The internal brain drain: foreign aid, hiring practices, and international migration

Wednesday 16 October 12.30–1.30pm

Speakers
Dr Nicolas Lemay-Hébert
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Location
Seminar Room 1
JG Crawford School of Public Policy, 132 Lennox Crossing, Acton, ACT 2601, ANU

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This seminar is free and open to the public.

The internal brain drain phenomenon— the poaching of local skilled workers from the public sector by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) or international organisations (IOs) in developing countries— is an area of concern for humanitarian and development organisations. Building on empirical material gathered in Haiti, this research advances a new and innovative understanding of the trend by conceptualising it as an equilibrium composed of two sets of tensions: those between the salary conditions in the public sector and the salary conditions offered to local staff working for IOs and INGOs; and the tensions inherent in the dual salary scale used by IOs and INGOs for local and international staff.

The two sets of tensions contribute in their own specific ways to international migration— as such the internal brain drain contributes to external brain drain dynamics. In this seminar, Dr Nicolas Lemay-Hébert will discuss the difficult policy choices facing development and humanitarian organisations when every set of policies addressing one side of the equilibrium is bound to impact the other.

Dr Nicolas Lemay-Hébert is a Fellow in the ANU Department of International Relations, and the Department’s Director of Research. His current research interests include state-building and intervention issues in the Asia-Pacific and beyond. He is particularly interested in local resistance to international interventions and the political economy of interventions.