriented” (LEC3). What’s important for education is “how much curiosity you have, the will to ask the right questions. It’s very hard to measure that. How are you going to do that with one exam?” (LEC4). All faculty interviewed felt that “it shouldn’t be completely based on exams” (LEC3). They detailed numerous ideas about more diverse forms of assessment, so that studies “could be done in a more fun way. Let them carry out a research. Let them do an analysis of an in-class survey. I think there’d be a more personal connection” (LEC1). Education at LIHE would “would definitely be less Eurocentric” if local lecturers assessed students (STU1). Assignments were the most common suggestion for formative assessment: “If there are assignments and a project we can do, that would be much better because that will give you a good understanding of the whole theory” and would “allow us to read and research more on a particular subject” (STU4). That way, students could show employers, “this is my work, this is what I have done. But we have nothing to prove” under the single-examination assessment system (STU8). One lecturer suggested that coursework constitute forty percent of students’ grade as a “safeguard for not marginalizing students who do badly at exams” (LEC2). They further substantiated their recommendation:

it would bring about the one dimension that is solely lacking in the social sciences, where people learn to write papers. They learn to do citations, they learn to do lit reviews. They have none of that training. They don’t know how to write an essay-type paper. (LEC2)

Additionally, “if there was constant grading and papers handed in, like you would have at a normal university, then they would have an incentive to study throughout the year” (LEC3). Yet under UOL’s rationality, these other forms of assessment are only suitable for a “normal university.” This is because in UOL’s abnormal educational spaces, expertise is located outside the classroom and the continent, in the calculative center of UOL, securing its status as a fully-real and “normal” university. That very displacement expertise is also what renders unheard the suggestions of students and faculty.

UOL instrumentalizes perceptions of British expertise to assert its predominance over curricula, marking, and other core academic functions in educational spaces of the global south. By reframing questions about the democratic governing of social spaces as questions of governance confined to desocialized and technicized problem spaces, “public life is reduced to problem solving and program implementation, a casting that brackets or eliminates politics, conflict, and deliberation about common values or ends” (Brown, 2015, p. 127). As UOL claims and reclaims its own monopoly of expertise, excellence, and prestige, it assumes that the deficits of the global south’s academic faculty are so obvious as to not require the explicit justification as to their diminished role in the UOL classroom. This is exemplary of new core-periphery relations in the global knowledge economy in which the problematic of poverty is recast into the problematic of technical ignorance. The colonial difference is thus reconceived in terms of “knowledge gaps” to be closed through the transfer of knowledge from the presumably knowledge-rich global north to the knowledge-poor global south (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 335). Ong (2008, p. 118) observes that universities in Singapore navigate “A series of exceptions that promotes knowledge actors and linkages but excludes low skill labour and enterprises has configured connections among far-flung sites, shaping what might be called an ecology of expertise.” She describes the ecology of expertise as connecting transnational capital, multinational corporations, media firms, universities, and other institutions of the knowledge economy. By establishing formal and informal linkages with the global knowledge economy, public and private actors in Singapore market its educational ecosystem as “as an exceptional island of intelligence in an archipelago of low-tech development” through university partnerships and branch campuses with institutions such as “John Hopkins University, MIT, University of Chicago, INSEAD and Duke University” (Ong, 2008, p. 122). A discursive assemblage of meritocracy, modernity, and nation-building distinguishes the exclusive ecology of expertise from a biopolitical formation constituted by the majority population that Ong regards as “sheer life.” Like Ong, Koh (2011) also sees Singapore’s educational landscape as shaped by the “problem space” of globalization. She concurs with Ong that actors in the global south often demarcate globalization itself as a “problem space” whose challenges “can be combated with ‘preparation’ in the form of more ‘education and training’ as the ‘solutions’” (Koh, 2011, p. 267). She goes on to argue that the recent push for education to prepare a global workforce cannot simply be understood as evidence of the homogenization of educational cultures. She explores the culturally-specific elements within Singapore’s problem space of globalization, such as its long history of placing particular value on education and its more recent debates surrounding bilingual examinations, that contribute to the assemblage of Singapore as a site of “global” education. Similarly, Sri Lanka is not simply being incorporated into a global knowledge economy defined by homogeneity, but rather defined by inequalities of expertise that are both specific to place and increasingly interconnected with global circulations. Inequalities of expertise justify the encompassment of southern educational spaces by northern universities, as well as the verticality and unilaterality of its particular mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality, including inscription, translation, numericization, audit culture, and responsibilization.

UOL’s calculative center secures its central location in global flows of knowledge and legitimacy through careful interventions of arterial inscription. These allow UOL to establish the generosity of their own expertise. Similar to the supposed beneficence and sustenance provided by colonial and developmental projects, UOL inscribes lecturers at institutions in the global south as unable to deliver a quality education without its pastoral guidance. Foucault (2007, p. 148) sees pastoral power as fundamentally operating “not only on the scale of a definite group, of a city or a state, but of the whole of humanity,” reflecting the boundless global scope of UOL’s cosmopolitan education. UOL’s ecology of expertise extracts capital, knowledge, legitimacy, and authority from its southern educational spaces.

UOL’s claim to expertise legitimates its role as a governing actor in Sri Lanka. It maps onto its mostly southern partner institutions something akin to a *problematization of ignorance*, somewhat resembling “the problematization of poverty” analyzed by Escobar (1995). He sees the definition of “poverty” as a problem area, defined by the “lack” of something that the colonizer possesses, as a central process through which colonial and developmental institutions justify their technical interventions into the global south. The problematization of poverty enabled a shift from social problems, which are primarily between state and society, to problems of governance, which can be acted upon by a variety of state and nonstate institutions. As governance “promulgates a market emphasis on ‘what works,’ it eliminates from discussion politically, ethically, or otherwise normatively inflected dimensions of policy, aiming to supersede politics with practical, technical approaches to problems” (Brown, 2015, p. 130). The intervention of UOL into Sri Lanka territorializes a number of problem spaces, including the constriction of access to public education, the perception of education from the global north as superior to local education, and graduate employability in the global knowledge economy. UOL does not explicitly address the former, but through the discourses explored in the previous section embraces the latter two. UOL discourse makes extensive use of terms like “quality,” “prestigious,” “academic excellence,” and “global reputation,” which serve to justify its intervention into the educational spaces it governs. This implicitly constructs a *lack* of quality and excellence in educational institutions of the global south and thereby problematizes the ignorance of the majority world, ignorance being the new poverty of the global knowledge economy. Although never explicitly stated, the implication is that education in the global south *benefits from*, rather than is *marginalized by*, the centrality of Britain in the global knowledge economy. This is similar to the ways in which the problematization of poverty obscured the very establishment of its conditions through developmental processes (Escobar, 1995).

The impoverishment of knowledge that UOL maps onto southern higher education undermines the pedagogical purpose of the university. This governs subjectivities of indistinction, decoupling university faculty from pedagogical authority, academic expertise, and social vocation. Lecturers are left speculating:

I’m not 100% sure why we’re not allowed to decide the curricula . . . I’m assuming it’s political, but I don’t know. I’m assuming they don’t want different countries teaching different ways, because at the end of the day, it’s a UOL degree. (ADF1)

UOL extracts examination expertise across the colonial difference and secures within its calculative center the universal legitimacy to standardize education throughout the global south:

They have the best grasp of it . . . I think there’s the advantage of aggregation, the fact that these people have access to so many papers. I might have only two or three students sometimes, whereas these guys might have a full list of hundreds, if not thousands, of students. (LEC4)

One student touched on the governing rationality behind UOL’s problematization of ignorance: “If our lecturers are to mark the papers, I think they should have a say in how exams are being prepared” (STU2). In other words, local assessment would remove UOL’s only role that justifies its colonization of educational spaces. Indeed, a top-level administrator requested from UOL that LIHE lecturers assess students, “but they said no because it is their exams. Their examiners are doing it. What they expect is only that we conduct their lectures” (TLA).

As a space defined by extraction, the vacuum left by UOL’s problematization of ignorance left LIHE without any distinct function. Interviewees diverged in how they characterized LIHE as an institution. Most thought of LIHE as either a university or a place where a “university experience” could be pursued:

I’ve heard a lot of my friends who I’ve studied with at LIHE, or even my students, refer to LIHE as “university.” They say, “I know him from uni. He was my lecturer at uni.” If you think of “university” as a place where you got your degree, absolutely yes. At the same time, it doesn’t say “university,” it says “London Institution of Higher Education,” and the university is the “University of London.” You can’t be graduating from two universities at the same time. If the university is UOL, then LIHE must be not the university. (LEC3)

The dispossession of university status results in an education where students “hardly do any of their own research,” because they’re “used to the system of tuition where everything is sort of spoonfed to them, everything is taught to them one-on-one, they get used to that even though they’re at university” (ADF2). Despite their critique of tuition culture, the same administrator defined LIHE itself as “just a tuition center.” This is evidenced by the fact that there is no formative assessment for students, and that “we don’t provide any of our own material when it comes to the education. We just take the material that’s been sent by LSE and then reproduce it for our students. We don’t make our own curricula or anything” (ADF2). Conversely, another administrator insisted, “we do not function as a tuition. We say that we are almost a university, so the only difference is that we do not mark our own papers” (ADF3). Students also variously described LIHE as a “university,” a “college,” or a provider of “tuition.” One student said that the reason LIHE doesn’t feel like a university “is not having the stress of graded assignments” (STU7). A different student indicated that LIHE’s facilities and learning environment do not feel like a university. Instead, “I feel like LIHE is more of a tuition class than an actual university. There’s no environment” (STU4). LIHE’s facilities allow for “no leisure. The library is very safe. It’s not conducive of any sort of learning. It’s just plain off-white walls” (STU4). As a result, “most of us feel like we don’t really have that university experience here” (STU2). Interviewees widely reported that the dispossession of assessment authority erodes the purpose of LIHE, such as one who said that not having:

assignment-based assessment is the one regret I have with University of London, 100 percent. I regret even joining UOL. It took so much time out of my life. Assignment-based assessment would have made my life easier and made me study throughout the year, rather than just cramming at the end of the year. It’s pointless. (STU4)

Some interviewees saw LIHE as an “intermediary,” a stripped-down institution that primarily generates profits:

That’s about 2 million pounds coming every year for very low footprint costs, no buildings, no lecturers to pay. The only real cost is marking those papers and providing the content. For students, it’s significantly cheaper than actually going to the United Kingdom and studying it there. For UOL, it’s cheaper to come to Sri Lanka [by partnering with LIHE] than opening up another duplicate campus. LIHE is the middleman that has figured this out and is bringing people together. (LEC4)

At the extractive periphery of UOL’s ecology of expertise, LIHE is a loose assemblage defined by its conspicuously absent institutional elements.

One student referred to LIHE as a “private university” in passing. However, when asked directly, they said it is not a university:

because we’re doing a degree that is offered by UOL, and LIHE is the college that offers the tuition. We’re sitting for exams offered by a different country, and the campus is located in different parts of Asia, and Sri Lanka is one of the campuses. LIHE is an institute, a college, but not a university. (STU8)

This was echoed by another who specified that LIHE is “like a community college, but not a university” (STU7). LIHE is not a university because a university “is a community, whereas here, people do not know each other. They come for lectures and they go,” since “they have no facilities for them to stay” (TLA). One lecturer also connected LIHE’s lack of academic community with the part-time status of most lecturers and “this lack of identity, the fact that LIHE is not really a ‘university’ university” (LEC3). When asked if LIHE is a university, another lecturer responded: “No. It’s a tutoring institution. It does no research. It creates no courses” (LEC2). For another, LIHE is almost a university, but “it’s not a university per se because it’s not the lecturers who mark the papers. But the only aspect which is not done at LIHE is assessing. The rest of it functions as a university, where there’s independent teaching, learning” (ADF3). This definition clearly marks UOL as not a university, since for its expansive “external” student body, UOL provides no teaching or learning to students.

One of the starkest pictures of LIHE was illustrated by the top-level administrator:

It is like a tuition center because LIHE has no formal responsibility with the students who register with the international program of UOL other than delivering lectures. UOL is the one who is doing the registration for them, setting the papers for them, running the exams for them, doing the assessments and issuing results. LIHE just delivers the lectures, that’s all. (TLA)

At the same time, “LIHE has to replace that university nature that the student expects, not UOL. The contact our lecturers and students have with UOL is just administrative, not academic” (TLA). This administrative contact is ineffective because “the coordination in UOL doesn’t work properly.” At the same time, when it comes to academic provision, “we are helpless, we are not the authority.” This power is particularly evident when UOL visits LIHE, during which “there is no point in dialoguing with them.” When asked whether LIHE and UOL have a colonial relationship, they replied:

without using the word ‘colonial,’ but it has those characteristics, yes. They are the academic authorities. Well, it’s more than an academic authority. It is not only regulator. They are running their own program here. We just have to deliver the program, that’s all. (TLA)

As a colonial extractive institution, UOL pushes southern educational spaces into an exteriority that threatens their existence entirely:

Outside lecturers, or institutions and their lecturers, are being pushed out. We’re being pushed out of the system because they’re promoting online teaching a lot. Maybe that’s where the world is headed. They’re pushing out the institutions and their lecturers. Institutions are kind of pushing back, but I don’t know how much you can push back. At the end of the day, the power is completely with UOL. (ADF1)

The expertise secured by UOL and the corresponding disempowerment in its classrooms indicate that its colonial educational project, which has spanned the course of a century, may be coming to realization. Institutions like LIHE are rendered unnecessary, “middlemen” or “intermediaries” dispossessed of pedagogical agency. UOL thereby transforms Southern educational spaces from sites of knowledge production into symbolic pathways to colonial approval and inscription. By rite of European knowledge, British assessment, and UOL inscription, graduates are welcomed into modernity.

**5. Conclusion: New poverties of knowledge, expertise, and legitimacy**

This research has been inspired by my four years as a lecturer at LIHE. My starting point was overcoming the presupposition that I taught in a classroom that the colonizer had created. Although UOL envisions itself as a provider of education, it was clear from my standpoint that it was a governor of education that intervened into educational spaces. These spaces, of course, did not need its colonial governmentality at all. Through the governmentality mechanisms detailed in this research, it wove itself inextricably into the fabric that constituted LIHE. Its arterial power maintained the colonial difference across which this relationship spanned. As I conducted the interviews, I became aware of the myriad ways in which the inequalities reproduced through UOL’s colonial governmentality had thoroughly transformed the subjectivities that course within and through LIHE. The colonizer does not even have to acknowledge coloniality from within modernity, and I too had missed the obvious: Like almost all colonial institutions, UOL’s colonial governmentality extracts knowledge, legitimacy, and agency from the domain it governs. Any other purpose that students or faculty could imagine for their classrooms was up against that constitutive purpose set forth by the colonizer.

This research was ridden with dissonance, which I first felt while reading books and papers on neoliberal governmentality. These studies were often difficult to apply to my experience. Most such accounts came from northern universities, which surprised me given the developmental origins of neoliberal policy. The extensively privatized educational landscape that spans much of the global south has been shaped by neoliberal and developmental governmentalities. While certain technologies like marketization and contractualization seemed to operate somewhat similarly across the colonial difference, most discussions of performativity and audit culture described matrices of governmentality that targeted faculty conduct as a valuable commodity. By contrast, UOL took little interest in what faculty did in or out of the classroom. Its governmentality mechanisms pushed its educational spaces to the exteriority of the university. The interviews made clear that the subjectivities governed by this process were characterized by invisibility. UOL’s governmentality takes no formal interest in classrooms or lecturers. Students and lecturers alike felt invisibilized, and sometimes even invisibilized themselves. The barren halls of LIHE are empty like a depleted mine, scarce in students, space, and community. Perhaps after over one hundred years of governing education in Sri Lanka, there is little left for UOL to extract.

As my research and reflection continued, the dissonances multiplied. Coming to see my classrooms as an extractive space forced me to consider the contradictions of being a male from the global north while teaching and researching in colonized educational spaces. This also meant that my subjectivity was privileged by UOL’s regime of thought, which deeply troubled me because I imagined that my intentions were decolonial in some way. How could I introduce to my students a course guide on international development that explicitly and unapologetically privileges northern subjectivities, the very same subjectivities that I bring to the classroom with me? When conducting interviews, I felt a related dissonance between the imperative to center the perspectives of students and faculty at LIHE and the necessity of recognizing the multitudinous forces that had governed and shaped those subjectivities. Students undertook UOL education while criticizing the lack of assignments, projects, or any other form of assessment conducted by their educators. Often, this lack extended to classroom education, which UOL’s governmentality renders unnecessary. Another challenge was interviewing lecturers who do not quite see themselves as lecturers, and students who may not attend any class at all. The boundaries inscribed by arterial power engender subjectivities of incompleteness, partialness, inauthenticity, and liminality.

UOL’s governmentality arranges partner institutions, their students, and their faculty in disparate positions of interiority and exteriority through a technology that I came to think of as *exteriorization*. It is not *externalization* in the sense that the governing actor does not merely employ resources beyond its domain, but rather actively produces the exteriority of the subject. Exteriorization is also distinct from *exclusion* in that subjects have a partial relationship with the governing actor. A limited, arterial form of governmentality conducts the exteriorized subject’s conduct and the resources, commodities, and inscriptions that circulate through their governable domain. The exteriorization of the subject can be enacted through casualization, informalization, invisibilization, and dehumanization. Whereas inscription demarcates interventional targets as interior to a governable domain, exteriorization delimits the responsibilities of governing actors, along with the legitimacy, authority, and agency of subjects. The most sustained and nuanced interventions of colonial governmentality are often those that inscribe disparities of interiority and exteriority to govern the ways in which subjects and their conduct are included or excluded from a governable domain.

Exteriorization in the global knowledge economy tends to reproduce the coloniality of knowledge production. UOL’s governmentality situates its students, lecturers, classrooms, and partner institutions in a position exterior to spaces of modernity in which universally valuable knowledge is produced. At the periphery of the global knowledge economy, neoliberal governmentalities exploit the arterial topology of colonial power to invisibilize particular practices, circulations, subjectivities, and ways of knowing. UOL takes no interest in the knowledge and perspectives that students and lecturers bring to the classroom. UOL does not visibilize its educational spaces because if it were to do so, it would have to address student and faculty criticisms of UOL examinations, their Eurocentrism, their necessitating of the rote learning that dominates UOL’s classrooms, and their severe pedagogical limitations. Subjectivities in this exteriorized space form around the absence of a “real” university that takes interest in classroom education or lecturers vested with real pedagogical authority. Students and faculty often saw LIHE in various ways that suggested irreality, inauthenticity, and inferiority. Further research should explore the liminal spaces and subjectivities that form as governmentalities dismember peripheral educational spaces according to arterial topologies.

UOL’s primary mechanism of exteriorization is its “external” examinations. As I read deeper into the interview transcripts, I was struck by that mechanism’s efficiency in governing an expansive range of educational conduct, capturing profits, and reproducing the universality of European authority and expertise. As UOL has demonstrated, assessment can govern in the absence of any educational schema or pedagogical intentions. UOL could thus serve as a model for governing colonial and neoliberal education in privatizing educational landscapes throughout the global south. Has it? How does assessment in other international education contexts function as a governmentality mechanism? Do other transnational education partnerships configure students, lecturers, and institutions according to the disparate levels of inclusion and exclusion that typify arterial power? Further research should examine grounded experiences of relationships between northern and southern educational institutions. This could provide much-needed insight into the subjectivities formed when transnational relationships are governed according to colonial and neoliberal rationalities.

Does UOL position itself as a center of calculation primarily to extract expertise and legitimacy, or does it use data and information aggregated from partnerships in other ways? Since UOL transfigures itself into a services business when governing partner institutions, it has little impetus to make transparent its own knowledge and conduct. Nonstate governmentality relies on desocialized sources of legitimacy. UOL translates academic expertise into examination expertise, thereby securing its legitimacy and authority away from southern educational spaces. With little social, cultural, political, or geographic connection to Sri Lanka, UOL does not need to explain to southern intellectual laborers the destiny of their extracted expertise. What is to be understood by the governed is that they are not educators, and the classrooms are not theirs. In fact, LIHE’s classrooms are not really governed as classrooms at all, but rather as coaching spaces where examination tutoring is conducted. Although it’s probable that UOL’s annual examination represents an unusually extreme reduction of higher education assessment, further research should explore whether other transnational education institutions similarly employ numericization as a mechanism of pedagogical deskilling, intellectual capital extraction, and the displacement of expertise. This could help destabilize the poverty of legitimacy and expertise that northern transnational education actors map across the global south.

After teaching and researching at LIHE, I still have trouble locating its presence or absence in the overlapping spheres of Colombo’s cultural politics, Sri Lanka’s rapidly privatizing higher education sector, and the globalizing knowledge economy. To some extent, LIHE fulfills the expectation that many have for international education institutions to provide an ethnically pluralistic community in the context of a largely segregated school system. However, I sometimes caught glimpses of disparities involving class, ethnicity, religion, and gender. Studies at similar institutions could help uncover more subtle and intersectional dynamics at work in transnational education. Further research, perhaps conducted by scholars with more contextual familiarity, could trace the connections between these dynamics and the broader ecologies of expertise that span the global south. Considering that almost all interviewees accessed and reproduced expertise in spaces and institutions beyond LIHE, such studies could look more in-depth at multiple sites at which student and faculty subjectivities are produced. This would allow for a more nuanced analysis of the problematization of ignorance that development education instrumentalizes, in that it would specify the ways in which expertise and ignorance contour multiple forms of inequality.

At the same time, there is need for more intensive study into conduct and counter-conduct at individual institutions. Students and lecturers alike expressed serious grievances with LIHE. They often responsibilized LIHE’s upper management for imposing arbitrary restrictions on students, taking little to no apparent interest in classroom education, and providing only bare-bones facilities and resources. This could be interpreted to suggest that these problems are particular to LIHE, despite its distinguished reputation amongst private universities in Sri Lanka. However, most of the alternatives in Colombo are also for-profit, which is typical of privatized education in the global south. The governmentalities and subjectivities examined in this study are not only the result of LIHE’s administration, but also UOL’s practices, the Sri Lankan state’s externalization and deproblematization of private education, and supranational policy initiatives that map new frontiers for colonial and neoliberal education. Thus, further research should compare experiences at for-profit transnational education institutions in a variety of contexts to trace extractive flows that proliferate throughout the global south. A deeper understanding of how colonial and neoliberal policy instrumentalizes transnational partnerships could be beneficial to those who study and work in the extractive periphery of the global knowledge economy.

This research indicates specific directions for research on governmentality, as manifesting within and beyond educational institutions. Most research on neoliberal governmentality focuses on the capture and capitalization of conduct at the capillary level, which cannot account for the exteriorization, marginalization, and invisibilization enacted by colonial institutions like UOL. Given neoliberalism’s developmental origins, research in this direction could shed light on governmentality as it operates across the colonial difference. Such analysis would situate governmentality spatially within modernity/coloniality, meaning that the modern state arises from an assemblage of technes and epistemes that it exchanges with the colonial state. Governmentality connects modernity with its exteriority, yet this very connection is often obscured through mechanisms like privatization, externalization, contractualization, and adjunctification. Neoliberal governmentality displaces authority from educators and their classrooms with such efficiency precisely because it reworks the mechanisms, rationalities, and discourses that colonial governmentality employs in epistemological extraction. Colonial governmentality evacuates knowledge and authority over knowledge from the exteriority of modernity into its interiority.

Ultimately, myself and those I interviewed were unable to identify many avenues of resistance to of UOL’s colonial governmentality. Students sometimes found opportunities for critical engagement in and out of the classroom, with a few forming reading groups to discuss texts outside of the subject guides. However, most students focused on examination preparation, or didn’t come to class at all. Likewise, some lecturers guided students beyond the boundaries set forth in the subject guides, but this meant defying the expectations of students and UOL, as well as performing additional unpaid labor for LIHE’s benefit. Even LIHE’s top-level administrator saw themselves as powerless after pushing UOL to consider alternative pedagogies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the pedagogical emptying of the colonized university appears to hollow out its sites of resistance as well. When then-president Rajapaksa (2010) condemned the university’s “evil” interconnection with public protest and democratic purpose, he may have been denouncing a specter that is already vanishing. UOL’s students and faculty are a transnational population and share no obvious social or political space. However, their education is governed by UOL’s mechanisms, rationalities, and epistemes, and thus form a common site at which counternarratives and practices of counter-conduct could circulate amongst students and faculty. Broader comparative studies that consider governmentality in transnational education institutions could inform strategies to resist the colonization and neoliberalization of southern educational spaces.

Movements like the one against SAITM, as discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, may indicate the demos as one of the most promising sites of resistance against the neoliberalization of education. But the demos itself is threatened by UOL and other northern education institutions who seek to develop southern education. Through such transnational partnerships, education is desocialized, secured away from the public, and transfigured into an exclusive expertise without any direct relation to the majority of the population. Is it possible to reconstruct a demos in which students and faculty can engage in critical dialogue about ongoing educational transformations in Sri Lanka and elsewhere? Could this demos be located in the public, in the shared spaces between private universities, public universities, and the majority of the population who has been excluded from both? After all, that form of participation is precisely what UOL has granted to its British educational spaces and denied to its colonized students and faculty.

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