



Guest Lecture - 2022/2
Faculty Research Committee
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
The Open University of Sri Lanka

Working Across Difference in the Postwar : The Politics of Community and Solidarity at a Jaffna Rickshaw Stand

This talk will center anecdotes from long-term fieldwork alongside a community of rickshaw drivers in Jaffna Town to discuss instances when various kinds of social difference manifested and were made meaningful in the course of ordinary life. By discussing how national, ethno-religious, and caste differences emerged within the everyday, I argue that postwar reconciliation should focus on far more than just Sinhala-Tamil relations.

Further, meaningful cross-community dialogue is poorly facilitated without broader social and cultural engagements in everyday life. It is not enough to advocate for top-down measures, as discourse across difference should be a routine part of life in a multicultural society. To conclude, I briefly consider the “queer underground” in Jaffna, which demonstrates the limits of government- and development-centric efforts. The pervasive stigma around queer sexuality in Jaffna, and Sri Lanka at large, means even once reforms are adopted LGBTQ+ Lankans will struggle to find a place in their communities until cultural and community differences can be embraced.

25th March 2022
02:00 PM via Zoom



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://learn.zoom.us/j/65515790856?pwd=VHdIR1NWWWF5dTIYSkptMzNGcTVnQT09>

Meeting ID: ID: 655 1579 0856

Passcode: .\$pg8BR&

Moderator: Dr. S. Pathmanesan

Dr. Daniel Dillon
Lecturer in Sociology
Huston-Tillotson University
Austin, Texas, USA

Daniel Dillon, a queer feminist ethnographer, earned his PhD in South Asian Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. His work centers on the intersections of gender, particularly masculinities, spatial-cultural dynamics, and various technologies and regimes of mobility. Drawing on the varied fields of cultural geography, feminist anthropology, and Tamil/Sri Lankan studies, his dissertation used literary ethnographic techniques to document the everyday lives and labors of a low-caste, low-class community of rickshaw drivers in Jaffna.