

Project Title: Bangladeshi Shrimp Processing Workers: Precarity and Citizenship

Abstract: The global trade in shrimp has increased dramatically over the past three decades. Today farmed shrimp is one of Bangladesh's most important export commodities, second only to garments. Nevertheless, most academic research on export-sector workers continues to be focused on the garment industry. I propose an ethnographic study of shrimp processing workers in Khulna Division, a major hub of seafood processing in Southwestern Bangladesh. My dissertation research will be structured around two major questions: 1) How does exploitation by employers intersect with workers' marginal position in the Bangladeshi state to produce shrimp processing workers as precarious subjects? 2) How are shrimp processing workers collectively negotiating their relationship with employers and their position as Bangladeshi citizens? My dissertation project has important policy implications pertaining to the governance of labor relations in the burgeoning agro-commodities export sectors in the Global South. In addition, my dissertation project will make significant contributions to several bodies of academic scholarship including literature that analyzes labor relations in global agro-commodity chains and scholarship on the relationship between precarious employment and citizenship.