

CALL FOR PAPERS

Workshop Dates: January 16-18, 2024 (in-person)

**Venue: Balsillie School of International Affairs,
67 Erb St. W., Waterloo, Ontario**

Workshop Title

Population Settlements in Contested Ethnic Territories of South Asia: Strategies and Objectives

Organized by: Dr. Harihar Jnawali (Wilfrid Laurier University), Dr. Hari KC (Toronto Metropolitan University), and Prof. Oded Haklai (Queen's University)

We invite interested researchers to submit a 250-word abstract to Hari Jnawali (hjnawali@wlu.ca) or Hari KC (hkc@torontomu.ca) by September 15, 2024. Please include your name, institutional affiliation, and email address with your submission. In your abstract, be sure to respond to the research questions included in the following concept note. **Participants may be eligible for travel support.** We look forward to receiving your contributions!

Concept note:

In an era in which settler colonialism is getting considerable attention, a phenomenon that has gone under the radar is how South Asian states pursue policies of internal colonialism in territories traditionally inhabited by homeland minorities. In the South Asian context, internal colonialism refers to the settlement of the mainstream population into traditionally ethnic territories. The Nepalese government, for instance, launched the organized population transfer program in 1961 and relocated the Pahadi people from the hill areas to the Tarai region, the contested homeland of the Madheshi peoples. In 2019, the Indian government amended the Constitution, relaxed settlement measures, and issued residency permits for non-Kashmiri People to settle in Kashmir, the contested India-administrated region of ethnic Muslims. After it seceded from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh advanced the military-assisted population transfer programs in the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) which was inhabited by ethnic Pahari peoples. Currently, Sri Lanka has been transferring Sinhalese people to Tamil areas to change the demographic structure of the homeland minorities. In the 1990s, the Bhutanese government evicted around 1,00,000 Nepali-speaking ethnic Lhotsampas from its Southern region and offered incentives to the mainstream Bhutanese people to settle in the ethnic territory. These examples indicate that population transfer is an ongoing reality in South Asia. However, the South Asian countries are different in terms of their political history. Countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka were subjected to British colonialism and can be said to have “learned” the colonial policy from their past colonizers, while other countries like Nepal and Bhutan had prolonged independence and did not thus have any predecessor to emulate from. The pursuit of internal colonialism, despite the differences in political history, makes South Asia an intriguing region to understand the patterns and objectives of population settlements. This project has two principal objectives: i) to identify the composite picture of

population transfer in South Asia and ii) to add South Asian perspectives to the theories of population settlements. To meet these objectives, the project will attempt to answer the following research questions: i) How and to what end have the South Asian countries used population settlements in territories inhabited by ethnic minorities? ii) How are these policies similar to or different from each other? iii) What are the shared patterns of population settlement strategies between South Asian countries? and iv) How do these patterns inform theories of population settlements?