Revisiting Social Reproduction: Migrant Care Workers & their Entitlements in Canada

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Tuesday, 12th February 2019, 12:30 – 13:30
Room 723, 7/F., Cheng Yu Tung Tower
Centennial Campus, The University of Hong Kong

This paper questions the temporary/permanent dichotomy with respect to migrant workers’ legal entitlements. With particular reference to the Canadian Caregiver Program, contended to be one of the best temporary migrant worker programs globally, it is argued that any caregiver program should see caregivers—irrespective of their local or foreign origin—as fully contributory members of society and thereby entitled to a full range of citizenship rights and entitlements. The paper offers a regulatory justification for migrant caregivers’ claims for full socio-economic citizenship rights and entitlements, developing this justification by drawing on—and reconceptualizing—the economic productivity-focused social reproduction perspective. In proposing a theoretical reconceptualization of socially reproductive work and evaluating migrant care workers’ entitlements in Canada, it will be shown that, on the basis of social reciprocity, caregivers cannot be considered temporary insofar as their entitlements are concerned.

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