Neo-liberalism's Global Workforce: The End of a Dream?

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6:30—8:00 pm
Swift Lecture Hall
1025 East 58th Street

Reception to follow in Swift Common Room

Abstract: The neo-liberal ideology of economic efficiency and shared prosperity masks the exploitation of labour on a global scale, backed by the political and military power of the sole super-power. The neo-liberal dream is dualistic: a cosmopolitan, mobile world for elites; a world of barriers, exploitation and security controls for the rest. How has this dream stood up to the shock of the economic crisis? Long-term economic, social and demographic factors make it likely that migrants will not be willing to leave destination countries, even in the event of job-loss and reduced income. Migrants have developed forms of collective resistance (through social movements) and individual and community resistance through livelihood strategies that undermine top-down ‘migration management’. The crisis may well give added impetus to the shift from a mono-polar form of globalization, to a multi-centred one, in which new economic powers will play a much greater role.

Stephen Castles is Research Professor of Sociology at the University of Sydney and Associate Director of the International Migration Institute (IMI), University of Oxford. He is a sociologist and political economist, and works on international migration dynamics, global governance, migration and development, and regional migration trends in Africa, Asia and Europe. His recent books include: The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World (2009); Migration, Citizenship and the European Welfare State: A European Dilemma (2006); and Migration and Development: Perspectives from the South (2008).

This event is free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Sarah Patton Moberg at spmoberg@uchicago.edu/773-834-0957 or visit humanrights.uchicago.edu. Swift Hall is in the middle of the University's Main Quadrangle, which is bounded by University Ave, Ellis Ave, 57th Street and 59th Street. Street parking is available on the surrounding streets.

This event is the first in the 2010-2011 series of events entitled "Migrant Rights in an Age of Globalization", which will culminate in a symposium at the School of Social Service Administration on April 12-13, 2011. This lecture is sponsored by the University of Chicago Human Rights Program, the Undergraduate Program in International Studies, the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory (3CT), the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture, and the Center for International Studies Norman Wait Harris Fund.