

Global garments, migrant labour and bordering the Greater Mekong Sub-region

Dennis Arnold
PhD Candidate
Department of Geography
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC, USA 27599-3220
arnoldd@email.unc.edu

Abstract

This paper focuses on the recent emergence of regional production networks and border industrial zones, the labour migrations they are generating, and their consequences for Burmese migrant workers in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. In this region the textile and garment industry is employing increasing numbers of workers in border areas on flexible and highly informal work 'contracts'. I focus on three scales of analysis through a case study from the Thailand-Burma border to understand these emergent labour formations and the gendered patterns of employment that dominate this industry. (i) Changing geographies of the global garment industry; (ii.) initiatives led by the Asia Development Bank, and accompanying sub-regional political groupings which aim to facilitate capital flows and trade by reducing transaction time and cost; and (iii) a case study of labour recruitment and employment practices in one border town, Mae Sot, Thailand.
