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GLOBAL MIGRATION SYSTEMS OF DOMESTIC AND CARE WORKERS

Conference at the University of Toronto, November 12-14, 2008. Conveners: Dirk Hoerder (Arizona State University), Wenona Giles (University of Toronto), Anke Ortlepp (GHI), Valerie Preston (York University). Participants: Sedef Arat-Koc (Ryerson University), Shelly Chan (University of California, Santa Cruz), Grace Chang (University of California, Santa Barbara), Cynthia Cranford (University of Toronto, Mississauga), Silvia D'Addario (York University), Marianne Frieze (University of Gießen), Luann Good Gingrich (York University), Felicitas Hillman (University of Bremen), Abhar Rukh Husain (York University), Franca Iacovetta (University of Toronto), Ray Jureidini (University of Cairo), Mareike König (GHI Paris), Pei-Chia Lan (Taiwan University), Helma Lutz (University of Frankfurt), Ewa Palenga-Möllenbeck (University of Frankfurt), Mary Romero (Arizona State University), Daiva Stasiulis (Carleton University), Barbara Thiessen (JDI Munich), Leah Vosko (York University), Madeleine Wong (St. Lawrence University).

The conference provided a fresh look at the history and development of domestic and care work from a global perspective. Focusing on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it brought together an international group of scholars from North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Sedef Arat-Koc opened the conference with her keynote lecture “The Politics of Neoliberalism—Migration and Social Reproduction: Crisis and Possibilities?” in which she reflected on the achievements of and challenges for the movements that are active on behalf of domestic and care workers in Canada. Broad in perspective, it set the agenda for the following conference days. The conference was dedicated to the memory of Christiane Harzig.

The first panel focused on historical views of the migration of domestic workers in the era of decolonization. Mareike König discussed the migration of German domestic servants to Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century. Due to the image of Paris as a city of culture and modernity, thousands of young women migrated to the French capital in order to find work and personal freedom. Whereas the sources on the German parishes in Paris often present these women as victims, letters of domestics show that they actively used the networks created by social organizations but also created networks themselves. Dirk Hoerder presented his and Christiane Harzig's thoughts on the agency of European women who migrated to domestic work in Canada and the United States between the 1880s and 1950s. He dealt with the role of domestic service as a protected labor market for women's post-migration insertion and argued that domestic service provided a stepping stone for the migrants' aspirations since otherness appeared as a resource

in an ethnically determined labor market. Comparing European to Caribbean migration, he showed that initial recruitment was an intermediate phase towards the postcolonial mobility of *femina migrants*. Women established their own long-distance migration routes and, even in service positions, developed independent life projects. Shelly Chen broadened the term “domestic labor” as work performed within the home by providing a traveling history of three groups of Chinese women in the period 1900-1966: maids who worked in European colonies, revolutionaries who went to Tokyo, and rural women whose husbands migrated overseas.

The volume, social profile, and direction of migration into domestic care work were the focus of the second panel. Felicitas Hillmann investigated the relationship of feminization to migration and domestic care work. Analyzing international data, she argued that there is a quantitative dimension to the feminization of migration. The invisibility of domestic work, the informal work setting, and the restricted entry of female migrants into the labor markets of the countries of arrival all enhance the necessity of domestic work for female migrants. She also outlined the social profile of female migration in Germany and pointed to the importance of domestic care work for the channeling of female migrants into the German labor market. Valerie Preston and Silvia D’Addario compared the participation in domestic work and caregiving for immigrant Filipinas in Toronto, Canada, focusing on the ways in which levels of unpaid work influence paid work, particularly in occupations related to care work. Using information from the census and from transcripts of interviews, both examined how paid and unpaid domestic work intersected for this group of women. Pei-Chia Lan examined the ethnically stratified labor market in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore and revealed the reasons why fewer Filipina migrants (the Westernized other) and Indonesian migrants (the traditional other) were recruited. Recruitment agencies function as a major doorkeeper in the maid trade and thus play an active role in the production of stratified others and professional servants. They not only construct and disseminate nationality-based stereotypes but also seek workers of “desired” characteristics through the organized practices of recruitment and training. Through “proper” management in dress, hairstyle, and character, migrant women are presented as de-feminized and naturally suitable servants under the gaze of prospective employers. This rite of passage aims to “moralize” and “civilize” the savage in the creation of “modern” servants for the service of foreign households.

The third panel dealt with emerging perspectives on migration and care work. Barbara Thiessen focused on the impact of social change in modern societies on private care arrangements. She argued that improvements in gender

equality rest on a new division of labor between women in a growing market for migrant domestic and care workers. She pointed to the transformation of Eastern Europe and to increasing inequality worldwide as the background for a growing number of female migrants. She also discussed the situation in Germany concerning domestic and care work and addressed gendered issues of domestic and care activities. In her paper on the development of care and household services as a profession in Germany, Marianne Friese pointed out that the feminization of work has not rendered the professional structure of Western industrial societies—the so called one-and-a-half-person-career—obsolete. Rather, it has created new types of social restructuring. These changes, she pointed out, are not based on a redistribution of work between the genders, but are founded on a new international division of labor among women of different generations, different ethnic groups, and different social backgrounds. Madeleine Wong examined the issue of transnational motherhood in the Ghanaian diaspora by exploring how Ghanaian women who have migrated to Canada and the United Kingdom care for children left at home with their fathers and other relatives. Using information from in-depth semi-structured interviews, she explored the frequency and nature of mothers' contacts with their children and showed that Ghanaian women are similar to other transnational female migrants who maintain their roles as mothers by appointing surrogates who act in their places. However, in the Ghanaian case, the importance of female lineage increases the reliance on relatives from their mothers' families in unexpected ways.

The panel on policy issues, labor rights, and protection opened with a paper by Cynthia Cranford, who presented a comparative analysis of personal assistance services (PAS) in the private and public sectors of Los Angeles. She showed that in the public sector innovative legislation allowed for employment flexibility and job security by deeming the recipient the employer for hiring/firing and creating a new organization as the employer for collective bargaining. Legislation combined with creative union organizing, she argued, has provided public workers with employment security, while a lack of regulation and unionization has resulted in insecurity for private workers. Her findings validate scholars' calls for a re-regulation of employment relationships to protect vulnerable workers, but underscore the additional importance of new forms of unionism. Grace Chang introduced a framework for viewing trafficking as coerced migration or labor exploitation in any labor sector, including manufacturing, agriculture, service work, domestic work, and sex work. She pointed to reports showing that domestic work is the industry in which women are most commonly trafficked. Many unrecognized trafficking victims, particularly in care work, she argued, would be better served by a broader definition of trafficking that looks beyond the sex industry and focuses on exploited

workers in all labor sectors. Luann Good Gingrich explored the relationship between gender, the law, and transnational livelihoods by considering how national legal and regulatory enactments operate gendered processes of social exclusion and inclusion across sovereign borders. Extending previous and ongoing research on social exclusion and Mennonite migrant women from Mexico, she investigated the peculiar and contrived legal place of women from Mexico entering Canada as low-skilled temporary workers.

The fifth panel examined displacement, human rights, and care work. Ray Jureidini explored the history of domestic service in Lebanon. He showed that non-Arab migrant domestic workers have emerged mainly since the end of the country's civil war (1990). But after years of arrests, detention, and deportation of female migrant domestic workers who left their employers (for unpaid salaries, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse), there are still few signs of the de-criminalization of these workers in Lebanon. There are no labor laws to protect migrant domestic workers in Lebanon or the Middle East generally. Following the invasion of Lebanon by Israeli military forces in July and August 2006, human rights awareness campaigns have sought to bring about a change in the attitude towards migrant domestic workers, but apparently with little effect. Abhar Rukh Husain contributed a perspective on Bangladesh. Focusing on migration and involuntary servitude, his paper highlighted the complex factors that underscore the persistent flows of women as migrant domestic workers from Bangladesh. These women migrate to the Middle East as domestic workers, but many also experience involuntary servitude, including fraudulent recruitment offers and debt bondage imposed by Bangladeshi recruitment agents.

The last panel aimed at a re-evaluation of reproductive labor. Helma Lutz and Ewa Palenga-Möllnbeck discussed their analytical concept for the exploration of the forms and dynamics of transnational labor and care arrangements in domestic work migration. They argued, first, that on the institutional level there is an interaction of three national regimes (migration, gender, and welfare/care), all of which must be considered in order to understand the specific dynamics of transnational care migration. Second, they explained how intersectionality analysis allows us to link the institutional level to the level of organizations and individuals in order to explore how these regimes function as a source of assets, or a cause of marginalization, or both. Third, by adopting the "dual" transnational perspective of both sending and receiving societies, they showed how transnational social spaces function as the frame of reference for migrants' actions. A cross-national comparative study of two cases of East-West migration from the Ukraine to Poland and from Poland to Germany was used to provide examples. Mary Romero explored the hidden

costs of paid care work by looking at child care, arguing that individual solutions to the problem of child care result in hidden costs of paid reproductive labor that are transferred to the families of private household workers and nannies. She showed that the substitute mothering that is currently purchased by hiring domestics and nannies transfers the more physical and taxing part of child care to the workers, while employers upgrade their own status to mother-managers. Reproducing the contemporary middle-class family with all its privileges requires vulnerable workers who are stigmatized in the labor force by their citizenship and (racialized) economic status in order to retain a globalized unequal distribution of reproductive labor. Child care policies and programs that are not inclusive of all mothers, regardless of class, race, or citizenship, Romero concluded, maintain a system of privileges that relies on subordination. In her paper, Daiva Stasiulis asked “what if caregiving were deemed ‘natural’ to men?” and explored the implications of reversing the gendered assumptions underlying caregiving for the global migration of female care workers. Taking inspiration from the witty essay by Gloria Steinem, “If Men Could Menstruate,” she explored the implications of an ideological regendering of care work for the revaluation of reproductive labor. She also examined the analytical, political, and policy implications of “bringing men back” into analyses of household and caregiving work for the global chain of care and the global migration of care workers.

Anke Ortlepp (GHI)