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Dr. Dinuk Jayasuriya
Adjunct Fellow
Development Policy Centre
Australian National University

This paper is one of a series of occasional papers produced as part of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's Irregular Migration Research Programme (Research Programme).

The Research Programme is intended to strengthen the evidence base on irregular migration, and is built on research framed in an open, inquiring manner that is objective and non-partisan. More information about the Research Programme can be found at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/pub-res/Pages/research/irregular-migration-research.aspx>

The Occasional Paper Series aims to provide information on, and analysis of, specific irregular migration issues of relevance to Australia, within a broader migration and/or global context.

The opinions, comments and analyses expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not represent the views of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

For more information contact:

Irregular Migration Research and Analysis Section
Department of Immigration and Border Protection
PO Box 25
Belconnen ACT 2616
Email: Irregular.Migration.Research@immi.gov.au

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Survey level data on people desiring or planning regular or irregular migration is rare. This study, which involved a random sample of over 21,000 households throughout Sri Lanka is thus unique, allowing us to capture a relatively large number of people who desired and planned irregular or regular migration.
2. The key research questions were:
 - Do drivers of irregular migration also extend to regular migration?
 - Does the aspirations-ability framework explain why some people facing protection issues choose to remain in Sri Lanka, while others choose to leave?
 - How do external and internal networks influence desires for migration?
 - Is internal migration associated with international migration?
3. The questionnaire was developed collaboratively between the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the research team. Initially, we undertook a pilot survey of 1000 people in 5 districts (out of a possible 25). For the final survey, 18 out of 25 districts in Sri Lanka were surveyed. Probability proportional to size techniques were used to undertake surveys at the DS level (next administrative unit) and then the GN level (lowest administrative unit). Twenty-eight households were surveyed in each GN. Individuals in each household were randomly selected where possible.
4. iPad devices were used to collect data which provided multiple advantages. Data that was entered into the iPad in Sri Lanka was 'synchronised' on a daily basis and hence available to the principal investigator immediately. This process reduces data entry errors that are common when transferring paper based data onto a computer based program.
5. We also demonstrated that by using iPad devices, the information is actually locked and cannot be accessed by the enumerator. It can only be accessed by the principal investigator. For sensitive questions (such as those involving desire for irregular migration and protection issues), we physically handed the iPad to the respondent and asked that they enter their own response.
6. Our summary statistics showed the proportion of households with at least one person desiring migration was 13%, suggesting over one in every 10 households had at least one person desiring regular or irregular migration. The proportion of households with at least one person desiring regular migration was 9.19%, planning regular migration was 3.32%, desiring irregular migration was 0.64% and planning irregular migration was 0.33%.
7. There was a strong relationship between previous attempts at migration and current desires and plans for migration. Approximately 12.08% of households in Sri Lanka have had at least one person previously attempt migration. However, it was clear that in approximately 50% of households with at least one person *desiring* irregular or regular migration, a previous household member had attempted migration. This increased to around 60% of households when considering households with at least one household member who was *planning* irregular or regular migration.

Using our large dataset, we developed literature across four broad (and sometimes disparate) areas. First, following theoretical propositions that people rationally choose migration pathways given their circumstances, we investigated if drivers of irregular migration also extended to regular migration. We found that factors normally associated with irregular migration, such as protection issues, were also associated with regular migration. Critically,

people facing protection issues appeared indifferent between choosing regular or irregular migration pathways.

8. Second, we found that the aspirations-ability framework explained why some people facing protection issues choose to remain in Sri Lanka, while others desired or planned migration. These reasons include having higher levels of household expenditure (capabilities), having household members who previously attempting asylum (aspirations) and networks overseas (capabilities and aspirations).
9. Third, we developed a theoretical framework relating to the importance of social ties in destination countries on the migration decision making process and found, consistent with recent literature, that weaker ties in destination countries were more influential than stronger ties on people's desires and plans for international migration. We consider the influence of social ties in source countries on the international migration decision making process, finding that involvement in social networks in source countries reduced the likelihood of planning regular migration and desiring irregular migration.
10. Fourth, our empirical findings are consistent with the theoretical proposition that internal migration is associated with international migration.
11. We urge caution with our results. First, given the dynamic nature of irregular and regular migration, the findings of this study are only relevant at one point in time. For example, it is entirely conceivable that relaxed or tightened border protection policies and migratory controls in destination countries would alter the relative influence of characteristics on irregular and regular migratory decisions. Further research, applying time series data, is required to investigate how the influence of characteristics on migration decisions may vary in response to policy changes. Second, the results are specific to Sri Lanka. External validity requires testing these hypotheses in multiple countries.
12. Our paper presents other areas for additional research. To illustrate, one area of investigation could be to consider the dynamic nature of irregular migration by comparing results from this paper to subsequent surveys. Another possibility is to consider the drivers of regular migration to developed countries versus developing countries.
13. Appendix A illustrates the hypotheses and whether we have rejected or failed to reject them.

1. THE IRREGULAR MIGRATION RESEARCH PROGRAMME

In August 2012, the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) established an Irregular Migration Research Programme (Research Programme) to identify and address the knowledge gaps in irregular migration research, with a particular focus on placing Australia's experience in a broader global and migration context. An underlying principle of the Research Programme is that the research be framed in an open, inquiring manner that is objective and non-partisan.

The Research Programme has been established as a multi-layered and integrated program including in-house research and analysis, commissioned research, a small grants program, a multi-year research partnership arrangement with the Australian National University and a series of occasional papers.

The first occasional paper *Establishing an Evidence-Base for Future Policy Development on Irregular Migration to Australia* identified specific research gaps in the Australian context and made recommendations about how to fill these gaps, drawing on international experience.¹ In the first occasional paper, the authors highlighted the lack of research in Australia (and limited research internationally) on migrant decision making, recommending that further research be undertaken on decision making particularly as it relates to leaving origin countries and choosing a destination.

This occasional paper has been produced from research which was commissioned under the DIBP-ANU Collaborative Research Programme – one tier of the broader Research Program. The Collaborative Research Programme supports the broader Research Programme through the commissioning of research which offers insights into the drivers, determinants, and decision-making of irregular migrants.

2. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on those planning regular and irregular migration from a source country, not those who have actually migrated. Understanding the drivers and determinants of people with aspirations, especially those at the planning stage, is valuable as they represent those who are most likely to migrate assuming they have adequate capabilities; for example in the form of financial resources, access to information from networks overseas or through the existence of more amenable destination and source country policies. Further, in source countries, in the absence of longitudinal data and data on people who have been accepted as migrants, those planning migration are likely to present the strongest proxy for those who actually migrate.

An investigation into those desiring migration also provides important insights for policy makers in destination countries as to the characteristics associated with people seeking both regular and irregular migration.

For our study, we undertook a sample of over 21,000 households across Sri Lanka, allowing us to capture a relatively large number of people in a migration source country who desire or are planning international migration through regular and/or irregular pathways. iPad devices were used to collect data, providing multiple advantages including enhanced confidentiality, timeliness of data delivery and test re-test capabilities.

We develop literature across multiple (and sometimes disparate) areas. First, literature suggests people choose irregular migration channels when regular ones become closed (Castles 2004; Koser 2005). However none appear to use survey data to investigate why people plan to choose one option over the other. Hence, we contrasted and compared drivers of irregular migration to regular migration, thereby implicitly recognising that neither exists in a vacuum.

Second, literature has broadly highlighted that protection issues (related to persecution from authorities) are positively associated with the decision to migrate irregularly (Hatton 2009; Melander and Oberg 2009). Following the notion that people are rational actors, we investigated whether the influence of protection issues extends to the decision to migrate regularly. Further, we consider if the majority of people who faced protection were those who sought migration (be it irregular or regular) and tested whether the aspirations-ability framework (Carling 2002; de Haas 2011) explained why

¹ Koser and McAuliffe (2013).

some who face protection issues choose to remain in Sri Lanka, while others desired or planned to migrate.

It is clear that external networks are important in the desire for migration. However, it is only recent literature that argues weaker social ties to people in destination countries are more important than stronger social ties in the decision to migrate (Liu 2013; Collyer 2005). We test this concept empirically. We also investigate how social networks within *source* countries influence irregular and regular outward bound migration decisions.

Finally, following theoretical propositions advanced suggesting that internal migration is associated with international migration (Skeldon 2006; King and Skeldon 2010; Ellis 2012), we investigate empirically if such a relationship may exist.

3. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Irregular migration in a broader migration context

Portes (1978) argued structural determinants facilitate irregular migration, with destination countries 'pulling' cheap labour and people in countries of origin being 'pushed' due to lack of economic opportunities. These macro-economic push-pull models dominated early discourse (Piore, 1980; Portes 1978), and expanded to include social and political factors (Castles 2013; Hatton 2009; Moore and Shellman 2004; Moore and Poe 2003).

Models have increasingly become more sophisticated, moving from these linear and largely macro push-pull models to understanding that structural drivers are complimented by micro-level agency, or choice. Moreover, the literature is evolving from viewing some migration as being 'forced' to an acceptance that 'forced' migrants too exhibit agency in their decision to seek asylum (McAuliffe and Koser 2013; Adhikari 2013). The academic literature has also developed from a paradigm discussing economic asylum seekers versus non-economic asylum seekers, to the economic *and* non-economic factors behind people seeking asylum (Hatton 2009), which factors dominate (Adhikari 2013) and how these may change over time (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013).

However, focusing on agency with respect to drivers of irregular migration in isolation may appear too narrow given the broader migration options available. Indeed, Castles (2004) suggests that irregular migration becomes the choice when alternative migration options become more restrictive.

We propose that the reverse is also true; regular migration options may become more palatable when irregular migration pathways become restrictive. Moreover, people seek to migrate for a better life. So it is reasonable that people choose the pathway, be it 'regular' (e.g. through a skilled visa or student visa) or irregular (e.g. via boat travel), that is more readily accessible within the specific environment. If irregular migration pathways become restricted, then perhaps people gravitate towards regular pathways (which may take longer and focus on a less desirable destination country). Hence, we argue that rational actors not only choose whether and when to seek irregular migration, this choice extends to whether and when to seek irregular *versus* regular migration. We acknowledge choices may become narrower, compelling people to choose a least desirable pathway and that there remain many people who would be unlikely to be able to access regular migration pathways, despite their intentions.

Clearly, decisions to seek irregular and regular migration are context specific; for example, people in Sri Lanka would face different choices to people in Syria. Following the surge in asylum seekers from Sri Lanka to Australia in 2012 and 2013, which was at odds with asylum flows everywhere else, the

Australian and Sri Lankan governments introduced policies aimed at curbing irregular migrants from entering Australia by boat. These included arrests of people smuggling syndicates in Sri Lanka and the removal of asylum seekers following enhanced screening procedures. The unusual surge in Sri Lankan irregular maritime arrivals to Australia, together with government responses, were thought to have contributed to a return to the lower number of asylum seekers travelling to Australia (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013). Hence, given this more restrictive irregular migratory environment, and the migration controls globally, we hypothesise (H1) that drivers normally associated with irregular migration, such as prior success of asylum seekers and protection issues, are also associated with regular migration.

3.2 Protection Issues

A body of literature proposes that protection issues are associated with international migration (Morrison 1993; Apodaca 1998; Davenport, Moore and Poe 2003; Shellman and Stuart 2007; Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2009; Hatton 2009) and internal migration (Adhikari 2013; Czaika and Kis-Katos 2007).

Yet literature does not appear to consider whether most people facing protection issues are the ones who seek migration (whether irregular or regular). Moreover, in an extreme case, a positive association between protection issues and migration may simply suggest that a small minority of potential irregular migrants face protection issues, compared with an even smaller minority in the wider population. Under such a scenario, a positive association between protection issues and irregular migration may exist, even though the vast majority of the people seeking irregular migration do not face protection issues.

In the context of the significant and unusual increase in IMAs, together with the substantial change in IMA ethnicity (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013), we hypothesise (H2a) that while protection issues are associated with a desire for irregular migration, most Sri Lankans, desiring, planning or even having paid a people smuggler are not likely to have protection issues.

Further literature does not appear to consider empirically why some people who face protection issues choose to migrate internationally while others do not. It may be because there is a certain threshold of violence which needs to be reached prior to protection issues perpetuating flight (Morrison and May 1994; Czaika and Kis-Katos 2007; Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2009), that the internal geographic scope of violence is more important than the intensity of violence (Melandar and Oberg 2007), that state actors are needed to encourage flight (Moore and Shellman 2006) or because in certain instances, economic factors may outweigh protection issues as the dominant reason for migration (Czaika and Kis-Katos 2007; Morrison 1993).

The aspirations-capability framework (de Hass 2011) and the aspirations-ability framework (Carling 2002) also provide insights into why protection issues may represent an insufficient condition for irregular migration. De Hass (2011) argues, "people will only migrate if they *perceive* better opportunities elsewhere and have the *capabilities* to move"; clearly a person who faces protection issues requires financial resources, practical support and information to travel to countries with safer environments.

Ultimately while literature has suggested reasons why people who face protection issues may remain in a country, or decide to leave, evidence based on micro-level quantitative data is rare. Even the few studies that undertake micro-level analysis focus on what protection issues are associated with migration (Ibáñez and Vélez 2008; Lundquist and Massey 2005; Bohra-Mishra and Massey 2009;

Adhikari 2013), not why some people facing protection issues choose to stay, and why others desire to leave.

We explore why some people with protection issues choose to remain while others desire to migrate internationally. Following the de Hass (2011) and Carling (2002) models, we hypothesise (H2b) that among people with protection issues, those who plan migration have greater abilities/capabilities than those who choose no migration.

3.3 Influence of social networks on the migration process

3.3.1 External networks

As early as 1920, scholars were discussing the concept of 'chain migration', where social networks were considered important in the migration process (Herman 2006). This concept has increased in prominence, particularly since the advent of social capital theory and its migration network hypothesis which proposes that migration is influenced by existing migrants in a potential migrant's social network. It largely relies on the family, friendship and ethnic relationships between people in source and destination countries facilitating and even predicting the arrival of new migrants (Bakewell et al. 2012) although recent critiques have also pointed to the importance of religious leaders, co-workers, agents and money lenders (Krissman 2005).

Theoretical and empirical literature has generally supported the importance of external networks in facilitating the migration process (Palloni *et al.* 2001; Massey *et al.* 2003; Liu 2013; Adhikari 2013). For example, using micro-data from Mexico, Palloni *et al.* (2001:1263) validates the network hypothesis of social capital theory that "people who are socially related to current or former migrants have access to social capital that increases the likelihood that they, themselves, will migrate".

Many have suggested stronger ties (such as immediate family) are most important in facilitating this migration process (Massey et al. 1993; Coleman 1989; Herman 2006) while others have promoted the superiority of weaker ties (Collyer 2005; Liu 2013). We argue that both stronger and weaker ties are likely to influence the desire and plans for migration, albeit at different levels of influences depending on the stage of migration. Moreover, we propose the importance of networks (be it immediate family, other family or friends) in facilitating the migration process may change over time, from the pioneering migrant stage (i.e. the initial migrants) to the mature migrant stage (second and successive generations of migrants). While we use immediate family as a proxy for strong ties, extended family as a proxy for medium ties and friends and acquaintances as a proxy for weak ties, we acknowledge that tie strength may not necessarily be associated with such relationships. Refer Table 1.

Table 1. Theoretical framework for tie strength

Groups*	Pioneer migration stage		Mature migration stage		
	Desire	Plans	Desire	Plans	Remittances
Immediate family (Strong ties)	High	High	Low	Low	High
Extended family (Medium ties)	High	High	High	Medium	Medium
Friends and acquaintances (Weak ties)	Medium	Low	High	High	Low

*Types of relationships between people in source countries and those in destination countries.

The immediate family group consist of people in source countries with immediate family members in destination countries. They are more likely to have access to financial assistance, information and other support services from their relatives, relative to people without immediate family members in destination countries. They are also more likely to obtain family visas, visitor visas and arguably other

permanent residency visas. Intuitively, during the pioneering stage of mass migration the desire and attempts to migrate are likely greatest among this cohort. Indeed in many countries, including Sri Lanka, people have migrated and subsequently sponsored the migration of close relatives.

Yet, we argue that this relationship is not linear. Rather, we posit, there comes a mature migration stage (second and successive generations of migrants) where people remaining in 'source countries', with immediate relatives in destination countries, have less desire to migrate. Some of these people may visit immediate family living in other countries, may have reared children in destination countries and returned back home and/or are simply comfortable enough in their current environment. They are also the cohort most likely to receive remittances. Moreover, some in this cohort, with arguably the greatest opportunity to migrate, may remain in source countries by choice. Indeed, by having immediate family overseas, this group have already spread risk (Monsutti 2008), and thus may have a relatively lower desire to migrate (than people with other family or friends and acquaintances) or are not attempting to migrate themselves.

The extended family group, consists of people in source countries with cousins, uncles, aunties and in-laws in destination countries but no immediate family members. Given these links, they still have information and possibly financial support (such as remittances), yet to a lesser extent to those in the immediate family group. Initially, during the pioneering migration stage, these people, upon discussions with other family members, generated a strong desire and subsequently attempted to travel overseas. Some succeed while others failed and remained behind. During the mature migration stage, those who remained behind may still have a strong desire and are making plans to some extent, although the extent of these plans may be subdued relative to the friends and acquaintances group by previous failed attempts.

The friends and acquaintances group, as expected, consist of people in source countries with friends and acquaintances in destination countries but no family members. During the initial pioneering stage, these people had some information and low financial support from friends and acquaintances living in destination countries. The concept and process of migration was something they understood at varying levels depending on the strength of their relationships. This may have presented them with some desire and plans to migrate. During the mature migration stage, these people have access to greater information from the many people who have previously migrated or visited destination countries. They see the benefits of migration, particular as demonstrated by enhanced wealth, however, given their lack of family overseas, this cohort is the least likely to receive remittances. They have a strong desire to travel overseas for regular migration and are more likely than people in the other groups to plan the migration process.

We propose that given the advent of globalization, the pioneering stage of migration is over for many countries. We assume this is true for Sri Lanka.² Hence, given we are in the mature stage of migration, following from our theoretical propositions (outlined in Table 1), we hypothesise that (H3a) people with other family or friends and acquaintances living overseas have a stronger desire to migrate regularly relative to people with immediate family living overseas (i.e. weaker ties are more important than stronger ties).

We believe the influence of networks in the irregular migration system operates differently to the influence of networks in the regular migration system. We follow the irregular migration system of 'careers' proposed by Cvajner and Sciortino (2010) where, in an environment of entry loopholes and/or weak internal controls in destination countries, strong and weak ties are important. However, if there

² See for example Hugo (2014) and Jayasuriya and McAuliffe (2013).

is a regulative complexity, the importance of social networks is weak or non-existent. We assume that currently, destination countries are conservative in their plans to accept irregular migrants. As such, we hypothesise (H3b) that networks, be it immediate family, other family or friends, are not significantly associated with a person planning irregular migration.

Internal networks

While the influence of external networks on migration has been considered extensively in the literature, a less developed concept is the role of social networks (such as women's groups, volunteer groups, etc.) *within* a source country on a person's desire to migrate internationally, either regularly or irregularly.

Literature has explored the relationship between social networks in-country and internal migrations, suggesting that they can help people cope and recover from disaster (Harpviken 2009) and assist in binding communities together (Adhikari 2013). Intuitively, it appears reasonable that the greater support a person has, the less likely they are to find support elsewhere. Indeed, using micro-level data, Adhikari (2013) finds some evidence that in conflict areas, social networks reduce the desire for internal migration. We extend this concept, hypothesising (H3c) those who have strong internal networks are less likely to desire international irregular migration.

What of the relationship between social networks and people who desire regular international migration? Literature seems largely silent on this area, focusing instead on the influence of external networks in the international migration process (Massey and Zenteno 1999; Palloni *et al.* 2001) or the influence of internal networks on internal migration (Dawkins 2006; Garip 2008). One possibility is that people with access to social networks in-country are more closely connected to people around them, desire to remain connected, and don't seek international migration. Hence we can hypothesise (H3d), that those with strong internal networks are significantly *less* likely to desire international regular migration. However it is also plausible that these people (who seek out groups) are more gregarious, risk taking and willing to 'travel into the unknown'. As such an alternative hypothesis (H3e), is that those with strong internal networks are significantly *more* likely to desire international regular migration.

3.4 Influence of internal migration on international migration

"Those working on international migration seldom consider internal migration to be relevant to their interests, and vice versa" (Skeldon 2006:17) yet there is evidence of clear links between the two (Ellis 2012). Consider that for economic opportunities and/or for protection reasons, people move cities within a country (Adhikari 2013) and between countries (Hatton 2009). Further, King and Skeldon (2010) argue that rural to urban migration is required to build the financial resources and contacts required for emigration, providing as an example, research by Zabin and Hughes (1995) showing more than three quarters of migrants in the United States from a particular state in Mexico, had previously worked in city centres.

Large scale micro-data highlighting an empirical relationship between internal and international migration appears non-existent. One reason could be because the data sources are different (Skeldon 2005). We face the same limitation, as we do not have access to information on people who have actually migrated overseas. However, we can investigate whether there is a relationship between those who have migrated internally, to those who desire or plan to migrate externally. Following Skeldon (2005), King and Skeldon (2010) and Ellis (2012), we hypothesise (H4) that internal migration is associated with a desire and plan for international regular migration.

4. SRI LANKA CONTEXT

Sri Lanka is an island country with land mass of 65,610 square kilometres positioned in the Indian Ocean, southwest of the Bay of Bengal and separated from the Indian subcontinent by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. It has a population of over 20 million people that comprise majority Sinhalese (75%), and minority Sri Lankan Tamils (11%), Indian Tamils (4%), Moors (9%), and Kaffirs, Burghers and Malays (<1%) (Census 2012). The Sinhalese are largely located in the southern, western and to a lesser extent eastern parts of Sri Lanka while the Tamils dominate northern and eastern Sri Lanka. An exception appears to be the capital district Colombo which is located in western Sri Lanka and houses the third largest number of Tamils among the 19 districts of Sri Lanka (Census 2012).

Sri Lanka has had a history of regular migration, which increased significantly over the last few decades. To illustrate, departures for foreign employment increased from just over 50,000 people per annum in 2009 to over 250,000 per annum in 2011 (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013). This is reflected in a six-fold increase in remittances during that same period. Migration for study has also increased, with numbers almost doubling from 2004 to 2009 alone (OECD 2010). Currently there is a large diaspora of permanent Sri Lankans overseas, with an estimated 700,000 in OECD countries alone (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013).

Irregular migration from Sri Lanka has been driven largely from the civil war that began in 1983 and concluded in 2009. However, even since the end of the war, there have been large flows of irregular migration. Some have blamed this on human rights violations perpetrated by the State against the ethnic minority in Sri Lanka (Pearson 2014) while others have argued asylum seekers are mostly economic migrants (Doherty 2013). Key destination countries include Canada, France, the UK, Switzerland and Australia. Australia in particular experienced an atypical spike in irregular migration, with an increase from just over 200 irregular migrants in 2011 to over 6,000 in 2012. This number reduced in 2013 and 2014.³

Given the recent spike and subsequent drop in irregular migrants from Sri Lanka, potentially due to enhanced activities by the Sri Lankan authorities and deterrence measures in destination countries, such as Australia (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013), Sri Lanka represents a good case study to investigate whether drivers associated with irregular migration are also associated with regular migration. Moreover, as irregular migration options have become more restrictive, people who otherwise would have attempted irregular migration may opt for regular migratory pathways. Additionally, with Sri Lanka's history of international migration (Hugo 2014), it is likely there are strong international networks in place. Indeed, that remittances account for a large portion of Sri Lanka's capital inflows is testament to this fact (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013). This provides us with fertile grounds to test the influence of external networks on migration decisions.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Questionnaire development

The questionnaire development progressed through various stages. An initial questionnaire was developed collaboratively with input from the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection and survey design experts. It was translated into Sinhala and Tamil by two people, back

³ Refer Jayasuriya and McAuliffe (2013) for further background information on migration from Sri Lanka.

translated by two separate people, and underwent specialist review by an independent trilingual specialist. The validity of the questionnaire was tested through discussions with the survey team and individual and focus group interviews of people pre-identified as planning irregular or regular migration. After necessary adjustments, the initial questionnaire was finalised.

A survey team, consisting of 30 different enumerators, five supervisors and one team leader, were trained over a three day period. A mini-pilot was then conducted, where each enumerator interviewed two people. Respondents were interviewed by enumerators of the same ethnicity in recognition of the potential sensitivities involved and to minimise response bias.

Subsequently, a main pilot was commissioned (during the first half of 2014) which focussed on investigating the proportion of people wishing to travel overseas irregularly and regularly. In Sri Lanka, the largest administrative unit is the provincial level, followed by the district level, then the DS level and finally the GN level. Five districts (out of 25) were randomly selected for the pilot in four provinces (out of a possible nine). Ten GNs were selected using the population proportional to size technique in each district, with 20 people surveyed in each GN. A total of 1000 people were surveyed, with one person interviewed per household.

Initially the focus was going to be on the post-conflict areas of Sri Lanka. However, given the pilot survey highlighted a significant drop in irregular migratory intentions in these areas compared to 2013 (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013), we decided instead to focus on the entire country. Further, the pilot survey demonstrated that questions relating to fear of future activities had to be dropped given respondent fatigue at the types of questions being asked.

Hence, after further revisions to the questionnaire, the final survey commenced. Eight districts were purposely selected given prior information on the large proportion of irregular migrants who lived in those areas (Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013). Colombo was also selected given it is the country's capital. Nine districts, out of the remaining 16 districts, were selected using simple random sampling and were weighted higher than the purposefully selected nine districts in the final analysis.⁴

The probability proportion to size technique was used to randomly select DSs and then GNs. Within large districts, eight DSs were surveyed and five GNs were surveyed within each DS. However, within smaller districts (i.e. those that had less than eight DSs in total), four DSs were surveyed and ten GNs were surveyed in each DS. Houses within each GN were divided into blocks of three, where one house in each block was selected at random until 28 were selected.

In each district 1120 people were targeted for a total of 20,160 people. However, given slight oversampling in some villages and under-sampling in others, 20,632 people were surveyed. Over and under sampled villages were weighted appropriately in the final analysis. The response rate was 81%.

Post-estimation weighting was undertaken to ensure appropriate population representation according to the number of households, gender and ethnicity as per the 2012 Census. Weighting was also undertaken to account for non-response.

⁴ The 9 randomly selected districts effectively represent 16 districts. As such, each response from these districts was given an additional weighting of 16/9. The 9 purposely selected districts were not given this weighting.

5.2 iPad usage and Data reliability

iPad devices were used to collect content data. A survey program, Survey Analytics was downloaded onto the principal investigator's computer and an application, Survey Pocket, was downloaded onto all iPads used to collect data. The questionnaire was uploaded onto the survey program and each iPad application was synchronised, resulting in the questionnaire being downloaded onto the tablet.

The use of iPad devices provides multiple benefits. For example, data that was entered into the iPad in Sri Lanka would be 'synchronised' on a daily basis and hence available to the principal investigator immediately. This process reduces data entry errors that are common when transferring paper based data onto a computer based program.

Further, given data is available in real-time, at the end of each day, the principal investigator reviewed data collected for any anomalies. The use of iPad technology also allows for rapid reliability test-retests. Specifically, enumerators independent of the survey team randomly contacted approximately 5% of the sample (over 1000 people) by phone two days after they had been surveyed, asking them selected questions. Our results produced a Kappa coefficient of over 0.8, revealing excellent reliability.

5.3 Ethical considerations and confidentiality

Irregular migration is considered illegal, and in Sri Lanka at least, is punishable by fines or imprisonment. Hence the topic is sensitive and research subjects may be vulnerable, posing various ethical issues relating to whether subjects should be interviewed at all, and if they are interviewed, the process that needs to be followed (Duvell et al. 2010). Include questions relating to persecution by the authorities and there is the potential for both fear among research subjects and danger to the researcher.

In acknowledgement of the inherent challenges in eliciting honest and candid responses in these circumstances, we addressed these issues in multiple ways. First, we obtained ethical clearance from the Australian National University's human ethics committee. Second, we stressed to the enumerators the importance of explaining the purpose of the survey, the fact that all information remains confidential, the need for informed consent and to convey to respondents if they feel uncomfortable, that they can opt out at any time. We also demonstrated that by using iPad devices, the information is locked and cannot be accessed by the enumerator. It can only be accessed by the principal investigator. Finally, for sensitive questions (such as those involving desire for irregular migration and protection issues), we physically handed the iPad to the respondent and asked that they enter their own response. A similar technique to address sensitive questions was successfully used in South Africa with results revealing that an unexpectedly large proportion of males admitted to committing rape (Jewkes et al. 2013) and in Australia when interviewing irregular migrants (McAuliffe 2013).

Given the sensitive nature of the questions asked, and notwithstanding the various measures put in place, it is difficult to completely allay the possible fears of respondents and create an atmosphere where participants are always likely to answer honestly.

6. MODEL

We adapt the Intender Continuum developed by Jayasuriya and McAuliffe (2013) for irregular migration purposes, to consider migration in general. First, we categorise people as Non-Migrants (people who do not wish to migrate for any reason). We then identify people who have a desire for irregular migration, people who have plans in place for irregular migration and people who have paid

people smugglers for irregular migration.⁵ Similarly, we identify people who have a desire for regular migration and people who have plans in place for regular migration. We understand that the nature of these stages is dynamic. For example, someone who desires irregular migration today may plan for regular migration tomorrow. Further, the stages are not mutually exclusive; for example, someone may simultaneously desire irregular migration and regular migration.

Importantly, our focus is at the *household* level. To illustrate, if the person seeking irregular migration in the household is not the respondent, we ask the respondent to provide relevant data on a person who is seeking irregular migration. If there is more than one person, we ask the respondent to randomly choose and provide data on one person seeking irregular migration. Through this process, we are able to capture data relevant to the household, not just the people we interview.

We apply the following logistic model in our analysis.

$$Y_{ij} \sim B(1, \pi_{ij})$$

$$\text{logit } \pi_{ij} = \alpha_j + \beta_j X_i + \mu_{ij}$$

We have five binary dependent variables where 'j' $\in \{1,2,3,4,5\}$ and 'i' represents individual 'i'. Y_{i1} is the conditional probability of people who *desire* regular migration over those who do not desire regular migration. Y_{i2} is the conditional probability of people who *plan* regular migration over those who do not plan regular migration. Y_{i3} is the conditional probability of people who *desire* irregular migration over those who do not desire irregular migration. Y_{i4} is the conditional probability of people who *plan* irregular migration over those who do not plan irregular migration. Y_{i5} is the conditional probability of people who plan irregular migration over those who plan regular migration. We apply the 'svy' command in STATA, ensuring our standard errors are clustered at the village level.

We include the same explanatory variables (X) across all regressions. Consistent with literature (Adhikari 2013; Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2014), our socio-economic variables include AGE, SEX (1 equals male, zero equals female), MARRIED (one equals married, 0 equals not married), ETHNIC MINORITY (one equals Tamils, Muslims, Burghers and zero equals Sinhalese), EDUCATION LEVEL (zero equals no education, one equals primary level education, 2 equals secondary level education and 3 equals tertiary level education), number of household members (HHMEMBERS), weekly household expenditure (HHEXPENDITURE) and employment status (WORK, equals one for full-time or part-time work, zero equals no formal work).

To capture other economic factors which may be associated with migration decisions, we include LOSTJOB, which equals one if the person has lost a job, and zero otherwise, and in unreported regressions, perceptions of household income (PERHHINC), which equals 5, 4, 3, 2 or one if the respondent believes household income is very sufficient, sufficient, neither sufficient nor insufficient, insufficient or very insufficient to meet the households needs respectively.

We include a variable, MIGRATION15, which captures if a respondent has internally migrated across districts since they were 15 years old. For robustness checks, in separate unreported regressions, we consider MIGRATION5, which captures if a respondent has internally migrated across districts since they were 5 years old.

⁵ For example, with the appropriate translation, we asked 'are you likely to seek irregular migration', 'are you planning irregular migration' and 'have you paid a people smuggler to assist you with irregular migration'.

We include a dummy variable, PASTASYFAIL, which equals one if a person lives in a house where someone has previously attempted asylum and failed, and zero if no one in the household has previously attempted asylum and failed. We also include PASTASYSUCCESS, which equals one if a person lives in a house where someone has previously successfully gained asylum, and zero if no one in the household has previously successfully gained asylum. AGENTAPPROCH equals one if a people smuggler, or agent, has approached someone in the household within the last year and zero otherwise.

After undertaking confirmatory factor analysis, it was clear that the protection issues we investigated could be separated into two factors; protection issues perpetrated by authorities and protection issues due to other actors. PASTPROTECTGOV equals one if a person alleges to have experienced at least one of the following within two years prior to the survey; physical violence from members of the police, military or government, unfair arrest by authorities, blackmail by authorities, paying bribes to authorities, being abducted or receiving serious threats from the police, military or government. PASTPROTECTGOV equals zero otherwise. PASTPROTECTOTH equals one if the person experienced physical violence from a family member or people in their own village within two years prior to the survey and zero otherwise. We also include dummy variables for POLICE and ARMY, which equals one if the village is within 2 kilometres of a police post and army camp respectively and zero otherwise.

Consistent with Table 1, external networks are separated into the dummy variables, people with immediate family internationally (IMFAM), people with other family internationally (OTHFAM) and people with friends or acquaintances living internationally (FRIENDS). For regressions involving irregular migration only (i.e. models 3, 4), we only consider IMFAM, OTHFAM and FRIENDS for countries that generally accept asylum seekers. For example, Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar would be excluded while 'Western' nations would be included.

A dummy is also included to capture internal social networks (SOCNET) which equals one if the person belongs to a social group such as self-help groups, Samurdhi, funeral committees, organizations for people with disabilities, community based organizations, rural development society or youth clubs. SOCNET equals zero otherwise.

7. RESULTS

Table 2 shows the proportion of households with at least one person not desiring migration of any kind is 87%, suggesting over one in every 10 households had at least one person desiring regular or irregular migration. The proportion of households with at least one person desiring regular migration was 9.19%, planning regular migration was 3.32%, desiring irregular migration was 0.64% and planning irregular migration as 0.33%.

Table 2. Summary statistics at the household level

	All	Non-Intenders	Desiring regular migration	Planning regular migration	Desiring irregular migration	Planning irregular migration
Proportions (%)	100.00	87.37	9.19	3.32	0.62	0.33
Households Numbers	20,632	17,110	2,982	1,188	251	126
Average number of household members	3.19	3.13	3.73	3.93	3.53	3.35
Average number of children in the household	1.46	1.44	1.54	1.61	1.53	1.15
Proportion of households with at least one person that has previously attempted migration (%)	12.08	8.60	47.81	60.18	48.64	62.31
Average proportion of households that had at least one previous household member who successfully claimed permanent residency in another country (%)	3.96	3.32	8.84	13.25	15.80	16.88
Average proportion of households with at least one person who previously attempted asylum (%)	1.48	1.03	5.18	9.87	36.30	46.14
Average proportion of households that had at least one previous household member who successfully claimed asylum (%)	0.85	0.74	1.29	2.21	8.85	12.05
Immediate family overseas (%)	11.29	9.93	24.74	26.36	31.43	28.54
Family living overseas (%)	13.91	11.53	40.23	44.17	32.64	32.90
Friends or acquaintances overseas (%)	5.06	3.69	18.83	23.58	18.71	16.80
Proportion facing protection issues from the authorities (%)	1.46	1.27	3.69	5.78	6.48	10.35

Weightings were applied for non-response, to account for oversampling and to make populations representative of the areas being surveyed (according to population size, sex and ethnicity). Household numbers are not weighted.

The summary statistics are revealing. Approximately 12.08% of households in Sri Lanka have had at least one person previously attempt migration. However, it is clear that in approximately 50% of households with at least one person *desiring* irregular or regular migration, a previous household member has attempted migration. This increases to around 60% of households when considering households with at least one household member *planning* irregular or regular migration. Similarly, in 36.30% and 46.14% of households with at least one person desiring or planning irregular migration respectively, there was at least one household member who previously attempted irregular migration. This compared to the 1.48% of households with at least one household member who previously attempted irregular migration in Sri Lanka overall.

Models 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Table 3 regress our equation with dependent variables Y_{i1} (one equals desire for regular migration, zero otherwise), Y_{i2} (one equals plans for regular migration, zero otherwise), Y_{i3} (one equals desire for irregular migration, zero otherwise) and Y_{i4} (one equals plans for irregular migration, zero otherwise) respectively. Results show older people are significantly less likely to plan regular or irregular migration (OR 0.71 and OR 0.67 respectively) as are married people (OR 0.52 and 0.31 respectively). Further, males are significantly more likely to plan regular or irregular migration (OR 2.04 and OR 2.54 respectively) while employment status remains largely insignificant.

Unsurprisingly, ethnic minorities are significantly more likely to plan regular and irregular migration (OR 6.53 and OR 2.70). There is evidence that economic factors are important, with people who have lost a job being significantly more likely to plan regular and irregular migration (OR 2.08 and OR 2.10 respectively). In unreported analysis, the variable for perceptions of household income remains insignificant across all regressions.

Table 3. Drivers of regular and irregular migration⁶

Dependent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Entire sample	Entire sample	Entire sample	Entire sample	Planning migration only	Protection issues only
	1 when desiring regular migration 0 otherwise	1 when planning regular migration 0 otherwise	1 when desiring irregular migration 0 otherwise	1 when planning irregular migration 0 otherwise	1 when planning irregular migration, 0 when planning regular migration	1 when desiring regular migration 0 otherwise
AGE	0.81*** (0.02)	0.71*** (0.04)	0.57*** (0.07)	0.67** (0.11)	1.14 (0.23)	0.68 (0.17)
SEX	1.23** (0.12)	2.04*** (0.34)	1.71* (0.47)	2.54** (1.10)	3.33** (1.74)	1.48 (0.73)
MARRIED	0.63*** (0.07)	0.52*** (0.08)	0.37*** (0.10)	0.31** (0.15)	0.60 (0.31)	0.27 (0.26)
EDUCATIONLEVEL	1.38*** (0.10)	1.43*** (0.16)	1.62* (0.42)	2.61** (0.97)	2.34** (0.90)	2.59* (1.48)
HHEXPENDITURE	1.25*** (0.08)	1.18* (0.11)	1.53*** (0.19)	1.84*** (0.33)	1.86** (0.52)	3.86*** (1.58)
WORK	0.83** (0.08)	1.06 (0.17)	1.35 (0.33)	1.28 (0.51)	1.26 (0.42)	0.56 (0.29)
LOSTJOB	1.32*** (0.10)	2.08*** (0.23)	2.25*** (0.53)	2.10** (0.75)	0.98 (0.37)	1.53 (0.68)
HMEMBERS	1.07*** (0.03)	1.10** (0.04)	1.05 (0.06)	0.90 (0.09)	0.80** (0.08)	1.19 (0.16)
ETHNIC MINORITIES	3.59*** (0.44)	6.53*** (1.30)	0.80 (0.24)	2.70*** (0.91)	0.26** (0.14)	18.00*** (9.92)
AGENTAPPROCH	0.96 (0.19)	0.66 (0.19)	1.40 (0.57)	2.16* (0.99)	3.07** (1.63)	0.26 (0.31)
PASTASYSUCCESS	0.82 (0.20)	1.78** (0.46)	14.81*** (7.05)	21.35*** (12.61)	8.30*** (5.73)	40.92*** (54.66)
PASTASYFAIL	7.18*** (1.93)	16.86*** (5.91)	46.18*** (14.95)	46.55*** (18.85)	7.24*** (2.93)	41.16*** (48.86)
PASTPROTECTGOV	1.83*** (0.35)	2.17*** (0.49)	1.45 (0.50)	2.65** (1.02)	0.93 (1.10)	
PASTPROTECTOTH	1.21 (0.50)	1.54 (0.74)	5.81*** (3.61)	18.37*** (12.55)	1.98 (0.85)	
ARMY	0.95 (0.11)	1.14 (0.16)	2.64*** (0.70)	1.44 (0.48)	1.40 (0.48)	0.87 (0.42)

⁶ Note, the influence of protection issues does not increase materially if the variables PASTASYSUCCESS and PASTASYFAIL are removed.

Dependent variable	1 when desiring regular migration 0 otherwise	1 when planning regular migration 0 otherwise	1 when desiring irregular migration 0 otherwise	1 when planning irregular migration 0 otherwise	1 when planning irregular migration, 0 when planning regular migration	1 when desiring regular migration 0 otherwise
POLICE	1.14 (0.13)	1.00 (0.14)	1.40 (0.39)	2.57** (1.09)	2.89** (1.30)	0.75 (0.38)
IMFAM	1.24** (0.12)	1.08 (0.15)	1.47 (0.61)	1.31 (0.62)	0.84 (0.29)	1.07 (0.58)
OTHFAM	2.59*** (0.23)	2.05*** (0.24)	0.93 (0.29)	0.78 (0.25)	0.69 (0.24)	1.48 (0.82)
FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES	2.46*** (0.31)	2.34*** (0.36)	1.22 (0.48)	0.72 (0.36)	0.45* (0.19)	3.80** (2.08)
MIGRATION15	1.33** (0.15)	1.29* (0.17)	1.23 (0.41)	0.85 (0.44)	0.73 (0.36)	1.26 (0.62)
SOCNET	0.87* (0.07)	0.57*** (0.08)	0.34*** (0.09)	0.62 (0.23)	0.87 (0.33)	1.91 (0.86)
Observations	18226	18553	18550	18552	1148	407

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Coefficients are odds ratios. Robust standard errors (clustered at the village level) in parentheses. Dummy variables (not reported) were included for when interviews were conducted in private and for each enumerator. Weightings were applied for non-response, to account for oversampling and to make populations representative of the areas being surveyed (according to population size, sex and ethnicity). Regressions do not include location fixed effects however when applying such fixed effects, results are similar. Some observations drop out due to missing data.

People who are more educated are also more likely to plan regular and irregular migration (OR 1.43 and OR 2.61 respectively) than those who are less educated. This appears reasonable for regular migration however it may seem surprising when considering irregular migration. Perhaps more educated people are able to understand the irregular migration process to a greater degree than those who are less educated. Alternatively, it is possible that more educated Sri Lankans simply want to migrate through whatever means possible; Hugo (2014) highlights that Spielvogel and Widmaier (2010) show almost 30% of educated Sri Lankans reside outside Sri Lanka, which is the 3rd highest level across all Asian countries.

Asylum seeker success by at least one previous household member significantly increases the odds of planning regular migration (OR 1.78) and planning irregular migration (OR 21.35). This relationship holds to a greater extent among households where at least one previous household member has *failed* in their attempts to seek asylum (OR 16.86 for those planning regular migration and OR 46.55 for those planning irregular migration). While this may seem reasonable for irregular migration, what's revealing is the results suggest some people who had previously considered irregular migration pathways, may also be considering regular migration pathways. Similarly, protection issues from authorities, usually expected to be associated with plans for irregular migration (OR 2.65) are also associated with plans for regular migration, to a marginally smaller degree (OR 2.17). These results point to rational actors choosing migration pathways that they believe present them with the greatest possibility for success, and not necessarily focusing on the 'asylum seeking route'. Hence results support to an extent, hypothesis H1 that drivers normally associated with irregular migration, such as prior success of asylum seekers and protection issues, are also likely to increase the odds of regular migration. An exception appears to be the fact that people who live within 2km of an army camp or police camp are significantly more likely to desire irregular migration (OR 2.64) or plan irregular migration (OR 2.57) respectively while this relationship does not hold with regular migration.

Model 5, which applies dependent variable Y_{i5} (one equals plans for irregular migration and zero equals plans for regular migration), shows respondents are significantly more likely to plan irregular migration relative to regular migration if they had been approached by people smugglers (OR 3.07), had at least one previous successful asylum seeker in their household (OR 8.03) or had at least one previous failed asylum seeker (OR 7.24). Hence, when only focusing on people who plan irregular or regular migration, it is clear that the influences of prior asylum success or failure are stronger across those planning irregular migration relative to regular migration.

However what is striking in Model 5 is that people who have protection issues are indifferent between choosing regular or irregular pathways. This again points to rational actors selecting the migration pathway that best suits their situation.

Table 2 shows that at least one person in 1.46% of households has experienced protection issues due to authorities. This proportion increases across those desiring regular migration (3.69%), planning regular migration (5.78%), desiring irregular migration (6.48%) and planning irregular migration (10.35%). Unreported data analysis shows 23.96% of people who have paid a people smuggler have experienced protection issues. This suggests most people actually desiring, planning or paying to travel for asylum may not be the ones who are eligible for asylum, nor are they the ones most in need of asylum. Hence we fail to reject H2a that most Sri Lankans, desiring, planning or even having paid a people smuggler are not likely to have protection issues.

Model 6 in Table 3 regresses dependent variable Y_{i1} (i.e. one equals desiring regular migration and zero otherwise) but restricts the dataset to people who had experienced protection issues from the authorities.⁷ We find people with the greatest capabilities as demonstrated by higher household expenditure (OR 3.86) and access to friends or acquaintances overseas⁸ (OR 3.80) are significantly and positively associated with planning regular migration. That the positive association between people who have made previous attempts at asylum (whether success or failure) and *regular* migration is particularly influential (OR of 40.92 and 41.16 respectively) may point to the importance of aspirations (as demonstrated by past initiative) in the desire to seek regular migration. Similar results hold in unreported regressions when considering people who plan regular migration. Hence we find some support for our hypothesis, H2b, that among people with protection issues, those who desire or plan migration have greater aspirations and capabilities than those who do not desire migration.

Table 2 shows the proportion of households with immediate family overseas, other family overseas or friends and acquaintances overseas is greater among those households with at least one person desiring or planning migration relative to households with no one desiring migration. We find that people with friends and acquaintances living overseas are significantly more likely to desire and plan regular migration (OR 2.46 and 2.34 respectively) as are people with other family overseas (OR 2.59 and 2.05). However, households with immediate family overseas are more likely to desire regular migration to a lesser extent (OR 1.24) with the relationship losing significance when considering those who are planning regular migration. Hence, we fail to reject our hypothesis (H3a) that weaker ties are more important than stronger ties when desiring and planning regular migration.

When considering those who desire or plan irregular migration, there is no significant relationship. Hence we fail to reject our hypothesis (H3b) that social networks, be it immediate family, other family or friends, are not significantly associated with a person planning irregular migration.

⁷ There is insufficient data to consider this relationship among people who desire or plan irregular migration.

⁸ Having friends and acquaintances overseas may also be associated with aspirations.

With respect to internal networks, there is some evidence to suggest that people who are engaged in social activities are significantly less likely to plan regular migration and desire irregular migration (OR 0.57 and 0.34 respectively). This provides some support to hypothesis (H3c), suggesting social groups may provide comfort to those who may otherwise seek irregular migration, although it does not seem to influence those who plan irregular migration. It appears that we fail to reject H3d while rejecting alternative hypothesis H3e; moreover, there is evidence to suggest strong participation in social groups within source countries reduces the likelihood that a person will plan to leave the country. Our results showing different social networks are likely to influence irregular migration differently builds on work by Gurak and Caces (1992) who argue that different types of networks facilitate both internal and international migration.

We fail to reject hypothesis (H4) that internal migration is associated with a desire and plan for international regular migration (OR 1.33 and 1.29 respectively), adding weight to the assertion that internal migration can lead to international migration (Skeldon 2006). Intuitively this appears reasonable; if people have the characteristics that encourage migration to a different area within a country, it is plausible that such characteristics may also encourage them to travel outside that country.

8. CONCLUSION

Our results, drawing on a unique sample of over 21,000 survey respondents throughout Sri Lanka, allow us to be the first to investigate drivers of irregular and regular migration from a source country using micro-level data. Hence, as opposed to macro-level studies, we are able to focus on agency in the decision making process.

Our results concerning protection issues are enlightening. Consistent with literature, we find that people facing protection issues are more likely to plan irregular migration than those without protection issues. However, we add to literature by finding that this relationship holds with people planning regular migration and that people facing protection issues are indifferent between seeking irregular or regular pathways. This points to rational actors, facing protection issues, choosing the irregular or regular pathway that best suits their migration aspirations.

The finding that the large majority of people with protection issues do not seek regular or irregular migration also appears to be novel, presenting a clear signal to authorities and development organisations that there are people living in Sri Lanka who need assistance. The people with protection issues who do plan regular migration appear to be those with the greatest aspirations and capabilities. These points, in addition to the fact that the majority of people desiring, seeking and having paid for irregular migration are not people with protection issues, may cause concern among policy makers in destination countries and international organisations that offers of asylum may not necessarily be reaching those in most need.

That said, we urge caution. First, given the dynamic nature of irregular and regular migration, the findings of this study are only relevant at one point in time. For example, it is entirely conceivable that relaxed or tightened border protection policies and migratory controls in destination and origin countries would alter the relative influence of characteristics on irregular and regular migratory decisions. Further research, applying time series data, is required to investigate how the influence of characteristics on migration decisions may vary in response to policy changes. Second, the results are specific to Sri Lanka. External validity requires testing these hypotheses in multiple countries.

We develop a theoretical proposition that we are currently in the mature migration stage and show empirically that people with weaker ties are likely to desire and plan regular migration to a greater

degree than those with stronger ties. This finding builds on the 'key first step' that Liu (2013) made to understanding the influence of relative tie strength in international migration. Further, we are the first to apply empirical micro-level analysis to show that social networks within a source country are likely to reduce the desire for irregular migration and to support the assertion by Skeldon (2006) that internal migration is associated with wanting to seek international migration.

Our paper presents rich areas for additional research. For example, one area of investigation could be to consider the dynamic nature of irregular migration by comparing results from this paper to the analysis undertaken in Jayasuriya and McAuliffe (2013). Another possibility is to consider the drivers of regular migration to developed countries versus developing countries.

Our study does come with limitations. First, by virtue of the subject area, we are asking sensitive questions regarding protection issues and illegal activity. It is possible people may be untruthful despite our professions of confidentiality and our use of iPad devices to conceal sensitive answers. A large level of untruthfulness will clearly bias our results. Nevertheless, such limitations are encountered by many studies focusing on sensitive areas (see for example Adhikari 2013).

Second, our study is cross-sectional in nature, suggesting we may have omitted key observable characteristics associated with migration decisions, such as fear of future protection issues (Adhikari 2013; Jayasuriya and McAuliffe 2013), how people perceive greater opportunities overseas (de Hass 2011), or even the possibility that protection issues perpetuate migration only above a certain threshold (Morrison and May 1994). Another possibility is that there are unobservable characteristics, such as desire to migrate which has not been captured. Future research will hopefully mitigate such issues by incorporating longitudinal analysis.

Third, we are only focussing on those people who are planning or desiring migration; they may have different characteristics than people who have actually migrated. Finally, the analysis of irregular migrants may be biased by the small number of absolute data points we captured.

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APPENDIX A: FINDINGS VERSUS HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESES	FINDING
(H1) Drivers normally associated with irregular migration, such as prior success of asylum seekers and protection issues, are also associated with regular migration (p.7).	Supported to an extent. Drivers normally associated with irregular migration, such as prior success of asylum seekers and protection issues, are also likely to increase the odds of regular migration (p.18).
(H2a) While protection issues are associated with a desire for irregular migration, most Sri Lankans, desiring, planning or even having paid a people smuggler are not likely to have protection issues (p.7).	We fail to reject this hypothesis. Most Sri Lankans, desiring, planning or even having paid a people smuggler are not likely to have protection issues (p.19). Approximately 10% of those planning irregular migration state they have experienced protection issues relative to just over 1% of those not desiring any form of migration.
(H2b) Among people with protection issues, those who plan migration have greater abilities/capabilities than those who choose no migration (p.8).	We fail to reject this hypothesis. Among people with protection issues, those who desire or plan migration have greater aspirations and capabilities than those who do not desire migration (p.19).
(H3a) People with other family or friends and acquaintances living overseas have a stronger desire to migrate regularly relative to people with immediate family living overseas (i.e. weaker ties are more important than stronger ties) (p.9).	We fail to reject this hypothesis. Weaker ties (relating to family and friends) are more important than stronger ties when desiring and planning regular migration (p.19).
(H3b) Networks, be it immediate family, other family or friends, are not significantly associated with a person planning irregular migration (p.9).	We fail to reject this hypothesis. Social networks, be it immediate family, other family or friends, are not significantly associated with a person planning irregular migration (p.19). We acknowledge this result may have been different in 2012.
(H3c) Those who have strong internal networks are less likely to desire international irregular migration (p.10).	Supported somewhat. Social groups may provide comfort to those who may otherwise seek irregular migration although it does not seem to influence those who plan irregular migration (pp.19-20).
(H3d) Those with strong internal networks are significantly <i>less</i> likely to desire international regular migration (p.10).	We fail to reject this hypothesis. There is evidence to suggest strong participation in social groups within source countries reduces the likelihood a person will plan to leave the country (p.20).
(H3e) Those with strong internal networks are significantly <i>more</i> likely to desire international regular migration (p.10).	We reject this alternative hypothesis (p.20).
(H4) That internal migration is associated with a desire and plan for international regular migration (p.10).	We fail to reject hypothesis – adding weight to the assertion that internal migration can lead to international migration (p.20).