Reconciliation or Reconstruction? Sri Lanka's Apparel Sector and the Post-War Nation State

Annelies Goger and Kanchana N. Ruwanpura
(Presented by Kanchana N. Ruwanpura)

Abstract

We examine in the paper how new garment factories in the former conflict areas of Eastern Sri Lanka elucidate the role of capital in the Sri Lankan government’s efforts to rebuild the nation following a longstanding civil war. Drawing on fieldwork in one such garment factory, we show how the state-capital alliance was manifested in this process through the management ethos, the creation of a new class of workers, and an active re-scripting of the narratives of the nation. We argue, therefore, that capital is deeply imbricated in the Sri Lankan State’s militarized nation building efforts.

About the Speaker

Dr Ruwanpura is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Geography, University of Edinburgh, UK. She received her PhD and M.Phil in Development Studies from University of Cambridge, UK and majored in Economics for her undergraduate studies at William Smith College, NY, USA. Her scholarship has explored a) the diversity of lived and structured spaces which focus on the connections between ethno-nationalism, post-disaster and materiality, b) the convergence and divergence of global governance regimes as everyday experiences for labour, and c) connections between civil society initiatives and uneven development processes. These research topics reflect her training in heterodox economics and development studies, where she is interested in interrogating ‘development’ as a global process, in the sense of it being grounded in multiple sources of knowledge, sites of concern and meanings of social justice – and hence she instinctively and intellectually values interdisciplinary engagement. As such she has researched and written about women-headed households in conflict-ridden eastern Sri Lanka, the politics of post-disaster reconstruction in Sri Lanka and more recently on global governance regimes and labour rights in the apparel sector.

Event Details

Wednesday, 2nd April 2014
4.00pm to 5.30pm

AS7 #04-13
Kent Ridge Campus
National University of Singapore

All are welcome.
Light refreshments will be served.

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