

Border Humanitarians

Gendered Order and Insecurity on the Thai-Burmese Frontier

In rich ethnographic detail, *Border Humanitarians* explores the narratives of Burmese activists in exile who rely on transnational political and social networks to respond to gender violence among the hundreds of thousands of migrants living and working precariously on the Thai border with Myanmar. The activists this book follows must navigate a multiplicity of representations; they are simultaneously "illegal" in Thailand, underpaid feminized laborers in a global garment supply chain, and targets of global North humanitarian intervention with funding to "rescue" and "empower" them. Looking at how these multiple roles overlap, Saltsman asks how state border enforcement regimes, global humanitarianism, and neoliberal capitalist trajectories produce varied sets of constraints and opportunities in migrants' lives. Here, like in many spaces that are simultaneously zones of refuge and hubs for flexible labor, the borderlands are both a site of dispossession for migrants as well as a resource for collective agency. As Saltsman details, gender itself emerges as an important tool for migrants and aid workers alike to navigate insecurity and assert varying ways of making order amidst the upheaval of displacement and ongoing exclusion.



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