



Herath, Roshan Wasantha (2025) *Postcolonization of university accounting education: case of Sri Lanka*. PhD thesis.

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/84847/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

Postcolonization of University Accounting Education: Case of Sri Lanka

Roshan Wasantha Herath

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Adam Smith Business School
College of Social Sciences
University of Glasgow

October 2024

Abstract

This study addresses a notable research gap by offering an institutional-level analysis of how and why university accounting education in an ex-colony interacts with the global accountancy discourses and practices. Adopting a postcolonial lens, it examines how and why Sri Lanka's first accounting degree programme engages with global accountancy discourses and practices. Both the literature and my pre-understanding suggest that university accounting education in ex-colonies often reproduces global discourses and practices, as adopted by local professional accounting bodies (PABs). To provide a comprehensive understanding, the study explores the interaction between Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka) and the global accountancy discourses and practices. The findings highlight a complex interplay of complicity and resistance (ambivalence) among key constituencies of CA Sri Lanka has led the local PAB to replicate global discourses and practices, including reproducing global curricula, implementing Mutual Recognition arrangements (MRAs), and adopting International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) and International Standards on Auditing (ISA). This has resulted in CA Sri Lanka developing a hybrid identity as a "globalised local institute," aimed at producing accountants aligned with global capital demands, thus enhancing their global mobility. Similarly, the study of B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme reveals that ambivalence among its key constituencies has driven the programme to replicate global discourses and practices, including adopting PAB-based curricular, seeking exemptions and accreditations from PABs, and promoting global standards such as IFRSs and ISA. This has created a hybrid identity for the degree programme: a globally recognised, professionally oriented academic qualification. Through this, the degree programme aims to produce graduates who are prepared to serve global capital, thereby enhancing their employability in international markets, which resembles that of CA Sri Lanka. This thesis contributes to postcolonial studies in accounting by offering a nuanced institutional-level analysis of global-local interactions within accounting profession and education in an ex-colony, from the perspective of colonized.

Key words: accounting profession; accounting education; ambivalence; mimicry; hybridity; postcolonial theory; Sri Lanka

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
List of Tables	vii
List of figures	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Author’s Declaration	xi
Abbreviations	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Gap	11
1.3 Aim and questions.....	15
1.4 Methodology, empirical sites, and theoretical lens	16
1.5 Contribution and implications	20
1.6 Summary of the thesis.....	22
CHAPTER 2: BRIDGING GLOBAL ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION AND ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION IN EX-COLONIES	25
2.1 Introduction	25
2.2 Sociology of accountancy profession	26
2.2.1 Sociological perspectives on professions.....	26
2.2.2 Professionalisation of Accountancy	28
2.2.3 Key themes in the literature on accountancy profession.....	31
2.3 Interactions between the global PABs and ex-colonies	32
2.3.1 Interactions during colonial era	32
2.3.2 Interactions during post-colonial era	34
2.3.3 Implications for ex-colonies	38
2.4 Transnational standard setters and ex-colonies	41
2.4.1 The International Accounting Standards Board.....	41
2.4.2 The International Federation of Accountants	43

2.4.3 Implications for ex-colonies	45
2.5 Transnational financial institutions and ex-colonies	48
2.5.1 The World Bank	48
2.5.2 Implications for ex-colonies	50
2.6 Gap	52
2.7 Summary and conclusion	53
CHAPTER 3: BRIDGING GLOBAL ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION AND UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTING EDUCATION IN EX-COLONIES.....	55
3.1 Introduction	55
3.2 Liberal and vocational education	56
3.2.1 Professional accounting education.....	57
3.2.2 Liberal accounting education	62
3.3 Reproduction of global discourses and practices in academia.....	67
3.3.1 Replicating professional curriculum in academia	67
3.3.2 Accreditation practices, education standards, and textbooks	73
3.4 Gap	77
3.5 Summary and conclusion	78
CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMING OF POSTCOLONIZATION	80
4.1 Introduction	80
4.2 Theoretical lens of imperialism	81
4.3 Theoretical lens of postcolonialism.....	85
4.4 Ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity.....	89
4.4.1 Ambivalence.....	89
4.4.2 Mimicry.....	91
4.4.3 Hybridity	93
4.5 Summary and conclusion	95
CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY	96
5.1 Introduction	96
5.2 Pre-understanding of reality.....	96

5.3 Philosophical and methodological position	99
5.4 Rigour of research.....	104
5.5 Methods of data collection.....	104
5.6 Empirical sites	107
5.7 Fieldwork	113
5.7.1 Ethical clearance	113
5.7.2 Collection of data	115
5.8 Analysis of data	128
5.9 Summary and conclusion	131
CHAPTER 6: NAVIGATING GLOBAL IDENTITY: AMBIVALENCE, MIMICRY, AND HYBRIDITY IN ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION	133
6.1 Introduction	133
6.2 Colonial Disposition	134
6.2.1 Accountancy practice under British rule	134
6.3 Post-colonial challenges in emerging accountancy profession.....	137
6.3.1 Ambivalence: British inspiration in local profession.....	137
6.3.2 Mimicking the British.....	141
6.3.3 Hybridity: British-inspired local profession	142
6.4 Neo-liberal expansion in accountancy profession	144
6.4.1 Ambivalence: global inspiration in local profession	144
6.4.2 Mimicking the globe.....	150
6.4.3 Hybridity: globalised local profession	158
6.5 Summary and conclusion	163
CHAPTER 7: NAVIGATING GLOBAL IDENTITY: AMBIVALENCE, MIMICRY, AND HYBRIDITY IN UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTING EDUCATION	165
7.1 Introduction	165
7.2 Ambivalence: liberal and native vs professional and English	166
7.3 Mimicry: replicating global discourses and practices in academia	176

7.3.1 Heavy component of internship	177
7.3.2 Dedicated curriculum for professional training	180
7.3.3 Accreditation/exemptions from PABs.....	187
7.4 Hybridity: globally recognised professionally oriented degree	191
7.5 Summary and conclusion	198
CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION	199
8.1 Introduction	199
8.2 Pursuit of global mobility and its implications.....	199
8.3 Pursuit of global employability and its implications	208
8.4 Summary and conclusion	220
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION	221
9.1 Introduction	221
9.2 Postcolonization of university accounting education	221
9.3 Contributions of the study	234
9.4 Implications of the study.....	237
9.5 Limitation and directions for future research.....	239
9.6 Concluding thoughts	241
Appendix 1: Virtual fieldwork plan for DA.....	243
Appendix 2: Virtual fieldwork plan for CA Sri Lanka	253
Appendix 3: Interview guides for participants at DA	260
Appendix 4: Interview guide for participants at CA Sri Lanka	263
References	266

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Statistics of commerce stream A/L examination participants	2
Table 1.2: First preference of students of common programme	7
Table 5.1: Philosophy of Science in Social constructionism	101
Table 5.2: Summary of interview and participants details (DA)	118
Table 5.3: Summary of interview and participants details (CA Sri Lanka)	125

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Positioning of CA Sri Lanka	5
Figure 1.2: A mass class for GCE A/L accounting subject.....	6
Figure 6.1: MRA with ICAEW	156
Figure 7.1: First curriculum of the degree programme	171
Figure 7.2: Evolution of internship programme	194
Figure 7.3: Evolution of research	196

Acknowledgements

This PhD thesis would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement of many individuals and organisations, to whom I am deeply grateful. As I reflect on this remarkable journey, I am humbled by the contributions of so many who have helped make this academic pursuit a reality.

First and foremost, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my PhD supervisors: Professor Danture Wickramasinghe, Professor Yvonne Joyce, and Dr. Gabriel Kaifala. Their intellectual guidance, invaluable insights, and unwavering support have been instrumental throughout my PhD journey. They not only provided me with direction but also cultivated an environment of trust, allowing me the freedom to explore my research interests in-depth. Their belief in my capabilities, coupled with their continuous encouragement, inspired me to constantly challenge myself and aim for greater academic excellence. In addition, I am deeply thankful to Professor Chandana Alawattage for his generous feedback and insightful advice throughout the course of my research.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the College of Social Sciences (CoSS) Graduate School at the University of Glasgow for awarding me the CoSS Scholarship. Without this generous financial support, undertaking this PhD at the prestigious Adam Smith Business School would have been a distant dream. The scholarship allowed me the freedom to dedicate myself fully to my research without the financial burdens that often accompany such a long academic endeavour.

In addition, I am immensely thankful to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka, for granting me study leave with pay, which allowed me to immerse myself fully in this academic endeavour. The support from my university made it possible for me to focus on my research and benefit from the world-class resources at the University of Glasgow.

I am also deeply grateful to the participants at the two empirical sites of my research: the Department of Accounting at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura

and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. Their willingness to share their experiences, insights, and personal stories enriched my research in ways I could not have anticipated. Their contributions formed the foundation of my empirical work, and I am appreciative of the time and effort they invested in my study.

Last but certainly not least, I owe a profound debt of gratitude to my family. My wife, Anuradha, has been an unwavering pillar of strength, providing me with constant support, love, and encouragement. She shouldered the responsibilities of our family with grace and patience, allowing me the peace of mind to focus on my work. Her sacrifices, understanding, and steadfast belief in me have made this journey not only possible but meaningful. To our children, Kithmudu and Kishan, I am grateful for their boundless love and joy. Their presence brought light during challenging times and constantly reminded me of the importance of perseverance and dedication.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my mother, whose unwavering blessings and support have always been a source of strength. Her faith in me and her prayers for my success have carried me through the most challenging moments of this journey. Her belief in my abilities has been a guiding force, and I owe much of my success to her constant presence in my life.

In conclusion, I extend my sincere thanks to everyone, including friends, colleagues, and relatives, who contributed in various ways to the successful completion of this thesis. Your kindness, encouragement, and unwavering belief in me have made this achievement possible, and for that, I am deeply grateful.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Roshan Wasantha Herath

Abbreviations

ACC	Accounting
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
AICPA	American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
BEC	Business Economics
BUS	Business Administration
CA ANZ	Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand
CA Sri Lanka	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka
CBA	Competence-Based Assessment
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CMA Sri Lanka	Institute of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka
CoSS	College of Social Sciences
CPA Australia	Certified Practising Accountant Australia
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DA	Department of Accounting
DSC	Decision Science
EC	European Commission
ENT	Entrepreneurship
EY	Ernst & Young
FIN	Finance
FMSC	Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce
GAA	Global Accounting Alliance
GCCAAO	Gulf Corporation Council Accounting and Auditing Organisation
GCE A/L	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
HRM	Human Resource Management
IAASB	International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board
IAESB	International Accounting Education Standards Board
IASs	International Accounting Standards
IASB	International Accounting Standards Board
IASC	International Accounting Standards Committee
ICA	Institute of Chartered Accountants
ICAA	Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales
ICAS	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
ICATT	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago
IESs	International Education Standards
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
IFAD	International Forum on Accountancy Development
IFRSs	International Financial Reporting Standards
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOSCO	International Organisation of Securities Commissions
IPD	Initial Professional Development
IPSASs	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
ISA	International Standards on Auditing
JKH	John Keells Holdings
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler

LKAS	Sri Lanka Accounting Standards
MAR	Marketing
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
MRAs	Mutual Recognition Arrangements
PABs	Professional Accounting Bodies
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
ROSC	Report on the Observance of standards and Codes
SBEs	Specified Business Enterprises
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SLAuSs	Sri Lanka Auditing Standards
SLFRSs	Sri Lanka Financial Reporting Standards
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMOs	Statements of Membership Obligations
T&T	Trinidad and Tobago
UGC	University Grant Commission
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
US	United States
USJ	University of Sri Jayewardenepura
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In Sri Lanka, students take the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A/L) at the end of their secondary education, typically at the age of 18 after completing 13 years of schooling. This national examination is typically taken by local students and is crucial as it determines university admission and eligibility for higher education. The GCE A/L is divided into four streams: Arts, Commerce, Science, and Technology (Department of Examinations, 2024). Only students who have completed the GCE A/L in the commerce stream are eligible to pursue degrees in management and commerce at state-funded universities. Sri Lanka has 14 such universities, each offering degree programmes in these fields (University Grant Commission, 2023). Among them, the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) is widely recognised as the pinnacle of management education in the country. For decades, it has produced top management professionals. It is the primary aspiration of most students who take the GCE A/L examination in the commerce stream to secure admission to the FMSC at the USJ. Every year, approximately 55,000 to 60,000 students sit for the GCE A/L examination in the commerce stream, with around 35,000 to 40,000 qualifying for university entrance (Department of Examinations, 2024) (see Table 1.1). However, due to limited resources, state-funded universities can accommodate only about 15% to 20% of eligible students (University Grant Commission, 2023) (see Table 1.1). Consequently, the majority of qualified students must pursue alternative pathways, such as enrolling in degree programmes at private universities (both nationally and internationally), pursuing professional qualifications, seeking employment locally or abroad, or facing potential unemployment. The FMSC at USJ admits only 1,000 to 1,300 students annually across its 12-degree programmes (University Grant Commission, 2023). Consequently, the aspiration of around 60,000 students each year becomes a reality for only a few of them.

Table 1.1: Statistics of commerce stream A/L examination participants

Year	No. Sat	Eligible for University entrance (% No. Sat)		Admitted to state-funded universities (% of eligible students)	
2016	57,227	38,768	67.74%	5,793	14.94%
2017	56,626	39,265	69.34%	6,179	15.74%
2018	54,353	36,322	66.83%	6,020	16.57%
2019	59,636	40,206	67.42%	7,807	19.42%
2020	60,768	40,953	67.39%	7,904	19.30%
2021	56,091	37,801	67.39%	7,899	20.90%
2022	59,114	40,140	67.90%	7,973	19.86%

Source: Department of Examinations, 2024; University Grant Commission, 2023

Among Sri Lanka’s four main secondary education streams, Commerce stands out as the second largest (Department of Examinations, 2024). The Arts stream is the largest, with approximately 80,000 to 100,000 students taking the GCE A/L examination in this stream each year (Department of Examinations, 2024). However, the arts stream encompasses nearly 60 subjects across four main subject areas: Social Sciences, Religious and Civilisation, Aesthetics, and Languages (University Grant Commission, 2023). In contrast, the Commerce stream is more focused, offering three core subjects: Accounting, Business Studies, and Economics, but candidates have the option to substitute Business Statistics for Business Studies and Information Technology for Economics (University Grant Commission, 2023). Thus, despite having a smaller enrolment compared to the Arts stream, the Commerce stream is often attractive with the greatest demand due to its narrow range of subject choices.

This high demand is largely driven by the country’s vibrant business environment and robust accounting profession (World Bank, 2015). The liberalisation of the economy in 1977 attracted many multinational corporations and professional firms to Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017). Today, country’s business landscape includes leading multinational corporations such as Unilever, Nestle, Pfizer, HSBC, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Dialog, IFS, John Keells Holdings (JKH), and Aitken Spence,

as well as the Big Four professional firms (Deloitte, PwC, EY, and KPMG) and middle-tier professional firms such as Grant Thornton, Baker Tilly, BDO Partners, and Mazars (World Bank, 2015). Additionally, Sri Lanka is recognised as one of the world's top destinations for finance and accounting related services outsourcing; Kearney's 2019 Global Services Location Index ranks Sri Lanka among the top 25 global destinations, with the country holding the first position for financial attractiveness (Match Board, 2023). Furthermore, the accounting profession in Sri Lanka is supported by two local Professional Accounting Bodies (PABs): CA Sri Lanka and the Institute of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka (CMA Sri Lanka) as well as two prominent global PABs¹: the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), and a local vocational training body, the Association of Accounting Technicians of Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, a distinctive aspect of commerce education is that the majority of students who pass their A/L examination, including those who enrol in universities, also pursue a professional accounting qualification. Notably, four-fifths of these students opt for the local Chartered Accounting qualification offered by CA Sri Lanka (World Bank, 2015). This preference is primarily driven by the affordability of the CA Sri Lanka qualification compared to global alternatives, such as ACCA and CIMA. The remaining students, typically from more affluent families, pursue these global qualifications (Yapa, 2006). University students often engage in professional education concurrently with their academic studies. By the time they enter university, many of them have already completed at least one level of their chosen professional qualification. Additionally, nearly all degree programmes in management and commerce include an internship component, ranging from six months to one year during the final year of study. Consequently, university

¹ A global PAB is an organisation that offers internationally recognised qualifications, maintains a worldwide membership, promotes international accounting and auditing standards, emphasises high ethical standards and professionalism among its members, facilitates their continuous professional development, and actively influences the accounting profession on a global scale (ACCA, 2021; ICAEW, 2022; Loft et al., 2006; Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014).

students generally begin fulfilling their professional experience requirements in their final year of the degree programme.

As previously mentioned, among the four major PABs in Sri Lanka, CA Sri Lanka has the largest student population (World Bank, 2015). The primary motivation for pursuing the CA Sri Lanka qualification is the promising career prospects it offers at an affordable cost. Currently, CA Sri Lanka positions its qualification as a globally recognised credential that facilitates global mobility for both current and aspiring accountants (see Figure 1.1). This positioning is underpinned by its affiliations with transnational standard setters, such as the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), and International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), as well as with transnational financiers like the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and global PABs including the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW), ACCA, and the Certified Practising accountants Australia (CPA Australia). In collaboration with these global bodies, CA Sri Lanka reproduces global discourses and practices in the local context. For instance, CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs in 2012 and ISA in 2014 (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). These initiatives have immensely benefitted the operations of multinational corporations and global professional firms within the country. Additionally, CA Sri Lanka has established MRAs with prominent global PABs such as ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia, which benefit local accountants who aspire global careers in accounting (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). Currently, 40 percent of CA Sri Lanka-qualified Chartered Accountants work abroad, while the majority of those remaining in Sri Lanka are employed by Big Four audit firms and multinational corporations operating in the country. Furthermore, nearly 60 percent of the top 50 companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange have a CA Sri Lanka member serving as Chairman, CEO, or Finance Director (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024).

Figure 1.1: Positioning of CA Sri Lanka



Source: CA Sri Lanka official Facebook page

Another distinctive feature of secondary education in Sri Lanka is the widespread reliance on private tuition classes alongside formal secondary school education. As illustrated in Table 1.1, securing a placement at state-funded university is highly competitive. Given Sri Lanka's status as a lower-middle-income country, most students cannot afford higher education at private universities. Consequently, tuition classes have become the preferred option for students seeking additional support to achieve higher rankings in their A/L examinations. These classes are conducted in all 25 districts of the country, primarily on weekends. Interestingly, teaching in these classes has often become a full-time occupation for graduates in management and commerce (including accounting), while serving as a part-time occupation for university lecturers and A/L teachers in these fields. Typically, these classes attract thousands of students (see Figure 1.2). Reflecting on my own experience as an A/L commerce student from 2005 to 2007, I attended tuition classes for Accounting, Business Studies, and Economics. Interestingly, these private tuition providers go to great lengths to produce students who achieve top ranks at both district and national levels. The success of these students is often used in advertising campaigns, which in turn attracts even more students to their classes.

Figure 1.2: A mass class for GCE A/L accounting subject



Source: Official website of a private tuition firm in Sri Lanka

Among the students admitted to the FMSC at the USJ, the most sought-after programme is the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree, offered by the Department of Accounting (DA), which established the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka in 1991 (Fonseka et al., 2019). The FMSC offers twelve bachelor's degree programmes, of which students can directly enrol in four: Commerce, Public Administration, Estate Management and Valuation, and Information Technology. For the remaining eight programmes, Accounting (ACC), Business Economics (BEC), Business Administration (BUS), Entrepreneurship (ENT), Finance (FIN), Human Resource Management (HRM), Marketing (MAR), and Decision Science (DSC), students initially enter a common first-year programme. Upon completion, students are allocated to one of these eight degree programmes based on a combination of factors, including their Grade Point Average from the A/L results, district and national ranks, and personal preference. Typically, 40% to 60% of these students select the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree as their first preference (see Table 1.2). However, only 200 students are admitted to this programme each year. Generally, the highest-performing students from each of the 25 districts in the country are selected for the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree. In 2009, I was fortunate to be admitted to this prestigious programme, having achieved a national rank of 123rd and a district rank of 8th in the 2007 A/L examination.

Table 1.2: First preference of students of common programme

Batch	Total	ACC	BEC	BUS	ENT	FIN	HRM	MAR	DSC
2008/2009	761	55%	2%	14%	0%	20%	2%	6%	0%
2009/2010	843	51%	4%	15%	2%	20%	2%	6%	0%
2010/2011	876	44%	6%	19%	1%	22%	2%	5%	1%
2011/2012	944	54%	2%	12%	1%	22%	3%	4%	2%
2012/2013	900	40%	7%	20%	0%	23%	2%	6%	2%
2013/2014	903	43%	10%	16%	1%	21%	2%	5%	3%
2014/2015	903	38%	8%	19%	1%	20%	4%	8%	2%
2015/2016	901	38%	9%	19%	0%	19%	3%	9%	2%
2016/2017	895	39%	13%	13%	0%	20%	2%	9%	4%
2017/2018	896	43%	18%	5%	0%	21%	2%	8%	1%
2018/2019	894	40%	17%	7%	1%	18%	1%	11%	4%
2019/2020	929	55%	12%	14%	1%	11%	1%	5%	1%
2020/2021	907	58%	11%	10%	1%	11%	1%	7%	2%
2021/2022	907	45%	16%	9%	1%	15%	1%	9%	4%
Average		46%	10%	14%	1%	19%	2%	7%	2%

Source: DA meeting minutes, January 2024

The strong demand for the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme can be attributed to the alignment between students' expectations and the pursuit of this degree programme. Most, if not all, students in this department are simultaneously pursuing a professional accounting qualification alongside their degree studies. By the time they enter the department, many have already completed at least two levels of their chosen professional accounting qualification. For instance, when I entered the department, I had completed two levels of CA Sri Lanka qualification. This degree programme is specifically designed to allow students to earn an academic qualification while also facilitating their pursuit of a professional qualification (University Grant Commission, 2010). By facilitating the simultaneous achievement of both academic and professional credentials, the department aims to enhance the employability prospects of its

graduates, particularly in an increasingly globalised economy (University Grant Commission, 2010).

Following the liberalisation of the economy in 1977, higher education in Sri Lanka began to display characteristics of neoliberal education (Jayawardena, 2017). One such prominent characteristic is producing a globally employable graduate. To achieve this, the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme is modelled on the Chartered Accounting qualification of the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka (Ukwatte and Yapa, 2013). The programme includes two-year internship, adopts a curriculum with technical skills emphasis, and is taught in English. It also develops soft skills such as business communication, computer literacy, teamwork, and leadership, and promotes global discourses such as IFRSs, ISA, and Integrated Reporting, as adopted by CA Sri Lanka. Consequently, CA Sri Lanka largely shapes the curriculum and pedagogy of this degree programme. In addition to aligning with CA Sri Lanka, the curriculum is compatible with those of other global professional accounting qualifications, including ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia. Consequently, the programme has secured the highest number of exemptions and accreditations from both global PABs, such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia, and local PABs, including CA Sri Lanka and CMA Sri Lanka. These initiatives have significantly enhanced the programme's employability prospects, achieving a 100% employability for its graduates, who predominantly work for multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms, both locally and internationally.

“From its inception, the Degree Programme had invalidated the common perception that universities do not produce employable graduates. And, after twenty-five years, the Department continues to maintain the record of 100% employment for its graduates.” (Fonseka et al., 2019, p. 53)

As I have elaborated thus far, the landscape of accounting education in Sri Lanka, an ex-colony, is unique compared to both developed countries like Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US), as well as developing countries such as China, Singapore, and South Africa (Lee, 1995a; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). In Sri Lanka, students often pursue a professional accounting qualification, primarily the Chartered Accounting qualification from CA Sri Lanka, alongside their bachelor's degree. This contrasts

with the systems in developed countries like Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, and the US and developing countries such as China, Singapore, and South Africa where accounting is typically a graduate profession. In these countries, holding a bachelor's degree is generally a prerequisite for pursuing a professional qualification in accounting. The situation in Sri Lanka also differs from that in the UK, where the majority of individuals entering the accounting profession first complete a bachelor's degree, despite several alternative routes into professional accounting qualifications, including entry from secondary education (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007;Paisey and Paisey, 2014).

In Sri Lanka, unlike in many countries where professional qualifications are typically pursued after completing a bachelor's degree, university accounting curricular are closely integrated with the curricular of local PAB, CA Sri Lanka and prominent global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia. Additionally, the four-year degree programmes in accounting incorporate a significant internship, periods ranging from one to two years. Also, these degree programmes place strong emphasis on soft-skills development, including communication, computer literacy, teamwork, and leadership. Furthermore, these programmes actively seek exemptions from local and global PABs such as CA Sri Lanka, ACCA, CPA Australia, and ICAEW. Consequently, these initiatives have resulted in accounting degree programmes achieving 100% employability for their graduates. The close alignment with PABs and the high employability rates have made accounting degree programmes the most sought-after choice among students who pursued the Commerce stream in Sri Lanka's A/L examination (Fonseka et al., 2019).

Having experienced this trajectory of accounting education firsthand, as a former A/L student, an undergraduate at DA, and now a lecturer pursuing a PhD degree, I am motivated to study the development and maintenance of the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree to understand how and why the university accounting education in an ex-colony engages with discourses and practices of increasingly globalised accounting profession. In Sri Lanka, the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka and B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree are closely linked. CA Sri Lanka plays a crucial role as an intermediary between the university accounting education and transnational bodies shaping global accounting profession. The curriculum of university

accounting education often mirrors global discourses and practices adopted by the local PAB. For instance, CA Sri Lanka is modelled on the ICAEW, and the B.Sc. Accounting degree programme is modelled on CA Sri Lanka. CA Sri Lanka reproduces the curriculum of the ICAEW, and the B.Sc. Accounting degree programme reflects the curriculum of CA Sri Lanka. Additionally, CA Sri Lanka has uncritically adopted IFRSs and IAS, and the B.Sc. Accounting degree programme promotes these discourses. Thus, the interaction between the university accounting education and global accountancy discourses and practices primarily occurred through the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka. Consequently, to fully comprehend how and why the university accounting education in Sri Lanka engages with discourses and practices of increasingly globalised accounting profession, it is essential to examine the interaction between the local PAB and transnational bodies shaping global accounting profession first. Therefore, this research study also focuses on the development and maintenance of CA Sri Lanka as it serves as a case study illustrating these global-local interactions.

Accordingly, the distinctive characteristics within the realm of university accounting education and profession make Sri Lanka a compelling case for exploring the postcolonial² dynamics inherent in post-colonial³ settings. Through an examination of how local institutions engage with global accountancy discourses and practices in accounting education and profession, we can observe a nuanced interplay between global influences and local agency. This context allows us to investigate how post-colonial institutions navigates, resists, and reinterpret the legacies of colonialism, particularly within accounting education and profession. By exploring how global accountancy discourses and practices are embraced and reconfigured, we gain insights into how post-colonial societies craft unique educational strategies that reflect their cultural, economic, and political realities. This case, therefore, embodies a rich terrain for unpacking the

² Postcolonial refers to the ongoing process of grappling with the lasting effects of colonialism, emphasising continuity in addressing its cultural, social, and political aftermath.

³ Post-colonial refers to the period immediately following the end of formal colonial rule.

complexities of global-local interactions, revealing how post-colonial identities are continually reshaped in response to global pressures while also resisting and redefining those very forces.

The following section delves into the literature on global-local interactions within the accounting profession and university accounting education, aiming to identify gaps in the current understanding of this phenomenon.

1.2 Gap

Accounting is increasingly becoming a universal profession, integrating emerging economies into the global economy (Hopper et al., 2017). This universal professionalism is shaped by a nexus of transnational standard setters, such as the IFAC and the IASB, transnational financial institutions like the WB and the IMF, and global PABs such as ICAEW, ACCA, and CPA Australia, collectively referred to as globalisation project of accountancy profession (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). A growing body of literature highlights the influence of this globalisation project on the accounting profession in emerging economies (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2010; Gallhofer et al., 2011; Johnson, 1972; Johnson and Caygill, 1971; Mihret et al., 2012; Yapa, 2010). Following the influential work of Johnson (Johnson, 1972; Johnson and Caygill, 1971), many studies have focused on how British-based global PABs have influenced the establishment of PABs in ex-colonies. Additionally, contemporary research has explored the role of international financial institutions and transnational standard setters in shaping the accounting profession in ex-colonies (Arnold and Sikka, 2001; Bakre, 2008; Chand and White, 2007; Chang, 2007; Graham and Annisette, 2012; Mir and Rahaman, 2005; Schiavo-Campo, 2009).

This literature shows that the globalisation project of accountancy profession has produced several undesirable consequences in the accounting profession in ex-colonies. It has hindered the development of locally relevant accounting curricular, resulted in uncritical adoption of global accounting technologies such as IFRSs and ISA, led to the domination of the local accountancy profession by internationally qualified accountants, and predominantly served the interests of the privileged such as multinational corporations, Big Four professional firms, and

global investors at the expense of the broader public interest (Hopper et al., 2017;Mihret et al., 2012;Perera, 2012). Consequently, this globalisation project of accountancy profession has impeded the development of an accounting profession in ex-colonies appropriate to local needs (Annisette, 2000;Bakre, 2008;Caramanis, 2002;Gallhofer et al., 2011;Mihret et al., 2012;Neu et al., 2006).

Interestingly, this body of literature has extensively explored the influence of globalisation project of accountancy profession in former colonies predominantly through the theoretical lens of imperialism (ibid). Imperialism involves the exercise of power by a centre, either through direct conquest (formal imperialism of rule) or through socio-political and economic influence (informal imperialism of influence); both of which involve the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies and result in similar form of domination (Young, 2016). Thus, the imperialism lens investigates the domination in centre-periphery relations from the ‘colonizer’s’ perspective, focusing on “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (Said, 1994, p.9). Previous studies have indicated that the colonial and imperial legacies left in ex-colonies have been instrumental in perpetuating this domination within the accounting profession (ibid).

However, the imperialism lens falls short of capturing the resistance/agency of the ‘colonized’ in the centre-periphery relations. To address this limitation, postcolonialism has emerged as a theoretical perspective that enables a deeper understanding of the resistance/agency of the ‘colonized’. Postcolonialism is both a theoretical as well as political position which is characterised by an active intervention with the economic, material and cultural conditions governing the global system in which a postcolonial nation is required to operate (Young, 2016). It challenges the continuing, often subtle, operation of an imperialist system of economic, political and cultural domination (Young, 2016).

However, with the exception of a few studies, the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and the accounting profession in former colonies remains largely unexplored through a postcolonial lens (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017). Using Sierra Leone as a case study, Kaifala et

al. (2019) explored, how Chartered and aspiring accountants in ex-colonies have constructed a hybrid professional identity through a global PAB, ACCA. Similarly, Thomson and Jones (2016) demonstrated how the migrant accountants in Canada have overcome colonial 'othering' and regained their professional identity by reproducing the Canadian professional archetype. Notably, both studies focused on the micro-level, analysing individual professional accountants (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). Consequently, there is limited understanding of the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and accounting profession in ex-colonies from a macro-institutional perspective. In addressing this gap, the present study extends the literature through empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing the resistance/agency of CA Sri Lanka in constructing a hybrid identity for the local PAB through its interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

Contemporary literature reveals that the influence of the globalisation project of accountancy profession extends beyond the accounting profession in ex-colonies and embraces the university accounting education in such contexts (Hopper et al., 2017; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). For example, accounting faculty allied to profession can hamper the development of university accounting education suitable to local needs (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). Many accounting faculty perceive neoliberal practices adopted by PABs, such as accreditation of accounting degrees, as an obstructive force which discourages academics from developing locally relevant curriculum based on their interest, motivations, and skills (Duff and Marriott, 2012). Consequently, the globalisation project of accountancy profession prevents the development of enlightened accounting curricular and liberal pedagogies, confines the academic accounting education to mere professional training, and hampers the pursuit of broader public interest and the development of identity as an independent academic discipline (Hopper, 2013; Hopper et al., 2017; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). However, despite this domination of globalisation project of accountancy profession, we know little about how and why university accounting education in ex-colonies like Sri Lanka engages with it. To this end, I will study the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka through a postcolonial theoretical perspective. This lens will allow me to analyse the resistance/agency of a university accounting degree programme in

an ex-colony in their interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

Additionally, previous studies on accountancy profession that have mobilised the postcolonial theoretical perspective have predominantly drawn on Homi Bhabha's notions of 'mimicry' (Thomson and Jones, 2016) and 'hybridity' (Kaifala et al., 2019). Bhabha (2012) defines "mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable, other as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (p. 122). This desire drives 'colonized' to imitate global discourses and practices. The postcolonial lens articulates 'hybridity' as everything that challenges and undermines colonial hegemony (Loomba, 2007). 'Hybridity' is fundamental in analysing postcolonial resistance to imperial domination (Bhabha, 2012) as it continually threatens the purity of universals and frustrates the centre's ability to reform the 'other'; it is an expression of both "enforcement and resistance" (Frenkel, 2008, p. 933; Boussebaa et al., 2014). The 'colonized' often draws on global discourses and practices to reconstruct their cultural identity, thereby challenging imperial hegemony (Loomba, 2007). In extending the application of postcolonial theory in accounting literature beyond these two notions, this study will use the notion of 'ambivalence'. 'Ambivalence' refers to the complex mix of complicity and resistance involved in the relationship between 'colonizer' and 'colonized' (Ashcroft et al., 2003). It posits that the 'colonized' simultaneously accommodates and resists colonial discourses and practices (Kaifala et al., 2019).

To explore the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession, the accounting profession in ex-colonies, and university accounting education in these contexts, this study employs the notion of 'ambivalence' alongside 'mimicry' and 'hybridity'. 'Ambivalence' theorises how the PABs and university accounting education (as colonial/post-colonial institutions) perceive global discourses and practices. The notion of 'mimicry' captures how and why these colonial/post-colonial institutions reproduce global discourses and practices, while 'hybridity' theorises how these institutions perceive their own identity. Given these gaps in the literature, the next section will outline the aim and questions of this study.

1.3 Aim and questions

This study aims to explore the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. Drawing from the theoretical lens of postcolonialism, I use the notion of ‘postcolonization’ to mean the reconstruction of hybrid identity by the peripheral institutions through the reproduction of global discourses and practices influenced by the enduring ‘ambivalence’ in post-colonial context (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017; Bhabha, 2012; Kaifala et al., 2019; Loomba, 2007; Thomson and Jones, 2016). More specifically, this thesis addresses the following two research questions:

- (1) How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession?
- (2) How does an accounting degree programme in the same context navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession?

These questions are interrelated, collectively highlighting the institution-level negotiations that shape global-local interactions in Sri Lanka’s accounting landscape. Both questions target the nuanced ways in which institutions, as entities rather than individuals, interact with the global accountancy discourses and practices that influence accounting education and profession. By examining the role of a local PAB and an accounting degree program in Sri Lanka, this study foregrounds two different, yet interconnected, institutional perspectives. While the local PAB grapples with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, the academic program faces the challenge of aligning itself with both global accountancy discourses and practices and the broader liberal and professional educational expectations within the region. Together, these research questions illuminate a novel approach to understanding the postcolonial dynamics within professional and educational settings. They reveal how postcolonial theory—through the constructs of mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence—can enrich our understanding of the ideological and structural

negotiations that ex-colonial institutions undertake to reconcile global pressures with internal priorities. Addressing these questions allows for a comprehensive analysis of how spatial and institutional tensions intersect within the field of accounting in Sri Lanka, ultimately offering a nuanced perspective on the agency of institutions in ex-colonies as they mediate between competing demands.

1.4 Methodology, empirical sites, and theoretical lens

The present study seeks a socially and historically situated understanding of the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and a local PAB and an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony. In reflecting on my research questions, I acknowledge that my ontological position is that reality is socially constructed, subjective, and multiple (Trautrim et al., 2012). Based on this ontology, my epistemological stance is interpretive, embracing the idea that “multiple realities are experienced, constructed, and interpreted in many ways” (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 10). Grounded in this subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, my methodological approach is qualitative (Trautrim et al., 2012). Furthermore, my review of existing literature on imperialism and postcolonialism within the accountancy profession revealed that scholars addressing similar research questions have predominantly employed qualitative methodologies (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Baker et al., 2010; Caramanis, 2002; Kaifala et al., 2019; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Thomson and Jones, 2016; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010). Consequently, both the nature of my research questions and the methodological approaches of prior literature inspired me to adopt a qualitative methodology for my study.

This study focuses on two empirical sites. To explore the first research question, I have selected CA Sri Lanka, the ‘premier national PAB in Sri Lanka’ (Yapa, 2006). CA Sri Lanka was established by the nationalist government that came to the power in 1956, through the Institute of Chartered Accountants Act (ICA) of Parliament No.23 of 1959 (Yapa, 2006). CA Sri Lanka establishes both the initial professional development and continuing professional development requisites for Chartered Accountants; it sets accounting, auditing, and public-sector accounting standards, as well as ethical guidelines for Chartered Accountants; and it operates

an investigative and disciplinary system for its students and members (IFAC, 2022a). The local institute holds a monopoly over auditing practice in Sri Lanka (Yapa, 2006). To date, it has produced over 7,000 members who are spread across 42 countries, and it currently has a population of over 30,000 students (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). CA Sri Lanka is strongly connected with global professional accounting organisations. It is a member of IFAC, the Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants, the South Asian Federation of Accountants, and Chartered Accountants Worldwide (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). It adopted IFRSs in 2012 and IAS in 2014 for the local context and has MRAs with ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024).

To explore the second research question, I have selected the DA at USJ, which introduced the country's first accounting degree programme in 1992 (Fonseka et al., 2019). The founding members of this four-year B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree are two CA Sri Lanka-qualified Chartered Accountants who severed in academia (Fonseka et al., 2019). From its inception, the degree programme has focused on producing globally employable graduates (University Grant Commission, 2010), replicating the model of CA Sri Lanka. Consequently, the degree programme resembles several characteristics typical of a professional accounting qualification, such as a two-year internship programme, a curriculum with technical skills emphasis, and English as the medium of instruction. Additionally, this programme places significant emphasis on information technology, and the development of soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, and leadership. This distinct approach sets it apart from other management and commerce degrees available in the country. The degree programme has secured highest number of exemptions from global PABs such as ACCA, CIMA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia, as well as local PABs like CA Sri Lanka and CMA Sri Lanka (Gunarathne et al., 2019). Currently, the department enjoys 100% employability for its graduates (Gunarathne et al., 2019).

To gather insights, I employ a variety of data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and self-reflections. I conduct semi-structured interviews with key actors from both CA Sri Lanka and DA. The actors

from CA Sri Lanka comprise of current and former governing council members including current and former presidents, advisors to the governing council, committee members, professional accounting educators, Chartered Accountants, and prospective accountants. The actors from DA comprise of academics, graduates, and undergraduates. These interviews help me understand how these actors perceive the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, how and why they reproduce these discourses and practices, and their views on the identity of local institutions. In addition, I review documents pertaining to CA Sri Lanka and DA, such as curricular, memoranda of understandings, meeting minutes, local and global research articles, and institutional publications. The review of these documents helps me understand how global discourses and practices are perceived and reproduced in the formation of identities for the local institutions. Furthermore, as an active member of DA over 15 years (4 years as a student and 11 years as an academic), I draw on my own experience to extend understanding of the research phenomenon (Wall, 2006). During the fieldwork, I maintain logs of my experiences within the department. These logs allow me to produce 'secondary' interpretations by reflecting on my own experiences. This process helps me understand how I perceived the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession and how I contributed to the reproduction of these discourses and practices in constructing identity for the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree.

To make sense of these subjective interpretations, I use a postcolonial theoretical perspective. This theoretical choice is influenced by my review of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession. It revealed that the interactions between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and accounting profession and education in ex-colonies have extensively been explored through the theoretical lens of imperialism (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2008; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Verma, 2010; Uche, 2010; Yapa, 2010). The lens of imperialism examines global-local interactions from a 'colonizer's' perspective (Said, 1994), which often overlooks the agency/resistance of the 'colonized'. In remedy, the theoretical perspective of postcolonialism has emerged, enabling us to appreciate the agency/resistance of the 'colonized' in such interactions. However, only a handful

of studies have used the theoretical perspective of postcolonialism to illuminate the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and the accounting profession in ex-colonies (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). These studies examine the interactions between global PABs and professional accountants in ex-colonies from the perspective of the 'colonized', acknowledging their cultural political agency and theorising how they have constructed a global identity. For example, Kaifala et al. (2019) have used the postcolonial notion of 'hybridity' to explore how professional accountants in Sierra Leone, an ex-British colony, have formed a global identity for themselves through ACCA. In a similar vein, Thomson and Jones (2016) have used the notion of 'mimicry' to demonstrate how migrant accountants in Canada have navigated colonial 'othering' to reclaim their professional identity. Notably, both studies focus on professional accountant as the unit of analysis, representing a micro-individual level analysis (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016).

The present study extends the application of postcolonial theory in two significant ways. First, it empirically demonstrates and theoretically analyses how and why a local PAB and an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony engage with the globalisation project of accountancy profession, representing a macro-institutional level analysis. Second, this study introduces the notion of 'ambivalence' alongside 'mimicry' and 'hybridity' in theorising 'postcolonization'. The notion of 'ambivalence' helps to better articulate how 'mimicry' and 'hybridity' persist at an institutional level in postcolonial contexts. It captures how post-colonial institutions perceive discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, which triggers 'mimicry'. This notion of 'mimicry' theorises how and why post-colonial institutions reproduces these discourses and practices, leading to a hybrid identity. Meanwhile, the notion of 'hybridity' captures how post-colonial institutions perceive their own identity in this context.

1.5 Contribution and implications

This study makes several contributions. First, it extends the growing body of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism within the accountancy professionalisation project (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2010; Johnson and Caygill, 1971; Johnson, 1972; Kaifala et al., 2019; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Thomson and Jones, 2016; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010) by empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing the agency/resistance of a local PAB in an ex-colony in their interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Adopting a theoretical lens of imperialism, previous studies have predominantly articulated the domination of globalisation project of accountancy profession in the accounting profession in ex-colonies. In contrast, a few studies that use a postcolonial lens have acknowledged the agency/resistance of professional accountants in these regions (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). However, there is a dearth of studies that have undertaken an institutional-level analysis of how and why local PABs in ex-colonies interact with the globalisation project of accountancy profession from a ‘colonized’ point of view. The present study addresses this lacuna.

Second, this study extends the emerging body of literature on the interaction between the accounting profession and university accounting education (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007; Hopper, 2013; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013) by articulating the agency/resistance of university accounting education in an ex-colony in its interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. While previous studies have predominantly articulated the domination of accounting profession over university accounting education, there is a lack of research providing an institutional-level analysis of how and why university accounting education in ex-colonies interacts with the globalisation project of accountancy profession from a ‘colonized’ perspective. The present study addresses this gap.

Third, by incorporating the notion of ‘ambivalence’, this study extends the application of postcolonial theory beyond ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’ in accounting literature (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). Research in

management and accounting literature explicitly using the notion of 'ambivalence' is scarce. An exception is Boussebaa et al. (2014), who empirically demonstrated the 'ambivalence' in the Englishisation discourse within the call centres in India. Their study revealed how the 'ambivalence' of call centre employees (colonial/post-colonial subjects) continuously hinders efforts to overcome the language barrier and produce purely English speaking local employees (Boussebaa et al., 2014). The present study contributes to this discursive dimension of postcolonial theory by empirically demonstrating how the 'ambivalence' surrounding a local PAB and an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony (colonial/post-colonial institutions) influences the reproduction of discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, through which these institutions pursue a hybrid identity.

This study also has several practical implications. First, it informs how the PABs in ex-colonies can facilitate global mobility for its members by actively engaging with globalisation project of accountancy profession. In today's world, the globalisation is a powerful and inevitable force that shapes various professional landscapes, including accounting. Thus, it is crucial for PABs in ex-colonies to collaborate with global accountancy bodies. By adopting international standards, such as IFRSs and ISA, and aligning their curriculum with those of global PABs, the PABs in ex-colonies can ensure that their members remain competitive and relevant in the global market.

Second, this study informs how accounting educators in post-colonial context can enhance global employability for their graduates through engagement with the global accountancy bodies. In post-colonial settings, ensuring the employability of graduates has become the priority of education. The university accounting programmes can achieve this by collaborating with actors of globalisation project of accountancy profession. Securing exemptions by aligning university curricular with those of PABs, incorporating practical experiences such as internship, enhancing proficiency in English language, and developing soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, and leadership are some of the initiatives through which accounting educators can prepare their graduates for global economy.

1.6 Summary of the thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters.

Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the study. It began with an explanation of the study's background and the motivation behind it. The chapter then articulated the knowledge gap by locating the study within the existing literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession, followed by the aim and questions explored in this study. Subsequently, I detailed the methodology, empirical sites, and theoretical lens. Finally, the chapter outlined the study's contribution and implications.

Chapter 2 and 3 present the literature review for this study. Chapter 2 focuses on the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and the PABs in former colonies. This chapter begins with an exploration of sociological perspectives on professions, including their application in accounting profession. It then reviews the literature on the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and PABs in former colonies, as well as its implications for these regions. Finally, the chapter articulates gaps in the literature that this study aims to address. The review of literature reveals a lack of institutional level analysis on how and why PABs in former colonies engage with the globalisation project of accountancy profession from a 'colonized' point of view.

The chapter 3 focuses on the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies. The chapter begins with an exploration of liberal and vocational forms of education in general, and professional and liberal forms of accounting education in particular. It then reviews the literature on interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies, and its implications for these regions. Finally, the chapter articulates gaps in the literature that this study will address. The review of literature reveals a lack of institutional level analysis on how and why accounting education in universities of former colonies engage with globalisation project of accountancy profession from a 'colonized' point of view.

Chapter 4 presents the theoretical framing for this study. It engages with different theoretical perspectives used in the literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession. The chapter reveals that this body of literature has predominantly employed the theoretical lens of imperialism to articulate the domination of the globalisation project of accountancy profession in accounting profession and education in ex-colonies. However, a few studies have utilised the postcolonial lens to articulate the agency/resistance of professional accountants (colonial/post-colonial subjects) in former colonies in their interaction with global PABs. There remains a lack of research applying the postcolonial lens to analyse the agency/resistance of PABs and university accounting education (colonial/post-colonial institutions) in their interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Additionally, the use of postcolonial theory in this literature has generally been limited to the notions of ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’ (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). To extend the application of postcolonial theory in accounting literature, this study introduces the notion of ‘ambivalence’ alongside ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’. It uses these three notions to define ‘postcolonization’. This chapter provides a detailed exploration of these theoretical aspects.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodology of this study, beginning with an elaboration of my pre-understanding of the research phenomenon. I then detail my ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions. Following this, the chapter addresses the rigour of the research and describes the data collection methods employed, including semi-structured interviews, documentary review, and self-reflections. Next, I describe the empirical sites and discuss the fieldwork process, including ethical clearance and collection of data. Finally, the chapter explains the approach used to analyse the study’s data.

Chapter 6 and 7 present the analysis of this study. Chapter 6 analyses the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and a local PAB in an ex-colony using the postcolonial notions of ‘ambivalence’, ‘mimicry’, and ‘hybridity’. In this chapter, I examine the emergence and historical evolution of CA Sri Lanka and its engagement with the discourses and practices of

globalisation project of accountancy profession, theorising this global-local interaction as 'postcolonization'.

Chapter 7 analyses how and why an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony engages with globalisation project of accountancy profession, using postcolonial notions of 'ambivalence', 'mimicry', and 'hybridity'. This chapter focuses on the emergence and historical evolution of the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree, the first accounting degree programme within the Sri Lankan university system and its engagement with discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, theorising this global-local interaction as 'postcolonization'.

Chapter 8 presents the discussion of this study, focusing on key findings that emerged from the analysis in the previous two chapters. This discussion is informed by literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession, as well as contemporary debate on the decolonization of university education.

Chapter 9 concludes the study by summarising the research aim, methodology, theoretical perspective, key findings, contributions, and implications of the study. Additionally, the chapter acknowledges the study's limitations and suggests directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: BRIDGING GLOBAL ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION AND ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION IN EX-COLONIES

2.1 Introduction

As I presented in Chapter 1, this thesis explores the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. In the present day, in striving for a hybrid identity, the university accounting education in ex-colonies often reproduces the global accountancy discourses and practices, as adopted by the local PABs. PABs in ex-colonies often act as intermediaries in replicating these global discourses and practices. Consequently, to fully comprehend how and why university accounting education in ex-colonies engages with global discourses and practices, it is essential to understand the interaction between the local PABs in ex-colonies and the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Currently, PABs in ex-colonies extensively interact with the global PABs such as ICAEW, ACCA, and CPA Australia, as well as transnational standard setting bodies like the IASB and the IFAC, and transnational financiers such as the WB and the IMF, in their quest for a hybrid identity (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). These interactions encompass adopting neo-liberal discourses such as IFRSs, ISA, International Education Standards (IESs), and sustainability and integrated reporting, maintaining MRAs with global PABs, replicating professional accounting curricular of these global bodies, and implementing capacity building projects with financial support for these initiatives (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014).

In this context, this chapter reviews the existing literature on the interaction between the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession and PABs in ex-colonies, with the aim of articulating a knowledge gap addressed through this study. In this, I first engage in comprehensive review of broader literature relating to sociological perspectives on professions, including its application in accounting profession, and explore key themes in accountancy profession. Following this, I examine how global PABs particularly the UK PABs, the single most influential global force shaping the accountancy profession in ex-

colonies interact with PABs in former colonies and the resulting implications. I then discuss how transnational standard setters, and financial institutions engage with PABs in ex- colonies and the implications of these engagements. Finally, through this literature review, I articulate a knowledge gap that this study aims to address. The insights gathered from this chapter would be particularly helpful for discussing the study's findings in Chapter 8. The next chapter will present the review of literature on interaction between the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies.

2.2 Sociology of accountancy profession

In this section, I explore various perspectives within the sociology of professions, their application in accountancy profession, and key themes in accountancy profession.

2.2.1 Sociological perspectives on professions

The sociology of professions, which examines professions as a distinct category of occupations, is a well-structured disciplinary field within the social sciences. Over time, this research area has actively nurtured various theoretical perspectives, including functionalism, interactionism, and critical Marxism. Prior to the early 1970s, "functionalist" and "interactionist" approaches were predominant. However, since then, a more "critical" perspective has gained prominence, drawing significantly on the works of Weber and Marx, offering deeper insights into the dynamics of professional power and control.

The functionalist perspective argues that the integration and smooth functioning of the society rely on the highly skilled activities carried out by professionals (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933; Greenwood, 1957). This view emphasises the distinctive attributes of the professional, such as the altruism, self-discipline, independence, ethical conduct, and esoteric knowledge which are largely unquestioned (Barber, 1963; Ritzer, 1972). These attributes shield professionals from competition, justifying their high status and rewards as fair compensation

for the essential services they render to key societal institutions (Halmos, 1971). In functionalism, professional associations are perceived as suitable means which regulate the competence and conduct of members of high calibre who undertake socially beneficial and indispensable tasks.

The interactionist perspective views the profession as an interest group seeking to convince others of the legitimacy of members' claim to professional recognition (Roth, 1974). Unlike functionalism which emphasises the professional expertise and authority of the distinctive attributes of members of the profession, this approach perceives professionalisation as a process of legitimising an occupational role which enables members to "get by" and "make out" in their dealings with clients and colleagues (Abbott, 1988). In interactionism, the professional body functions as a basic organisational instrument which defines and secures the social identity and status of its members. However, the interactionist perspective does not simply consider professional bodies as homogeneous and fully integrated, instead it exposes the existence of rival interests within these professional bodies (Freidson, 1988). Members often form coalitions to pursue their sectional interests in response to opportunities and threats posed by the environment (Bucher and Strauss, 1961). While interactionism acknowledges the political skills of professionals in securing the status of a 'profession', it overlooks the power dynamics that largely determines the success or failure of professionalisation (Saks, 1983; Boreham, 1983). To illustrate power dynamics in professionalisation, a critical approach has emerged within the sociology of professions.

The critical perspective, rooted in the seminal work of Weber and Marx, examines the formation of professional associations within the context of bureau-capitalist society. This approach views the formation of these professional associations as a means to achieve collective social mobility by securing control over niche markets for expert labour (Larson, 1979; Klegon, 1978). It perceives professionalisation as a strategy for controlling the occupation, regulating the supply of professional workers, and ensuring market closure. Researchers influenced by Weber have exposed the strategies adopted by professions, such as controlling entry, examination, education, training, and qualification, to restrict access to both material and symbolic benefits (Child and Fulk, 1982). While doing so, their efforts

are often directed towards gaining state support and legitimation for occupational closure. From this perspective, the socially and materially privileged position of professional workers is secured by virtue of the protection and patronage of an elite segment of society (Freidson, 1988). Thus, professionalisation is a strategy to create a social distance between professionals and their clients, with its success measured by the legitimisation of the profession's claims by this elite segment of society (e.g., state representatives) rather than by claims to possession of professional expertise or contributions to social order.

2.2.2 Professionalisation of Accountancy

The process of accountancy professionalisation has been examined through various lenses in the sociology of professions, notably functionalist, interactionist, and critical lenses. The functionalist view emphasises that the essence of accountancy professionalisation lies in the capability of a PAB to produce competent experts who are committed to serving the public interest (Willmott, 1986). It posits that the possession of specialised, esoteric knowledge enables accounting professionals to competently serve society, which is crucial for broader societal acceptance of the accounting profession (Willmott, 1986). In contrast, the interactionist perspective suggests that PABs function as interest groups, primarily focused on advancing and safeguarding the interests of their members by convincing society of the legitimacy of their claim to professional recognition (Haug and Sussman, 1969; Roth, 1974). According to this view, the accountancy professionalisation is an outcome of “symbolic interactions”, where the accounting profession is expected to be congruent with the desired image of society (Sian, 2006; Willmott, 1986; Yapa, 1999; Walker, 2004; Uche, 2002). Before the 1970s, the literature on the sociology of the accounting profession was largely dominated by functionalist and interactionist approaches. However, in more recent times, the critical perspective has become predominant in the literature on the accountancy profession (Willmott, 1986).

The critical perspective employs Max Weber's notion of ‘closure’ to examine the process of accounting professionalisation in the broader context of power relations. Professional accounting associations strive to achieve closure by

securing legislation that grants them the exclusive right to provide professional accountancy services in niche markets (Sian, 2006;Uche, 2002;Walker, 2004;Willmott, 1986;Yapa, 1999). This strategy of closure is implemented by establishing strict requirements for membership in these professional associations, such as criteria for entry, education, training, and certification (Chua and Poullaos, 1998;Sian, 2007). Thus, the formation of a PAB becomes a central element in the process of accounting professionalisation. PABs pursue market closure by converting expertise and knowledge into economic and social rewards (Power, 1997). The critical approach extends the interactionist perspective by situating the professionalisation process within a broader context of power relations, where the state, public, and other stakeholders legitimise the profession's move towards closure (Larson, 1977). From this critical standpoint, accounting professionalisation is viewed as a collective effort by accountants to achieve social mobility by securing a niche market for their expert labour (Larson, 1977;Klegon, 1978).

The literature on professions identifies several key actors, that influence the accountancy professionalisation project. Particularly, the corporatist framework developed by (Streeck and Schmitter, 1985), and further advanced by authors such as Puxty et al. (1987) and Willmott et al. (1992), has been the most influential. This theoretical framework posits that three key actors, states, markets, and communities both influence and are influenced by professionalisation efforts. A 'principle of order' coordinates and allocates resources among these forces. The state is characterised by 'hierarchical control', with 'bureaucratic agencies' serving as its collective actors (Puxty et al., 1987). In the process of professionalisation, the state plays a crucial role by enacting legislation that grants monopoly rights to professional associations (Abbott, 1988;Willmott, 1986). In contexts where the market system is not well-developed and/or the state is a dominant economic player, the state, as a major client, defines professional services and shapes the development of professions (Krause, 1991). The legislation leads to market closure, allowing members of professional association exercise exclusive rights in providing professional services (Krause, 1991). It also grants these professional associations the sole authority to set standards for membership. In accounting, the literature demonstrates that PABs

employ occupational closure strategies by establishing membership criteria to exclude non-members from providing professional services (Mihret et al., 2012). The influence of the state on professionalisation processes varies across countries. For example, the state has been a central actor in accounting professionalisation processes in Europe (Caramanis, 2002; Ramirez, 2001), whereas it is generally seen as having been more neutral in Anglo-American contexts (Sian, 2006).

Another influential actor in the professionalisation process is the market, which is coordinated by 'dispersed competition', with 'firms' serving as its collective actors (Puxty et al., 1987). The existence of an expanding market for accounting labour inevitably leads to the formation of rival PABs (Willmott, 1986). For example, in the UK, followed by ICAEW, several other PABs, such as the Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors, ACCA, and CIMA were established. In Sri Lanka and Malaysia, British-based global PABs like ACCA and CIMA competed freely with the local PAB and eventually secured a significant share of the market (Yapa, 2006; Susela, 2010). The third key actor, communities, are coordinated by 'spontaneous solidarity', with 'families' acting as their collective entities (Puxty et al., 1987). Historically, the professionalisation of accountancy in the UK was driven by the unreliability of an unregulated, 'free' market for accounting expertise (Willmott, 1986). The emerging UK accounting profession drew heavily on the ideals of community of gentlemanly conduct and public service to justify their monopolistic efforts to restrict the supply of accounting labour (Willmott et al., 1992). These coordinating principles often both contest and support each other. For instance, while the market is considered more suitable than the state for coordinating some products such as, carbon emissions, the effective functioning of the market relies on the state's authority to ensure compliance with contracts and uphold societal values of trust and ethical conduct (Streeck and Schmitter, 1985). In a similar vein, Puxty et al. (1987) argue that the development of accounting profession is shaped by the interplay of the key constituents: state, market, and community.

2.2.3 Key themes in the literature on accountancy profession

The literature on accountancy profession has broadly revolved around four key themes: inter-professional and occupational rivalry, the inter-play between commercialisation and professionalisation, marginalisation, and imperialism and postcolonialism (Cooper and Robson, 2006). Research into inter-professional rivalry and disputes over control of work has been revitalised and extended by the Abbott's seminal work on 'systems of professions' (Abbott, 1988). Abbott's analysis focused on the development of professions through inter-occupational competition, particularly regarding expertise and struggles for market control. His approach opens up new avenues for comparative research, not just on how accounting has evolved in comparison to other professions (Johnson, 1972), but also in relation to other occupations. The exploration of commercialisation and professionalisation gain momentum with Hanlon's research on the role of accountants within the labour process of modern capitalism. Hanlon's work raised the often-neglected questions about the profession as a profit-driven business, adopting its activities depending on the specific form that capital accumulation takes in different places and times (Hanlon, 1994; 1996; 1997). Research on marginalisation within the accounting profession has highlighted groups of accountants who have traditionally been excluded from most studies of the profession. The pioneering work of Loft (1994) and Kirkham and Loft (1993) marked a significant shift by focusing explicitly on non-elite accountants, such as bookkeepers and cost clerks, during the process of professional formation. These scholars, instead of concentrating on 'great men' and prestigious firms and institutions, examined how low-status workers were able to establish their own professional bodies, often by forming alliances with elite accountants and auditors (Cooper and Robson, 2006).

There has been a growing interest in the theme of imperialism and postcolonialism within accountancy profession followed by the influential work of Johnson (Johnson, 1972; Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Most of the studies have examined the influence of British-based global PABs in setting up of PABs in ex-colonies (Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2005; 2006; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010) Other

contemporary studies have examined the influence of international financial institutions such as WB and IMF, as well as transnational standard setters like IFAC and IASB, on accounting PABs in ex-colonies (Arnold and Sikka, 2001; Bakre, 2008; Chand and White, 2007; Chang, 2007; Graham and Annisette, 2012; Mir and Rahaman, 2005; Schiavo-Campo, 2009). These studies have predominantly used the theoretical lens of imperialism, which investigates the domination involved in the centre-periphery relations. This approach rooted in the ‘colonizer’s’ perspective and concerns with “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (Said, 1994, p.9). However, only a few studies have explored the resistance within centre-periphery dynamics in the accountancy profession. For instance, through the lens of postcolonialism, Kaifala et al. (2019) investigated, how Chartered and aspiring accountants in ex-colonies, specifically in Sierra Leone, have constructed a hybrid professional identity through affiliation with a global PAB, the ACCA. Similarly, Thomson and Jones (2016) demonstrated how migrant accountants in Canada have resisted colonial ‘othering’ and reconstructed their professional identity by reproducing the Canadian professional archetype. The present study contributes to this strand of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism by exploring how and why a local PAB in an ex-colony interacts with the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

2.3 Interactions between the global PABs and ex-colonies

This section examines the involvement of the British-based global PABs, which have been the most influential force in shaping the accountancy profession worldwide, in the development of the accountancy profession in ex-colonies since colonialism. It also considers the implication of these interactions for the ex-colonies.

2.3.1 Interactions during colonial era

During the colonial era (from the early 1850s to end of World War II), Scottish and English Chartered bodies such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) and ICAEW, appeared largely uninterested in overseas membership

(Briston and Kedsle, 1997). Instead, their members, along with other British-qualified accountants from the Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors, migrated to serve the accounting needs of the empire (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Initially, these migrant British accountants concentrated themselves in South Africa and Australia, where the economies were booming due to the discovery of gold and diamond (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Gradually, they followed British capital and commerce, providing professional services and staffing commercial hubs throughout the empire. For instance, in India, accountancy was introduced by British merchants accompanied by British Chartered Accountants (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Similarly, the founding members of accountancy bodies in Australia and Canada were primarily British-qualified accountants.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the UK began exporting its accountancy qualifications to its colonies. The dominant presence of the English Institute and the Scottish Chartered bodies in the UK accountancy profession, coupled with their overseas exclusion policies, led second-tier UK PABs, such as ACCA and CIMA, to pursue expansion strategies across the British empire (Briston and Kedsle, 1997). This imperial expansion was driven by a desire to attract members, money, and influence (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). The Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors was the first to export its accountancy qualifications, establishing examination centres in Australia, South Africa, and India during the early twentieth century and maintaining these facilities until its amalgamation with the English Institute in 1957 (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Following the same footpath, the ACCA also began exporting its qualifications. This global expansion was fuelled not only by demand but also by the presence of sufficient administrative and supervisory structures. Since World War II, CIMA (formerly the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants) has also made it possible to take at minimum, part of their examinations overseas (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Consequently, the number of candidates taking examinations in British colonies increased, even after the Society discontinued its examinations. While the English institute and the Society were more influential in exporting personnel, the ACCA and CIMA have led in exporting qualifications (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). The international expansion efforts of CIMA and ACCA have also shifted the focus in British colonies from training for auditing practice to preparing accountants for

roles in government, industry, and commercial sectors (Johnson and Caygill, 1971).

2.3.2 Interactions during post-colonial era

Since the end of World War II, UK PABs have intensified their efforts to establish a global presence. The increasing global aspirations of modern-day PABs are manifested in words such as ‘global’, ‘international’, ‘Worldwide’, which have become key elements of their linguistic repertoire, accompanied by persuasive rhetoric to characterise their activities and status. For example, the ACCA (2021) refers to itself as a leading global body for professional accountants, with 233,000 members and 536,000 students in over 178 countries. With a wide network of 110 offices worldwide, the ACCA asserts its commitment to “the development of a strong global accountancy profession” (ACCA, 2021, p. 3). Similarly, the ICAEW, despite its national linkages in its title, positions itself as a world-leading professional membership organisation, supporting nearly 200,000 Chartered Accountants globally and providing insight and leadership to the global accountancy and finance profession (ICAEW, 2022).

Since the 1960s, the UK PABs have maintained various interactions with the accountancy profession in ex-colonies. These interactions include joint examination partnerships, gaining recognition for their qualification in jurisdictions where it operates, capacity-building projects, MRAs, and global professional alliances (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). Currently, the ACCA has established 14 joint examinations partnerships in ex-colonies such as Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Cambodia, Cyprus, Eswatini, Guyana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Malta, Trinidad and Tobago, Sierra Leone, United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam (ACCA, 2022). Since 1965, ACCA has collaborated with emerging national PABs in these regions to provide globally accepted qualifications that are locally recognised and relevant (ACCA, 2022). Under these arrangements, the ACCA examinations are incorporated into national professional qualifications, allowing students to satisfy the exam criteria for membership of both bodies simultaneously. This arrangement reflects the close ties between ACCA and the accountancy profession in ex-colonies, where a significant percentage of

practitioners were qualified through ACCA during colonial times (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Additionally, ACCA's 'Stakeholder engagement' strategy ensures that its qualification programmes are included in the national qualifications frameworks and ranking systems in the countries where it operates. Currently, such arrangements exist in Pakistan, South Africa, Malta, and the United Arab Emirates (ACCA, 2012).

Similarly, since the 1960s, many UK PABs have engaged in capacity-building projects around the world. For instance, the English Institute has worked with newly emerged PABs in former British colonies through the Overseas Accountancy Examinations Advisory Board to build their capacity to conduct accountancy examinations (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). This initiative was based on the understanding that the country involved would eventually assume full responsibility for the examinations, typically within six or seven years. In the early stages of the project, British examiners engaged in the supervision of examinations and collaborated with local moderators, who would gradually take on the role of examiners in the final years of the project. Several such projects have been implemented, beginning with an 'unofficial' relationship with Ceylon from 1960 to 1967, followed by official agreements with Southern Rhodesia (1962), Malaysia (1963), Ghana (1966), and Nigeria (1968) (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Another instance of capacity-building by global PABs is seen in Singapore, where the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Singapore plans to transform itself into a regional accountancy hub with the support of international PABs operating in Singapore including ACCA, ICAEW, and CIMA (ACCA, 2012).

Additionally, ICAS highlights that a key focus of its international efforts is developing education and examination standards in former colonies, as well as helping to build capacity to strengthen national accountancy institutes (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). Over the past decade, ICAS has undertaken development projects in countries such as Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kenya, New Zealand, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, and Vietnam (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). A strong impetus for such activities is the significant support and funding they receive from the international financial institutions such as the

WB and international policy organisations. According to ICAEW (2012), capacity-building efforts involving ICAEW are typically funded through international development programmes intended to enhance financial transparency, boost business confidence, attract investment, and support economic growth. For countries to secure World Bank funding, it is usually a “prerequisite to have undergone a Report on the Observance of standards and Codes (ROSC) in Accounting and Auditing” (ICAEW, 2012, p. 3). The recently established Audit Quality Monitoring Programme by the Gulf Corporation Council Accounting and Auditing Organisation (GCCAAO) is a further illustration of such engagement between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ professional bodies, with the initiative being an explicit collaboration between the GCCAAO and the ICAEW (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014).

Another contemporary development during neoliberalism is that many UK PABs pursue ‘MRAs’ with PABs in other countries to streamline the process for qualified accountants to become certified in another jurisdiction (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). For instance, the ICAEW offers four routes to membership for members of other PABs: reciprocal agreements, credit for prior learning arrangements, common content arrangements, and the pathways to membership programme (ICAEW, 2022). Reciprocal membership agreements grant mutual membership rights between two accounting bodies. The ICAEW has such arrangement with the ICAS, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ), the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia (ICAA), the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants, and the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (ICAEW, 2022). Credit for prior learning arrangements allow members of other PABs to apply for exemptions from certain modules of another professional accounting qualifications. For example, members of CA Sri Lanka, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh, and Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal are eligible to ICAEW membership upon passing the advanced-level ACA exams of the ICAEW (ICAEW, 2022).

The Common Content Project is an ICAEW initiative in collaboration with premier accountancy bodies in Europe, aimed at developing, maintaining, and unifying

high-quality professional accountancy education benchmarks (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). Members of these common content bodies can apply for ICAEW membership without meeting any further examination or experience requirements (ICAEW, 2022). The pathways to membership scheme allows fully qualified members from certain professional bodies, such as ACCA, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, CA Sri Lanka, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh, and others, to apply for ICAEW membership based on their experience (a minimum of five years) (ICAEW, 2022). Additionally, ICAEW's MRAs involve a review of the qualification systems of participating countries, including those in the European Economic Area and Switzerland. These arrangements not only facilitate cross-border mobility for accounting professionals but also incentivise the alignment of credentialing criteria and practices among the participating bodies.

Similarly, in recent decades, global PABs have formed transnational alliances involving numerous national PABs. The strategic imperatives of such alliances are diverse; some aim to strengthen their position and reap benefits from belonging to a 'global elite', while others seek to provide 'peripheral' bodies with a strong voice in the areas of transnational regulation (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). For example, the Global Accounting Alliance (GAA), established in 2005, represents ten leading PABs from major capital markets. The GAA's mission includes influencing transnational policymaking through regular reviews of the activities and plans of the IFAC and engaging in regular dialogue with IFAC leadership and other key stakeholders of the accounting profession. The GAA strives to guide and influence the profession where practical (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). Similarly, the Chartered Accountants Worldwide describes itself as a body that unites the leading institutes of Chartered Accountants globally. Its mission is to support, develop, and promote the essential role of Chartered Accountants in the global economy and to uphold Chartered Accountancy as the preeminent qualification in accountancy, finance, and business (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014).

These interactions between the UK PABs and PABs in ex-colonies have several implications for the ex-colonies. These implications are discussed below.

2.3.3 Implications for ex-colonies

Following political decolonization, several former colonies pursued an agenda of indigenisation of accountancy by establishing national PABs to serve their emerging economies. However, the prevalence of western accounting practices implanted during the colonial period, coupled with the continued presence of Western public accounting firms and PABs, hindered the evolution of accounting systems to suit local needs and circumstances in former colonies (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2005; 2006; Sian, 2010; Uche, 2010; Yapa, 2010). Among other factors, the presence of UK PABs such as the ACCA was the dominant force in sustaining the western influence on the accountancy profession in former colonies (Annisette, 2000; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010). In the post-independence period, the ACCA's presence in former colonies was consolidated by these countries' preference for global professional models, the need to attract foreign investments, the desire for internationally recognised qualifications and knowledge-creation processes, and disinterest or inability of other British PABs and American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Consequently, ACCA's came to dominate the accountancy profession in many ex-colonies such as Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), Jamaica, Nigeria, and Barbados often through the co-optation of local PABs (Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2005; 2006; Poullaos and Uche, 2012). For instance, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago (ICATT) chose to adopt ACCA's examinations as its own, as a resolution to the problem of educating and certifying prospective accountants in T&T, while openly expressing its unwillingness to localise the professional education of accountants in the country (Annisette, 2000). This failure to localise professional training in countries like T&T, Jamaica, Nigeria, and Barbados led the ACCA to become the most popular professional qualification among local practitioners and the holders of ACCA qualification enjoy high status over their locally qualified counterparts (Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2005; 2006; Poullaos and Uche, 2012).

Additionally, the failure to indigenise professional accountancy has resulted in the uncritical adoption of 'global neo-liberal accounting models' by ex-colonies (Annisette, 2000). This includes the adoption of IFRSs, IFRSs for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), ISA, International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSASs), Integrated Reporting, and the importation and application of global audit consultancy and training methodologies within the local business contexts of these ex-colonies. These discourses and practices were developed presuming the existence of efficient capital markets, investor sophistication, and effective regulatory and legal systems, which are largely absent in ex-colonies (Hopper et al., 2017). Thus, their relevance for local circumstances is highly debatable. Additionally, the uncritical adoption of these international accounting practices perpetuates a system in which the creation, dissemination, and certification of accounting knowledge remain predominantly western which is an integral part of the modern global formation of 'imperialism without empire' (Annisette, 2000). Consequently, the overseas economies are seamlessly integrated into the expanding global economy, which is largely dominated by the United States.

Furthermore, the adoption of global professional curricular in former colonies often reproduces western values, systems, priorities, and limitations of global syllabi while ignoring the issues pertinent to former colonies (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). For example, financial accounting modules of global PABs predominantly focus on 'maximisation of wealth of shareholders, agency relationships, and capital market needs' and lack coverage on critical perspectives such as challenging orthodox accounting practices or acknowledging the social and organisational context of accounting (Sikka et al., 2007). Similarly, auditing modules confines to mere technical matters and hardly discuss the corporate failures and scams, corporate social responsibility, ethics, and philosophies which are vital for prospective accountants to be reflective (Sikka et al., 2007). In management accounting modules of global PABs have not deviated from its traditional emphasis on 'shareholder wealth maximisation' and largely ignore the social consequences that have led to corporate failures (Sikka et al., 2007). Additionally, the global PABs have limited understanding of the unique accounting challenges in former colonies, making their materials unlikely to be relevant to the local circumstances (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Thus, these countries have

failed to produce class of accountants attuned to the specific social and economic realities of their countries (Mihret et al., 2012; Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Instead, the focus has been on producing professionals disciplined to serve the global capital (Annisette, 2000).

Apart from the ACCA, the other most influential global PAB in former colonies is the ICAEW. In the post-independence period, ICAEW qualified members from ex-British colonies, who had a subjugated mindset towards their qualifying body, established local PABs replicating the model of the English institute (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). For instance, in Sri Lanka, until 1977, those seeking an accountancy qualification had to pass their examinations in English, secure an articulated clerkship, pay a premium to their principal, and complete five years of training without a salary (Yapa, 2010). This system effectively meant that the qualification from CA Sri Lanka was accessible primarily to individuals from privileged backgrounds, particularly the children of the British-educated elite with interests in plantation and business (Yapa, 2010).

The replication of Western professional accountancy models in local contexts often fails to meet local priorities and needs. For instance, the nationalist governments of Sri Lanka and Nigeria established local PABs, to train accountants in all areas to serve the nation state development agendas (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). However, the adoption of the English Institute's model, led these local qualifications to focus primarily on auditing practice, neglecting the specialist 'management' and 'public sector' accountancy functions (Wallace and Briston, 1993). Although ex-colonies would benefit from opening opportunities for those with the potential to attain expertise, the reality was closure (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). The high British standards coupled with commercial and social factors, created significant barriers to entering auditing practice. For instance, in Sri Lanka, British training models discouraged entry for those from lower social strata of society including university graduates, while those attempting the CA Sri Lanka examinations modelled on the ICAEW, experienced high failure rates and onerous practice requirements (Yapa, 2010). Accordingly, the chronic shortage of accountants in ex-colonies is not solely a reflection of poverty, poor education facilities, or the inherent difficulty of accounting, but also a result of exclusionary

strategies adopted by local elite accountants (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). When questioned, the local PABs often defend these exclusionary practices by citing the importance of maintaining ‘quality’, a standard derived from outside exemplar; first from agents of formal empire, and later from representatives of informal empire (Poullaos and Uche, 2012).

2.4 Transnational standard setters and ex-colonies

This section examines the involvement of transnational standard setters, specifically IASB and IFAC, another influential force in shaping the accountancy profession worldwide, in the development of the accountancy profession in ex-colonies. It also examines the implications of the interactions between transnational standard setters and the PABs in these regions.

2.4.1 The International Accounting Standards Board

The International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC), predecessor of the IASB, was a voluntary organisation established in 1973 by PABs from ten countries: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, the UK, and the United States. The Northern PABs, inclined towards trusteeship, considered the IASC to be the most suitable entity to govern accountancy by issuing International Accounting Standards (IASs) (Hopper et al., 2017). The primary objective of the IASC was to develop and implement a uniform set of accounting standards aimed at harmonising financial reporting on a global scale (Perera, 2012). Over time, the IASC expanded significantly, growing to include 156 PABs from 114 countries, representing over two million accountants, including those from former colonies (Perera, 2012).

The harmonisation efforts of the IASC developed in three distinct phases. During the first phase, spanning the initial 15 years, the IASC issued 26 generic IASs, many of which allowed for multiple options (Nobes and Parker, 2008). This phase was characterised by the IASC’s adoption of a ‘lowest-common-denominator approach’ aiming to accommodate the diverse accounting practices of various countries (Perera, 2012). However, this approach helped a little to enhance the

comparability of financial statements across countries. The second phase, from 1989 to 1993, saw two major developments. The first was the 1989 publication of the 'Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements' (Nobes and Parker, 2008). The second was the launch of the 'Comparability of Financial Statements Project', which sought to reduce the number of accounting treatment options allowed under IASs (Nobes and Parker, 2008). Consequently, 10 IASs were revised and approved in 1993, with the revisions taking effect in 1995 (Perera, 2012).

The final phase of the IASC's work began in 1993 with the International Organisation of Securities Commission (IOSCO) agreement and concluded with the creation of IASB in 2001 (Nobes and Parker, 2008). During this period, the primary focus was on developing a core set of IASs that would be endorsed by IOSCO for cross-border listing purposes (Perera, 2012). IOSCO, committed to the global standardisation agenda to meet investors' needs had joined the IASC's Consultative Group in 1987 and supported the IASC's Comparability Project (Perera, 2012). In 1995, the IASC and IOSCO agreed on a work programme for the IASC to develop a set of 30 core international standards. IOSCO, in turn, agreed to evaluate these standards for potential endorsement for cross-border security offerings and listings once they were completed. The IASC completed this programme with the publication of IAS 39, *Financial instruments: recognition and measurement*, in December 1998 (Nobes and Parker, 2008). In May 2000, IOSCO's Technical Committee recommended that securities regulators allow foreign issuers to use the IASC's core standards as an alternative to local standards for accessing a country's capital markets (Nobes and Parker, 2008). The Technical Committee included securities regulators from the 14 largest and most developed capital markets, such as Australia, France, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the US. IOSCO's endorsement of IASC standards was a significant milestone in the harmonisation process. Currently, the IASB is responsible for developing IFRSs and promoting their application.

The transition from the IASC to IASB accompanied a shift in focus from accounting harmonisation to accounting convergence (Perera, 2012). The IASB's goal is to bring about convergence of national accounting standards and IFRSs to high-

quality solution. While convergence, like harmonisation, is a gradual process, it differs in that it aims for the global adoption of a single set of accounting standards (Perera, 2012). Convergence seeks to reduce international differences in accounting standards by developing high-quality standards in collaboration with national standard-setters (Nobes and Parker, 2008). Currently, 144 countries, primarily former colonies, require IFRS for all or most companies, while 12 countries permit the use of IFRS for all or most companies (IFRS Foundation, 2018).

However, the structure and the membership of IASB has raised concerns about its legitimacy in setting standards, the constituencies it serves, power asymmetries, and the efficacy of the standards adopted (Cobham and McNair, 2012). The IASB operates as a private entity, with its board members being employees of the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation, which is funded by corporations and some seats are designated for 'Big Four' accounting firms, leading to their overrepresentation (Suddaby et al., 2007). Consequently, the IASB's expertise is heavily influenced by the major accounting firms it oversees (Cobham and McNair, 2012). Most of the IASB trustees are from North America and Europe, and eight of the 14 IASB members are from these regions, while representation from former colonies is minimal (Cobham and McNair, 2012). This has led to criticism that the IASB promotes western accounting practices prevalent in countries like the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to former colonies (Perera, 2012).

2.4.2 The International Federation of Accountants

The IFAC, which sets International Standards on Auditing, is a non-governmental organisation which established in 1977 during the 11th World Congress of Accountants (Perera, 2012). Its creation was led by influential regulators such as the WB, the IOSCO, and the European Commission (EC), who recognised the growing global significance of auditor governance (Perera, 2012). The IFAC represents over 3 million Professional accountants from 180 PABs in 135 countries (IFAC, 2022b). It aims to serve the public interest and strengthen the global accountancy profession by promoting high-quality professional auditing (Perera, 2012). The IFAC claims that its membership is a globally recognised hallmark of a

high-quality PAB, and it demonstrates a PAB's expertise in and commitment to international standards, adherence to best practices, and dedication to serving the public interest (IFAC, 2022b). Recently, IFAC broadened its scope to include the setting of international standards on ethics, accounting education and training, and public sector accounting.

The IFAC requires its member bodies to comply with 'membership obligations', which include the adoption of international standards. The Statements of Membership Obligations (SMOs) set benchmarks for both existing and potential IFAC member bodies, helping them ensure high-quality performance by professional accountants (IFAC, 2022b). The SMOs outline the IFAC member bodies' obligation to: a) support the adoption and implementation of international standards and other pronouncements issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB), International Accounting Education Standards Board (IAESB), International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants, International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board, and International Accounting Standards Board (IASB); and, b) establish effective quality assurance, investigation, and disciplinary systems (IFAC, 2022b).

The IFAC has placed a stronger emphasis than the IASB on public interest, ethics, and the needs of former colonies (Hopper et al., 2017). For instance, in response to criticisms from the WB of their negligence of former colonies, the IFAC organised the International Forum on Accountancy Development (IFAD) in 1999 to enhance transparency and the quality of financial reporting within accounting and auditing profession in former colonies (Perera, 2012). IFAD's membership includes the international financial institutions such as the WB, the IMF, and the Asian Development Bank), other key international organisations like IOSCO, the IASB, and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and the Big Four accountancy firms (Perera, 2012). In May 2000, IFAC established the Forum of Firms in collaboration with Big Four international accounting firms (Hopper et al., 2017). This forum, alongside IFAD, worked to promote the international standards on auditing and financial reporting worldwide to safeguard the interests of global investors and promote international capital flows (Hopper et al., 2017). Additionally, IFAC directed the Professional Accountancy Organisation

Development Committee's plan for 2011-2014 to strengthen the PABs in former colonies (Hopper et al., 2017).

However, changes to IFAC's membership and governance increased the influence of Northern accounting firms and regulators, which has undermined IFAC's commitment to public interest commitment and its global regulatory strategies for auditing and public oversight (Humphrey et al., 2009;Loft et al., 2006). For instance, the re-emergence of self-regulation through modified regulatory partnerships between transnational accounting firms, public oversight boards, and large national PABs has compromised global regulation in bank auditing, diminished the status of auditing, and impaired auditors' ability to address public interest issues effectively (Humphrey et al., 2009).

2.4.3 Implications for ex-colonies

The adoption and implementation of international standards and other pronouncements such as IFRSs and ISA, by PABs in ex-colonies have led to several undesirable consequences. For instance, Syrian accountants have criticised the global and imperialistic nature of IFRSs, arguing that it could jeopardise the Syrian accountancy profession and local employment; they also predicted challenges in adopting and implementing IFRSs without adequate training (Gallhofer et al., 2011). Studies from other regions suggest that while adoption of IFRSs facilitate global capitalism, it has adverse effects on former colonies (Briston, 1978;Perera, 1989). In China, the adoption of fair value accounting did little to advance the public interest or challenge political and economic forces (Zhang et al., 2012). In the South Pacific Islands, limited resources, skills, and connections to capital markets hindered the harmonisation of accounting practices (Chand, 2005). Fiji's adoption of IFRS 9, influenced by multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms, primarily benefited these entities by facilitating the transfer of economic resources rather than improving local relevance and accountability (Chand and White, 2007). In Jamaica, the promise of neutrality and rationality from global Standards obscured the impact of international capital flows (Bakre, 2008). Similarly, upon the pressure from transnational institutions on government and local PAB, Bangladesh adopted IFRSs to attract foreign direct investments, but the

little local involvement led to poor adoption levels and domestic conflicts (Mir and Rahaman, 2005).

Similarly, an examination of 20 IMF and WB Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes in Accounting and Auditing in Africa since 2003 revealed a neglect of local needs, cultural differences, and contextual factors in their Northern-centric prescriptions; further they were found to be overly complex, and primarily addressing the needs of capital markets and businesses while excluding the needs of state and central planners (Andrews, 2013). The failure to accommodate these issues means that IFRSs are merely adopted but not enforced (Fyson, 2012). However, donors such as the WB and the IMF assess accounting progress in former colonies based on the legal adoption of IFRSs and ISA, formal regulatory compliance, the commitment of businesses and accountants on these matters, and the provision of formal accounting education and training (Andrews, 2013;Fyson, 2012).

The IFAC who seeks harmonisation through the adoption of global auditing and corporate governance practices by former colonies are found to be inappropriate, as it presumes the prevalence of efficient capital markets, investor sophistication, effective regulators, and robust legal systems in these countries (Hopper et al., 2017). For instance, in Bangladesh, the predominance of family-owned business, convenient access to bank credits, and lack of skilled auditors contribute to weak compliance with and enforcement of auditing standards (Siddiqui, 2012). Compliance with debt covenants and legitimacy gains are the reasons for the often adoption of auditing standards by former colonies (Baker et al., 2010).

Perera (2012) categorises the issues associated with the adoption of international standards into two main groups: the general convergence issues and specific challenges faced by former colonies. General convergence issues include nationalism and resistance to foreign influence, difficulties in reaching consensus, lack of universal acceptance of the need for such standards, inadequate customisation to meet specific needs of each country, naïve assumption of comparable reports, cost imposed on family-owned indigenous businesses, and cultural differences (Perera, 2012). Specific challenges include difficulties in

exercising professional judgement within a principle-based approach, shortage of qualified and experienced accountants and regulators, absence of a well-established accountancy profession, challenges in aligning standards with national economic planning, insufficient government involvement, and weak legal systems (Perera, 2012).

The lack of technical expertise and power have hindered the ability of former colonies to influence the IASs setting process (Hopper et al., 2017). Calls from the WB and G20 summits (2009 and 2010) for the IASB to make IFRSs more relevant for former colonies, enhance their involvement in standard setting, address SME concerns, and improve access to financial services for the poor have not been fully realised (Hopper et al., 2017). Critics argue that IASB's consultation processes are merely a legitimisation strategy (Botzem, 2014). The IASB has been criticised for neglecting former colonies' issues such as transfer pricing, cross-border invoicing, global consolidation, tax confidentiality, lenient penalties for tax violations, disclosure of offenders, and intra-company trade (Cobham and Mcnair, 2012). Furthermore, UN representatives from former colonies have struggled to use their majority to challenge global accounting harmonisation agendas dominated by minority Northern nations (Rahman, 1998).

Adoption of IFRSs and ISA by the former colonies has been reinforced by IFAC's recent initiative of international standards on professional accounting education. These standards are issued by the IAESB of IFAC, and they pursue the global adoption of these standards (IFAC, 2022b). In fact, IFAC has successfully promoted the global adoption of these international standards on professional accounting education by requiring its member PABs to align their professional curricular with the IAESB's standards (IFAC, 2022b). The rationale behind these IESs is that neoliberal capital markets and global investor transparency will address the public interest needs of society (Loft et al., 2006). However, this one world view embedded in the education standards pronounced by the IAESB has attracted criticisms. For instance, Sikka et al. (2007) argue that accounting education has become a political process that imposes a one worldview, overlooking the diverse cultures, histories, traditions, financial institutions, and social relationships of different countries. In a similar vein, Loft et al. (2006) contend that the

governance structure within which IFAC (and, by extension, the IAESB) standards are developed may not ultimately be suitable or relevant for addressing broader notions of public interest. The Public Interest Activity Committees of IFAC, including the IAESB, are predominantly comprised of experts from the Big Four audit firms with insignificant representation from the Anglo-Saxon countries (Loft et al., 2006). Consequently, these committees, influenced by Anglo-American ideological values, embed a hegemonic logic of globalisation into the IESs, which may not fully serve the diverse needs of public interest.

2.5 Transnational financial institutions and ex-colonies

The expansion efforts of the IASB and IFAC have been facilitated by transnational financial institutions such as the WB, through financing the capacity building projects like adoption of IFRSs and ISA by former colonies (Hopper et al., 2017). This section examines the involvement of transnational financial institutions, specifically the WB, which have been an influential force in shaping the accountancy profession worldwide, in the development of the accountancy profession in ex-colonies. It also examines the implications of the interactions between transnational financial institutions and the PABs in these regions.

2.5.1 The World Bank

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, established in 1944, is the central institution within the larger World Bank Group, often referred to as the 'WB' (Annisette, 2004). The WB Group also includes three other specialised developmental agencies: the International Finance Corporation; the International Development Association, and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. The WB's primary functions include providing loans, guarantees, and technical assistance for development projects in its borrowing countries. The leading industrial countries established the WB, along with its twin, the IMF, with the primary aim of preventing the reemergence of economic crises that had affected capitalist nations during the Second World War (Annisette, 2004). From its inception, the WB was a distinctly a capitalist institution, alongside the IMF,

committed to ensuring capitalist growth and monetary stability in the post-war international capitalist system (Annisette, 2004).

Until 1979, the WB's role in the expansion of the capitalist system into the Third World was negligible. However, since then, the WB began to play a key role with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Loans, where it imposed policy reforms similar to the IMF's conditionalities on borrowing countries (Annisette, 2004). These reforms include reduction of government spending, elimination of subsidies from basic commodities, privatisation of public services, import and export tax removal, elimination of barriers to foreign ownership and repatriation of profits, adjustment of domestic prices, currency devaluations, and increase of interest rates (Annisette, 2004). The ultimate objective was to transform the economies of borrower countries into open and competitive market economies, granting maximum freedom to market forces, a process that often resulted in adverse consequences for the poor (Hopper et al., 2017).

The imposition of this Neo-liberal agenda on the former colonies has also led to significant changes in financial reporting regulations. The WB's International Financial Architecture Framework aims to standardise accounting practices globally by encouraging former colonies to adopt neo-liberal global accounting discourses and practices such as IFRSs, ISA, and IFRSs for SMEs, and public oversight of auditing (Graham and Annisette, 2012). To achieve global standardisation of accounting practices, the WB and IMF rely on the technical expertise of transnational regulation and standard-setting agencies, particularly the IASB and the IFAC, in formulating their general accounting recommendations (Hopper et al., 2017). The WB identifies weak financial governance, crony capitalism, and a lack of transparency as root causes of crises in former colonies (Graham and Annisette, 2012). Consequently, they pressure these countries to adopt international best practices to eradicate these root causes (Hopper et al., 2017). Some, including the US Department of Treasury, argue that harmonising accounting practices will increase global financial integration and extend Northern capital markets to former colonies, while critics highlight the adverse consequences of financialisation of the global economy in the image of western, finance-led capitalism (Graham and Annisette, 2012).

2.5.2 Implications for ex-colonies

In this contemporary neoliberal world, former colonies have increasingly become aid-dependent and are compelled to adopt development policies advocated by transnational financiers, particularly the WB and its affiliates (Hopper et al., 2017). These transnational financiers view many states in former colonies as too big and corrupt, thus constraining rather than facilitating the development. The assumption is that state bureaucracies are inflexible, uncreative, rule-bound, and often corrupt (Hopper et al., 2017). Frustrated with former colonies governments' failure to deliver services to the poor, international financiers turned to market capitalism, inspired by neo-classical economics (Graham and Annisette, 2012). The former colonies were conditioned to adopt one-size fits all policies, such as privatisation, deregulation, open markets, free trade, limited government intervention, attracting private capital, and public sector reforms within SAPs, in securing loans to rectify their fiscal imbalances (Boli and Petrova, 2007; Cook and Kirkpatrick, 1995; Vreeland, 2003). These policies aimed at downsizing the state and creating conditions conducive for international financial capital and global capital markets.

In promoting global financial integration, transnational financiers are committed to standardising accounting practices worldwide and promoting the adoption of neo-liberal global accounting discourses and practices by the governments of former colonies (Hopper et al., 2017). To secure WB funding, former colonies must undergo a ROSC in Accounting and Auditing. These reports often recommend that the governments of former colonies adopt IFRS, IFRS for SMEs, ISA, and public oversight of auditing (Graham and Annisette, 2012). The WB and the IMF rely on Northern PABs, Big Four accounting firms, the IASB, and the IFAC for the technical detail within their general accounting recommendations. While these recommendations may benefit former colonies with weak accounting expertise and institutions, the motives of the northern accounting industry may be neither altruistic nor socially desirable for all (Arnold and Sikka, 2001; Power, 1994).

The WB's pursuit of international harmonisation of accounting poses risks for former colonies. A key concern is the uncritical adoption of neo-liberal global

accounting discourses and practices, which is integral to the modern global formation of 'imperialism without empire' (Annisette, 2000). In practice, the adoption of IFRSs has primarily benefitted international firms, with the anticipated increases in financial transparency and information often failing to materialise (Bakre, 2008; Chand and White, 2007; Mir and Rahaman, 2005). For instance, when Fiji adopted IFRS 9, it was accompanied by promise of improved 'relevance' and 'accountability' by influential multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms. However, the primary beneficiaries were these multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms, who leveraged the standards to transfer economic resources (Chand and White, 2007). Accordingly, this adoption tends to favour Northern accounting firms and multinational corporations at the expense of local accounting firms and businesses.

Additionally, the standardisation of accounting practices is a lucrative endeavour that allows northern PABs to expand their membership and credentials to former colonies (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). For instance, the relationship between ICATT and ACCA was strengthened by the belief within ICATT that as accounting practices become standardised internationally, professional accounting training should also be standardised at an international level (Annisette, 2000). Similarly, these standardisation efforts have created avenues for northern PABs to implement 'capacity-building projects' in former colonies, often financed by the WB. As ICAEW (2012) illustrates, the general approach of its capacity-building projects involves funding under international development programmes aimed at improving financial transparency, increasing business confidence, incentivising investment, and supporting growth. Securing WB funding typically require countries to have undergone a ROSC in Accounting and Auditing. Recently, the ICAEW assisted the GCCAAO in developing a world-class Audit Quality Monitoring Programme and provided advice and support for the creation of a Gulf Monitoring Unit to oversee the application of ISA in each Gulf Corporation Council country (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). These capacity-building projects often channel a significant portion of aid back to donor countries through fees and procurement of technology and equipment from Northern suppliers (Chang, 2007; Schiavo-Campo, 2009). Beyond these official aims of promoting local economic and professional development, these projects arguably allow Northern

PABs to embed themselves within national professional and regulatory circles, thereby extending their influence locally.

2.6 Gap

As previously discussed, the existing literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in the accountancy profession has extensively explored how the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession produce domination within the accountancy profession in former colonies (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2005; 2006; 2010; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010). According to this body of literature, such domination hinders the development of accounting curricular that are grounded in relevant local contexts (Mihret et al., 2012), results in the uncritical adoption of global accounting technologies (Annisette, 2000; Perera, 2012), elevates the status of global qualified members within the local profession (Annisette, 2000; Mihret et al., 2012), and primarily serves the interests of the privileged, such as the Big Four professional firms, multinational corporations, investors, and managers, often at the expense of the broader public interest (Hopper et al., 2017).

Notably, this literature has predominantly analysed the domination of globalisation project of accountancy profession in former colonies through the theoretical lens of imperialism (ibid), which focuses on the power dynamics of centre-periphery relations from the ‘colonizer’s’ perspective. However, the imperialism lens falls short in capturing the resistance/ agency of the ‘colonized’ in the centre-periphery relations. To address this limitation, postcolonialism has emerged as a theoretical perspective that enables a deeper understanding of the resistance/agency of the ‘colonized’ within the centre-periphery relations. Postcolonialism is both a theoretical as well as political position, characterised by active engagement with the economic, material, and cultural conditions that shape the global system in which postcolonial nations must operate (Young, 2016). It challenges the continuing, often subtle, operation of an imperialist system of economic, political, and cultural domination (Young, 2016).

However, despite a few notable studies, the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and the accounting profession in former colonies has been largely unexplored through a postcolonial lens (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017). For instance, Kaifala et al. (2019) used Sierra Leone as a case study to explore how Chartered and aspiring accountants in former colonies have constructed a hybrid professional identity through their affiliation with a global PAB, ACCA. Similarly, Thomson and Jones (2016) demonstrated how migrant accountants in Canada have overcome colonial 'othering' and reconstructed their professional identity by reproducing the Canadian professional archetype. Notably, both studies focused on the micro-level, analysing individual professional accountants (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). Consequently, there is limited understanding of the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and accounting profession in ex-colonies from a macro-institutional perspective. To address this gap, the present study explores the research question: How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? Through this, the study extends the literature by empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing the resistance/agency of CA Sri Lanka in constructing a hybrid identity for the local PAB through its interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

2.7 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, I began with a comprehensive review of the broader literature on sociological perspectives of professions, including its application in accounting profession, and explored key themes in accountancy profession. Before the 1970s, the literature on the sociology of the accounting profession was largely dominated by functionalist and interactionist approaches. However, in more recent times, the critical perspective has become predominant in the literature on the accountancy profession (Willmott, 1986). The literature on the accountancy profession has broadly revolved around four key themes: inter-professional and occupational rivalry, the inter-play between commercialisation and professionalisation, marginalisation, and imperialism and postcolonialism (Cooper

and Robson, 2006). The present study contributes to this strand of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism by exploring how and why a local PAB in an ex-colony interacts with the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

I examined how the global PABs, particularly the UK PABs, interact with PABs in former colonies and the resulting implications. Following this, I discussed the engagement of transnational standard setters and financial institutions with PABs in ex-colonies and the implications of these engagements. These interactions encompass adopting neo-liberal discourses such as IFRSs, ISA, and IESs, maintaining MRAs with global PABs, replicating professional accounting curricular of these global bodies, and implementing capacity building projects with financial support for these initiatives (Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey, 2014). The existing literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in the accountancy profession has extensively explored how the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession produce domination within the accountancy profession in former colonies (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2005; 2006; 2010; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010)

In this context, I identified a knowledge gap that this study aims to address. The literature review revealed that previous studies have failed to articulate the resistance/agency of PABs in ex-colonies as they interact with globalisation project of accountancy profession. To address this gap, the present study explores how and why a local PAB in a former colony engages with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. Consequently, this study extends the literature by empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing the interaction between the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession and CA Sri Lanka. The insights gained from this chapter will be particularly useful for discussing the findings of this study in Chapter 8. The next chapter will review the literature on the interaction between the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies.

CHAPTER 3: BRIDGING GLOBAL ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION AND UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTING EDUCATION IN EX-COLONIES

3.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. In the present day, local accounting degree programmes in ex-colonies extensively interact with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession in the construction of a hybrid identity for their degree programmes (Hopper et al., 2017). These interactions encompass maintaining exemptions and accreditation arrangements with PABs, replicating professional accounting curricular, promoting neo-liberal accounting technologies such as IFRSs/IAS, ISA, and sustainability and integrated reporting, and adopting IESs and textbooks that reinforce a technical skill emphasis in accounting curricular (Hopper et al., 2017; Poullaos and Uche, 2012; Sikka et al., 2007; Watty et al., 2013).

In this chapter, I review the existing literature on the interaction between the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education, with the aim of articulating a knowledge gap addressed through this study. I begin by exploring the concepts of liberal and vocational education in general, followed by an examination of professional and liberal forms of accounting education specifically. I then discuss the interaction between the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies and the implications of these engagements. Finally, I articulate a knowledge gap that this study aims to fill. The insights gathered from this chapter will be particularly helpful for discussing the findings of this study in Chapter 8. The next chapter will address the theoretical framing of this study.

3.2 Liberal and vocational education

Education can broadly be divided into two categories: liberal education and vocational education. At one extreme lies liberal education, which is deeply rooted in the ancient Greek idea of a 'civilised' person (Rothblatt, 1990). Liberal education represents a college or university curriculum intended to impart general knowledge and develop general intellectual capacities, as opposed to a vocational, professional, or technical curriculum (Sangster, 2010). During medieval period, European universities taught seven liberal arts: grammar, rhetoric, and logic (the trivium) and geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy (the quadrivium). In Victorian times, there were three main traditions in liberal education namely the study of classics at Oxford, mathematics at Cambridge, and philosophy at Scottish universities (Sanderson, 1993). In the modern day, liberal arts colleges are more prominent in the United States of America (USA) for bachelor's education and in Europe for secondary school education (Sangster, 2010). In modern colleges and universities, the liberal arts include the study of literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics, and science as the basis of a liberal education. These subjects are studied not for their utility value, rather for their capacity to train the mind and cultivate the intellect (Rothblatt, 1976).

Liberal education is a preparation for life (Entwistle and Waterston, 1988). It is characterised by freedom, morality, impartiality of judgement, intellectuality, understanding, self-knowledge, educational breadth, tolerance, respect for others, and personal development (Barnett, 1988; Duke, 1990; Bagnall, 1991; Wegener, 1978; Dean, 1988). According to Newman (1852), the purpose of liberal education is to "open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, [and] eloquent expression" (p. 148). A liberally cultivated mind has the capacity to follow logical arguments, deduce, induce, draw beliefs from reasoning, and form theoretical standards for critical comparisons (Sanderson, 1993). A mind so cultivated has no need to be justified by subsequent actions, it is a good in itself. In other words, liberal education is self-justifying and an end, emphasising intellectual curiosity and learning for its own sake (Newman, 1852).

Nevertheless, a mind trained in an abstract liberal discipline can flexibly apply itself to any other subject matter (Sanderson, 1993). As Newman (1852) states, it enables a man to fill any post with credit and master any subject with facility. Consequently, educationists advocate that it is extremely beneficial for someone to experience an education of this type before moving on to train for a career of his/her own desire.

The vocational/professional education, which lies at the other extreme of the education, is essential for preparing people for employment (Stokes, 1989). In contrast to liberal education, vocational education is specialist, practical and technical (Wilkinson, 1970), transmitting an exploitable knowledge for market participation (Feinberg, 1983). A predominant method of learning associated with vocational education is apprenticeship, where learning and teaching take place through observations, imitations, and personal correction (Moodie, 2002). This is complemented by imparting knowledge and developing competencies through teaching in classrooms and learning from textbooks. Another key feature of vocational education is competence-based learning and assessments. This approach focuses on training and assessment to meet industry standards rather than comparing an individual's achievement to that of others in a group (Carnegie, 2000). It emphasises what a person can do, not just what they know.

3.2.1 Professional accounting education

The origins of accounting education can be traced back to the fifteenth century, although there is little evidence of its development until the end of eighteenth century (Evans and Paisey, 2018). Early forms of accounting, prior to the emergence of words 'accounting' or 'accountancy' were known as 'reckoning' and often related to merchant's accounts (Evans and Paisey, 2018). Similarly, bookkeeping is considered as the predecessor to accounting education (Parker, 1994). Historians of accounting widely accept Luca Pacioli's instructional treatise on double-entry bookkeeping in 1494, as the earliest known publication on bookkeeping (Sangster, 2015). According to Sangster et al. (2008) it was a manual which guided the small businessman in bookkeeping. Challenging the status quo, Sangster (2015) claims that Marino de Raphaeli's instructional treatise on double-

entry bookkeeping in 1475 is the earliest known publication which provides insights into how double-entry bookkeeping was practiced in Venice in fifteenth century. Later, in 1714 the Roger North extended the application of double-entry bookkeeping to landed estates through his textbook '*The Gentleman Accomptant*' (Parker, 1997). Another historical study on double entry book-keeping, revealed a shift from 'on the job training' to the 'course-based education' with the establishment of Portuguese School of Commerce in Lisbon in 1759 (Rodrigues et al., 2004; 2007; 2016).

Accounting education, being an integral component of the accountancy professionalisation project, gained prominence with the emergence of accounting as a modern profession in the UK during the nineteenth century (Willmott, 1986). The first professional body of accountants, the ICAS, was founded in 1951 through the merger of three predecessor Scottish royal PABs: the Society of Accountants in Edinburgh (1853), Glasgow (1854), and Aberdeen (1867) (Walker, 1991). In the making of professional accountants, accounting education plays a crucial role (Anderson-Gough et al., 1998; Poullaos, 1994; Power, 1994). Arguably, the single most important characteristic of a profession is its education and training programs, which equip members with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver professionalised services. The accountants often assert to their esoteric knowledge, independence, altruism, ethical conduct, commitment to the public interest, and self-discipline to maintain and advance their materially and symbolically privileged status (Abbott, 2014; Macdonald, 1995). These claims for possession of distinctive attributes have empowered accountants to secure niche market for their expertise and influence public policy-making (Sarfatti-Larson, 1977). Therefore, accounting education is central to the accountancy professionalisation.

In the modern day, professional accounting education is globally shaped by the IFAC. The IFAC distinguishes between two phases of professional accounting education: Initial Professional Development (IPD) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (Paisey et al., 2007). IPD assesses professional knowledge through examinations that leads to certification (Hines, 1989). It incorporates Competence-Based Assessment (CBA), a form of assessment which specifies a set

of general and specific outcomes that assessors, students, and other interested parties use to objectively judge students' achievement or non-achievement of these outcomes (Paisey et al., 2007). CBA, originally used in vocational education in the UK, gained prominence in accounting following the publication of the White Paper, *Working Together: Education and Training* (Paisey et al., 2007), which advocated for competence-based education across all occupations, including the professions. In the United States of America, CBA gained prominence following the Accounting Education Change Commission released a list of 55 competencies in 1990. More recently it has been reinforced by the Core Competency Framework issued by the AICPA (Paisey et al., 2007). The rationale behind CBA is that demonstrating competence involves performing tasks effectively rather than merely possessing theoretical knowledge. However, CBA has faced criticism for reducing learning to predetermined outcomes rather than fostering a broader educational perspective (Hussey and Smith, 2002; Mulder et al., 2007; Wolf, 1995).

IPD also involves instilling a professional ideology which enables professionals to exercise their judgement, distinguishing professions from other occupations (Paisey et al., 2007). The exercise of judgement requires knowledge, but PABs hold varying opinions regarding the knowledge base of professionals. These opinions revolve around the core (what a newly qualified accountant should know) and elective (what can be customised to individual preferences and career plans) modules (Paisey et al., 2007). Proponents of core and elective modules argue that this approach offers a broad curriculum by creating space for a wide range of electives, thereby allowing the development of various skills (Paisey et al., 2007). For instance, Chartered Accountants Ireland and ACCA include electives in *Advanced Taxation*, *Advanced Performance Management*, and *Advanced Audit and Assurance*, with ACCA also offering a fourth elective in *Advanced Financial Management*. In contrast, the PABs such as ICAEW maintains that all Chartered Accountants should undergo the same training as this is a tie that binds. In other words, they are committed to preserving the generalist professional. Despite the different approaches to developing professional accountants, most PABs retain the typical multi-stage, all compulsory subject model for professional examinations. Consequently, the majority of accountants continue to be educated in more or less the same manner.

IPD in accounting also incorporates work experience (Roslender and Dyson, 1992; Anderson-Gough et al., 2005; Power, 1991). Work experience is integrated into the IPD to enable accountants to learn by doing (Anderson-Gough et al., 1998). However, work experience requirements vary across PABs. For instance, ICAEW and ICAS require three years of relevant work experience, whereas the AICPA recommends one year but some State Boards of Accountancy in the USA either have no work experience requirement within their specific jurisdiction or permit experience to be gained in a wide range of settings, such as teaching in academia (Paisey et al., 2007). Work experience requirements are often expressed in terms of competence, which inherently needs to be assessed in the workplace (Paisey et al., 2007). The International Accounting Education Standards Board distinguishes between capability and competence. Capability comprises the attributes held by individuals, which enable them to perform their roles, whereas competence reflects an individual's ability to perform a work role to a defined standard within a real-world environment (Paisey et al., 2007). Since the 1990s, competence-based learning and qualifications have been developed and progressively introduced into vocational and professional education and training. The UK's Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) was an early adopter to this approach (Langley, 1995). In 1998, AICPA released the *Core Competency Framework for Entry into the Accounting Profession* as an educational component of its CPA Vision Project (Bolt-Lee and Foster, 2003). ICAS was one of the first PABs in the UK to introduce a competence-based approach in 1999 (Gammie and Joyce, 2009).

IPD serves as a passport into the world of the qualified accountant, with certification acting as a license to practice (Jarvis, 2018). However, the accounting environment is ever evolving, necessitating that accountants remain up to date (Paisey et al., 2007). In this context, CPD has been considered a solution. The CPD stage begins upon the completion of IPD and continues throughout the remainder of the professional accountant's career, and even beyond as long as the accountant continues to undertake accounting-related work post-retirement (Paisey and Paisey, 1996).

Initially, CPD was considered the responsibility of individual accounting practitioners rather than their PABs, and it was not originally a mandatory requirement (Friedman et al., 1999). Instead, it was perceived as an implicit ethical responsibility for accounting practitioner to maintain their competence and knowledge of current developments, enabling them to perform their duties with due care and skill (Paisey and Paisey, 1996). However, this approach left more discretion in the hands of the practitioners over whether they update their knowledge and skills necessary to exercise judgement, which later raised cause for concerns. Gradually, the PABs realised that the legitimacy of the accountancy profession depends on the ability of its members to offer a quality service to its clients and the wider public, thereby ensuring that accounting professionals are competent and capable of being relied upon to provide good quality advice (Paisey et al., 2007). Consequently, the PABs began to assume responsibility for CPD, making it a mandatory requirement since 1980s (Paisey and Paisey, 1996).

Since then, CPD was initially made compulsory for certain categories of members and later evolved to become mandatory for all the members of PABs. For example, in the UK, CPD became compulsory for auditors and insolvency practitioners under legislation introduced in the 1980s (Paisey et al., 2007). IES 7: *Continuing Professional Development* which came into effect from January 2006 (IFAC, 2004), fundamentally altered the nature of CPD by requiring all accountants to undertake CPD irrespective of their area of work. In 2012, IFAC issued a revised version of IES 7, which became effective from 1 January 2014. This version maintained the mandatory position of CPD and reiterated that its purpose is to develop and maintain professional competence, enabling professional accountants to continue performing their roles competently. IFAC (2012) states “CPD provides continuing development of the (a) professional knowledge, (b) professional skills, (c) professional values, ethics, and attitudes, and (d) competence achieved during IPD, refined appropriately for the professional activities and responsibilities of the professional accountant” (P. 4).

However, the IPD and CPD, which predominantly emphasise technical aspects with the aim of producing technocrats, have attracted criticism over time. Two such major criticisms are: first, specialised ears come at the expense of generalised

deafness (Boulding, 1956), and second, it results in trained incapability (Veblen, 2015). An emphasis on detailed technical issues, requiring specialised language, makes it challenging for professionals in different fields of accounting such as audit, tax, and cost accounting to converse meaningfully (Boulding, 1956). Veblen (2015) recognised that the concentrated technical training can produce highly trained practitioners who are incapable of functioning effectively beyond their narrow field of expertise, lacking the broader perspective needed to adapt to changing circumstances. Similarly, several researchers have criticised this narrow focus on technical, rule-based, and standards-compliance training for failing to impart skills, ethics, accountability, transparency, and good corporate governance (Edwards and Shaoul, 1999;Dunn and Sikka, 1999;Mitchell and Sikka, 2002;Cousins et al., 2004;Mitchell and Sikka, 2005). The repeated crisis in capitalism, manifested through corporate collapses, frauds, audit, and accounting failures have pointed the finger at the “poverty of professional accounting education” which encouraged the prospective accountants to acquire knowledge on techniques, rules, regulations, and laws without reflecting on their consequences to the society (Sikka et al., 2007). Consequently, prospective accountants are not informed of the socio-historical context of accounting and the social consequences of accounting techniques. Unfortunately, it appears that the PABs who control the professional accounting education have done little to address these criticisms.

3.2.2 Liberal accounting education

The narrow technical emphasis of accounting curricular leaves accounting education with largely deprived of attention to the wider contextual, social, environmental, ethical, and cultural dimensions of accounting and accountability (Amernic and Craig, 2004;Carmona, 2013;Chabrak and Craig, 2013;Hopper, 2013). To address this, researchers have emphasised the importance of liberal education as a necessary element for any vocational preparation (Dewey, 2015;Sangster, 2010). Traditionally, liberal education has been instrumental in developing higher-order skills such as reflection, critical thinking, thinking out of the box, and lifelong learning (Sangster, 2010). An accounting curriculum with an emphasis on liberal education exposes students to a broader set of perspectives on accounting

and helps them understand accounting within a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context in which it operates (Amernic and Craig, 2004).

The need for liberalising the curriculum has been highlighted by various actors. In 1938, The American Institute of Accountants (Now, AICPA) recommended a 120-hour curriculum, with half focused on accounting (30 per cent) and business (20 per cent), and other half on liberal arts (Sangster, 2010). The Carnegie Report (1986) in the USA recommended that undergraduate degrees across all disciplines should be designed around an 'enriched major' that addresses broader questions (Boyer, 1987). For accounting, this includes: 1. What is the history and what are the traditions of accounting? 2. What are the social and economic implications of accounting? 3. What social and moral issues relating to accounting need to be confronted and resolved? (Boyer, 1987). Zeff (1989) raised the question of liberalism in accounting and pointed out that the accounting textbooks and teaching in the USA often provide a 'tedious catalogue of practice'. He advocated for accounting education to explore, why problems arose, what alternatives were available, and what has been the effect of the chosen official pronouncement. He argued that the breadth of accounting education should be expanded to include subjects such as the history of accounting, non-accounting factors influencing the development of accounting, the impact of accounting on the economy and society, and international factors. These suggestions indicate that a liberalising the accounting curriculum can occur within an accounting context. Breadth can be achieved by studying the boundaries between accounting and other disciplines, such as history, economics, or sociology, rather than replacing accounting study with something completely different.

Similarly, Kimmel (1995) argued that teaching accounting rules without developing students' 'thinking skills' would leave them unable to apply these rules to unstructured problems. He also recognised that teaching 'thinking skills' alone, without developing the student's understanding of accounting rules would be of limited use. Therefore, the liberal education advocates recognise that an accounting education must contain significant coverage of accounting. However, they argue that accounting education should foster a broadly-based understanding of the subject, while allowing the opportunity for the development of wider skills

that will ultimately be of considerable use to the accounting profession. Consequently, they advocate for a balanced curriculum, where accounting knowledge and other skills coexist (Amernic, 1996). Recently, Sangster edited an issue of *Accounting Education* focused on the theme of liberalising accounting education in 2010 (Wilson, 2011).

The literature on liberalising the accounting curricular advocates various approaches to achieve the liberalisation. One approach involves incorporating broader liberal arts subject such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, politics, English literature, and history into the accounting curricular (Amernic and Craig, 2004; Sangster, 2010). Another approach is to structure courses in ways that promotes liberal learning (Willits, 2010). For instance, Amernic and Craig (2014) proposed a pedagogical pathway that integrates liberal approaches to learning, allowing liberal non-accounting subject matter to emerge naturally. Specifically, their pathway encourages students to explore accounting through nine angles of vision proposed by Peshkin (2001) plus two additional lenses. This approach represents a more spontaneous, informal, teacher-led methods of liberalising accounting curricula.

Indeed, varying efforts toward liberalising the accounting curriculum can be found in different parts of the world. For example, in contemporary USA, a 120- or 150-hour accounting curriculum for Certified Public Accountants dedicates 75 per cent to accounting and business topics, while 25 per cent is devoted to liberal arts topics such as written communication, social/behavioural sciences, mathematics, biological/physical sciences, historical perspectives, and arts and humanities (Sangster, 2010). This indicates that the concept of a broad educational foundation upon which the specialisation of accounting is developed is thriving in USA, which has a longer history of university accounting education compared to other English-speaking countries of the world (Wilson, 2011). Similarly, some UK universities have incorporated elements of liberal arts education into their accounting degree curricular. For instance, Keele University offers an elective Year Two module on Accounting and Philosophy, the University of Northampton offers a joint degree in Accounting and Philosophy, and the University of Cardiff offers undergraduate modules in Business History, Economic History, and Japanese History (Hopper,

2013). Additionally, many UK universities offer joint honours degrees combining a foreign language with one of many different business school disciplines, including accounting (Sangster, 2010).

Despite these efforts, most business schools and their accounting departments worldwide remain committed to professional/technical emphasis and ideologies and interests of private capital while neglecting theory, ethics and morality (Sangster, 2010). The literature widely acknowledges that a technical preoccupation in preparing future accounting practitioners is inadequate (Andersen et al., 1989;Pricewaterhousecoopers, 2003). Yet, accounting curriculum continues to maintain a technical orientation (Andersen et al., 1989;Pricewaterhousecoopers, 2003). The Accounting Education Change Commission notes a tendency in the USA towards an excessive concentration on technical preparation at the end of academic degree programmes, which aims to improve candidates' chances of success in professional examinations taken shortly after graduation (Wilson, 2011). This inevitably short-changes students by restricting their opportunities for advanced academic study in favour of a technical emphasis.

In the UK, particularly the teaching universities largely replicate the curricular, pedagogy, and aims of PABs, which reinforce the technical emphasis in accounting education (Hopper, 2013). In fact, in their advertising campaigns, these universities promise students preparation for professional examinations and enhanced employability. For instance, in 2010, the UK government granted the degree awarding powers to BPP University College, a privately-owned, profit seeking corporate provider of accounting training, renowned for coaching accounting trainees to pass professional examinations. BPP University College promises the students who failed to secure a place in established UK universities that 'there's a place for you at BPP', and offers 'practically focused programmes'(Wilson, 2011). This highlights the fact that the BPP's lack of concern for theory and lack of regard for research (Hopper, 2013). This illiberal and blinkered stance of profit-seeking institutions who engaged in preparing the next generation of accounting practitioners raises cause for concern (Wilson, 2011).

Another recent trend in accounting education is that global PABs and professional firms, in collaboration with some universities, have started offering four-year bachelor's degrees which include a year of practical experience for sponsored students (Hopper, 2013). Some universities have extended this collaboration to allow elite students to complete both their degree and professional qualification within six years. For instance, the University of Lancaster, in collaboration with ICAS and Ernst & Young offers a four-year bachelor's degree that exempts students from all but the final stage of ICAS professional qualification (Paisey and Paisey, 2014). Similarly, the University of Newcastle and Henley Business School offer comparable programmes in collaboration with ICAEW and PricewaterhouseCoopers (Paisey and Paisey, 2014). Additionally, the Universities of Bristol, Durham, and Exeter, partnering with ICAS and KPMG, provide six year programmes combining university education, professional training, and work experience targeted for school-leavers, allowing them to obtain a degree and full ICAS qualification (Paisey and Paisey, 2014). These developments eventually reinforce the technical emphasis in accounting education at the expense of a more liberal form of education.

In preparing future accounting practitioners, a technical oriented curriculum may not help practitioners to serve the public interest at its best. Accounting education should not merely develop technical skills acontextually (Carmona, 2013). An overemphasis of technical skills and rote learning does not foster critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills among accounting practitioners (Wilson, 2011) and often leads to a focus on the interests of privileged (Hopper et al., 2004). Prospective accountants would remain uninformed of the socio-historical context of accounting and social consequences of accounting techniques. Without addressing these broader issues, accounting education may continue to remain a "decontextualised technical process". While this would help to build technical expertise in accountants, it is unlikely to produce accountants who can envision socially responsible accounting practices. Therefore, in the making of effective accounting practitioner, accounting education should extend beyond its technical dimension to further its embeddedness within the social world (Carmona, 2013; Chabrak and Craig, 2013). A curriculum that combines professional and

liberal education may be advisable to avoid future scandals like Enron and the demise of Arthur Andersen.

3.3 Reproduction of global discourses and practices in academia

The existing literature on the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education, predominantly revolves around the dominant influence of the globalisation project of accountancy profession (Hopper et al., 2017; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). This influence often manifests in university accounting education through various mechanisms such as the presence of professionally qualified academics within academic institutions, reproduction of professional curriculum, accreditation and exemption arrangements, adoption of IESs, and the use of global textbooks. In this section, I will explore how the globalisation project of accountancy profession exerts its domination over university accounting education in ex-colonies.

3.3.1 Replicating professional curriculum in academia

University accounting education in ex-colonies often reproduces the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, particularly through the presence of professionally qualified academics in academia. These professionals promulgate new rules, structures, and system apparently in the broader social interest, in new spaces such as academia, to their own and the profession's advantage (Suddaby and Viale, 2011). This enables them to shape their own professional agendas, such as confining university accounting education to professional training aimed at producing graduates who unconsciously serve global capital (Hopper, 2013). As exclusive interpreters of these new rules, these professionals reinforce the profession's power and legitimacy (Suddaby and Viale, 2011). These rules and structures are maintained through facilitative efforts, policing, and deterrence (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

A key mechanism professionals employ in maintenance of profession-inspired institution is embedding the institution's normative foundation into daily activities. In profession inspired departments or faculties in universities, this

often involves prioritising technical training at the expense of critical and creative thinking, emphasising *how-to-do* teaching (professional values) rather than *how-to-think* teaching (university values) (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). Often, these universities produce their curricular by mimicking the curricular of PABs. This surrender of key academic function to the profession often results in professional values overshadowing university values in accounting education. Consequently, university accounting education overly emphasises technical skills, rote, rule-based learning, and a heavy focus on the interest of the private capital, while neglecting theories beyond positive economics and agency theory, as well as ethics, morality, and broader, research-informed, fundamental or conceptual accounting issues (Hopper et al., 2004). According to Gray and Mckernan (2000) the recruitment of Chartered Accountants as academics rarely fosters critical, independent reasoning among teachers or students. The absence of critical thinking implies that the universities are not truly educating students but are instead “simply inculcating them into the current conventional ways of accounting practice” (Gray and Mckernan, 2000, p. 10). When technical teaching is embedded and routinised in the daily lives of academics, it ensures that the status quo remains unchallenged.

University accounting curricular that focus merely on technical training would not help academia to accomplish its broader public interest commitments. Universities are meant to impart critical skills and knowledge through enlightened curriculum and innovative pedagogy (Hopper, 2013). While professional training can benefit students and prospective employers, whether such technical skills-based education deserves the status of a university education is questionable. A conservative accounting curriculum socialises students into the existing economic and social order, diverting their attention from public interest (Hopper, 2013). Such curriculum deceives students who seek critical skills development and compromises the university’s mission of creating and diffusing knowledge in the public interest. It simply moulds students to unconsciously serve the interests and ideologies of the privileged, neglecting the interests of marginalised constituencies such as the employees, the environment, civil society, and government (Hopper et al., 2004). These students fall short of critiquing contemporary capitalism and its accounting and accountability systems, thereby

leaving the status quo unchallenged (Hopper, 2013). It is regrettable that prevailing accountability and taxation regimes have emerged from social movements with minimal involvement from accounting academics (Hopper, 2013). Therefore, university accounting curriculum should be designed to enhance students' critical thinking skills, encouraging them to question dominant systems (e.g. capitalism, socialism), and to approach accounting topics within their historical, socio-political, and economic context (Carmona, 2013). This would produce breed of emancipated critical accountants better equipped to serve the public interest.

Another issue with conservative accounting curricular is their reliance on conventional pedagogy and assessments. According to Freire (1996), conventional pedagogy, or the banking approach holds that “the information is deposited into passive students who can, when asked, withdraw that knowledge from their store of information and repeat what was deposited in them” (p. 52). This approach reflects a “paternalistic social action apparatus” (Freire, 1996, p. 55) where the all-knowing teacher controls the education process and educates an ignorant passive student who merely gives back what they have been given. Closed-book examinations, a common assessment method often associated with the banking approach, reinforce this model. Conventional pedagogy neglects critical thinking and aims to preserve both the hidden curriculum and the status quo. According to Illich (1971) “the purpose of the hidden curriculum is to hide from its participants the contradictions between the myth of an egalitarian society and the class-conscious reality it certifies” (p. 402). In accounting, the hidden curriculum makes the arbitrariness of capitalist ideology, and its power structures appear natural, perpetuates taken-for-granted perceptions of reality, and prevents an alternative vision (Hopper, 2013). In other words, the managerial capture of accounting education reinforces the interest of the privileged (shareholders and managers) while neglecting the needs of those subjected to oppressive forces.

Accounting pedagogy should extend beyond teaching technical menus to foster critical and creative thinking skills. It needs to theorise accounting not only through the lens of neo-classical economics but also to examine its ethical and moral foundations and its role in serving the public interest (Hopper et al., 2004).

This requires holistic engagement with students and multidisciplinary analyses of real-world accounting cases illustrating shortcomings of capitalism (Hopper, 2013). A dialogical approach to education is particularly effective for this holistic engagement. It creates an setting where co-investigators congregate, represent, and reflect upon 'problem situations' (Thomson and Bebbington, 2004). This approach aims to dismantle the vertical structures of authority associated with the banking model and foster iterative communication, making co-investigators accountable for mutual learning (Thomson and Bebbington, 2004). As Freire (1996) describes, "Students become critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher, who presents material for the student's consideration and re-examines his/her earlier considerations as the students express their own views" (p. 61). The assessment methods associated with dialogic education are unconventional and may include reflective learning logs, videos, posters, personal learning records, and creative essays. These methods aim to develop student's creative and critical skills.

Another consequence of overemphasising technical teaching is that it compromises the research emphasis in university accounting curricular. The professional accounting syllabi leave no room for research. This attitude is embedded and routinised within universities' accounting departments since the university accounting curricular mimic the professional syllabi (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). Evidence suggests that professionals undermine research. For example, the Chief Operating Officer of South Africa Institute of Chartered Accountants comments that "research is a phenomenon that is negatively impacting the profession, because the research requirement is driving lecturers out of academia; lecturers who would have otherwise stayed on board simply for the gratification they derive from imparting knowledge to future generations" (Wadee, 2009, p. 4). For Chartered Accountants, research is alien and something for which they feel little passion or concern (Wadee, 2009). It is even surprising that the Chartered Accountants in academia embody this view and work towards the goals of their professional body, despite it compromising the traditional university values.

Another institutional mechanism which disincentivises research in contexts such as South Africa is the recruitment of Chartered Accountants without postgraduate qualifications or research output as senior lectures. This affects research in two ways. First, since they are appointed as senior lectures without a research record, they do not feel the need to conduct any research (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). Since they haven't acquired any research skills at a lower academic level or through a PhD programme, they are later ashamed of exposing their inexperience in conducting research (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). In contrast, in context such as Australia and the UK, academics are recruited from practice without any research output, but they are often at the level of tutor or lecturer (Irvine et al., 2010). The presence of professionally qualified accountants with practical exposure has obvious merits. Undeniably, most, if not all, of them are experts in their subject area, and it is always not fair to label them, and their courses are bereft of enlightening content and innovative pedagogy (Hopper, 2013). But unfortunately, this is often the case (Hopper, 2013). This is owing to the lack of schemes and incentives to train them in accounting research, heavy teaching loads leading to inadequate time to undertake Ph.Ds. or research, and late academic entry preventing financial sacrifices infeasible towards this end (Hopper, 2013). Consequently, accounting degrees designed and delivered by professionally qualified staff tend to reproduce the objectives and content of professional curricular.

If one presumes that universities should create and diffuse knowledge, the lack of emphasis on research and theory in accounting curricular is worrisome (Hopper, 2013). Over the last fifty years or so, accounting research has evolved into an interesting social science. It encompasses issues such as novel forms of accountability, ecology, theories like neo-classical economics, industrial sociology, literary theory, and discourse analysis, and empirical scrutiny of practices such as international financial reporting standards, activity-based costing, transfer pricing, and tax evasion and avoidance, and investigation of the role of accounting profession, transnational institutions, and the state (Hopper, 2013). The failure to engage in accounting research and incorporate these materials into curricular compromises not only the ability of the students to debate radical reforms but also their development of skills and knowledge pertinent to professional

accounting (Hopper, 2013). Universities, particularly those funded by public, should act in public interest. Accounting research in this vein identifies constituencies neglected by the profession, criticises the profession for the ignorance of public interest commitment, and extends its vision into the areas such as ecology and development (Hopper et al., 2004). Accounting academics should embrace and contribute to this research vein to fulfil their public interest obligations.

However, some argue that professional influence will bridge the gap between accounting research and practice. This claim presumes that the accounting research fails to meet employers' needs, which is largely questionable (Hopper, 2013). An enlightened university curriculum with more liberal pedagogy is more instrumental in developing higher-order skills than professional training (Sangster, 2010). Currently, the accounting profession recognises the threat posed by university courses such as MBAs to their future student enrolments, yet the PABs fall short in introducing curricular and pedagogical changes to address this. Thus, it would be fascinating if the universities break the shackle of profession and be on their own with the understanding there is lot to be done with respect to university curricular and its pedagogy (Sikka et al., 2007).

A gap between academia and the profession is sensible, as the ends and constituencies of each are not always in coincidence. The contemporary accounting profession primarily serves the interests of 'Big Four' audit firms, multinational corporations, managers, and investors (Hopper et al., 2004). In contrast, universities, particularly those funded by the public, should act in the public interest. In this respect, accounting research has identified constituencies such as employees, communities, and ecology that are neglected by the profession (Hopper et al., 2004). It has questioned the profession's negligence of public interest commitment and has extended the accountability to include ecological and societal concerns (Sikka et al., 2007). These unconventional areas are largely ignored in professional curricular, as they interfere with socialisation of accounting students into worldviews which serve the interest of the privileged, as promoted by professional syllabi (Hopper et al., 2004). If university accounting is

not to be a handmaiden of the profession, it should redefine its boundaries to pursue public interest (Hopper, 2013).

3.3.2 Accreditation practices, education standards, and textbooks

Another contemporary mechanism in which the globalisation project of accountancy profession interacts with university accounting education is through the accreditation and exemption practices of PABs, particularly British PABs such as ACCA and ICAEW. These bodies play a significant role in shaping accounting education in universities in developing economies. This is typically achieved through a mechanism of exemptions granted to university accounting degree programmes from examination requirements of PABs (Kotb et al., 2019). In pursuit of maximum exemptions, accounting scholars are motivated to mimic the curricular of PABs, which reflects the knowledge, expertise, and belief of the PAB members. Accounting degree programmes are thus designed to comply with examination exemptions from as many PABs as possible (Kotb et al., 2019). Universities in Asia and Middle East, in particular, often mimic the curricula of PABs, predominantly ACCA and ICAEW, to secure the highest number of examination exemptions (Kotb et al., 2019). Consequently, university curricular tend to be confined to the narrow interests of professional practice and dominated by PABs (Williams, 1991; Zeff, 1989). In other words, PABs attempt to maintain their symbolic and economic rewards by exerting power over accounting education (Richardson, 1988). Under the traditional British model, the ability of British PABs to produce qualified accountants through professional examinations without an academic degree puts them in a powerful position to influence the production of graduates for the profession (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). This perception creates pressure on universities to adopt the ideology of PABs regarding what should or should not be included in accounting curricular and to pursue a higher number of examination exemptions from PABs to attract students (Duff and Marriott, 2012). Accordingly, PABs, as influential stakeholder with a major stake in the profession, play a hegemonic role in shaping accounting education in universities and maintaining its status quo.

Accounting academics criticise accreditation of degree programmes by PABs as a restrictive force which compromises academic freedom and autonomy (Apostolou and Gammie, 2014; Duff and Marriott, 2012). The constraining nature of accreditation, which influences both the content of curricular and forms of assessment, prevents academics from imparting broader knowledge and skills to their students (Apostolou and Gammie, 2014). Most accounting academic staff perceive accreditation as an obstructive force which discourages academics from developing locally relevant curricular based on their interest, motivations, and skills (Duff and Marriott, 2012). Consequently, accreditation requirements of PABs ideologically influence the academic staff, resulting in a greater emphasis being placed on professional knowledge (practice) in the delivery of the courses at the expenses of students' critical thinking and intellectual rigor (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). Additionally, it results in little emphasis being placed on research (academic knowledge) and research informed teaching (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). This promotes the socialisation of accounting students to the present capitalist economic and social order, leading them to uncritically accept the global neoliberal discourses (e.g., integrated reporting, block chain technology, IFRSs) propagated by the PABs, which may not necessarily be locally relevant (Annisette, 2000; Hopper, 2013).

Similarly, accreditation requirements pose challenges to assessment methods associated with dialogic education. The accreditation processes of PABs often do not recognise assessment modes such as reflective learning logs, creative essays, posters, videos, and personal learning experiences as legitimate modes of assessment, or even do not tolerate if they account for a significant percentage of the marks (Thomson and Bebbington, 2004). Instead, the accreditation requirements insist on closed-book examinations, which hinders the development of creative and critical thinking skills through a dialogic approach to education.

However, it should not be perceived that the accreditation requirements alone prevent the development of enlightened curriculum and dialogical pedagogy. A thorough examination of accreditation requirements would often discover innovative ways of meeting such requirements. For example, some Scottish four-year bachelor's degrees are structured so that all accreditation requirements are

met in the first three years, leaving the fourth year free for more flexible learning. Additionally, some universities create non-accredited classes in years 2 and 3 to accommodate diverse pedagogical approaches (Thomson and Beddington, 2004).

Another criticism of accreditation by PABs is that it impedes the development of a distinct academic identity for university accounting departments. According to Geddes (1998), the role undertaken by an academic arm of a profession under an accreditation arrangement can resemble that of a private tutorial firm. If profession were to dictate the content of accounting degrees, academia might lose its scholarly status (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). To avoid being merely a handmaiden of the profession, academic accounting should redefine and reconstruct its boundaries to better serve the public interest (Hopper, 2013). Academic accounting can establish itself as a distinct discipline through rigorous intellectual research (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). For instance, in the mid-1970s, accounting emerged as a successful academic discipline in England largely because the newly recruited academics with academic qualifications were publishing in scholarly journals and maintaining elite research profiles, surpassing their professionally qualified peers (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). Additionally, these academically qualified staff were less inclined to engage in professional training for accountants compared to their professionally qualified colleagues. They expressed frustration over the hegemonic role of PABs in prescribing course content under accreditation arrangements and pointed out the potential loss of academic dignity if the profession were to dictate what a degree programme should be. They argued that academic accounting should not be “sold into slavery of professional accountancy training” (Weetmen, 1979).

Creating its own distinct identity as an academic discipline allows accounting academics to better serve the public interest while pursuing their academic interests. This sets accounting academics free to undertake research that extend beyond the confines of ‘shareholder wealth maximisation’, despite unappealing to majority of accounting professionals. For instance, accounting research has brought attention to constituents such as employees and communities that are often overlooked by the profession. it has criticised the profession’s neglect of its commitment to the public interest and has fundamentally questioned accounting

discourses and practices such as sustainability development goals and integrated reporting (Hopper, 2013). These deliberations are not accommodated in professional accounting courses because they challenge the conventional knowledge, are unappealing to profitable businesses, and are not immediately applicable (Hopper, 2013). Therefore, if academic accounting were heavily influenced by the profession, the scope of accounting knowledge would be confined to what is acceptable to the profession, discouraging the creation and dissemination of knowledge by universities that is essential for serving the broader public interest (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). Furthermore, this academic freedom fosters competition for intellectual recognition among scholars, encourages the pursuit of competitive research grants, and support the advancement of journals that strive to attract rigorous research and distinguished authors (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007).

The establishment of accounting as a scholarly discipline also accrues benefits to the profession. In some English universities, the top-tier research in accounting has reinforced the status of accounting as an intellectually rigorous discipline. This has elevated the status of the accounting profession to that of a 'learned profession', enabling accounting profession to attract graduates and undergraduates from a wide range of disciplines (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). Consequently, academia can benefit both the academic community and the profession by focusing on the creation and dissemination of academic knowledge (research) aimed at serving the public interest, rather than merely engaging in professional training (practice).

Similar to the accreditation and exemption practices, another contemporary mechanism that reinforces the technical emphasis in accounting curricular and conservative pedagogy is the promotion of IFAC's IESs within academia by the PABs. In Sri Lanka, CA Sri Lanka, the local PAB, claims to actively promote IASs among academics (Watty et al., 2013). While the IFAC states that these IESs are intended for professional accounting education, they have become a significant influence in academic accounting education in developing countries. This influence stems from power of PABs to institutionalise a professional agenda within both the accounting profession and accounting education (Lee, 1995b). The hegemonic

logic embedded in the IESs suggests that neoliberal capital markets and global investor transparency will meet the public interest needs of society. Educators who embrace IESs, whether unconsciously or consciously, engage in the political process of socialising their students into this one worldview, irrespective of the diverse cultures, histories, traditions, financial institutions, and social relationships of different countries (Sikka et al., 2007). Ultimately, this uncritical adoption of professional education standards could result in a confined and mechanistic model of teaching and learning, at the expenses of cultivating higher-order skills such as critical and creative thinking, which are crucial in the contemporary environment (Elliott, 1996).

Additionally, the technical emphasis in academia is reinforced through the widespread use of textbooks that largely reflect this narrow perspective (Hopper et al., 1987; Sikka et al., 2007). These textbooks often gloss over corporate scandals, ethical issues, the socio-economic context of accounting, and theoretical and empirical research, instead serving the ideologies and interests of the privileged (Hopper, 2013). They focus predominantly on the interest of investors and managers of large western conglomerates to the exclusion of public sector, non-governmental organisation, developing countries, civil society, and the environment (Hopper et al., 2004). This leaves accounting education in a historical, theoretical, and moral vacuum, disconnected from contemporary politics, and sanitised from corporate failures and their consequences (Hopper, 2013).

3.4 Gap

As previously discussed, the literature on the interactions between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education has largely focused on how the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession dominate university accounting curricular and pedagogy. This domination hinders the development of enlightened accounting curricular and liberal pedagogy intended to produce a emancipated breed of accountants (Hopper, 2013). Additionally, it tends to confine academic accounting education to mere professional training, emphasising technical skills at the

expense of pursuing the broader public interest and establishing its own identity as a prestigious academic discipline (Hopper et al., 2017). Furthermore, this domination often promotes the interests of privileged, such as Big Four professional firms, multinational corporations, managers, and investors, at the expense of the broader public interest (Hopper, 2013;Hopper et al., 2004;Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). However, these studies have failed to articulate the resistance/agency of university accounting education in ex-colonies as they interact with the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

To address this gap, the present study explores the research question: How does an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? For this exploration, I adopt a postcolonial theoretical perspective, which broadly examines how the colonized react to, engage with, resist, and reconstruct global discourses and practices (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017;Loomba, 2007). This theoretical lens allows for an analysis of the resistance/agency of the accounting degree programme in an ex-colony as it interacts with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Consequently, this study extends the emerging body of literature on the interaction between the accounting profession and university accounting education (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007;Hopper, 2013;Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013) by empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing the resistance/agency of the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree, the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka in constructing a hybrid identity through its interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession .

3.5 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, I first explored the concepts of liberal and vocational education in general, followed by a specific examination of professional and liberal forms of accounting education. A curriculum that combines professional and liberal accounting education helps students understand accounting within a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context in which it operates (Amernic and Craig, 2004). However, previous literature on interaction between the global

accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies reveals that the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession dominate university accounting curricular and pedagogy. This domination often occurs through various mechanisms, such as the presence of professionally qualified academics within academic institutions, the reproduction of professional curricular, accreditation and exemption arrangements, the adoption of IESs, and the use of global textbooks. Consequently, most business schools and their accounting departments in ex-colonies remain committed to professional/technical emphasis in their curricular and pedagogy.

In this context, I identified a knowledge gap that this study aims to fill. The review of existing literature revealed that previous studies have failed to articulate the resistance/agency of university accounting education in ex-colonies as they interact with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. To address this gap, the present study explores how and why an accounting degree programme in a former colony engages with the global accountancy discourses and practices. Consequently, this study extends the emerging body of literature on the interaction between the accounting profession and university accounting education (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007; Hopper, 2013; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013) by highlighting the resistance/agency of an accounting degree programme in a former colony in its interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. The insights gathered from this chapter will be useful for discussing the findings of this study in Chapter 8. The next chapter will address the theoretical framing of this study.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMING OF POSTCOLONIZATION

4.1 Introduction

The present study aims to understand the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. In the contemporary world, university accounting education in ex-colonies increasingly interacts with discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. Previous studies have extensively explored how these global discourses and practices produce domination of university accounting curricular and pedagogy by PABs. For instance, the influence of global PABs impedes the development of enlightened university accounting curricular and liberal pedagogy that can produce accountants attuned to local needs (Hopper, 2013; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013); confines university accounting education in ex-colonies to serve merely the needs of the accounting profession, preventing them from pursuing broader public interest (Hopper et al., 2017; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013); hinders the ability of universities forming an identity as a prestigious academic discipline (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007; Hopper et al., 2017); and promotes exploitation by privileged, such as Big Four professional firms, multinational corporations, managers, and investors. However, these studies have failed to articulate the resistance/agency of university accounting education in ex-colonies in their interactions with the global accountancy discourses and practices. Therefore, the present study aims to understand how and why an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony interacts with these global discourses and practices.

In such context, this chapter presents the theoretical framing of my research questions. This study raises two research questions: (1) How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? (2) How does an accounting degree programme in the same context navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? My literature review revealed that previous studies predominantly

used the theoretical lenses of imperialism and postcolonialism to analyse the global-local interactions within the accounting profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies. Accordingly, in this chapter, I initially discuss the applicability of these two theoretical lenses to my exploration of the ‘postcolonization’ of university accounting education in an ex-colony. Subsequently, I explain the specific theoretical notions I mobilise in theorising ‘postcolonization’. In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the methodology of this study.

4.2 Theoretical lens of imperialism

The theoretical lens of imperialism is a useful framework in analysing the domination involved in centre-periphery relations. Imperialism is an exercise of power by a centre, either through direct conquest (formal imperialism of rule) or through socio-political and economic influence (informal imperialism of influence); both of which involve the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies, resulting in similar form of domination (Young, 2016). This imperialism lens focuses on the colonizer’s perspective and concerns “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (Said, 1994, p. 9). Baumgart et al. (1982) describe imperialism as the expansionist policies adopted by modern industrial nations from the 1880s. Till about 1880, an openly advocated and consciously pursued policy of acquiring colonies for political, economic, and strategic purposes was absent. However, since the 1880s, imperialism has emerged as a dominant and increasingly aggressive policy among European states for a variety of political, economic, and cultural reasons (Young, 2016).

The twentieth-century political economy identifies Lenin’s analysis in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) as the most instrumental economic argument of imperialism (Ashcroft et al., 2006). In his argument, the evolution of capitalism involves the concentration of means of production where few large corporations dominate the market (Lenin, 2015). This leads to the concentration of financial capital controlled by banks to an extent where accumulation of capital exceeds the investment opportunities in the monopolised

economies in the industrialised European nations (Lindsey, 1982). Consequently, the financial capital is invested outward to extract additional surplus. Hence, in addition to the two long-standing motives of capitalist expansion to overseas: new markets and sourcing raw materials, a third motive has emerged: exportation of surplus capital (Lindsey, 1982). This enables capitalist nations to dominate and exploit weaker ones (Lenin, 2015). This whole thesis is based on the influential work of J.A.Hobson, whose disgust with the war in South Africa led to his book *Imperialism* in 1902. He emphasised, when a country enters the capitalist economy, it becomes more challenging for its producers, traders and financiers to profitably dispose their economic resources, thus they persuade government to acquire other territories in order to provide lucrative markets. As production at home exceeds than what can be sold at a profit, and more capital exists than can be invested profitably. “It is this economic condition of affairs that forms the taproot of imperialism” (Hobson, 1902, p. 71).

However, there are several arguments against purely economic views of European imperialism, one such prominent argument was by two well-known historians, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher. They subscribed to the view that the dissolution of the European empires following the World War II, is just the end of a particular phase in the history of imperialism or a particular form of imperialism, but not the imperialism itself (Annisette, 2000). Robinson and Gallagher (1953) define imperialism as “a sufficient political function of the process of integrating new regions into [an] expanding economy” (p. 5). This political function could be served in the formal colonial rule (post-1870 Britain up until the decades of the 1950's and 60's) (formal imperialism of rule) as well as in the informal hegemony (post-World War II USA) (informal imperialism of influence). Consequently, in one form or another, imperialism is not over. An important aspect of Robinson and Gallagher's theorisation of imperialism is the crucial role played by indigenous actors in the operationalisation and maintenance of informal imperialism of influence. According to Robinson (1972) these indigenous actors comprise a diverse group of individuals at different levels within society who were drawn into collaboration due to the creation of European institutions within their societies. As a matter of coincidence of their interest with former colonial and new imperial actors they serve as mediators between Indigenous and European economic and

political systems. They ensure local developments are occurred in a conducive manner to European penetration (Annisette, 2000). This represents a major deviation from traditional conceptualisation of imperialism where all active components of imperialism were considered European (Robinson, 1972).

However, there is a serious omission from inscriptions by economic and political theorists of imperialism that is the civilising mission of European cultural dominance (Ashcroft et al., 2006). There has been a continuous development of imperial rhetoric and imperial representation of the rest of the globe from at least the eighteenth century. “As a continuous practice, this had much more to do with the desire for, and belief in, European cultural dominance—a belief in a superior right to exploit the world’s resources—than pure profit” (Ashcroft et al., 2006, p. 114). According to Said, the imperial rhetoricians after 1880s “deploy a language whose imagery of growth, fertility, and expansion, whose teleological structure of property and identity, whose ideological discrimination between ‘us’ and ‘them’ had already matured elsewhere—in fiction, political science, racial theory, [and] travel writing”(Said, 1993, p. 128). It was this power of imperial discourse, the control of means of representation rather than the means of production confirmed the hegemony of imperialism in the late nineteenth century. Despite the age of ‘classical imperialism’ had ended by 1914, the imperialism had been well equipped to adapt to the changing dynamic of world power and ultimately evolved into globalism, arguably the natural successor of imperialism in the late twentieth century (Ashcroft et al., 2006).

A growing body of literature over the last few decades has used the theoretical lens of imperialism in various fields, including geography (Harvey, 2003), economics (Amin, 2023), literary theory (Said, 1993), sociology (Pieterse, 2004), political science (Panitch and Gindin, 2021), and management organisational studies (Boussebaa, 2015). In a similar vein, over the last couple of decades, accounting scholars have predominantly used the theoretical lens of imperialism to explore the influence of globalisation project of accountancy profession on accounting profession and education in ex-colonies and beyond. Majority of this work is of historical nature, particularly concentrating on the domination of British based global PABs on accountancy profession in ex-colonies during British

colonialism in the late nineteenth century (e.g. Chua and Poullaos, 2002; Johnson and Caygill, 1971), as well as the aftermath of British colonial rule (e.g. Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2006; Caramanis, 2002; Cooper et al., 1998; Dwyer and Roberts, 2004; Kamla et al., 2012). For instance, the ACCA has dominated the accounting professionalisation in T&T and Jamaica through the co-optation of local PABs (Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2006). The ICATT and Institute of Chartered Accountants of Jamaica have opted to adopt ACCA examinations as their own in response to the challenges of education and certification of their prospective accountants. This submerged the government's agenda of indigenising accounting training in these countries (Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2006). These studies demonstrate that the colonial and imperial legacies left in those countries have been instrumental in sustaining the domination of global PABs in accounting professionalisation (ibid).

Meanwhile, several other studies have explored the influence of transnational standard setters and international financial institutions on the accounting profession in ex-colonies (Bakre, 2008; Chand and White, 2007; Gallhofer et al., 2011; Graham and Annisette, 2012; Mir and Rahaman, 2005). For instance, the Syrian accountants perceived IASs as a form of cultural imperialism, emphasising its potential to threaten the Syrian accounting profession and local jobs; they also acknowledged the problems in adopting and implementing IASs without adequate training, resources, and support (Gallhofer et al., 2011). In Bangladesh, pressure from transnational institutions led the government and the local PAB to adopt the IASs to encourage foreign direct investments, but the minimal local involvement resulted in poor adoption levels and domestic conflicts (Mir and Rahaman, 2005). To secure WB funding, ex-colonies require to undergo a ROSC in Accounting and Auditing; these reports recommend the adoption by the governments in ex-colonies of IFRS, IFRS for SMEs, ISA, and public oversight of auditing (Graham and Annisette, 2012). However, the practical effects of adopting IFRSs have not extended beyond multinational corporations and Big Four professional firms (Bakre, 2008; Chand and White, 2007; Mir and Rahaman, 2005).

Accordingly, the previous literature on global-local interactions within the accounting profession and education in ex-colonies has predominantly used theoretical lens of imperialism to articulate the domination of globalisation

project of accountancy profession over the accounting profession in ex-colonies. Hence, it approaches centre-periphery relations in accounting profession and education from the colonizer's point of view, failing to acknowledge the agency of the colonized in these relations. In remedy, the theoretical lens of postcolonialism has emerged, enabling us to appreciate the agency of the colonized in global-local interactions.

4.3 Theoretical lens of postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is both a theoretical and political position characterised, by active intervention in the economic, material, and cultural conditions that govern the global system in which a postcolonial nation must operate (Young, 2016). It offers a political critique of these conditions from the perspective of its victims (colonized) and demonstrates a commitment to social justice (Said, 1994). Therefore, postcolonialism recognises the resistance and agency of the postcolonial world within such conditions. It opposes the ongoing, often hidden, operation of an imperialist system of economic, political, and cultural domination (Young, 2016). However, postcolonialism is not a single, homogeneous ideology rather more diverse and heterogeneous political stances that involve a wide range of positions (Young, 2016). For instance, the political, historical, intellectual, and cultural needs of Nigerian men and women fighting against eco-degradation and exploitation by multinational oil corporations differ from the contemporary needs of Black British activists (Mirza, 1997; Sivanandan, 1982; Young, 1999). Postcolonial theory consists of numerous activities with diverse priorities and positions; thus, it would be a mistake to assume that it possesses a homogeneous theoretical framework, given that it is, in part, characterised by negation of totalising forms (Young, 2016).

In broad, postcolonialism is characterised by theoretical formulations of psychological, culturalist, materialist, and poststructuralist (Mcleod, 2007). Psychology involves the study of both conscious and unconscious mental processes and behaviours. A psychological formulation of postcolonialism studies psychological effects of colonization and/or decolonization on formerly colonized and frequently colonizing people (Ward, 2007). These psychological effects

encompass inferiority and dependency complexes, internalisation of racism, traumatic legacies of colonization, etc. After World War II, a new approach for studying colonization has emerged; several French theorists such as Octave Mannoni, Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon started examining psychological effects of colonization on the colonized and the colonizer (Ward, 2007). The work of Ashis Nandy in the 1980s also deserves acknowledgment here. In his seminal text, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (1983), he examined the effects of colonization on both the colonized and colonizer with reference to the relationship between India and Britain (Nandy, 1983). This was a key concern in the work of aforementioned French theorists as well.

The culturalist formulation is best understood as an exploration of the central role of culture in maintaining imperialist power and postcolonial resistance. The term 'culturalism' was first coined by Richard Johnson in 1979 to connect underlying assumptions of cultural studies by Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson, and Raymond Williams, who are known as founding fathers of cultural studies (Procter, 2007). Specifically, it was adopted to problematise the perceived emphasis of human agency, which tended to underestimate the structuring role of culture. The influential cultural studies by Roland Barthes and Louis Althusser in 1970s, led the emergence of the view that cultural formations such as music, texts, and languages determine what it means to be human in the first place (Procter, 2007). Literary culture was the primary focus of earliest accounts of postcolonialism, as seen in seminal texts like *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin and journals such as *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, and *Kunapipi: Journal of Postcolonial Writing and Culture* (Procter, 2007). However, the recent text like *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001) by Robert J.C. Young and new journals such as *Interventions* assign relatively minor role to literature in order to recover materialist formations that some argue were neglected in early postcolonial studies (Procter, 2007).

The materialist formulation can be simply thought of as analysing cultural texts within its historical contexts. In a complex note, it is the economic, political, cultural, social, and gender issues, the material realities with which texts engages

and which in turn have shaped the text (Murphy, 2007). In this materialist formulation it is necessary to acknowledge the influential work of Karl Marx, the eminent nineteenth century German political and economic theorist. Despite all materialist writers are not Marxists, their work is informed by the Karl Marx's analytical framework of power relations within society (Murphy, 2007). The relationship between the *base* (the underpinning economic structure of a society) and *superstructure* (culture and institutions that depend on the economic structure) is a key Marxist concept which has been widely used in cultural studies. The text forms part of superstructure. It is up to the materialist writers to trace the connection between the individual texts and the wider social, political and economic base. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and its related states and rise of postmodernist thoughts in universities resulted in decline of Marxist modes of analysis (Murphy, 2007). In postmodernism, Marxist thinking have been critiqued in the field of postcolonialism on the grounds of imposition of broad western conceptualisation on non-western societies. The dominant models of analysis in the contemporary literary and cultural studies are now poststructuralist.

The poststructuralist formulation can be thought of as broader questioning of the values of European enlightenment and its claim to universalism (Morton, 2007). It emphasises the fundamental ambiguity of colonial discourses and representations (Murphy, 2007). This conception has been significantly influenced by discursive theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Edward Said whose work was inspired by the poststructuralist ideas of French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault (Boussebaa et al., 2014). These theorists broadly inquire how the colonized react to, engage with, resist, and reconstruct western discourses and practices (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017; Loomba, 2007). They expose how the centre exercises power through false claims to universalism while portraying localisms as backward and in need of reform (Boussebaa et al., 2014). Thus, the poststructuralist formulation of postcolonialism encourages a critical view of such claims, as they ignore cultural and institutional heterogeneity, thereby marginalising local subjectivities and forms of knowledge that do not conform to what is considered to be universal.

An extensive body of literature over the last few decades, has used the poststructuralist angle of postcolonial theory in management and organisational studies (Boussebaa et al., 2014;Fougère and Moulettes, 2012;Frenkel, 2008;Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006;Jack et al., 2011;Mckenna, 2011;Prasad, 2003). However, accounting scholars have scarcely used this lens (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017), particularly in the stranded of research on global-local interactions in accounting profession and education in ex-colonies. Alawattage and Fernando (2017) explored how local managers in Sri Lanka have embraced and appropriated global sustainability discourses, specifically Global Reporting Initiatives, to create a hybrid cultural identity for corporate social and environmental accountability in a post-colonial context. Kaifala et al. (2019) examined how chartered and aspiring accountants in ex-colonies have constructed a hybrid professional identity through the global PAB, ACCA. Similarly, Thomson and Jones (2016) demonstrated how migrant accountants in Canada have overcome the colonial ‘othering’ and regained their professional identity by adopting Canadian professional archetype. Interestingly, these studies concentrate on the micro-individual level, focusing on the experiences of professional accountants and managers (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017;Kaifala et al., 2019;Thomson and Jones, 2016). Furthermore, these studies have predominantly used Homi Bhabha’s notions of ‘mimicry’ (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017;Thomson and Jones, 2016) and ‘hybridity’ (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017;Kaifala et al., 2019).

In this context, the present study extends the application of postcolonial theory in accounting literature, by introducing the Homi Bhabha’s notion of ‘ambivalence’ alongside ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’. It explores the ‘postcolonization’ of university accounting education in an ex-colony, by employing these three concepts to theorise the phenomenon. Drawing from these three notions, I define ‘postcolonization’ as reconstruction of a hybrid identity by the peripheral institutions through the reproduction of global discourses and practices influenced by the enduring ‘ambivalence’ in post-colonial context (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017;Kaifala et al., 2019;Loomba, 2007;Thomson and Jones, 2016). The notion of ‘ambivalence’ is used to theorise how the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka, and the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka

(colonial/post-colonial institutions) perceive global discourses and practices, particularly in terms of their complicity and resistance. The notion of ‘mimicry’ explains how these institutions reproduce global discourses and practices. The notion of ‘hybridity’ captures how and why these institutions pursue a hybrid identity. Accordingly, these three notions broadly illustrate the resistance/agency of colonial/post-colonial institutions in global-local interactions. The next section will elaborate on these three notions in depth.

4.4 Ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity

4.4.1 Ambivalence

The notion of ‘ambivalence’ was first used in psychoanalysis to describe a persistent fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. Young (2005) refers to ambivalence as the simultaneous attraction towards and repulsion from a person, an action, or an object. Later, it was adapted into postcolonial theory by Homi Bhabha, who describes ‘ambivalence’ as a complex mix of complicity and resistance involved in the relationship between colonizer and colonized (Bhabha, 2012). Ambivalence holds that the colonized simultaneously manifest accommodation of, and resistance to, colonial discourses and practices (Kaifala et al., 2019). The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is ambivalent because colonial subjects are never completely opposed to or complicit with the colonizer (Bhabha, 2012). Hence, rather than assuming that some colonised subjects are complicit, and some are resistant, ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance coexist in a fluctuating relation within the colonized (Ashcroft et al., 2003). Ambivalence also illustrates how colonial discourse relates to the colonized in ways that are both exploitative and nurturing, or that represents itself as nurturing, simultaneously (Ashcroft et al., 2003). It is inevitable colonial discourse produces ambivalent subjects instead of compliant subjects who simply reproduce assumptions, habits, and attitudes of colonizer. Thus, the ambivalence disrupts the clearcut authority of colonial discourse and is an undesirable aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer (Ashcroft et al., 2003).

In Bhabha's argument, the colonial discourse is compelled to be ambivalent because the colonizer never really wants colonial subjects to be exact replicas of themselves (Ashcroft et al., 2003). For example, in 1792, Charles Grant was willing to promote the Christianity among Indians, but was concerned that it would make them "turbulent for liberty" (Bhabha, 2012, p. 87). His solution was to blend Christian doctrines with divisive caste practices to produce a 'partial reform' that would result in a superficial imitation of English manners, rather than a genuine transformation. Bhabha suggests that this demonstrates the conflict within imperialism itself, that will undoubtedly cause its own destruction: it is compelled to create an ambivalent situation that will disrupt its assumption of imperial power (Ashcroft et al., 2003). Thus, ambivalence empowers the colonized to the extent that it subverts the colonizer-colonized relationship, thereby disrupting imperial hegemony (Kaifala et al., 2019).

There is a dearth of research in accounting or management literature which has mobilised the notion of 'ambivalence'. Boussebaa et al. (2014) is an exception who have demonstrated the ambivalence in the Englishisation discourse implicated in the call centres in India. They showed how ambivalence continuously frustrates efforts to overcome the language barrier and produce pure English speaking local employees, while simultaneously drawing the 'other' into the Anglosphere's linguistic system by reducing language diversity (Boussebaa et al., 2014). In addressing this theoretical gap of insufficient empirical demonstration of ambivalence, the present study employs this notion to analyse how a local PAB and university accounting education in an ex-colony, perceive discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Given the inherent ambivalence of colonial subjects/institutions, the perceptions of CA Sri Lanka and the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka towards discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession are characterised by a complex mix of resistance and complicity. Thus, the notion of 'ambivalence' is highly relevant to this study in analysing how these colonial/post-colonial institutions in Sri Lanka simultaneously resist and comply with global discourses and practices.

4.4.2 Mimicry

According to Bhabha (2012) “mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable, other as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (p. 122). The ‘centre’ presents itself as the bearer of universality and seeks to transform the ‘periphery’ in its own image, yet at the same time maintains difference, economically and culturally - doing otherwise would in effect delegitimise and bring to an end the social structures perpetuating core-periphery divisions (Boussebaa et al., 2014). In this context, the ‘periphery’, itself a site of much cultural diversity that can never be fully absorbed into the ‘centre’, is led to ‘mimic’ rather than replicate ‘universals’. Thus, mimicry is the “process by which the colonial subject is reproduced as “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 2012, p. 86). The notion of mimicry has a double articulation. On the one hand, it is “an elusive and effective strategy of the colonizer to force periphery to emulate western models, which implies a certain cultural convergence between the two and an effort to make the unfamiliar familiar” (Bhabha, 2012, pp. 85-86). On the other hand, it “emerges as the representation of a difference” (Bhabha, 2012, p. 86). Hence, the discourse of mimicry revolves around ‘ambivalence’, which suggests that effective mimicry should produce its slippage, its excess, and its difference (Bhabha, 2012). Consequently, mimicry constructs the colonized as a partial copy of the colonizer, leading to the creation of a new cultural identity: the postcolonial hybrid (Young, 2016).

British historian and politician, Thomas Macaulay’s *Infamous minute* (1835) is a classic text which explains the construction of the colonized as a partial presence of the colonizer. By introducing European education in India, Macaulay attempted to form a class of persons who were Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, morals, and intellect; in other words, mimic men who could serve as translators and be employed in various departments of labour (Bhabha, 2012). However, the unintended consequence of this postcolonial writing is ‘ambivalence’, which poses a threat to colonial authority. Thus, the menace of postcolonial writing does not emerge necessarily from direct opposition to colonial discourse but from the disruption of colonial authority through mimicry, which could potentially evolve into mockery (Ashcroft et al., 2003). The colonial subjects

are ‘appropriate’ objects of colonial authority; simultaneously, they are inappropriate because their behaviour could be beyond the colonial chain of command, disturbing the normality of dominant discourse (Ashcroft et al., 2003). Hence, the threat inherent in mimicry does not stem from the explicit resistance but from the colonial identity of almost the same but not quite (Bhabha, 2012).

The application of the notion of ‘mimicry’ in the strand of research on imperialism and postcolonialism within the accountancy profession and accounting education is scarce. Thomson and Jones (2016) have used this notion in analysing how the migrant accountants in Canada have overcome the colonial ‘othering’ and reconstructed their professional identity through the mimicry of the Canadian professional archetype. Additionally, Poullaos and Uche (2012) have showed how the accountancy profession in ex-British colonies has developed into hybrid form through mimicry of British-based professional models mingled with individual country specificities. I extend these efforts by analysing how and why a local PAB and an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony reproduce the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

The notion of ‘mimicry’ is highly relevant to this study, as the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka, and the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka have consistently reproduced the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession from their inception to the present. For instance, the local PAB replicates professional model of ICAEW, operates in English, adopts discourses such as IFRSs, ISA, and IESs, maintains MRAs with ACCA, ICAEW, CPA Australia and Other global PABs, and replicates the curricular of these global PABs (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024; Yapa, 2006; 2010). Similarly, this local degree programme follows professional model of PABs, operates in English, maintains exemption and accreditation arrangements with PABs, and replicates curricular of these PABs (Fonseka et al., 2019). Thus, the notion of ‘mimicry’ is particularly useful in analysing how and why these colonial/post-colonial institutions in Sri Lanka replicate the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

4.4.3 Hybridity

The notion of hybridity has been simply articulated as mingling of separate and discrete cultures in other theoretical contexts (Frenkel, 2008;Hutnyk, 2005;Smith, 2004;Young, 2016). However, from a postcolonial perspective, hybridity is everything that challenges and undermines colonial hegemony (Lomba, 2007). Thus, it recognises the agency of the colonized in constituting their hybrid identity (Nandy, 1983). The notion of hybridity is fundamental in analysing postcolonial resistance to imperial domination (Bhabha, 2012). This resistance continually threatens the purity of universals and frustrates the centre's ability to reform the periphery (Boussebaa et al., 2014;Frenkel, 2008). The colonized often draw from the global discourses and practices, interpret them through their own lenses, and juxtapose them with local ideas and practices to reconstruct their cultural identity, thereby challenging imperial hegemony (Lomba, 2007). In doing so, they also implicitly unsettle and undermine the colonizer's cultural authority (Werbner, 2001;Yousfi, 2014). The colonizer tends to position their discourses and practices as ideal 'models' for the colonized; establishing their identity as economically, socially, and environmentally responsible, technically exceptional, uncorrupted, and productive for the rest of the world (Banerjee, 2011;Banerjee and Prasad, 2008). However, the colonized juxtapose these superior models with local ideas and practices to reconstruct their own cultural identity. Thus, in a postcolonial setting, the colonizer's identity is shaped by how the colonized reconstruct and reinterpret it for their own appreciation, appropriation, and reimagining of the self (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017).

This new cultural identity is constructed in what Bhabha calls 'third space' (Bhabha, 2012). This third space is an ambivalent and contradictory one that destabilises established social structures such as centre-periphery relations and cultural purity (Kalua, 2009). In this space, a new cultural identity is formed that is neither one nor the other, as it differs from the established norms of both competing cultures (Kaifala et al., 2019). Thus, this postcolonial hybrid identity emerges through a process of symbolic interaction between competing identities (Bhabha, 2012). In this third space of cultural enunciation, the postcolonial hybrid cannot lay claim to any cultures, as none of them feels like home (Bressler, 2004).

In this sense, hybridity distorts the cultural authority of the colonizer and colonized (Kaifala et al., 2019).

The application of the notion of ‘hybridity’ in the strand of research on imperialism and postcolonialism within accountancy profession and accounting education is limited. Kaifala et al. (2019) have used this notion to analyse how Chartered and aspiring accountants in Sierra Leone have constructed a hybrid professional identity through the global PAB, ACCA. Poullaos and Uche (2012) also showed how the PABs in ex-British colonies have developed into hybrid forms through mimicry of British-based professional models mingled with individual country-specific elements. I extend these efforts by analysing why a local PAB and an academic degree programme in an ex-colony pursue a hybrid identity, having reproduced discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession.

The notion of ‘hybridity’ is highly relevant to this study, as the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka, and the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka have consistently pursued a hybrid identity by replicating discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, from their inception to the present. Drawing on global discourses and practices such as the replication of professional model of ICAEW, adoption of IFRSs, ISA, and IESs, MRAs with global PABs, and replication of curricular of global PABs, the local professional body has pursued a hybrid identity from its inception. Similarly, the local degree programme, through its replication of the professional model of global PABs, use of English as the medium of instructions, exemption and accreditation arrangements with PABs, and replication of professional curricular, has attempted to form a hybrid identity for its degree programme from the inception. Thus, the notion of ‘hybridity’ is particularly useful in analysing why these colonial/post-colonial institutions in Sri Lanka pursue a hybrid identity by replicating the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

4.5 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the theoretical framing of my research questions. I began by discussing the theoretical lenses of imperialism and postcolonialism, which are predominantly used in the strand of literature on global-local interactions in the accounting profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies. The theoretical lens of imperialism, which examines global-local relations in the accounting profession and education from the colonizer's point of view, has failed to acknowledge the agency/resistance of the colonized in these relations. To address this, the theoretical lens of postcolonialism has emerged, enabling us to appreciate the agency of the colonized in global-local interactions.

This study has chosen the theoretical lens of postcolonialism, as it allows for an articulation of the agency/resistance of the accounting profession and university accounting education in an ex-colony in its interactions with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. In this articulation, more specifically, I have adopted the postcolonial notions of 'ambivalence', 'mimicry', and 'hybridity'. The notion of 'ambivalence' captures the perceptions of CA Sri Lanka and the B.Sc. accounting (Hons.) degree programme in Sri Lanka towards discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, which are characterised by simultaneous accommodation and resistance. The notion of 'mimicry' explores how and why these colonial/post-colonial institutions replicate the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Finally, the notion of 'hybridity' theorises how the local PAB and the first accounting degree programme have formed a hybrid identity for their respective institutions. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The present study explores the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex- colony. In this context, this chapter elaborates on the methodology used to explore the two research questions of this study: (1) How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? (2) How does an accounting degree programme in the same context navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? First, I will elaborate on my pre-understanding of the reality which I seek to uncover through this study. This shapes my philosophical position and informs the data collection methods, the execution of fieldwork, and the data analysis for this study. Second, I will discuss my philosophical position, the rigour of research conducted, and the methods of data collection. Third, I will explain the procedures followed during the fieldwork. Finally, I will detail the data analysis process. The next two chapters will present the analysis of this study.

5.2 Pre-understanding of reality

Pre-understanding of reality underlies all research. The notion of pre-understanding suggests that knowledge is never developed from ground zero; rather, it is always built on some form of prior understanding (Fehér, 2015;Palmer, 2004). Many qualitative researchers acknowledge that they capitalise on pre-understanding in their research work (Aspers and Corte, 2019;Mills, 1970;Strauss, 1987;Suddaby, 2006), primarily because “the researcher is the instrument of research” in interpretive research (Maxwell, 2012, p. 91). Hence, one can productively mobilise this pre-understanding throughout the research process, particularly in stimulating imagination, generating ideas, broadening the empirical base, and evaluating what empirical materials and theoretical notions

are interesting and relevant (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2022). Consequently, I perceive my pre-understanding as a positive input in carrying out this study. When I embarked on my PhD, as an academic attached to the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka, I had significant prior non-academic knowledge of the phenomena under investigation through my everyday participation in the empirical sites and the society. Additionally, I had considerable prior academic knowledge of the phenomena, particularly through my exposure into critical literature. In this section, I elaborate on my pre-understanding of the reality which I seek to uncover through this study.

From my everyday participation in the DA, I perceive that the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree replicates the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. These encompass maintaining exemptions and accreditation arrangements with PABs, replicating professional models, including accounting curricular and practical training, and promoting neo-liberal accounting technologies such as IFRSs/IASs, ISA, and sustainability and integrated reporting. In replicating these global discourses and practices, the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka, often acts as an intermediary. In striving for a hybrid identity, this degree programme often reproduces these global discourses and practices, as adopted by the local PAB. Consequently, to fully comprehend how and why the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree engages with global discourses and practices, it is essential to understand the interaction between CA Sri Lanka and the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Therefore, I take CA Sri Lanka, the premier national PAB in Sri Lanka, as a case study for this qualitative enquiry. Accordingly, in this section I will first elaborate on my pre-understanding of the interaction between CA Sri Lanka and the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

Based on my extensive engagement with CA Sri Lanka and my readings on accountancy profession, it is evident that CA Sri Lanka replicates the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession in constructing a hybrid identity for the local institute. For instance, the CA Sri Lanka was established in 1959 replicating the model of ICAEW and its qualification is predominantly offered in English. This mimicry of the model of English Institute has led the local qualification to emphasise auditing practice while neglecting the

specialist management and public sector accountancy functions within the country (Wallace and Briston, 1993). In recent years, CA Sri Lanka has adopted global standards such as IESs in 2010, IFRSs/IASs and ISA in 2012, and Sustainability standards in 2024. Additionally, CA Sri Lanka has entered into reciprocal arrangements with global PABs such as ICAEW, ACCA, and CPA Australia, creating a formal commitment to reproduce curricular of these global bodies (World Bank, 2015). Through the replication of these global discourses and practices, the local PAB has predominantly served the interest of Big Four professional firms and multinational corporations, to the exclusion of SME sector and public sector of the country (Hopper et al., 2017). With the aim of more actively and systematically bringing forward my pre-understanding of this reality, the present study raises the first research question: How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the post-colonial ambivalence as they pursue a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession?

In exploring the interactions between the university accounting education in Sri Lanka and globalisation project of accountancy profession, I focus on my own academic department, the DA at USJ, which introduced the first accounting degree programme in the country as a case study. From my everyday participation in the DA, I observe that the global discourses and practices adopted by the DA are manifested in various aspect of its degree programme, including the aim of the degree programme, curriculum and pedagogy, market positioning, and academic recruitment policies. Since the inception of the degree programme in 1992, its aim has been producing employable graduates for global economy, which resembles that PABs operate in the local context. In this pursuit, the model of this degree programme which consists of four-year curriculum with two years of practical training, closely resembles that of a PAB. This curriculum heavily emphasises the technical skills and rote, rule-based learning at the expense of theory other than positive economics and agency theory, ethics and morality, and broader research-informed, fundamental or conceptual accounting issues (Hopper et al., 2004); this resulted in excessive focus on private capital, particularly the interests of Big Four professional firms and multinational corporations, to the exclusion of other constituencies such as public sector, non-government organisations, and grassroots level communities (Hopper et al., 2017). For instance,

over 90% of the students in this degree programme undergo internship in Big Four professional firms and multinational companies operating in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the content of this curriculum is largely dictated by the exemption and accreditation arrangements with PABs particularly ACCA, CPA Australia, and CA Sri Lanka. In pursuit of maximum number of exemptions from these PABs, the department goes to the extent of introducing specific courses, such as ‘Advanced Auditing and Assurance Services’ and ‘Advanced Taxation and Tax Planning’, which are mandated by PABs as prerequisites to qualify for their exemptions.

The two-year internship programme is one of the distinguishing features of this degree programme. The primary reason students choose this degree programme is the opportunity for this extensive internship experience. Additionally, support for their professional examinations, such as adopting a curriculum similar to that of PABs and securing exemptions from PABs is highly appreciated by the students. The department prominently highlights these features when promoting the degree programme to advanced level commerce students in the country. Out of roughly 1,200 students admitted to the business school annually, over 40% students apply for B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree as the first preference (Fonseka et al., 2019). Furthermore, in the recruitment and promotion of academics of this department, possessing a professional accounting qualification is an implicit criterion. Individuals with a professional accounting qualification are often favoured over those with an academic qualification, such as a PhD in the recruitment and promotions. In bringing forward this pre-understanding more deliberately, the present study raises the second research question: How does an accounting degree programme in the same context, navigate the post-colonial ambivalence as they pursue a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession?

5.3 Philosophical and methodological position

A social researcher should be reflexive of the “assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it is investigated” as these assumptions shape the approach to a particular social reality, whether explicitly or implicitly (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 1). These assumptions encompass ontological

(nature of reality), epistemological (nature of knowledge), human nature (relationship between human beings and their environment), and methodological (ways to investigate and obtain knowledge) dimensions, collectively known as philosophy of science. According to Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2017), there are three overarching philosophies of science in the realm of research: positivism, social constructionism, and neorealism. Positivism has been the dominant philosophy of science since its beginning in the nineteenth century through to the twentieth century. It is an interpretation of science which holds “science is ultimately intended to systematise data of our experience” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2017, p. 21). Positivism posits that reality is observable, and data exists (it is already there), and the researcher’s task is to gather and systematise them. In contrast, social constructionism views reality as socially constructed (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2017). Therefore, the task of the researcher is to explore how the social phenomenon/phenomena is/are socially constructed. Social constructionists question the existence of purely rational and objective knowledge, arguing instead that knowledge arises from processes related to ideology, interests, or power (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2017). Neorealism, on the other hand, criticises both positivism and social constructionism as being too superficial, unrealistic, and anthropocentric. Neorealism asserts that the world exists independently of human being and emphasises the existence of deep structures and mechanisms in this world that can be understood through scientific theories, which are central to this perspective (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2017). The present study aligns itself with the perspective of social constructionism. The following table (see Table 5.1) elaborates on the philosophy of science in social constructionism, particularly as it applies to management and organisational studies.

Table 5.1: Philosophy of Science in Social constructionism

Dimensions	Characteristics
Ontology	Socially constructed realities, emerging, objectified, and sometimes contested in the routines and improvisations of people. Context is human action and interpretation. Social reality relative to interactions between people in moments of time and space. Relationally embedded. Social community. Reality as symbolic and linguistic meanings and interpretations. Contextualised in a social site. Discursive realities constructed by discursive and nondiscursive practices and systems. Contested and fragmented. Reality as process: interrelated actions, elements, structures, and systems. Generalisable or context dependent.
Epistemology	Pragmatic or syntagmatic: common sense knowledge – naturally occurring actions, interactions, conversations. Mundane activities. Pragmatic knowing: in-situ, knowing-from-within. Transitory understandings and ‘withness’ thinking (Shotter, 2008). Non-replicable knowledge, situated validity. Macro- and micro-level focus. Research as embedded and embodied.
Human nature	Humans as intentional and reflexive subjects, constructors, and enactors of social realities within linguistic conventions or routines. Storytellers. Humans as intersubjective, embodied, relational, and reflexively embedded. Actors, interpreters, sense makers. Choosing linguistic resources, managing impressions. Humans as subjectivities, products of discourse, contested and conflicted discursive sites.

Dimensions	Characteristics
Methodology	Ethnomethodology, existential phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology. Constructionism and constructivism. Inductive, relational constructionism, dialogism. Aesthetics, symbolic interactionism, syntagmatic or pragmatic. Detached or involved researcher. Interpretive procedures.

Source: Adapted from Cunliffe, 2011, pp.8-9

The present study explores the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. Reflecting on my research issue in light of characteristics laid out in the above Table 5.1, I acknowledge my philosophical position in this study, in ontological terms, is that reality is socially constructed, subjective, and multiple, and that people are intentional and reflexive actors (Trautrim et al., 2012). In this study, I seek a culturally situated understanding relative to a particular context, time, and group of people; or in other words a historically, and socially situated experience of cultural members (Cunliffe, 2011). Grounded on this ontology, my epistemological position is interpretive, where “multiple realities are experienced, constructed and interpreted in many ways” (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 10). Accordingly, my research accounts offer a contextualised understanding of a social reality which is subjectively situated relative to my own and cultural members’ embedded experience (Cunliffe, 2011). Despite this social reality being constructed in a particular context, as subjectivist researchers acknowledge, I hold that this contextualised understanding offers relevant insights to other contexts, particularly ex-colonies in my case (Trautrim et al., 2012).

Grounded in this subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, I acknowledge that my methodological position is qualitative (Trautrim et al., 2012). Additionally, my review of prior literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession and accounting education revealed that scholars addressing similar research questions have also employed qualitative methodologies (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Baker et al., 2010; Caramanis, 2002; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010). Consequently, I employ various qualitative data collection

methods, including semi-structured interviews, documentary reviews, and self-reflections, to capture culturally situated meanings and I perform a narrative analysis to construct a comprehensive, contextualised understanding of social reality (Cunliffe, 2011;Trautrim et al., 2012). In qualitative methodology, the researcher is considered an instrument of the research process (Bryne, 2001). Thus, rather than seeking to eliminate the researcher's presence, it is essential to critically reflect on the impact of the researchers' positionality throughout the research process, as this shapes and validates knowledge construction and determination (Finlay, 2002;Hopkins, 2007). Based on my ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions, I will now reflect on their impact on the research process as follows.

As I elaborated earlier in the pre-understanding section, I am an academic attached to the DA, one of the empirical sites of this study. I designed this research to deeply explore a subjective everyday reality I have experienced over the past decade in academia. Through this study, I aim to determine whether the reality I experienced is necessarily a reality experienced by other members of DA (my fellow academics, graduates, and undergraduates) or not. Hence in relation to DA, this study offers a contextualised understanding of a social reality experienced by members of DA including myself. This reality is subjectively formed through textual and verbal interpretations of members of DA and my self-reflections. In exploring postcolonization in academia, I understood the need to engage with members of CA Sri Lanka, my other empirical site. Although, I possess certain knowledge, as detailed in the pre-understanding section, I am largely an outsider in this context. Therefore, in relation to CA Sri Lanka, I subjectively constructed a social reality experienced by its members (existing and past governing council members including presidents, committee members, education providers, current and prospective Chartered Accountants). This reality was subjectively formed through textual and verbal interpretations of members of CA Sri Lanka, and my secondary interpretations of them.

5.4 Rigour of research

From an interpretive perspective, rigour involves telling an authentic and plausible story (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993). This study ensures research rigour in several ways. Scholars in the broader discipline of sociology of knowledge assert that rigour is achieved by maintaining consistency appropriate to a particular research paradigm (Trautrimis et al., 2012). This study maintains consistency in data collection, analysis, and theorisation in alignment with subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology (Cunliffe, 2011). Some researchers argue that rigour can be achieved through methodological triangulation (Mangan et al., 2004). This study employed a variety of data collection methods including semi-structured interviews, documentary reviews, and self-reflections which enhance the authenticity (genuine and unquestionable), credibility (free from error and distortion), representativeness (typical of its kind), and meaning (clear and comprehensible) of data (Scott, 2014). According to Lukka and Modell (2010), rigour in interpretive research can be achieved through thick descriptions and an emic understanding of the meanings embedded in the life-worlds of the people being studied. Additionally, rigour is supported through abduction, where the researcher constructs theoretically informed explanations based on empirical knowledge (Lukka and Modell, 2010). This study offers a rich, contextually sensitive, emic understanding of the social phenomenon under scrutiny and advances this empirical knowledge through a plausible, theoretically informed etic explanation.

5.5 Methods of data collection

In producing credible knowledge about the social reality under scrutiny, this study employed a variety of data collection methods, including semi structured and intersubjective interviews, documentary reviews, and self-reflections. Guided by a subjective ontology and interpretive epistemology, semi structured interviews were used to explore diverse meanings, perceptions, and interpretations of cultural members (Cunliffe, 2011). Additionally, my pre-understanding of the social reality under scrutiny facilitated intersubjective interviews with members

of DA, where participants collaboratively reflected on issues and shared insights (Boje, 1991; Cunliffe, 2002).

Several scholars have highlighted the benefits of using interviews as a data collection method in qualitative research. For instance, Interviews “allow investigator to better understand how people view the world and the meanings they attach to what takes place therein” (Dai et al., 2019, p. 36); they “make more coherent sense of what is going on inside the black box of organisational processes” (Parker, 2012, p. 68); “offer nuanced interpretations of phenomena” (Lapsley, 2012), “draw out richer analysis and interpretation of our empirical observations” (Burns, 2014, p. 75); and help “understand the social and historical context in which events and actions occur” (Irvine and Gaffikin, 2006).

The present study aims to explore the postcolonization of university accounting education in Sri Lanka. The semi-structured interviews with members of DA and CA Sri Lanka enabled an understanding of the complex mix of resistance and complicity towards the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession in the historical evolution of these two institutions. Additionally, these interviews provided insights into how and why these discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession have been replicated, and how the members perceive the identity of their respective local institutions and the rationale behind such identities.

In addition to interviews, this study employed documentary reviews as a data collection method. Documentary review has been a principal tool for classical sociologist such as Marx, Webber, and Durkheim (Scott, 2014). In a broader sense, documents are the traces left by human thoughts and actions, which allow us to understand the past (Langlois et al., 2019). More specifically, a document is a linguistic instrument with a deliberate purpose, intended either to form the basis of or to assist the activities of an individual, organisation, or community (Webb and Webb, 1975). These documents can be public, private, or personal; this study used both public and private documents (Mogalakwe, 2006). The advantage of review of documents over other data collection methods is its ability to provide information about the past, which is generally inaccessible through interviews and

observations (Scott, 2014). Documents can be seen as objective residues of the past, not deliberately produced for the benefit of the researcher (Scott, 2014). Therefore, engaging with such documents enhances the credibility to the research.

This study examines the historical evolution of CA Sri Lanka (established in 1959) and DA (established in 1991) from their inception to present day. Engaging with documents was instrumental in obtaining a richer understanding of the historical details of these two institutions. During interviews, some members of these institutions could not recall specific historical details, but they referred me to documents where I could locate the piece of information I was interested in. Additionally, some historical information in the documents pertaining to these institutions was not captured during interviews. Thus, this documentary review complemented the interview data. Furthermore, it reinforced the credibility of the analysis by confirming the participants' verbal interpretations.

This study also incorporates an element of autoethnography. Autoethnography is a research method where the researcher draws on his/her own experience to extend understanding of a particular phenomenon (Wall, 2006). In this method, the researcher assumes the role of an insider, actively engaging in all facets of the processes under observation, description, and analysis (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010; Parker, 2017). As I mentioned previously in the section of pre-understanding, being a member of DA, I could produce deep and rich understanding of the social phenomenon under scrutiny through self-reflections on my decade-long experience with DA. Although there is an emphasis on 'I' in autoethnographic approach, the enquiry is rather a sociological analysis than a self-indulgent account (Haynes, 2017). This is because, the experience of the researcher emerges through interactions with other cultural members in the field (Zou, 2021). Thus, the researcher functions as both a subject and an object of the research enquiry (Haynes, 2017).

Several scholars argue that the autoethnography as a data collection method accrues significant benefits to qualitative research. For instance, autoethnography is considered more authentic than conventional research

methods, because voice of an insider is more true than that of an outsider (Reed-Danahay, 2021). Additionally, auto ethnographers can provide a rich, detailed description of culturally relevant personal experiences, making these cultural experiences more engaging for the audience (Ellis et al., 2011). Furthermore, autoethnography allows researchers to explore subject areas that are not easily and profoundly captured by other methods of data collection, enabling them to delve deeper into their own experience “in ways that may not be possible if they were being interviewed by someone else” (Ngunjiri et al., 2010, p. 8).

The use of autoethnography as a data collection method enriched this study in several ways. First, I possessed a nuanced understanding of practices of DA, evolution of the academic programme over a decade, and my complicity and resistance towards discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, and identity of the academic degree programme. I mobilised this nuanced understanding to create a detailed and insightful account of social phenomenon under investigation through self-reflections. Second, autoethnography facilitated interviews with members of DA in an intersubjective manner, allowing for collaborative reflections between myself and my academic colleagues, which provided valuable insights into the phenomenon under scrutiny. Third, being an insider, I was able to verify the credibility of both textual and verbal interpretations made by the cultural members of DA.

5.6 Empirical sites

This study addresses two research questions, each involving a distinct empirical site. To explore the first research question: How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? I choose CA Sri Lanka, the premier national PAB in Sri Lanka as the empirical site.

Just a decade after Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948, the nationalist government that came to power in 1956 established CA Sri Lanka. The government enacted Act of Parliament No.23 of 1959, which empowered CA Sri

Lanka to set standards for membership in the accounting profession and maintain a register of qualified accountants and auditors (Yapa, 2010). The formation of CA Sri Lanka resembles the experience of most ex-British colonies, where a small elite of British qualified local accountants established a national professional body, replicating the model of ICAEW (Yapa, 2006). The inaugural governing council of CA Sri Lanka, led by Mr. Weerasinghe (the first Sri Lankan Auditor General post-independence), was exclusively composed of ten prominent local accountants who were ICAEW qualified and came from high-status families involved in business, public practice, public sector, and professional education (Nesaratnam, 1999). Despite their local origins, these individuals were influenced by British values, taste, opinions, and lifestyles (Boussebaa et al., 2014).

From its inception, CA Sri Lanka was keen on preserving the British standards within the local institution by replicating practices of the English Institute. Similar to the English institute, CA Sri Lanka placed a strong emphasis on public practice. Indeed, the local institute enjoys monopoly over auditing practice in Sri Lanka (Yapa, 2006). By adopting the ICAEW model, CA Sri Lanka established its own professional curriculum and examinations; candidates were required to pass these examinations and complete a five-year period of practical training as articled clerks under the supervision of Chartered Accountants (known as principals) to gain membership as 'Chartered Accountants' (Yapa, 2010). From 1960 to 1967, CA Sri Lanka engaged with the Overseas Accountancy Examinations Advisory Board of ICAEW to design its curriculum and examinations (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Later, following recommendations from the 'Committee on the Future Training of Accountants' in Sri Lanka, CA Sri Lanka renamed its training scheme from 'articles' to 'practical training' and shortened the duration of training in the curriculum introduced in 1976 (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). However, this reduction in training duration was nothing more than directly following a similar change made earlier by the ICAEW (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). Consequently, despite Chartered Accountants being trained locally, the curriculum, examinations, and training adopted for producing such accountants closely resembled those of ICAEW (Briston, 1978; Yapa, 2000).

CA Sri Lanka's adherence to British standards effectively served as closure strategies that benefited the elite social group represented by the founders of CA Sri Lanka. For instance, until 1976, the examinations of CA Sri Lanka were exclusively conducted in English, and those who pursued the qualification had to secure an articulated clerkship, often paying a premium to their principals for training (Yapa, 2010). However, conducting examinations exclusively in English resulted in only a few ultimately qualifying as professional accountants, despite large number of students enrolled each year (Yapa, 2006). From 1959 to 1977, the average failure rate in CA Sri Lanka's examinations was around 80 per cent (Yapa, 2010). Additionally, the articulated clerk system faced criticisms, particularly from local graduates who could not afford the premium for training (Yapa, 2006). Consequently, these closure strategies marginalised individuals from poorer rural areas who completed their secondary education in native languages (Sinhala and Tamil) and local graduates who were not proficient in English language and/or could not afford the premium for training (Yapa, 2010).

Following the liberalisation of Sri Lanka's economy in 1977, CA Sri Lanka expanded its engagements beyond ICAEW. They began collaborating with transnational standard setters like IASB and IFAC, transnational financiers such as WB and IMF, and other global PABs including ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia. The liberalisation of the economy attracted many multinational corporations and global professional firms to Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017). In response, CA Sri Lanka embarked on a mission to facilitate the local operations of these multinational companies and professional firms. To this end, CA Sri Lanka became a member of both the IASC (later IASB) and IFAC in 1978. Currently, CA Sri Lanka establishes both the initial professional development and continuing professional development requisites for Chartered Accountants. It sets accounting, auditing, and public-sector accounting standards as well as ethical guidelines for Chartered Accountants. Additionally, it operates an investigative and disciplinary system for its students and members in compliance with the requirements of IFAC (IFAC, 2022a). The CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs/IASs and ISA and permitted the use of IFRSs for SMEs starting 1 January 2012. This was the outcome of a convergence project initiated by CA Sri Lanka in 2009, based on recommendations from the WB. This initiative has enormously benefitted the multinational corporations, global investors, global professional firms, and

global PABs. For instance, as of December 2013, 84% of public listed companies in Sri Lanka, representing 98% of the market capitalisation, were audited by the Big Four audit firms: KPMG, E & Y, PwC, and Deloitte (Yapa et al., 2017). In parallel with the adoption of IFRSs and ISA, the global qualifications such as those offered by ACCA and ICAEW have increasingly become relevant in the local context. However, this adoption of global standards has also imposed significant costs on local business organisations and professional firms in terms of training and education, IT and infrastructure development, and compliance.

In addition to its engagement with transnational standard setters and transnational financiers, CA Sri Lanka has recently begun collaborating with global PABs through MRAs. Currently, CA Sri Lanka has MRAs with ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). These arrangements have significantly benefited local accountants seeking global mobility. By the end of 2023, CA Sri Lanka has produced over 7,000 members, with more than 40% of them working overseas across 42 countries (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). Additionally, there are over 30,000 aspiring professional accountants, with the majority aiming overseas employment (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). However, these MRAs require CA Sri Lanka to align its curriculum with that of global PABs. This alignment means that the local curriculum may reproduce the western values, systems, and priorities (Mihret et al., 2012). Consequently, the local institute has been producing a class of local accountants tailored to serve the global capital, at the expense of relevant local knowledge (Mihret et al., 2012).

Another concurrent development by CA Sri Lanka has been its involvement in university accounting education. To this end, CA Sri Lanka launched its academic programme, B.Sc. Applied Accounting (General/Special) degree in 2013 (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). The primary objective of this degree programme is to enable Chartered Accountants to earn a degree, offering a substantial number of exemptions for their CA qualification. However, the programme is not restricted to Chartered Accountants; it is also open for candidates who have secured a minimum pass in their G.C.E. Advanced Level in any stream, as well as those who have completed or partially completed

professional or vocational qualifications (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). Moreover, in 2020, CA Sri Lanka made another initiative, offering exemption schemes for accounting and finance degrees from local universities (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). This initiative aims to encourage graduates to enter the profession. This is an interesting development, as it enriches the accounting profession in Sri Lanka by integrating both academically and professionally qualified individuals. However, the exemption schemes could also be served as obstructive force which has the capacity to confine the university curricular for the narrow interest of professional practice, potentially preventing academia from imparting broader knowledge and skills to students (Apostolou and Gammie, 2014).

To explore the second research question: How does an accounting degree programme in the same context navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? I choose ‘the preeminent Accounting Department within the university system in Sri Lanka’, the DA at USJ which introduced the country’s first accounting degree programme in 1991 (Fonseka et al., 2019). The B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree is a four-year programme designed to cover the theoretical and practical Knowledge required for a professional in accounting (Fonseka et al., 2019). From its inception, the aim of this degree programme has been ‘producing employable graduates for global economy’. Consequently, the founders adopted a curriculum emphasising technical skills that closely resemble the curriculum of CA Sri Lanka (Ukwatte and Yapa, 2013). This degree programme is built on four key pillars; English-medium instructions, two-year of practical training in accounting and finance, IT as a core component, and business communication skills to produce accounting graduates comparable to those produced by PABs (Gunarathne et al., 2019). Additionally, the department claims to follow an outcome-based education model to meet the needs of the accounting profession (Gunarathne et al., 2019).

From its inception, the DA has maintained a close relationship with PABs. In fact, PABs has been instrumental in the development and maintenance of this degree programme. The presence of Chartered Accountants in academia led the

establishment of the first accounting degree programme in the Sri Lankan university system. The co-founders of this degree programme are locally qualified Chartered Accountants (Fonseka et al., 2019). In their pursuit of ‘producing employable graduates’, they replicated the professional model of CA Sri Lanka within academia. This model has proven successful over the years, with DA securing 100% employability for its graduates (Gunarathne et al., 2019). Additionally, the DA heavily relies on professionally qualified academics for the delivery of its degree programme, with over 70% of the staff currently holding professional qualifications (Department of Accounting, 2024a).

The replication of the professional model has enabled this degree programme to secure the highest number of exemptions/accreditation from both global PABs such as ACCA, CIMA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia as well as the local PAB CA Sri Lanka (Gunarathne et al., 2019). The degree programme initially secured exemptions from CIMA in 2000; overtime, this relationship evolved to the extent that graduates with a first-class degree from DA only needed to sit the strategic level case study to qualify with CIMA, starting from 2015 (Fonseka et al., 2019). Similarly, the department entered into an agreement with ACCA in 2013, exempting its graduates from 9 out of 14 (currently 9 out of 13) modules of ACCA (Fonseka et al., 2019). Additionally, the CPA Australia has accredited this degree programme for the first time in 2016. More recently, the department in collaboration with CA Sri Lanka, entered into an agreement with ICAEW, allowing graduates to sit just 2 papers of the strategic level of CA Sri Lanka qualification and advanced level of ICAEW (2 papers and case study) to qualify with ICAEW (Department of Accounting, 2024b). Furthermore, in 2020, CA Sri Lanka offered an exemption scheme to DA graduates, exempting them from all levels except strategic level of its qualification (Department of Accounting, 2024b).

The replication of professional model, including technical curriculum and two-year practical training), along with exemption arrangements with PABs, have made this degree programme the most sought-after among students who sit for the GCE AL in the commerce stream in Sri Lanka (Fonseka et al., 2019). The department currently has an annual intake of roughly 200 students, selected based on the highest Grade Point Average in the AL exams on a district basis. By the time the

department celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2017, it had produced 3,518 graduates (Fonseka et al., 2019).

Despite the numerous benefits realised through the replication of professional model in academia, there have been several undesirable consequences. First, this has led the professional values (how-to-do-teaching) dominating the university accounting curriculum, compromising academic values (how-to-think accounting) that should also be institutionalised in university accounting education (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). For instance, research had not been an integral component of this degree programme until it was recently prescribed by the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF). In conformity with SLQF guidelines, a compulsory research project in accounting was introduced as a credit course through curriculum revision in 2015 (Fonseka et al., 2019). Additionally, there were no dedicated courses for developing critical thinking skills, other than Advanced Accounting Theory, which provides only a glimpse of critical flavour to students (Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, 2024a). Thus, the DA remains committed to excessively inculcating technical skills and rote, rule-based learning with a heavy emphasis on private capital interest while neglecting skills such as critical thinking, creativity, research and reflection, theory other than positive economics and agency theory, ethics and morality and broader research-informed, fundamental or conceptual accounting issues (Hopper et al., 2004).

5.7 Fieldwork

5.7.1 Ethical clearance

I started working on the ethical clearance for this study in July 2022. Initially, I spent a month familiarising myself with the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee at the CoSS, University of Glasgow. I referred to several documents related to non-clinical research involving human participants/data, including the 'Post Graduate Research (PGR) Students' Application Form for Ethical Approval', 'Participant Information Sheet Templates', 'Privacy Notice Templates', 'Consent Form Templates', 'Data Protection Impact Assessment Template', and 'Data Management Plan Template'. I then began working on these documents facilitated

by the guidance on CoSS ethical approval process for PGR students, available through the Research Ethics-CoSS website. Additionally, I benefitted from an optional PGR course, Qualitative Research Methods, which I followed during my first year of Ph.D. study. This course exposed me to the principles and practices of ethics in research.

This ethical clearance process allowed me to deeply reflect on several key aspects, including data collection methods and their justifications, obtaining permission to access participants, securing informed consent, ensuring the confidentiality of personal and research data in terms of storage, access, retention, and disposal, addressing potential distress caused to participants, and adhering to legal requirements such as the age of legal capacity, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This study involves collecting data through online interviews with members of DA and CA Sri Lanka, complemented by documentary reviews pertaining to these two entities and self-reflections on my experience with DA. Prior to data collection, securing access to these two empirical sites was an ethical requirement. Therefore, I officially requested permission from the head of DA and the President of CA Sri Lanka to interview their members and review allowable documents. They considered my request favourably and granted me access in February 2023. My current employment with DA and my various official engagement with CA Sri Lanka were significant factors in this outcome.

This ethical approval process highlighted the importance of ‘informed consent’ and ‘confidentiality’ as critical elements in research involving human participants. In this regard, prior to interviews with members from the two empirical sites, I emailed each participant a ‘participant information sheet’, clearly outlining the study’s purpose, the use of personal and research data, and the measures in place to ensure confidentiality regarding storage, access, retention, and disposal of research and personal data. Having created this awareness, I obtained written informed consent from each participant via a consent form sent by email before their interview. To maintain data confidentiality, I implemented several measures: participants are referred to by pseudonym in the thesis, access to personal and research data stored in ‘Microsoft Teams’ space provided to PGR students by

University of Glasgow is restricted to myself and my research supervisors, and the retention and disposal of personal and research data are conducted in compliance with University of Glasgow research guidelines.

Additionally, this process prompted me to consider potential distress to participants and how to address it. My familiarity with the empirical sites and participants, combined with my prior experience in conducting qualitative interviews, helped me conduct the fieldwork with minimal distress to participants. This ethical approval process also made me more aware of the relevant legislation with which I must comply in conducting this research. In this context, all participants of this study were between the ages of 21 and 70 and were competent to provide written consent. I also ensured compliance with requirements of GDPR. Having drafted the ethical documents, I sought feedback from my supervisors, made revisions upon their feedback, and submitted the final version to the Research Ethics Committee at CoSS, University of Glasgow in March 2023. I secured ethical approval for my project in May 2023.

5.7.2 Collection of data

Having obtained ethical approval from the university in May 2023, I began my fieldwork in July 2023. Prior to starting my fieldwork, I developed two comprehensive fieldwork plans (see appendices 1 and 2) for each of the two empirical sites: DA, USJ and CA Sri Lanka. These plans guided me throughout the fieldwork and included detailed reflections on the study's purpose, required data, data collection methods, participants, the time frame, and duration. The development of these plans was informed by my exposure to literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession and accounting education and postcolonial theory, particularly postcolonial notions of 'ambivalence', 'mimicry', and 'hybridity'. Additionally, I was heavily benefited from my pre-understanding on the social reality under investigation. By the time, I embarked on my PhD, I spent 13 years as both a student (4 years) and an academic (9 years) in DA, USJ. Since starting my academic career in 2013, I had also been deeply engaged with CA Sri Lanka in various capacities, including as a participant in their workshops, an academic contributor to their bachelor's degree

programme, a member of integrated reports evaluation panel, and a presenter at their annual research conference. I also actively sought feedback from my supervisors at various stages of developing these fieldwork plans. These factors were crucial in shaping the comprehensive development of the plans. However, this was not a one-off activity, instead I continuously updated the fieldwork plans as the fieldwork progressed until January 2024.

Alongside the fieldwork plans, I developed question guides tailored to each category of participants at the empirical sites. There were three categories of participants from DA: academics, graduates, and undergraduates. Considering the perceived differences among participants, I developed two distinct question guides: one for academics another for graduates and undergraduates (refer to appendix 3). These guides were further adjusted based on specific differences among participants. For instance, I interviewed DA undergraduates in their second, third, and final years, and academics with varying levels of experience, adjusting the questions to suit these different contexts. Similarly, in CA Sri Lanka, there were three broader categories of participants: governing council members (both former and existing), committee members (both former and existing), and professional education providers. Accordingly, I customised the question guide (see appendix 4) for each of these groups. Throughout the development of these question guides, I actively sought feedback from my supervisors at various stages. Similar to the fieldwork plans, the development of these question guides was an iterative process. I continuously refined and improved the guides based on the insights and experiences gained during the interviews.

I conducted semi-structured interviews for this study online using the Zoom platform for several reasons. First, as previously elaborated, my extensive exposure to both the empirical sites provided me with sufficient contextual understanding, eliminating the need for physical presence to gain a feel of the field. Second, my established relationships with accounting academics and accounting professionals at these empirical sites allowed me to conveniently connect with them virtually. Indeed, they preferred online interviews over physical meetings as it offered them the flexibility to connect with me at a time and location convenient for them. Third, some key research participants including

notable academics, distinguished graduates, and key professionals, were dispersed across various regions, including the US, the UK, Middle East, and Australia, during my fieldwork period. Lastly, during my fieldwork, Sri Lanka was experiencing the worst economic crisis in its history, leading to shortages of basic supplies such as medicine, fuel, and electricity. Conducting interviews physically in Sri Lanka during this period would have been significantly challenging. These factors collectively compelled me to choose online interviews as the preferred method of data collection.

I initiated the online interview process by emailing the research participants requesting a preferred date and time for an online interview. In these emails, I attached the consent form, participant information sheet, privacy notice (in compliance with ethical requirements of University of Glasgow), and an interview guide. Upon receiving their confirmation of the date and time, along with the signed consent form, I proceeded to conduct the interviews. In total, I conducted 55 online interviews for this study, including 40 interviews with participants from DA. These comprised 18 academics, 14 graduates, and 8 undergraduates (see below Table 5.2 for details). Some of these interviews with members of DA were carried out intersubjectively, as my pre-understanding of the context allowed me to bring my experience into the discussion. All interviews were video recorded with the participants' consent and conducted in English, based on their preference. To ease into the interview process, I began with my academic colleagues. Initially, I completed 10 interviews with academics of varying experience levels, including Professors, Senior Lecturers, and Lectures. Next, I interviewed 6 graduates and 4 undergraduates. I then continued with the remaining 8 academics, 8 graduates and 4 undergraduates as they became available. After each interview, I produced a brief note highlighting the key points and my reflection on the discussion.

Table 5.2: Summary of interview and participants details (DA)

Category	Interviewee	No.	Time Spent	Highest academic qualification	Professional qualification	Matters Discussed
Academics	Senior Professors and Professors	5	7.5 hours	5 PhDs	3 CAs (2 CA Sri Lanka qualified and 1 CIMA qualified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for a degree programme in accounting • Rationale behind the model of degree programme • Evolution of relationships with global and local PABs • Rationale and Perception on accreditation /exemption arrangements with PABs • Milestones in the accounting curriculum development • Research emphasis of the accounting curriculum • Blend of accounting, business and general education in the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on creative, critical and reflexive thinking skills in the accounting curriculum

Category	Interviewee	No.	Time Spent	Highest academic qualification	Professional qualification	Matters Discussed
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on accounting's role in public sector, SME sector, and grassroot communities in the accounting curriculum • Distinction between accounting degree and professional accounting qualification • Evolution of the accounting degree in future
	Senior Lecturers	7	10.4 hours	5 PhDs, 2 Masters	4 CAs (2 CA Sri Lanka qualified and 2 CIMA qualified), 1 ACCA affiliate, and 1 CA Sri Lanka past finalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception on the pursuit of the degree programme • Perception on the model of the degree programme • Perception on accreditation/exemption arrangements with PABs • Research emphasis of the accounting curriculum • Blend of accounting, business and general education in the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on creative, critical and reflexive thinking skills in the accounting curriculum

Category	Interviewee	No.	Time Spent	Highest academic qualification	Professional qualification	Matters Discussed
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on accounting's role in public sector, SME sector, and grassroots communities in the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on local context in the degree programme • Distinction between accounting degree and professional accounting qualification • Future improvements for the accounting degree in future • Development of learning outcomes and selection of course contents • Textbooks and research materials used in the courses • Teaching and learning strategies and assessment modes used in the delivery of courses • Engagement with PABs (accreditation /exemption, equivalent modules) in the development of courses

Category	Interviewee	No.	Time Spent	Highest academic qualification	Professional qualification	Matters Discussed
	Lecturers	6	7.3 hours	2 Masters, 4 Bachelors	2 CAs (1 CA Sri Lanka qualified and 1 CIMA qualified), 2 CIMA past finalists, and 1 ACCA affiliate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception on the pursuit of the degree programme • Perception on the model of the degree programme • Perception on accreditation/exemption arrangements with PABs • Research emphasis of the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on creative, critical and reflexive thinking skills in the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on local context in the degree programme • Distinction between accounting degree and professional accounting qualification • Future improvements for the accounting degree

Category	Interviewee	No.	Time Spent	Highest academic qualification	Professional qualification	Matters Discussed
Graduates	Managers (Big Four firms)	4	3.7 hours		2 CA Sri Lanka qualified and 2 following CA Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for choosing a degree programme in accounting • Perception on the two-year practical training component of the degree programme • Perception on accreditation/exemption arrangements with PABs • Research emphasis of the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on creative, critical and reflexive thinking skills in the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on local context in the degree programme • Distinction between accounting degree and professional accounting qualification • Future improvements for the accounting degree
	Managers (multinational corporations)	5	6.5 hours		3 CA Sri Lanka qualified, 1 CIMA qualified, and 1 following CA Sri Lanka	
	Managers (second tier global audit firms)	3	2.3 hours		1 CA Sri Lanka qualified and 2 following CA Sri Lanka	
	Lecturers	2	2 hours		1 CIMA qualified and 1 following CA Sri Lanka	

Category	Interviewee	No.	Time Spent	Highest academic qualification	Professional qualification	Matters Discussed
Under-graduates	Interns at Big Four firms (third and final Year)	6	5.2 hours	6 Reading for Bachelors	5 Following CA Sri Lanka and 1 following CIMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for choosing a degree programme in accounting • Perception on the two-year practical training component of the degree programme • Perception on accreditation/exemption arrangements with PABs • Research emphasis of the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on creative, critical and reflexive thinking skills in the accounting curriculum • Emphasis on local context in the degree programme • Distinction between accounting degree and professional accounting qualification • Future improvements for the accounting degree
	Interns at multinational corporations (final year)	1	1 hour	1 Reading for Bachelors	CIMA past finalist	
	Second year	1	1 hour	1 Reading for Bachelors	Following ACCA	

After completing the required number of interviews with participants from DA, I approached members of the other empirical site, CA Sri Lanka. I conducted 15 semi-structured online interviews with them, including 8 council members (former and existing), 5 committee members, and 2 professional education providers (see below Table 5.3 for details). As with the DA interviews, I produced a brief note summarising the key points and my reflections after each interview. Additionally, I gathered insights from prospective Chartered Accountants (students currently pursuing the CA Sri Lanka qualification) and locally qualified Chartered Accountants through interviews with graduates and undergraduates of DA. These participants were either pursuing CA Sri Lanka qualification or had completed the CA Sri Lanka qualification. Among them, there were 6 locally qualified Chartered Accountants and 11 aspiring Chartered Accountants.

Table 5.3: Summary of interview and participants details (CA Sri Lanka)

Interviewee	No	Job roles	Time spent	Matters Discussed
Council members	7 (including 5 current and past Presidents)	4 partners (Big Four audit firms), 2 partner (second-tier global audit firm), and 1 executive finance director (multinational corporation)	7 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader purpose served by CA Sri Lanka • Evolution of relationship with ICAEW and other global professional accounting bodies, transnational standard setters (i.e. IASB, IFAC), and transnational financiers (i.e. World Bank) • Rationale for adopting international accounting and auditing standards • Rationale for reciprocal arrangements with global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia • Major milestones in the evolution of professional curriculum • Emphasis of CA Curriculum on public listed entities, SMEs, Public sector, and other sectors (e.g. NGOs) • Challenges encountered in the development of professional curriculum and dealing with them • Rationale for offering a degree programmes in accounting • Rationale to offer exemptions for local accounting and finance degrees • Evolution of accounting profession and professional accounting education in Sri Lanka

Interviewee	No	Job roles	Time spent	Matters Discussed
Committee members	5	2 partners (Big Four audit firms), 1 business consultant, and 2 Chief Finance Officers (multinational corporations)	4.4 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committees served/serve in CA Sri Lanka and major functions involved • Perception on relationship with ICAEW and other global professional accounting bodies, transnational standard setters (i.e. IASB, IFAC), and transnational financiers (i.e. World Bank) • Perception on adopting international accounting and auditing standards • Perception on reciprocal arrangements with global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia • Major milestones in the evolution of professional curriculum • Emphasis of CA Curriculum on public listed entities, SMEs, Public sector, and other sectors (e.g. NGOs) • Challenges encountered in the development of professional curriculum and dealing with them • Perception on offering a degree programmes in accounting • Perception on offering exemptions for local accounting and finance degrees • Evolution of accounting profession and professional accounting education in Sri Lanka
Advisors	1	Independent director/Chair of audit committees	1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception on relationship with ICAEW and other global professional accounting bodies, transnational standard setters (i.e. IASB, IFAC), and transnational financiers (i.e. World Bank)

Interviewee	No	Job roles	Time spent	Matters Discussed
		(two multinational corporations)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception on adopting international accounting and auditing standards • Perception on reciprocal arrangements with global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia • Perception on offering a degree programmes in accounting • Evolution of accounting profession and professional accounting education in Sri Lanka
Professional education providers	2	2 Owners	2.3 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception on relationship with ICAEW and other global professional accounting bodies, transnational standard setters (i.e. IASB, IFAC), and transnational financiers (i.e. World Bank) • Perception on adopting international accounting and auditing standards • Perception on reciprocal arrangements with global PABs • Major milestones in the evolution of professional curriculum • Emphasis of CA Curriculum on public listed entities, SMEs, Public sector, and other sectors (e.g. NGOs) • Drawbacks of CA curriculum • Perception on offering a degree programmes in accounting • Perception on offering exemptions for local accounting and finance degrees • Evolution of accounting profession and education in Sri Lanka

In addition to the semi-structured online interviews, documentary review was another data collection method used in this study. For DA, I gathered documents that included local and international publications such as monographs, research articles, curricular, and prospectuses, and internally available documents like meeting minutes, curriculum review documents, Memoranda of understanding (MoU) with professional firms, PABs, and business corporations, as well as course specifications. All these documents were available online. I could locate most of these documents in DA website and research databases, while the remaining documents were stored in an online repository, google drive, to which I have secured access as a department member. During the ethical clearance process, I officially obtained permission to use these documents for the purpose of this study. Regarding CA Sri Lanka, I collected local and international publications, including research articles, books, curricular, and newspaper articles. These documents were found on the CA Sri Lanka website and research databases. Additionally, I accessed internally available documents such as MoU with other global and local PABs and universities and curriculum review meeting minutes upon request.

Furthermore, self-reflections were another data collection method used in this study. As both an academic and student of DA, I could produce deep reflections on my experience in the department. These self-reflections were particularly helpful in conducting interviews with DA members (academics, graduates and undergraduates) more meaningfully. I was able to bring my experiences into the discussion while engaging in conversations with the members of DA. It enhanced the credibility of research data gathered through the interviews and generated rich data for the analysis presented in chapter 7.

5.8 Analysis of data

In a qualitative study, “the analysis of data is not a distinct stage of the research...it begins in the pre-fieldwork phase, in the formulation and clarification of research problems, and continues through to the process of writing” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019, p. 158). Consequently, I engaged in a preliminary

analysis while conducting my fieldwork. This thesis consists of two analytical chapters, each dedicated to addressing one of the two research questions separately. These research questions focused on postcolonization of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies such as Sri Lanka. Regarding university accounting education, soon after completing interviews with 10 academics, 6 graduates, and 4 undergraduates, I transcribed these interviews verbatim using the Artificial Intelligence application, Cockatoo transcription, which provided transcripts with approximately 90% accuracy. I then listened to the video recordings and corrected any errors to ensure complete accuracy. Based on these transcripts and various documents, such as a monograph on the evolution of DA and local and international research articles on DA that I had gathered, I drafted an initial narrative. This narrative was informed by my pre-understanding of the phenomena under investigation, reflective notes produced during fieldwork, my exposure to literature on postcolonialism and imperialism in accountancy profession and accounting education.

However, in this preliminary analysis, I did not emphasise theory. Instead, I drafted a narrative around a central theme, “producing an employable graduate for global economy” which emerged from the initial interviews, documentary review, and my self-reflections. I found that everything what they said and done in one way, or the other was connected to this central theme. Alongside this central theme, I identified several sub-themes that emerged while reviewing the interview transcripts, my reflective notes, and initially gathered documents. I sought feedback on this preliminary analysis from my supervisors, who advised me on necessary improvements for drafting the analysis chapter which explore the postcolonization of university accounting education in ex-colonies such as Sri Lanka. I then proceeded with remaining 20 interviews with members of DA, transcribing them verbatim using the Cockatoo transcription application initially and manually correcting them for accuracy. Concurrently, I gathered additional documents such as curricular, prospectuses, course specifications, MoU, and meeting minutes.

Having gathered all the necessary data, I proceeded to produce the second and third drafts of the analysis chapter, structuring it around three major themes:

ambivalence surrounding the pursuit and practices of the accounting degree programme, mimicking the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, and constructing a postcolonial hybrid identity for the degree programme. These themes were aligned with the postcolonial notions central to this study: ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. In this analysis, the postcolonial notion of ambivalence captured the two intertwined types of tensions in university accounting education in Sri Lanka: spatial (global vs. local priorities) and institutional (professional vs. academic values). The notion of mimicry theorised the replication of global accountancy discourses and practices, such as incorporating significant practical training component, reproducing curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs, and maintaining accreditation and exemptions arrangements with these PABs. The notion of hybridity captured the formation of a global accountancy profession-based identity: globally recognised professionally oriented academic degree, through which the programme pursued the global employability for its graduates. The analysis confirmed my pre-understanding of the social reality under scrutiny in relation to DA.

Similarly to the approach taken for university accounting education, I engaged in a preliminary analysis of the local accountancy profession during my fieldwork. Soon after completing 4 interviews with council members, 2 interviews with committee members, and 1 interview with professional education provider, I transcribed these interviews verbatim using the Cockatoo transcription application, achieving approximately 90% accuracy. I then reviewed the video recordings to correct any errors and ensure complete accuracy. Additionally, I had 17 transcripts which gathered insights from 6 locally qualified Chartered Accountants and 11 aspiring Chartered Accountants. Using these transcripts, along with documents such as professional curricular and local and international research articles related to CA Sri Lanka, I drafted an initial narrative. This narrative was informed by my pre-understanding of the empirical site, reflective notes produced during fieldwork, my review of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession and accounting education.

In this preliminary analysis, I chose not to emphasis on the theory. Instead, I focused on crafting a narrative around a central theme “global mobility for its

members” which emerged from the initial interviews and documentary review. I found that everything what they said and done in one way, or another was connected to this central theme. Alongside this central theme, I identified several sub-themes that emerged while reviewing the interview transcripts, my reflective notes, and initially gathered documents. I sought feedback on this preliminary analysis from my supervisor, who advised me on necessary improvements for drafting the analysis chapter which explore the postcolonization of accountancy profession in ex-colonies such as Sri Lanka. I then proceeded with remaining 8 interviews with members of CA Sri Lanka, transcribing them verbatim using the Cockatoo transcription application initially and manually correcting them for accuracy. Concurrently, I gathered additional documents, including curriculum review meeting minutes and MoU with both global and local PABs, as well as local universities.

Having gathered all the necessary data, I developed second and third drafts of analysis chapter on the postcolonization of the accountancy profession in Sri Lanka. I structured these drafts around three major themes: ambivalence surrounding the local professional accounting qualification, mimicking the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, and the postcolonial hybrid identity for the local PAB. These themes were aligned with postcolonial notions central to this study: ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. In this analysis, the postcolonial notion of ambivalence captured the spatial tensions (global vs. local priorities) within CA Sri Lanka. The notion of mimicry theorised the phenomenon of replication of global accountancy discourses and practices, such as adopting IFRSs and ISA, reproducing curricular of global PABs, and maintaining MRAs with these PABs. The notion of hybridity captured the formation of global identity: a globalised local profession, through which CA Sri Lanka pursued global mobility for its members. The analysis confirmed my pre-understanding of the social reality under scrutiny in relation to CA Sri Lanka.

5.9 Summary and conclusion

This chapter detailed the methodology used to explore the two research questions of this study. In this respect, I first elaborated on my pre-understanding of the

reality which I seek to uncover through this study. This was important as it informs the whole methodology of the study. Then, I discussed my philosophical position, the rigour of research conducted, and the methods of data collection. This study seeks a context specific understanding of the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and a local PAB and an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony. In reflecting on my research questions, I acknowledge that my ontological position is that reality is socially constructed, subjective, and multiple (Trautrim et al., 2012), and my epistemological stance is interpretive (Cunliffe, 2011). Grounded in this subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, my methodological approach is qualitative (Trautrim et al., 2012). To gather insights, I employ a variety of qualitative data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and self-reflections. This variety of methods enhances the authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning of data (Scott, 2014).

Finally, I explained the procedures followed during the fieldwork and the data analysis process. Having secured ethical clearance for the study from the Research Ethics Committee at CoSS, University of Glasgow, in May 2023, I carried out fieldwork from July 2023 to January 2024. During this period, I conducted 55 online interviews with members of the two empirical sites: CA Sri Lanka and the DA at USJ. This was complemented by review of documents pertaining to these two institutions and self-reflection on my experience at the DA. The analytical strategy involved writing and rewriting the narrative. Initially, stories were narrated in relation to the two empirical sites. For the DA, the narrative centred on the theme of “producing an employable graduate for global economy”, while for CA, it focused on the theme of “global mobility for its members”. These stories were then refined through several rounds of rewriting, framing them using the postcolonial notions of ‘ambivalence’, ‘mimicry’, and ‘hybridity’. The next two chapters will present the analysis of this study.

CHAPTER 6: NAVIGATING GLOBAL IDENTITY: AMBIVALENCE, MIMICRY, AND HYBRIDITY IN ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION

6.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. Drawing from theoretical lens of postcolonialism, I use the notion of ‘postcolonization’ to mean the reconstruction of a hybrid identity by the peripheral institutions through the reproduction of global discourses and practices influenced by the enduring ‘ambivalence’ in post-colonial context (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017; Bhabha, 2012; Kaifala et al., 2019; Loomba, 2007; Thomson and Jones, 2016). In this context, this chapter addresses the first research question of the study: How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession?

In this chapter, before delving into the analysis of accountancy profession in a post-colonial context, I will first discuss the evolution of accounting practice in Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) during the British colonial rule. This historical backdrop is crucial, as the colonial legacies significantly influenced the accountancy profession in post-colonial Sri Lanka. Therefore, understanding the colonial legacies enhances the postcolonial analysis of the evolution of local PAB in post-colonial era. Subsequently, using three postcolonial notions of ‘ambivalence’, ‘mimicry’, and ‘hybridity’, I analyse the historical evolution of the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka in its engagement with ICAEW from CA Sri Lanka’s inception in 1959 to the beginning of neo-liberalisation of economy in Sri Lanka in 1977. Finally, I examine the historical evolution of CA Sri Lanka in its interactions with globalisation project of accountancy profession encompassing global PABs, transnational standard setters, and transnational financiers throughout the neo-liberalism in Sri Lanka, employing the notions of ‘ambivalence’, ‘mimicry’, and ‘hybridity’. The insights gathered from this analysis will be critically discussed later in Chapter 8. The next chapter will explore how and why university

accounting education in Sri Lanka engages with globalisation project of accountancy profession.

6.2 Colonial Disposition

6.2.1 Accountancy practice under British rule

In 1796, the British took over the Dutch-controlled Ceylon and colonized the whole island in 1815 eventually. Under British rule, Ceylon transformed from an agriculture-based society to a plantation-based economy initially with coffee then tea, rubber and coconut as dominant crops creating significant changes in the socio-economy of the country (Wickramasinghe and Cameron, 2004). The British plantation companies heavily invested in the tea industry, while the agency houses in Colombo (Capital city of Ceylon) involved in the day-to-day supervision of production (De Silva, 1981). Additionally, at various stages a segment of the indigenous population participated in the plantation economy (De Silva, 1981). The plantation economy contributed to breakthrough in trade, generating substantial profits for indigenous traders, speculators and middlemen. This wealth accumulation led to the rise of a new elite class during this period (Jayawardena, 2002).

Accountancy in Ceylon was initially practiced predominantly in these plantation companies and to a lesser extent in government departments. Similar to other ex-British colonies like Australia, South Africa, and India, in Ceylon the accounting was initially practiced by migrant UK-qualified accountants who followed the British capital and commerce providing professional services throughout the empire (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). These accountants offered management and accounting services through the British firms established in Ceylon for the plantation joint stock companies introduced in the mid-nineteenth century (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). Despite these firms operating in Ceylon, they were managed as if based in the UK, training local employees in the British system (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). Some migrant accountants also served in government departments such as railway, postal services, survey and irrigation, to training accounting personnel (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). Thus, in the 19th

century the accounting practice was in its infancy and primarily served by the migrant UK-qualified accountants.

At the turn of the 20th century, prospective accountants from newly emerged plantation elite families began pursuing professional qualifications from the UK PABs. However, the top-tier bodies like Scottish Chartered bodies and ICAEW were not interested in overseas membership (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Consequently, the children of newly emerged elite class who could afford accounting education and training in abroad and secure an article clerkship in the UK, proceeded to England to pursue ICAEW professional qualification (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). During this time, the second tier UK PABs started expanding throughout the British empire (Briston, 1978). The Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors was the first to export its qualification by setting up examination centres in Australia, South Africa and India in the early twentieth century and continuing until it merged with the English Institute in 1957 (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). In Ceylon, the examinations of Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors were first held in Colombo in 1920 (Yapa, 2006). Following this trend, the ACCA and CIMA (formerly known as Institute of Cost and Works Accountants) also began offering overseas examinations after World War II (Johnson and Caygill, 1971). The membership in these PABs was accessible locally by completing the examinations and meeting experience and character requirements. This enabled the elite social class in Ceylon to pursue a UK professional accounting qualification at the home country. The pursuit of UK professional accounting qualifications has created a local class of accountants trained to serve the British capital (Annisette, 2000). These local accountants increasingly joined the British firms in Ceylon, gradually eliminating the need for UK migrant accountants.

Towards the mid-twentieth century, the government of Ceylon realised the need for modernising the colonial business environment to revitalise the plantation and other related industries and enhance accountability in the British colonial administration. Accordingly, the company law in Ceylon was revised, enacting the companies Ordinance No.51 of 1938, modelled on the UK companies Act of 1929 (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). It drew attention to two matters, first the auditors of company accounts be registered under ordinance and second the establishment

of controlling body for these auditors. Consequently, in 1941 the 'Accountancy Board' was established (Yapa, 2000). The accountancy body regulated accountants in the public practice and conducted examinations for the selection of suitable candidates for the government accounting service (Yapa, 2000). As per the regulations of the board, the registration for company audits was open to members of the established PABs in the UK, individuals registered under Indian company legislation, and experienced practitioners deemed knowledgeable by the Board (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998).

Apart from that, the board also conducted examinations to select suitable candidates for government employment. These examinations were similar to those of British PABs and successful candidates were appointed as Ceylon Registered Accountants. The Board also collaborated with few private academies, to offer classes for exam applicants. The establishment of 'Accountancy Board' is a significant milestone in the development of accounting practice in Ceylon, operating until CA Sri Lanka was established in 1959.

The developments in accounting practice during the British colonial rule established a robust foundation for British influence to endure in Ceylon even after independence. According to Sian (2010), key colonial legacies such as plantation economy, British capital, British accounting firms, the Companies Ordinance, the traditional British model of accounting education, and an elite of British-qualified accountants significantly determined the accounting profession and education in post-independent ex-British colonies like Ceylon. These conditions continued to influence local accounting practices, prompting engagement with global PABs like the ICAEW for guidance, inspiration, and solutions to post-colonial accounting challenges in Ceylon (Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2010; Sian, 2010; Uche, 2010; Yapa, 2010). This is explored in detail in the postcolonial challenges section.

6.3 Post-colonial challenges in emerging accountancy profession

6.3.1 Ambivalence: British inspiration in local profession

In post-colonial literature, notion of ‘ambivalence’ refers to the complex mix of complicity and resistance involved in the colonizer-colonized relationship (Bhabha, 2012). It holds that the colonized subjects and institutions simultaneously manifest both accommodation of, and resistance to colonial discourses and practices (Kaifala et al., 2019). In my empirical enquiry, I witnessed that the emergence and evolution of the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka reflect a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global discourses and practices. In post-independent Sri Lanka, the development of CA Sri Lanka has been influenced by two key constituents: the government of Sri Lanka and the members of CA Sri Lanka, particularly the governing council. In this section, I analyse how these two constituents’ complex interplay of complicity and resistance towards global discourses and practices have shaped CA Sri Lanka from its inception to the beginning of neo-liberalism in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka’s independence from Britain on February 4, 1948, was a peaceful transition from the colonial rulers to the Anglicised upper-class elite, who had already been substantially self-governing since 1931 (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). United National Party assumed control from the British, inheriting a relatively prosperous economy, a substantial foreign reserve, and a well-established bureaucracy (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). This elite smoothly adapted to the British-style parliamentary democracy created by the Soulbury Constitution of 1947, which remained in force until 1972 (Wickramasinghe, 2014). This constitution provided the country with a government modelled on the British Westminster system, featuring a bicameral parliament (Wickramasinghe, 2014). Generally, the policies of the United National Party were conservative, reflecting the preferences of the western-educated elite who succeeded the British (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). This created an opportunity for someone to exploit the more radical nationalist strand of politics that was yearning for leadership.

In 1956, a nationalist government took control in Sri Lanka, replacing laissez-faire economic policies with socialist, state capitalist policies aimed at transforming Sri Lanka into a modern mixed economy (Wickramasinghe, 2014). This nationalist government established CA Sri Lanka by the Institute of Chartered Accountants Act (ICA) No.23 of 1959, as part of the nation state building project. Through this establishment, the nationalist government aspired to produce a breed of local accountants to serve the nation development agenda (Yapa, 2006).

“The mission of CA Sri Lanka was to be the premier national institute of accountants committed to serving society by promoting and developing accountancy expertise towards the country’s resource management and maintaining the highest levels of integrity and competence.” (Yapa, 2006, p.453)

However, similar to most ex-British colonies, the dominant positions in accountancy practice were occupied by British qualified accountants who were complicit with British ideologies, values, and priorities; some act as consultants and advisors to the government on accounting related matters in Sri Lanka (Wijewardena and Yapa, 1998). They insisted on producing local accountants solely through the PABs that replicated the traditional British model of producing accountants (Yapa, 2000). Consequently, a small elite of British qualified accountants created a monopolistic and elite professional body, CA Sri Lanka which is virtually a carbon copy of the ICAEW with an identical emphasis on auditing practice (Yapa, 2006). From its inception, the founders pursued an agenda of ‘the closure of the auditing practice’ to benefit the elite social group they represented, at the expense of broader nation development agenda which was intended by the nationalist government of Sri Lanka (Yapa, 2010; Larson, 1977; Klegon, 1978).

As part of the nation state building project, the government pursued a policy whereby all key industries should be run by the state (Yapa, 2006). To support this agenda, the government urged CA Sri Lanka to produce local breed of accountants specialised in management and public sector accounting functions (Wallace and Briston, 1993). Despite these national needs, from its inception the local institute emphasised on the auditing practice which resembled that of ICAEW. The founders of the institute leveraged their connections with government officials to secure a monopoly over auditing practice through the act of ICA passed in the parliament

in 1959 (Yapa, 2010; Willmott, 1986; Sian and Poullaos, 2010). Section 21 of the ICA Act states:

“no person who is a member of the Institute or is a partner of any such firm of accountants shall practise as an accountant unless he is the holder of a certificate to practise.”

The primary impetus for the founders of the local institute to prioritise auditing practice over management and public sector accounting functions was the most lucrative business opportunity of providing auditing services to British-owned plantation sector companies at that time.

Consequently, from its inception, the CA Sri Lanka has been committed to producing local breed of accountants to serve the interests of global capital (predominantly British). By the time the institute was established, there were very few professional firms such as Ford Rhodes, Thornton and Co. (1897) (later KPMG Sri Lanka) and Burah Hathy & Co. (1958) (later BDO Partners), established by British. The founding members of the local institute were senior partners of these professional firms (Yapa, 2010). These professional firms predominantly served the plantation sector companies owned by British which were the most significant corporate sector in the economy till mid 1970s (Moore, 1997). Consequently, from its inception, the founders were committed to producing local breed of accountants who are willing servants of global capital despite the government's intention to produce local accountants to meet national needs.

In order to maintain the British outlook in the local profession, the institute opted to operate predominantly in English. Despite the nationalist government had declared Sinhala (the dominant local language of Sri Lanka) as the official language of the country and majority of the government institutions were operating in Sinhala and Tamil, the institute offered its qualification exclusively in English until 1976 (Yapa, 2010). This is a classic instance of complicity of founders of the local institute with British. In fact, they were British-educated local elite with plantation and business interests. Although they were local in blood and colour, they were British in values, taste, opinions and lifestyles (Bhabha, 2012; Boussebaa et al., 2014). Hence, they wished to maintain elite

status within the local profession. However, in response to government pressure, the institute introduced Sinhala and Tamil medium options for first two level of its qualification since 1977 (Yapa, 2010).

During the 1970s, the government recognised the inadequacy of the number of Chartered Accountants produced by the local institute and their inadequate training for the state's accounting manpower requirements. The government urged CA Sri Lanka to adapt its qualification to suit social, economic and employment needs of the society (Yapa, 2006). In response, the governing council of CA Sri Lanka appointed a committee, the "Future Training of Accountants" in 1973 to undertake significant revision of the training scheme of the Institute. The committee report made several observations and recommendations:

"The articulated clerk system of training based on the old British model was inadequate... [and] experience under articles is heavily biased towards the legal and statutory audit....the new scheme of training, apart from increasing the number of accountants, must also satisfy the following special needs of the economy: 1. The need for accountants who can present information lucidly to decision makers, taking into account the need of the country in the present context; 2. The need for able Financial Managers and Advisers who can appreciate the problems of the country; and 3. The need for accountants who are imaginative organisers able to undertake the problems of management arising in the overnight creation of large scale undertakings and also small scale decentralised management units." (The Accountant, 1973, pp 7,9 &11]

In line with the recommendations of this committee, in 1976 the CA Sri Lanka introduced a new curriculum. As part of this curriculum reform, CA Sri Lanka changed the name of its training scheme from 'articles' to 'practical training' and reduced the duration of training from 5 to 3 years for university graduates and 4 years for nongraduates (Yapa, 2010). Interestingly, this reduction in the duration of practical training was nothing more than directly following the same change that had been previously introduced by the ICAEW (Briston, 1978). Accordingly, from the inception of CA Sri Lanka to the beginning of neo-liberalism in the country, despite the nationalist government's aspiration for the local institute to support its nation state development agenda, the governing council of CA Sri Lanka remained committed to producing a local breed of accountants to serve the interests of global capital (predominantly British).

6.3.2 Mimicking the British

According to Bhabha (2012), the colonial subjects' and institutions' desire for a reformed and recognisable identity induces colonized to mimic colonial discourses and practices. In postcolonial literature, mimicry is defined as the “process by which the colonial subject is reproduced as almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 2012, p. 86). Therefore, the mimicry of colonial discourses and practices does not make the identity of the colonized identical to that of colonizer. Instead, it constructs the colonized as a partial copy of the colonizer, leading to the creation of a new cultural identity: the postcolonial hybrid (Young, 2016). In this context, I analyse how CA Sri Lanka has reproduced practices of ICAEW from the inception of local PAB to the beginning of neo-liberalism in Sri Lanka.

From the inception, the founders of the local institute, comprised of 10 ICAEW qualified accountants, sought to establish an ICAEW-inspired identity for the local institute by mimicking its practices. The establishment of local professional body, CA Sri Lanka resembles the experience of most of the ex-British colonies where the small elite of British qualified accountants created the monopolistic and elite professional body by replicating the model of English institute. Like in case of ICAEW, the CA Sri Lanka introduced its own professional curriculum and examinations; the membership was granted only to those who passed those examinations and completed a five-year period of practical training as articled clerks under the supervision of Chartered Accountants, known as principals (Yapa, 2010). From its inception, the founders of local institute had taken several measures to ensure, the local curriculum and examinations were on par with those of ICAEW. First, since 1960 to 1967, CA Sri Lanka collaborated with Overseas Accountancy Examinations Advisory Board of ICAEW in the development of its examination system and approval of its professional syllabi (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Second, in 1964, the CA Sri Lanka president invited E. Cockson-Jones, an ICAEW Fellow, to assume the role of full-time director of studies who coordinates the tutorial programmes, lectures and other services that would help to enhance the quality of the students sitting the institute's examinations (Yapa, 2010). Third, CA Sri Lanka engaged Foulks Lynch, a British private publishing firm, to produce study texts during this time (Yapa, 2010). Consequently, despite the Chartered

Accountants were produced locally, the curriculum, examinations and training adopted for producing such accountants resembled that of ICAEW (Briston, 1978; Yapa, 2000). By mimicking the practices of ICAEW, the founders of the local institute aimed to establish an identity for CA Sri Lanka similar to that of ICAEW (Yapa, 2010).

Moreover, in maintaining an ICAEW-inspired identity, CA Sri Lanka exclusively operated in English and implemented system of articled clerks until 1977. The founders of CA Sri Lanka were British-educated, prominent figures in their educational, professional and business roles with high-status family backgrounds (Nesaratnam, 1999). They intended for CA Sri Lanka to remain the exclusive domain of their class. To enrol in the CA qualification, a student was required to pass GCE A/L (Yapa, 2010). These aspiring accountants required to secure an articled clerkship, pay a premium to the principal, serve for five years, follow an English-medium curriculum, and complete all CA Sri Lanka examinations conducted exclusively in English. This English-medium professional education and premium requirements meant that this qualification was accessible only to those from privileged backgrounds with an English-language education. Essentially, this qualification was intended for the children of the British-educated elite with plantation and business interests until mid-1970s (Yapa, 2006; Balachandran, 2007). However, these closure strategies marginalised individuals from poorer rural areas who completed their secondary education in Sinhala and Tamil and local graduates who were not proficient in English and could not afford the premium for principals (Yapa, 2010). Accordingly, from CA Sri Lanka's inception to the onset of neo-liberalism in the country, CA Sri Lanka replicated the practices of ICAEW in their pursuit of an ICAEW-inspired identity.

6.3.3 Hybridity: British-inspired local profession

As previously discussed, the mimicry of colonial discourses and practices does not construct an identity for the colonized that is identical to the colonizer. Instead, it constructs colonized as a partial copy of the colonizer, leading to the formation of a new cultural identity: the postcolonial hybrid (Young, 2016). The postcolonial literature refers to hybridity as everything that challenges and undermines the

colonial hegemony (Loomba, 2007). It acknowledges the agency of the colonized in constituting their hybrid identity (Nandy, 1983). The colonized often draw from the colonial discourses and practices and read it through their own interpretive lenses, juxtapose with local ideas and practices reconstruct their cultural identity (Loomba, 2007). In this section, I analyse how and why the CA Sri Lanka has reformed an identity to local institute by drawing from practices of ICAEW until the beginning of neo-liberalism in Sri Lanka.

From its inception, the founders of CA Sri Lanka aimed to create a hybrid identity for the local institute, shaping it into a British-inspired local institute through extensive engagement with the ICAEW. As previously elaborated, the nationalist government established CA Sri Lanka through an act of parliament, as a part of its nation state building project. The intention was to create a truly local entity that could produce a breed of accountants capable of serving the auditing, management, and public sector accounting functions of the economy (Wallace and Briston, 1993). In this project, the government relied on several prominent figures involved in accounting practice in Sri Lanka at the time. These individuals were British-educated elite with interests in plantations and business. Although they were local in blood and colour, they were British in values, taste, opinions and lifestyles (Bhabha, 2012; Boussebaa et al., 2014). Consequently, they sought to maintain elite status within CA Sri Lanka by replicating traditional British model for producing accountants. The outcome was that the Chartered Accountants were produced locally, by adopting a curriculum, examinations and training similar to ICAEW (Briston, 1978; Yapa, 2000).

Through the formation of hybrid identity: British-inspired local institute, the founders of CA Sri Lanka aimed to facilitate greater mobility for its members. Until the mid-1970s, the dominant corporate sector in Sri Lanka was the British-owned plantation companies (Moore, 1997). These companies were served by professional firms where the founding members of the local institute held senior positions (Yapa, 2010). The founders were of the view that the mobility of its members can be enhanced through catering to global capital. Therefore, they replicated ICAEW-like practices to produce breed of local accountants familiar with British values, systems and priorities. This strategic approach was intended to better serve the

interest of global capital (predominantly British), thereby achieve greater mobility for its members.

In the process of constructing a hybrid identity for the local institute, the agential role of founders of CA Sri Lanka was particularly noteworthy. Unlike some of the other ex-colonies, the founders of CA Sri Lanka did not fully surrender the professionalisation project to British. Instead, they actively engaged with the ICAEW, mimicking their practices such as the curriculum, examinations, articulated-clerk system, and conducting operations in English. The similar practices were then implemented locally. This approach contrasts the situation in some of the other ex-colonies such as T&T and Jamaica who adopted ACCA's curriculum and examination as their own (Annisette, 2000; Bakre, 2006). Moreover, while CA Sri Lanka also placed strong emphasis on auditing practice similar to ICAEW, the founders of CA Sri Lanka were able to secure a legal monopoly on auditing practice through legislation passed by parliament, an accomplishment not paralleled by ICAEW. The adoption of practices similar to ICAEW and securing monopoly over auditing practice consolidated the accounting profession in Sri Lanka as an exclusive domain of social class to which founders of CA Sri Lanka belonged until the mid-1970s (Balachandran, 2007; Yapa, 2010). Accordingly, from its inception to the onset of neo-liberalism in the country, CA Sri Lanka pursued a hybrid identity: British-inspired local institute, aiming to better serve the interest of global capital (predominantly British), thereby enhance mobility of its members.

6.4 Neo-liberal expansion in accountancy profession

6.4.1 Ambivalence: global inspiration in local profession

Following the liberalisation of the Sri Lankan economy in 1977, CA Sri Lanka expanded its engagement beyond the ICAEW to include actors of globalisation project of accountancy profession. These actors encompass transnational standard setters such as IFAC and IASB, transnational financiers like the WB and the IMF, and global PABs such as ACCA and CPA Australia. In neo-liberalism, CA Sri Lanka's engagement with these actors of globalisation project of accountancy profession is characterised by a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global discourses

and practices. The evolution of CA Sri Lanka during this neo-liberal period has been influenced by two key constituents: the government of Sri Lanka and the members of CA Sri Lanka. The latter group represents both global business interests (multinational corporations, Big Four firms, and medium-scale global professional firms) and local business interests (local businesses and small scale local professional firms). In this section, I analyse how these two constituents' complex interplay of complicity and resistance to global discourses and practices have shaped CA Sri Lanka during the neo-liberalism in Sri Lanka.

In 1977, the United National Party took over the power and initiated the liberalisation of the economy, aiming to boost economic growth through a market and export-oriented economic strategy (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). The government implemented several measures, including the elimination of import and price controls, tariff reductions, devaluation of rupee, relaxation of exchange controls, and reduction of income tax to encourage private enterprises (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). Concurrently, the government embarked on an ambitious programme to privatise state industries and restructure economy. This shift towards neoliberalism placed the state on a diminishing role in the economy (World Bank, 2004). The subsequent governments also continued to uphold liberal economic policies with an outward approach, placing a strong emphasis on privatisation of state ventures. Alongside these privatisation efforts, several reforms were introduced in the sphere of Accounting and Auditing to induce investors trust in corporate sector in Sri Lanka. These liberal economic reforms, attracted many multinational companies and global professional firms to Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017).

In 1992, the government initiated financial sector reforms by appointing 'Presidential Commission on Finance and Banking' (Asian Development Bank, 2002). One key recommendation of this committee was the adoption of international accounting and auditing standards to enhance financial reporting in Sri Lanka (Asian Development Bank, 2002). In response, the parliament passed the Sri Lanka Accounting and Auditing Standards Act No.15 of 1995, establishing an institutional framework for setting and overseeing the accounting and auditing

standards for the ‘Specified Business Enterprises⁴’ (SBEs) operating in Sri Lanka (Asian Development Bank, 2002). The Act led to the establishment of the ‘Accounting Standards Committee’ and ‘Auditing Standards Committee’ which advise CA Sri Lanka on adopting accounting and auditing standards (World Bank, 2004). These committees function under the auspices of CA Sri Lanka. The act also established the ‘Accounting and Auditing Standards Monitoring Board’ to monitor and enforce compliance with accounting and auditing standards in Sri Lanka (World Bank, 2004). The monitoring board operates under the purview of the Ministry of Finance. This institutional reform in the sphere of Accounting and Auditing manifests the complicity of government with global discourses on accounting and auditing.

In parallel with the liberalisation of the economy in 1977, CA Sri Lanka began collaborating with transnational standard setters such as the IFAC and the IASC from the late 1970s. However, CA Sri Lanka did not adopt IASs and ISA until the Sri Lanka Accounting and Auditing Standards Act No.15 of 1995 was passed by parliament. Prior to the adoption of IASs and ISA, CA Sri Lanka followed the ‘Statements of recommended Practice’ issued by ICAEW (Asian Development Bank, 2002). When adopting IASs and ISA, CA Sri Lanka’s approach involved making necessary modifications to reflect local conditions. Under the act, the standards adopted for the local context were known as Sri Lanka Accounting Standards and Sri Lanka Auditing Standards. There were even instances where CA Sri Lanka introduced their own standards in the absence of relevant international standards. This approach to adopting international accounting and auditing standards, while making modifications, embodies both complicity and resistance to global discourses. On one hand, CA Sri Lanka aims to replicate international standards in the local context. On the other hand, they consider the relevance of these standards for the local context and make necessary modification to suit local

⁴ SBEs are defined in the Accounting and Auditing Standards Act as: companies listed on the stock exchange, banks, insurance companies, factoring companies, finance companies, leasing companies, unit trusts, fund management companies, stockbrokers and stock dealers, stock exchanges, public corporations engaged in the sale of goods or the provision of services, and non-listed companies that meet the following criteria: annual turnover in excess of LKR 500 million, shareholders equity in the excess of LKR 100 million, gross assets in excess of LKR 300 million, liabilities to banks and other financial institutions in excess of LKR 100 million, and staff in excess of 1,000 individuals.

conditions. Thus, they demonstrate a form of resistance to these international standards.

In pursuit of economic growth through increased private sector activity, the Sri Lankan government intensified its collaborations with the WB and the IMF from the early 2000s. As conditioned by these transnational financiers, Sri Lanka underwent its first ROSC in 2003 (World Bank, 2004). One of the key recommendations related to accounting and auditing practices was the adoption of IASs/IFRSs and ISA without modification for specified business enterprises (World Bank, 2004). In response, starting in 2009 CA Sri Lanka began a project to converge local accounting and auditing standards with international standards, with financial support from the WB. Consequently, effective from 1 January 2012, CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modification. However, in accordance with act of No.15 of 1995, these standards are referred locally as Sri Lanka Financial Reporting Standards (SLFRSs/LKAS) and Sri Lanka Standards on Auditing (SLAuSs). As one of the council members explained, the rationale behind CA Sri Lanka's adoption was to facilitate the Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and accommodate multinational corporations.

*“...from a capital market point of view, we are looking for foreign direct investments. When a country promotes FDIs obviously one of the criteria investors looking at is our financial reporting framework, whether they can understand the financial statements. If they are looking to acquire shares of a company, they want to understand the financial statements of the target entity. If their financial statements are in compliance with international standards, they can easily perform the analysis. So, these international standards give comfort to these capital market investors.”
(Council member 2)*

This adoption of IFRSs/IASs and ISA in the local context had immensely benefited global professional firms as well.

“The four largest international accounting firms audit 84 per cent of listed companies in the country which account for 98 per cent of market capitalisation as of December 31, 2013” (World Bank, 2015, p.34).

However, this move has not seen favourably by the local business community. Hence, there were resistance from local business community for this adoption of

global standards in the local profession. One such concern they raised was these international standards does not necessarily reflect the local circumstances.

“I could remember, back in 2012 when we wanted to adopt IFRSs, lot of people questioned, we have below 300 PLCs, why you have to go and adopt these international standards. Actually, if you take standard on financial instruments, most of the things are not applicable in the Sri Lankan context. We don’t have complex financial instruments; we don’t have minimum level of hedging instrument. In that context, the applicability of the standard is very narrow and it’s a wastage of time. But on the other hand, if you don’t do that it would have had impact on the foreign investors who bring money to Sri Lanka.” (Council member 2)

In a similar vein, several other council members had also acknowledged the extra burden created by IFRSs for the local business entities.

“We are a small economy. We don’t have complex financial instruments and complex business environment. We don’t have an options exchange in Sri Lanka whereas India they have an options exchange. We don’t have derivate exchange. Compared to major economies, our requirements are narrow. The accounting standards are developed to cater the broader requirements. When we adopt these standards, the compliance cost would be high. In meeting these broader requirements, there are many disclosure requirements are laid down in the standard. If we really do a cost benefit analysis there may not be a that much of benefit from an entity’s perspective.” (Council member 3)

“...adoption of IFRS 17 insurance contract standard requires a significant change in the systems. It costs at least LKR 2 billion (£5 million) for an insurance company.” (Past President 1)

Despite local resistance, the institute had decided to proceed with the adoption of IFRSs and ISA in the local context without modifications. This unaltered adoption of IFRSs/IASs and ISA manifests strong complicity with global discourses by the government of Sri Lanka and members of CA Sri Lanka who represent the global business interest. The resistance towards these global discourses by members of CA Sri Lanka who represent the local business interests has been managed to mitigate through various measures. These include differing the adoption date of Standards, organising training programmes to familiarise local businesses and firms with IFRSs and IAS, and encouraging the adoption of a simplified version of IFRSs, known as SLFRSs for SMEs. The council members elaborated these measures during their interviews as follows:

“We initially planned to adopt IFRS 17 with effect from 1 January 2023. However, the local insurance companies requested us to postpone the adoption of IFRS 17 by another one or 2 years. We have understood their challenges. Accordingly, we have deferred the adoption of IFRS 17 until 2025.” (Past President 1)

“CA Sri Lanka always supports their members in the adoption of latest international standards. We offer CPD for our members on the latest standards.” (Council member 3)

“We have given required level of flexibility to small and medium scale businesses while embracing IFRS. We all accept IFRS is not so relevant to small and medium scale businesses who are not exposed to global environment. Hence, we have introduced separate accounting framework for SMEs. Accordingly, they can elect SLFRSs for SMEs if they are not exposed to complex matters.” (Past President 2)

Similar to other developing countries, Sri Lanka’s adoption of IFRSs/IASs and ISA has primarily benefitted the global accounting firms and multinational corporations, often at the expense of local accounting firms and local businesses (Annissette, 2000). The rationale behind CA Sri Lanka’s focus on global business interests is that majority of CA Sri Lanka members serve these global entities. Nearly 60 percent of the top 50 companies listed in the Colombo Stock Exchange has a CA Sri Lanka member either as chairman, CEO or finance director (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, 2024). In addition to facilitating member mobility through the unmodified adoption of IFRSs/IASs and ISA, CA Sri Lanka has recently embarked on another initiative, MRAs, to create global mobility for its members.

Currently, CA Sri Lanka has MRAs with several global PABs including ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia, and ICAEW. These MRAs provide different routes to member of one professional body (i.e. member of CA Sri Lanka) to become a member of another professional body (i.e member of ACCA). The process of MRAs starts with benchmarking of local curriculum against the curricular of global PABs (World Bank, 2015). Thus, these MRAs testify the complicity of CA Sri Lanka’s curriculum with that of global PABs. During an interview, a council member articulated the rationale for these MRAs as follows:

“We pursue these options [MRAs] to be valuable because it improves our members mobility. It helps them to create more opportunities and we believe that is the part that any local accountancy body has to play.We have a very good rapport and relationship with main PABs such as ICAEW, CA Australia, CPA Australia, CA New Zealand, ACCA, CIMA. All these major PABs of international repute has recognised CA Sri Lanka qualification and they have offered reciprocal exemption schemes. Our members can easily take the membership of other bodies. We have built the credibility of our qualification over the years, and they have recognised it. Now we have to capitalise it.” (Council member 1)

However, this initiative faced criticism from senior figures in Sri Lanka’s accounting profession. CA Sri Lanka intensified its focus on MRAs during the country’s worst economic crisis in history, culminating in a declaration of bankruptcy in 2022. In this context, the nation expected the national professional body to play a pivotal role in addressing the economic crisis. Instead, the local institute prioritised global mobility of its members, leading to a shortage of qualified professionals to meet the nation’s needs.

“...when the financial crisis came in Sri Lanka, the young, qualified accountants were the first to leave Sri Lanka and go abroad and find jobs. It created a vacuum here.” (Advisor of CA Sri Lanka)

Accordingly, during the neo-liberal era in the country, Sri Lankan governments and CA Sri Lanka members representing global business interests have largely been complicit with global accountancy discourses and practices, while CA Sri Lanka members representing local business interests have resisted these discourses and practices.

6.4.2 Mimicking the globe

In neo-liberalism, CA Sri Lanka has expanded its mimicry of practices and discourses beyond ICAEW to encompass those of globalisation project of accountancy professions. In this section, I analyse how the CA Sri Lanka has replicated discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession in the evolution of local accountancy profession during the neo-liberal era in the country.

Mimicking international accounting and auditing standards

Following the liberalisation of the economy in 1977, CA Sri Lanka began collaborating with transnational standard setters such as IFAC and IASB in the late 1970s. However, it was not until the establishment of the ‘Accounting Standards Committee’ and ‘Auditing Standards Committee’ under the Act No.15 of 1995 that CA Sri Lanka adopted IASs and ISA. When adopting these standards, CA Sri Lanka made modifications as necessary to reflect the local conditions. In some cases, CA Sri Lanka issued its own accounting standards in the absence of relevant international standards. Additionally, these standards were not frequently revised to lessen the burden on businesses operating in Sri Lanka. A council members elaborated on this during his interview:

“Before 2012 we did not have many standards. Most of the standards were in compliance with international accounting standards and auditing standards. Auditing standards almost same. For accounting we had some unique standards. For instance, SLAS 32: Plantations. It was kind of unique standard to Sri Lanka. Based on requirements we came up with unique standards plus there were some serious modifications to the international accounting standards when we adopt them in Sri Lanka. Also, our standards were not revised in a greater intensity compared to the international accounting standards. There were differences as such.” (Council member 2)

This approach of adopting international standards with necessary modification, ensured that the standards truly reflected local conditions. Consequently, CA Sri Lanka balanced the interest of both global and local businesses operating in Sri Lanka, without prioritising one over the other. This approach faced no resistance from CA members as it was considered fair for all businesses operating within the country.

However, in 2003 the WB identified the modification of international standards as a barrier to attracting FDIs to Sri Lanka and recommended the adoption of international standards without modifications (World Bank, 2004). In response, CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications with effect from 1 January 2012. As one of the council members explained, the rationale for this adoption was to facilitate the multinational businesses.

“...these international standards provide a level playing field for multinational companies. When the countries they operate have same set of standards, they can compare their financial statements easily. Otherwise, they have to put an extra time, energy and cost to convert the local standards based financial statements to financial statements based on IFRSs. In the context of globalisation, it is important to provide a level playing field where the capital is flowing freely across the world.” (Council member 1)

Despite CA Sri Lanka adopting IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications, the Accounting and Auditing Standards Act No. 15 of 1995 in Sri Lanka mandates that these standards be referred locally as SLFRSs/LKAS and SLAuSs. Additionally, the act requires these standards to be translated and published in the national languages. Consequently, the local regulatory requirements have enabled CA Sri Lanka to retain some degree of resistance in the adoption of IFRSs/IASs and ISA.

“There is a fundamental regulatory requirement coming from Accounting and Auditing Standards Act No. 15 of 1995 which says the specified business entities have to comply Sri Lanka accounting standards..... [the] act requires the accounting and auditing standards to be translated into Sinhala and Tamil and published in Gazette.” (Committee member 1)

Similarly, there have been instances where regulatory requirements compelled CA Sri Lanka to modify IASs. In some cases, the government of Sri Lanka issued acts which supersede any other written law. In such circumstances, CA Sri Lanka has to direct the accounting treatment accommodating the requirements of these acts. For example, the Government of Sri Lanka issued the Surcharge Tax Act No. 14 of 2022, which contains the following provision in section 6.

“Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in any other written law, the tax levied under this Act shall be deemed to be an expenditure in the financial statement relating to the year of assessment commenced on April 1, 2020.”

Consequently, CA Sri Lanka had to issue a Statement of Alternative Treatment (SoAT) that superseded paragraph 46 of LKAS 12: Income Tax. The application was made mandatory for all the companies who were liable to pay Surcharge Tax.

“In accommodating the legal requirement under the Surcharge Tax Act No. 14 of 2022, the preparers who are liable to pay surcharge tax under the said Act, shall account as follows; Since such expense is deemed to be an

expenditure for the year of assessment which commenced on 1 April 2020, it shall be recorded as an adjustment to the opening retained earnings reported in the Statement of Changes in Equity on the first day of the previous financial year” (CA Sri Lanka, 2022).

In a similar vein, CA Sri Lanka made a minor adjustment to IAS 1 to better suit local regulatory requirements.

“In 2015 Sri Lanka modified paragraph 69(d) of IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements, in the Current liabilities section” (IFRS Foundation,2023).

Apart from the regulatory requirements, CA Sri Lanka has modified IFRSs in extreme circumstance. For example, considering the recent unprecedented changes in the macro-economic conditions, CA Sri Lanka issued a SoAT on the Reclassification of Debt Portfolio.

“As a result of recent unprecedented changes in the macro-economic conditions, a one-off option (no further reclassification thereon) is provided to reclassify debt portfolio. Accordingly, the debt portfolio is reclassified to Amortised Cost from Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income on the first day of the entity’s next reporting period” (CA Sri Lanka, 2022).

Another instance of which CA Sri Lanka exercises its resistance in the adoption of IFRSs and ISA is, its ability to determine the effective date of adoption.

“There are instances where we adopt a particular international standard quite late. For example, IFRS 17: Insurance Contract has gone live in the world but in Sri Lanka we have been postponing it. However, when we adopt we adopt the same version. For instance, when India adopt international standards, they adopt with modifications but we don’t do that. However, there could be timing differences. For certain standards, we want to see the impact on the relevant industry, we may give a kind of lead time for affected industries. For example, insurance companies we have given them a grace period to get ready. This may be two years or three years, depending on the feedback from the industry.” (Council member 2)

Despite these few instances of minor modifications, there have been no significant modifications in the adoption of international accounting and auditing standards in Sri Lanka. However, this adoption of international standards without

modifications have predominantly served the interests of global businesses including multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms, often at the expense of local businesses. The major impetus for CA Sri Lanka to emphasise the interests of global businesses is the fact that a majority of its members serve these multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms. Therefore, CA Sri Lanka has chosen to facilitate the operations of these global businesses to enhance global mobility for its members. Further exploration of this will be provided in the hybridity section.

Mimicking global discourses and practices in curriculum development

In parallel to the adoption of IFRSs/IAS and ISA, CA Sri Lanka embarked on adopting IESs. In collaboration with ICAEW, CA Sri Lanka developed its 2010-2015 curriculum in compliance with IESs to meet IFAC membership obligations. In 2010, with ICAEW's consultation, CA Sri Lanka benchmarked its curriculum against both IESs and ICAEW curriculum. This benchmarking exercise confirmed that the CA Curriculum complies with IESs and is compatible with the ICAEW curriculum.

“The overall conclusion of the benchmarking comparison is that the proposed new CA Sri Lanka qualification programme satisfies IFAC requirements for professional education. This provides a general indication that CA Sri Lanka’s qualification is not incompatible with the ICAEW ACA. The second stage of the review comprised a detailed matching exercise where topics in the CA Sri Lanka syllabuses were matched with topics from the ICAEW’s ACA qualification. The overall conclusion of the matching exercise is that ICAEW ACA knowledge areas are sufficiently covered by the CA Sri Lanka 2010 syllabus.” (CA Curriculum, 2010).

This adoption of IESs manifests the dual articulation of mimicry. On one hand it is “an elusive and effective strategy of the colonizer to force periphery to emulate western models, which implies a certain cultural convergence between the two and an effort to make the unfamiliar familiar” (Bhabha, 2012, pp. 85&86). Below comments illustrate the forceful nature of these international standards.

“We have no option. Being a IFAC member, compliance with IESs is a mandatory requirement.” (Council member 2)

“As a full member of the International Federation of Accountants CA Sri Lanka is committed to implement IESs requirements. Hence, CA curriculum fulfils the requirement of IFAC and the IESs.” (CA Curriculum,2020)

On the other hand, it “emerges as the representation of a difference” (Bhabha, 2012, p. 86). Mimicry is not a passive or obedient copying of the colonizer's practices. Instead, through mimicry, the colonized can subtly challenge and disrupt the power dynamics imposed by the colonizer, adding their own agency into the borrowed cultural forms. For instance, CA Sri Lanka leveraged the adoption of IESs as an opportunity to negotiate MRA with ICAEW. The CA Sri Lanka realised the alignment of its curriculum with IESs, in consultation of ICAEW would inherently make it compatible with ICAEW curriculum. This led CA Sri Lanka to pursue negotiations for an MRA with ICAEW. This underscores the agency of the local institute in adopting IESs.

“The topic matching exercise shows that the CA Curriculum 2015 contains the vast majority (over 99%) of the more than 220 topics contained in the ICAEW ACA (leaving aside the detail of law and taxation modules). The overall conclusion of the exercise is that ICAEW ACA knowledge areas are covered by the CA Curriculum 2015. The conclusions referred to above reflect the conclusions of the benchmark review of the CA Curriculum 2015 undertaken by ICAEW.” (CA Curriculum,2015)

“If you are a current, fully qualified member of CA Sri Lanka with at least five years’ of full membership you may be eligible to apply for ICAEW membership under the Pathways to Membership route.” (CA Sri Lanka,2018).

“A student who completes corporate level of CA Sri Lanka has to do the strategic level [final level] whereas ICAEW has advanced level [final level]. So, we came to understanding. If our student who have completed corporate level, can take the advanced level of ICAEW and get the membership of both institutions.” (Past President 2)

Figure 6.1: MRA with ICAEW



Source: CA Sri Lanka official Facebook page

Subsequently, in the effort to enhance global mobility for its members, CA Sri Lanka expanded these MRA beyond ICAEW to encompass ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia. These MRAs led CA Sri Lanka to mimic the professional curricular of these global PABs, in the development of its own curriculum.

“Whenever we develop our curriculum to a greater extent possible align our curriculum with theirs [global PABs]. When there are more and more overlaps, we can get more and more exemptions. ACCA we have total exemptions. ACCA is very popular in Middle east and Maldives. CPA Australia full reciprocal membership like wise. Our members can migrate to key markets and practice in those markets.” (Council member 3)

In order to facilitate the adoption of IESs and implementation of MRAs, CA Sri Lanka has engaged an international publisher to develop its study texts. This resembles the approach adopted by global PABs like ACCA, CIMA, and ICAEW in the development of their study texts.

“Our study packs are developed by BPP. We started this in 2015. This was possible because we adopt international standards [IFRSs and ISAs] and practices in the local context.” (Council member 1)

This mimicry of international standards and practices has constructed the local professional accounting body as a partial copy of an international professional accounting body; thus a new cultural identity has been formed for the local institute which is 'globalised local professional body' (Young, 2016).

However, the mimicry of global curricular has negative implications for the local profession. These global curricular reproduce the Western values, systems and priorities to the exclusion of issues pertinent to developing countries (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). For instance, in the mimicry of global curricular, the CA Curriculum largely ignored the knowledge relevant to two of the most significant contributors of the economy which is the public sector and small and medium size enterprises (SMEs).

“State-owned enterprises (SOEs) play a strategic role in the national economy. Their vast asset base of almost 43 percent of the GDP is larger than the market capitalisation of all the listed companies in the Colombo Stock Exchange. The elimination of prevailing losses made by state-owned business enterprises could alone bring about an economic turnaround, and improved financial reporting has a significant role to play in this for (a) better and informed management decision-making; (b) improved oversight, assessment of fiscal risk, and governance of SOEs; and (c) greater transparency and accountability.” (World Bank, 2015, p. IV)

“Public sector and NGOs side, I would say it is not being addressed at this moment by the CA curriculum.” (Professional Education Provider 2)

“We mostly look at these high-profile businesses and we teach all the 41 accounting standards. But SME is just a small lesson. SME is like two page lesson in our study text. What we just highlight is, what are the differences between accounting standards for SMEs, and full set of accounting standards? What are the similarities? But we have 300 odd PLCs and all together as far as I know specified business enterprises the number is like 600 whereas we have like 60,000 odd private companies in Sri Lanka and there are like several hundred thousands of sole proprietorships and partnerships. But what we teach in our syllabus is for that 600 and we are not giving enough focus to the SME sector which is the largest sector. You learn all these complex accounting standards like you know SLFRS 13 and SLFRS 9 and you go to SMEs, and they will say, look here we don't have that.” (Professional Education Provider 2)

CA Sri Lanka's disregard for these contextual considerations suggests that in its quest for global mobility for its members through the mimicry of global discourses and practices, local contextual factors are less relevant.

Accordingly, during the neo-liberal era in the country, CA Sri Lanka has gradually evolved from a facilitator of British capital to a facilitator of global capital. In parallel, CA Sri Lanka expanded its mimicry of ICAEW practices to encompass the practices and discourses of globalisation project of accountancy profession.

6.4.3 Hybridity: globalised local profession

In neo-liberalism, the expansion of CA Sri Lanka's engagement from ICAEW to globalisation project of accountancy profession has reshaped its hybrid identity from British-inspired local profession to globalised local profession. In this section, I analyse how and why the CA Sri Lanka has reformed its identity by drawing from practices and discourses of globalisation project of accountancy profession during the neo-liberal era in Sri Lanka.

Engaging transnational standard setters: local standards in par with global

Following the liberalisation of the economy, multinational corporations and global network of professional firms made a remarkable presence in Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017). The country's business environment is characterised by the presence of top multinational companies such as Unilever, Nestle, Pfizer, HSBC, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Dialog, IFS, John Keels Holdings, and Aitken Spence, as well as Big 4 professional firms (Deloitte, PwC, EY, and KPMG) and middle-tier professional firms such as Grant Thornton, Baker Tilly, BDO Partners, and Mazars (World Bank, 2015). Recognising the lucrative opportunities these multinational companies and professional firms present for its members, the local institute began to serve as a facilitator for these global entities.

As a facilitator of global businesses, one big move of the institute was changing its approach to adopting international accounting and auditing standards. From 1995 to 2011, CA Sri Lanka adopted IASs and ISA with modifications. However, since

1 January 2012 CA began to adopt IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications. CA Sri Lanka perceives the unmodified adoption of these international standards, as a way to form a global identity to local institute through its engagement with transnational standard setters. They take great pride in this achievement, believing that full compliance with international standards enhances global recognition for the local institute.

“Unlike India or China, when we adopt an international standard, we adopt the same version.”, his face showing evident pride [Council member 1]

“If we modify international accounting and auditing standards, we cannot claim that we are in full compliance with IFRSs and ISA.” [Council member 2]

Some members went so far as to implicitly unsettle and undermine the cultural authority of global PABs while reconstructing their global identity through the engagement of transnational standard setters (Werbner, 2001; Yousfi, 2014). They perceive that becoming a member of IFAC, grant them the equal status to a global PAB.

“I think following IFAC standards guarantee that we are also same as other IFAC members. It shows CA Sri Lanka is equal to other international professional bodies” (Professional education provider 2)

Through this pursuit of global identity, the local institute aimed to enhance global mobility of its members in two ways. First, it attracts and facilitates global capital (multinational corporations and global network of professional firms) in the local context, thereby providing lucrative opportunities for its members within the country. Second, it creates overseas opportunities for its members.

“...FDIs evaluate our accounting practices before they come here. If they find there is no difference between their country and our country, it is an easy comparison for them and there is no additional cost to them. In the same way our members have cross border opportunities and increase their mobility. Because there are no changes in the accounting and auditing standards we adopt here verses standards in the UK or Australia.” (Council member 2)

“Our members are either CEOs or CFOs in big PLCs [MNCs] like JKH, Aitken Spence, Hayleys, etc, they are better off.” (Council member 3)

“Firms like us [Big 4 firms] usually provide opportunities for [local] CAs to have a global exposure by sending them overseas. Proficiency in IFRSs and ISA mean they can quickly get used to the working environment there” (Committee member 4)

“I think the main advantage of adoption of international standards by CA Sri Lanka is that a [local] Chartered Accountant would be suitable to work anywhere in the world.” (Professional Accounting Education Provider 2)

These comments illustrate the agency of the local institute in adopting international standards in the local profession (Kaifala et al., 2019; Nandy, 1983). By collaborating with transnational standard setters, the local institute has sought to create a reformed identity, transforming itself into a globalised local institute. In its pursuit of this reformed identity, the local institute has actively engaged in a cognitive venture for survival, emancipation and empowerment of its members (Nandy, 1983). This finding corresponds the experience of Sierra-Leone accountancy profession, where local professional accountants sought to achieve global mobility by reforming a hybrid identity through ACCA (Kaifala et al., 2019).

Local qualification in par with global

In neo-liberalism, CA Sri Lanka has sought to create a global identity for its qualification. The major impetus for this has been enhancing the global mobility of its members. In this endeavour, one significant step of CA Sri Lanka was the adoption of IESs in the development of its curriculum.

“In the curriculum development we adopt the international accepted norms which is International Education Standards by IFAC”. (Council member 2)

CA Sri Lanka utilised the adoption of IESs as a strategic opportunity to negotiate MRA with global PABs. This manifests CA Sri Lanka’s agency in the adoption of IESs. Currently, CA Sri Lanka has established MRAs with all globally recognised PABs, including ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia, and CA ANZ. The local institute takes great pride in the global mobility they have created for its members.

“The moment you land in other country, for instance New Zealand or Australia, you are an employable professional unlike the other profession where you have to get the local qualification to get the placement. We haven’t seen any of our member in the waiting list. That is the mobility we created for our members.” his face showing evident pride (Council member 1)

“40% of our members are now overseas. Every week 4 people go to Canada. Reciprocal arrangement with international PABs is a wonderful platform for our members.” his face showing evident pride (Council member 3)

In reconstructing their global identity through MRAs with global PABs, some members went so far as to implicitly unsettle and undermine the cultural authority of global PABs (Werbner, 2001;Yousfi, 2014). They perceive, with the increasing adoption of MRAs, the distinction between local qualification and a global qualification is becoming blurred.

Currently, ACCA members can get the [local] chartered qualification after five years. [Local] chartered members can get the ACCA after five years which means it's like equal [qualifications]. (Professional education provider 2)

In implementing these MRAs, CA Sri Lanka has increasingly aligned its curriculum with that of Global PABs.

“In securing the cross-border mobility of its members, in the development of curriculum the CA Sri Lanka works hard to align its curriculum with global PABs. This has helped us to enter into MRAs with several global PABs.” (Council member 3)

In order to enhance the global identity of its local qualification, the institute has recently partnered with international publisher, BPP to develop their study texts. CA Sri Lanka perceives several benefits in their collaboration, which they have detailed as follows:

“BPP has got its own brand reputation internationally in the education sector. We have attached their brand reputation to ours also.” (Council member 1)

“We want to enhance quality. Simple as that. If you take accounting, auditing and financial management we are in par with British curriculum. Therefore, it is an easy job for them also. We have MRAs with international accounting bodies. In that, BPP has done our study text also matter.” (Council member 3)

Moreover, in the pursuit of global identity for its qualification, CA Sri Lanka recently sought a benchmarking study from UK ENIC, the UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills. This study resulted in CA Sri Lanka qualification being accredited at the level of a master’s degree.

“CA Sri Lanka has taken steps to benchmark its qualification in line with Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) to further enhance the recognition of the CA Qualification globally. As per the outcome of ENIC benchmarking project....CA Qualification has been benchmarked as a qualification comparable to RQF level 7, which is a master’s degree standard.” (CA Sri Lanka,2022)

These initiatives highlight the agential role of the local institute in shaping a hybrid identity for its local qualification, transforming it into globalised local qualification (Kaifala et al., 2019;Nandy, 1983).

Degree for global mobility

Another recent initiative aimed at enhancing the global mobility of its members, CA Sri Lanka ventured into offering degree programmes in accounting. In 2013, CA Sri Lanka launched its B.Sc. Degree in Applied Accounting. The major impetus for this initiative was to support its members with securing visas and work permit in certain foreign countries. Additionally, as CA Sri Lanka negotiates MRAs with professional bodies in Australia, New Zealand and Canada where degree is a prerequisite for membership, it became evident that a degree was essential for its members. In response to these needs, the local institute launched a degree programme in accounting that provides significant exemptions to its members.

“When we look at the mobility of our members, sometimes when we want to enter into MRAs with other professional bodies elsewhere in the world. They look at the first degree of the member also. In certain countries, degree is a minimum qualification to enter into a profession. At the

moment there is an issue for us to entering into MRAs. In our case degree is not the minimum entry qualification. In such a context it is good to encourage our students to get the degree also along with the CA Qualification. It would be helpful sometimes when securing visa and work permit; additional mark would be given to academic qualification.”
(Council member 1)

Accordingly, during the neo-liberal era in the country, CA Sri Lanka, by replicating discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, has striven to reshape its identity into that of a globalised local institute, thereby enhancing global mobility for its members.

6.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter explored how the ambivalence of key constituents of CA Sri Lanka has led the replication of global accountancy discourses and practices by the local institute, resulting in the formation of a global identity through which it pursued global mobility for its members. In this, I first discussed the evolution of accounting practice in Sri Lanka during the British colonial era, as an understanding of colonial legacies enhances the postcolonial analysis of the evolution of local PAB in post-colonial era. Subsequently, I analysed the emergence and historical evolution of the local PAB in its engagement of ICAEW until the beginning of neo-liberalism in Sri Lanka using three postcolonial notions: ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. This analysis revealed that the development of CA Sri Lanka during this period reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global discourses and practices by both the government of Sri Lanka and the governing council of CA Sri Lanka. This led CA Sri Lanka to reproduce the practices of ICAEW, including adopting the English Institute model, with a strong emphasis on auditing practice, curriculum, examinations, and a five-year practical training period (Yapa, 2010). Drawing heavily on these ICAEW practices, the founders of CA Sri Lanka sought to establish a hybrid identity for the local institute, shaping it into a ‘British-inspired local institute’.

Finally, I examined the historical evolution of CA Sri Lanka in its engagement with globalisation project of accountancy profession during the neo-liberal period in Sri Lanka, using the same three postcolonial concepts. The evolution of CA Sri

Lanka during this period reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global accountancy discourses and practices by the government and CA Sri Lanka members representing both global and local business interests. During the neo-liberal period, CA Sri Lanka expanded its mimicry beyond ICAEW practices to include those of globalisation project of accountancy profession, encompassing global PABs, transnational standard setters, and transnational financiers. This included adopting IFRSs and ISA, maintaining MRAs with global PABs, and implementing capacity building projects. The expansion of CA Sri Lanka's engagement from practices of ICAEW to discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession transformed its hybrid identity from a 'British-inspired local profession' into a 'globalised local profession'. Through this pursuit of global identity, the local institute aimed to enhance global mobility of its members.

The insights gathered from this chapter will be critical discussed in chapter 8. In light of the findings from this chapter, the next chapter explores how and why university accounting education in Sri Lanka engages with global accountancy discourses and practices. This will help determine whether the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree program shares a goal similar to that of CA Sri Lanka in reproducing global accountancy discourses and practices or if it has an alternative pursuit.

CHAPTER 7: NAVIGATING GLOBAL IDENTITY: AMBIVALENCE, MIMICRY, AND HYBRIDITY IN UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTING EDUCATION

7.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to understand the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. In the present day, local accounting degree programmes of ex-colonies extensively engage with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession in the construction of a hybrid identity for their degree programmes (Hopper et al., 2017). However, the reproduction of these global discourses and practices in university accounting education in ex-colonies is not straightforward. The ‘ambivalence’ of colonial/post-colonial subjects and institutions, results in this reproduction being characterised by a complex mix of resistance and complicity.

In this context, this chapter addresses the second research question of the study: How does an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession? First, I explore how the ‘ambivalence’ surrounding the university accounting education shapes the historical evolution of the pursuit and practices of the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka. Next, I delve into how the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession are replicated in the emergence and maintenance of this degree programme. Finally, I examine how and why the local degree programme has constructed a hybrid identity. This analysis will help determine whether, by reproducing global accountancy discourses and practices, the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme aims to achieve a goal similar to that of CA Sri Lanka: global mobility for its members. The insights gathered from this chapter will be critical discussed in the next chapter.

7.2 Ambivalence: liberal and native vs professional and English

The notion of ambivalence in post-colonial literature means a complex mix of complicity and resistance involves in the colonizer-colonized relationship (Bhabha, 2012) . It refers to a mentality where the colonized simultaneously manifest accommodation and resistance to colonial discourses and practices. In my empirical enquiry, I witnessed, the emergence and maintenance of university accounting education in Sri Lanka involves a complex mix of complicity and resistance to practices and discourses of globalisation project of accountancy profession. In post-independent Sri Lanka, aligning with the expectations of the nationalist governments, the academia has evolved from instructions in English to native languages (Sinhala and Tamil). Additionally, vocationally oriented degree programmes introduced in 1960s have maintained a balance of liberal and professional values. Academics advocating this educational philosophy, have resisted the exclusive focus on professional values in the country's first accounting degree programmes introduced in 1991. Conversely, another segment of academics who strongly believes that vocational degrees should primarily emphasise on professional values and be taught in English. Thus, they have been complicit with practices and discourses of globalisation project of accountancy profession in constructing the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka. In this section, I delve into how this complex mix of complicity and resistance to discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession has been manifested in the university accounting education, with reference to the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka.

By the time Sri Lanka gained independence from British rule in 1948, the only university in the country was University of Ceylon established in 1943 (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). It was an Oxbridge tradition university dedicated for liberal arts education taught in English (De Silva, 1978). This university intended to produce socially conscious local graduates who would primarily serve in the colonial administration, which was the main source of employment in the colonial territories (Warnapala, 2011). Resembling the tradition of British universities, the University of Ceylon adopted an anti-vocational stance. Thus, commerce was not offered as a separate stream of study;

instead, a few related subjects were taught under study programmes in the Faculty of Arts (Fonseka et al., 2019). Consequently, university accounting education was absent during British colonial rule in Ceylon.

In post-independent Sri Lanka, civil society pressured the administrators with nationalist and decolonising discourses, criticising English-medium instructions for reproducing European liberalism rather than fostering locally relevant knowledge (Warnapala, 2011). In response, the nationalist government that came to power in 1956, raised the status of two Pirivenas of higher learning (institutes for Buddhist Monks), experienced in teaching in Sinhala medium to fully-fledged universities to promote teaching different disciplines in native languages (Sinhala and Tamil), predominantly Sinhala (De Silva, 1978). The Pirivenas of Vidyodaya (established in 1873) and Vidyalandara (established in 1875), headed by learned Buddhist monks, had an excellent record for nearly nine decades as premier seats of Buddhism and oriental learning in the island were converted by the Act of parliament, No. 45 of 1958 into two independent universities namely, Vidyodaya University of Ceylon, (now USJ), and Vidyalandara University Of Ceylon (now University of Kelaniya) to advance education in native languages. Concurrently, the University of Ceylon had to switch its teaching from English to native languages. The greatest demand for these three universities came from arts-qualified secondary school leavers which recorded at 57.5 percent in 1959 and 76.1 in 1966 (Gunawardena, 1982).

The graduates educated in native languages from these universities were intended to meet the social and economic needs of the country, as part of the nation state building project initiated by the nationalist government. These graduates were predominantly employed in the state-controlled enterprises and other public sector entities, which dominated the economy until neo-liberal turn in Sri Lanka in 1977. However, the state-controlled economy could not accommodate the unprecedented expansion of higher education, resulting in educated unemployment in the country (Hettige, 2000). Among the various measures employed by policy makers to address this issue, 'vocalization of university curriculum', which emphasised the employability of graduates was proven

successful to a greater extent in reducing the graduate unemployment (Gunawardena, 1982).

Consequently, degree programmes with more economic and social relevance were incorporated into the arts curriculum (Warnapala, 2011). The Vidyodaya University of Ceylon was the first university to introduce bachelor's degrees in business administration and public administration in 1960 (Fonseka et al., 2019). Following this, University of Ceylon (now University of Peradeniya) in 1962 and Vidyodaya University of Ceylon in 1973 introduced Bachelor of Commerce degree programmes (Fonseka et al., 2019). Subsequently, several other universities, including Kelaniya, Jaffna, Colombo, and Ruhuna, launched commerce and management degree programmes between 1976 and 1992. In these degree programmes, accounting was taught as a subject.

However, this vocational shift in higher education did not imply that university degree programmes should completely abandon liberal arts education. Rather, it advocated for a balance between liberal education and vocational education in university degree programmes. This was emphasised by the Thistlewaite Commission (Ceylon-Canada External Aid Review Committee) in 1967 as follows:

“while a university must always be concerned to provide the students with a liberal education, it must also provide them with socially useful skills; that whenever possible, courses of study should be given a vocational emphasis in accordance with projections of manpower needs where these are available.” (Gunawardena, 1982, p. 63)

This was echoed in the thoughts of Ven. Weliwitiye Sri Soratha Thero, the first vice chancellor of Vidyodaya University of Ceylon who introduced the first vocationally oriented degree programmes in Sri Lanka.

“Our mission extends beyond producing employable graduates; we aspire to enrich society with intellect and cultivate a culture of thoughtfulness”. (Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, 2024b, p. 5)

In this context, the first attempt to establish an accounting degree programme was made in 1985 at USJ. The proposal was developed by a three-member committee consisting of the Dean of FMSC at USJ, Director of Studies at CA Sri

Lanka, and a Senior Lecturer in Department of Business Administration at FMSC, who is also a Chartered Accountant (Fonseka et al., 2019). They designed a four-year bachelor's degree in accounting that included two years of practical experience. This model was inspired by the local (globalised, as argued in the previous chapter) and global PABs, where a professional curriculum and practical experience were integral to the qualification. However, this proposal confronted a significant resistance from academics at USJ. They criticised the program for not sufficiently differentiating between the proposed degree and professional qualifications, for including a two-year practical component, and for selecting of English as medium of instruction for the degree programme. As a result, faculty board did not grant approval for the proposal (Fonseka et al., 2019). Reflecting on these challenges during an interview, one of the founders of the accounting degree programme recalled these criticisms as follows:

“... there are so many professional bodies in Sri Lanka why you are going to start this accounting degree programpractical training is not for the academic degrees it is for either the technical college or the professional bodiesWhy are you planning to offer this degree programme in English. You try to deprive the rural students as they completed their secondary education in local language [Sinhala or Tamil].” (Professor 1)

In 1989, the proposal was revived under the leadership of the Dean of FMSC. He appointed a three-member committee of young academics, who were also Chartered Accountants. These committee members, representing the fields of Business Administration, Public Administration, and Commerce, brought transparency, representativeness, and a liberal outlook to the process, which significantly enhanced acceptability of the proposal (Fonseka et al., 2019). The committee addressed the criticisms of the previous proposal. They enhanced the academic rigour of the proposed degree by introducing an accounting theory course and offering research as an optional course, thereby distinguish the proposed degree from professional qualifications. Furthermore, they incorporated several Computer and Information Technology course units featuring hands-on experience for the first time in vocationally oriented degree programmes. The inclusion of practical training was justified by emphasising the necessity of hands-on experience in accounting practice, akin to that required in medical and engineering fields. English was chosen as the medium of instruction, supported by

extensive training in English throughout the four years of the degree programme (see Figure 7.1). Senior academics involved in this degree programme elaborated on these aspects as follows:

“...We are not looking for prior English knowledge whoever is prepared to do an accounting degree, we enrol them, and we train them. We offered business communication courses in all four years. In first two year, Monday to Friday 8-10 a.m. we set aside for teaching English [Business Communication]we introduced IT course units into degree programme and also, we provided hands on experience on computers right from the first year of the degree programme.....we highlighted, you see the medical degrees because of the clinical training of their degree they are suitable to work as a doctor then how come the other graduate qualified to do a respectable job without having practical training so that's a kind counter argument, we created... accounting is a profession. So how can they practice without practical knowledge? So, always we get the example from medical faculties and the engineering faculties.” [Professor 1]

“In order to provide students with theoretical and conceptual understanding to the degree programme, from the inception we introduced accounting theory subject and research project [optional course]” (Retired Senior Professor 1)

Figure 7.1: First curriculum of the degree programme

Table 3.1: The structure of the study programme, 1991

Degree Part I	Degree Part III	
1. Financial Accounting I and II	1. Computer Based Accounting	Note 1: During the third and fourth year students were required to undergo practical training in Accounting and Finance under the supervision of professionally qualified accountants.
2. Cost Accounting	2. Auditing and Professional Practice	
3. Micro-Economics	3. Financial Management	
4. Business Mathematics	4. Corporate Law	
5. Management Process I and II	5. Marketing Management	
6. Information Technology and Computer Application for Business Theory and Practical)	6. Business Communication	
7. Business Communication	7. Practical Training (under supervision of a member of a Professional Accounting Body) (Refer Note 1)	
Degree Part II	Degree Part IV	Note 2: Elective Subjects (one of the following):
1. Advanced Financial Accounting	1. Advanced Accounting Theory	1. Advanced Auditing
2. Management Accounting	2. Financial and Investment Analysis	2. Issues in Company Financial Reporting
3. Macro-Economics	3. Taxation	3. Research Report (Accounting, Finance or Auditing)
4. Business Statistics and Operations Research	4. Business Communication	4. System Analysis and Advanced Programming Techniques
5. Commercial Law	5. Public Sector Accounting and Finance	5. Strategic Management
6. Database Management with Computers (Theory and Practical)	6. Elective (Refer Note 1 below)	6. Production Management
7. Business Communication	7. Practical Training (under supervision of a member of a Professional Accounting Body)	7. Human Resource Management

Along an Untrodden Path 31

Source: Along an Untrodden Path: Twenty-Five Years of DA, p. 31

At the invitation of the Dean, the team presented the proposal to the Faculty Board in September 1989. With the charismatic leadership of the Dean of FMSC, the proposal successfully passed at Faculty Board.

“A member of the committee reminisces that hardly a question was raised during question time.” (Fonseka et al., 2019, p. 28)

The University Grant Commission approved the implementation plan for this proposal in February 1991 (Fonseka et al., 2019). Consequently, the DA at FMSC of the USJ introduced the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka in 1992.

This historical milestone marks a critical turn in management education in Sri Lanka. This accounting degree programme was the first in the country’s management education to transition from instruction in the native language to English. Additionally, this programme diverged from the tradition of liberal and vocational blend in vocationally oriented degrees, placing a strong emphasis on

vocational/professional values in a degree programme. For the first time in management education, this degree programme integrated practical experience as an essential component of its curriculum.

“By the time our degree was introduced, the main criticism against management degree programmes was lack of practical experience. In order to fill this gap, two-year internship programme was introduced. The other criticism for management graduates in general was they cannot work in English language which is the language of private sector business organisation. So, the degree was introduced in English medium.” (Senior Professor 1)

Consequently, the university education became more narrowly focused on the employability of graduates. These practices and discourses adopted in the degree programme were influenced by the local (globalised) and global PABs.

“What is the purpose of doing a degree if they can't get good opportunities in the market after the degree. And we can argue various way that education is not for jobs that is to uplift the standard of the people and various kind of argument we can put forward. But you see around the world, if we think about one degree where the demand is very high, it means the job is assured. For example, medical degrees all over the world, the demand is very high, right? Because after the graduation, the job is assured. Engineering also, the demand is very high, because of the degree, more often the job is assured.....to a certain extent we followed CA Sri Lanka practical training component. Same kind of practical training book, we printed in the department and same format we have maintained.... actually, from the very inception we continuously use the professional curriculum when developing our curriculum. We mainly targeted to get the exemption as much as possible.” (Professor 1)

According to the founders, the main purpose of introducing this accounting degree programme was to produce employable graduates to serve private sector. The turn towards neo-liberalism, following the liberalisation of the economy in 1977 encouraged the privatisation of state-owned industries (World Bank, 2015). These laissez-faire economic policies attracted many multinational corporations and professional firms to Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017). Despite the rapid growth of the private sector, there were limited employment opportunities for management and commerce graduates in the private sector. Consequently, at the time this degree programme was introduced, there was significant unemployment or under employment among management graduates in the country. Additionally, the global

and local (globalised) professional bodies were not producing sufficient number of accountants to meet the demand (Yapa, 2006). Capitalising this opportunity, a degree programme in accounting was initiated to address the unemployment and/or under employment of management graduates.

“.....those days actually main problem what we have encountered is the employability of graduate. Even though we produce the large number management graduate, more than 75 percent of the public administration, business administration and commerce graduate ultimately ended up being schoolteachers or unemployed. Those days CA Sri Lanka pass rate is very, very low. Sometime per year, less than 50, accountants produced. CIMA of course, only the affluent family members can do. So, professional qualification was limited to a very small crowd. Considering those aspects, we [co-founders] had a very casual discussion on how to tackle this problem. The solution was to start a dedicated degree program, an accounting degree program. So, from the very beginning, we focus on producing employable graduates. Our motto from the inception of the degree programme was employable graduates for global economy.”
(professor 1)

The pursuit of producing employable graduates to serve private sector dominated by multinational corporations and global professional firms during neo-liberalism, resembles the efforts of local (globalised) PAB, CA Sri Lanka and global PABs, including CIMA and ACCA in the local context. This manifests the complicity of this degree programme’s aim to produce employable graduates for the private sector with that of global and local PABs.

“What CA Sri Lanka do we follow to a certain extent. We are fully convinced with the notion that private sector is the thing.” (Retired Senior Professor 1)

Despite this complicity with PABs enabling the degree to secure 100% employability for its graduates, some academics of the department, continue to resist. They criticise the narrow focus on employability, akin to that of PABs, arguing that university accounting education should have broader pursuit and should be committed to incorporate liberal values of education. So, there would be no need university accounting education to be justified by the subsequent actions (employability), it would be a good in itself (Newman, 2010). In other words, university accounting education would be self-justifying and end in itself. Two senior lecturers expressed their views on this as follows:

“In university what we do must ultimately contribute for a person, even without being employed they should still be able to have a kind of satisfaction, kind of enlightenment. But as we operate now, if you don’t get employed you are totally frustrated, what I studied totally useless. No. Your study itself from the very right time of studying and realising concept you should have already been rewarded. No need to be employed or get the financial benefit. But nowadays, depending on what you study, there is no reward at all unless you find a job and draw a salary and convert those salary into materials. Only by associating those materials or digesting those materials you get the satisfaction. But satisfaction should come from your mind if you don’t cultivate your mind no point of putting all these ingredients to your life because you have not cultivated your mind, you haven’t understood the society, world, and life. So, you just earn and earn lot of money but there are lots of holes in your bucket. No point of filling it. Because it drains out.” (Senior Lecturer 1)

“My view is that the employment should be an outcome of the graduates that we produce. It shouldn’t be the main thing. From the very beginning we had this professional influence. But, after 30 years we need to think why we are here for; We have to relook at our very being. We need to question should we have this employment as the main thing or should it be an outcome. This employment mindset is reflected in our degree programme. Four-year degree programme two-year full employment. Degree becomes a part time agenda. Unfortunately, most of the academics of the department still believes that the existing model is correct. I don’t think this is the correct model. We need to have a serious internal dialogue on what is the purpose of making a graduate. Even we claim we produce wholesome graduate. We have not even defined what is wholesome graduate. We simply ended up producing technocrats.” (Senior Lecturer 3)

In a similar vein, one of the academics argued that universities should not assume the sole responsibility for producing work-ready graduates. Instead, business organisations should also play a role in this process.

“Ideally these industry organisations should be learning organisations. When we send a graduate to a particular organisation, that organisation should give an opportunity to this newly recruited graduate to grow with them. That’s why these organisations have HR function. They allocate resources for training and development. This implies they assume a responsibility for training and development of newcomer. If we understand that we should stop trying hard to make a graduate exactly fit for a particular organisation. We can prepare a graduate who can understand the work, sense the work, who has skills to adopt to any environment. People with these qualities, skills, values given an opportunity they will cope with the requirements of this organisation in a reasonable time.” (Senior Lecturer 1)

Further, some academics raised a concern of public interest. Despite the liberalisation of economy in 1977, state-owned enterprise continues to play a significant role in the economy and SMEs constitute a larger proportion of economy (World Bank, 2015). However, emphasising solely on producing employable graduates to serve global capital (multinational corporations and global professional firms) could hinder the ability of the degree programme to discharge its public interest obligations towards other constituencies such as the public sector and SMEs.

“State-owned enterprises (SOEs) play a strategic role in the national economy. Their vast asset base of almost 43 percent of the GDP is larger than the market capitalisation of all the listed companies in the Colombo Stock Exchange.” (World Bank, 2015, p. IV)

“We should pay par more attention to public sector and related matters in our degree programme. We have a bounded duty to strengthen that aspect [USJ is a state-funded university]. It is not fair by the country. You can create an interest in the public sector, develop a set of people interested in public sector. In the good old days [Early years of the degree programme], we had a one course unit on public sector accounting, over time it has faded away” (Retired Senior Professor 1)

“SMEs are the backbone of the country I mean most of the companies are SMEs or at least I mean how many public listed companies are in Sri Lanka? Only a few but we have a lot of non-listed private companies. There are lots of issues going on specially in a situation like today in Sri Lanka crisis situation, even if not a crisis we have to expose our students to our local scenarios.” (Senior Lecturer 4)

Despite this resistance from academics advocating for liberal values and commitment to locally relevant knowledge, the academic department remains strongly dedicated to replicating the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. This commitment is driven by their ultimate pursuit of producing employable graduates in service of global capital. The following section will explore how this accounting degree programme has reproduced the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession.

7.3 Mimicry: replicating global discourses and practices in academia

According to Bhabha (2012), the desire of colonized for a reformed identity drives colonized to mimic colonial discourses and practices. Mimicry is the “process by which the colonial subject is reproduced as almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 2012, p. 86). Therefore, the mimicry of colonial discourses and practices does not make the identity of the colonized identical to that of colonizer. Instead, it constructs the colonized as a partial copy of the colonizer, leading to the creation of a new cultural identity: the postcolonial hybrid (Young, 2016). In its quest for a professionally oriented global identity, this degree programme replicates the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. In replicating these global discourses and practices, the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka often acts as an intermediary. As argued in the previous chapter, CA Sri Lanka reforms its global identity by adopting the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. In striving for a global identity, this degree programme often reproduces these global discourses and practices, as adopted by the local (globalised) PAB. Apart from that, this degree programme also directly engages with discourses and practices of global PABs, in its pursuit of a professionally oriented global identity. In this section, I explore how the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka has replicated the global accountancy discourses and practices in its quest for a professionally oriented global identity.

The model of this degree programme, which consists of four-year curriculum with two years of practical training, closely resembles that of a PAB. This resemblance is largely due to the involvement of Chartered Accountants in academia who plays a significant role in the development and maintenance of this degree programme. Notably, the two founders of this degree programme are locally qualified Chartered Accountants (Fonseka et al., 2019). Additionally, over 70% of the academic staff are professionally qualified members (Department of Accounting, 2024a). These professionals, serving as primary interpreters of the new rules, structures and systems have reinforced the profession’s power and legitimacy within academia (Suddaby and Viale, 2011). Consequently, their professional exposure has profoundly influenced the development and maintenance of this degree programme.

Many academics in the department argue that replicating a professional model in academia is essential, because accounting being a technical practice, university accounting education should predominantly emphasise on technical skills. They hold that this technical skill emphasis would convince the market the work readiness of graduates thereby creates better employability prospects for them. One senior professor elaborated on this during an interview as follows:

“...accounting is a calculative practice. Although it is a degree a heavy dose of practice to be included. This increases the attraction of the degree to the industry. Even without a professional qualification our graduates would have served the purpose [needs of the employers].” (Retired Senior Professor 1)

This emphasis of *how-to-do* teaching (professional values) instead of *how-to-think* teaching (academic values) is a key routinising mechanism that professionally qualified academics employ in maintaining a profession inspired institution (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). As a result, this degree programme simply inculcates students into the current conventional ways of accounting practice, leaving the status quo unchallenged (Gray and Mckernan, 2000). However, it fails to empower students to appreciate accounting as a social and moral practice (Carnegie et al., 2021).

7.3.1 Heavy component of internship

Similar to a professional accounting qualification, this degree programme includes a substantial practical training component. Academics hold that the practical training is crucial for the employability of its graduates. In implementing the practical training requirement of the degree, they have replicated the practical training practices of local (globalised) PAB. Several academics elaborated on this during their interviews as follows:

“The main reason for introducing a two-year practical experience is to gain acceptance from the market. By the time we introduce our degree most of the management graduates were unemployed or under employed... the main criticism against management degree programmes was lack of practical experience. In order to fill this gap, two-year internship programme was introduced.” (Senior Professor 1)

“To a certain extent we followed CA Sri Lanka practical training component. Same kind of practical training book, we printed in the department and same format we have maintained.” (Professor 1)

Initially, the department struggled to secure internship placements for its first batch of students. However, by the time next batch was ready to start internship, training providers began approaching the department to seek students for placements. This shift was due to the commitment of the department’s founders and the outstanding performance of the first batch of students in their workplaces. By the early 2000s, the degree programme had become well established in the market. Overtime, this momentum increased further. Currently, more than 15 training providers including Big Four firms and well-known multinational corporations, visits the department to recruit trainees.

“To find placement for first batch of students we struggled a lot. I can remember prof.... (co-founder) and I personally visit these private sector people and had discussions with them. There was a civil uprising in 1988 and 1989. So, the private sector people had the attitude that the university students heavily involved with this movement. Then we had to assure them that our small batch of students are not troublemakers. Eventually they agreed to provide placement for our students. Things have started to change after the first batch of students. Mindset of private audit firms completely changed. It is an achievement of our students. They worked hard in their workplaces and that changed the attitude of their employers. From the second batch onwards, xx [one of the Big Four firms] used to visit the university and recruit students.” (Professor 1)

“We have signed MOU [Memoranda of understanding] with over 20 training providers, including EY, KPMG, PwC, Deloitte, BDO, Nihal Hettiarachchi, and multinationals such as JKH, HSBC, Moody’s Analytics, etc. They annually conduct awareness sessions for our students prior to their internship. They invite our students to apply for internship placement in their organisations.” (Senior Professor 1)

Although, the internship programme helps to secure employability for its graduates, some academics resist for having such a heavy internship component in the degree programme. Specifically, they pointed out that it compromises academic values such as critical and creative thinking, conceptualisation, reflections, reflexivity, and research that should have been integral to a degree programme (Sangster, 2010). Several academics involved in the degree programme elaborated on this during their interviews as follows:

“If you [are] thinking of a good degree perhaps you could cut down the years of experience. May be three years in the university and one year outside. You could enrich the other courses and bring down the stress of students. I know students are exhausted, they are like dead souls, they can’t concentrate, they are just sitting there, they can’t absorb much due to fatigue, even though they are young. They don’t ask the questions, one thing because of the tradition other thing is they are tired....If they work in a less stressful environment, their creativity likely to rise. University degrees are meant to develop thinkers. Students’ critical thinking [and] conceptualisation should be strengthened but for that you have some more time. Despite so much of opposition [for 2-year internship programme] coming from the faculty (business school), we firmly hold on to what we practice.” (Professor 2)

“Our students’ perception is, they would enter the accounting department and then they will have the professional qualification and have a job. I don’t think they see a better or wider perspective in the degree programme. All this critical thinking, philosophical insights, I don’t think they have time to develop or even to think of. Not only students but even the academics. Most of the academics who joined the department went through this cycle. They are diehard academics who save this internship of two years. Do we really need to have this after 30 years [since the degree programme has initiated] when the world has changed so much. If you look at our research profiles, you know how hard we find time to do research. It’s because of this external relationships and internship matters. Our young academics don’t have time. I know the agony that they undergo.” (Senior Lecturer 2)

Apart from that, some academics raised their doubt as to whether it necessarily takes two years to gain the desired exposure through an internship, suggesting that a shorter duration, could provide adequate practical experience without compromising students’ opportunities for critical academic learning and broader university experiences.

“The duration of two year, is a very significant part of our degree program. But to get that exposure, maybe period of six months would be adequate. So, this two-year period is too much, whereas they have to sacrifice, compromise with the time that they could have spent within the university to gain lots of experience, exposures actually to enhance their learning. That’s not happening. They get a degree, but learning doesn’t take place.... we never do a critical analysis of what we have learned. There is no real evidence available that we have improved our performance just because of training because I also my myself had covered this article for more than two years then I realised so that all the things that I learned are not connected to my degree like just doing the things and learning being with them mixing with them. So they are like even within six months’ time, could have been done.” (Professor 3)

Similarly, some undergraduates and academics highlighted the exploitative nature of internships at Big Four firms during their interviews.

“We don’t even get the transportation coverage from the allowance we are getting. So my parents are spending to send me to office that’s what’s happening....I am a senior audit associate. They pay me LKR 13,000 (£31, £1=LKR420). Our firm is I think it’s the lowest paying firm among all the big four firms.... In our firm, they don’t recruit many people. They are very understaffed. What they do is putting the same person to two to three audits at the same time. Balancing academic work and also doing the audits is very hard because we are not just doing the audit, we have the degree and also, we have CA to follow. So, it’s very challenging to balance the academics.” (Undergraduate 7)

“It’s just giving cheap labour for two years for audit firms and other organisation” (Professor 1)

Despite these resistances, DA remains steadfast in maintaining its two-year internship component. Even after 30 odd years from the inception of the degree programme, the DA continues to uphold this requirement, as it is crucial for employability of its graduates.

“Accounting and Financial Management Skills are subject specific skills, which are developed through the two-year Internship Programme in Accounting and Finance. The internship programme is offered as two courses - ACC 3475 Internship in Accounting and Finance I (Year 3) and ACC 4673 Internship in Accounting and Finance II (Year 4).”(Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, 2024a, p. 18)

Consequently, incorporating a significant component of internship is a key routinising mechanism adopted by academics in the DA to maintain its status as a profession inspired institution (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013).

7.3.2 Dedicated curriculum for professional training

Like in case of practical training, from its inception the DA has reproduced the curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs. Several practices adopted by DA have facilitated this replication of professional curricular in academia. One such practice is the engagement with members of PABs in developing the DA’s curriculum. The major impetus for this collaboration was to assure the private

sector employers that DA undergraduates/graduates are well-prepared to meet their needs. To ensure that the university accounting curriculum aligns with the private sector expectations, the DA sought the expertise of pioneering members of PABs during the initial curriculum development. This collaboration ensured that the university accounting curricular closely resembles that of global and local (globalised) PABs. During interviews, some academics shared their view on this as follows:

“We are catering to the profession. Hence, in the development of initial curriculums representatives from professional bodies were involved in the process. This was essential because you have to gain access to market through these people. I could remember in the 10th anniversary celebration conference, a partner of [middle tier] Audit firm was so happy because they were involved in the initial curriculum developments.” (Senior Professor 1)

“In the inception of the degree a larger number of council members of CA Sri Lanka helped us to develop our curriculum. Not only that, but they also helped us to find good lecturers because early stage of the department most of the lecturers were conducted on visiting basis.” (Professor 1)

Engagement with professionals in the development of curriculum has grown exponentially over time. The department has consistently sought support from industry experts for university curriculum development through various formal and informal engagements. Periodically, the department engages in dialogue with industry representatives to gather insights for improving the curriculum, to achieve better employability prospects for its students. In addition to these formal engagements, the members of the department also have informal conversation with members of PABs regarding curriculum matters.

“The department organised Employers Forum to deliberate on the curriculum revision and the Skill Development Programme of Intern Accountants in 2013.” (Fonseka et al., 2019, p. 159)

“During the times of our curriculum development, I often have telephone conversations with some of our alumni members including Mr....[former President CA Sri Lanka] and Mr....[Current President of CA Sri Lanka] seeking their inputs.”(Senior Professor 1)

In addition to direct engagement with professionals, another practice that has enhanced the alignment of the DA curriculum with professional curricular has been the close association of curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs. From the inception of the degree programme, the department has consistently referred to the curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs when developing the university accounting curriculum. This practice continues to this date. The primary motivation for this practice is threefold: to facilitate undergraduates who pursue professional qualifications pass their exams more easily, to facilitate those who do not follow professional qualifications in establishing themselves in the job market, and to secure exemptions from PABs. Some academics elaborated on this as follows:

“From the early stage of the department I can remember, myself and professor[cofounder] first we get the professional curricular and one by one we go through the subjects and we prepare detailed curriculum by referring to professional curriculum. That’s the approach we had from the early stage.” (Professor 1)

“When it comes to the curriculum development, we continuously follow professional curriculum. We try to align with the professional curriculum due to various reasons. The first reason is most of our students are doing chartered exams simultaneously. So, if we align with professional curriculum to a certain extent, they would feel comfortable with their professional exams. Second reason is, for undergraduates who are not doing professional exams, they can go to the market and establish since they have followed similar kind of curriculum, somewhat acceptability can be got from the market. The other reason is exemption from the PABs.” (Senior Professor 1)

Another practice which contributes to the replication of professional accounting curricular is the involvement of practitioners and professionally qualified academics in delivering the university curriculum. Owing to the emphasis on professional training in the curriculum, the department has relied on professional qualified members since its inception. Most of the academics recruited by the department hold professional qualifications, and practitioners are brought in as necessary. These practitioners and professionally qualified academics are deeply influenced by their professional backgrounds, motivating them to reproduce the professional curriculum in academia. Some academics shared their views on this practice as follows:

“At the early stage of the department, Chartered Accountants in market undertook majority of the courses on a visiting basis. Even today some of the courses such as Advanced taxation and Advanced Auditing and Assurance are taught by Chartered Accountants from the market.” (Senior Professor 1)

From the inception, in most of the instances when we are recruiting, we look at whether this person is fully qualified or partly qualified [professional qualification]. There are instances we put an informal condition at the time of recruitment that you have to become Chartered Accountant in order to be confirmed in the lectureship.” (Professor 1)

“I could recall myself as an ACCA qualified member, I was so pleased to witness all the latest development in ACCA curriculum in our degree programme.” (Myself)

However, according to Gray and Mckernan (2000), recruiting Chartered Accountants as academics hardly exposes or enables teachers or students of critical, independent reasoning. The absence of critical thoughts implies that the universities do not truly educate students rather they simply inculcate students into the current conventional ways of accounting practice (Gray and Mckernan, 2000). Consequently, the practices adopted by this department, which replicate the professional curriculum, indicates a strong commitment to professional training at the expense of nurturing critical and creative thoughts.

Although there has been a strong commitment to professional training, a few academics within the department resist the extreme measures taken to ensure employability of graduates. In Particular, they critique the approach to developing the IT skills of undergraduates.

“We are teaching computer-based accounting. We have come to that level which is the worst case. University is teaching a particular computer application: Sage. So, our graduates are that ready. You just recruit our students and give the machine they will start work. We should not go to that extent. Instead, we can equip and enrich our students with how the technology is changing, what is the role of technology, what are the emerging trends in the technology, what are the computer-based packages, how they are evolving, their limitations and challenges. Let the particular organisation to train the package. It is something up to the organisation. They should not expect graduates best fit for their requirement. Instead, they can give them a reasonable time to grow. That’s why they have probationary period, management training and etc. Give them a chance, they will adapt to the environment.” (Senior Lecturer 1)

They also highlighted the adverse consequences of reproduction of professional curriculum in academia. The confinement of university accounting curriculum to mere professional training has led to several undesirable consequences in academia. One such consequence is the neglect of general education within the university accounting curriculum, which is instrumental in developing higher order skills such as creative and critical thinking, reflection, thinking out of the box, and lifelong learning (Sangster, 2010). This deceives students who deserve higher order skills development in university accounting education and compromises the university's mission of creating and diffusing knowledge in the public interest (Hopper, 2013).

“According to my understanding, Sociology and Psychology are the foundation for all the social science subjects and top of that Philosophy comes. It talks about fundamentals of truth and existence. If a university student does not study about Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology who study about it. Unfortunately, our graduates doesn't know about any of this. How can our students be intellectuals without knowing that. In my opinion, if our students know the fundamentals of these subjects, it is easy for us to teach business and accounting related subjects. PABs talk about ethics and best practices, but the foundation of ethics given by Philosophy. Instead of having this foundation, we are very proud to claim that our curriculum 100% match with professional curriculum. In the short run you might see it is beneficial because students are happy and job market is secured but in the long run, I don't think this works [graduates might fail to have a wider perspective on life]we should train our graduates to independently see the society, the world and the purpose of life. Then they will learn new things, adapt [to] the environment and flourish.” (Senior Lecturer 1)

“How you can expect our graduates to have critical views if they don't have a social view. If they don't understand the fundamentals of sociology psychology and philosophy, we can never expect a student to have a critical view.” (Professor 2)

In a similar vein, some academics highlighted that the heavy technical emphasis in curriculum has failed to expose students to broader set of perceptions of accounting and help them to understand accounting in a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context in which it operates (Amernic and Craig, 2004). Consequently, this degree has fallen short of producing more reflexive and emancipated accountants (Hopper, 2013).

“Our graduates are not rounded. They are highly technocrats. Students must not only be equipped with technical competencies but, they must be taught about world [and] life which will help to become rounded people. We give students this is the thing. We rarely encourage students for alternative views.” (Retired Senior Professor 1)

“Our students are not sensitive to what is happening in the market, society and real issues in the world, they are just sensitive to narrowly defined problems.” (Professor 2)

The Adoption of a technical curriculum in academia has also led this degree programme to largely overlook the areas such as public sector accountability. By reproducing a professional curriculum, students have been moulded to unconsciously serve the interests and ideologies of the private capital, neglecting the constituencies such as the government, civil society, and so forth (Hopper et al., 2004). Consequently, the academia has largely failed to fulfil its broader public interest commitments (Hopper, 2013). An academic shared his view on this as follows:

“We scarcely do any good public sector accounting courses. Our values are different, people are thinking of nothing but higher salary and not serving Sri Lanka but flying. Recently, I asked 20 students what you hope to do after the degree, all they wanted to go abroad. Nobody thinks joining the government departments and go up the ladder, they think private sector is the thing. For a common person, ordinary person there are reasons for that. Efficiency [and] higher salary are obvious reasons but that does not mean we should not conduct a fair dose of public sector accounting courses in our degree.....none of our academics have the expertise or interest in public sector related subjects, so these subjects are not suggested or promoted.” (Senior Lecturer 1)

Similarly, the exclusive emphasis on professional training has caused this degree programme to pay little attention to research. Despite research being a core university value, professionally qualified academics often believe that it adds virtually no value to the accounting graduates they produce. This manifests an embodiment of ideology of PABs, which leaves no room for research in their curriculum (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013;Wadee, 2009). Some academics shared their view on research as follows:

“The point is [should] everyone need to do research. Can’t a person be a successful person, good citizen, effective corporate citizen even if you don’t have research. By asking everyone to do research don’t over burden them. Because they are not going to use this damn research in their professional life. An accountant would hardly do research, but they may have to direct others to do research. This can be done if they have a basic idea of this research which can be gain through assignments in various other courses, guest lectures and etc.” (Senior Professor 1)

“Accounting is a very special kind of a discipline, if students feel that they can do wonderfully well in society without research, we must allow them to do so. Otherwise, it is a human right violation.” (Retired Professor 1)

This sentiment was also echoed during interviews with graduates of this degree programme.

“I am working currently as an auditor in ... [one of the Big Four firms]. I'm not sure like I'm afraid to say, I don't find the research added lot of value to my career or helped to develop my analytical skills.” (Graduate 15)

“I'm negative with the research. I believe that if it's optional, more ideal for the student, because most of students don't have an idea to continue their life as an academic, while some of students have it.... with the internship we have a limited time to focus on research. So, with that limited time, I don't believe we can get a good output from the research.” (Graduate 10)

However, the failure to engage in accounting research and incorporate research materials in curriculum can compromise not only the ability of the students to debate radical reforms but also to develop skills and knowledge pertinent to professional accounting (Hopper, 2013).

Despite these resistances, the DA remains strongly committed to replicating professional curricular in academia. As a result, they excessively emphasise on technical skills, rote, rule-based learning, and focus on the interest of private capital, thereby socialising students into the present economic and social order. They perceive this approach is crucial for enhancing employability of its graduates.

7.3.3 Accreditation/exemptions from PABs

Since the early 2000s, the DA has embarked on a journey to secure accreditation and exemptions from both local (globalised) and global PABs. This initiative reflects the department's commitment to enhancing the employability of its graduates by facilitating the attainment of professional accounting qualifications more efficiently. This arrangement has reinforced the department's commitment for technically rigorous curriculum, as it necessitates aligning the DA's curriculum with that of PABs. However, it was not until 2011 that the department's degree programme was granted significant exemptions from these PABs. In 2011, the degree programme achieved substantial recognition, earning exemptions from all ACCA examinations except for strategic professional level. Similarly, in 2015 this degree programme was granted exemptions from all CIMA examinations except for the strategic case study.

“From 2000 onwards we applied for the exemptions from CIMA and CA Sri Lanka. The initial exemption documents were sent to CIMA UK office. We had to fill the exemption form, provide supporting documents such as our curriculum, past papers etc. But, initially we did not get sufficient exemptions. Sufficient in the sense, not to the level we expected. But over time we got more and more exemptions from CIMA where our student only have to do case study to qualify with CIMA since 2015. When I was the head of department, in 2011 the ACCA gave us exemptions to sit only the final stage of their qualification. For this there were many discussions. People came from UK. There was a one lady called ..., she was in charge of MENASA region. At that time, ACCA wanted to expand their market in Sri Lanka. They selected the correct place. In the first two batches there were only few to take the offer due to cost factor. They had to pay for the exemption fees. Then I had another round of discussion and huge fee waiver was given. Then students started to take ACCA.” (Senior Professor 1)

Although these global bodies had offered maximum number of exemptions, CA Sri Lanka was not convinced to offer exemptions for this degree programme. Consequently, the DA adopted a different strategy to secure exemptions from CA Sri Lanka. This demonstrates the agency of DA in the process of obtaining exemptions.

“Even though we applied for the exemptions from CA Sri Lanka, they never wanted to give exemptions. Their argument was the same lecturer who taught the course set the examination paper. The other point they raised if we give exemptions to your degree all others will ask.....even at that time [when ACCA offers exemptions] CA Sri Lanka was reluctant. At this time, we wanted to gain more and more acceptance from the local institute. Because our graduate membership was increasing. We wanted our graduates to go into council of CA Sri Lanka. Now we have been able to produce a president. This was one of our strategies to get acceptance. Finally in 2020 we secured maximum level of exemption from the local institute.” (Senior Professor 1)

Despite the department’s deep commitment to accreditation and exemption arrangements, some academics have shown resistance, highlighting adverse consequences of the accreditation practices. One such concern is excessive complicity with the PABs and failure to negotiate better terms in these accreditation arrangements.

“Very recently we had this CPA Australia coming in. Everyone was taking about supporting CPA by asking and promoting students to do CPA. I don’t know it is the immaturity of the leadership. I was just wondering why? Why do we have to do that? Why can’t we demand better terms with them. Terms in the sense, exemption fee waivers, easy way of registering, may be some research funding for the academic staff. We have now enough recognition for the degree programme. We need to discuss better terms.” (Senior Lecturer 3)

Another concern is that, in the pursuit of maximum number of exemptions, academics of the department are motivated to design the university curriculum to secure exemptions from as many PABs as possible (Kotb et al., 2019). For instance, the department had to introduce two optional courses, Advanced Auditing and Assurance Services and Advanced Taxation and Tax Planning to obtain exemptions from the Advanced Audit and Assurance module of CA Sri Lanka and the Taxation module of ACCA. Although these courses were introduced as electives, majority of the students opt to take them. Consequently, the PABs exert a hegemonic influence over university accounting education (Duff and Marriott, 2012). This compromises academic freedom and autonomy of the academics, discouraging them from developing locally relevant course and curriculum based on their interest, motivations and expertise (Duff and Marriott, 2012). For instance, the prerequisites of exemption schemes have constrained the

department from offering innovative and academically sound courses, such as Sustainability Management Accounting. Furthermore, the academics freedom is compromised in the development of traditional course units like financial accounting, management accounting, auditing, and taxation, as these exemption and accreditation arrangements dictate the content of these courses (Apostolou and Gammie, 2014).

“At the time I was in my third year of the degree programme there were only 2 students who opted advanced auditing and assurance services course. But this time there are over 55 students. The sole intention is to get the CA exemption. They follow this subject not because they perceive this subject is valuable but their objective is in one effort complete a course in the degree and the professional qualification. Some of the students who are in non-audit sector do this subject because of this exemption. This course is really good for someone who pursue their career in audit and forensic sector. It is good to learn new things, but this subject is very practical. It is taught by professionals in the industry.” (Lecturer 4)

“You know what happen to one of my courses on corporate sustainability. First time I had 50 students. That was very popular. Then, in the next year there came this exemption. For students to get ACCA exemptions, they have to take advanced taxation. Everyone went for that. Not because this course is bad but because they find the flexibility. Learning the same thing for degree programme and professional qualification. It’s easy for them.” (Senior Lecturer 2)

“As accreditation coordinator of the department, I could recall myself requesting lecturers involved in Accounting, Auditing and Taxation to include some topics as requested by ACCA, in order to be eligible for exemptions from equivalent modules in ACCA.” (Myself)

Some young academics have resisted these accreditation and exemptions arrangements, arguing that they compromise the quality of accounting professionals produced through these pathways. They contend that while university accounting courses and professional accounting courses may cover similar content, universities often lack the depth and rigour found in professional courses due to various constraints. Consequently, even though students may receive exemptions from certain professional examinations, there is no assurance that they possess the same level of competencies as those who complete the equivalent professional courses. Therefore, these exemption schemes have the

potential to undermine the capacities of accounting professionals produced through these pathways.

“I did CIMA from the very beginning. I know how hard some subjects specially the risk management. The performance management pillar was really tough. There were lot of things to learn. But here under the exemption arrangements we allow students to get the CIMA qualification just by completing the strategic level case study. In that case there is a doubt regarding the quality of the CIMA member. Are we really reaching to the expectations of CIMA. For example, in risk management subject in our degree programme we don’t touch up to that extent. Even, my friends used to tell without having much effort we became CIMA member.” (Lecturer 4)

“I got the CIMA qualification under an exemption scheme. I just did the case study. I don’t really get the flavour of CIMA. People say that CIMA is all about management accounting, but I don’t know that.” (Lecturer 3)

They advocate for a model in which PABs and Universities may operate relatively independent. According to their perspective, universities should concentrate on delivering courses with a research and theoretical emphasis while PABs should concentrate on technical practice. Consequently, a student pursuing both an academic degree and a professional qualification would gain a broader exposure and a wider perspective on a particular subject matter.

However, currently there is no intention among majority of academics of the department to pursue such change. They remain committed to the current pursuit of highest number of exemptions from PABs for several reasons. First, they perceive that these exemptions and accreditation provide global recognition for their degree programme. Second, they view these schemes as a mean to differentiate their degree programme from other accounting and finance degrees in the country, thereby attracting the most talented pool of students. Third, these exemptions and accreditation facilitate greater mobility for graduates by allowing them to complete their professional qualifications easily and quickly.

“DA has already gained global recognition for its BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree Programme by way of receiving exemptions/accreditation from global professional accounting bodies (PABs), viz. ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia, and ICAEW.” (Fonseka et al., 2019, p. 148)

“...it's [exemptions/accreditation] a very powerful tool for us. If we compare our degree with others, for example finance department, still they are struggling to get those kind of exemptions. And even B.Com [Bachelor of Commerce], the curriculum is very much similar to our curriculum, but still they do not get that much of accreditation or exemptions for their degree program. This is a wonderful tool which we can market our degree program” (Lecturer 4)

“... it has benefitted students via cutting down on the time they have to spend to obtain multiple qualifications.” (Fonseka et al., 2019, p. 119)

Accordingly, this degree programme reproduces the global accountancy discourses and practices including replicating professional curricular, incorporating practical training, and maintaining accreditation and exemption arrangements in its quest for a professionally oriented global identity.

7.4 Hybridity: globally recognised professionally oriented degree

As previously discussed, the mimicry of colonial discourses and practices does not construct an identity for the colonized that is identical to the colonizer. Instead, it constructs colonized as a partial copy of the colonizer, leading to the formation of a new cultural identity: the postcolonial hybrid (Young, 2016). Postcolonial literature articulates hybridity as everything that challenges and undermines the colonial hegemony (Loomba, 2007). It acknowledges the agency of the colonized in constituting their hybrid identity (Nandy, 1983). The colonized often draw from the colonial discourses and practices and read them through their own interpretive lenses and juxtapose them with local ideas and practices to reconstruct their cultural identity (Loomba, 2007). In this section, I explore how the DA has constructed a hybrid identity for its degree programme by drawing from the practices and discourses of the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

Drawing from the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession such as replicating professional curricular, incorporating practical experience, and maintaining accreditation and exemption arrangements, the DA has sought to create a hybrid identity for its degree programme. This positions it as a globally recognised professionally oriented academic degree.

“.....from the very inception we continuously use the professional curriculum when developing our curriculum. We mainly targeted to get the exemption as much as possible. And then encourage the student to do the professional exams. That is what we thought. So from my point of view, I mean getting the exemption is an advantage. Always I see it as a positive.” (Professor 1)

“DA has already gained global recognition for its BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree Programme by way of receiving exemptions/accreditation from global professional accounting bodies (PABs), viz. ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia and ICAEW.” (Fonseka et al., 2019, p. 148)

“Our philosophy has been an academic degree with a practical orientation.” (Senior Professor 1)

The primary motivation behind this has been to enhance the global mobility of graduates.

“Our motto from the inception of the degree programme was employable graduates for global economy.” (Professor 1)

“Our model has stood the test of time. It has produced 100% employability for our graduates. After 30 odd years, our graduates are dominating the business scene. They are partners in Big 4 companies, CEOs and CFOs of multinational companies, council members of CA Sri Lanka, and most of our graduates have migrated to Australia, Middle east, Canada, UK, [and] US. This is the vision Prof.....and Prof.....[co-founders] had when they start this department in the early 90s (Senior Professor 1)”

Most academics are of the view that the hybridity of this degree facilitates mobility of its graduates in two keyways. First, upon the completion of the degree programme, they have a recognised academic qualification. Second, it offers a fast track to professional qualification, allowing graduates to receive the maximum number of exemptions from local (globalised) and global professional bodies, and two years of practical training by the time they complete the degree. A retired senior professor shared his thoughts on this as follows:

“This is a world where you think of a well-paid job. For that, a degree with a two-years of internship will help. When students complete the degree, they have an academic qualification, and they are well equipped to get their professional qualification. What we do is to facilitate students to get both the qualifications easily. To settle down in their profession, this is definitely an aid.” (Retired senior professor 1)

To enhance the readiness of its graduates and undergraduates for the global business environment, thereby enhance their employability prospects, the department has been committed from the outset to refining and advancing the professional model replicated in academia. A key initiative from the very beginning of the department has been placing a greater emphasis on developing student's business communication skills, IT skills, and other soft skills more than the PABs do. This approach exemplifies how the colonized often adapt colonial discourses and practices through their own interpretive lenses, blending them with local ideas and practices to reconstruct their cultural identity (Lomba, 2007).

“We had to include several features to show the market our graduates are work ready. One criticism for graduates at that time was, they cannot work in English language which is the business language, so degree was introduced in English medium. The other thing was IT which introduced as an integral component of the degree way back in 1992. Also, in our degree we had business communication as a course in all the four years. Later, it was reduced to two years. Our degree programme had all these elements to gain acceptance of the market.” (Senior Professor 1)

“We offered business communication courses in all four years. In first two year, Monday to Friday 8-10 a.m. we set aside for teaching English [Business Communication]... we introduced IT course units into degree programme and also, we provided hands on experience on computers right from the first year of the degree programme.” (Professor 1)

Over the years, several improvements have been made to these skill development courses. For instance, the development of soft skills has been streamlined by organising it as a graded course: Management and personal capacity skills development. This course aims to enhance various soft skills, including adaptability, interpersonal, teamwork, ability to negotiate, time and stress management, problem-solving, leadership, and communication skills. Students benefit from guest lectures and workshops focused on these skills developments, and their progress is evaluated through innovative methods such as reflective logs, videos, presentation, and portfolio of learning experiences.

“The aim of this course is to develop a wide array of skills and values in students from three areas: (a) soft (generic) skills; (b) professional communication skills in English; and (c) professionalism and ethical conduct....assessment methods encompass reflective logs, learning portfolio, creative act and drama, presentation, and final exam” (ACC

Similarly, the practical training component has undergone significant improvements over time. During the early years, practical training was conducted as non-graded courses in the third and fourth years of the degree programme. Students were evaluated based on the satisfactory completion of stipulated number of training hours. Over time, this evolved into four-semester based graded courses, incorporating range of assessments including training supervisor’s evaluation, reflective logs, training records, and viva-voce examinations. The following extract provides a snapshot of evolution of internship component from the inception of the degree programme (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: Evolution of internship programme

Table 9.1: Evolution of the internship programme

Year	Description
1991 (effective from 1994)	Introduction of Practical Training Programme in Accounting and Finance as an integral component of the Degree Programme. Conduct of non-graded courses-Practical Training I and II- in the third and fourth years of the study programme. The students are assessed based on satisfactory completion of the stipulated number of training hours.
1996	Renaming the internship programme as Internship Programme in Accounting and Finance with increase of its depth and breadth. Conduct of compulsory non-graded courses-Internship in Accounting and Finance I and II- in the third and fourth years of the study programme. The students are assessed based on satisfactory completion of the stipulated number of training hours followed by an interview. Recognition of DAs internship programme by ICASL as suitable practical training for its professional programme.
2001	Conversion of the Internship Programme in Accounting and Finance to four semester-based graded course units (Internship in Accounting and Finance I, II, III and IV) during the third and fourth years of the study programme. The students are assessed based on an assortment of assessment methods, viz. training supervisor’s evaluation, training records and a viva-voce examination.
2007	Establishment of the Centre for Accounting Internship and Skills Development (CAISD) for administering, monitoring and evaluating the internship programme and skill development activities and also to act as the liaising office with the training providers. Established under the World Bank funded IRQUE project.
2008	Signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with training providers with a view to formalize internship arrangement. Commencement of complementary training programmes and workshops in order to prepare students for internship.
2011	Introduction of Skill Development Programme of Intern Accountants, a fully-fledged skill development programme with a wider scope in place of the Internship Programme in Accounting and Finance. Conduct of four semester-based graded course units - Skill Development of Intern Accountants I, II, III and IV. (This programme is explained in detail below).
2016	Commencement of the Internship Mentoring Programme in collaboration with the Accounting Alumni Association (AAA). In this, AAA members share their internship experiences with current students. This has created a platform for students to engage in career development planning.
2017	Introduction of the Internship Portal to facilitate on-line student registration, monitoring and evaluation of the internship programme. It enables transmitting of personal information, details of the training organizations and the training records on a weekly basis. This is being further developed as a comprehensive on-line internship database.

Source: Along an Untrodden Path: Twenty-Five Years of DA, pp.58-59

In addition to refining and advancing the professional model, the hybridity of this degree programme is also evident in its incorporation of an academic dimension. While maintaining strong focus on integrating professional elements into the degree programme, efforts have also been made to incorporate an academic dimension. To help students understand accounting within a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context in which it operates (Amernic and Craig, 2004), an advanced accounting theory course has been included from the inception of the degree. This is the only course in curriculum which pays attention to wider contextual, social, environmental, ethical, and cultural dimensions of accounting and accountability (Amernic and Craig, 2004; Carmona, 2013; Chabrak and Craig, 2013; Hopper, 2013). However, the course has not been well received by many graduates, who tend to focus primarily on the technical dimension of accounting.

“This accounting theory subject, some students don't have an interest to learn that subject. They don't see any value in it.” (Lecturer 2)

“We recently had a chat on different things that we studied during the university days and there are my friends who question why we were offered that subject (advanced accounting theory), who cares whatever these theories. For a practitioner, I don't think it's really adding any value.” (Graduate 1)

Similarly, from the inception of the degree programme a research component was introduced. Until recently, this research component was offered as an elective course unit. However, in compliance with Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) requirements set by the University Grant Commission (UGC), it has been made a mandatory course unit starting in 2018. The following extract provides a snapshot of the evolution of the research component from the inception of the degree programme (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Evolution of research

Table 15.1: Development of the research aspect in the Accounting Degree Programme

In the early days (1992-1996) the Research Report offered as an elective offered during the last semester of the study programme. Areas for research: Accounting, Finance and Auditing.
The syllabus revision of 1996 expanded the research component into the Research Methodology course (final year-first semester) followed by the Research Report (final year-second semester), both electives.
With the syllabus revision that accompanied the restructuring of FMSC (2001), the credit value of the Research Report (to be prepared during the final year) was raised to 6 while maintaining its elective status.
The syllabus revision of 2008 introduced a compulsory Research Methodology course (3 credits). The Research Report renamed as Dissertation (6 credits) remained an elective.
The introduction of Knowledge Seeking and Learning to Learn Skills (KSLL) (2011) as a component of the Skill Development Programme of Intern Accountants brought in a compulsory group research project and a presentation (approximately 3 credits). The research was to commence in the third year-first semester with teaching of basics of research methodology and conclude with group research presentations in the final year-second semester.
The syllabus revision of 2015, maintained the compulsory Research Methodology course (3 credits) with either a compulsory Research Project in Accounting (3 credits) or the Dissertation in Accounting (6 credits).

Source: Along an Untrodden Path: Twenty-Five Years of DA, p.100

Although the research component has become mandatory, this change was merely a matter of complying with regulatory requirements to maintain the status of the Honours degree, rather than focusing on enhancing the research competencies of undergraduates.

“Whether you like it or not now you will have to have this research component. The reason is if you want to recognise your degree program as a SLQF level 6 bachelor's degree, certainly we will have to comply with that because SLQF is mandatory.” (Senior Professor 1)

....this [research] has been included in our syllabus not as a requirement to enhance the quality of graduates but to comply with the UGC Sri Lanka qualification framework. (Professor 3)

In a similar vein, some academics have noted that the quality of research conducted by undergraduates has been compromised.

“In an accounting degree program with 200 students, we have a challenge of supervising research. Somewhere down the line we give some guidelines and we also give it up students do whatever they want. In that sense, research is not taking place... market has been created to prepare thesis or research for you by paying some amount of money and we don't have a system to monitor this.” (Professor 3)

“Different lecturers are doing it in different ways, there is no streamlining of it and the students also some students take it serious some do not take it serious we just pass students because they do it when they come to the final year.” (Senior Lecturer 7)

“Problem is whether the students have the time to do that (research). Because I know personally that all the five days they are working 8 to 5 and then lectures from 6 to 9.” (Senior Lecturer 2)

Without deliberate engagement over these issues, it is questionable whether this research component of the degree would necessarily develop the research competencies of its graduates.

Interestingly, neither the majority of academics nor graduates are worried about the inadequate development of research competencies. When questioned about the potential for compromising between academic and professional values in the degree programme, they were particularly unwilling to consider reducing the two-year internship to allow more time for research skill development.

“...our students will never like to, if you ask them, whether shall we reduce internship? Definitely they will disagree. And I am personally of that view. Internship is something we should not scrap.” (Senior Professor 1)

“Two-year internship is one of the reasons why the students select this degree program over the others. it's a competitive advantage. we cannot compromise it.” (Graduate 15)

The lack of appreciation for accounting theory course and the research component (academic dimension) of this degree programme is underpinned by the perceived lack of correlation between this academic focus and employability of graduates. However, the programme must retain this academic dimension due to the resistance of academics who advocate for liberal values and institutional requirements such as the SLQF framework mandated by the UGC. While placing minimal emphasis on academic values, the degree programme remains deeply committed to instilling professional values. Consequently, this degree programme reproduces the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, such as replicating professional curricular, incorporating practical training, and maintaining accreditation and exemption arrangements. Through these efforts, the degree programme has formed an identity as a globally recognised professionally oriented academic degree, thereby enhancing the global mobility of its graduates. This aim, which the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree

programme pursues by reproducing global accountancy discourses and practices, resembles that of CA Sri Lanka: global mobility for its members.

7.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter explored how the ambivalence of key constituents of B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme has driven the replication of global accountancy discourses and practices, resulting in the formation of a global identity through which it pursued global mobility for its graduates. I analysed the evolution of the degree programme in its engagement with the globalisation project of accountancy profession using three postcolonial notions: ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. This analysis revealed that the emergence and evolution of the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree, since its inception in 1991, reflect a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global accountancy discourses and practices by the programme's key constituencies. These constituencies include the government of Sri Lanka, a segment of academics at the USJ who advocate for balancing liberal and professional values, and another segment of USJ academics who strongly emphasise professional values within the degree programme.

This dynamic led the DA to reproduce the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, often as adopted by the local (globalised) PAB. Additionally, the DA engaged directly with discourses and practices of global PABs. These practices encompass incorporating a substantial practical training component, replicating curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs, and pursuing accreditation and exemption arrangements with these PABs. Drawing on these discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, the DA has sought to create a hybrid identity for its degree programme, positioning it as a 'globally recognised professionally oriented academic degree'. Through this, the DA aimed to enhance the global employability of graduates which resembling the pursuit of CA Sri Lanka: global mobility for its members. The next chapter will critically discuss the key findings of this analysis.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. In this exploration, Chapter 6 analysed how CA Sri Lanka navigates the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession. Chapter 7 extended this analysis by examining how the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme navigates the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

In this chapter, I discuss the findings that emerged from the empirical analysis conducted in the previous two chapters, connecting them with the literature review on the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and PABs in ex-colonies (Chapter 2) and interaction between globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies (Chapter 3). First, I discuss how the findings of the present study extend the existing literature on interaction between local PABs in ex-colonies and globalisation project of accountancy profession. Second, I discuss how the findings of the present study enhance our understanding of the interaction between university accounting education in ex-colonies and globalisation project of accountancy profession. The next chapter presents the conclusion of this study.

8.2 Pursuit of global mobility and its implications

Despite a few notable studies, the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and the accounting profession in former colonies has been largely unexplored through the lens of postcolonialism (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017). For instance, Kaifala et al. (2019) used Sierra Leone as a case study to explore how Chartered and aspiring accountants in former colonies have

constructed a hybrid professional identity through their affiliation with a global PAB, ACCA. Similarly, Thomson and Jones (2016) demonstrated how migrant accountants in Canada have overcome colonial 'othering' and reclaimed their professional identity by reproducing the Canadian professional archetype. Notably, both studies focused on the micro-level, analysing individual professional accountants (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). Consequently, there is limited understanding of the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and accounting profession in ex-colonies from a macro-institutional perspective. In addressing this gap, present study extends the literature by empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing how and why a local PAB in an ex-colony engages with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession.

The analysis in chapter 6, which examines how CA Sri Lanka navigates the post-colonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, reveals that the emergence and evolution of CA Sri Lanka from its inception in 1959 until Sri Lanka's neo-liberal turn in 1977, reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to these global discourses and practices by two key constituents: the government of Sri Lanka and the governing council of CA Sri Lanka. The nationalist government established CA Sri Lanka through the ICA Act No.23 of 1959 as part of its nation state building project (Yapa, 2010). Through this establishment, the government aimed to produce a breed of local accountants capable of serving the auditing, management, and public sector accounting functions of the economy (Wallace and Briston, 1993). To achieve this, the government relied on several prominent figures involved in accounting practice in Sri Lanka at the time. These individuals were British-educated elite with interests in plantations and business. Although they were local in blood and colour, they were British in values, taste, opinions and lifestyles (Bhabha, 2012; Boussebaa et al., 2014). They insisted on producing local accountants exclusively through the PABs that replicated the traditional British model of training accountants (Yapa, 2000).

Accordingly, a small elite of British qualified accountants established CA Sri Lanka by replicating the model of the English Institute, with a strong emphasis on

auditing practice. Like in case of ICAEW, the CA Sri Lanka introduced its own professional curriculum and examinations, granting membership only to those who passed these examinations and completed a five-year period of practical training as articled clerks under the supervision of Chartered Accountants, known as principals (Yapa, 2010). From 1960 to 1967, CA Sri Lanka collaborated with the Overseas Accountancy Examinations Advisory Board of ICAEW in developing its examination system and approving its professional syllabi (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Additionally, CA Sri Lanka exclusively operated in English until 1976, despite the nationalist government's declaration of Sinhala as the official language and majority of government institutions operating in Sinhala and Tamil (Yapa, 2010).

The founders of CA Sri Lanka, drawing heavily on the practices of the ICAEW, sought to establish a hybrid identity for the local institute, shaping it into a 'British-inspired local institute'. Until the mid-1970s, the British-owned plantation companies dominated corporate sector in Sri Lanka (Moore, 1997). Professional firms, where founding members of the local institute often held senior positions, primarily served these companies (Yapa, 2010). The founders were of the view that the mobility of its members can be enhanced through catering to this British capital. Therefore, they replicated ICAEW-like practices to produce a breed of local accountants familiar with British values, systems, and priorities. Consequently, Chartered Accountants were produced locally, by adopting a curriculum, examinations, and training similar to those of ICAEW (Briston, 1978; Yapa, 2000). This strategic approach was intended to better serve the interest of global capital, thereby achieve greater mobility for its members. Thus, by forming a 'British-inspired local institute', the founders of CA Sri Lanka aimed to facilitate greater mobility for its members.

The evolution of CA Sri Lanka during neo-liberal period post 1977 reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global discourses and practices by two key constituents: the government of Sri Lanka and the members of CA Sri Lanka representing both global business interests and local business interests. Following the United National Party's rise to power in 1977, the government pursued economic liberalisation, focusing on market-driven and export oriented growth strategies, along with the privatisation of state industries (Samarasinghe

and Samarasinghe, 1998). In the early 2000s, the Sri Lankan government strengthened its ties with the WB and the IMF to further economic growth through increased private sector activity. As conditioned by these transnational financiers, Sri Lanka underwent its first ROSC in 2003, which recommended adoption of IASs/IFRSs and ISA without modification for SBEs (World Bank, 2004). Consequently, effective from 1 January 2012, CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications, aiming to attract FDIs and accommodate multinational corporations and global professional firms.

However, this decision was met with resistance from the CA Sri Lanka members with local business interests, which argued that these international standards did not necessarily reflect the local conditions and imposed additional burden on local business entities. To address the concerns of CA Sri Lanka members representing local business interests, CA Sri Lanka implemented measures such as differing the adoption date of Standards, organising training programmes to familiarise local businesses and firms with IFRSs and IAS, and encouraging the adoption of a simplified version of IFRSs, known as SLFRSs for SMEs.

In addition to adopting IFRSs/IASs and ISA, CA Sri Lanka has recently embarked on another initiative: MRAs. Currently, CA Sri Lanka has MRAs with several global PABs including ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia, and ICAEW. These MRAs provide various pathways for member of one professional body (e.g., CA Sri Lanka) to gain membership in another (e.g., ACCA). The process of MRAs begins with benchmarking the local curriculum against those of global PABs (World Bank, 2015). Thus, these MRAs attest to the alignment of CA Sri Lanka's curriculum with that of global PABs. However, this initiative faced criticism from senior figures in Sri Lanka's accounting profession. CA Sri Lanka intensified its focus on MRAs during the country's worst economic crisis in history, culminating in a declaration of bankruptcy in 2022. In this context, the nation expected the national professional body to play a pivotal role in addressing the economic crisis. Instead, the local institute prioritised global mobility of its members, leading to a shortage of qualified professionals to meet the nation's needs.

During neo-liberal era in Sri Lanka, the local institute expanded its mimicry beyond ICAEW practices to include those of globalisation project of accountancy profession, encompassing global PABs, transnational standard setters, and transnational financiers. For instance, CA Sri Lanka adopted IASs and ISA through the establishment of the 'Accounting Standards Committee' and 'Auditing Standards Committee' under the Accounting and Auditing Standards Act No.15 of 1995 (World Bank, 2004). In adopting these standards, CA Sri Lanka made modifications as necessary to reflect local conditions. However, in 2003 the WB identified the modification of international standards as a barrier to attracting FDIs to Sri Lanka and recommended the adoption of international standards without modifications (World Bank, 2004). In response, CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications with effect from 1 January 2012. This unaltered adoption of international standards has predominantly served the interests of global businesses including multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms, often at the expense of local businesses. The major impetus for CA Sri Lanka to emphasise the interests of global businesses is the fact that a majority of its members serve these multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms.

In addition to adopting IFRSs/IAS and ISA, CA Sri Lanka pursued the adoption of IESs and implementation of MRAs. In collaboration with ICAEW, CA Sri Lanka developed its 2010-2015 curriculum in compliance with IESs, fulfilling its obligations as a member of IFAC. In 2010, with ICAEW's consultation, CA Sri Lanka benchmarked its curriculum against both IESs and ICAEW curriculum. This benchmarking exercise confirmed that the CA Curriculum complies with IESs and is compatible with the ICAEW curriculum. This led CA Sri Lanka to pursue negotiations for an MRA with ICAEW. Subsequently, CA Sri Lanka expanded these MRA beyond ICAEW to encompass ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia. These MRAs led CA Sri Lanka to further align its curriculum with those of these global PABs.

The expansion of CA Sri Lanka's engagement from practices of ICAEW to discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, has transformed its hybrid identity from a 'British-inspired local profession' into a 'globalised local profession'. Following the liberalisation of the economy, multinational corporations and global network of professional firms made a remarkable presence

in Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017). The country's business landscape now features leading multinational companies such as Unilever, Nestle, Pfizer, HSBC, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Dialog, IFS, JKH, and Aitken Spence, as well as Big Four professional firms (Deloitte, PwC, EY, and KPMG) and middle-tier professional firms such as Grant Thornton, Baker Tilly, BDO Partners, and Mazars (World Bank, 2015). Recognising the lucrative opportunities these multinational companies and professional firms offered its members, CA Sri Lanka positioned itself as a key facilitator for these global entities. A significant move in this direction was adopting IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications from January 1, 2012. The institute takes great pride in this achievement, believing that full compliance with international standards enhances its global recognition. Consequently, CA Sri Lanka perceives the unmodified adoption of these international standards, as a mean of solidifying its global identity.

In its pursuit of a global identity, CA Sri Lanka has also established MRAs with globally recognised PABs, including ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia, and CA ANZ. In implementing these MRAs, CA Sri Lanka has increasingly aligned its curriculum with that of Global PABs. Consequently, the distinction between local qualification and a global qualification is becoming increasingly blurred. To support these MRAs, CA Sri Lanka ventured into offering degree programme in accounting, launching the B.Sc. Degree in Applied Accounting in 2013. As CA Sri Lanka negotiated MRAs with professional bodies in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada where a degree is a prerequisite for membership, it became evident that a degree was essential for its members. In response, the local institute launched this degree programme, offering significant exemptions for its members.

Through this pursuit of global identity, the local institute aimed to enhance global mobility of its members in two ways. First, it attracted and facilitated global capital (multinational corporations and global network of professional firms) in the local context, thereby creating lucrative opportunities for its members within the country. Second, it opened up overseas opportunities for its members. Currently, over 40% of CA Sri Lanka members serve outside Sri Lanka while the remaining Chartered Accountants predominantly work for multinational corporations and global audit firms operating in Sri Lanka.

However, in line with the findings of previous studies on imperialism in accountancy profession (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Arnold and Sikka, 2001; Bakre, 2005; 2006; 2008; 2010; Chand and White, 2007; Chang, 2007; Graham and Annisette, 2012; Mir and Rahaman, 2005; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Schiavo-Campo, 2009; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010), the present study confirms that this pursuit of global mobility for local Chartered Accountants, has led to dependencies, domination, and exploitation within the accounting profession in ex-colonies. First, CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs and ISA to facilitate the operations of multinational corporations and global audit firms. This led to a reliance on transnational standard setters such as IASB and IFAC, as well as transnational financiers like the WB. Following the recommendation of the WB, CA Sri Lanka embarked on a project to converge its local accounting and auditing standards with global standards in 2009. Consequently, from, 1 January 2012, Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs and ISA without major modifications. However, these standards do not necessarily suit the local conditions and circumstances in Sri Lanka. These standards are developed presuming the existence of efficient capital markets, investor sophistication, effective regulators, and legal systems, which are largely absent in former colonies (Hopper et al., 2017). For instance, Sri Lanka lacks active markets beyond stock exchange, has fewer than 300 PLCs, and does not use complex financial instrument, or even basic hedging instruments such as share options, forward contracts, or futures contracts. The adoption of latest standards like IFRS 17 costs an insurance firm in Sri Lanka approximately LKR 2 billion (£ 5 million). Consequently, the relevance of IFRSs, particularly IFRS 13: Fair value measurements, IFRS 9: Financial Instruments, IFRS 17: Insurance Contracts, in Sri Lanka is largely questionable. Hence, similar to other ex-colonies like T&T, Nigeria, and Siera Leone dependencies on transnational bodies such as IFAC and the WB has led to the uncritical adoption of IFRSs and ISA in the local context (Annisette, 2000; Perera, 2012).

Second, in an effort to enhance the global mobility of its members, CA Sri Lanka has recently entered into MRAs with global PABs such as ICAEW, ACCA, and CPA Australia. These agreements have formalised CA Sri Lanka's commitment to aligning its curriculum with that of global PABs. Additionally, as a member of IFAC, CA Sri Lanka has adopted IESs since 2010, in line with membership obligations of

IFAC. As a result, the development of local PAB's professional curriculum is shaped by global discourses and practices. However, the curricular of global PABs and IESs predominantly focus on western values, systems, and priorities. By adopting these global curricular and IESs, CA Sri Lanka promotes western frameworks while overlooking issues pertinent to ex-colonies like Sri Lanka (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). For instance, the nationalist governments of Sri Lanka originally established the local PAB to train accountants in all areas in support of nation state building efforts. However, by reproducing the ICAEW curriculum, the local qualifications have emphasised auditing practice while neglecting specialist areas such as 'management' and 'public sector' accounting (Wallace and Briston, 1993). Similarly, CA Sri Lanka's recent curriculum has largely ignored accountability issues in the SME and public sectors, despite these being two of the most significant sectors in the economy (World Bank, 2015). Consequently, the local institute has failed to produce a class of accounting workforce attuned to relevant local social and economic specificities (Mihret et al., 2012; Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Instead, it has produced a class of accountants disciplined in a manner suited to serve global capital (Annisette, 2000).

In addition, the pursuit of global mobility for its members has led to the domination of the accountancy profession and education in ex-colonies by global actors. First, the unmodified adoption of international standards such as IFRSs and ISA has allowed multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms to dominate the business landscape in Sri Lanka. This uncritical adoption of international standards perpetuates a system where the creation and dissemination of accounting knowledge remain largely western, reinforcing the modern global formation of 'imperialism without empire' (Annisette, 2000). The practical effects of adopting IFRSs had not extended beyond international firms and multinational corporations; anticipated increases in financial transparency and information quality have not materialised (Bakre, 2008; Chand and White, 2007; Mir and Rahaman, 2005). In Sri Lanka, the Big Four firms audit 84 per cent of the countries' listed companies, which account for 98 per cent of market capitalisation (World Bank, 2015). Additionally, the adoption of IFRSs has facilitated the dominance of multinational corporations in Sri Lanka's business landscape, while imposing burdens such as consultancy fees, staff training, and IT infrastructure

development on local businesses. Although the adoption of IFRSs promised improved 'relevance' and 'accountability' by multinational corporations, but they primarily helped these multinationals to transfer economic resources (Chand and White, 2007). Consequently, Sri Lanka has been smoothly incorporated into the global economy, which remains dominated by the US (Annisette, 2000).

Similarly, the adoption of IESs and the implementation of MRAs have led to the domination of CA Sri Lanka's professional curriculum by global actors. These global discourses and practices necessitate the local PAB to align its curriculum with the requirements of transnational standard setters and global PABs. As a result, the content of the local curriculum is largely dictated by these global bodies. Consequently, the local curriculum often mirrors the limitations of global curricular, which predominantly focus on shareholder wealth maximisation, agency relationships, capital market needs, and mere technical matters (Sikka et al., 2007). This global curricular hardly discuss corporate failures, scandals, and its social consequences, corporate social responsibility, ethics, and philosophies, topics that are crucial for fostering reflective thinking in future accountants (Sikka et al., 2007). Additionally, they lack theories that enable students to critique orthodox accounting practices or acknowledge the social and organisational context of accounting (Sikka et al., 2007). The dominance of global bodies in shaping CA Sri Lanka's professional curriculum often results in the reproduction of these limitations within the local context. This undermines the local institute's ability to pursue the broader public interest through the development of locally relevant curricular (Mihret et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the pursuit of global mobility for Chartered Accountants in an ex-colony have also facilitated exploitation by the global actors. First, the Big Four professional firms have been able to attract local talent at a minimum cost. Trainees at these firms often receive less than LKR 10,000 (£ 25) per month, and in some cases, these firms fail to pay even the minimum amount prescribed by CA Sri Lanka. Additionally, these firms frequently assign a limited number of interns to each audit engagement, forcing them to work long hours from morning until late at night to meet audit deadlines.

Second, adoption of global discourses such as IFRSs, ISA, IESs, Sustainability Financial Reporting standards, and Audit Quality Monitoring Mechanisms has led the local PAB to enter into capacity building projects with global PABs, particularly ICAEW. These projects often results in local funds and aid from transnational financiers like the WB being redirected back to Western countries through fees and the procurement of technology and equipment from Northern suppliers (Chang, 2007;Schiavo-Campo, 2009). For instances, in 2010, CA Sri Lanka engaged ICAEW for consultancy services to ensure its Curriculum's compliance with IESs. In 2012, ICAEW provided education and training services to CA Sri Lanka during the adoption of IFRSs and ISA. More recently, ICAEW assisted in developing an audit quality assurance unit for CA Sri Lanka, costing the local institute millions. Similarly, the adoption of IESs led CA Sri Lanka to hire the renowned global publisher BPP to develop their study materials, also costing millions.

Third, by reproducing a global curriculum in the local context, the CA Sri Lanka promotes the interests and ideologies of the privileged such as Big Four professional firms, multinational corporations, global investors, and global PABs (Hopper et al., 2017). Hence, CA Sri Lanka produces willing servants of global capital who would unconsciously contribute to the exploitation of ex-colonies by these global actors (Annisette, 2000). Amid Sri Lanka's ongoing financial crisis, CA Sri Lanka has pursued MRAs with global PABs to facilitate the migration of its members. Currently, over 40% of CA Sri Lanka's members work abroad, creating a shortage of qualified accountants to address the country's needs. Additionally, these MRAs have allowed global PABs, particularly ACCA and ICAEW, to rapidly expand their membership in Sri Lanka, resulting in a significant outflow of capital. This situation is unsustainable, especially during a period of economic turmoil in the country.

8.3 Pursuit of global employability and its implications

The literature on the interactions between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education has largely overlooked the resistance/agency of university accounting education in ex-colonies as it interacts with globalisation project of accountancy profession.

Consequently, there is a limited understanding of how and why university accounting education in former colonies engages with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession from a macro-institutional perspective. In addressing this gap, present study extends the emerging body of literature on the interaction between the accounting profession and university accounting education (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007; Hopper, 2013; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013) by articulating the resistance/agency of an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony through a post-colonial theoretical perspective, which broadly examines how the colonized react to, engage with, resist, and reconstruct global discourses and practices (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017; Loomba, 2007).

The analysis in chapter 7, which examines how the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme navigates the post-colonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, reveals that the emergence and evolution of the degree programme from its inception in 1991, reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to these global discourses and practices. By the time Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, the University of Ceylon, founded in 1943, was the country's only university (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). It was an Oxbridge tradition university dedicated for liberal arts education taught in English (De Silva, 1978). This university aimed to produce socially conscious local graduates for colonial administration roles (Warnapala, 2011). However, in post-independence, civil society pressured the administrators with nationalist and decolonising discourses, criticising English-medium instructions for reproducing European liberalism rather than fostering locally relevant knowledge (Warnapala, 2011). In response, the nationalist government elected in 1956, raised the status of two Pirivenas of higher learning (institutes for Buddhist Monks), experienced in teaching in Sinhala medium to fully-fledged universities: Vidyodaya University of Ceylon (now USJ) and Vidyalandara University of Ceylon (now the University of Kelaniya) to promote teaching different disciplines in native languages (Sinhala and Tamil), predominantly Sinhala (De Silva, 1978).

The graduates educated in native languages from these universities were intended to address the social and economic needs of the country, as part of the nation state building project initiated by the nationalist government. However, the state-controlled economy struggled to absorb the rapid expansion of higher education, resulting in educated unemployment in the country (Hettige, 2000). One of the key measures implemented by policy makers to address this issue was the 'Vocationalization of university curriculum', which emphasised graduate employability and proved largely successful in reducing the graduate unemployment (Gunawardena, 1982). As a result, more economically and socially relevant degree programmes were incorporated into the arts curriculum (Warnapala, 2011). Vidyodaya University of Ceylon became the first institution to offer bachelor's degrees in business administration and public administration in 1960s, with accounting as a subject (Fonseka et al., 2019). However, this shift towards vocational education did not mean abandoning liberal arts education entirely; instead, it advocated for a balanced approach, integrating both liberal and vocational education in university degree programmes.

In this context, the first attempt to establish an accounting degree at the USJ was made in 1985 but faced resistance from academics over concerns about its similarity to professional qualifications, the inclusion of two-year practical component, and the use of English as the medium of instruction. In 1989, the proposal was revived with the appointment of a three-member committee of young academics, who were also Chartered Accountants. This committee added academic rigour to the proposed degree by including an accounting theory course and an optional research course. They also introduced several Computer and Information Technology courses featuring hands-on experience for the first time in vocationally oriented degree programmes in the country. The inclusion of practical training was justified by the need for real world experience, similar to medical and engineering fields. Use of English as the medium of instruction, supported by extensive training in English throughout the programme. Consequently, this accounting degree was the first in the country's management education to transition from native language instruction to English and deviate from the traditional blend of liberal and vocational education, placing a strong

emphasis on vocational/professional values, including practical experience as a core curriculum component in vocationally oriented degree programme.

According to the founders, the main purpose of introducing this accounting degree programme was to produce globally employable graduates. The turn towards neo-liberalism, following the liberalisation of the economy in 1977, encouraged the privatisation of state-owned industries (World Bank, 2015). These laissez-faire economic policies attracted many multinational corporations and global professional firms to Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017). Despite the rapid growth of the private sector, there were limited employment opportunities for management and commerce graduates. Consequently, when this degree programme was introduced, there was significant unemployment or under employment among management graduates in the country. Additionally, the global and local (globalised) professional bodies were not producing enough accountants to meet the demand (Yapa, 2006). Capitalising this opportunity, a degree programme in accounting was initiated to address the unemployment and/or under employment of management graduates. The pursuit of producing employable graduates to predominantly serve multinational corporations and global professional firms during neo-liberalism, resembles the efforts of local (globalised) PAB, CA Sri Lanka and global PABs, including CIMA and ACCA. This manifests the complicity of this degree programme's aim to produce globally employable graduates with that of global and local PABs.

Despite this complicity with PABs, which enabled the degree to secure 100% employability for its graduates, some academics in the department continue to resist. They criticise the programme's narrow focus on employability, similar to that of PABs, arguing that university accounting education should pursue broader goals and be committed to incorporate liberal values of education as well. Additionally, concern about public interest have been raised. Although the economy was liberalised in 1977, state-owned enterprise still plays a significant role, and SMEs constitute a larger proportion of economy (World Bank, 2015). They argue that focusing solely on producing employable graduates for global capital such as multinational corporations and global professional firms might compromise the programme's ability to address its public interest obligations towards other

constituencies such as the public sector and SMEs. Despite this resistance, the department remains firmly committed to replicating discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, driven by the goal of producing employable graduates in service of global capital.

Since its inception in 1991, the DA has reproduced the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, often as adopted by the local (globalised) PAB. Additionally, the DA has also engaged directly with discourses and practices of global PABs. For instance, similar to a professional accounting qualification, this degree programme includes a substantial practical training component, which academics believe is crucial for graduate employability. In implementing this practical training requirement, the DA has replicated the practical training practices of local (globalised) PAB. However, some academics resist the heavy emphasis on internship, arguing that it undermines academic values such as critical and creative thinking, conceptualisation, reflections, reflexivity, and research which should be integral to a degree programme (Sangster, 2010).

Similarly, from its inception, the DA has reproduced the curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs. This has been facilitated by several practices, including engaging members of PABs in curriculum development to ensure alignment with private sector expectations. This collaboration has led to a curriculum that closely resembles those of global and local (globalised) PABs. Over time, engagement with professionals has increased, with the department regularly consulting industry representatives and having informal conversation with members of PABs to enhance the curriculum and improve student employability. In addition to directly engaging with professionals, DA has consistently aligned its curriculum with those of global and local (globalised) PABs since the programme's inception. This alignment aims to help undergraduates pass professional exams more easily, support those not pursuing professional qualifications in the job market, and secure exemptions from PABs. The curriculum also benefits from the involvement of practitioners and professionally qualified academics, who influenced by their professional backgrounds, contribute to the replication of professional accounting curricular in academia.

Despite a strong commitment to professional training, some academics within the department resist the extreme measures taken to ensure employability of graduates. They argue that confining university accounting curriculum to mere professional training has led to several undesirable consequences. One such consequence is the neglect of general education within the university accounting curriculum, which is instrumental in developing higher order skills such as creative and critical thinking, reflection, thinking out of the box, and lifelong learning (Sangster, 2010). It compromises the university's mission of creating and diffusing knowledge in the public interest (Hopper, 2013) and fails to expose students to broader set of perceptions of accounting and help them understand accounting in a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context (Amernic and Craig, 2004). Similarly, the exclusive emphasis on professional training has caused this degree programme to pay little attention to research, which is a core university value (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013; Wadee, 2009). This lack of research in curriculum compromises not only the ability of the students to debate radical reforms but also the development of skills and knowledge crucial for accounting profession (Hopper, 2013). Despite these resistances, the DA remains strongly committed to replicating professional curricular in academia to enhance employability of its graduates.

The DA's commitment to replicating professional curricular is reinforced by its accreditation and exemption arrangements with PABs. Since the early 2000s, the DA has sought accreditation and exemptions from both local (globalised) and global PABs to enhance employability of its graduates by facilitating the attainment of professional accounting qualifications more efficiently. However, it was not until 2011 that the department's degree programme received significant exemptions from these PABs. In 2011, the degree programme achieved substantial recognition, earning exemptions from all ACCA examinations except for strategic professional level. Similarly, in 2015, it secured exemptions from all CIMA examinations except for the strategic case study. In 2020, the DA obtained exemptions from all CA Sri Lanka examinations except for strategic level.

However, some academics resist these arrangements, citing several concerns. They argue that excessive complicity with PABs compromises academic freedom

and autonomy of the academics, discouraging the development of locally relevant course and curriculum based on their interest, motivations, and expertise (Duff and Marriott, 2012). For instance, the prerequisites of exemption schemes have constrained the department from offering innovative and academically rigorous courses, such as Sustainability Management Accounting. Additionally, the academics freedom is compromised in the development of traditional course units like financial accounting, management accounting, auditing, and taxation, as these exemption and accreditation arrangements dictate the content (Apostolou and Gammie, 2014). Some young academics argue that these arrangements undermine the quality of accounting professionals produced through these pathways. They contend that while university accounting courses and professional accounting courses may cover similar content, universities often lack the depth and rigour of professional courses. They advocate for a model where universities focus on theoretical and research-based education, while PABs handle technical practice. Despite these concerns, the DA continue to pursue maximum exemptions, valuing the global recognition, differentiation from other degree programmes, and enhanced mobility for graduates that these arrangements offer.

Drawing on the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession such as replicating professional curricular, incorporating practical experience, and maintaining accreditation and exemption arrangements, the DA has sought to create a hybrid identity for its degree programme. This positions it as a 'globally recognised professionally oriented academic degree'. The primary motivation behind this is to enhance the global employability of graduates. Most academics are of the view that the hybridity of this degree facilitates employability in two keyways. First, upon completing the programme, graduates obtain a recognised academic qualification. Second, it offers a fast track to professional qualification, enabling graduates to receive the maximum number of exemptions from both local (globalised) and global PABs, along with two years of practical training by the time they complete the degree.

To enhance the global employability of its graduates, the department has focused on refining the professional model replicated in academia. From its inception, it has placed greater emphasis on developing student's business communication

skills, IT, and other soft skills more than the PABs do. This approach exemplifies how the colonized often adapt colonial discourses and practices through their own interpretive lenses, blending them with local ideas and practices to reconstruct their cultural identity (Loomba, 2007). Over time, skill development courses have been improved. For instance, the development of soft skills has been streamlined by organising it as a graded course: Management and personal capacity skills development, covering soft skills such as adaptability, interpersonal, teamwork, ability to negotiate, time and stress management, problem-solving, leadership, and communication. Students engage in guest lectures and workshops, with progress assessed through reflective logs, videos, presentation, and portfolio of learning experiences. Similarly, the practical training component has also evolved. Initially, it was offered as non-graded courses in the third and fourth years of the degree programme, with students evaluated solely on the satisfactory completion of stipulated number of training hours. Over time, this evolved into four-semester based graded courses, assessed through training supervisor's evaluation, reflective logs, training records, and viva-voce examinations.

In addition to refining the professional model, the hybridity of this degree programme is evident in its incorporation of an academic focus. While maintaining a strong emphasis on professional elements, the programme also incorporates an academic dimension. To help students understand accounting within a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context (Amernic and Craig, 2004), an advanced accounting theory course has been included since the programme's inception. This is the only course in the curriculum that addresses the wider contextual, social, environmental, ethical, and cultural dimensions of accounting and accountability (Amernic and Craig, 2004; Carmona, 2013; Chabrak and Craig, 2013; Hopper, 2013). However, it has not been well received by many graduates, who tend to focus primarily on the technical dimension of accounting. Similarly, a research component was introduced at the start of the programme. Until recently, this research component was offered as an elective. It became a mandatory course in 2018 to comply with SLQF requirements set by the UGC. This change was merely a matter of complying with regulatory requirements to maintain the status of the Honours degree, rather than focusing on enhancing the research skills of

undergraduates. Interestingly, neither the majority of academics nor graduates are worried about the inadequate development of research skills.

The lack of appreciation for the accounting theory course and the research component (academic dimension) of this degree programme stems from the perceived lack of correlation between this academic focus and graduates' employability. However, the programme must retain its academic focus due to the resistance from academics who advocate for liberal values, as well as institutional requirements such as the SLQF framework mandated by the UGC. While placing minimal emphasis on academic values, the degree programme remains deeply committed to instilling professional values. As a result, it replicates discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, including replicating professional curricular, incorporating practical training, and maintaining accreditation and exemption arrangements. These efforts are aimed at enhancing the global employability of graduates. This aim, which the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme pursues by reproducing global accountancy discourses and practices, resembles that of CA Sri Lanka: global mobility for its members. Currently, most graduates of DA work for multinational corporations and Big Four professional firms, both locally and internationally, where they are well compensated.

However, in line with the findings of the previous studies on interactions between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007; Hopper, 2013; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013), this study confirms that this pursuit of global employability for local graduates, has led to dependencies, domination, and exploitation within the academia in an ex-colony. First, the DA has become dependent on PABs for curriculum development. From its inception, the DA's academic staff referred to the curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs to ensure the university curriculum aligned with them. This close resemblance to professional curricular has led university accounting education to excessively inculcate technical skills, rote, rule-based learning, and a heavy emphasis on the interest of the private capital, while neglecting other constituencies such as the public sector, NGOs, grassroots communities, and theory beyond positive economics and agency theory,

as well as ethics, morality, and broader research-informed, fundamental or conceptual accounting issues (Hopper et al., 2004). Thus, this narrow technical emphasis in university accounting curriculum leaves accounting education largely deprived of attention to wider contextual, social, environmental, ethical, and cultural dimensions of accounting and accountability (Amernic and Craig, 2004; Carmona, 2013; Chabrak and Craig, 2013; Hopper, 2013).

When university accounting education focuses solely on technical training, it fails to help academia meet its public interest commitments. Universities are meant to mould students to serve public interest by imparting critical skills and knowledge through an enlightened curriculum and innovative pedagogy (Hopper, 2013). The curriculum and pedagogy should expose students to a broader set of perspectives on accounting and help them understand accounting within a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context in which it operates (Amernic and Craig, 2004). However, the adoption of a technical skills-based curriculum simply moulds students to unconsciously serve the interests and ideologies of the privileged (multinational corporations, Big Four professional firms, global investors, and managers) to the exclusion of interests of neglected constituencies such as employees, the environment, civil society, and government (Hopper et al., 2017). This approach falls short of critiquing contemporary capitalism and its accounting and accountability systems, leaving the status quo unchallenged (Hopper, 2013). Indeed, it has been observed that this academic programme has largely ignored the public sector (despite being offered by a government university) and the SME sector, which is a major contributor to the economy, while catering to the interests of the privileged.

Second, the DA has become dependent on PABs for exemption and accreditation arrangements, reinforcing the reproduction of professional curricular in academia. This dependence has compromised the academic freedom and autonomy of academically qualified staff, constraining the development of an enlightened accounting curriculum and innovative liberal pedagogy (Duff and Marriott, 2012; Hopper, 2013). Consequently, there is a greater emphasis on professional knowledge (practice) in course delivery, at the expense of critical and creative thinking and research-informed teaching. This promotes the socialisation

of accounting students into the existing capitalist economic and social order, diverting their attention from the public interest (Hopper, 2013). As a result, students fall short of critiquing contemporary capitalism and its accounting and accountability systems, leaving the status quo unchallenged (Hopper, 2013). Moreover, students have uncritically accepted global neo-liberal discourses such as integrated reporting, block chain technology, IFRSs, and ISA promoted by this academic programme.

Additionally, this pursuit of global employability for accounting graduates has allowed PABs to dominate the academic programme. Due to the DA's reliance on PABs for exemptions and accreditation, PABs have been able to dictate the content and assessment methods of the university curriculum. For instance, exemption arrangements have led to the introduction of two optional courses: Advanced Auditing and Assurance Services and Advanced Taxation and Tax Planning, to secure exemptions for equivalent modules from ACCA and CA Sri Lanka. This hegemonic role of PABs in defining the content of the accounting degree often compromises the academic dignity of the programme (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). Moreover, PAB's accreditation and exemption processes frequently do not recognise alternative assessment methods such as reflective learning logs, creative essays, posters, videos, and personal learning experiences as legitimate forms of evaluation, or these methods are not tolerated if they account for a significant portion of the final grade (Thomson and Bebbington, 2004). Instead, accreditation requirements insist on closed-book examinations. This rigid approach hinders the development of student's creative and critical thinking skills, limiting opportunities for a more dialogic, participatory style of education.

Furthermore, the domination of university accounting curriculum and pedagogy by PABs prevents academia from establishing its own identity. Professional accounting curricular often leave no room for research. When academia embodies the professional ideology, it may easily drift away from research, as observed in this degree programme. If a university aims to create and disseminate knowledge for the public good, the lack of research is concerning (Hopper, 2013; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). In serving the public interest, academia should focus on constituencies neglected by the profession, critique PABs for their neglect of

public interest commitments, and expand their vision to include novel forms of accountability, ecology, diverse theories such as neo-classical economics, industrial sociology, literary theory, and discourse analysis. It should also empirically examine practices like IFRSs, activity-based costing, transfer pricing, tax evasion and avoidance, and the investigation of the role of accounting profession, transnational institutions, and the state (Hopper, 2013). The failure to engage in such research and incorporate these elements into the accounting curriculum compromises not only students' ability to debate radical reforms but also their development of the skills and knowledge demanded by the contemporary accounting profession (Hopper, 2013).

In the pursuit of global employability for its graduates, the DA has contributed to the exploitation by global actors. First, the two-year internship programme has facilitated the exploitation of intern labour, particularly by Big Four professional firms, through unfair compensation and excessive workloads in ex-colonies such as Sri Lanka. For instance, undergraduates in this degree programme receives a monthly salary of LKR 10,000 (£25). Additionally, these professional firms assign a minimum number of undergraduates per audit, requiring them to work from morning until late at night to meet audit deadlines. As a result, they often miss university lectures regularly and are not permitted to take study leave for their university examinations.

Second, by adopting a technical curriculum that serves the interests of the privileged such as Big Four professional firms, multinational corporations, global investors, and global PABs, this degree programme produces willing servants of global capital. These graduates are ill-equipped to critique contemporary capitalism and its accounting and accountability systems, thus leaving the status quo unchallenged (Hopper, 2013). They are socialised into the current economic and social order, diverting their focus away from the public interest (Hopper, 2013). As a result, these graduates unconsciously contribute to the ongoing exploitation of ex-colonies by global actors. It is particularly concerning that many graduates from this degree programme are leaving Sri Lanka amid the ongoing financial crisis, creating a shortage of qualified people to address the country's

needs. This situation has been exacerbated by the DA's exemption and accreditation arrangements with global PABs.

8.4 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, I first discussed the findings that emerged from the empirical analysis of how CA Sri Lanka navigates the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, connecting them with the literature review on the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and PABs in ex-colonies (Chapter 2). As discussed, CA Sri Lanka engages with global accountancy discourses and practices, shaped by the post-colonial ambivalence, to form a hybrid identity as a globalised local institute. Through this identity, it pursues global mobility for its members. However, this pursuit produces dependencies, domination, and exploitation by global actors in the accountancy profession in an ex-colony. Next, I discussed the findings that emerged from the empirical analysis of how the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme navigates the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, linking them with the literature review on interaction between globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies (Chapter 3). As discussed, the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree engages with global accountancy discourses and practices, shaped by the post-colonial ambivalence, to form a hybrid identity as a globally recognised professionally oriented academic degree. Through this identity, it pursues global employability for its graduates, which resembles that of CA Sri Lanka. However, this pursuit produces dependencies, domination, and exploitation by global actors in the university accounting education in an ex-colony. The following chapter will present the conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the culmination of the thesis. It begins with a comprehensive summary of the story of postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony with an emphasis on outcomes of the research questions posited in the study. Following this, I articulate the academic contributions and practical implications of the study. Finally, the chapter navigates towards a discussion of the limitations and directions for future research with some concluding thoughts.

9.2 Postcolonization of university accounting education

This thesis explored the postcolonization of university accounting education in an ex-colony. Drawing from theoretical lens of postcolonialism, I use the notion of ‘postcolonization’ to mean the reconstruction of a hybrid identity by the peripheral institutions through the reproduction of global discourses and practices influenced by the enduring ‘ambivalence’ in post-colonial context (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017; Bhabha, 2012; Kaifala et al., 2019; Loomba, 2007; Thomson and Jones, 2016). In the present day, accounting degree programmes in ex-colonies extensively engage with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession in constructing a hybrid identity for their programmes (Bhabha, 2012; Hopper et al., 2017). These engagements encompass maintaining exemptions and accreditation arrangements with PABs, replicating professional accounting curricular, promoting neo-liberal accounting technologies such as IFRSs/IASs and ISA, and adopting IESs and textbooks that emphasise technical skills (Hopper et al., 2017; Poullaos and Uche, 2012; Sikka et al., 2007; Watty et al., 2013). In replicating these global discourses and practices, the local PABs in ex-colonies, often act as intermediaries. The university accounting education in ex-colonies often reproduces the global discourses and practices, as adopted by the local PABs. Consequently, to fully comprehend how and why the university accounting education in ex-colonies engages with global discourses and practices,

it is essential to understand the interaction between the local PABs in ex-colonies and globalisation project of accountancy profession.

In this context, my review of literature revealed that there has been a growing scholarly interest in exploring the influence of globalisation project of accountancy profession on the accounting profession in ex-colonies, followed by the influential contributions of Johnson (Johnson, 1972; Johnson and Caygill, 1971). Majority of this scholarship has scrutinised the role of the British-based global PABs in establishing PABs in former British colonies and beyond (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Baker et al., 2010; Gallhofer et al., 2011; Johnson and Caygill, 1971; Mihret et al., 2012; Yapa, 2010). Additionally, some of the other studies have delved into the influence exerted by international financial institutions such as the WB, the IMF, and the WTO, as well as transnational standard-setting bodies including the IFAC and the IASB, on the accounting profession in ex-colonies (Arnold and Sikka, 2001; Bakre, 2008; Chand and White, 2007; Chang, 2007; Graham and Annisette, 2012; Mir and Rahaman, 2005; Schiavo-Campo, 2009).

This strand of literature has predominantly explored the influence of globalisation project of accountancy profession in former colonies through the theoretical lens of 'imperialism' (ibid). The theoretical lens of 'imperialism' investigates the domination involved in the relations of centre-periphery from the 'colonizer's' perspective. The previous studies revealed that the globalisation project of accountancy profession continues to dominate the accountancy profession in ex-colonies owing to colonial and imperial legacies left in those countries. Specifically, this domination has hindered the development of curricular grounded on the relevant local context, led the uncritical adoption of neo-liberal accounting technologies such as IFRSs and ISA, reinforced the hegemony of global qualified accountants in local profession; and advanced the interests of the privileged such as multinational corporations, Big Four professional firms, and global investors at the expense of the broader public interest (Hopper et al., 2017; Mihret et al., 2012; Perera, 2012). However, the theoretical lens of imperialism fails to account for the resistance/agency of the colonized in the global-local encounter in accountancy profession.

In response, a few researchers have adopted a postcolonial lens to acknowledge the resistance/agency of colonized in global-local encounter in accountancy profession. For instance, Kaifala et al. (2019) explored, how Chartered and aspiring Accountants in Sierra Leone have constructed a hybrid professional identity through the global PAB, ACCA. Similarly, Thomson and Jones (2016) demonstrated how migrant accountants in Canada have overcome colonial 'othering' and regained their professional identity through mimicry of the Canadian professional archetype. In both studies, the unit of analysis was at the micro-individual level, focusing on the professional accountant (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). Consequently, there is limited understanding of the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and accounting profession in ex-colonies from a macro-institutional perspective. To address this gap, present study extends the literature through empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka.

Contemporary literature shows that the influence of globalisation project of accountancy profession extends beyond the accounting profession in ex-colonies and embraces the university accounting education in these contexts (Hopper et al., 2017; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). This prevents the development of enlighten accounting curricular and liberal pedagogy, confines the academic accounting education to mere professional training, prevents the pursuit of broader public interest and the development of identity as an independent academic discipline (Hopper, 2013; Hopper et al., 2017; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). Despite this domination of globalisation project of accountancy profession, we know little about how and why university accounting education in ex-colonies, like Sri Lanka, engages with this globalisation project of accountancy profession. To address this gap, I will study the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka through a postcolonial theoretical perspective, which allows for an appreciation of the resistance/agency of university accounting degree programmes in ex-colonies in their interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession.

In addressing the identified gaps in the literature, the present study posed the following two research questions.

- (1) How does a local PAB in an ex-colony navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession?
- (2) How does an accounting degree programme in the same context navigate the postcolonial ambivalence as it pursues a hybrid identity by reproducing discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession?

In exploring these research questions, rooted in a subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, I adopted a qualitative methodology. This approach was informed by my review of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism within the accountancy profession, where scholars addressing similar research questions have predominantly employed qualitative methodologies (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Baker et al., 2010; Caramanis, 2002; Kaifala et al., 2019; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Thomson and Jones, 2016; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010). Consequently, both the nature of my research questions and the methodological approaches of prior literature, inspired me to adopt a qualitative methodology for my study. In this, I utilised a diverse array of qualitative data collection methods, such as semi structured interviews, documentary review, and self-reflections to capture the culturally situated meanings and performed a narrative analysis to construct a nuanced and contextually informed understanding of postcolonial dynamics of university accounting education in ex-colonies (Cunliffe, 2011; Trautrimis et al., 2012). To address the first research question, I chose CA Sri Lanka, the preeminent national PAB in Sri Lanka, as my empirical site. For the second research question, I chose DA at USJ, who introduced the first accounting degree programme in the Sri Lankan university system, as my empirical site.

In making sense of data gathered in this study, I employed the theoretical lens of postcolonialism. This choice was informed by several factors, including my exposure into literature on accountancy profession, my pre-understanding of

accountancy profession and accounting education in Sri Lanka, and data gathered through verity of qualitative data collection methods. Among other factors, the most influential was the gap in the strand of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession. It revealed that only a handful of studies have used the theoretical perspective of postcolonialism to illuminate the interaction between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and the accounting profession and education in ex-colonies (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). For example, Kaifala et al. (2019) used the postcolonial notion of ‘hybridity’ to explore how professional accountants in Sierra Leone, have developed a global identity through ACCA. In a similar vein, Thomson and Jones (2016) used the notion of ‘mimicry’ to demonstrate how migrant accountants in Canada have navigated colonial ‘othering’ to reclaim their professional identity. Notably, both studies focus on professional accountants representing a micro-individual level analysis (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). The present study extends the application of postcolonial theory in two significant ways. First, it empirically demonstrates and theoretically analyses how and why PABs and university accounting education in ex-colonies engage with the globalisation project of accountancy profession, representing a macro-institutional level analysis. Second, the present study introduces the notion of ‘ambivalence’ alongside ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’ in theorising ‘postcolonization’. The notion of ‘ambivalence’ helps to better articulate how ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’ persist at an institutional level in postcolonial contexts.

The exploration of first research question revealed that the development of CA Sri Lanka from its establishment in 1959 to Sri Lanka’s neo-liberal turn in 1977, reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global discourses and practices by the government of Sri Lanka and the governing council of CA Sri Lanka. The nationalist government established CA Sri Lanka through the ICA Act No.23 of 1959 as part of its nation state building project (Yapa, 2010), intending to produce local accountants for auditing, management, and public sector roles (Wallace and Briston, 1993). To achieve this, the government relied on British-educated local elite who maintained British values and lifestyles (Bhabha, 2012; Boussebaa et al., 2014). They insisted on producing local accountants exclusively through the PABs that replicated the traditional British model of

training accountants (Yapa, 2000). They established CA Sri Lanka by replicating the model of the English Institute, with a strong emphasis on auditing practice and a similar curriculum and examinations to the ICAEW, including five-year practical training period (Yapa, 2010). From 1960 to 1967, CA Sri Lanka collaborated with the ICAEW to develop its examination system and syllabus (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). Despite the nationalist government's declaration of Sinhala as the official language, CA Sri Lanka exclusively operated in English until 1976 (Yapa, 2010).

Drawing heavily on the practices of the ICAEW, the founders of CA Sri Lanka sought to establish a hybrid identity for the local institute, shaping it into a 'British-inspired local institute'. Until the mid-1970s, the British-owned plantation companies dominated Sri Lanka's corporate sector (Moore, 1997), and many founding members of CA Sri Lanka held senior positions in professional firms serving these companies (Yapa, 2010). To better serve global capital (predominantly British), the institute adopted a curriculum, examinations, and training similar to those of ICAEW (Briston, 1978; Yapa, 2000). This strategy aimed to produce breed of local accountants aligned with British values and systems, through which CA Sri Lanka aimed to facilitate greater mobility for its members.

The evolution of CA Sri Lanka during the post-1977 neoliberal era reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global discourses and practices by the government and CA Sri Lanka members representing both global and local business interests. Following the economic liberalisation initiated by the government in 1977, which included privatisation and market-driven growth (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998), Sri Lanka strengthened its ties with the WB and the IMF to further economic growth. Sri Lanka's first ROSC in 2003 recommended unmodified adoption of IASs/IFRSs and ISA for SBEs (World Bank, 2004), which CA Sri Lanka implemented from 1 January 2012, aiming to attract FDIs and accommodate multinational corporations and global professional firms. However, this decision faced resistance from CA Sri Lanka members with local business interests, who argued that these global standards did not suit local conditions and imposed additional burden on local business entities. To address the concerns, CA Sri Lanka implemented measures such as differing the adoption date of Standards, organising training programmes, and encouraging the adoption of IFRSs for SMEs.

In addition to adopting IFRSs/IASs and ISA, CA Sri Lanka pursued MRAs with global PABs including ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia, and ICAEW. These MRAs allowed members to gain cross-membership in other bodies. However, this initiative faced criticism from senior figures in Sri Lanka's accounting profession, for prioritising global mobility over addressing local needs.

During the neo-liberal period, CA Sri Lanka expanded its mimicry beyond ICAEW practices to include those of globalisation project of accountancy profession, encompassing global PABs, transnational standard setters, and transnational financiers. For instance, following the recommendations of the WB, CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications with effect from 1 January 2012. However, this unaltered adoption of international standards has predominantly served the interests of global businesses including multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms, often at the expense of local businesses. The major impetus for CA Sri Lanka to emphasise the interests of global businesses is the fact that a majority of its members serve these multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms. In addition, CA Sri Lanka pursued the adoption of IESs and implementation of MRAs. In collaboration with ICAEW, CA Sri Lanka developed its 2010-2015 curriculum in compliance with IESs, fulfilling its obligations as a member of IFAC. This exercise confirmed that the CA Curriculum complies with IESs and is compatible with the ICAEW curriculum. This led CA Sri Lanka to pursue negotiations for an MRA with ICAEW. Subsequently, CA Sri Lanka expanded these MRA beyond ICAEW to encompass ACCA, CIMA, and CPA Australia. These MRAs led CA Sri Lanka to further align its curriculum with those of these global PABs.

The expansion of CA Sri Lanka's engagement from practices of ICAEW to discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, has transformed its hybrid identity from a 'British-inspired local profession' into a 'globalised local profession'. Following the liberalisation of the economy, multinational corporations and global professional firms made a remarkable presence in Sri Lanka (Yapa et al., 2017). Recognising the lucrative opportunities these entities offered its members, CA Sri Lanka positioned itself as a key facilitator for these global entities. A significant move in this direction was adopting IFRSs/IASs and ISA without modifications, which CA Sri Lanka viewed as essential to solidifying its

global identity. In its pursuit of a global identity, CA Sri Lanka has also established MRAs with globally recognised PABs, including ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA, CPA Australia, and CA ANZ. Through this pursuit of global identity, the local institute aimed to enhance global mobility of its members in two ways. First, it attracted and facilitated global capital (multinational corporations and global network of professional firms) in the local context, thereby creating lucrative opportunities for its members within the country. Second, it opened up overseas opportunities for its members. Currently, over 40% of CA Sri Lanka members work abroad while those remaining primarily serve multinational corporations and global audit firms operating in Sri Lanka.

However, this pursuit of global mobility has resulted in dependencies, domination, and exploitation within the accounting profession in ex-colonies, echoing previous studies on imperialism in accountancy profession (Annisette, 2000; Arnold and Sikka, 2001; Bakre, 2005; 2008; Chang, 2007; Graham and Annisette, 2012; Mir and Rahaman, 2005; Poullaos and Sian, 2010; Schiavo-Campo, 2009; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010). CA Sri Lanka adopted IFRSs and ISA to facilitate multinational corporations and global audit firms, leading to reliance on the IASB and the IFAC, as well as the WB. However, these standards are developed presuming the existence of efficient capital markets, investor sophistication, effective regulators, and legal systems, which are largely absent in former colonies like Sri Lanka (Hopper et al., 2017). Consequently, the relevance of IFRSs, particularly IFRS 13: Fair value measurements, IFRS 9: Financial Instruments, IFRS 17: Insurance Contracts, in Sri Lanka is largely questionable. Hence, similar to other ex-colonies like T&T, Nigeria, and Siera Leone dependencies on transnational bodies such as the IFAC and the WB has led to the uncritical adoption of IFRSs and ISA in the local context (Annisette, 2000; Perera, 2012).

To enhance the global mobility of its members, CA Sri Lanka has recently entered into MRAs with global PABs such as ICAEW, ACCA, and CPA Australia, aligning its curriculum with that of global PABs. This alignment has shifted the focus of local PAB's curriculum towards Western values, systems, and priorities, while neglecting issues pertinent to Sri Lanka (Poullaos and Uche, 2012). For instance, CA Sri Lanka's recent curriculum has largely ignored accountability issues in the SMEs and

public sectors, despite these being two of the most significant sectors in the economy (World Bank, 2015). Consequently, the local institute has failed to produce an accounting workforce attuned to relevant local social and economic specificities, instead training accountants in a manner more suited to serve global capital (Mihret et al., 2012; Poullaos and Uche, 2012; Annisette, 2000).

In addition, the pursuit of global mobility has led to the domination of the accountancy profession and education in ex-colonies by global actors. The unmodified adoption of IFRSs and ISA has allowed multinational corporations and Big Four audit firms to dominate the business landscape in Sri Lanka, reinforcing global accounting practices (Annisette, 2000). Similarly, the adoption of IESs and MRAs has led to the domination of CA Sri Lanka's professional curriculum by global bodies. These global discourses and practices necessitate the local PAB to align its curriculum with the requirements of transnational standard setters and global PABs, leading to a local curriculum that often mirrors the limitations of global curricular. The global curricular hardly discuss corporate failures, scandals, and its social consequences, corporate social responsibility, ethics, and philosophies, topics that are crucial for fostering reflective thinking in future accountants (Sikka et al., 2007). This undermines the local institute's ability to pursue the broader public interest through the development of locally relevant curricular (Mihret et al., 2012). Furthermore, the Big Four professional firms exploit local talent by offering minimum wages and demanding long hours. Capacity building projects with global PABs have led to significant financial outflows from Sri Lanka to Western countries (Chang, 2007; Schiavo-Campo, 2009). The MRAs have also resulted in a shortage of qualified accountants in Sri Lanka while allowing global PABs to expand their membership and drain local capital, exacerbating the country's economic challenges.

The exploration of second research question revealed that the emergence and evolution of B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree from its inception in 1991, reflects a complex mix of complicity and resistance to global discourses and practices. The University of Ceylon, founded in 1943, was Sri Lanka's only university at the time of independence in 1948 (Samarasinghe and Samarasinghe, 1998). It was an Oxbridge tradition university dedicated for liberal arts education taught in English

(De Silva, 1978) and aimed to produce graduates for colonial administration roles (Warnapala, 2011). However, nationalist and decolonising pressures after independence led to the elevation of two Buddhist Pirivenas into fully-fledged universities: Vidyodaya University of Ceylon (now USJ) and Vidyalankara University of Ceylon (now the University of Kelaniya) to promote teaching different disciplines in native languages to address national needs (De Silva, 1978). However, the state-controlled economy struggled to absorb the rapid expansion of higher education, leading to educated unemployment (Hettige, 2000). In response, government introduced the 'Vocationalization of university curriculum', to improve employability (Gunawardena, 1982). Vidyodaya University of Ceylon became the first to offer business and public administration degrees in the 1960s, with accounting as a subject (Fonseka et al., 2019). However, this shift towards vocational education did not mean abandoning liberal arts entirely; instead, it advocated for a balanced approach, integrating both liberal and vocational education in university degree programmes.

In this context, the first attempt to establish an accounting degree at the USJ was made in 1985 but faced resistance from academics due to concerns over its professional focus and the use of English. A revised proposal in 1989, led by a committee of young academics who were also Chartered Accountants, added academic rigour to the proposed degree by including an accounting theory course and an optional research course. Additionally, practical training and courses in Computer and Information Technology were incorporated, justifying the need for real-world experience. Use of English as the medium of instruction, supported by extensive training in English throughout the programme. Consequently, this accounting degree became the first in the country's management education to transition from native language instruction to English and deviate from the traditional blend of liberal and vocational education, placing a strong emphasis on vocational/professional values in vocationally oriented degree programme.

The main purpose of introducing this degree programme was to produce graduates to serve global capital, including multinational corporations and global professional firms. This resembles the efforts of local (globalised) PAB, CA Sri Lanka and global PABs such as CIMA and ACCA. Despite this complicity with PABs,

which has enabled the degree to secure 100% employability for its graduates, some academics in the department continue to resist. They criticise the programme's narrow focus on employability, arguing that university accounting education should pursue broader goals and incorporate liberal values of education as well. Additionally, concern about public interest have been raised. Despite this resistance, the department remains committed to replicating discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, driven by the goal of producing employable graduates to serve global capital.

Since its inception in 1991, the DA has reproduced the discourses and practices of the globalisation project of accountancy profession, often as adopted by the local (globalised) PAB. For instance, similar to a professional accounting qualification, this degree programme includes a substantial practical training component, which academics believe is crucial for graduate employability. However, some academics resist this heavy emphasis on internship, arguing that it undermines academic values such as critical thinking, reflections, and research (Sangster, 2010). Similarly, from its inception, the DA has reproduced the curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs aiming to help undergraduates pass professional exams more easily, support those not pursuing professional qualifications in the job market, and secure exemptions from PABs. Despite these efforts have ensured the employability of graduates, some academics argued that focusing solely on professional training neglects the general education within the university curriculum, which is instrumental in developing higher order skills such as critical thinking, reflection, thinking out of the box, and lifelong learning (Sangster, 2010). It compromises the university's mission of creating and diffusing knowledge in the public interest (Hopper, 2013) and diminishes the focus on research (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013;Wadee, 2009).

The DA's commitment to replicating professional curricular is reinforced by its accreditation and exemption arrangements with PABs. Since the early 2000s, the DA has sought accreditation and exemptions from both local (globalised) and global PABs to enhance employability of its graduates by facilitating the attainment of professional accounting qualifications more efficiently. By 2020, the degree programme has secured the maximum exemptions from global PABs such

as ACCA and CIMA, as well as from the local (globalised) PAB, CA Sri Lanka. However, some academics resist these arrangements, arguing that excessive complicity with PABs compromises academic freedom and autonomy of the academics, discouraging the development of locally relevant course and curriculum based on their interest, motivations, and expertise (Duff and Marriott, 2012). Despite these concerns, the DA continue to pursue maximum exemptions, valuing the global recognition, differentiation from other degree programmes, and enhanced mobility for graduates that these arrangements offer.

Drawing on the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession, the DA has sought to create a hybrid identity for its degree programme, positioning it as a 'globally recognised professionally oriented academic degree'. The primary aim is to enhance the global employability of graduates. This hybrid model facilitates employability in two keyways: providing graduates with a recognised academic qualification and offering a fast track to professional qualification, including maximum exemptions from local (globalised) and global PABs along with two years of practical training by graduation. From its inception, the DA has focused on refining the professional model replicated in academia by placing greater emphasis on developing student's business communication, IT, and other soft skills than PABs typically do. For instance, the development of soft skills has been streamlined by organising it as a graded course, and the practical training component has evolved into four-semester graded course with assessments, including reflective logs, training records, and viva-voce examinations.

In addition to refining the professional model, this degree programme maintains an academic focus. To help students understand accounting within a broader historical, socio-political, and natural context (Amernic and Craig, 2004), an advanced accounting theory course has been included since the programme's inception. However, it has not been well received by many graduates, who tend to focus primarily on technical aspects. Similarly, a research component, initially an elective, became mandatory in 2018 to comply with SLQF requirements set by the UGC. This change was merely a matter of complying with regulatory requirements, rather than focusing on enhancing the research skills. Neither the majority of academics nor graduates are worried about the inadequate

development of research skills. The lack of appreciation for the academic dimension of this degree programme stems from the perceived lack of correlation between the academic focus and graduates' employability. While placing minimal emphasis on academic values, the degree programme remains deeply committed to instilling professional values aimed at enhancing the global employability of graduates. This aim, which the B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme pursues by reproducing global accountancy discourses and practices, resembles that of CA Sri Lanka: global mobility for its members. Currently, most graduates of DA work for multinational corporations and Big Four professional firms, both locally and internationally, where they are well compensated.

However, this pursuit of global employability, has led to dependencies, domination, and exploitation in ex-colonies, echoing findings of the previous studies on interactions between the globalisation project of accountancy profession and university accounting education (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007;Hopper, 2013;Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). First, the DA's reliance on PABs for curriculum development has led university accounting education to excessively inculcate technical skills, rote, and rule-based learning, while neglecting wider contextual, social, environmental, ethical, and cultural dimensions of accounting (Amernic and Craig, 2004;Carmona, 2013;Chabrak and Craig, 2013;Hopper, 2013). Consequently, the adoption of a technical skills-based curriculum has simply moulded students of DA to unconsciously serve the interests and ideologies of the privileged to the exclusion of interests of neglected constituencies such as employees, the environment, civil society, and government (Hopper et al., 2017). Second, the DA's reliance on PABs for exemptions and accreditation, has compromised the academic freedom and autonomy of staff, constraining the development of an enlightened accounting curriculum and innovative liberal pedagogy (Duff and Marriott, 2012;Hopper, 2013). Consequently, a greater emphasis being placed on professional knowledge in course delivery, at the expense of critical and creative thinking. This promotes the socialisation of students into the existing capitalist economic and social order, diverting their attention from the public interest (Hopper, 2013).

Additionally, this pursuit of global employability for accounting graduates has allowed PABs to dominate the academic programme. Through exemptions and accreditation arrangements, PABs dictate the content and assessment methods of the curriculum, compromising the academic dignity of the programme (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007). The PAB's accreditation and exemption processes often disregard alternative assessment methods such as reflective learning logs, creative essays, and personal learning experiences, insisting instead on closed-book examinations (Thomson and Bebbington, 2004). This rigid approach hinders the development of student's creative and critical thinking skills, limiting opportunities for a more dialogic, participatory style of education. Furthermore, this domination prevents academia from establishing its own identity. Professional accounting curricular often leave no room for research. As observed in this degree programme, the alignment with professional ideology can lead to a neglect of research which is concerning for a university aiming to create and disseminate knowledge for the public good (Hopper, 2013; Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013). This lack of research compromises not only students' ability to debate radical reforms but also their development of the skills and knowledge demanded by the accounting profession (Hopper, 2013).

Moreover, the DA's focus on global employability for its graduates, has contributed to the exploitation by global actors. The two-year internship programme has facilitated the exploitation of intern labour, particularly by Big Four professional firms, through unfair compensation and excessive workloads in ex-colonies like Sri Lanka. Additionally, graduates moulded by a technical curriculum becomes uncritical supporters of global capital, contributing to the ongoing exploitation of ex-colonies and exacerbating issues such as brain drain during Sri Lanka's financial crisis.

9.3 Contributions of the study

This study offers several contributions. First, it extends the growing body of literature on imperialism and postcolonialism in accountancy profession (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2010; Johnson, 1972; Johnson and Caygill, 1971; Kaifala et al., 2019; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Thomson and

Jones, 2016;Uche, 2010;Verma, 2010;Yapa, 2010) by empirically demonstrating and theoretically analysing the resistance/agency of a PAB in an ex-colony in their interactions with discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. This strand of literature has predominantly explored the global-local interactions in accountancy profession predominantly through the theoretical lens of ‘imperialism’ (Annisette, 2000; 2010;Bakre, 2010;Johnson, 1972;Johnson and Caygill, 1971;Sian and Poullaos, 2010;Susela, 2010;Uche, 2010;Verma, 2010;Yapa, 2010). These studies have shown how global PABs (e.g., ACCA), transnational standard setters (e.g., IFAC) and transnational financiers (e.g., WB) dominate the accountancy profession in ex-colonies owing to colonial and imperial legacies left in those countries.

However, the theoretical lens of ‘imperialism’ fails to acknowledge the resistance/agency of colonial subjects and their institutions in the relations of centre-periphery in accountancy profession. In addressing this, a few studies have examined the agency of accountants from ex-colonies using the theoretical lens of postcolonialism. For instance, Kaifala et al. (2019) explored, how Chartered and aspiring accountants in ex-colonies have constructed a hybrid professional identity through a global professional accounting body, ACCA. Similarly, Thomson and Jones (2016) examined how migrant accountants in Canada have overcome colonial ‘othering’ and reclaimed their professional identity by mimicking the Canadian professional archetype. Despite these studies, an institutional-level analysis of how and why local PABs in ex-colonies interact with the globalisation project of accountancy profession through the theoretical lens of postcolonialism remain largely unexplored (Alawattage and Fernando, 2017). To address this gap, the present study explored how and why the local PAB, CA Sri Lanka, has engaged with discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession.

The present study revealed the complex mix of complicity and resistance of key constituents of CA Sri Lanka: The Sri Lankan government and members of CA Sri Lanka, including governing council members, has driven the local PAB to replicate the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. This includes reproducing global curriculum, implementing MRAs, adopting IFRSs, ISA, and IESs, thereby creating a hybrid identity for the local institute: a globalised

local institute. By constructing this global identity, the local institute seeks to produce local accountants who are willing servants of global capital, thereby securing global mobility for its members.

Second, this study extends the emerging body of literature on interaction between the accountancy profession and university accounting education in post-colonial context and beyond (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013; Annisette and Kirkham, 2007; Hopper, 2013) by articulating the resistance/agency of an accounting degree programme in an ex-colony in its interaction with the globalisation project of accountancy profession. While previous studies have primarily focused on the domination of the accounting profession over university accounting education, there is a lack of research providing an institutional-level analysis of how and why university accounting education in ex-colonies interacts with the globalisation project of accountancy profession from a 'colonized' perspective. To address this gap, the present study, adopting a postcolonial lens, explored how and why the first accounting degree programme in Sri Lanka has engaged with the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession.

The present study revealed the complex mix of complicity and resistance of key constituents of B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree: the Sri Lankan government, civil society, and academics, has driven the academic programme to replicate the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession. This includes reproducing curricular of global and local (globalised) PABs, implementing exemption/accreditations from PABs, promoting global accounting technologies such as IFRSs and ISA, thereby creating a hybrid identity for the programme: a globally recognised, professionally oriented academic degree. By constructing this professionally oriented global identity, the academic programme aims to produce local graduates who are willing servants of global capital, thereby enhancing their global employability.

Third, by adopting the perspective of 'ambivalence', I extend the application of the discursive angle of postcolonial theory beyond 'mimicry' and 'hybridity' in accounting literature (Kaifala et al., 2019; Thomson and Jones, 2016). There is a dearth of research in management and accounting literature that explicitly

employs the notion of ‘ambivalence’. Boussebaa et al. (2014) are an exception, as they empirically demonstrated ambivalence in the Englishisation discourse within call centres in India. They showed how this ambivalence continuously frustrates efforts to overcome the language barrier and produce pure English-speaking local employees (Boussebaa et al., 2014). The present study contributes to the discursive angle of postcolonial theory by empirically demonstrating how ambivalence drives the mimicry of global discourses and practices by the colonial/postcolonial institutions, leading to the formation of hybrid identities. Specifically, ‘Ambivalence’ theorises how colonial/post-colonial institutions (such as PABs and university accounting education in ex-colonies) perceive global discourses and practices, particularly in terms of their complicity and resistance. The notion of ‘mimicry’ captures how and why these colonial/post-colonial institutions reproduce global discourses and practices, while ‘hybridity’ theorises how these institutions perceive their own identity and the rationale behind it.

9.4 Implications of the study

This study has several practical implications. First, this study informs PABs in ex-colonies on how to enhance the global mobility of their members. To achieve this, PABs should actively engage with global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia, as well as transnational standard setters like the IFAC and the IASB, and transnational financers such as the WB and the IMF. In today’s world, the globalisation is a powerful and inevitable force that shapes various professional landscapes, including accounting. Thus, it is essential for PABs in ex-colonies to collaborate with global accountancy bodies. By adopting international standards such as IFRSs, ISA, and IESs, as well as implementing MRAs, aligning their curricular with those of global PABs, and implementing capacity building projects with support from these global bodies, PABs in ex-colonies can ensure that their members remain competitive and relevant in the global market.

Second, this study informs accounting educators in post-colonial context on how to enhance their graduates’ global employability through engagement with the global accountancy bodies. In post-colonial settings, ensuring the employability of graduates has become the key educational priority. University accounting

programmes can achieve this by collaborating with global accountancy bodies. Securing exemptions through aligning university curriculum with those of PABs, incorporating practical experiences such as internship, promoting global neo-liberal discourses such as IFRSs and IAS, enhancing proficiency in English language, and developing soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, and leadership are some of the initiatives through which accounting educators in post-colonial settings can prepare their graduates for global economy.

Third, this study would bring into attention of the influential stakeholders within the accounting profession in ex-colonies, the potential drawbacks of replicating the discourses and practices of globalisation project of accountancy profession in the local context. For instance, the adoption of IFRSs and ISA does not reflect the local circumstances, thereby impose additional burden on local businesses (Annisette, 2000; Perera, 2012). Similarly, MRAs force local PAB to conform to curricular of global PABs, promoting Western values, systems, and priorities at the expense of issues pertinent to ex-colonies (Poullaos and Uche, 2012) and result in unprecedented migration of qualified accountants, creating a vacuum of qualified people to serve the needs of the country. Moreover, the adoption of global discourses and practices has led the local PAB to promote the ideologies and interests of privileged to the exclusion of constituencies such as public sector, local businesses (especially SMEs), and grassroot communities (Hopper et al., 2004). Therefore, this study advocates for a critical stance within the local PAB when adopting these discourses and practices. This critical approach would enable local institutes to navigate a balance between the interests of various stakeholders and evolve their qualification to better serve the public interest.

Fourth, this study would enlighten accounting academics in ex-colonies about the potential drawbacks of replicating global discourses and practices in the university accounting education, thereby inspire a movement for decolonization of university accounting curricular. It revealed that these discourses and practices confine the university accounting education in ex-colonies to mere professional training, often at the expense of broader public interest (Hopper, 2013). The overemphasis on technical skills and rote learning has led students to unconsciously serve the interests of multinational corporations and Big Four professional firms, to the

exclusion of interests of neglected constituencies such as the government, local business communities, and grassroots communities (Hopper et al., 2004). In contrast, an accounting curriculum that emphasises higher order skills such as critical thinking, reflection, out of the box thinking, and lifelong learning (Sangster, 2010) alongside technical skills, can produce a breed of reflective accounting graduates better equipped to serve the public interest in ex-colonies like Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study encourages academics in these regions to engage in the development and refinement of accounting degree programs, integrating both academic values and professional values to better meet the diverse needs of their societies. Accordingly, this study serves as an initial step towards expanding the ongoing scholarly discourse on the decolonization of university education into the academic sphere in ex-colonies.

9.5 Limitation and directions for future research

The present study explored the postcolonial dynamics in accountancy profession and university accounting education in the context of ex-British colony, Sri Lanka. However, it is imperative to acknowledge the contextual specificity inherent in such findings, as historical narratives, political structures, economic trajectories, and cultural ethos vary across ex-colonial territories. Hence, the generalisability of the study's findings to other ex-colonies may be limited. Consequently, replicating this inquiry across diverse ex-colonial contexts would expand the breadth and depth of scholarly inquiry on imperialism and postcolonialism in the accountancy profession (Annisette, 2000; 2010; Bakre, 2010; Johnson, 1972; Johnson and Caygill, 1971; Kaifala et al., 2019; Sian and Poullaos, 2010; Susela, 2010; Thomson and Jones, 2016; Uche, 2010; Verma, 2010; Yapa, 2010). Also, it would offer nuanced insights into the emerging body of literature on interaction between the accountancy profession and university accounting education in post-colonial settings (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013).

Employing a postcolonial theoretical lens, the current study undertook a comprehensive macro-level analysis elucidating postcolonial dynamics in accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies. A future research endeavour can extend this investigation by delving into the nitty

gritty of mundane practices of accountancy profession and university accounting education using a theoretical lens that emphasises micro-level practices, preferably Bourdieu's theory of practice. By situating the analysis within Bourdieu's theoretical framework, which emphasises the interplay between habitus, field, and capital, researchers can gain deeper insights into how social actors negotiate and reproduce dominant discourses and practices within the accountancy profession and university accounting education in ex-colonies. Moreover, by scrutinising the subtle interplays of power, agency, and symbolic capital at play within these micro-level practices, future research endeavours may unearth critical nuances and tensions that may be hidden at the macro-level analysis.

This study exposed the potential drawbacks of replicating global discourses and practices in the university accounting education in ex-colonies. It was evident that university accounting education in ex-colonies excessively inculcates technical skills and rote, rule-based learning and heavily concentrates on the interest of the private capital, particularly multinational corporations, global investors, and the Big Four professional firms (Hopper et al., 2004). This narrow technical focus leaves university accounting education largely deprived of attention to wider contextual, social, environmental, ethical, and cultural dimensions of accounting and accountability (Amernic and Craig, 2004; Carmona, 2013; Chabrak and Craig, 2013; Hopper, 2013). As a result, prospective accountants in ex-colonies remain uninformed about the socio-historical context of accounting and the social consequences of accounting techniques. Although they are sound in technical expertise, they are unlikely to envision socially responsible accounting practices. Consequently, this study invites academics in ex-colonies to embark on conceptual investigations into how the contemporary academic debate on the decolonization of university accounting education can be operationalised within the university accounting education in post-colonial settings. Such research endeavour not only enriches the scholarly discourse but also has the potential to catalyse meaningful reforms aimed at fostering epistemic diversity, cultural inclusivity, and social justice within accounting education domains (Retief Venter and De Villiers, 2013).

9.6 Concluding thoughts

In concluding this thesis, I would like to reflect on one interesting conversation I had during my fieldwork pertaining to the ambiguity surrounding the purpose of post-colonial institutions. It was fascinating to witness neither preeminent national PAB nor the premier academic accounting department exhibited clarity regarding their respective mission. The national PAB offers academic programmes such as bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting. Similarly, the academic department offers professionally oriented bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting. This raises fundamental questions regarding their roles within the broader context of accounting education and professional development in post-colonial settings. During an interview, one of the professors of DA shared his thoughts on this as follows:

“Professional bodies have a role in society. Academic institutions have a role in the society. But it seems in our country these institutions they have not recognised their role. In a society they have separate roles, that's why we have separate institutions, say professional bodies, universities likewise. But it is interesting to see that these institutes have not recognised their role. For example, we can see professional bodies, their main duties to provide the professional service and to act for the best interest of the public and to create some professionals in the fields of accounting and finance and monitoring their ethical conducts and to ensure societies getting the competent professional service from their members to enhance the public interest. Accordingly, they have a dedicated role in this regard. But recently we can see these professional bodies are offering degree programs. At the same time the academic institutes, for example Department of Accounting is offering professional degree, master's degree in professional accounting. If these Professional bodies and the universities and the industry organisations have recognised their roles, then we could implement ideal models but unfortunately these institutions they have not really working for what they are supposed to be.”

Given the significance of fostering a robust accounting profession and educational infrastructure in ex-colonies such as Sri Lanka, it becomes imperative to initiate critical dialogues involving key stakeholders. This inclusive discourse should encompass representatives from professional bodies, academic institutions, industry stakeholders, and policymakers. Through such collaborative endeavours, a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted objectives and challenges

confronting the development of accounting profession and education in post-colonial contexts can be attained.

In the realm of university accounting education, engaging in the contemporary academic discourse surrounding the decolonization of university education emerges as a pertinent avenue for academia to rediscover its purpose within post-colonial societies. By actively participating in this discourse, academia can endeavour to realign its objectives with the overarching goal of advancing public interest and promoting inclusivity in professional practices. Consequently, leveraging the insights gathered from this dialogue can inform strategic initiatives aimed at revitalising the relevance and efficacy of accounting education in post-colonial settings.

Appendix 1: Virtual fieldwork plan for DA

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Beginning of accounting education in Sri Lankan universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergence of vocationally oriented degrees and their rationale • Accounting as a university subject and its rationale 	Professors	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	July 2023- August 2023	3 hours
				Documentary review: Local and global publications (e.g., Along an untrodden path)	July 2023- August 2023	10 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Rationale for developing an accounting degree programme at the University of Sri Jayewardene-pura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for accounting as a university discipline in the presence of global and local PABs • Philosophical foundation of the degree programme • Model of the degree programme • Purpose served by the degree programme • Role of professional qualifications in the development of the degree programme • Securing qualified academics for programme delivery • Distinction from professional qualifications and future developments 	Professors	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	July 2023- August 2023	5 hours
				Documentary review: Local and global publications (e.g., Along an untrodden path, Colonialism and accounting education in developing countries, and department website)	July 2023- August 2023	20 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Historical evolution of the relationship between PABs and DA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitudes and reactions of PABs to the inception of the degree programme Attitudes of academics towards the role of PABs and their education Engagement with local and global PABs from the inception of the degree Need for professional accreditation for the degree programme Need for degree programme to align with professional accounting qualifications Need for degree programme to maintain a distinctive approach from professional accounting qualifications 	Professors, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	July 2023-September 2023	5 hours
				Documentary review (i.e. MoU with local and global PABs)	July 2023-August 2023	20 hours
		Myself		Self-reflection	July 2023-September 2023	10 hours

<p>Rationales behind curriculum development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on milestones in the evolution of the degree curriculum (1992,1996, 2001,2008,2013,2017,2021) • Ideology behind major development in the degree curriculum • Underlying local and global guidelines, models, and ideologies in curriculum development • Rationale for the inclusion, modification, and exclusion of subjects in the curriculum • Knowledge, skills, and attitudes intended to be imparted to students • Subjects aimed at developing critical and creative thinking skills • Development of research skills • Balance between accounting, business education and general education 	<p>Professors, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers</p>	<p>Online (Zoom meetings)</p>	<p>In-depth interviews</p>	<p>July 2023-September 2023</p>	<p>5 hours</p>
---	---	--	-------------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of global and local professional accounting curricular in degree curriculum development • Accommodation of accreditation and exemption requirements of PABs in our curriculum • Opinions on whether the degree curriculum should align with professional curricular or pursue an alternative approach • Impact of academic and professional qualifications on curriculum development 	Myself		Self-reflection	July 2023-September 2023	5 hours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for including an internship component in the degree programme • Importance of securing placements in Big Four firms and multinational companies for students' local and global careers • Significance of entering into MoU with Big Four firms and multinational companies • Local and global guidelines adhered to in the development of the internship programme • distinctiveness of the internship programme from those of PABs • Positive and negative impacts of the internship on the degree programme and students 			Documentary review (e.g., curriculum development documents, internship handbook, course outlines, and department meeting minutes)	July 2023-September 2023	15 hours
--	---	--	--	---	--------------------------	----------

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Courses in the degree programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical approach to determining course content • Knowledge, skills, and attitude intended to be imparted to students • Textbooks used in the course • Research materials and emphasis associated with the course • Incorporation of local knowledge into the course • Teaching and learning strategies used in course delivery • Assessment methods used in the course • Challenging/critiquing contemporary development and discourses 	Professors, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	July 2023-September 2023	6 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of the course with equivalent courses in professional qualifications • Distinction between the course and equivalent courses in professional qualifications • Perception on accreditation by PABs and strategies adopted to accommodate these requirements in the course 			Documentary Review (course outlines, students handbook)	July 2023-September 2023	15 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Rationales behind the milestones in the development of the degree programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestones and their contributions to the development of the degree programme (e.g., semester-based system 1998, restructuring programme in 2001, 10th anniversary, WB grant 2005, Endowed EY Professorship, completion of IRQUE project, 20th anniversary, employability forum 2013, MoU with Big Four firms and multinational companies, and 30th anniversary) 	Professors and Senior Lecturers	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	July 2023-September 2023	8 hours
				Documentary review (e.g., publications of the department, and meeting minutes)	August 2023-September 2023	20 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Reflection on the degree programme by current and former students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for choosing this degree • Knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained • Knowledge, Skills, and attitudes underpinning career success and personal life • Research emphasis of the degree • Distinctive courses in the degree programme • Courses helped to develop higher-order skills, such as critical and creative thinking, reflective thinking, etc. • Courses that support understanding of public sector and SMEs • Opinions on whether the degree curriculum should align with professional curricular or not • Suggestions for improving the degree programme 	Graduates and Undergraduates	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	July 2023-September 2023	10 hours

Appendix 2: Virtual fieldwork plan for CA Sri Lanka

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Historical evolution of the accounting profession in Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose served by CA Sri Lanka • Rationale for emphasis on Public Practice • Considerations for the public sector and SMEs • Future of the accounting profession in Sri Lanka 			Documentary review (e.g., local and global publications relating to CA Sri Lanka)	October 2023- November 2023	15 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
		Governing council members, including current and former presidents	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	November 2023-December 2023	3 hours
Historical evolution of relations with global PABs, transnational standard setters, and transnational financial institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relations with ICAEW and other PABs from inception and their rationale • MRAs with PABs and their impact on your qualification 	Governing council members, including current and former presidents	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	November 2023-December 2023	3 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milestones in relations with IASB, IFAC and other regional bodies and their rationale • Engagement with transnational financial institutions and its rationale • Capacity-building projects collaborations with ICAEW, IFAC, IASB and the WB 			Documentary review: Local and global publications (e.g., CA Sri Lanka website)	October 2023- November 2023	8 hours
Historical evolution of relations with local universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relations with local universities and their rationale • Perception of the role of university accounting education 	Governing council members including current and former presidents and Committee members	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	November 2023- December 2023	2 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation of local degree programmes and how quality is ensured • Incorporation of local research findings into the professional accounting curricular • Rationale for initiating a degree programme 			Documentary Review Local and global publications (e.g., CA Sri Lanka Website, and newspaper articles)	October 2023- November 2023	8 hours

<p>Evolution of the professional accounting curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of curriculum development • Local and global guidelines, models, and ideologies underpinning curriculum development • Milestones in curriculum development and their rationale • Development of study texts • Courses emphasising the public sector and SMEs • Incorporation of locally relevant knowledge into the curriculum (e.g., local accounting practices) • Courses stimulating ethical behaviour in accountants and their reference to local cases 	<p>Governing council members including current and former presidents, Committee members, and Professional accounting educators</p>	<p>Online (Zoom meetings)</p>	<p>In-depth interviews</p>	<p>November 2023-December 2023</p>	<p>4 hours</p>
--	---	--	-------------------------------	----------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Convergence with IFRSs, ISA, IPSASs, IFRS for SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for convergence with IFRSs and ISA • Appropriateness of these global standards to local conditions. • Impact of these global discourses on Big Four audit firms and small- to medium-sized audit firms. 	Governing council members including current and former presidents, Committee members, Professional accounting Educators, Chartered Accountants, and CA Students	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	November 2023-December 2023	3 hours

Purpose	Data required	Participants	Location	Mechanism	Date	Duration
Reflections of Chartered Accountants and CA students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation to pursue CA Sri Lanka qualification • Courses that supported understanding of the public sector and SMEs • Transferability of skills to another context • Courses that stimulate ethical behaviour in accountants and their reference to local cases • Reflection on audit exposure at Big Four firms 	Chartered Accountants and CA Students	Online (Zoom meetings)	In-depth interviews	November 2023-December 2023	8 hours

Appendix 3: Interview guides for participants at DA

Academics

Accounting Education in General

1. In Sri Lanka, where global and local professional accounting bodies (PABs) operate, what is the rationale for offering a degree programme in accounting?
2. What is the reasoning behind the model of our degree programme?
3. How has our relationship with PABs evolved over time?
4. What are the major milestones in our curriculum development, and what is the rationale behind them?
5. What is the balance between accounting, business education, and general education in our degree curriculum?
6. What is your view on the research emphasis in our degree curriculum, and how important are research skills for our graduates?
7. How important are critical and creative thinking, reflective thinking, and other higher order skills for our graduates? How do we foster these skills?
8. What is our focus on the public sector and SMEs in the degree programme?
9. How important is it to consider professional curricular when developing our degree curriculum?
10. How important are professional accreditation and exemptions (CIMA, ACCA, CA Sri Lanka, and CPA Australia) for our degree programme?
11. In what dimensions, is our degree programme distinct from a professional qualification?
12. How should our degree curriculum evolve in the future?

Course units in Degree Curriculum

1. What is the broad aim of your course, and what are the knowledge, skills, and values do you emphasise?
2. How do you determine the course content?
3. What textbooks are used in the course?
4. What research materials and emphasis are associated with your course?
5. What teaching and learning strategies are employed in delivering the course?

6. What assessment methods are used in your course?
7. How important is it to refer equivalent courses in global and local professional qualifications when developing your courses?
8. How does your course differ from equivalent courses in professional qualifications?
9. Does your course involve challenging/critiquing contemporary development and discourses?
10. What is the impact of accreditation/exemptions on the development of your courses?

Graduates and undergraduates

B.Sc. Accounting (Hons.) degree programme

1. Why did you choose to pursue this degree?
2. Which subjects did you find most valuable, and why?
3. Were there courses that helped you gain an understanding of accounting in the public sector and SMEs?
4. What is your reflection on the internship in accounting and finance programme?
5. What are your thoughts on the research emphasis of the degree programme?
6. What are your thoughts on exemptions and accreditation offered to the degree programme by PABs?
7. How have the Knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed through the degree programme impacted your career progression and personal life?
8. How similar or distinct is your degree curriculum with/from professional curriculum?
9. What future improvements would you like to see in your degree programme?

CA Sri Lanka qualification

1. Why did you choose to pursue this qualification?
2. What emphasis do the CA Curriculum and examinations place on public listed entities, SMEs, the public sector, and other sectors (e.g., NGOs) in the country?

3. What is your view on the reciprocal arrangements with global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia?
4. What is your opinion on accreditation and exemption schemes for local degree programmes?
5. How do you perceive CA Sri Lanka's move into offering degree programmes in accounting?
6. What challenges have you encountered or are encountering while pursuing the CA Qualification?
7. What similarities and differences do you see between the subjects learned in CA Sri Lanka courses and those in your degree programme (e.g., financial accounting, management accounting, auditing, and so forth)
8. In your opinion, how should the accounting profession, professional accounting education, and examinations in Sri Lanka should evolve in future?

Appendix 4: Interview guide for participants at CA Sri Lanka

Governing council members and advisors

1. How do you see the role of CA Sri Lanka evolving with the changes occurring in the business world?
2. What is CA Sri Lanka's emphasis on auditing practice, public sector accountability, SMEs, and grassroots communities?
3. How do you perceive the evolution of CA Sri Lanka's relationship with ICAEW and other global PABs, transnational standard setters (e.g., IASB and IFAC), and transnational financiers (e.g., WB)? How do these relationships contribute to the development of the accounting profession and professional accounting education in the country?
4. What is your view on the adoption of international accounting and auditing standards by CA Sri Lanka?
5. What is your opinion on the reciprocal arrangements CA Sri Lanka has with global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia? How do these arrangements benefit the development of accounting profession and professional accounting education in the country?
6. What are the major milestones in the evolution of CA Sri Lanka's professional curriculum and examinations?
7. What challenges have you encountered in developing CA Sri Lanka's professional curriculum, and how have you addressed them?
8. How do you see CA Sri Lanka's move into offering degree programmes in accounting?
9. How does CA Sri Lanka engage with accounting degree programmes at universities, and how do these engagements enhance both university accounting education and professional accounting education in the country?
10. What is your view on the accreditation and exemption schemes for local degree programmes, and how do they mutually benefit university accounting programmes and accounting profession in the country?
11. In your opinion, how should the accounting profession, professional accounting education, and examinations in Sri Lanka evolve in the future?

Committee members

1. What are the committees have you served or are currently serving on at CA Sri Lanka? What are the major functions of those committees?
2. What is the rationale for converging our local standards with global standards (e.g., IFRSs, ISA, and IPSASs)?
3. What is the process for developing the CA curriculum?
4. What is CA curriculum's emphasis on auditing practice, public sector accountability, SMEs, and grassroots communities?
5. What challenges have you encountered in developing CA Sri Lanka's professional curriculum, and how have you addressed them?
6. How do you perceive CA Sri Lanka's relationship with other global PABs, transnational standard setters (e.g., IASB and IFAC), transnational financiers (e.g., WB)?
7. What is your view on the accreditation of local degree programmes by CA Sri Lanka?
8. In your opinion, how should the accounting profession, professional accounting education, and examinations in Sri Lanka evolve in the future?

Professional accounting educators

1. What are the major milestones in the evolution of the professional curriculum and examinations of CA Sri Lanka?
2. What emphasis does the CA Curriculum and examinations place on public listed entities, SMEs, the public sector, and other sectors (e.g, NGOs) in the country?
3. How do you perceive that the relationship with global PABs (e.g., ICAEW and ACCA), transnational standard setters (e.g., IASB and IFAC), and transnational financiers (e.g., WB) contributes to the development of the accounting profession and professional accounting education in the country?
4. What is your view on the reciprocal arrangements with global PABs such as ACCA, ICAEW, and CPA Australia? How do these arrangements benefit the development of the accounting profession and professional accounting education in the country?

5. What is your view on the accreditation and exemption schemes for local degree programmes, and how do they mutually benefit university accounting programmes and accounting profession in the country?
6. What are the drawbacks of CA curriculum and examinations?
7. In your opinion, how should the CA curriculum and examinations evolve in the future?

References

- Abbott, A. 1988. *The system of professions: An essay on the expert division of labor*. Chicago: Chicago UP.
- Abbott, A. 2014. *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*, University of Chicago press.
- ACCA. 2012. *ACCA Qualification: recognition status* [Online]. Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, London. [Accessed 24 October 2022].
- ACCA. 2021. *Annual Report 2021* [Online]. Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. Available: <https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/about-us/annual-reports/reports-archive.html> [Accessed 20 October 2022].
- ACCA. 2022. *Joint Examination Partnerships* [Online]. Available: <https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/footer-toolbar/contact-us/jes.html> [Accessed 20 December 2022].
- Alawattage, C. & Fernando, S. 2017. Postcoloniality in corporate social and environmental accountability. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 60, 1-20.
- Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. 2022. Pre-understanding: An interpretation-enhancer and horizon-expander in research. *Organization Studies*, 43, 395-412.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldbberg, K. 2017. *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*, sage.
- Amernic, J. & Craig, R. 2004. Reform of accounting education in the post-Enron era: moving accounting 'out of the shadows'. *Abacus*, 40, 342-378.
- Amernic, J. H. 1996. The rhetoric versus the reality, or is the reality "mere" rhetoric? A case study of public accounting firms' responses to a company's invitation for alternative opinions on an accounting matter. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 7, 57-75.
- Amernic, J. H. & Craig, R. J. 2014. Liberalising accounting curricula using 'angles of vision'. *The Routledge companion to accounting education*, 255.
- Amin, S. 2023. *The Crisis of Imperialism*. Imperialism. Routledge.
- Andersen, A., Young, A., Haskins, D., Main, P. M., Waterhouse, P. & Ross, T. 1989. Perspectives on education: Capabilities for success in the accounting profession. *Big Eight White Paper*. Authors New York.
- Anderson-Gough, F., Grey, C. & Robson, K. 1998. Work hard, play hard': An analysis of organizational cliché in two accountancy practices. *Organization*, 5, 565-592.

- Anderson-Gough, F., Grey, C. & Robson, K. 2005. "Helping them to forget..": the organizational embedding of gender relations in public audit firms. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 30, 469-490.
- Andrews, M. 2013. *The limits of institutional reform in development: Changing rules for realistic solutions*, Cambridge University Press.
- Annisette, M. 2000. Imperialism and the professions: the education and certification of accountants in Trinidad and Tobago. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 25, 631-659.
- Annisette, M. 2004. The true nature of the World Bank. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 15, 303-323.
- Annisette, M. 2010. Maintaining empire: The practice link in Trinidad and Tobago. *Accountancy and empire*. Routledge.
- Annisette, M. & Kirkham, L. M. 2007. The advantages of separateness explaining the unusual profession-university link in English Chartered Accountancy. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 18, 1-30.
- Apostolou, B. & Gammie, E. 2014. The role of accreditation in accounting education and training. *The Routledge companion to accounting education*. Routledge.
- Arnold, P. J. & Sikka, P. 2001. Globalization and the state-profession relationship: the case the Bank of Credit and Commerce International. *Accounting, organizations and society*, 26, 475-499.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. 2003. *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*, Routledge.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. 2006. *The post-colonial studies reader*, Taylor & Francis.
- Asian Development Bank 2002. *Diagnostic Study on Accounting and Auditing Practices in Selected Developing Member Countries: Azerbaijan, Fiji Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Manila*, Asian Development Bank.
- Aspers, P. & Corte, U. 2019. What is qualitative in qualitative research. *Qualitative sociology*, 42, 139-160.
- Bagnall, R. G. 1991. Relativism, objectivity, liberal adult education and multiculturalism. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 23, 61-84.
- Baker, C. R., Biondi, Y. & Zhang, Q. 2010. Disharmony in international accounting standards setting: The Chinese approach to accounting for business combinations. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 21, 107-117.

- Bakre, O. M. 2005. First attempt at localising imperial accountancy: the case of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Jamaica (ICAJ)(1950s-1970s). *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 16, 995-1018.
- Bakre, O. M. 2006. Second attempt at localising imperial accountancy: The case of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Jamaica (ICAJ)(1970s-1980s). *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 17, 1-28.
- Bakre, O. M. 2008. Financial reporting as technology that supports and sustains imperial expansion, maintenance and control in the colonial and post-colonial globalisation: The case of the Jamaican economy. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 19, 487-522.
- Bakre, O. M. 2010. Imperialism and professionalization: the case of accountancy in Jamaica. *Accountancy and empire*. Routledge.
- Balachandran, B. 2007. Governance of an accountancy body-the story of CIMA. *Accountancy Business and Public Interest*, 6, 190-214.
- Banerjee, S. B. 2011. Voices of the governed: Towards a theory of the translocal. *Organization*, 18, 323-344.
- Banerjee, S. B. & Prasad, A. 2008. Introduction to the special issue on "Critical reflections on management and organizations: a postcolonial perspective". *Critical perspectives on international business*.
- Barber, B. 1963. Some problems in the sociology of the professions. *Daedalus*, 669-688.
- Barnett, R. 1988. Does higher education have aims. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 22, 239-250.
- Baumgart, W., Mast, B. V. & Brunschwig, H. 1982. Imperialism: the idea and reality of British and French colonial expansion, 1880-1914. (*No Title*).
- Bhabha, H. K. 2012. *The location of culture*, routledge.
- Boje, D. M. 1991. Consulting and change in the storytelling organisation. *Journal of organizational change management*, 4, 7-17.
- Boli, J. & Petrova, V. 2007. Globalization today. *The Blackwell companion to globalization*, 103-124.
- Bolt-Lee, C. & Foster, S. 2003. The core competency framework: A new element in the continuing call for accounting education change in the United States. *Accounting Education*, 12, 33-47.
- Boreham, P. 1983. Indetermination: professional knowledge, organization and control. *The Sociological Review*, 31, 693-718.

- Botzem, S. 2014. Transnational standard setting in accounting: Organizing expertise-based self-regulation in times of crises. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*.
- Boulding, K. E. 1956. *The image: Knowledge in life and society*, University of Michigan press.
- Boussebaa, M. 2015. Professional service firms, globalisation and the new imperialism. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 28, 1217-1233.
- Boussebaa, M., Sinha, S. & Gabriel, Y. 2014. Englishization in offshore call centers: A postcolonial perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45, 1152-1169.
- Boyer, E. L. 1987. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. *College: The undergraduate experience in America*, 1.
- Bressler, C. E. 2004. *Literary Criticism: all introduction to theory and practice*. High Education Press.
- Briston, R. J. 1978. The evolution of accounting in developing countries. *International Journal of Accounting Education and Research*, 14, 105-120.
- Briston, R. J. & Kedslie, M. J. 1997. The internationalization of British professional accounting: the role of the examination exporting bodies. *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, 7, 175-194.
- Bryne, M. 2001. Data analysis strategies for qualitative research.(Research Corner). *AORN journal*, 74, 904-906.
- Bucher, R. & Strauss, A. 1961. Professions in process. *American journal of sociology*, 66, 325-334.
- Burns, J. 2014. Qualitative management accounting research in QRAM: some reflections. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 11, 71-81.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. 1979. *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* Heinemann. London: UK.
- Caramanis, C. V. 2002. The interplay between professional groups, the state and supranational agents: Pax Americana in the age of 'globalisation'. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 27, 379-408.
- Carmona, S. 2013. Accounting curriculum reform? The devil is in the detail. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 24, 113-119.
- Carnegie, G., Parker, L. & Tshuridu, E. 2021. It's 2020: what is accounting today? *Australian Accounting Review*, 31, 65-73.
- Carnegie, J. 2000. Pathways to Partnerships: Qualification linkages between vocational education and training and higher education. May, Report and Draft Policy guidelines of the ANTA/AVCC joint study on

- Carr-Saunders, A. M. & Wilson, P. A. 1933. *Professions (The)*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Chabrak, N. & Craig, R. 2013. Student imaginings, cognitive dissonance and critical thinking. *Critical perspectives on accounting*, 24, 91-104.
- Chand, P. 2005. Convergence of accounting standards in the South Pacific island nations. *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, 28, 269-290.
- Chand, P. & White, M. 2007. A critique of the influence of globalization and convergence of accounting standards in Fiji. *Critical perspectives on accounting*, 18, 605-622.
- Chang, H.-J. 2007. *Bad samaritans: Rich nations, poor policies, and the threat to the developing world*, Random House Business New York.
- Child, J. & Fulk, J. 1982. Maintenance of occupational control: The case of professions. *Work and Occupations*, 9, 155-192.
- Chua, W. F. & Poullaos, C. 1998. The dynamics of “closure” amidst the construction of market, profession, empire and nationhood: An historical analysis of an Australian accounting association, 1886-1903. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 23, 155-187.
- Chua, W. F. & Poullaos, C. 2002. The Empire Strikes Back? An exploration of centre-periphery interaction between the ICAEW and accounting associations in the self-governing colonies of Australia, Canada and South Africa, 1880-1907. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 27, 409-445.
- Cobham, A. & McNair, D. 2012. The role of rich countries in development: the case for reforms. *Handbook of Accounting and Development*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Cook, P. & Kirkpatrick, C. 1995. The distributional impact of privatization in developing countries: who gets what and why. *Privatization and equity*. Routledge.
- Cooper, D. J., Greenwood, R., Hinings, B. & Brown, J. L. 1998. Globalization and nationalism in a multinational accounting firm: The case of opening new markets in Eastern Europe. *Accounting, organizations and Society*, 23, 531-548.
- Cooper, D. J. & Robson, K. 2006. Accounting, professions and regulation: Locating the sites of professionalization. *Accounting, organizations and society*, 31, 415-444.
- Cousins, J., Mitchell, A. V. & Sikka, P. 2004. *Race to the bottom: The case of the accountancy firms*, Association for Accountancy & Business Affairs Basildon.
- Cunliffe, A. L. 2002. Social poetics as management inquiry: A dialogical approach. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 11, 128-146.

- Cunliffe, A. L. 2011. Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational research methods*, 14, 647-673.
- Dai, N. T., Free, C. & Gendron, Y. 2019. Interview-based research in accounting 2000-2014: Informal norms, translation and vibrancy. *Management Accounting Research*, 42, 26-38.
- De Silva, K. 1978. The universities and the government in Sri Lanka. *Minerva*, 251-272.
- De Silva, K. M. 1981. *A history of Sri Lanka*, Univ of California Press.
- Dean, P. 1988. Policy on higher education. *Liberal Education and General Educator*, 59, 35-38.
- Department of Accounting. 2024a. *Academics* [Online]. Available: <https://mgt.sjp.ac.lk/acc/staff/academic/> [Accessed 02 February 2024].
- Department of Accounting. 2024b. *Exemptions* [Online]. Available: <https://mgt.sjp.ac.lk/acc/study/b-sc-acc/exemptions/> [Accessed 25 March 2024].
- Department of Examinations. 2024. *Statistics and School Performance Indices* [Online]. Available: <https://www.doenets.lk/statistics> [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- Dewey, J. 2015. *Democracy and education*, Sheba Blake Publishing Brooklyn, NY.
- Duff, A. & Marriott, N. 2012. *Teaching and research: partners or competitors?*, The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland.
- Duke, C. 1990. Liberal adult education: a note from the epicentre. *Adults Learning*, 1, 241-242.
- Dunn, J. & Sikka, P. 1999. *Auditors: Keeping the public in the dark*, Citeseer.
- Dwyer, P. D. & Roberts, R. W. 2004. The contemporary gender agenda of the US public accounting profession: embracing feminism or maintaining empire? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 15, 159-177.
- Edwards, P. & Shaoul, J. Reporting accounting? *Accounting Forum*, 1999. Taylor & Francis, 59-92.
- Elliott, D. J. 1996. Consciousness, culture and curriculum. *International Journal of Music Education*, 1-15.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E. & Bochner, A. P. 2011. Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical social research/Historische sozialforschung*, 273-290.
- Entwistle, N. & Waterston, S. 1988. Approaches to studying and levels of processing in university students. *British journal of educational psychology*, 58, 258-265.

- Evans, E. & Paisey, C. 2018. Histories of accounting education-an introduction. SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England.
- Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce 2024a. *Prospectus 2024*, Nugegoda, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce.
- Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce 2024b. *Student Orientation Programme 2022/2023*, Nugegoda, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce.
- Fehér, I. M. 2015. Prejudice and pre-understanding. *A Companion to Hermeneutics*, 280-288.
- Feinberg, W. 1983. Understanding education: Toward a reconstruction of educational inquiry.
- Finlay, L. 2002. Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative research*, 2, 209-230.
- Fonseka, M., Manawaduge, A. & Senarathne, S. 2019. *Along an Untrodden Path: Twenty-five years of the Department of Accounting*, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.
- Fougère, M. & Moulettes, A. 2012. Disclaimers, dichotomies and disappearances in international business textbooks: A postcolonial deconstruction. *Management Learning*, 43, 5-24.
- Freidson, E. 1988. *Professional powers: A study of the institutionalization of formal knowledge*, University of Chicago Press.
- Freire, P. 1996. *Pedagogy of the oppressed (revised)*. New York: Continuum, 356, 357-358.
- Frenkel, M. 2008. The multinational corporation as a third space: Rethinking international management discourse on knowledge transfer through Homi Bhabha. *Academy of Management Review*, 33, 924-942.
- Frenkel, M. & Shenhav, Y. 2006. From binarism back to hybridity: A postcolonial reading of management and organization studies. *Organization Studies*, 27, 855-876.
- Friedman, A., Durkin, C. & Hurran, N. 1999. Good practice in CPD among UK professional associations. *Continuing Professional Development*, 2, 52-68.
- Fyson, S. 2012. Accounting and Development: the role of donors from policy to practice. *Handbook of accounting and development*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Gallhofer, S., Haslam, J. & Kamla, R. 2011. The accountancy profession and the ambiguities of globalisation in a post-colonial, Middle Eastern and Islamic context: Perceptions of accountants in Syria. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 22, 376-395.

- Gammie, E. & Joyce, Y. 2009. Competence-based approaches to the assessment of professional accountancy training work experience requirements: The ICAS experience. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 18, 443-466.
- Geddes, S. 1998. The development of accountancy education, training and research in England: method and methodology. *ACCOUNTING EDUCATION-LONDON-*, 7, S171-S178.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. 1993. Appealing work: An investigation of how ethnographic texts convince. *Organization science*, 4, 595-616.
- Graham, C. & Annisette, M. 2012. The role of transnational institutions in framing accounting in the global south. *Handbook of accounting and development*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Gray, R. & Mckernan, J. 2000. Accounting education: crisis? What crisis. *Accounting and Finance Update*, 5, 9-11.
- Greenwood, E. 1957. Attributes of a profession. *Social work*, 45-55.
- Gunarathne, N., Senaratne, S. & Senanayake, S. 2019. Outcome-based education in accounting: The case of an accountancy degree program in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences*.
- Gunawardena, C. 1982. Matching education with employment in Sri Lanka. *Higher Education Review*, 15, 58.
- Halmos, P. 1971. Sociology and the personal service professions. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 14, 583-597.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. 2019. *Ethnography: Principles in practice*, Routledge.
- Hanlon, G. 1994. The commercialisation of accountancy: Flexible accumulation and the transformation of the service class.
- Hanlon, G. 1996. "Casino capitalism" and the rise of the "commercialised" service class-an examination of the accountant. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 7, 339-363.
- Hanlon, G. 1997. Commercialising the service class and economic restructuring—a response to my critics. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 22, 843-855.
- Harvey, D. 2003. 2003: The new imperialism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haug, M. R. & Sussman, M. B. 1969. Professional autonomy and the revolt of the client. *Social problems*, 17, 153-161.
- Haynes, K. 2017. Autoethnography in accounting research. *The Routledge companion to qualitative accounting research methods*. Routledge.

- Hesse-Biber, S. N. & Leavy, P. 2010. *The practice of qualitative research*, Sage.
- Hettige, S. T. 2000. Economic liberalisation, qualifications and livelihoods in Sri Lanka. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 7, 325-333.
- Hines, R. D. 1989. Financial accounting knowledge, conceptual framework projects and the social construction of the accounting profession. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 2, 0-0.
- Hobson, J. A. 1902. The scientific basis of imperialism. *Political Science Quarterly*, 17, 460-489.
- Hopkins, P. E. 2007. Positionalities and knowledge: Negotiating ethics in practice. *ACME: an international journal for critical geographies*, 6, 386-394.
- Hopper, A., Burns, J. & Yazdifar, M. 2004. Management accounting education and training: putting management in and taking accounting out. *Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management*, 1, 1-29.
- Hopper, T. 2013. Making accounting degrees fit for a university. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 24, 127-135.
- Hopper, T., Lassou, P. & Soobaroyen, T. 2017. Globalisation, accounting and developing countries. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 43, 125-148.
- Hopper, T., Storey, J. & Willmott, H. 1987. Accounting for accounting: towards the development of a dialectical view. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 12, 437-456.
- Humphrey, C., Loft, A. & Woods, M. 2009. The global audit profession and the international financial architecture: Understanding regulatory relationships at a time of financial crisis. *Accounting, organizations and society*, 34, 810-825.
- Hussey, T. & Smith, P. 2002. The trouble with learning outcomes. *Active learning in higher education*, 3, 220-233.
- Hutnyk, J. 2005. Hybridity. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 28, 79-102.
- ICAEW. 2012. *Capacity building for a sustainable profession* [Online]. Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, London. [Accessed 15 October 2022].
- ICAEW. 2022. *Pathways to Membership* [Online]. Available: <https://www.icaew.com/membership/becoming-a-member/members-of-other-bodies/campaigns/pathways-to-membership> [Accessed 30 December 2022].
- IFAC 2004. *International Education Standard for Professional Accountants 7 (IES 7): Continuing Professional Development: a Program of Lifelong Learning and Continuing Development of Professional Competence.*, New York, International Federation of Accountants.

- IFAC 2012. *International Education Standards 7: Continuing Professional Development (Redrafted)*, New York, International Federation of Accountants
- IFAC. 2022a. *Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka* [Online]. Available: <https://www.ifac.org/about-ifac/membership/members/institute-chartered-accountants-sri-lanka> [Accessed 20 January 2024].
- IFAC. 2022b. *Membership* [Online]. Available: <https://www.ifac.org/who-we-are/membership> [Accessed 10 December 2022].
- IFRS Foundation. 2018. *Annual report 2018* [Online]. Available: <https://www.ifrs.org/content/dam/ifrs/about-us/funding/2018/annual-report-2018.pdf> [Accessed 15 November 2022].
- Illich, I. 1971. Deschooling Society (London, Calder & Boyars). *IllichDeschooling Society1971*.
- Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. 2024. *Who we are* [Online]. Available: https://www.casrilanka.com/casl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=85&lang=en [Accessed 20 January 2024].
- Irvine, H. & Gaffikin, M. 2006. Getting in, getting on and getting out: reflections on a qualitative research project. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 19, 115-145.
- Irvine, H., Moerman, L. & Rudkin, K. 2010. A green drought: the challenge of mentoring for Australian accounting academics. *Accounting Research Journal*, 23, 146-171.
- Jack, G., Westwood, R., Srinivas, N. & Sardar, Z. 2011. Deepening, broadening and re-asserting a postcolonial interrogative space in organization studies. SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England.
- Jarvis, P. 2018. *Professional Education (1983)*, Routledge.
- Jayawardena, D. 2017. The 'MacBurger', non-state universities and the changing landscape of higher education in Sri Lanka. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 15.
- Jayawardena, K. 2002. *The Rise of the Colonial Bourgeoisie in Sri Lanka. From Nobodies to Somebodies*. London: Zed Books.
- Johnson, T. 1972. Imperialism and the professions: notes on the development of professional occupations in Britain's colonies and the new states. *The Sociological Review*, 20, 281-309.
- Johnson, T. J. & Caygill, M. 1971. The development of accountancy links in the Commonwealth. *Accounting and Business Research*, 1, 155-173.

- Kaifala, G. B., Gallhofer, S., Milner, M. & Paisey, C. 2019. Postcolonial hybridity, diaspora and accountancy: Evidence from Sierra Leonean chartered and aspiring accountants. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 32, 2114-2141.
- Kalua, F. 2009. Homi Bhabha's third space and African identity. *Journal of African cultural studies*, 21, 23-32.
- Kamla, R., Gallhofer, S. & Haslam, J. 2012. Understanding Syrian accountants' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, social accounting. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 25, 1170-1205.
- Kimmel, P. 1995. A framework for incorporating critical thinking into accounting education. *Journal of accounting education*, 13, 299-318.
- Kirkham, L. M. & Loft, A. 1993. Gender and the construction of the professional accountant. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 18, 507-558.
- Klegon, D. 1978. The sociology of professions: An emerging perspective. *Sociology of work and occupations*, 5, 259-283.
- Kotb, A., Abdel-Kader, M., Allam, A., Halabi, H. & Franklin, E. 2019. Information technology in the British and Irish undergraduate accounting degrees. *Accounting Education*, 28, 445-464.
- Krause, E. 1991. Professions and the state in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: Theoretical issues. *Professions and the state: Expertise and autonomy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, 3-41.
- Langley, F. 1995. The application of competences to an accounting qualification (the experience of the UK Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)). *Accounting Education*, 4, 29-36.
- Langlois, C. V., Berry, G., Powell, F. Y. & Seignobos, C. 2019. *Introduction to the Study of History*, Routledge.
- Lapsley, I. 2012. Financial Accountability & Management. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 9.
- Larson, M. L. 1979. The rise of professionalism. *Pediatrics*, 63, 490-490.
- Larson, M. S. 1977. *The rise of professionalism*. Berkeley. University of California Press.
- Lawrence, T. B. & Suddaby, R. 2006. 1.6 institutions and institutional work. *The Sage handbook of organization studies*, 215-254.
- Lee, T. 1995a. The professionalization of accountancy: a history of protecting the public interest in a self-interested way. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 8, 48-69.

- Lee, T. 1995b. Shaping the US academic accounting research profession: The American Accounting Association and the social construction of a professional elite. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 6, 241-261.
- Lenin, V. I. 2015. Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism. *Conflict after the Cold war*. Routledge.
- Lindsey, C. W. 1982. Lenin's theory of imperialism. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 14, 1-9.
- Loft, A. 1994. Accountancy and the first world war. *Accounting as social and institutional practice*, 116-137.
- Loft, A., Humphrey, C. & Turley, S. 2006. In pursuit of global regulation: Changing governance and accountability structures at the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 19, 428-451.
- Loomba, A. 2007. Colonialism/Postcolonialism (Special Indian Edition). Oxon: Routledge.
- Lukka, K. & Modell, S. 2010. Validation in interpretive management accounting research. *Accounting, organizations and society*, 35, 462-477.
- Macdonald, K. M. 1995. The Sociology of the Professions: SAGE Publications. *The Sociology of the Professions*, 1-240.
- Mangan, J., Lalwani, C. & Gardner, B. 2004. Combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies in logistics research. *International journal of physical distribution & logistics management*, 34, 565-578.
- Match Board. 2023. *What differentiates Sri Lanka for Business Process Outsourcing* [Online]. Available: <https://www.matchboard.com.au/what-differentiates-sri-lanka-for-business-process-outsourcing/#:~:text=Sri%20Lanka%20was%20ranked%20in,in%20terms%20of%20financial%20attractiveness>. [Accessed 12 June 2024].
- Maxwell, J. A. 2012. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*, Sage publications.
- Mckenna, S. 2011. A critical analysis of North American business leaders' neocolonial discourse: Global fears and local consequences. *Organization*, 18, 387-406.
- Mcleod, J. 2007. *The Routledge companion to postcolonial studies*, Routledge London.
- Mihret, D. G., James, K. & Mula, J. M. 2012. Accounting professionalization amidst alternating state ideology in Ethiopia. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*.
- Mills, C. W. 1970. *The Sociological Imagination* Harmondsworth. *Penguinbooks, USA*.

- Mir, M. Z. & Rahaman, A. S. 2005. The adoption of international accounting standards in Bangladesh: An exploration of rationale and process. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*.
- Mirza, H. S. 1997. *Black British feminism: A reader*, Taylor & Francis.
- Mitchell, A. V. & Sikka, P. 2002. *Dirty business: the unchecked power of major accountancy firms*, Citeseer.
- Mitchell, A. V. & Sikka, P. 2005. *Taming the corporations*, Association for Accountancy & Business Affairs Basildon.
- Mogalakwe, M. 2006. The use of documentary research methods in social research. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine De Sociologie*, 10, 221-230.
- Moodie, G. 2002. Identifying vocational education and training. *Journal of vocational education and training*, 54, 249-266.
- Moore, M. 1997. The identity of capitalists and the legitimacy of capitalism: Sri Lanka since independence. *Development and Change*, 28, 331-366.
- Morton, S. 2007. Poststructuralist formulations. *The Routledge companion to postcolonial studies*. Routledge.
- Mulder, M., Weigel, T. & Collins, K. 2007. The concept of competence in the development of vocational education and training in selected EU member states: a critical analysis. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 59, 67-88.
- Murphy, D. 2007. Materialist formulations. *The Routledge companion to postcolonial studies*. Routledge.
- Nandy, A. 1983. *The intimate enemy: loss and recovery of self under colonialism* Oxford University Press. *New Delhi, India*.
- Nesaratnam, A. 1999. The early years of the institute—the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. *Fortieth Anniversary Supplement. Accountant*, 34, 2-6.
- Neu, D., Gomez, E. O., Graham, C. & Heincke, M. 2006. “Informing” technologies and the World Bank. *Accounting, organizations and society*, 31, 635-662.
- Newman, J. H. 1852. *Discourses on the scope and nature of university education: addressed to the Catholics of Dublin*, Wm. C. Brown Reprint Library.
- Newman, J. H. 2010. *Idea of a university*, Ignatius Press.
- Ngunjiri, F. W., Hernandez, K.-a. C. & Chang, H. 2010. Living autoethnography: Connecting life and research. *Journal of research practice*, 6, E1-E1.
- Nobes, C. & Parker, R. H. 2008. *Comparative international accounting*, Pearson Education.

- Paisey, C. & Paisey, N. J. 1996. Continuing professional education: pause for reflection? *Critical Perspectives on accounting*, 7, 103-126.
- Paisey, C. & Paisey, N. J. 2014. The state of professional accounting education and training. *The Routledge companion to accounting education*. Routledge.
- Paisey, C., Paisey, N. J. & Tarbert, H. 2007. Continuing professional development activities of UK accountants in public practice. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 16, 379-403.
- Palmer, R. E. 2004. Gadamer's hermeneutical openness as a form of tolerance.
- Panitch, L. & Gindin, S. 2021. The making of global capitalism. *Power and Inequality*. Routledge.
- Parker, L. D. 2012. Qualitative management accounting research: Assessing deliverables and relevance. *Critical perspectives on accounting*, 23, 54-70.
- Parker, L. D. 2017. Participant observation at the coalface. *The Routledge Companion to Qualitative Accounting Research Methods*. Routledge.
- Parker, R. H. 1994. Finding English words to talk about accounting concepts. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 7, 70-85.
- Parker, R. H. 1997. Roger North: gentleman, accountant and lexicographer. *Accounting History*, 2, 31-51.
- Perera, H. 2012. Adoption of international financial reporting standards in developing countries. *Handbook of accounting and development*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Perera, M. 1989. Accounting in developing countries: A case for localised uniformity. *The British Accounting Review*, 21, 141-157.
- Peshkin, A. 2001. Angles of vision: Enhancing perception in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7, 238-253.
- Pieterse, J. N. 2004. *Globalization or empire?*, Routledge.
- Poullaos, C. 1994. *Making the Australian chartered accountant*, Garland.
- Poullaos, C. & Sian, S. 2010. *Accountancy and empire: The British legacy of professional organization*, Routledge.
- Poullaos, C. & Uche, C. U. 2012. Accounting professionalization in developing countries. *Handbook of accounting and development*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Power, M. 1991. Auditing and environmental expertise: between protest and professionalisation. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 4.
- Power, M. 1994. *The audit explosion*, Demos.

- Power, M. 1997. *The audit society: Rituals of verification*, OUP Oxford.
- Prasad, A. 2003. *Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis: A critical engagement*, Springer.
- Pricewaterhousecoopers, L. 2003. *Educating for the public trust: The PricewaterhouseCoopers position on accounting education*, PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- Procter, J. 2007. Culturalist formulations. *The Routledge companion to postcolonial studies*. Routledge.
- Puxty, A. G., Willmott, H. C., Cooper, D. J. & Lowe, T. 1987. Modes of regulation in advanced capitalism: Locating accountancy in four countries. *Accounting, organizations and Society*, 12, 273-291.
- Rahman, S. F. 1998. International accounting regulation by the United Nations: a power perspective. *Accounting, auditing & accountability journal*, 11, 593-623.
- Ramirez, C. 2001. Globalisation of Accountancy and the Management of Professional Accountants' Identities in the UK. *Congrès de l'Association européenne de sociologie, Helsinki*.
- Reed-Danahay, D. 2021. *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*, Routledge.
- Retief Venter, E. & De Villiers, C. 2013. The accounting profession's influence on academe: South African evidence. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 26, 1246-1278.
- Richardson, A. J. 1988. Accounting knowledge and professional privilege. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 13, 381-396.
- Ritzer, G. 1972. *Conflict and change*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Robinson, R. 1972. Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration. *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, 120.
- Robinson, R. & Gallagher, J. 1953. The imperialism of free trade. *Economic History Review*, 6, 1-15.
- Rodrigues, L. L., Carqueja, H. O. & Ferreira, L. F. 2016. Double-entry bookkeeping and the manuscripts dictated in the Lisbon School of Commerce. *Accounting History*, 21, 489-511.
- Rodrigues, L. L., Craig, R. & Gomes, D. 2007. State intervention in commercial education: the case of the Portuguese School of Commerce, 1759. *Accounting History*, 12, 55-85.

- Rodrigues, L. L., Gomes, D. & Craig, R. 2004. The Portuguese School of Commerce, 1759-1844: a reflection of the "Enlightenment". *Accounting History*, 9, 53-71.
- Roslender, R. & Dyson, J. 1992. Accounting for the worth of employees: a new look at an old problem. *The British Accounting Review*, 24, 311-329.
- Roth, J. A. 1974. Professionalism: The sociologist's decoy. *Sociology of work and occupations*, 1, 6-23.
- Rothblatt, S. 1976. The Past and Future Freedom of the British University. JSTOR.
- Rothblatt, S. 1990. The Carriers of Civilization. *Higher Education Policy*, 3, 9-12.
- Said, E. 1994. Secular interpretation, the geographical element, and the methodology of imperialism. *After colonialism*. Princeton University Press.
- Said, E. W. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books.
- Saks, M. 1983. Removing the blinkers? A critique of recent contributions to the sociology of professions. *The sociological review*, 31, 3-21.
- Samarasinghe, S. D. A. & Samarasinghe, V. 1998. *Historical Dictionary of Sri Lanka*, Scarecrow Press.
- Samsonova-Taddei, A. & Humphrey, C. 2014. Transnationalism and the transforming roles of professional accountancy bodies: Towards a research agenda. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 27, 903-932.
- Sanderson, M. 1993. Vocational and liberal education: a historian's view. *European Journal of Education*, 28, 189-196.
- Sangster, A. 2010. Liberalising the accounting curriculum. Taylor & Francis.
- Sangster, A. 2015. The earliest known treatise on double entry bookkeeping by Marino de Raphaeli. *Accounting Historians Journal*, 42, 1-33.
- Sangster, A., Stoner, G. N. & McCarthy, P. 2008. The market for Luca Pacioli's *Summa arithmetica*. *Accounting historians journal*, 35, 111-134.
- Sarfatti-Larson, M. 1977. The rise of professionalism. Berkeley. University of California Press.
- Schiavo-Campo, S. 2009. Potemkin Villages: "The" Medium-Term Expenditure Framework in Developing Countries. *Public Budgeting & Finance*, 29, 1-26.
- Scott, J. 2014. *A matter of record: Documentary sources in social research*, John Wiley & Sons.
- Sian, S. 2006. Inclusion, exclusion and control: The case of the Kenyan accounting professionalisation project. *Accounting, organizations and society*, 31, 295-322.

- Sian, S. 2007. Reversing exclusion: The Africanisation of accountancy in Kenya, 1963-1970. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 18, 831-872.
- Sian, S. 2010. Between the Lines: The Professionalization of Accountancy in Kenya. *Accountancy and Empire*. Routledge.
- Sian, S. & Poullaos, C. 2010. Accountancy and empire: setting the stage. *Accountancy and Empire*. Routledge.
- Siddiqui, J. 2012. Audit Markets in Less Developed Economies: Caveats for Globalization? *Handbook of Accounting and Development*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Sikka, P., Haslam, C., Kyriacou, O. & Agrizzi, D. 2007. Professionalizing claims and the state of UK professional accounting education: some evidence. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 16, 3-21.
- Sivanandan, A. 1982. A different hunger: writings on black resistance. (*No Title*).
- Smith, A. 2004. Migrancy, hybridity, and postcolonial literary studies. *The Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies*, 241-261.
- Stokes, P. 1989. Vocational Education and Training in the Developed World: A Comparative Study. Cantor, L. Carfax Publishing Co.
- Strauss, A. L. 1987. *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*, Cambridge university press.
- Streeck, W. & Schmitter, P. C. 1985. Community, market, state-and associations? The prospective contribution of interest governance to social order. *European sociological review*, 1, 119-138.
- Suddaby, R. 2006. From the editors: What grounded theory is not. Academy of Management Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510.
- Suddaby, R., Cooper, D. J. & Greenwood, R. 2007. Transnational regulation of professional services: Governance dynamics of field level organizational change. *Accounting, organizations and society*, 32, 333-362.
- Suddaby, R. & Viale, T. 2011. Professionals and field-level change: Institutional work and the professional project. *Current Sociology*, 59, 423-442.
- Susela, D. S. 2010. 5 The Malaysian Accountancy Profession and its Imperial Legacy. *Accountancy and Empire: The British Legacy of Professional Organization*, 99.
- Thomson, I. & Bebbington, J. 2004. It doesn't matter what you teach? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 15, 609-628.
- Thomson, K. & Jones, J. 2016. Colonials in camouflage: Metonymy, mimicry and the reproduction of the colonial order in the age of diversity. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 35, 58-75.

- Trautrim, A., Grant, D. B., Cunliffe, A. L. & Wong, C. 2012. Using the “documentary method” to analyse qualitative data in logistics research. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 42, 828-842.
- Uche, C. U. 2002. Professional accounting development in Nigeria: threats from the inside and outside. *Accounting, Organizations and society*, 27, 471-496.
- Uche, C. U. 2010. Colonial heritage and the accounting profession in Nigeria. *Accountancy and empire*. Routledge.
- Ukwatte, S. & Yapa, P. S. 2013. Empirical study on university accounting education and the professional promulgation 2000-2013: The case from a former British colony. *Journal of Accounting Education*, 15, 9-27.
- University Grant Commission. 2010. *Subject Benchmark Statement in Accounting* [Online]. Available: <https://www.eugc.ac.lk/qac/downloads/SB/SBS-Accounting.pdf> [Accessed 26 November 2024].
- University Grant Commission. 2023. *Sri Lanka University Statistics* [Online]. Available: https://www.ugc.ac.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=102%3Apublications&catid=49%3Apublications&Itemid=70&lang=en [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- Veblen, T. 2015. *The higher learning in America: The annotated edition: A memorandum on the conduct of universities by business men*, JHU Press.
- Verma, S. 2010. The Influence of Empire on the Establishment of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India After Independence. *Accountancy and empire*. Routledge.
- Vreeland, J. R. 2003. *The IMF and economic development*, Cambridge University Press.
- Wadee, N. 2009. Accounting profession’s strategic association with SA’s universities. *Accountancy SA*, 16, 1-26.
- Walker, S. P. 1991. The defence of professional monopoly: Scottish chartered accountants and “satellites in the accountancy firmament” 1854-1914. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 16, 257-283.
- Walker, S. P. 2004. The genesis of professional organisation in English accountancy. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 29, 127-156.
- Wall, S. 2006. An autoethnography on learning about autoethnography. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 5, 146-160.
- Wallace, R. & Briston, R. J. 1993. Improving the accounting infrastructure in developing countries. *Research in Third World Accounting*, 2, 201-224.

- Ward, A. 2007. Psychological formulations. *The Routledge companion to postcolonial studies*. Routledge.
- Warnapala, W. a. W. 2011. *The Making of the System of Higher Education in Sri Lanka: An Evaluative Study*, W.A. Wiswa Warnapala.
- Watty, K., Sugahara, S., Abayadeera, N. & Perera, L. 2013. Developing a global model of accounting education and examining IES compliance in Australia, Japan, and Sri Lanka. *Accounting Education*, 22, 502-506.
- Webb, S. & Webb, B. 1975. *Methods of social study*, Cambridge University Press.
- Weetmen, P. 1979. Accounting degree; a conflict of objectives. *Nigerian Accountants*, 2, 11-15.
- Wegener, C. 1978. Liberal Education and the Modern University.
- Werbner, P. 2001. The limits of cultural hybridity: on ritual monsters, poetic licence and contested postcolonial purifications. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 7, 133-152.
- Wickramasinghe, D. A. & Cameron, D. 2004. British capital, Ceylonese land, Indian labour: The imperialism and colonialism of evolution of tea plantations in Sri Lanka. *University of Sri Jayawardenepura*.
- Wickramasinghe, N. 2014. *Sri Lanka in the modern age: a history*, Oxford University Press.
- Wijewardena, H. & Yapa, S. 1998. Colonialism and accounting education in developing countries: The experiences of Singapore and Sri Lanka. *The International Journal of Accounting*, 33, 269-281.
- Wilkinson, R. 1970. The Gentleman Ideal and the Maintenance of a Political Elite (1963). *Sociology, History and Education*. Methuen, London.
- Williams, R. L. 1991. *The origins of federal support for higher education: George W. Atherton and the land-grant college movement*, Penn State Press.
- Willits, S. D. 2010. Will more liberal arts courses fix the accounting curriculum? *Journal of Accounting Education*, 28, 13-25.
- Willmott, H. 1986. Organising the profession: a theoretical and historical examination of the development of the major accountancy bodies in the UK. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 11, 555-580.
- Willmott, H. C., Puxty, A. G., Robson, K., Cooper, D. J. & Lowe, E. A. 1992. Regulation of accountancy and accountants: a comparative analysis of accounting for research and development in four advanced capitalist countries. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 5.
- Wilson, R. M. 2011. Alignment in accounting education and training. Taylor & Francis.

- Wolf, A. 1995. *Competence-based assessment*, McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- World Bank 2004. *The Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC) Accounting and Auditing in Sri Lanka*, 2004, The World Bank.
- World Bank 2015. *The Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes Accounting and Auditing in Sri Lanka*, Washington The World Bank.
- Yapa, P. S. 1999. Professional accounting environment in Brunei Darussalam. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*.
- Yapa, P. S. 2000. University-profession partnership in accounting education: the case of Sri Lanka. *Accounting Education*, 9, 297-307.
- Yapa, P. S. 2006. Cross-border competition and the professionalization of accounting: the case of Sri Lanka. *Accounting History*, 11, 447-473.
- Yapa, P. S. 2010. The imperial roots of accounting closure: The case of Sri Lanka. *Accountancy and empire*. Routledge.
- Yapa, P. W., Jalathge, S. L. U. & Siriwardhane, P. 2017. The professionalisation of auditing in less developed countries: the case of Sri Lanka. *Managerial Auditing Journal*.
- Young, R. J. 1999. Academic activism and knowledge formation in postcolonial critique. *Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy*, 2, 29-34.
- Young, R. J. 2005. *Colonial desire: Hybridity in theory, culture and race*, Routledge.
- Young, R. J. 2016. *Postcolonialism: An historical introduction*, John Wiley & Sons.
- Yousfi, H. 2014. Rethinking hybridity in postcolonial contexts: What changes and what persists? The Tunisian case of Poulina's managers. *Organization Studies*, 35, 393-421.
- Zeff, S. A. 1989. Recent trends in accounting education and research in the USA: some implications for UK academics. *The British Accounting Review*, 21, 159-176.
- Zhang, Y., Andrew, J. & Rudkin, K. 2012. Accounting as an instrument of neoliberalisation? Exploring the adoption of fair value accounting in China. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*.
- Zou, Y. 2021. Methodological Insights Experiencing and knowing in the field: an autoethnographic account of conducting audit fieldwork in China. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 34, 680-698.