

IPW LECTURES

Recognizing the Full Costs of Care? Law, Harm and Compensation for Families in South Africa's Silicosis Class Action

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Abstract:

The talk concerns recognition and compensation of the intimate, gendered work of caring by family members for workers who became ill with lung diseases as a result of poor labour conditions in the mines in South Africa. It focuses on a recent decision by a court in South Africa (Nkala and Others v. Harmony Gold Mining Company Limited and Others, 2016) that took the unusual step of acknowledging this care work and attempting to compensate it indirectly. The talk combines insights from political economy and law within a feminist frame to develop an argument about compensation for social reproductive work to address the harm experienced by the carers of mineworkers. Using the theory of depletion through social reproduction, it suggests ways of understanding the costs of care in order to fully compensate the harms suffered by the carers. This is done with reference to a photographic essay by Thom Pierce called 'The Price of Gold' taken in the mineworkers' homes after their discharge from work due to illness. The talk argues that ideas of depletion should inform any consideration of compensation of people engaged in caring in a range of reparatory contexts.

Der Vortrag findet im Rahmen der Vorlesung „Zur Aktualität des Marx'schen Denkens. Kritische und feministische Zugänge" statt.