

Social Sciences and Humanities Working Group Presents:

Seafarers in industrial fishing: Examining migrant worker precarity

Dr. Melissa Marschke, University of Ottawa and Dr. Peter Vandergeest, York University
December 8, 2021 12:30 pm AST

Our talk focuses on COVID-19, instability and migrant fish workers. Drawing on interviews with port-based support organizations and various other international organizations, we outline how pre-existing long term structural marginalizations of seafarers in fishing have made fish workers particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of pandemic management policies for seafarers. We focus our analysis on obstacles to crew change and reduced access to crucial shore services, and show how the repatriation of crew and access to shore services is the outcome of negotiation among a constellation of port-based actors. We further examine global governance in fisheries, particularly with respect to the responsibilities and potential roles of flag, port, coastal and home country states; of seafood importing states especially with regard to products made with forced labour, and private sector action. We also explore where Canada stands with regards to particular global governance initiatives, and in terms of migrant fish workers.



Melissa Marschke is a Professor in the School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa. Her work focuses on livelihoods, natural resources and precarious work, with a particular interest in migrant workers in industrial fisheries.



Peter Vandergeest is Professor Emeritus of Geography at York University. His current research concerns working conditions and labour relations for migrant workers in industrial fisheries, with a focus on fisheries operated from Taiwan and Thailand. His approach in this research builds on his past work on the political ecology of forestry, agriculture and aquaculture in Southeast Asia.



Discussant:
Dr. Desai Shan, LLB, Ph.D

Desai Shan is Assistant Professor at Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland. She received her PhD from Cardiff University in 2017. She held the Ocean Frontier Institute

Postdoctoral Fellowship (Dalhousie University, 2018-2020), On the Move Research Partnership Postdoctoral Fellowship (University of Ottawa, 2017-2018), Nippon Foundation-Seafarers International Research Centre PhD Fellowship (Cardiff University, 2011-2015). As a dedicated researcher in the fields of international maritime law and occupational health and safety (OHS), she has published fifteen research articles and book chapters on Canadian and international seafarers' rights to occupational health and safety.



Discussant:
Dr. Barbara Neis, Ph.D., C.M., F.R.S.C.

Barbara Neis is John Lewis Paton Distinguished University Professor and Honorary Research Professor, Department of Sociology, Memorial University of Newfoundland. She is also the former co-founder and co-director of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Research and a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Council of Canadian Academies. Professor Neis has worked for three decades in multi-disciplinary teams carrying out community-engaged research in marine and coastal contexts on social and environmental change, rebuilding fisheries, gender and fisheries, occupational health and safety and mobile work. She is also a co-investigator in several modules and projects of the Ocean Frontier Institute.

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