

# Cinnamon Peelers in Sri Lanka: Shifting Labour Process and Reformation of Identity Post-1977

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## Introduction

Since 2003, the focus of the cinnamon industry in Sri Lanka has mainly been on modernizing the production infrastructure and process from the traditional *wadiya* (makeshift place for work and living) to factory and shop-floor operations to meet trade compliance requirements for food safety and other non-tariff requirements in the international market. These non-tariff trade requirements have been laid down based on trade agreements Sri Lanka has entered into with the World Trade Organization (WTO). Sri Lanka, following the adoption of open economic policies in 1977, committed to undertaking international trade agreements of WTO in 1995 (Geeganage 2013). Though leading cinnamon proprietors and exporters supported this proposal, there has been overt resistance from smaller scale cinnamon-producers (smallholders) and peelers to adapt to modern shop-floor operational requirements. However, there have been several success stories of new generation cinnamon-peelers in modern shop floor adaptations, particularly outside the traditional cinnamon growing areas. There has been little academic effort to understand the impact of these shifts on traditional cinnamon peelers in the production of cinnamon.

The objective of the present study is to understand the organizational level impacts and changes caused by this transition. These changes are viewed from the point of labour and hence an attempt will be made to capture the experience of cinnamon peelers as they transform from the traditionally known peeler to a shop-floor worker.

To this end, the paper will first set out the context in which the study was carried out, followed by a discussion of the research findings. The findings are organized under three main themes namely *work distribution*, *structural social change*, and *subjectivity and reflexivity*. Under all three themes, comparisons are made between the traditional and modern shop floor settings to illustrate the shift in the labour process and the consequent [re]formation of the identity of the cinnamon-peeler.

This study employed an organizational ethnographic approach to collect empirical data. Observations, analyses, and interpretations of data were placed within a theoretical discussion framed by the Labour Process Theory (LPT)<sup>1</sup> and the theory of subjectivity and reflexivity in the work milieu.<sup>2</sup> Observations were made in a traditional work setting (*wadiya*) in a traditional cinnamon growing area as well as in a modern shop floor setting in an alternative new cinnamon growing area.

## Context

One of the main intentions of colonialism in Sri Lanka was to monopolize the cinnamon trade (Jayawardena 2000). Prior to European arrival, the extraction of cinnamon was done through *rajakariya* – a system of unpaid labour that served the monarchy and aristocracy (Dewasiri 2007). The colonial capitalist intervention in this status quo was forceful, changing the existing feudal political-economy and restructuring social relations to enable the extraction of surplus labour (Gunasinghe 1990; Jayawardena 2000; Wickramasinghe 2006; Dewasiri 2007).

The Dutch changed the social division of labour in producing cinnamon by segregating and assigning this economic role to the people belonging to the *salagama* caste.<sup>3</sup> However, later, the administration assigned the extraction and supply of cinnamon to the Department of Cinnamon, also known as *Mahabadda*.

Capitalism in the context of early colonial Sri Lanka mainly developed in the plantations. Plantation agriculture brought two significant changes to peasant agriculture, Dewasiri (2007) observes. They were intended to establish a form of market oriented production while also separating land ownership (land) and labour due to the change in the control of production. The object and process of the capitalists however, did not include the intention of industrialization or technological advancement (Gunasinghe 1990; Jayawardena 2000).

Cinnamon as an industry continued even after the cessation of the monopoly of the *Mahabadda* by the Dutch East India Company. The ownership of trading cinnamon in foreign markets was transferred from colonial companies to local proprietors. The locals<sup>4</sup> who benefitted from primitive accumulation during the colonial period and subsequent land acquisitions (Jayawardena 2010) gradually developed as planters and the new employers of the artisans who continued to provide labour for harvesting and peeling cinnamon. Primitive accumulation bifurcated the *salagama* caste to an upper class of wealthy proprietors or company owners and a working class of artisans – the cinnamon peelers<sup>5</sup>.

In 1972, with Sri Lanka becoming a republic, the government through the Land Reform Commission Act of 1972 and the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation Act of 1958 (as amended in 1962 and 1979), acquired the land that belonged to plantation companies and large proprietary holdings.<sup>6</sup> These lands were redistributed amongst the rural population to proportionally increase the tenure under smallholdings. With the emergence of smallholder tenure in the industry, the government established the Department of Export Agriculture (DEA) primarily for the purpose of supporting them to cultivate export crops including cinnamon (other than coconut, rubber, and tea). A mandatory service of the department was to provide planting material and technical and financial assistance to smallholders.

With the liberalization of the economy by the 1978 reforms, the country's key economic focus gradually shifted from agriculture to industry and service sectors. Textile and apparel, telecommunication, tourism, and

banking sectors were all adapting and shifting with the international market and domestic and international consumer patterns to gradually become key industries of the political economic landscape of the country. In this context however, there has been minimal status quo change in the infrastructure used for the cinnamon industry compared to its pre-liberalization status. The inflow of capital for improving worker output, technological development, and adaptation for manufacturing value added products has been limited in the agricultural sector as a whole, including the cinnamon industry (World Bank 2015). Only a few entrepreneurs invested in value adding ventures, while the majority of enterprises continued to produce and supply primary products to almost the same commodity markets. Sanjeeva (2015) and Samarawickrema (2014) observe that the majority of cinnamon peelers along the southern coast, particularly Galle, continue with the traditional way of occupational grouping called *kalliya* (or work gang). However, there has been some level of social mobility across the value chain, particularly with the increasing price of cinnamon in the world market.<sup>7</sup> Samarawickrema (2014) also observes there is a trend of changing production process and manufacturing infrastructure among several proprietors with assistance from international development agencies, in keeping with market compliance requirements laid down by the WTO.<sup>8</sup> These tendencies could be viewed as a reflection of a larger shift in the Sri Lankan economy towards dependence on foreign aid/ loans and the consequent adjustments made in the interest of fulfilling compliance demands, both legacies of economic liberalization.

### Work Redistribution<sup>9</sup>

**Division of labour for Work Efficiency and Productivity:** A cinnamon peeler in a *kalliya*<sup>10</sup> in the traditional work setting of *wadiya* carries out the entirety of the work, from field work operations to the end task of processing cinnamon quills. Therefore, division of labour is almost non-existent in a *kalliya*. However, in a *kalliya*, labour is primarily divided based on gender with a *priori* notions of a woman's role i.e. to support skilled male workers to maintain efficiency in peeling to produce as high a volume as possible. However, when necessary, even female members are called upon to take over the tasks of cinnamon-peeling.

Division of labour in cinnamon production shows a significant change in the transformation from *kalliya* to a 'two-member line' (peeler and scrapper cum joiner) in shop floor operations. In this transformation, the traditional cinnamon-peeler is separated from field work and re-assigned to a constricted work locus in shop floor

operations (factory operations). With this division, work concerning crop maintenance tasks and harvesting is re-assigned to the 'Harvesting Gang', a unit of male workers. Moreover, the work output of the cinnamon peeler is re-defined to objectivize the management requisite of producing cinnamon according to buyer specifications or to produce as efficiently as possible, thereby reducing the unit cost of production.

The cinnamon peeler's work locus is re-organized into five work categories according to various competencies, which have been defined and decided by the management. These categories are: Sorting and grading, stacking fire wood, heavy work, fine cinnamon peeling (Alba grade), and peeling other grades of cinnamon. Consequently, *kalliya*, the social grouping of the traditional work setting, has been transformed and reorganized into 'work teams'. Several 'lines' of the shop floor operations comprise a work team. In contrast to *kalliya*, lines and work teams comprise only female workers.

***Separation between Work Conceptualisation and Execution:*** The cinnamon peeler in a *kalliya* enjoys autonomy in decision making, arranging logistics, and scheduling work. Often, the instructions of the proprietor to the cinnamon peeler are ad hoc and informal, and the frequency of instructions is comparatively less, resulting in minimum or no supervision of the peeler. The cinnamon peeler possesses the knowledge and skills for undertaking his work tasks, which could range from field work operations including harvesting and essential maintenance of the crop, to processing the final product. In some instances, the peeler could carry out the task of 'baling'<sup>11</sup> cinnamon leaves to produce cinnamon oil. The peeler decides on what grade of cinnamon to produce in an undertaking.<sup>12</sup> The proprietor has minimal control over the peeler's decision making process and very little ability to provide advice on the quality and grade of the produce.

The cinnamon peeler in the transformation to shop floor worker has foregone the knowledge and skills (labour capacity) of conceptualizing and undertaking the entirety of the work locus due to the labour redistribution process. In a move to counter labour power, the management has transferred this technical ability to agents with designated authority over labour, work supervision, and control i.e. 'Field Officer' and 'Factory Supervisor'.

Decisions pertaining to what grade to produce and product quantities, and delivery deadlines for shipment are made by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the marketing and sales team of the company. The decision

then transforms into an order with these specifications and conditions. The CEO's office formally notifies and instructs through facsimile or e-mail the manager in charge of the plantation and factory operations. The order then, through a chain of command, transforms into a target, setting in motion shop floor operations.

***Transformation from Apprentice Practical Learning to Training and Development:*** The art and craft of harvesting and peeling cinnamon was earlier passed down from older to younger generations. The training was informal, apprentice-based, and 'on-the-job'. Often the leader of the *kalliya* is called '*basunhaya*' (master craftsman or master peeler). He leads the process of training the apprentices, generally known as '*goloya*'. Training a *goloya* is a long process of stiff supervision and teaching. The training culture carries elements of patriarchal norms. It is said that as a way of correcting practices and teaching the apprentice, the master peeler would not hesitate to use corporal punishment.

In the transformation, the training of novices in the shop floor has become a function of the human resource management division. Hence, training and induction of novices is now the formal responsibility of the Factory Supervisor. However, coaching and mentoring of novices are carried out by senior workers through 'sisterhood' sessions. These sessions are informal and often squeezed into formal work schedules. A remarkable transformation in this regard has been the feminization of the training culture from the patriarchal one prevalent in the *kalliya*, the reasons for which are discussed later in the paper.

***Separation between Labour and Autonomy of Work:*** The autonomy of the cinnamon peeler in a *kalliya* enables them to demand an equity share from the proprietor in the sale of produce. The cinnamon peeler holds an equity of one or two-thirds of the produce or income from sale. Therefore, the peeler usually takes part in negotiations between the proprietor and vendor or intermediary collector.

The workers' autonomy is compromised by the management takeover of knowledge and control over the shop floor in the process of shifting from *kalliya* to line. The management as a hierarchical organizational structure, has carefully distanced lower management personnel and workers from sales and market details. Accessing information for these two categories is restricted to anonymous details encrypted in the form of an order and target. Thus information asymmetry has served to provide an additional advantage to the management hierarchy for greater control.

### Social/ Structural Change<sup>13</sup>

**Separation between Worker and Means of Production:** Knowledge and care about the tools used in the field and processing cinnamon in a *wadiya* constitute a part of the cinnamon peeler's 'way of life'. The peeler owns all tools required for field work and processing. He comes into possession of such tools by using locally available scrap metal and the service of the blacksmith. Often, the peeler has knowledge and ability to advise the blacksmith on the specifications of the tools.

However, in shop floor operations, the management not only provides all tools related to field and factory operations for the workers, but also repairs and, where applicable, replaces them. The workers do not have any ownership or knowledge of how to make or maintain the tools.

**Purpose of Labour (for Increasing Unit Capital):** The cinnamon peeler in the *kalliya* engages in his occupation for the main purpose of maximizing return for him and his *kalliya*. A one-third or two-third equity share of income, incentives for additional volumes, and subsistence expenses are demanded from the proprietor. The sole purpose of applying their skills and knowledge is to maximize the volume produced at the end of the undertaken contract.

However, the worker's objective changes dramatically in the shift to shop-floor operations. There, the work is re-distributed for maximizing production efficiency by reducing operational overheads, and is objectivized for the workers as targets. The target is provided by the management, sent down through the chain of command to the worker.

Production tasks are at the Factory Supervisor's discretion, ideally based on his judgment of the workers' skill levels. Therefore, the supervisor subjugates the worker's subjectivity and reflexivity through the managerial instruction of 'target'. The worker, consequently, gives in to the managerial norm of target objectivity, and internalizes it as his or her capacity to work (labour power).<sup>14</sup>

### Subjectivity and Reflexivity<sup>15</sup>

Subjectivity and reflexivity is reckoned as a tension between power (structure) and individualization that is a compensating mechanism for class deprivation (Knights and Willmott 1989). In this study, the issue of subjectivity of the cinnamon-peeler in the transformation from *kalliya* to shop-floor worker is

investigated in terms of power that is exerted through social practices and the consequent control as well as resistance of the people to becoming subjects.

Social practices around the cinnamon-peeler, in the social and economic setting of *kalliya*, were designed to counter the social stigma of their caste and enjoy equitable economic return in exchange of their labour power. Often, the cinnamon-peeler enjoyed equal social status as their proprietors in this labour-capital relation. In contrast, the management normative of the plantation management culture and structure<sup>16</sup> has subjugated the autonomy of the cinnamon-peeler in the transformation as a shop floor worker. The management hierarchy subordinates the social status of the cinnamon peeler outside of the work milieu as well.

### Gender

The cinnamon peeler accords significant importance to patriarchal norms and values in making sense (subjectivising) of social relations within and outside of the *kalliya*. Sexually oriented tales or stories, and idioms with reference to women are used as examples for describing work practices, product quality, and finishes. For instance, the peelers would say "a neat job [baling] is like making an ugly woman a beautiful bride" to describe the standard practice and finish of a cinnamon bale. In another instance, they would say "once you undress a woman, there is nothing [beautiful] to see". This phrase is used as a trick by both the proprietor and peeler to deceive and convince a vendor to buy mixed grade bale.<sup>17</sup> In terms of gender roles, women are quite often considered as auxiliary workers in a *kalliya*. The leader of the *kalliya* is essentially a senior male. Female members of the gang (*kalliya*) are often given the tasks of scraping bark, placing peeled cinnamon bark for air drying, filling cinnamon sticks for quilling, removing and dumping waste, cleaning after the day's work, and preparing meals or tea. Interestingly though, these tasks also would be carried out by a '*golaya*' in a *kalliya*.

In the shift from *kalliya* to shop floor worker lines or teams, gender segregation of labour has resulted due to work re-distribution. Field work operations are entirely carried out by male workers, whilst skilled work tasks in the factory are delegated only to female workers. Typically, the management of the industry finds that command and control of female workers is easier for maintaining organizational discipline and order. Female workers are thought to be hard working, disciplined, and efficient in managing time and completing work with minimum wastage. Because of this gendered work re-arrangement, the shop-floor social life has

been feminized. This phenomenon is apparent through shop-floor talk and peer interactions, which demonstrate overt sisterhood amongst the workers. The peers address each other either as *akka* (older sister) or *nangi* (younger sister). Furthermore, the workers have named their groups with names of flowers like jasmine, rose, etc. Even though the training of new workers is typically carried out by the Factory Supervisor through an orientation process, further training and coaching is carried out by a senior worker (an *akka*), similar to the interaction and relation between veteran and apprentice. However, communication between the trainer and trainee is mentoring and reinforcing, in contrast to the rough and stiff manner of training conducted in the *kalliya*. Even though the shop floor comprises a majority of females, the management is male-dominated and holds all decision-making positions. The supervisor calls the female workers *lamai* or *lamaya* or *lamayo*. Jayawardena (2014) analyzes this as part of the process of localization of contemporary human resource management practices. The terms as Jayawardena (2014) observes, connote “infantilised female rustic wage labour”, which are part of “a socio-political assimilation process [of] managerial normative of the Global North [into the] native social discourse [of a society in] the Global South”<sup>18</sup> (p. 290).

### Labour - Capital Relation

The relation between the capital owner/ employer/ proprietor-grower and cinnamon peeler was informal, friendly, and mutually-respectful. Verbal communication between these parties symbolized a society where people of different ages and genders addressed each other by kinship terms such as *mama* (uncle), *nenda* (aunty), *puthel/duwel/lamayo* (son/daughter/child), *ayya* (older brother), *malli* (younger brother), *akka* (older sister), and *nangi* (younger sister). Relations between the peeler and vendor (or middle-man or collector, who was called *velenda* or *bi-cycle velenda*) were also informal and strong. Quite often, the vendor belonged to the same community as the cinnamon peeler, or lived in the same village, or belonged to the same social network.

The peeler capitalizes on the social relations between the proprietor and the vendor for his advantage, by using his labour power. There are two possible objectives for the peeler’s attempts to be manipulative in this tri-partite socio-economic relationship: The first is to assure maximum return to the peeler (by either favouring the proprietor or the vendor). The second is, in case of perceiving an injustice from the proprietor, to covertly resist or punish him by dragging the transaction negotiations until it favours the vendor

and at the same time, come to a secret agreement with the vendor for a commission that could compensate the peeler’s perceived grievance.

Often in the case of one’s own area (meaning village or neighbouring villages) or one’s own people, the peeler ensures the quality and volume of the product, whilst being attentive to the entailing field work of maintenance, both of which are imperative for the endurance of the plantation. The reason behind this care is the presence of a social relationship in addition to the usual economic relationship. Conversely, employers outside of the area and the social/kinship network would not enjoy this luxury. In such a case, they would only concentrate on producing the maximum amount of volume because their relationship with the proprietor is purely economic.

Consuming alcohol after the weekly Friday fair (known as the *Sikurada Pola*), receiving ‘weekly money’ (known as *sathiye salli*), and assembling in local taverns and betting centres for gambling are all common practices among the men of the *kalliya*. Meeting at taverns is an important part of their social life because it is an essential part of their fellowship. The peeler uses this as a way to meet other peelers, discuss their work, and also keep an eye on going rates, employers, and vendors. The cinnamon-peeler considers autonomy as an important part of his life and social identity. Freedom from work regulations and routines is important for the cinnamon-peeler. Even though the work demanded from the cinnamon-peelers is laborious, they tend to opt for this job mainly due to their strong desire and will to assure the freedom for self-organization and self-management of time and work, while freely engaging with their social life.

In the transformation to shop floor operations, the cinnamon peeler’s relation with the capital owner has become a formal one between employer – employee. Here the worker is supposed to follow a daily routine that is dictated by production targets. Work routines, the formal shop floor culture, and its social life are all determined by the Factory Supervisor. Recreational activities of the workers are limited to an annual staff outing or recreational gathering. The supervisor encourages and endorses the practice of having ‘team leaders’. A shop floor precedent for workers is to form work teams. The purpose of this grouping is on the one hand to consolidate management control over the execution of work orders on schedule, and on the other to control the socialising of workers on the shop floor. The supervisor sets out (informal) selection criteria to choose team leaders for work teams. Shop floor workers are allowed to form teams and appoint (often older and

skilled) female colleagues as team leaders. These leaders informally function as mediators between the workers (shop-floor teams) and the Supervisor (management). This is the only channel through which workers are 'allowed' by the supervisor to lobby for their grievances and demands.

### Resistance and Polity

The *Kalliya* is structured on communal values, amongst which feature trustworthiness and eagerness to learn and work, essential attributes for the formation of the *kalliya* as a unit or gang. It is the main reason why the *kalliya* comprises either family members including in-laws and blood relatives or at least close friends. The smooth function of a *kalliya* depends on these intra-community relations. The inter-*kalliya* relationship is also an important element for the cinnamon peeler in his work and social lives. Between *kalli* (plural of *kalliya*) there is competition for selecting tree rows (*aruwa*) that are easy to harvest in the field and to peel as much as possible in a day. Their motive is to produce as much volume as possible in the shortest period of time to complete their contract and move on to another plantation to undertake another contract. Despite this competitiveness between *kalli*, there is a solidarity amongst them that stems from mutual dependency. The cinnamon peeler considers the competitiveness between *kalli* as a positive factor and part of their social character or identity. When handling grievances they would not hesitate to resort to measures like abandoning the job in hand. If their demands are not met or conditions are not satisfied, they would threaten the proprietor with discontinuation of the job, because they are confident of being hired by another employer.

The community of the peeler represents an effective, strong, and efficient social network and interactions. Despite the lack of an institutionalized formal trade association or union, they engage in deliberations, coordination, and implementation of actions and policies affecting their economic interests, and make these decisions in spaces like taverns, funeral houses, and at other communal events. For instance, the policy of sharing one-third or two-thirds of the produce or income for labour has been demanded and maintained by all cinnamon peelers. The proprietors at the time had little choice but to accept their terms due to the scarcity of skilled workers to harvest and peel cinnamon.

The transformation to the shop floor worker and labour re-distribution through an alternative social grouping of workers to form the line operating system has weakened this bargaining power of the cinnamon

peeler and undermined their work autonomy in the labour process. The fellowship of the shop-floor workers has been confined to work teams over which the Factory Supervisor has complete command and control. He selects team leaders by setting informal criteria for 'high skilled workers'. The supervisor is tactful in maintaining direct contact and communications with these leaders and endorsing them as the representatives of their team members.

However, subtle resistance from female workers to this rigid order usually manifests itself through a sisterhood-type culture of mentoring in shop-floor operations. Listening to music of their liking while working is another key feature of the shop-floor that indicates the covert and subtle desire of these female workers to break free from the rigid labour process where they are constantly told what to do.

### Conclusion

This study was conducted to comparatively assess the impact of the transition from the traditional production process to modern factory shop floor operations on the labour process and identity of cinnamon peelers. The study was conceptualized based on the Labour Process Theory and the identity theory of subjectivity and reflexivity. It was observed that this transformation was externally induced and conditioned by international market requirements, which is supported by observations of resistance from traditional cinnamon peelers as they adapt to the changes in their industry.

The findings present the *kalliya* as an autonomous bloc with the ability and capacity to conceptualize and execute all production related activities/ tasks without, or with minimum, supervision. The structure and relations of the group are similar to that of a clan and are centered on patriarchal norms. Artisanship and labour scarcity were capitalized on to ensure work autonomy, which in turn was used to bargain with employers to demand fair returns on their labour surplus. The *Kalliya* demonstrates a unique labour formation with collective bargaining through informal/ social networks and mechanisms, featuring swift communication/ coordination of decisions through meetings at weekly fairs, taverns, etc. Factors that could have contributed towards making the cinnamon peeler network resilient and effective include the presence of a majority of smallholders, the lack of cordiality between them and larger plantation owners, and the scattered and unstructured leadership of the group.

The findings also suggest that the transition from *kalliya* to shop floor worker has subordinated labour or

work autonomy to managerial norms. Consequently, separating conceptualization from execution, processing from harvesting, and confining the work locus to the factory floor have all resulted in a severe weakening of the bargaining power of cinnamon workers. The *kalliya* has become a line, a two-member team comprising a peeler and a joiner/scrapper. Their autonomy is subjected to the buyer's specifications and demands. The worker is led to objectivize his work to reduce the unit cost of production and to maximize profit for the capital owner. The redistribution of work aims to increase efficiency of the production process. However, in contrast to the traditional labour process, work distribution has increased non-productive/ non-value adding tasks in the labour process through the chain of command. The chain of command has been derived from the plantation management normative without being tested for suitability to the intrinsic requirements of the cinnamon industry. It has been utilized for maintaining information asymmetry to provide an additional advantage to the management hierarchy in maintaining operational control. Recruitment, hiring, induction, and training of novices have become a part of the management's responsibilities. In spite of these formal procedures, the traditional norm of apprentice training continues to exist in the shop floor, though now as a feminized endeavor of 'sisterhood sessions'. The relation of the cinnamon peeler with work and capital has become an economic one, with characteristics of a formal employee-employer transaction. The social relations in the shop-floor have been controlled and conditioned by the management through work teaming and appointment of team leaders. Feminization of the shop floor has become a key feature of the transition which is quite contradictory to *kalliya* patriarchal normative. However, control over the shop floor rests with the male dominated management hierarchy or chain of command on the assumption that females are easier to control. Hence one can observe a continuation of patriarchal values in the industry.

The objective of shifting to shop floor operations was to elevate production standards to comply with food safety certification requirements to integrate with global value chains. It was also believed that this would increase the global competitiveness of the industry. The resistance from traditional cinnamon peelers at the outset implies that this transition has on the one hand been forced on them (with the additional disincentive of threatening their labour power) and on the other, would not accrue any spill over economic benefits to them. The overall impact of the transition has been the subjugation of the autonomy of the cinnamon peeler to

conceptualize, execute, and demand for equity. In sum, the management takeover of the production process has diluted the bargaining power of the cinnamon peeler.

## Notes

1 Harry Braverman (1974) introduced the Labour Process Theory in his seminal work 'Labour and Monopoly Capital'. Introducing this theory, Braverman reconstructs the analysis of Marx on the change in production processes in the capitalist society, situating it in late liberal and early neo-liberal America. There Braverman emphasizes on Marx's interpretation of this process as a ceaseless project for accumulation of capital, which in turn gives precedence to structuring society; and that continuously changes the labour processes of industries and redistributes labour amongst occupations and industries.

2 Knights and Willmott (1989), in their paper titled 'Power and Subjectivity at Work', attempted to fill the gap in the structural analysis of 'reproduction and transformation of social relations at the point of production' with a project designed to address the theoretical and ontological inadequacy of LPT.

3 Salagama (Halagama), a caste based in the southern parts of Sri Lanka (mainly Galle District), is reported to be from South India and migrated around 13th century AD, who were then gradually assimilated to the culture of Sinhalese speaking natives in Sri Lanka (Jayawardena 2000).

4 The locals, as Jayawardena identifies, were cinnamon peelers who rose to the ranks of the bourgeois.

5 This observation is based on a personal communication with Wijitha de Zoysa-Jayathilake roughly in between 2011 – 2013.

6 Private ownership during the pre-land reform period was instituted by two main categories, i.e. Broad Based Companies, which are synonymous with Public Listed Companies (PLCs) also known as London Sterling Companies, which traded at the London Stock Exchange and the local bourgeoisie, who held tenure as Absentee Land Lords and managed as proprietary holdings (Source: Interview with Weerakoon Wijewardena (PhD), Colombo, 4 June 2017).

7 Interview with Wijitha de Zoysa-Jayathilake on the issue of 'skilled labour scarcity in the cinnamon industry', Colombo, 20 April 2011.

8 In addition to tariff related agreements, other types of trade agreements include Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers for Trade (TBT). These agreements condition imports and exports by introducing and updating compliance requirements to exporting countries, in support of domestic food safety and other commodity quality standards and regulations established to safe guard the citizens (consumers) of importing countries.

9 In the transformation into a capitalistic mode of production, Braverman (1974) identifies two distinct changes in the labour process; redistribution of work in the form of division of labour, and separation of work conceptualization and execution. Braverman found that labour redistribution is an agenda set out as a consequence of mechanization – technological adaptation and improvement towards increasing labour efficiency and productivity. On the other hand, he sees the separation of work conceptualization and execution in fact as a separation of labour from labour power.

10 Often a three-member gang of family members or relatives. Sometimes, individuals of the same village or community come together to form a *kalliya*. This social grouping is primarily based on biological or communal relationships. Mutual trust and togetherness are considered to be the foundation of this social grouping.

11 This is characterized by bundling large volumes of leaves in a standard manner and size for transporting.

12 The cinnamon peeler in the *kalliya* has the autonomy to decide which grade is to be produced. However, the way in which this

autonomy is practiced differs according to geography. In Galle District, where almost all cinnamon peelers reside, the decision is announced to the landowner after the commencement of work (or field work). However, in Matara District (and non-customary cinnamon growing areas like Ratnapura and Kalutara Districts), the landowner would nominate a grade for the cinnamon peeler, and the work is undertaken on this understanding.

13 Braverman (1974), furthering Marx's definition of labour power as the capacity to work, finds it as the means of exchange relations between the capitalist and the worker ('purchase and sale of labour power') in this transformative process, which is conditioned by three social or structural changes to the worker and labour. These changes, according to the author, are separation between the worker and the means of production; freeing of workers from any legal constraints; and making the purpose of labour entirely about increasing the unit of capital belonging to the employer (capitalist); whereby control over the labour process passes onto the capital owner, which in turn produces the problem of antagonism between labour and capital due to opposing interests of capital accumulation.

14 An adapted simple definition of one of Marx's profound concepts of labour is labour power. According to Felluga (2002), labour is the abstraction of human labour into something that can be exchanged for money. The relation of labour-power to the actual labour of a private individual is analogous the relation of exchange-value to use-value. The system of labor-power relies on the belief that the labourer chooses freely to enter into a contractual relationship with an employer, who purchases that worker's labour power as a commodity and then owns the goods produced by that worker. However, the worker is exploited insofar as he has no other option: the capitalist owns all the means of production. Also, the capitalist seeks to achieve the highest possible rate of surplus-value, 'which depends, in the first place, on the degree of exploitation of labour-power'. The capitalist seeks to provide the labourer only enough money to subsist and to produce more labourers (through child-bearing)".

15 Knights and Willmott (1989) draw from Burawoy (1979) and Cockburn (1983) in articulating and advancing the debate on subjectivity and reflexivity. Burawoy and Cockburn had carried out ethnographic studies to understand subjectivity or in other terms the identity of workers, which has been recreated as a compensating mechanism to balance class deprivation in the work place. However, deviating from this tradition which finds class consciousness embedded in compensating mechanisms, Knights and Willmott draw upon the issues of control and resistance, which they find have ontological relevance to LPT. Emphasizing on this notion, the authors stress: ".....how subjects come to recognize themselves as discrete and autonomous individuals whose sense of clear identity is sustained through participation in social practices which are a condition and consequence of the exercise of power and the production of specific [knowledge] knowledges" (p. 538).

16 Management culture and the structure of cinnamon shop floor operations have taken their cue from the traditional plantation management normative – from staff dress code to formal systems and processes such as organizational structure, finance and administration, etc.

17 Mixed grade bale constitutes low quality grades in the middle, and high quality grades in the outer layer to warp around the earlier grade. The vendor would agree to a price for the bale corresponding to the high quality quills in the outer layer.

18 The terms and explanations marked in the inverted or quotation marks belong to the author of the article cited there.

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