

La soutenance de mémoire de Master en sciences sociales
- *pilier géographie* - de

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Leaving Sri Lanka again?

Migration intentions of Sri Lankans being back from Switzerland

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Résumé : Many Sri Lankan nationals live in places outside Sri Lanka, among other reasons, due to the long-standing civil war. As the conflict ended in 2009, some of them decided 'freely' to return to Sri Lanka. However, others were forced to return to Sri Lanka as they weren't granted asylum anymore. In the case of Switzerland and Sri Lanka, there exists no particular research on the social phenomenon of deportation and of return migration. This Master's thesis aims to fill this gap by comparing different reasons for return in relation to the intention of future migration. By conducting 25 interviews with individuals who moved from Switzerland back to Sri Lanka, the author reveals the importance of the idea of 'leaving Sri Lanka again'. Therefore, this thesis seeks to contribute to our understanding of (return) migration by focusing on the future. Future migration intentions are seen as embedded in the present and past experiences.

In order to understand future migration intentions, this thesis uses the theoretical concept of translocality, with a particular focus on the question of time. Using a feminist conceptualisation, the author understands migration processes as simultaneously embedded in different scales: from the individual and local scale of social organisation to the broader scale of the political and economic field. Through an in-depth analysis of 7 narrative interviews, the author shows that individuals' lives are embedded in different places mainly through social networks. Through the earlier migration from Sri Lanka to Switzerland, individuals have established translocal affiliations and relationships

which persist even after the person left the country of destination. The social network abroad can be a reason that someone wants to leave Sri Lanka again. At the same time, it helps realise this idea and, hence, can be a means of 'taking power back' over one's decisions and life. Nevertheless, pending and uncertain times remain an expression of the national or supranational actors and regulations which shape one's access to the possibility to leave Sri Lanka again. Further migration intentions can be linked to a translocal life that is characterised by different places which are important in someone's life.