

Transnational Networks of South Asian Trading Communities: The Pathans and Punjabis/Sindhis of Malaysia and Thailand

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1. Aim

This paper examines the role of ethnic based chambers of commerce, friendship and clan associations and cultural/religious networks of South Asian migrant trading communities in the Thai-Malaysia region. In glaring contrast to the literature on Chinese trading groups whose clan networks and chambers of commerce have been identified as positive elements to the success of their trade, little has been discussed on the trade and religious networks of South Asian trade diasporas.

2. Data and Methods

For this purpose, data will be obtained through interviews with selected members of the Pathan and Punjabi/Sindhi trading community both in the Thai-Malaysia border regions as well as Bangkok and north-east Thailand. The methodology is largely qualitative through interviews and observation.

3. Results

We found that the presence of clan associations and chambers of commerce representing the business interests of the Pathan/Punjabi migrant trading communities contributed to the growth and sustenance of South Asian trade and their cultural survival in the region.

4. Conclusion

From these findings, we are able to link the role of transnational networks in facilitating trade and the growth of capitalists among migrant communities such as the Pathan and Punjabi in Thailand and Malaysia.

References

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