



Die Wiener Sprachgesellschaft lädt ein

zu einem Vortrag

von

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*Language requirements for migration
and the management of vulnerability*

Language requirements for migration have emerged in regimes of circular labor migration, where migrant workers make multiple and temporary moves between ‘home’ and foreign places of work. These language requirements enact borders that serve as targeted and flexible mechanisms for rationalizing and regulating forms of labor. The rationalizations for these language requirements are at the intersection of discourses around the protection of vulnerable bodies and the regulation of laboring bodies. The language requirements are evidence of how the embodied nature of language is instrumentalized as a border that reaffirms and produces the differences between laboring bodies, thus serving as a targeted and flexible mechanism for mobilizing and regulating forms of labor. The discourse of protection and ‘quality’ used to rationalize these language requirements is a dimension of the self-disciplining and self-responsibilization of workers. Focusing on the regimes governing the migration of transnational domestic workers in the Philippines and in Singapore, this paper shows how language requirements at the pre-labor migration stage are used to select, filter and ‘discipline’ migrant women, ostensibly in the name of ‘quality’ and protection. In the case of the Philippines, a labor-sending country, the obligatory language and culture training for first-time transnational Filipino domestic workers is examined. In the case of Singapore, a labor-receiving country, the ‘English test’ that was required of first-time would-be foreign domestic workers is analysed.

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Gäste sind wie immer herzlich willkommen!