Identity Conflict In Sri Lanka Ijhssnet

"A detailed and original work on a specific conflict....A useful platform for wider insights into the requirements of conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes more generally." -- Dr. Iain Atack, International Peace Studies, Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity Coll., Dublin *** "A very valuable contribution to the history and the sociology of Sri Lanka and also to the search for a just solution for the Tamils." -- Francois Houtart, Professor Emeritus, Catholic U. of Louvain *** "The author's mastery of Sinhala, Tamil and English has given him a special cultural competence to analyse the Sri Lankan conflict within a geopolitical setting." -- Peter Schalk, Professor Emeritus, Uppsala U. *** "A challenging contribution to an ongoing critical examination of the connection between state and religion." -- Prof. Dr. Lieve Troch, Cultural and Religious Sciences, UMESP, Sao Paulo (Series: Theology, Ethics and Interreligious Relations. Studies in Ecumenics - Vol. 2)

The book provides a detailed historically-based analysis of the origin, evolution and potential resolution of the civil conflict in Sri Lanka over the struggle to establish a separate state in its Northern and Eastern provinces. This conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the secessionist LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) is one of the world's most intractable contemporary armed struggles. The internationally banned LTTE is considered the prototype of modern terrorism. It is known to have introduced suicide bombing to the world, and recently became the first terrorist organization ever to acquire an air force. The 'iron law of ethnicity' – the assumption that cultural difference inevitably leads to conflict – has been reinforced by the 9/11 attacks and conflicts like the one in Sri Lanka. However, the connections among ethnic difference, conflict, and terrorism are not automatic. This book broadens the discourse on the separatist conflict in Sri Lanka by moving beyond the familiar bipolar Sinhala versus Tamil ethnic antagonism to show how the form and content of ethnicity are shaped by historical social forces. It develops a multipolar analysis which takes into account diverse ethnic groups, intra-ethnic, social class, caste and other variables at the local, regional and international levels. Overall, this book presents a conceptual framework useful for comparative global conflict analysis and resolution, shedding light on a host of complex issues such as terrorism, civil society, diasporas, international intervention and secessionism.

This book looks at civil society and peace movements in the context of the identity-based armed conflict in Sri Lanka. Focussing on the identity politics inherent in peace work, it demonstrates why civil society groups engaged in peace activities often fail to enhance the sense of security among civilians and are also unable to challenge the underlying structures of war. The book highlights the role peace organisations play in providing alternatives to dominant discourses of militarism. It draws on unique empirical material, including 150 interviews with leaders, participants and key actors involved in civil society peace work in Sri Lanka. By critically examining the roles played by civil society actors for peace, The Identity Politics of Peacebuilding: Civil Society in War-torn Sri Lanka contributes to filling the gap between the international enthusiasm for supporting civil society peace work on the one hand, and the lack of a thorough understanding of the relevance and impact of this work on the other. The author uses a constructivist approach to point out the dangers of romanticising inter-ethnic understanding in peace work and ignoring identity politics within peace movements. This book is a highly recommended reading for researchers, students and academics involved in the study of Politics, International Relations, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Sociology, as well as donor agencies, consultants, NGOs and peace activists.

This book studies the representation of identity politics in the Indian Tamil film Kannathil Muthamittal, which deals with the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. Drawing on the influential role of cinema in politics on the Indian subcontinent, and the perceived shared identity of the Tamil communities in Sri Lanka and India, the book researches the film in relation to the conflict. It discusses the differences in conception of the Indian Tamil identity and the Sri Lankan Tamil identity (in the film), and argues that the Indian Tamil is represented as politically and culturally superior and more empowered than the Sri Lankan Tamil. Using existing literature on identity formation and the socio-cultural history of Tamil identities of Sri Lanka and India as a reference point, the representation of the two Tamil identities in the film are analysed.

Papers presented at a symposium held at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, 13-15 March 1997; chiefly reflects the social aspects of cultural and political identity in Sri Lanka.

Why are relations between politically mobilized ethnic identities and the nation-state sometimes peaceful and at other times fraught and violent? Madurika Rasaratnam's book sets out a novel answer to this key puzzle in world politics through a detailed comparative study of the starkly divergent trajectories of the 'Tamil question' in India and Sri Lanka from the colonial era to the present day. Whilst Tamil and national identities have peaceably harmonized in India, in Sri Lanka these have come into escalating and violent contradiction, leading to three decades of armed conflict and simmering antagonism since the war's brutal end in 2009. Tracing these differing outcomes to distinct and contingent patterns of political contestation and mobilization in the two states, Rasaratnam shows how, whilst emerging from comparable conditions and similar historical experiences, these have produced very different interactions between evolving Tamil and national identities, constituting in India a nation-state inclusive of the Tamils, and in Sri Lanka a hierarchical Sinhala-Buddhist national and state order hostile to Tamils' political claims. Locating these dynamics within changing international contexts, she also shows how these once largely separate patterns of national-Tamil politics, and Tamil diaspora mobilization, are increasingly interwoven in the post-war internationalization of Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis.

In the mid-1950s, Sri Lanka's majority Sinhalese politicians began outbidding one another on who could provide the greatest advantages for their community, using the Sinhala language as their instrument. The appeal to Sinhalese linguistic nationalism precipitated a situation in which the movement to replace English as the country's official language with Sinhala and Tamil (the language of Sri Lanka's principal minority) was abandoned and Sinhala alone became the official language in 1956. The Tamils' subsequent protests led to anti-Tamil riots and institutional decay, which meant that supposedly representative agencies of government catered to Sinhalese preferences and blatantly disregarded minority interests. This in turn led to the Tamils' mobilizing, first politically then militarily, and by the mid-1970s Tamil youth were bent on creating a separate state.

As in the cascading of water, violence and nonviolence can cascade down from commanding heights of power (as in waterfalls), up from powerless peripheries, and can undulate to spread horizontally (flowing from one space to another). As with containing water, conflict cannot be contained without asking crucial questions about which variables might cause it to cascade from the top-down, bottom up and from the middle-out. The book shows how violence cascades from state to state. Empirical research has shown that nations with a neighbor at war are more likely to have a civil war themselves (Sambanis 2001). More importantly in the analysis of this book, war cascades from hot spot to hot spot within and between states (Autesserre 2010, 2014). The key to understanding cascades of hot spots is in the interaction between local and macro cleavages and alliances (Kalyvas 2006). The analysis exposes the folly of asking single-level policy questions like do the benefits and costs of a regime change in Iraq justify an invasion? We must also ask what other violence might cascade from an invasion of Iraq? The cascades concept is widespread in the physical and biological sciences with cascades in geology, particle physics and the globalization of contagion. The past two decades has seen prominent and powerful applications of the cascades idea to the social sciences (Sunstein 1997; Gladwell 2000; Sikkink 2011). In his discussion of ethnic violence, James Rosenau (1990) stressed that the image of turbulence developed by mathematicians and physicists could provide an important basis for understanding the idea of bifurcation and related ideas of complexity, chaos, and turbulence in complex systems. He classified the bifurcated systems in contemporary world politics as the multicentric system and the statecentric system. Each of these affects the others in multiple ways, at multiple levels, and in ways that make events enormously hard to predict (Rosenau 1990, 2006). He replaced the idea of events with cascades to describe the event structures that 'gather momentum, stall,

reverse course, and resume anew as their repercussions spread among whole systems and subsystems' (1990: 299). Through a detailed analysis of case studies in South Asia, that built on John Braithwaite's twenty-five year project Peacebuilding Compared, and coding of conflicts in different parts of the globe, we expand Rosenau's concept of global turbulence and images of cascades. In the cascades of violence in South Asia, we demonstrate how micro-events such as localized riots, land-grabbing, pervasive militarization and attempts to assassinate political leaders are linked to large scale macro-events of global politics. We argue in order to prevent future conflicts there is a need to understand the relationships between history, structures and agency; interest, values and politics; global and local factors and alliances.

This title is an examination of the everyday economy, experiences, and livelihoods in the context of Sri Lanka's civil war. It argues that the war is grounded not just in the goals and intentions of the opposing sides, but also in the everyday orientations, experiences, and material practices of all Sri Lankan people.

"In examining the literary representations of these critical junctures, Neluka Silva draws upon key aspects of postcolonial, nationalist and feminist theory, which have influenced both the understanding of the concerned episodes and the literary productions of the authors selected. By providing an implicit comparative frame of reference, the author succeeds in suggesting ways in which certain choices reinforce or subvert established power relations in the fraught arena of nationalist politics in the four South Asian countries." "This book will be of interest to students and scholars of postcolonial literature, cultural studies, critical theory, gender studies, politics and nationalism."--BOOK JACKET.

Interdisciplinary in its approach, this book explores the dilemmas that Buddhism faces in relation to the continuing ethnic conflict and violence in modern Sri Lanka. Prominent scholars in the fields of anthropology, history, Buddhist studies and Pali examine multiple dimensions of the problem. Buddhist responses to the crisis are discussed in detail, along with how Buddhism can help to create peace in Sri Lanka. Evaluating the role of Buddhists and their institutions in bringing about an end to war and violence as well as possibly heightening the problem, this collection puts forward a critical analysis of the religious conditions contributing to continuing hostilities.

This text uses theory and rich ethnographic work to explore how the creation and contestation of dominant discourses of nationalism have shaped Sri Lankan conflict.

In May 2009, the Sri Lankan army overwhelmed the last stronghold of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam—better known as the Tamil Tigers—officially bringing an end to nearly three decades of civil war. Although the war has ended, the place of minorities in Sri Lanka remains uncertain, not least because the lengthy conflict drove entire populations from their homes. The figures are jarring: for example, all of the roughly 80,000 Muslims in northern Sri Lanka were expelled from the Tamil Tiger-controlled north, and nearly half of all Sri Lankan Tamils were displaced during the course of the civil war. Sharika Thiranagama's In My Mother's House provides ethnographic insight into two important groups of internally displaced people: northern Sri Lankan Tamils and Sri Lankan Muslims. Through detailed engagement with ordinary people struggling to find a home in the world, Thiranagama explores the dynamics within and between these two minority communities, describing how these relations were reshaped by violence, displacement, and authoritarianism. In doing so, she illuminates an often overlooked intraminority relationship and new social forms created through protracted war. In My Mother's House revolves around three major themes: ideas of home in the midst of profound displacement; transformations of familial experience; and the impact of the political violence—carried out by both the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan state—on ordinary lives and public speech. Her rare focus on the effects and responses to LTTE political regulation and violence demonstrates that envisioning a peaceful future for post-conflict Sri Lanka requires taking stock of the new Tamil and Muslim identities forged by the civil war. These identities cannot simply be cast away with the end of the war but must be negotiated anew.

This book details the potential of computer mediated technologies, particularly the internet, in creating and nurturing political and cultural identities among the widely dispersed "conflict-generated" Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and traces the engagement of the disapora in Australia with the online media in the struggle for a homeland. Taking the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka as a given, the book explores the way in which new media has added dimensions to the issue. Although the theoretical framework of the book overflows into the areas of political communication, journalism, media theories and studies, nationalism, and social psychology, it draws heavily from the theories of Ellul's "social propaganda" and Anderson's concept of nation as an "imagined community." Divided into three parts, the first part explores the potential of the internet to lead to the "imagination" of the nation by the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora; the second part traces the online engagement of the diaspora in the making of the homeland; and the third part contrasts it with the experiences and expectations of the homeland of the second generation of migrants in Australia and the Sri Lankan refugees in India. With the focus shifting to the diaspora after the announcement of the decimation of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka in May 2009, the book aims to contribute to an understanding of the dynamics to underscore the increasingly significant role that communication technologies play in deciding the weave and warp of the fabric of a nation.

Within the larger context of the bitter ethnic strife in Sri Lanka, this timely volume assembles a multidisciplinary group of scholars to explore the central issue of Tamil identity. Bringing historical, sociological, political, and geographical perspectives to bear on the subject, the contributors analyze various aspects of the Sri Lankan Tamil community as it strives to justify its rightful place on the island. Exploring the roots of conflict in Sri Lanka, the book traces the distinct historical origins of the Sri Lankan Tamils, discusses the impact of colonial rule, assesses the country's caste system, and questions the government's land settlement policy as well as other discriminatory practices. This exploration enables the contributors to explain the rise of militant movements in Sri Lanka - particularly the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who demand the right of self-determination. Finally, the volume addresses the explosive issues of separatism and secession.

Ethnic conflicts are nowadays a frequent phenomenon in what some call a "postwestphalian" world reshaped by the forces of globalization. When they turn violent these conflicts constitute a regional, if not global threat to security and stability as the recent developments in Iraq or Sri Lanka amply demonstrate. But why and how do ethnic conflicts escalate into outbreaks of collective violence? This is the question this small book seeks to address. Drawing on the current debates in the field of conflict studies, the author differentiates between two concepts of ethnic conflict and analyzes the notion of ethnicity as collective identity. Offering explanations for the occurrence of ethnic violence that are

situated on three different levels of analysis, he proceeds from the discussion of violence-prone strategic interactions among ethnic groups to the analysis of within-group social dynamics. There elites use appropriately labeled violent incidents in order to rally co-ethnics for political purposes. It is argued that the three levels of analysis are not exclusive, but instead appear complementary once we differentiate between different levels of violence. This book, therefore, proposes a new perspective on collective identity and the escalation of violence in ethnic conflict. It is of interest for those who seek theoretical insights into one of the most pressing political phenomena of our time.

This dissertation examines the divergent trajectories of ethnic and national politics in the Tamil speaking regions of India and Sri Lanka. Despite comparable historical experiences and conditions, the south Indian Tamil speaking areas were peaceably accommodated within a pan-Indian framework whilst Sri Lankan politics was marked by escalating Tamil-Sinhala ethnic polarisation and violent conflict. The dissertation explains these contrasting outcomes by setting out a novel theoretical framework that draws on the work of Reinhart Koselleck and his analysis of the links between concepts and political conflict. It argues that in the era of popular sovereignty the nation and ethnicity have become central and unavoidable concepts of political order, but concepts that can be deliberately constructed through political activity in more or less inclusive ways. Setting out the conceptual connections between the nation, ethnicity and popular sovereignty, the dissertation shows how the conceptual tension between a unified national identity / interest and ethnic pluralism becomes a central and unavoidable locus of political contestation in the era of popular sovereignty. Tracing the politics of ethnicity and nationalism in India and Sri Lanka from the late nineteenth century to the late 1970's, the analysis shows that the accommodation of Tamil identity within Indian nationalist frameworks and the escalation of Tamil - Sinhala ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka cannot be linked to differences in ethnic demography, political system, historical experiences or the structure of economic incentives. It reveals instead that these divergent outcomes are best explained as effects of contingent and competitive processes of political organisation and mobilisation through which deliberately more or less ethnically inclusive national identities are asserted, established and then contested.

Sri Lanka, one of the most promising states in Asia following independence in 1948, has been torn apart for the past fifteen years by a vicious civil war. The majority Sinhala and minority Tamils have killed each other with increasing ferocity. The Tamils, who are primarily Hindu, fear losing their identity and being overwhelmed by the majority, who are Buddhist. The Sinhala, in turn, fear that the Tamils, with the backing of their ethnic kin in the Indian province of Tamil Nadu, will destabilize and take over control of the Sri Lankan government. Colonial-era rivalries and deep-rooted distrust fuel the tensions. What will bring about an end to this destructive conflict, and how will the island nation heal its physical and psychic wounds following a peace? How will a sustainable peace be arranged? Can mediation help? This book of essays by Sri Lankan and Western authors examines the causes of war and the possibilities for peace. Contributors are Chandra R. de Silva, Old Dominion University; Rohan Edrisinha, University of Colombo; Saman Kelegama, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka; David Little, United States Institute of Peace; Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake, Columbia University; Teresita C. Schaffer, former U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka; David Scott, Johns Hopkins University; Donald R. Snodgrass, Harvard Institute for International Development; Jayadeva Uyangoda, Sri Lanka Foundation; William Weisberg and Donna Hicks, Harvard University. A World Peace Foundation Book

Concerns the treatment of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka.

Power, Identity and Conflict in Sri LankaDeeper Hegemony

Focusing on notions of diaspora, identity and agency, this book examines ethnicity in war-torn Sri Lanka. It highlights the historical development and negotiation of a new identification of Up-country Tamil amidst Sri Lanka's violent ethnic politics. Over the past thirty years, Up-country (Indian) Tamils generally have tried to secure their vision of living within a multi-ethnic Sri Lanka, not within Tamil Eelam, the separatist dream that ended with the civil war in 2009. Exploring Sri Lanka within the deep history of colonial-era South Asian plantation diasporas, the book argues Up-country Tamils form a "diaspora next-door" to their ancestral homeland. It moves beyond simplistic Sinhala-Tamil binaries and shows how Sri Lanka's ethnic troubles actually have more in common with similar battles that diasporic Indians have faced in Fiji and Trinidad than with Hindu-Muslim communalism in neighbouring India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Shedding new light on issues of agency, citizenship, displacement and re-placement within the formation of diasporic communities and identities, this book demonstrates the ways that culture workers, including politicians, trade union leaders, academics and NGO workers, have facilitated the development of a new identity as Up-country Tamil. It is of interest to academics working in the fields of modern South Asia, diaspora, violence, post-conflict nations, religion and ethnicity. Through an examination of the critical junctures in post-colonial Sri Lanka, Kenneth D. Bush refines and advances our understanding of the dynamics underpinning violent and non-violent 'ethnic' conflict. The book enables us to understand how the ebb and flow of relations within ethnic groups affects relations between groups, for good or for ill.

In the past decade, Sri Lanka has been engulfed by political tragedy as successive governments have failed to settle the grievances of the Tamil minority in a way acceptable to the majority Sinhala population. The new Premadasa presidency faces huge economic and political problems with large sections of the island under the control of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) and militant separatist Tamil groups operating in the north and south. This book is not a conventional political history of Sri Lanka. Instead, it attempts to shed fresh light on the historical roots of the ethnic crisis and uses a combination of historical and anthropologial evidence to challenge the widely-held belief that the conflict in Sri Lanka is simply the continuation of centuries of animosity between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The authors show how modern ethnic identities have been made and re-made since the colonial period with the war between Tamils and the Sinhala-dominant government accompanied by rhetorical wars over archeological sites and place-name etymologies, and the political use of the national past. The book is also one of the first attempts to focus on local perceptions of the crisis and draws on a broad range of sources, from village fieldwork to newspaper controversies. Its interest extends beyond contemporary politics to history, anthropology and development studies.

The year 2009 brought the end of the protracted civil war in Sri Lanka, and observers hoped to see the re-establishment of harmonious religious and ethnic relations among the various communities in the country. Immediately following the war's end, however, almost 300,000 Tamil people in the Northern Province were detained for up to a year's time in hurriedly constructed

camps where they were closely scrutinized by military investigators to determine whether they might pose a threat to the country. While almost all had been released and resettled by 2011, the current government has not introduced, nor even seriously entertained, any significant measures of power devolution that might create meaningful degrees of autonomy in the regions that remain dominated by Tamil peoples. The Sri Lankan government has grown increasingly autocratic, attempting to assert its control over the local media and non-governmental organizations while at the same time reorienting its foreign policy away from the US, UK, EU, and Japan, to an orbit that now includes China, Burma, Russia and Iran. At the same time, hardline right-wing groups of Sinhala Buddhists have propagated-arguably with the government's tacit approval-the idea of an international conspiracy designed to destabilize Sri Lanka. The local targets of these extremist groups, the so-called fronts of this alleged conspiracy, have been identified as Christians and Muslims. Many Christian churches have suffered numerous attacks at the hands of Buddhist extremists, but the Muslim community has borne the brunt of the suffering. Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities presents a collection of essays that investigate the history and current conditions of Buddhist-Muslim relations in Sri Lanka in an attempt to ascertain the causes of the present conflict. Readers unfamiliar with this story will be surprised to learn that it inverts common stereotypes of the two religious groups. In this context, certain groups of Buddhists, generally regarded as peace-oriented , are engaged in victimizing Muslims, who are increasingly regarded as militant , in unwarranted and irreligious ways. The essays reveal that the motivations for these attacks often stem from deep-seated economic disparity, but the contributors also argue that elements of religious culture have served as catalysts for the explosive violence. This is a much-needed, timely commentary that can potentially shift the standard narrative on Muslims and religious violence.

Examines the relationship between the ethnic conflict and economic development in modern Sri Lanka.

In a new approach to conflict management and subsequent resolution, instead of focusing on the causes of the conflicts alone, Centre for Security Analysis (CSA) explored the consequences of the protracted conflicts Northeast of India, Jammu and Kashmir, Naxalism, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka to examine the way consequences undermine the states' efforts to bring stability, development and peace in the region. Six conflict specific studies done in the four countries established the need to analyse three major issues in greater detail ethnic/cultural identity, political management and economic factors. CSA engaged experts from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar to analyse as to how and what role the identity factor played out in each of the four countries and how their respective governments tried to politically manage the conflict and the consequences.