

Decolonising Peacebuilding: Managing Conflict from Northern Ireland to Sri Lanka and Beyond

By

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Exploring the conflict management trajectories of Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, this book engages in a discussion that highlights the importance of 'decolonising' approaches to peacebuilding and conflict management in deeply divided societies. Existing knowledge on the topic is largely produced in the Western academy, using global North-centric approaches. This book, written by a researcher from the global South who navigates the political life of a deeply divided society in Western Europe, begins a conversation on a new, 21st century re-conceptualization of ethno-national conflict in deeply divided societies, based on a paradigm of decolonising. This book will appeal to policymakers and practitioners in peacebuilding and related areas worldwide, and students of peace and conflict studies, as well as a general readership with an interest in decolonial approaches to world politics.

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About the book:

This work exemplifies decolonial praxis. It not only renders a deft, multi-layered excavation of the colonial inheritances underpinning the materialities of ethno-conflicts and peacebuilding, but of the geopolitics of knowledge production surrounding them. Through the compelling insights arising in the engaged comparison of Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, the work illuminates the inextricable links between epistemic and corporeal violence; and those between the generation of embodied knowledges and profound social change. In this fashion, Weerawardhana demonstrates that, in contrast to the presumptions that locations in the global South are simply foils or backdrops for extending the reach of Northern theories – still rife in the western academy -- they are essential sites of knowledge production in themselves. As such, this is a transformative and transforming work that breaks through the ossification of the cis-white-het-western canon. The importance of this book cannot be overstated.

- Dr Alice Feldman, Lecturer, University College Dublin. Convenor, MA Race, Migration and Decolonial Studies

This book provides a groundbreaking critique of the current patronizing approach to conflict of the dominant West. Both politicians and academics there assume and promote their hegemony, most obviously through the neo-imperialist dogma masquerading as what is termed Liberal Interventionism. In this regard the privileging of the Northern Ireland peace process, without proper exploration of the previous support for terrorism provided by the United States and why it was stopped, allows for

sermonizing which the author incisively exposes as not always relevant to other conflict situations.

- Professor Rajiva Wijesinha (@RajivaW), Secretary General, Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process [2007-2008], Member of Parliament [2010-2015] & former State Minister of Higher Education, Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Chamindra's work is a very important addition to the conversation and debates around the peace process and politics more generally in the North of Ireland. Too often we are given accounts of history that are stuck in the binary conversation of Unionism or Nationalism. It's therefore very important to have discussions that approach politics from a totally different angle here. Being an MLA I am all too aware of the need for more critical texts on the peace process and this text is a very welcome addition. Having a Global South perspective in relation to discussing politics in N. Ireland is extremely important and I would urge people to read this important book.

- Gerry Carroll (@GerryCarrollPBP), MLA, Northern Ireland Assembly [2016-present], People Before Profit

This book is an invitation to a reading of ethnic conflict and the politics of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka 'beyond' our usually assumed positions. Irrespective of where one stands on these violent conflicts and their continued ramifications, this book carries insights of interest. The decolonial focus is very helpful in questioning long-held assumptions and approaches, globally as well as within specific deeply divided societies. This book is a must-read to both Western and non-Western politicians, diplomats and peace activists. This book is also a highly advisable addition to Peace and Conflict Studies coursework worldwide.

- Rathika Sitsabaiesan (@RathikaS), MP for Scarborough-Rouge River, The Canadian House of Commons [2011-2015], gender and social justice advocate, educator.

About the author:

A Sri Lankan national, [Chamindra Weerawardhana](#) (*DEUG, Licence, Maîtrise, Master 2 Recherche*, PhD) is a political analyst, public relations specialist, consultant and an international gender and social justice advocate. Her writing has appeared in international peer reviewed journals and edited volumes, as well as in many journalistic outlets in Sri Lanka and abroad. An alumna of Université François Rabelais (Tours, France), and Queen's University Belfast, Dr Weerawardhana has held research and teaching assignments at several institutions, including Université Paris 13, Université Lille 1, Utrecht University, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Victoria. She is a Research Affiliate at the Centre for Gender, Feminisms and Sexualities at University College Dublin. In 2017, she was elected to the Executive Committee of the Labour Party in Northern Ireland, and as the Party's LGBT+ Officer. Dr Weerawardhana holds board memberships in several Sri Lankan and international gender and social justice organisations. She has also worked in political advocacy and lobbying roles, and engages in consulting missions internationally on a range of issues including foreign affairs, intersectional justice, gender justice, and conflict management in deeply divided places.