

# Beyond Borders: Understanding the Nexus of Migration, Development and Conflict

## Migration Short Course 2019

Organised by the Centre for Poverty Analysis

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### COURSE SUMMARY

This short course is designed to create an interactive learning space for those interested in understanding the intricacies of migration, including how different types of migration is interconnected with conflict, natural disasters and (under)development.

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### COURSE DETAILS



**Target Group:** Mid-career professionals working in the state sector, staff of International Organisations, Civil Society Organisations, and graduate and post-graduate students with an interest in the topic.



**Course Faculty:**

- Professor. Georg Frerks (Utrecht University)
- Dr. Lothar Smith (Radboud University)
- Dr. Shyamika Jayasundara-Smiths (International Institute of Social Studies)
- Mr. Benil Thavarasa (Head of Migration and Development Unit, Embassy of Switzerland to Sri Lanka and the Maldives)
- Mr. Mohamed Munas (CEPA)
- Ms. Natasha Palansuriya (CEPA)
- Ms. Chandrima Arambepola (CEPA)



**Method of Delivery:** Lectures, interactive in-class workshops, and a session on perceiving migration through art.

**Language of Instruction:** English



**Assessment Method:** Full attendance and active participation in all sessions.



**Dates:** 18th - 21st November 2019

**Time:** 9.30am to 5.00pm (all four days)

**Location:** Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)

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## KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

### *Causes of Migration*

- Conflict
- Natural disasters
- Climate change
- (Under)development
- Education
- Demographic changes

### *Dynamics and Experiences of Migration (bottom-up perspectives)*

- Migrants
- Refugees
- IDPs
- Asylum seekers
- Diasporas
- Securitisation
- Identity
- Agency and victimhood
- Xenophobia and criminalisation

### *Responses to Migration*

- Aid
- Management/governance regimes
- Policies

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Throughout history, migration has been intimately related to economic and social development as well as disaster and conflict; it is often seen as the result of imbalances in development, but also as influencing national development, and global and regional trajectories. Migration is a dynamic and multidimensional reality configured both historically and contemporaneously, which continues to rapidly unfold at present. Human mobility has been rising in the background of rapid globalisation - according to the United Nations, currently there are approximately 250 million people living outside of their country of birth. In addition to the popular South-North flows of migration of the past, we are now witnessing an increase in the South-South migration flows; South-South migration flows are nearly as large as South-North flows. Beyond international migration, it is also important to take cognisance of internal migration, a phenomenon prevalent in many countries. Global estimates indicate that more than 740 million people have moved within their country of birth, but this is a guesstimate that is expected to be on the conservative side.

People migrate for various reasons, from searching for a better life-to avoiding political persecution and repression, and as a partial response to climate change. This multiplicity of reasons makes migration a complex and a multidimensional process, which continues to shape the trajectories of (human) development. Moreover, there is a more regulated form of temporary and circular migration where migrants reside temporarily abroad and return home after completing a term of labour. This form of migration, also known as labour migration, is of the essence for the sending country in view of the significant remittances these migrants send home.

Conflicts have historically played an important role in migration trends, and changes in the nature of conflicts since the end of the cold war have strongly affected the nature of displacement in the developing world and beyond. Due to the emergence of new forms of conflict in many parts of the world, countries have been confronted with the challenge of managing displaced persons, migrants and refugees associated with these violent conflicts. Forced migration and refugees are subject to the protection regime codified under international law, but this is challenged and under strain by the sheer numbers and xenophobic reaction, notably in the Global North. Another aspect affecting the trends of global conflict is the diaspora – communities of migrants settled outside the country of origin. These diasporic communities may contribute not only to prevent or resolve conflict, but can also sustain or even heighten ongoing conflict.

The effect of migration goes beyond simple economic returns, but also affects identities, cultures, demographic composition, geographies and histories. Amidst the success stories, we are increasingly hearing the stories of migrants trying to reach more prosperous countries in vain or who lost their lives on the way. Recent studies claim that at least eight migrants have died every day in the last 15 years whilst trying to get to Europe or to the United States. Migration can be approached from different angles; more progressive voices argue that migration enriches the recipient society while others point to the need for labour supply in ageing societies. However, conservative and mainstream European media seldom celebrate the positive aspects, rather the alleged negative effects are emphasised. As a consequence, contemporary migration brings a multiplicity of perceived challenges to the western nations in relation to societal integration and political legitimacy. Migration has been increasingly presented as a force that endangers the public order, cultural or national identity, labour market stability and has been securitised. As a result, the policy discourse on migration has become a political issue around curbing in-migration from least developed nations. This is exacerbated by the fear that especially migrants from Islamic countries could be jihadist terrorists. In Europe and the US this securitisation of migration has led to strongly increased surveillance and intrusive border controls (cf. the work of van Houtum and Engbersen).

Given the above developments we are seeing, for the first time at a high policy level, migration is being accorded an important position. This is, for instance, reflected in the United Nations' main Development Agenda - the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs). These SDGs recognise the integral role and the immense contribution that migration (if well-managed) can have on sustainable development. The SDGs are now paving the way for policy planning and implementation across borders and across sectors, recognising the interlinkages between migration and development and the fundamental contributions of migrants. Migration is also a priority in other global (i.e. Global Compact on Migration) and regional organisations, and their development policy agendas are informed by different realities, experiences and competing understandings, assumptions and ideologies. Due to the complex nature of migration and the broad field of work it covers, currently the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), as the leading organisation for migration, has undertaken the responsibility of building a comprehensive, concise and practical approach to migration governance. In spite of these high-level developments, scholars are finding 'containing' effects on people's physical movement and securitisation, militarisation of borders, a global surge in xenophobia and parochial forms of nationalist politics. As a result the movement of capital is happening more freely and faster than the physical movement of people, both accentuated and facilitated by modern technological developments. In many places, within and across international borders, migrants are seen as undesirable, 'unwanted' and 'threats'. With the intensification and increasing complexity of globalisation, contemporary trends have led social scientists to study Migration from a multidisciplinary approach - as a cross-cutting subject permeating other disciplines. Human security, securitisation, social movements, critical political economy, critical policy analysis, arts and media are a few relatively new areas in which the study of migration – processes,

systems, life experiences and their dynamic interactions with economy, (nation) state, politics and culture – is being undertaken.

Consequently, this short course is aimed at understanding the interconnectedness and dynamics between different types of migration, conflict, natural disasters and (under)development. First, it will shed light on the different causes and types of migration and mobilities. Next, it will examine some of the relevant and recent dynamics in the global, regional and local migration landscape, particularly with attention to the bottom-up experiences of these dynamics. Then, it will examine competing understandings, debates and policies underpinning current migration governance arrangements and regimes, and assess them using different analytical lenses. Given Sri Lanka's contribution to global migration, this short course pays close attention to Sri Lanka's experiences of migration to West Asia and the Diaspora in the West, respectively.

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Gain a critical understanding of historical and contemporary causes (push and pull; keep and repel factors), processes and discourses on migration, conflict and development (e.g. transnational modalities).
- Gain an insight into contemporary international policy regimes governing migration and what ulterior agendas these relate to, for instance in connection to development cooperation, and to other kinds of global mobilities.
- Critically examine the issues, recent dynamics and experiences of migrants by situating them in the national, regional and global contexts.
- Develop analytical skills to assess recent migration related policy developments at global, regional and national levels (i.e. using lenses of Policy Analysis, Political-Economy Analysis, Human Security Analysis, Gender Analysis and Media Analysis)
- Gain deeper insights into Sri Lanka's history and experience of labour migration, economic migration and forced migration.
- Understand the role of Sri Lanka's diasporic community in shaping issues at home, and the challenges involved in engaging such a diverse diaspora.

In collaboration with



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