

Narayani Sritharan

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst, May 2021 (expected)
Major Fields: Econometrics, Economic Development, Microeconomics

M.A. in Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst, May 2017
Major Fields: Economic Development, Microeconomics, Monetary Economics

B.Sc. in Economics, University of Copenhagen, January 2013

Primary Fields

- Economic Development
- Econometrics
- Microeconomics

Dissertation

Title: Four Essays on Peace Consolidation and Ethnic Reconciliation in Postwar Sri Lanka

Committee: Dr. Leonce Ndikumana, Committee Chair, UMass Economics;
Dr. Ina Ganguli, UMass Economics;
Dr. Omar Dahi, Hampshire College Economics;
Dr. Priyanka Srivastava, UMass History and Economics

Research Experience

Research Assistant, UMass Amherst, Sept 2017-Jan 2019

- Assisted Dr. Mwangi wa Githinji in collecting, cleaning, administrating and running models on big panel data on wealth distribution in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Research Interests

- Sustaining peace in post-conflict countries
- Ethnic reconciliation
- Race/ethnic horizontal inequalities
- Decolonization of economic development theories
- Aid distribution and donor politics/agenda

Teaching Experience

Online Instructor, University Without Walls, UMass Amherst, 2018-2019

Courses

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory (Winter 2020), Introduction to Microeconomics (Summer 2019), Introduction to Macroeconomics (Summer 2018).

Teaching Assistant, Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2016-2019

Courses

Economic Development (Fall 2016), Game Theory (Spring 2017 and Spring 2019)

Instructor, John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, Summer 2018

Courses

Game Theory (self-designed curriculum)

Teaching Assistant, Economics, University of Copenhagen, 2012-2014

Courses

Game Theory (Spring 2014), Intermediate Microeconomics (Fall 2013), Intermediate Macroeconomics (Fall 2013), Introduction to Microeconomics (Spring 2012), Open Economy Macro-modeling (Spring 2012)

Instructor, Economics, Copenhagen Business School, 2012-2013

Courses

Introduction to Microeconomics (Fall 2012 and Spring 2013)

Teaching Interests

- Economic Development
- Econometrics
- Microeconomics including game theory
- Economics of Peace and Conflict
- Economics of race and gender

Awards, Grants and Fellowships

Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) fellowship	2021
International Confederation of Associations for Pluralism in Economics travel grant	2019
UMass Economics Department travel grant	2016 and 2019
American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies	2016 and 2019
Danish Government grant	2016
Oticon Fonden grant	2016
Knud Høejaards Fond grant	2016
Fonden af 1. Juni 1973 grant	2016
Hede Nielsens Fond grant	2016

Selected Presentations

Organized Panel at the Conference on South Asia, Madison WI, Oct. 2021 (due to COVID-19)

Work to be presented: "The Role of Aid on Peace Consolidation in Postwar Sri Lanka"

Annual Allied Social Science Association meeting, Atlanta GA, Jan. 2019

Work presented: “The Role of Aid on Peace Consolidation in Postwar Sri Lanka”

UMass Amherst GIS poster session, Nov. 2016

Work presented: “Language of Instruction in schools in Postwar Sri Lanka.

Work History

Economics Department, UMass Amherst, MA Sept 2019 – Present

Program Coordinator for online classes

- Created updated, and maintained 19 economics courses
- Trained and provided technical support to 40 instructors
- Created marketing material for the department online program

Western Massachusetts Asylum Support Network 2019 – Present

Healthcare Coordinator and Financial Administrator

- Helped new asylum seekers get health insurance and navigate the American health care system
- Created a welcome package for asylum seekers and their sponsors on the essential healthcare information
- Administered the networks’ finances

Center for Popular Economics, Amherst, MA Sept 2017 – Feb 2018

Staff

- Wrote grant proposals resulting in \$5,000 award
- Filed taxes
- Organized the annual summer program with room and board for 20 participants

Danske Bank, Copenhagen, Denmark Aug 2013 – Aug 2014

Assistant Analyst

- Developed macro-modeling on emerging markets
- Forecasted foreign exchange rates on emerging markets
- Produced portfolio reports/briefs on emerging markets in collaboration with the trading floor

Confederation of Danish Industry, Copenhagen, Denmark Sept 2011 – Jan 2012

Assistant Consultant

- Created an efficient database on Danish labor market data
- Updated and maintained the department’s website

FirsTrust Shanghai, Shanghai, China June 2011 - Aug 2011

Intern

- Participated in the development of investment strategies for this Chinese-American investment-consulting firm.
- Managed and updated the database on clients’ investment portfolios

Organization for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation, Chennai, India

Intern June 2010 – Aug 2010

- Reworked spending systems for increased impact in the refugee camps
- Participated in developing strategies empowering women in the refugee camps

Public Engagement and Academic Service

Diversifying and Decolonising Economics, (<https://d-econ.org/>) March 2019 - Present

Co-founder and Steering Group Member

Department of Economics, UMass Amherst
Graduate Student Representative at the Chair Search Committee
Sep 2019 – May 2020

Department of Economics, UMass Amherst
Graduate Student Representative at the Executive Committee
Sep 2019 – May 2020

Department of Economics, UMass Amherst
Co-Chair of Economic Graduate Student Organization
Sep 2017 – Sep 2018

Skills and Techniques

Statistical software	STATA, VBA, SAS, R, GIS, LATEX, Excel, Matlab
Teaching Platforms:	Blackboard, Moodle
Financial data platforms:	Bloomberg, MacroBond, ThomsonReuters
Languages:	Fluent in Danish, Tamil, and English; Conversational proficiency in German; Beginners Spanish

References

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Distinguished Professor of Economics
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Associate Professor of Economics &
Co-Director of Peacebuilding and
Statebuilding Program
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Dissertation Summary

Four Essays on Peace Consolidation and Ethnic Reconciliation in Postwar Sri Lanka

The economics literature has focused on the factors that bring about war and which conditions are needed to negotiate a peace. There is less research on how to sustain peace and how to ensure that the opposing parties reconcile. Johan Galtung (1996) defines negative peace as the absence of violence. Positive peace, in contrast, is more than the absence of violence; it encompasses the presence of a process of reconciliation, and government capacity building that can serve the needs of the entire population. The aim of any type of peacebuilding should indeed be positive peace. My research investigates whether there is positive peace in Sri Lanka. Within the economics discipline, post-conflict economic development is more or less lumped into 'development economics'. This means that to investigate economic development in countries coming out of the war, researchers look to theories and models of classic development economics. This dissertation research intends to argue that classical development economics is ill-suited to analyze development in post-conflict countries. Sri Lanka was chosen for this purpose since it is a country that has experienced conflict and is struggling to recover from it. The country does not have any natural resources that are of interest to the international community. However, it is very strategically geographically placed in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, unlike most contemporary wars, the Sri Lankan peace was not negotiated. The war ended with a 'winner takes all' outcome. Thus, Sri Lanka makes a very appealing case study.

Horizontal Inequality Pre and Postwar Sri Lanka

This first essay is on the historical background of the Sri Lankan war. It was vital for me to lay out the many complicated aspects of the conflict before I started diving into what needed to be done postwar. This essay explores what horizontal inequalities caused the conflict and whether these inequalities persist since the official end of the conflict.

The Role of Aid on Peace Consolidation in Postwar Sri Lanka

The research question of interest is 'Are conflict-affected districts a priority in aid allocation in postwar Sri Lanka?' The literature on the effect of aid in postwar countries suggests that aid can help create positive peace, or in other words, that aid indeed does have a vital role to play in rebuilding postwar countries. Thus, if aid is not equally distributed across the country and ethnic groups, then the gain from aid will be unequal. Unequal gains from aid will undermine peace consolidation, which is what a postwar country should strive for.

State Capacity Building in Postwar Sri Lanka

In a post-conflict era, the state is at best rattled and, at worst, destroyed and needs rebuilding. The people in the country need to regain trust in the state, and that requires a strong and capable state with ample capacity. A capable state and good governance are essential to sustaining peace in a post-conflict country. In that context, this second essay investigates the following questions:

- (i) Is the post-conflict Sri Lankan state a capable state? How has the conflict-affected the capacity of the state? In particular, how has the conflict-affected revenue mobilization in Sri Lanka?
- (ii) Do the people who were affected by the war trust the government? How is the government perceived in the war-affected regions? Has this perception changed overtime under a new president since 2015?

Remittances and Migration in Postwar Sri Lanka

The literature on remittances and migration contains relatively little evidence on households that have been affected by wars. I explore how remittances affect the consumption patterns of internally displaced households. The specific research question is: do internally displaced people utilize their remittances differently compared to people who are not internally displaced or who are resettled? I also explore which kinds of households receive a higher level of remittances. The question is: are there significant differences in the wealth between households that receive remittances and households that do not?

On the flip side of remittances is human capital flight. Due to a lack of economic freedom, human rights violations, underdevelopment, lousy working conditions, and low wages, skilled workers flee their home countries for the benefits of advanced countries. However, the diaspora sends remittances to their dependents and organizations in the source countries. Furthermore, some countries have experienced brain circulation where migrants come back with much higher skill levels. In the case of Sri Lanka, are there policies in place that encourage remittances and the return of emigrants? How do these policies compare with those in other post-war countries?