7th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network

ABRN

BORDERLAND FUTURES TECHNOLOGIES, ZONES, CO-EXISTENCES

Online Pre-conference **Programme Book**

06-07.
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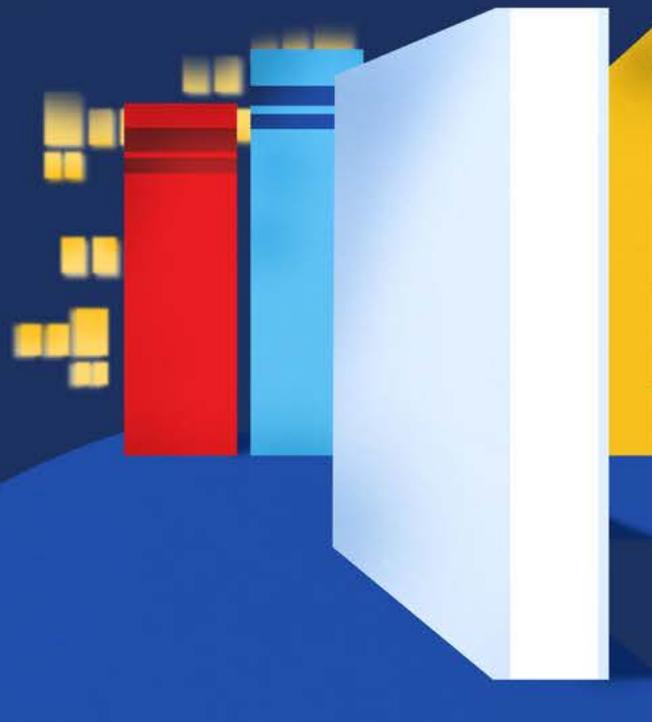
Day 1 (6th Nov, Fri)

09:30-09:45	**Opening Remarks** **Woo-Hyung Chon** (RCCZ, Chung-Ang University, South Korea)
09:45-10:00	**Welcome Speech** **Jun-Sik Son** (Director of RCCZ, Chung-Ang University, South Korea)

Session 1

	Moderator: Kyosun Koo(RCCZ, Chung-Ang University, South Korea)
10:00-12:00	**Andrew Grant** (Boston College, USA) "Bounding China: Boundary Lines as Border Aesthetics in Cartography of China" **Melody Shum** (Northwestern Univ., USA) "The Lyaudet Kidnapping Incident and the Establishment of the Police Mixte in the Sino-Vietnams Borderlands (1895-1896)" **Nadine Plachta** (Univ. of Colorado Boulder, USA) "Centralizing Peripheries: Infrastructure, Development, and New Markets between Nepal and China" **Rupak Shrestha** (Univ. of Colorado Boulder, USA) "The Border came in between Us: Extraterritoriality, Intimacy, and Dissensus at the Nepal-China Borderlands"

Session 2

	Moderator: Jihoon Park(RCCZ, Chung-Ang University, South Korea)
13:00-15:00	**Kapil Dahal** (Tribhuvan Univ., Nepal) "Cross-border Medical Travel to India: Pattern, Factors, and Experiences" **Snehashish Mitra** (National Institute of Advanced Studies, India) "Speculating the Frontier City: New Urbanization in Northeast India" **Somoshree De** (North Bengal Univ., India) "Creating a Zone within Contact Zone: Institutional Interferences in the Foot Hills of the Himalayas during Colonial Times" **Ratchada Arpornsilp** (Australian National Univ., Thailand) "Behind Resistance: How Grassroots Movements shape the Border Landscape of Special Economic Zone"

Session 3

	Moderator: Duncan McDuie-Ra(University of Newcastle, Australia)
15:30-17:00	**Anindita Chakrabarty** (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India) "The Making of the Citizens and Non-Citizens through the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam" **Shivangi Kaushik** (Univ. of Oxford, UK) "Understanding the Creation of Borderland Geographies in New Delhi" **Brett Le Saint** (Paul-Valery Univ., France) "Looking Both Ways. Social and Symbolic Aspects of the Local Administration of the Isan-Lao Borderland"

Day 2 (7th Nov, Sat)

Session 4

	Moderator: Myungho Hyun(RCCZ, Chung-Ang University, South Korea)
09:30-12:00	**Sojung Kim** (Johns Hopkins Univ., USA) "Living in the Two Koreas: The Everyday Life of North Korean Migrant Women in South Korea"
	So-Rim Lee (Columbia Univ., USA) "From K-Pop to Z-Pop: The Idol and the Politics of Visual Representation"
	Khathaleeya Liamdee (Univ. of Washington, USA) "Market, Checkpoint, and Casino: Life of In-Betweenness across the Thai-Cambodian Border"
	Juliet Lu (Cornell Univ., USA) "From Borders to Bridgeheads: Yunnan and Xinjiang as the "Qiaotou" of Global China"
	Rishav Kumar Thakur (Columbia Univ., USA) "Ethical Boundary Work in Bodoland (India) and Enlisting Others in Moral Communities, One at a Time"

Session 5

	Moderator: Keehyun Ban(Korea Military Academy, South Korea)
13:00-15:00	**Srishtee Sethi** (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India) **& Philipp Zehmisch** (Heidelberg Univ., Germany) "Contentious Borderlands? Reflections on Co-existence, Belonging, and Shared Histories at the India-Pakistan Border"
	Zainab Akhter (IDSA, India) "Ladakh as a Borderland between India and Pakistan: Fluidities and Rigidities"
	Min Kim (American Univ., USA) "The Shadows of the Sovereign: Competition, Coalition, and State Consolidation in Frontiers of India"
	Neha Meena (Jawaharlal Nehru Univ., India) "Sindh as a 'Green Place': Historic Memories of Mobility and Connections of in the Western Rajasthan Borderland"

Session 6

	Moderator: Juan Zhang(Bristol University, United Kingdom)
15:30-17:30	**Franziska Plümmer** (Univ. of Vienna, Austria) "Lost in Transition: Liminal Citizenship of Border Residents in the Sino-Myanmar Border Zone Lost in Transition"
	Zhu Tingshu (Mahidol Univ., Thailand) "The Myanmar Immigrants in China-Myanmar Borderland Cities: The Emerging Migrant-City Nexus?"
	Busarin Lertchavalitsakul (Naresuan Univ., Thailand) "Strategic Space, Outwitting, and Arbitrary Rules: State Transformation and Mobility in the Myanmar-Thailand Borderlands"
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Ⅱ. Abstract

DAY 1

Session 1

Borderlands Futures:
Technologies
Zones
Co-existences
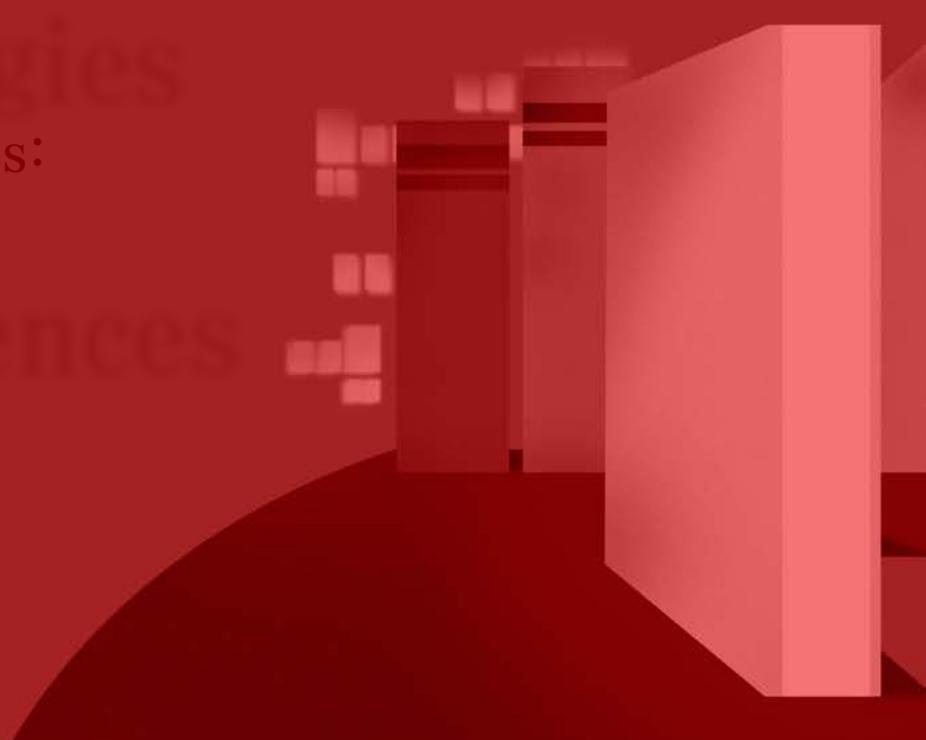
Session 1

Andrew Grant
Boston College, United States

"Bounding China: Boundary lines as border aesthetics in cartography of China"

Polychromatic contours, red outlines, dashed lines, shaded borderlands, barely visible traces: there are many ways to highlight Asia's cartographic bodies and each approach promotes a particular way of seeing the world. Furthermore, which cartographic depiction is chosen and who draws it is highly political. This paper explores the politics of aesthetics around drawing China's body. Using from contemporary and historical maps of China, this paper shows that drawing – or not drawing - China's boundary is a politically fraught process in which differently positioned political actors must carefully navigate how to express the Chinese state body. Showing the China's boundaries reinforces notions of Chinese territorial claims and ultimately the Chinese national geobody. Not showing or downplaying these boundaries speaks to China's regional hegemony, both as a civilizational force and as a dominant, even imperialistic, regional power. While China's cartographic body can be expressed in both of these ways – national and imperial – there has long existed a careful state politics concerning who is allowed to represent what body and in what context. Making an aesthetic error by representing the wrong sort of boundary in the wrong context has geopolitical significance. Additionally, challenging the dominant aesthetic order is also an opportunity to assert alternative imaginative geographies. Drawing from several cases of mapped depictions of China's borders in its northeast, western, and southeast, I will demonstrate how the politics of drawing China continues to have impacts on Asian geopolitics today. Furthermore, I argue that there are important differences beyond the distinction of boundary or no boundary, and that there is much to learn from paying attention to the aesthetic quality of borderlines, the nature of their shifts, and the techniques behind them in maps both historical and contemporary.

Melody Shum
Northwestern University, United States

"The Lyaudet Kidnapping Incident and the Establishment of the Police Mixte in the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland (1895-1896)"

In 1895, Cyrille Lyaudet, a Frenchmen working in the coal mines on Cái Bầu Island in northern Vietnam, his wife, and his little daughter were kidnapped and transported across the nearby Sino-Vietnamese border. This soon escalated into an international conflict that involved senior French and Chinese officials and the formation of a joint-rescue mission. The Lyaudets were rescued, but the incident exposed persisting problems of border governance concerning jurisdiction, banditry, economic exploitation, and local reactions to the implementation of an international border since the end of the Sino-French War in 1885. This paper argues that the Police Mixte, a Franco-Chinese joint-borderland policing institution established in 1896, was an international solution to these local problems. It was an attempt to stabilize and systematize border governance across a landscape that had historically been difficult to penetrate without local knowledge. Utilizing French and Chinese diplomatic correspondences, political reports, and memoirs as well as Vietnamese court documents, this paper uses the Lyaudet incident to explore the political and socio-economic changes that were brought to the borderlands as a result of the French colonization of northern Vietnam. At the same time, it reveals the historically violent nature of the borderlands and the savviness of its inhabitants in response to the different "tools" of empire—the laws, methodologies, and technologies employed to "pacify" them. Seeing the region on both sides of the border as a single borderland, my paper demonstrates the contingencies of Chinese, Vietnamese, and French colonial state-building and governmentality at different scales and modalities.

Nadine Plachta
University of Colorado Boulder, United States

"Centralizing Peripheries: Infrastructure, Development, and New Markets between Nepal and China"

This presentation is concerned with the making of development zones in Nepal's northern borderlands. Focusing on the shifting economic geographies of traders and businessmen in Tsum, I demonstrate that the current revival of border markets and informal economies is inseparable from the combined processes of state restructuring and infrastructural reconstruction that ensued after the 2015 earthquakes devastated large parts of the country. I seek to develop the category of "informal development zones" to attend to the ways in which state power is enacted to control and discipline the margins in the post-disaster moment, while also foregrounding how rural inhabitants engage with, resist, or support the formalities of state laws and regulations. Looking closely at local narratives of social differences and insecurities, I show how people navigate the complex space between competition and choice, opportunities and constraints to carve out investment strategies and entrepreneurial opportunities. Informal development zones are transforming life in borderlands and offer an urgent reminder of the uncertain and uneven outcomes of market economies following moments of rupture.

Rupak Shrestha
University of Colorado Boulder, United States

"The border came in between us: extraterritoriality, intimacy, and dissensus at the Nepal - China borderlands"

This paper will explore interactions among extra-territorial sovereignty, state-making practices, and politics of indigeneity. I will analyze how Chinese extra-territorial sovereignty produces new political effects, and how social and political transformations at the Nepal-China borderlands condition the ways in which Tibetan refugees attach meaning to and claim geographic places. Drawing on feminist political geographies (Fluri 2015; Hyndman 2004; Smith 2012), I examine how everyday interactions and events reveal the intricacies of macro-scale Nepal-China geopolitics. I discuss the role of sovereignty in transforming the cultural politics of 'being' at the borderlands. Tibetan refugees in the region engage in strategic form of intimacy with Walung indigeneity in order to negotiate their place and political being within Nepali state-making practices. In doing so, the Tibetans in this region do not subscribe to the discourse of refusal (i.e., refusing citizenship or integration in a new location/host country) that has been identified as part of the broader political lives of Tibetan refugees (McGranahan 2016). Tibetan refugee and Walung peoples' interactions are juxtaposed and conditioned by various manifestations of situational affect - for example through familiarity and at others through suspicion and disruption. Such actions hold political possibilities for Tibetan refugees in Phale. Then again, in the backdrop of increasing Chinese presence, everyday life is met with politics of eavesdropping, rumor, and the hyper-visibility of extradition.

Session 2

Borderlands Futures:
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Session 2

Kapil Dahal
Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

"Cross-border Medical Travel to India: Pattern, Factors, and Experiences"

There are extensive and increasing economic, social and cultural relations across the border between Nepal and India. Regulation of this border with security and administrative measures has not stopped large numbers of people to cross it to meet their everyday needs and other necessities. Though it is open, this national border inherently separates people politically and materially and also joins them in social, cultural and economic frontiers. Cross-border medical travel exists amidst these ties among the people from both sides of the border.

The phenomena of cross-border medical travel have a long history, which basically overlaps with the development of biomedicine in this zone. This paper deals only will the medical travel of aspirant health seekers and patients from Nepalese side. It portrays the experience of these people, mainly the women from southern part of Nepal, which shares its boundary with India. As a common practice, embedded with local cultural realm, the visiting woman has to travel across the border with a guardian, often the male member of the family. In analyizing this phenomena, this paper examines some fundamental anthropological questions such as what does border crossing symbolizes to these women. Can this phenomenon be taken as an empowerment of women or the way they have been under surveillance and patronage of the accompanying guardian signifies the extension of gendered boundary? This paper also scrutinizes the factors that make these women go for health care seeking in the other side of the border. On top of being lured by availability of advanced medical technologies, it also interprets why do these health facilities effort hard in making their health facilities appealing for the patients from Nepal, mainly through impression management and typical projection of available specialized services.

Keywords: Cross Border Medical Travel, Ethnography, Gender, Health Seeking Practices, Nepal

Snehashish Mitra
National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, India

"Speculating the Frontier City: New Urbanization in Northeast India"

The town of Champhai in Mizoram state (India) is located within 30 km of the Indo-Myanmar border which has expanded in recent years as the cross-border trade flow has increased. The paper interrogates the urban formation in Champhai which has been shaped by numerous legal/illegal flows across border. There has been a surge in the infrastructural activities in Champhai and Zokawthar (border settlement), on the basis of which the paper evaluates the 'frontier' status of the borderland and the prospect of Mizoram in India's 'Act East Policy'. Champhai district shares border with Chin province of Myanmar.

Fieldwork was conducted in Champhai where in-depth and semi-structured interviews were carried out with respondents ranging from government officials, school teachers and businesswo(men). Data collected from government agencies, indicating tax collection and smuggling activities over time gives an idea about the changing/unchanging nature of border trade and attempts by Mizoram state government to increase revenue generation. Through the findings the paper attempts to convey the ongoing transition in the border areas of Northeast India and the subsequent urbanisation with a set of stakeholders ranging from the local traders, migrant labours across the border, smugglers and state officials.

The Chins and Mizos, are ethnically encompassed under the 'Zo' identity . National borders however have created a perception of different against the Chins from Chin province of Myanmar in Mizoram. Drawing on earlier instances of violence against the Chins in Mizoram, the paper raises question on how the question of citizenship will be reconciled in Champhai as the trade flow accentuates over time. The question of citizenship in India is going through a tectonic shift through National Register of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Bill. This complicates new regime of politics over citizenship, influencing the interface of commerce, communities and mobilities in the Indian borderland.

Somoshree De
Centre For Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University, India

"Creating a zone within contact zone: Institutional interferences in the foot hills of the Himalayas during colonial times"

The attempts to separate the hills from the plains or for that matter the highlands from the lowlands or valleys politically, administratively, culturally or otherwise are quite common to colonial governance no matter howsoever strategic, deliberate or arbitrary the very act of separation might have been. Following Scott this paper situates the Himalayas beyond the reaches of the State. The foot hills of the Himalayas on the one hand, due to its geographical location between the center and periphery of the state naturally assumes the character of a 'contact zone'. On the other hand, frontiers in the contact zone represent the state mechanisms functioning of which however, went on unlike the mainland colonial administration. British Empire and its mechanisms of colonialism, as an institution, attempted to control its 'turbulent' and 'resource' frontiers in the Eastern Himalayas. The targeted region and its people, usually marked as 'remote' and 'savage', were brought under defined territory of control. This paper would discuss how the very act of frontier making was not always a case of top down administrative decision. Colonial state apparatus had to respond to and sometimes even forced to recognize the complexity of the region, it's dynamic of power relations, questions of resource pool and control – issues that sanctify the region's qualification as a contact zone. Individual or collective experiences at the frontiers further affected the ideologies of governing the region under colonial control. The paper attempts to explore these processes which in fact consolidated the idea of foot hills- in the Bhutan/Tibet Dooars – as a zone out of sub-Himalayan contact zone.

Keywords: Frontier, Turbulent and Resource Frontiers, Contact Zone, Waste Land

Ratchada Arpornsilp
Australian National University, Thailand

"Behind resistance: How grassroots movements shape the border landscape of Special Economic Zone"

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have rapidly expanded as a spatial model and engine to promote industrial economic growth and development across the world. In the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), the promotion of SEZs is based upon the logic of regional integration and connectivity. Drawing from the collaborative frameworks of the ASEAN Economic Community, the GMS Economic Cooperation Program and the Ayeyarwady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy, the border SEZs are extensively driven by the Asian Development Bank and "One Belt, One Road" Initiative. In 2014 the Thai military government directed the establishment of SEZs in 10 target border provinces. Chiang Khong (in translation as a town of Mekong), a Thai-Lao frontier territory of Mekong River located in Chiang Rai province of northern Thailand, is one of them. Through the authoritative imposition, parts of the Ing wetland forest in Chiang Khong were demarcated for SEZ development. Such an ambiguous process of public or communal land conversion is conducted without an informed engagement of primary stakeholders at the local level. Yet, these borderland communities have previously accessed and managed the designated lands and resources to sustain their livelihoods. The use of special economic zoning thence becomes the state's governing technology to territorialize the borderland and integrate the borderlands in the global market economy. Applying a combined analytical lens of political ecology and social movements, this paper inquires how land and natural resource contestations around SEZs stimulate collective actions. Employing an ethnographic case-study approach in Chiang Khong, the paper specifically explores the strategic influence that grassroots movements exert over the development vision of border SEZs and how these forces result in re-contouring the shape and relationship of various actors in the border landscapes. This paper will contribute to the deliberation of border SEZ public policy in Thailand and its impacts on the borderland communities with implications to wider GMS.

Session 3

Borderlands Futures:
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Session 3

Anindita Chakrabarty
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

"The Making of the Citizens and Non-Citizens through the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam"

The paper aims to understand how technologies of controlling population are devised by the contemporary state, in the context of the National Register of Citizens (NRC henceforth) in the North East Indian State of Assam. In so doing, the paper interrogates how borders come to be lived through the process of identifying the genuine citizens or the 'indigenous' and the 'doubtful', playing a determinant role in the logic of state control. The NRC aims to differentiate citizens from non-citizens, and entails a bio-political initiative on the part of the state to control the inhabitants. The paper unravels how this bureaucratic initiative and its implementation are experienced in everyday life, entailing conflicting notions of belonging, citizenship, or residency in the two valleys of the state of Assam, namely the Barak and the Brahmaputra, and create newer created newer ethnocentric feelings. This forms the foundation for newfangled drives for displacement and dispossession in Assam.

The contemporary exercise of finalising the 'authentic citizens' through the NRC documents lineage of forefathers acquired through what is termed as the 'legacy data', and proof of residence of persons in India prior to the cut-off date of the midnight of 24th March, 1971. The borderland state of Assam however is characterised by its shared history, cultural familiarity, and socio-linguistic commonness with erstwhile East Bengal and present Bangladesh. The technological control on the populace thus represents the state's imposition of objectifying attempts to define culturally specific identity according to a statist discourse. Therefore it is necessary to understand how technologies come to define the very notion of citizenship and the relatedness between borders and the categorisation of citizens and their delineations. The paper thus addresses the evolution of the endogenous forms of technology in South Asia, with a specific focus on contemporary India.

Shivangi Kaushik
Oxford Department of International Development,
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

"Understanding the Creation of Borderland Geographies in New Delhi"

This paper is a part of my doctoral research project which seeks to understand how the racialized subjectivities of female migrant students from the Northeastern region of India (NER) construct different narratives of belongingness in the neighborhoods of New Delhi. Through their everyday practices of negotiating the city, I try to understand how borderland geographies unfold in the center of India i.e. New Delhi. It seeks to understand the experiences of female students from NER who migrate to New Delhi (Delhi University) for pursuing their undergraduate degrees and who by the virtue of their physical features resemble the people of the neighboring countries of Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and China. By conducting an in-depth ethnography, the paper seeks to understand how they 'world' (Ong and Roy 2011) the neighborhoods of New Delhi through the creation of private hostels which cater to the female students from the region and where specific cuisines from NER are served. The paper then looks at the role of the churches (different branches like Catholic or Baptist churches) in Delhi in the lives of the migrant women from NER which address concerns of racial discrimination within Delhi and how it also mediates their access to hostels and colleges in the city. Do these institutions of accommodation and faith become 'escape zones' or do they become spaces of alienation in New Delhi?

I am currently staying in one of the hostels which accommodates only female students from NER in a locality called Old Gupta Colony (near Delhi University) and from my ethnography, a story is emerging where it is obvious that not only they are stereotyped and excluded for their distinctive physical features but also for their behavioral patterns (they are assumed to be docile and obedient as well as licentious women), food choices and as well as their inability to converse fluently in Hindi are also ridiculed. This, then raises pertinent questions of belongingness where one can ask: if an individual requires to look 'Indian' enough, need to speak Hindi fluently or follow specific social practices to belong to New Delhi (McDuie Ra 2013)? How do race and gender then intersect for these women to constitute them as racialized

subjectivities within the different neighborhoods of New Delhi? I also seek to understand the quality of access to institutions of higher education like that of colleges that these young women may have by understanding the nature of their classroom interactions with their teachers and students who are from different parts of India. How do instances of racial discrimination influence the way they consume the spaces of colleges in New Delhi, vis-à-vis migrant students from other parts of the country?

Articulations of race and racialization in India have barely received ample academic attention, as often 'mainstream' India (the other geographic regions of the country which are not a part of Northeast India) has denied that the worst forms of racial discrimination have always been reserved for the people from NER and also experiences of racialization of Indians abroad often overshadow the experiences of racialization faced by the migrant students from the region within Indian cities. Based on my fieldwork study, I argue that race in the context of New Delhi is uniquely deployed: not only to create the racialized Other but also, to constitute boundaries between different communities and to make sure that people who possess different physical features and have different socio-cultural features do not belong to New Delhi. Even though some scholars have argued that race as a marker of physical differences is a futile concept, however, the importance of the epicanthic fold of the eye and the distinctiveness of the 'Northeastern face' (Wouters & Subba 2013) cannot be undermined in this particular study. The distinctiveness of this ethnographic paper it is hoped, will then lie in the way it is able to juxtapose the perspectives of these female migrants who move from a peripheral region to a city where they may be excluded from belonging and along with that of a person like myself who is also in the process of understanding where she herself belongs.

Brett Le Saint
Paul-Valery University, Montpellier 3 (France), Centre for Studies and Comparative Research in Ethnology., France

"Looking both Ways. Social and Symbolic Aspects of the Local Administration of the Isan-Lao Borderland"

As the Thai-Lao border separates the northeastern part of Thailand (Isan) and the Vientiane Plain, it has been described to have divided the ethnic Lao population into two different national entities. Following these assumptions, academic literature and Thai mass media considerate most of the northeastern region population to be of Lao origin which have led the Thai conservative voices to look at this population as suspect of disloyalty regarding the Thai state. Based on a 15 months ethnography of two villages situated on each side of the Mekong River, my proposal aims to question those assumptions and will focus on the licit but illegal aspects of local border administration which is partly based on the mutual acquaintance of border actors. Inherited from a long history of transborder mobility across the river, mutual understanding, kinship ties and working relationships are still structuring the crossings from one bank to another. Nevertheless, this mutual acceptance inherited from the past encompasses much more than a simple tolerance between metaphorical (and sometimes real) kin. First, this mutual acceptance isn't so mutual as Thai people crosses the border much less frequently. Second, these asymmetric uses of the border has to be analyzed regarding the global, regional and local socio-political transformations and the way it has structured a real economy of desire at the border since the end of the Vietnam War. Through the analysis of these differentiated trends toward the uses and the administration of the border, my proposal attempts to show that the ambivalence of the relationship between Isan and Lao people reflects the intermediate position of the former in a regional geopolitical order and how life at the border can partially free itself from state regulation policies while being largely shaped by a diffuse nationalist rhetoric and the symbolic order it bears.

Ⅲ. Abstract

DAY 2
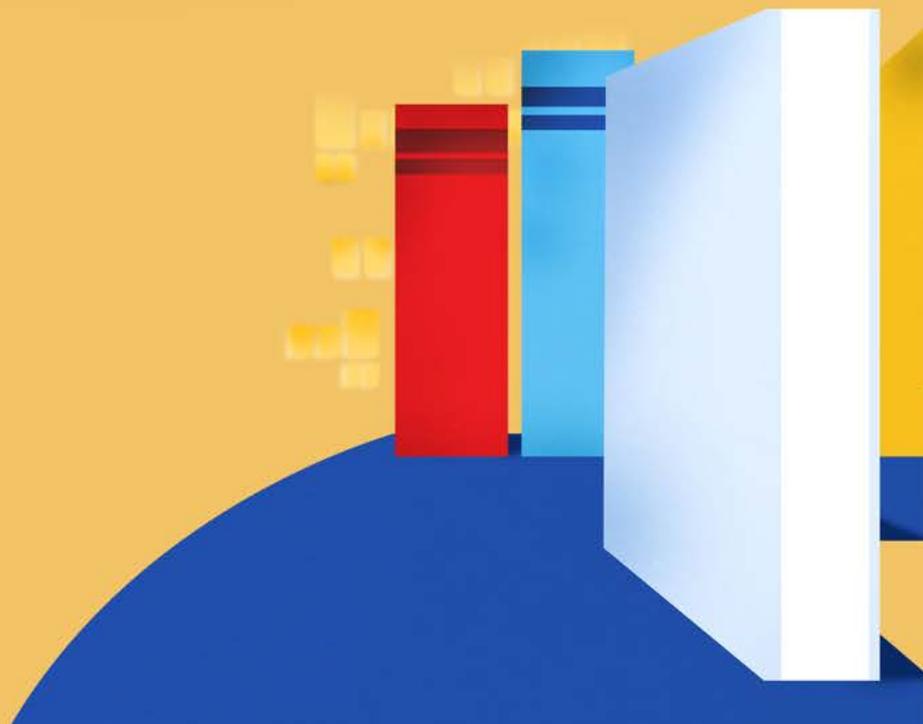
Session 4

Borderlands Futures:
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Session 4

Sojung Kim
Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University, United States

"Living in the Two Koreas: The Everyday Life of North Korean Migrant Women in South Korea"

"South Koreans do not know how the bundan [the North-South partition of Korea] is such a fearful thing. How sorrowful it is," a North Korean migrant in her mid-forties told me when I met her four years ago in South Korea. Her voice, almost heard like a mere murmur, immediately captured my attention. The bundan, which is often construed as an effect of both Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953), seeped into her life. "Perhaps such a mournful fate I was bound to, never able to see my family and my hometown [in North Korea] again, it deeply aches my heart," she said. Based on eight months of ethnographic work with sixteen North Korean migrant women in the southern region of South Korea between 2015 and 2019, this paper explores how coexistence of the two Koreas comes to be enmeshed in North Korean migrant women's engagement with kinship relations, by attending to the women's voices often carried with mixed senses of loss, resentment, and sacrifice. Taking the ethical as a dimension of everyday life (Das 2015; Lambek 2010), rather than as a bounded domain or moral experience captured in moments of ruptures (Zigon and Throop 2014), I will probe the ways in which living in two Koreas is shaped within North Korean migrant women's engagement with kinship and intimate relations in the context of the bundan armistice regime. Attending to the women's affective responses to the circumstances they find themselves in, my project will delve into how the ethical emerges, and how ethics and politics comes to be aligned and – misaligned – in everyday life.

So-Rim Lee
Columbia University, United States

"From K-pop to Z-pop: The Idol and the Politics of Visual Representation"

The Z-Stars are two "K-pop inspired" multinational idol groups (Z-Girls and Z-Boys) that made their official South Korean debut in February 2019. The members of Z-Stars won the first season of Z-POP Dream, a 2018 pan-Asian audition competition televised and held across seven countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Japan, and Taiwan. While the South Korean media primarily took note of them as curiosity K-pop acts "with no Korean members," more welcome awaited the Z-Stars in Indonesia, Vietnam, India, and the Philippines in subsequent showcases in 2019.

I want to use Z-Stars as a leverage to explore the current state of the K-pop industry and its rhetoric of transnationalism. If the nascent era of hallyu ("Korean Wave") of early 2000s beckoned scholars and the general public alike to ask the ontological question, "what is K-pop?" by 2020, K-pop's transnational impact and niche within the global pop music industry has shifted this question into "what counts as K-pop?" or "who gets to do K-pop?" To be clear, the K-pop industry has always been situated in a curiously ambivalent space; on one hand, it is a globalizing enterprise run by the logic of global capitalism; yet on the other hand, these globalizing processes of K-pop enable transnational interactions and hybrid popular cultures generated on the local and individual levels of interactions and frictions. How can we, then, navigate the slippery and ill-defined labels of K-pop and Z-pop, not from the top-down perspective, but from that of the fans?

Khathaleeya Liamdee
University of Washington, United States

"Market, Checkpoint, and Casino: Life of In-Betweenness Across the Thai-Cambodian Border"

This study illustrates how the post-war era of Chong Chom – O'Smach checkpoint (Thai-Cambodian Border) became dependent on two border casinos which built right after the checkpoint opened on the Cambodian side and Chong Chom border market on the Thai side. It delves into the lived experiences across the border checkpoint to portray how effective yet ambivalent Thai immigration policy are. It tells from ethnographic accounts of daily encounters between Thai state authorities, Thai border dwellers, and Cambodian migrants at Chong Chom checkpoint. Moreover, the promotion of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 has indeed boosted up and created the newly visible cross-border mobilities which demonstrating through diverse economic opportunities/activities by nationality. For instance, choices of vehicles would determine which can use for traveling across the border, or one must stop at the checkpoint. It narrates the patterned circulations around and across the border that highlights the forms of economic disparities that are not only about inequality between the two countries. By observing multiple ways of border crossing, it exposes other aspects of disparity, negligence, and illicitness by state authorities, which resulted from the past war. Particularly in Thailand, as a host country, it is not only Cambodian migrants that have been suppressed and controlled by Thai immigration laws. Thai border dwellers who live in the border province also share their struggles to make a living but in different patterns of mobility in relation to the existence of border casinos and the lives of the Cambodian merchants in the border market as well.

Juliet Lu
Cornell University, United States

"From Borders to Bridgeheads: Yunnan and Xinjiang as the "Qiaotou" of Global China"

Western China has always been a strategic region to the formation of the Chinese nation. Historically, its remote wildness defined the civility of Eastern China. After 1949, the integration of the region's land and ethnic minority dominated populations was portrayed as proof of the CCP's meddle and fed narratives of the Chinese paternalistic state. With the Go West initiative in the 2000s, the region became a frontier for resource extraction feeding Eastern China's rapid development. Now, under the Belt and Road Initiative, the same region is shifting from remote frontier to gateway of connectivity. Yunnan and Xinjiang provinces have been named "Qiaotou" or bridgeheads and receive increasing central government funding and administrative responsibility for fostering trade and investment of Chinese capital in the regions they neighbor. This paper compares their histories as frontiers through the lens of the State Farms system in Yunnan and the Bingtuan system in Xinjiang – originally borderland military units, turned after 1949 into state agribusiness institutions, which served comparable roles in claiming 'wasteland' for the Chinese state and drawing Han migration into minority dominated border regions. I then examine the recent designation of both provinces as bridgeheads by reviewing the events, institutions, and programs launched in each province as a result, and connecting these to the establishment of two special economic zones on the borders of each province: Khorgos in Kazakhstan, and Boten in Laos. I argue that Yunnan and Xinjiang are two very different bridgeheads, with Yunnan provincial leadership using an increasing openness to gain independence from Beijing, and Xinjiang, in contrast, representing the site of extreme and increasing central state control. The comparison shows that province-specific histories of state formation within China's borders, particularly through technologies, logics, and institutions of resource governance, paved the way for China's current day global integration.

Rishav Kumar Thakur
Columbia University, United States

"Ethical boundary work in Bodoland (India) and enlisting others in moral communities, one at a time"

Taking the cue from Veena Das in "Language and Body," who argues that "[a]t the very least (…) scenes of violence constitute the (perhaps metaphysical) threshold within which the scenes of ordinary life are lived," I attempt to highlight the articulation and propagation of a threshold which distributes certain forms of violence as acceptable (or not) in the expression of conflict between Bodo and Bengali-speaking Muslim communities in Chirang district of Bodoland, Assam. I do so by focusing on a conversation with one interlocutor, Afreen (name changed), who discovered the body of a Bengali-speaking Muslim woman raped and murdered allegedly by Bodo militants in October 2014. Detailing the elaborate defilement of the discovered body, Afreen attempted to convey a sense of excess – along with incredulity and incredibility—at this violence. Yet, such an incident was intelligible as part of a sequence of events, including riots and the recent rape and murder of a Bodo schoolgirl by Bengali-speaking Muslim men in the vicinity. Regardless of intelligibility, Afreen held onto, and labored to convey, a disbelief at the excessiveness of violence in the scene that arrested her. By preserving this sense, I understand Afreen as excising the possibility of sliding from intelligibility to normalization of sexual violence as a mode to inflict harm on the ethnic other, which is the body where hatred deposits. Further, I argue that in Afreen's attempt at conveying this sense of excessiveness to the listener, we see how an actor calls onto others in sharing her sense of a threshold. By providing a window to view the minutiae of ethical work in face-to-face interactions which instantiates and works upon moral communities, this paper raises questions on negotiating change, ethical agency, understanding as distinct from intelligibility, and finally, striving and aspirations in everyday life.

Session 5

Borderlands Futures:
Technologies
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Co-existences

Session 5

Srishtee Sethi & Philipp Zehmisch
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

"Contentious Borderlands? Reflections on Co-existence, Belonging, and Shared Histories at the India-Pakistan Border"

The partition of British India in 1947 has caused far-reaching geographic, demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural transitions in postcolonial South Asia that continue to haunt the present. Dividing bureaucracies, armies, territories, communities, and environments between the emerging Islamic state of Pakistan and the secularly constituted India also implied the introduction and institutionalization of a distinct mode of geography, landscape, and ideational force – 'The Borderlands of Northern South Asia' (Gellner,2013).The semantic and material partition of these borderlands affected communities on both sides of the territorial boundary in multiple ways: a politically motivated genocide during partition –committed by Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims against each other – caused the biggest mass migration of the 20 th century; further, several wars, omnipresent propaganda, and politics of nationalist and communalist co-optation by both states impacted efficaciously the process of "bordering" of Selves against a factual or imagined "enemy Other".

As a result, previously corresponding, often hybridized socio-cultural and religious traditions as well as overlapping ethnic and linguistic features –based on shared histories of co-existence, co-habitation, and collaboration – gradually transformed into means of ideological contestation and conflict; negotiations of citizenship and belonging in the borderlands came to be heavily influenced by hegemonic ethics of nationalism and statehood as well as religious conformism and indoctrination demanding integration and assimilation within the respective, dominant definition of the "mainstream" in each borderland.

Against these odds, our fieldwork on both sides of the Indo-Pak border (Sethi in India, Zehmisch on both sides) found subdued, silenced, and subaltern voices and practices that may be viewed as everyday counter-hegemonic politics.Our interlocutors from different borderland communities cling to earlier notions of peaceful co-existence with the Other, fluid forms of hybrid religious practice, and, by and large, reject chauvinist ultranationalist politics and rhetorics of hate and Othering.

Instead, they continue to act according to an ethics of collaboration and solidarity across semantic and physical borders that includes a sense longing for lost and undivided homelands and landscapes, places of worship and ritual, and the cultivation of relationships on the other side of the border.

Investigating such dialectics between hegemony and counter-hegemony, our presentation draws a comparative, ethnographic perspective including two adjacent, culturally similar regions of the western borderlands: Cholistan in South Punjab, Pakistan and Rajasthan in India. Further, we aim to enable an understanding of borders as social and semantic spaces generating people's histories and socio-cultural lifeworlds. Seeking to provide a localised case study and simultaneously contribute to the worldwide ethnography of borderlands, we aim to open up a productive dialogue that includes otherwise silenced voices narrating an alternative, more peaceful (hi)story of South Asian borderlands than the conflict-laden imagery of media representations.

Zainab Akhter
Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis (IDSA), India

"Ladakh as a borderland between India and Pakistan: Fluidities and Rigidities"

In the modern geopolitical arrangement, borders represent a clear and distinct divide that literally mark boundaries and separate communities (in most cases of the same ethnicity). In an attempt to mark a territorial distinction, the state also inevitably create a borderland wherein people from both sides of the border deal with everyday accommodations, and in case of contested and impermeable borders negotiate with the harsh realities.

In South Asia, the majority of the borderlands are porous or semi-permeable for movement of goods and people. And therefore much of the border studies literature in the region have mainly focused on the transborder people. Additionally in case of India-Pakistan, the border studies are limited to militarization and security and often remain focused on the Kashmir Conflict. Despite the conflict, the border between India and Pakistan in Kashmir is open for limited trade and people-to-people movement (Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route). However the border between India and Pakistan in Ladakh, regardless its peaceful state remain rigid and completely impermeable. These cross border dwellers, the baltis in Ladakh (India) and Baltistan (Pakistan) form a unique set of borderland, co-existing in peace since 1948 when a permanent Line of Control (LoC) was officially demarcated between India and Pakistan. Notwithstanding the rigidities of the border, there is a sense of longing and belonging for the other side. It's the collective historical memory of the place as one entity before partition and a sense of closeness that converge on both sides of the border which keeps them connected and in a state of peace and tranquility.

This study is an attempt to bring the Balti account from the border regions of Ladakh and Baltistan into the mainstream narrative of the India-Pakistan discourse. It also makes an attempt to see if the peaceful co-existence of the Baltis based on the collective memory and a strong longing for the other can makes an attempt to see if the peaceful co-existence of the Baltis based on the collective memory and a strong longing for the other can be used as a starting point to resolve the disputes between India and Pakistan, especially in the Himalayan region? And additionally, as a

result, increase the chances of fluidity across the border, making a case for the opening up the cross border traditional Turtuk-Kaphlu and Kargil-Skardu routes for trade and people-to-people movement, making it a transborder borderland.

Min Kim
American University, United States

"The Shadows of the Sovereign: Competition, Coalition, and State Consolidation in Frontiers of India"

This paper examines the bottom-up process of post-independence state consolidation in the peripheries of post-colonial India. It argues that the extension of state control in border regions (or lack thereof) is a deeply endogenous process that is sensitive to the local political dynamics and the subsequent center-periphery coalition building. I illustrate this argument by comparing the experiences of two of India's border hill districts -- Nagaland and Mizoram -- as they transitioned into more autonomous territorial units within the Indian union. These two peripheral regions share similar structural conditions and disintegrated violently after independence, but were subsequently reconstituted differently. Each case differs in its political transformation partly due to the nature of local politics and how political and violent entrepreneurs in the periphery are linked with the state center at various points in time. Some local actors gained access to government resources through grants of administrative, political, and fiscal autonomy. Local actors who allied with the state center leveraged their government connections to ensure local dominance and hegemony over their rivals. At the same time, the state center utilized local proxies for mobilizing electoral support and stability in contested frontiers. Tracing the changing politics in the peripheries and resulting center-periphery coalitions provide a mechanism for understanding how states govern their territories. The divergent experiences of order-making in India's peripheries provide a rare opportunity to examine "the state" from below, emphasizing the agency of local actors in shaping the contour of the state formation process.

Neha Meena
Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

"Sindh as a 'green place': Historic memories of Mobility and Connections of in the western Rajasthan borderland"

Historically, Thar desert has been a homeland of various mobile communities, such as pastoralists. With the Partition of Indian subcontinent these nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral communities, like Raikas, ended up residing and separated on the two sides of the India-Pakistan international border. Thereafter, the procedures of construction of restrictive border and nation-building have created situations of separation and loss of connections (in terms of social, cultural and economic) for pastoralists on both sides of the border. Despite that, even after decades of separation from those in Pakistan, people on the Indian side remember their connections with them, who are now politically denoted as 'other' and 'stranger', through emotions of loss, separation, and nostalgia. This paper interrogates the perception, imagination, and memories of the border through oral narratives of Raika pastoralists in the western Rajasthan. The idea is to trace the historical memories of mobility, relationships and pastoral way of life of Thar region to the present day 'sensitive' border areas of Rajasthan. I intend to explore, in what ways in the present the Raika pastoralists perceive their past relationships with those who have become 'other', i.e., pastoralists on the Pakistani side of the India-Pakistan border? The broader aim is to understand affects of the border on historical relationships of Raikas with pastoralists of Sindh in the situations where the Indian state has largely ignored their mobility, connections, and pastoral lifestyle. Based on the archival history (deriving from ethnographic documents of British colonial agents to Rajputana princely state and census surveys of India) of the Thar frontier and ethnographic work of Raikas in the border areas of Bikaner (Rajasthan), this paper examines consequences of construction of the border and subsequent practices of the state on the mobility, identity and traditional (social, cultural, and economic) practices of pastoralists. The paper argues that construction of the border and bordering practices of the state in the regions of Thar has created the situations of identity transformation for Raika pastoralists. Resultantly, this change in livelihood strategies and pastoral way of life has lead to the circumstances of an identity crisis for pastoralists in the border areas.

Session 6

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Session 6

Franziska Plümmer
University of Vienna, Austria

"Lost in Transition: Liminal Citizenship of Border Residents in the Sino-Myanmar Border Zone Lost in transition"

The existing literature on border residents largely analyses how territorial articulation of the nation state coincides with the de facto realities of local residents, or in other words, how the authority of states is subverted, ignored or challenged at the border. This paper takes an alternative view arguing that the concept of liminal citizenship explains how the notion of sovereignty is not challenged but becomes in fact invigorated at the border. Taking the Sino-Myanmar border as a case study, this article explores local practices of citizenship in the border area, asking how the category of border residents is constructed within the larger Chinese concept of citizenship. To do so, this article investigates the rationalities informing the inherently graduated citizenship regime and the legal and social implications of border residents. The article finds that in Chinese border prefectures, local authorities apply spatial strategies to selectively integrate Myanmar workers into the local economy producing a form of liminal citizenship. This strategy builds on local authorities establishing exceptional immigration rules to allow limited access for this specific group of foreigners. As part of this local legalization, the authorities issue border passes that allow their holders unlimited border crossing and qualifies them to obtain working permits. This way, the border zone has become a distinct administrative zone that is subject to exceptional regulation – a border dispositif.

Zhu Tingshu
The Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Thailand

"The Myanmar Inmigrants in China-Myanmar Borderland Cities: The Emerging Migrant-City Nexus?"

The borderland between China and Myanmar are undergoing massive transformation. Especially since the early 2010s, both old and new political, economic and social dynamics registered on a variety of spatial scales (Brenner, 2004) are reshaping the transnational structures the borderland accommodates. China's Belt and Road Initiative, its new immigration and border control regime, the nation-wide industrial relocation, and the developmental aspirations of the borderland region, namely Yunnan Province and its frontier cities, all contribute to the ascending momentum in the reconstruction of transnational mobility and connectivity in the borderland. On the other side of the territorial boundary, the Aung San Suu Kyi government's reorientation towards China, Myanmar's national peace progress and the country's effort to bolster the economy in its Northern borderland induce not only new transnational economic opportunities but also nascent political and social trajectories that traverse the border.

The borderland cities in China along the border are home to around 100,000 Myanmar migrants. The preponderance of them are locally settled for many years, leading to the formulation of strong local attachment and salient local emplacement. They contribute to various local economic sectors by connecting the resources and markets across the border, and enrich the cultural diversity of the multi-ethnic cities. However, the aforementioned occurrences are changing the the borderland political, economic and social landscape which these migrants are familiar with. This paper therefore investigates the difficulties faced by the Myanmar migrants in three borderland cities and the coping strategies they employ at present. Furthermore, it intends to see whether the chronological dialectics between the Myanmar migrants and local development generate the migrants-city nexus (Schiller & Çağlar, 2015), in which the transnational immigrants act as the agents of local development.

Busarin Lertchavalitsakul
Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University, Thailand

"Strategic Space, Outwitting, and Arbitrary Rules: State Transformation and Mobility in the Myanmar-Thailand Borderlands"

This paper aims to unravel the existing power of four polities—the Myanmar Army, the Thai state, the Maha Ja family, and the Shan ethnic group following periods of the surrender of the world's wanted drug warlord Khun Sa to the Myanmar regime in the mid-1990s. These political forces have operated in forms of local state agencies, border elites, and an armed rebel despite its leader agreeing on a ceasefire. Framing through the creation of 'strategic space', I look at how these powers employed two main tactics— 'outwitting' and 'arbitrary rules' to extract resources and to control populations over their claimed territories. The perpetuation of their dominance occasionally has led to interruptions and suspensions of people and trade flows across the national borders. Simultaneously complying with and manipulating the arbitrary rules proactively and reactively, people have yet navigated their passages through political and national boundaries. This resulted in an increase of people's mobility and commodity flows against structural forces. The political powers' attempts to outwit one another, is also reflected in the relationships between people's maneuverability and their shifting dynamic social statuses. Successful cross-border mobility enunciates people's practices that have derived from the historical development of state transformation over time. In addition, this paper shows that the contestation of such polities has thus far overshadowed their betterment of local livelihoods, isolating people from Myanmar's rapid uneven economic development and Thailand's lagged bureaucratic structure.

Akkanut Wantanasombut
Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

"Sending money back home: Banking digitalisation, Myanmar migrant workers, and Thailand-Myanmar border trade"

The ministry of labour of Thailand reports that Thailand has accepted approximately 3 million legal migrant workers from her neighbouring countries, two-thirds of these migrant workers came from Myanmar. For decades, this huge number of migrant workers from Myanmar, directly and indirectly, benefits Thailand-Myanmar border trade in many aspects, including when Burmese workers sending money they earned in Thailand back to their family at home.

In the past, accessing to banking and financial services in rural Myanmar where most of the migrant workers came from were limited. In the areas where no formal channel available, the workers have no other choice to send money back home. The only informal system allows them to do so. Through this channel, not only workers can send money home with a cheaper fee, Burmese and Thai traders are able to offset their trade. As there are many Burmese workers in Thailand, the money workers sent home become a significant part of the Thai-Myanmar border trade. However, the digitalization of banking and financial system has offered the migrant workers choices of remittance.

This paper studies how the development of economic activities, financial, and banking that evolved and revolved around the border trade. Field research was conducted by using a semi-structured interview of totally 32 Myanmar migrant workers whose lives and work in Samutsakorn province and 9 Thai border traders at Mae Sot. Base on the interviews, most of the migrant workers have experience of using mobile banking and financial application, they familiar with technology and its capacity as the alternative method of sending money back home. However, they still prefer to use underground banking because it benefits them the most. Same as traders that confirmed there still no threat for the border trade payment offsetting.

The digitalization of banking is strengthening informal banking as it makes a faster and better money distribution.

7th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network

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