

Session 2 Ubiquitous Borders

Presentation 2

Pregnant Mainland Women and the Cultural Politics of Birthright Citizenship: Towards a Feminist Geopolitics

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Abstract

This essay starts off with an explication of feminist geopolitics as an analytical approach and a theoretical context where the discussion of cross-border births is situated. Guided by feminist geopolitical scholarship that aims to problematize the dominant narratives by situating knowledge and looking at security at multiple scales, this essay then focuses on pregnant Mainland women in Hong Kong to spur a reconception of such geopolitical concepts as security, borders and citizenship by closely examining the narrative devices and implications of the representative geopolitical discourse in Hong Kong, which characterize Mainlanders as accidental visitors with Janus-faced natures, who bring in economic benefits but cause havoc in terms of social relations for the local populace. The second part seeks to illuminate the idea that both the government's discriminatory population policy in governing these accidental citizens and the discourse of Mainlander-as-locust tell only partial stories of the Mainland pregnant women by examining *It Is Her, but It Is Also You and Me: Interviews of Women with Two-ways Permit* (2008), a collection of interviews conducted with Mainland spouses. We will argue that these interviews present an alternative account of cross-border marriages and birthright citizenship that enables us to see not only the effects of the dominant geopolitical discourses surrounding Mainland spouses but the possible forms of social recognition and bonds that can take place in Hong Kong now, however fragile, contingent and compromised these may be. An equally important task for us is to suggest some challenges to this compassionate feminist project that seeks to recognize the marginal subject in Hong Kong society and create trust between locals and Mainland migrants.