

# A Tamil asylum diaspora: Sri Lankan migration, settlement and politics in Switzerland.

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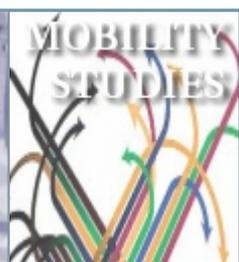
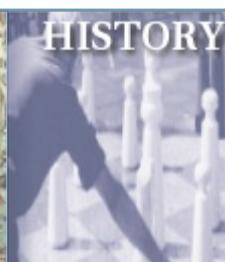
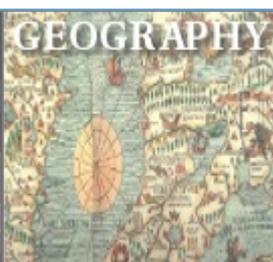
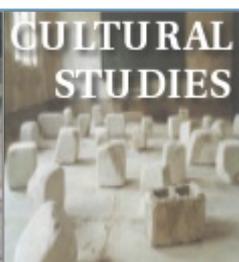
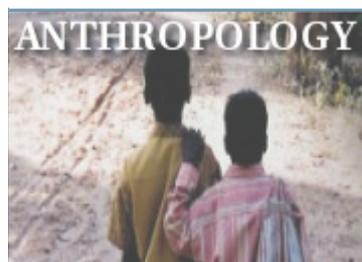
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**A TAMIL  
ASYLUM  
DIASPORA**

SRI LANKAN MIGRATION, SETTLEMENT  
AND POLITICS IN SWITZERLAND



**CHRISTOPHER McDOWELL**

## A TAMIL ASYLUM DIASPORA

Sri Lankan Migration, Settlement and  
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**Christopher McDowell**

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*"... the study is strong... the data is very well analyzed and socio-historically contextualized ... McDowell's research can not only serve as a praiseworthy example of a detailed migration study, but scholars in religious studies, anthropology and indology may take it as an example how to contextualize and to empirically substantiate one's studies on South Asian overseas communities."* • **International Journal of Hindu Studies**

## DESCRIPTION

During twelve years of ethno-nationalist secessionist violence in the north and east of Sri Lanka, insurrection in the south, and island-wide state repression, many Tamils were forced to seek political asylum overseas. At least 200,000 Tamils, primarily from the Jaffna Peninsula, have escaped to Europe of whom ca. 25,000 (the largest group relative to the population) have settled in Switzerland, the focus of this study. The author examines the conditions in Sri Lanka that led to the flight, the phases and technicalities of the emigration and resettlement in Switzerland. Based on anthropological fieldwork and on completely new archival material, the author not only looks at the development of the Tamil community in all its diversity but also at the impact of federal and cantonal policy and practice, at the economic situation and broader changes in Switzerland which led to demands for reforms to the country's asylum and immigration rules. In this respect, Switzerland set an example that other governments were soon to follow.

**Christopher McDowell** is Research Officer, Refugee Studies Programme, International Development Centre, University of Oxford.

**Subject:** Refugee & Migration Studies Peace & Conflict  
Studies General Anthropology

**Area:** Asia Europe

**Subject Codes**

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