

Everyday Ethnicity in Sri Lanka

Up-country Tamil Identity Politics

By Daniel Bass

Series: [Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series](#)

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.

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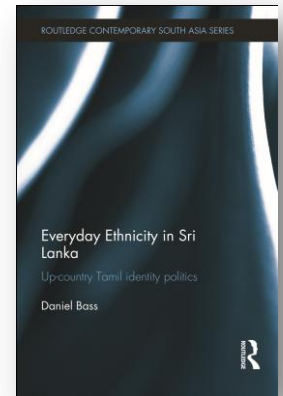
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Author Biography

Daniel Bass is Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Southern Connecticut State University. His research interests include ethnicity, religion, globalization, migration, labor, and popular culture among Tamils in Sri Lanka, India and the diaspora. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on Up-country Tamils in Sri Lanka.

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