



Power, Identity and Conflict in Sri Lanka : Deeper Hegemony

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Standard accounts of identity and conflict have tended to assume that power, nationalist discourses and the conflicts they generate are dominated by political elites and states. This book challenges those traditional assumptions by developing a novel practice-oriented understanding of nationalist identity and conflict operative through socially diffuse networks of power. Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Sri Lanka, the text explores how the history, politics and culture of this fascinating island have created national identity discourses that contest many assumptions of nationalist theories. The book uses this empirical research, alongside a fusion of poststructural and phenomenological approaches, to show how the historical diffusion of power and knowledge, through global and local identity structures, can generate nationalist discourses and effects across a variety of social levels, thus challenging elite-centric and statist accounts. Using further comparative examples from Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia, the book shows how this new theoretical approach can be seen in action in a variety of contexts with shared identity frameworks and political cultures of patronage, authoritarianism and militarisation.

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