

Feminization of labor migration: female migrant domestic workers from the Philippines in Turkey

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Abstract

Today, migration is inevitably a global practice for many Filipina domestic workers. Therefore, it offers a dynamic profile of Filipina migrant domestic workers with myriad motivations and experiences through various destinations before entry to Turkey and now here, which especially rooted in the colonial histories of the Philippines. However, the main focus of the article is to explore Filipinas' decisions to migrate and their experiences as migrant domestic workers in Turkey, and also sometimes their previous experiences. This paper also presents the experiences of Filipina migrant domestic workers with the employers and intermediary agencies directly from their perspectives. In short, the research gives a brief analysis of female labor migration from the Philippines to Turkey. In order to understand how and why women's labor migration from the Philippines has historically become prominent in the employment of migrant women as domestic workers, we also need to be aware of the historical construction of domestic work as women's work. In other words, there could be several factors, but the most important is the ability to teach English to the children, and also the colonial history of the Philippines. However, the case of the Filipina migrant domestic workers considerably differs from the other foreign domestic workers in Turkey since the employers seem to be more inclined to prefer Filipina domestic workers based on these factors I mentioned above. And the main method was the feminist anthropology including participatory-observation, interviewing, meetings, etc. Then the fieldwork is based in the in-depth interviews with twenty people that I conducted in Istanbul.

Introduction

This paper discloses the hidden reasons behind the migration of Filipina domestic workers to Turkey and wants to pay attention to the multiplicity of women's experiences through the migration process in Turkey. Furthermore, I seek out opportunities to live and work overseas for a variety of reasons. In general, as many researchers have been pointed out before, Filipinas do not migrate just because of poverty, but rather in various ways of the migration in the decision-making process and experiences including some aspirations for a better life, at least getting away physically from repressive family structures or unemployed/cheating husbands, and without having any plans to migrate. According to Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild (2003:8), one of the main motivations of women's labor migration from developing countries is directly rooted in poverty that constitutes this as a push factor for women's migration decision.¹ Even though the migration of female domestic workers is mostly explained with economic reasons, there are also other factors behind this, as it is just mentioned above. In addition to this, women's decision to migrate would not be explained only by economic reasons, colonialism as a neither individual nor group decision. For example, "For men and women alike, migration has become a private solution to a public problem" (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003:18). Furthermore, as Stephen Castles et al. (2014) mention that migration systems theories analyze the causes of migration at the macro-micro level that include both economic reasons and colonial ties (and/or colonialism). According to them, "Motives for migrating are often manifold... It is difficult to separate economic from social, cultural and political causes of migration" (Castles et al., 2014:26). In addition to this, in the case of women's labor migration from the Philippines we see that all these reasons have roots mostly based on the histories of colonialism in the Philippines (especially American colonialism). Originally I had planned to study the experiences of Filipina domestic workers in Turkey, rather than reemphasizing the historical background of the Philippines. In addition, it seems that the connections of Filipina domestic workers also affect the migration decision-making process (it is also known *migration network theory*).

In terms of both quality and quantity, the number of academic studies about Filipina domestic workers (even Filipina brides abroad) are too many all around the world. Today the Philippines has been the second largest labor-sending country in the world, next to Mexico for years is now very well known. Thus, Philippine labor migration has internationally become a very well-researched topic, and also studying Filipinas' labor migration as domestic workers is not a new phenomenon, and also well researched topic especially about the 'feminization of migration.'

In addition to this, academic studies in Turkey mostly focus on women from the former Eastern Bloc. In the late 1980s, a new wave of female labor for the service sector emerged in Turkey via the international migration flows. Since the early 1990s, Turkey has faced various migration flows such as Filipina domestic workers (Weyland, 2010), Moldavian (Kümbetoğlu, 2005), and domestic workers from Georgia (Dinçer, 2014). Although IBNA (Independent Balkan News Agency) stated that in 2013, "the number of Filipinos in Istanbul has surpassed 5,000, most of which have found jobs as fishermen and domestic helpers [engineers, chefs and some become brides in Turkey]."² However, there are no statistics about the number of Filipinas/os in Turkey yet. Besides, many of them are illegal in Turkey as such in other countries of the world.

This research is rooted in social cultural anthropology and women's studies. I aim to focus on Filipina domestic workers and their experiences in Turkey putting these following questions

¹ Developing countries usually refer the 'Third World's migrants' as less developed ones compared to the advanced or First World countries.

² <https://balkaneu.com/turkeys-minorities-3-000-russians-5-000-filipinos/>

at the center of the study; Are there any of them in Turkey? What do they do as female migrant domestic workers in Turkey? Why do Turkish employers prefer them as female migrant domestic workers? This is because of the fact that historically speaking English fluently has become an important and elective factor in the Philippines compared to other female migrant domestic workers in Turkey. It is also important to note that Filipina domestic workers receive better payment than other counterparts, such as Georgian, Turkmen, Uzbek, Armenian and Moldavian in the service sector in Turkey because of their ability to speak English and higher education. In other words, the more they have an university degree and speak English, the more they are preferred to employ by host families in the gendered, racialized, and high-demand global labor market. In addition, because of the debates mentioned above, the discussion on feminization of labor migration will be the main point of the paper.

Methodology

However, it draws on a range of feminist anthropologist methods including participation, observing, interviewing, and meetings. This was framed two ethnographic approaches and participatory observations were also very important; these are semi-structured interviews were conducted in English with Filipina domestic workers. When feminist methodology were added in, the general fruitful questions for the readers became, and are, why these women's labor migration gained such an importance today? Where have they been before? What brought these women here? In other words, I aim to show a different side of women's labor migration from the Philippines to Turkey and what are the experiences of these women in Turkey? Anyway, by using feminist anthropologist methodology, I avoided doing a hierarchical research because I did not want to set boundaries between the "researcher" and the "subject." Thus, I use feminist anthropologist methodology, highlighted women's experiences, and considered them as a primary source within the scope of the research. As van der Geest et al. (2012:7) said that an anthropologist's personal life affects the whole research process from the top on down including the questions we ask.

The fieldwork was conducted from April to June 2018 in Istanbul. In the fieldwork, I conducted in-depth interviews with twenty people in Istanbul and their ages were between 27 and 52. Among twenty interviewees, seventeen were Filipina domestic workers, one was a Filipino engineer, one was a Turkish employer and one was a Turkish man beloved one of my Filipina interviewees. The interviews that I conducted with them were all done in public places like in the shopping center, cafeteria, and/or in the restaurant usually while drinking coffee, and tea or snacking. They have only one paid day off every week and it is usually on Sundays.

Since the majority of Filipina domestic workers migrate to the Middle Eastern countries to work, among these countries Turkey is often seen a better option for them from those regions in the Middle East, even though they have too many problems. Sixteen of them out of seventeen interviewed in this research came from Hong Kong, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Qatar, Kuwait, Romania, Russia and England to Turkey and/or before coming to Turkey they had worked at least one or two of these countries. Many of them are currently working in Turkey but some of them are back to the Philippines or started working in European countries after all. Interviews were conducted in English and in the case of Turkish interviewee, Turkish. I used a tape-recorder during the interviews except with one Turkish female employer. Semi-structured interviews were all recorded, and then transcribed in order to get interpretation of data gathered through the fieldwork. In addition, the interviews lasted for about three hours. Within the context of this research, I changed all the names of Filipina domestic workers I interviewed and used a different nickname for each of them. I placed the

interviewees' information in my study with given nicknames, age and the interview year. I showed it in brackets and after quoted from them.

A brief history of Filipino migration

Throughout history, the Philippines is both sending and receiving archipelago. Migration is not a new phenomenon for the Philippines, but what is new in the modern world is that more women are employed in jobs that traditionally regarded as women's work (entertainment, service sector etc.) in the global marketplace. If we go back to the international labor migration, we can say that from the earliest years of Spanish colonial rule in the late sixteenth century until the early 1900s, there was practically no economic migration from the Philippines. There was limited migration towards the United States after the Philippines formally became an American colonial territory in the nineteenth century. By the 1970s, gendered migration has become a nation-building strategy of Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos, "The Philippine labor export policy demonstrates the feminization of export labor and commodification of migrant labor" (Lindio-McGovern, 2012:25); upon the benefits of exporting and importing domestic workers' remittances.

During Marcos' rule until 1986 and even after the Marcos years we see the drawing of the contemporary contours of labor export as a key feature of Philippine development policy or "a planned state strategy" (Aguilar, 2014:7). Therefore, the Philippine Government has been central to the globalization of Filipina/o workers. Filipinos are now said to be found in over 239 countries (Aguilar, 2014:95). Turkey is just one of those countries for Filipinas/os. Following Ella, she paid attention to the labor export of the Philippines by using "export skills of people."

In the Philippines, the government is like we call it remittance economy. You have to remit money. It depends on many overseas Filipina workers sending dollars to uphold the economy. So, entering on the free trade marketing it is like no protection for the local industry. And then natural resources are not really cultivated for the Filipinos to operate a job then the government is looking for something to export and we don't have enough export to generate the dollar. So, that was the President of Philippines Ferdinand Marcos 1970s the government created Labor Export Programme. You have to export the people, export the skills of the people. That was 1970s during Marcos's administrations. That time it was engineers, builders, construction workers in the Middle East in Saudi Arabia because that time Filipinas heavily get in debt it is a big debt to the IMF and World Bank and then the US gained access in the Oil Reserve in Saudi Arabia and needed a cheap labor. So, the Philippines will send them cheap labor in order to be able to pay that to IMF and World Bank. The government borrow money from IMF and World Bank for the Philippines and the money was not stand well it goes for corruption and the export is small. It is small export and less industry to be able to pay the debt. So, the government opened this Labor Export Program. It exports the skills and these are engineers, builders and construction workers in Saudi Arabia. That is the legal way because it is systematic formal migration in the Philippines. Because that time US also has already a big control of Saudi Arabia and started exploitation it and needed a cheap labor. So, they saw Philippines as cheap and skilled. And over the years it is no longer political it is already heavily dependent on export labor. And soon follow their domestic workers' nannies (41, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:98)

The study also shows that the Philippine Government encourages the female migration because of the remittances provided by them. The export of overseas Filipina/o workers was initiated under Marcos' Government during the 1970s, which facilitated the increased scale of migration aided by the IMF and World Bank. Therefore, migration is a gendered process in the Philippines, and should be analyzed as such. According to Pauline Barber, labor export is a key feature of Philippine development strategy, as it is mentioned above.

Filipinos were yet again eager to fill in-demand slots in Middle Eastern oil-exporting nations flush with petro-dollars. The Marcos regime also recognized the political advantages of

facilitating overseas contracts as a means to control the potential for social unrest associated with high rates of poverty and landlessness (2008:1269).

In addition to this, Waverly Dolaman (2010:55) points out that, in the case of the Philippines, the “culture of migration” is rooted in its history. For example, Ella, one of interviewees, underlined the same point, and emphasized the importance of speaking English very well.

The migration is the export of labor from generation to generation. Because when it was 1970s when the parents are there in the 1980s-90s the children the next generation is migrated again. Many countries opening jobs for a cheap labor for the Filipinos. Sometimes we distract because of our own ability we speak English very well we are educated. So, that’s why they prefer the Philippines. In some ways, very nice but the impact is you are always away from your family and the home country is no longer developing for the job for the second generation. It looks like we only depend on export (41, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:49).

Women make up more than 80 percent of the Philippines’ labor migration through its colonial history from generation to generation. Throughout the 1990s, overseas Filipina/o contract workers are in ever increasing numbers of migration group all over the world as well as Turkey. Although there is still no statistical information about the number of Filipina domestic workers in Turkey, there is a growing migration network from the Philippines to Turkey since then. I also heard from my interviewees that Filipina domestic workers first came to Turkey from the Philippines in the 1990s.

A crucial role of intermediary agencies in the recruitment process

It is a commonly held belief that Filipinas/os usually leave the Philippines with an assistance of government-accredited agencies. Mostly, these agencies steer the migration. Another common strategy among these women is to rely on migrant networks, that is, moving to another country where their relatives and/or friends have already found them employment (Aguilar, 2014:140). Within the scope of this study, almost all of the informants have made the transition from other countries to Turkey or they return to the Philippines and have done work for a short time and then come to Turkey. Most of the informants interviewed under this study who came to Turkey through an intermediary agency with a network among Hong Kong, Singapore and Russia.³ For example, Angelica (42, 2018) describes it as “tie-up agencies”: “Turkish agencies cannot hire us without tie-up agencies. I came here from Hong Kong in 2017. I was working also in Afghanistan for five years and in Dubai for five years”.

In addition to this, most of them came from Hong Kong, Singapore, Romania, England, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Qatar, Kuwait and Russia to Turkey and/or before coming to Turkey they had worked in at least one of those countries. Therefore, they have always evaluated and compared these two basic factors -their stories of immigration and working conditions abroad through other countries they had worked before coming to Turkey. For example, when I asked them *Can you tell me your story related to your job? What relevant work experience do you have in this career field? What brought you here? What do you think about your employer?* etc. Most of them preferred to talk about their previous employers in Hong Kong, Singapore, Romania, England, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Qatar, Kuwait and Russia rather than to speak about Turkish employers. At this point, I can illustrate one of my interviewees whose name is Sarah. She started to answer the second question given above as

³ The name of the agency is kept confidential for the benefit of my informants. The interviewees who were victimized by the agency initiated a petition in against their counterparts and since the legal process is still ongoing, we have decided to keep confidential the relevant documents. Rather it should be noted that this case happened in 2018. So far, I have not received any information about the case yet.

follows: “I started being a nanny when I was in London” (38, 2018). Of course, she is just one of them to be mentioned here. According to my observations depending on my fieldwork, I would say that they usually avoid saying anything negative about Turkey, and also about their experiences here. What is important at this point is why and how often they tend to be more close when it comes to talk about negativities, problems, sexual harassment, overseas worker’s rights, wages etc. in Turkey even though there are some Turkish employers who are being very strict, even with the performances of household work. Maybe it is because many Filipina migrant domestic workers just find a simple solution which can be said to focus on positive thinking to struggle against. Diana speaks about her first workplace in Turkey.

In my contract they told me that my responsibility is to take care of the youngest. This is two years old but when I came here everything changed because all about cooking, cleaning. They already told me that I won’t do such things and then suddenly I became a nanny for four children and then cooking and cleaning by hand I don’t use any machine or gloves. The hardest part for me was during the Ramadan. They are doing fasting and I am working. Lots of work, less to sleep! The baby was sleeping with me and she is sleeping very late and then I have to wake up around 2.30 early in the morning just to prepare food. And then it is very difficult for me but I still said to myself this is work you don’t have to complain hopefully everything will change (43, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:119-120).

Anyway there is another reason for the type of tendencies in this process; they might have felt more comfortable sharing their previous experiences or the things had happened to them in the Middle Eastern countries than in Turkey. Besides, some of them mentioned that they were told “The agency in the Philippines and in Hong Kong, and also some other people said If you will apply nanny in Hong Kong it will be easy for you to go to Canada.”

One of the most common reasons for coming to Turkey: dream of America and Canada

Most of the Filipino that’s our strategy because if you go from the Philippines to another it is very hard for us. So, it is our stepping to go first in Hong Kong. You work first in Hong Kong at least you have work experience and then from Hong Kong there is an agency there to process your all papers for Canada (Carmel, A Filipina domestic worker in Istanbul, 42, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:141).

The increase in the number of women’s labor migration as domestic workers is a kind of proportional for the increase in the number of intermediary agencies both in the Philippines and in Turkey. In addition to this, even most of Filipina domestic workers have been planned to go to Canada, they decided to come to Turkey through the “tie-up agencies” in Hong Kong.⁴ Wherever they go to work, this is due to their desire to go America and/or Canada at the end. This desire is deeply rooted in the history of the Philippines. When talking about the cross-country hierarchical structure of migration, it would be appropriate to consult sociologist Anju Mary Paul. Anju Mary Paul (2011) describes a four-stage hierarchy of destination for Filipino domestic workers. At the bottom are the low-cost destinations of countries in West Asia (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain); in the third tier are the Southeast Asian destinations (Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei); in the second tier are the East Asian destinations (Taiwan and Hong Kong); and the top tier are the United States, Canada, Spain and Italy which always imagined by OFWs in the Filipino diaspora. According to Anju Paul (2011:1862), “migrant social capital embedded within the Filipino diaspora is also influential in encouraging

⁴ It is important to note that according to Petra Weyland, all these agencies were not involved earlier “I cannot remember any agencies. I think When I did my research, agencies were not involved. It was completely unregulated. They came with a tourist visa and then overstayed.” Quoted from correspondence with Petra Weyland via e-mail in 11 June 2018.

participants to consider stepwise international migration in the first place.” To elaborate on this, I would share Nina’s expressions through her migration route.

Actually, I was looking for an agency to go to Canada in the Philippines. Because some of my friends are in Canada already. So, I found that agency and got the number. One woman from the agency asked me “Do you want to go Turkey?” I was like “What is Turkey?” I never heard Turkey. I know there is Turkey in the glob map but I have no any idea. I know Turkey is a Middle Eastern country. So, when I heard it I was like “What is Turkey? She said “Ooo you can go to Turkey. Turkey’s place is very nice. There is very high salary.” So, the one in my mind is the salary. The agency brings that so quick that you can apply. The woman [the owner of the Turkish tie-up agency in Hong Kong] told me that “Ohh you are going to Turkey” (39, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:142).

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, sometimes bad working conditions can lead to an unplanned migration for Filipina domestic workers. Without having planned to work in Turkey, Rose’s movement may be considered “incidental.” Rather the opportunity emerged suddenly and Rose came to Turkey in order to be able to go to Canada, and also escape from her previous bad working conditions in Saudi Arabia. When giving details of her unplanned movement which means that she ever dreamed of going to Canada, she also emphasizes the treatment of her previous employing family in Saudi Arabia. Let’s have a look how she describes her previous working conditions in Saudi Arabia and her arrival to Turkey.

Before I came to Turkey I was in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia it is not my plan to come to Turkey. I was working there as a caregiver. I was taking care of an old couple they are sick. The woman has Alzheimer. Her illness is Alzheimer you now she forgot. So, she loves me so much but sometimes when she is not okay she is hurting me physically you know. The guy is not problem it is the woman but he cannot stand from the wheelchair but the woman is in good health but the problem is her mind. She loves me but sometimes she hurts me. When it is my third month I wanted to go home but the family didn’t allow me to go. The daughter told me that I have to be with them until finish the contract. They come to Turkey every summer because they have a summerhouse in Yalova. Around June 2011, I came to Turkey with them. So, they left me here. They went back to Riyadh without me. That’s why I am here in Turkey. So, it is not really a plan. So, I was working in Riyadh but I came here with my employer before. That’s it (39, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:140).

Historically, some countries, such as the United States of America and Canada, are constructed as the “ideal place” for immigrants particularly as of higher living standards and salaries. Intermediary agencies have an active role between the employers and the employees in the employment process of female migrant domestic workers in the service sector. Currently, there are countless companies that are actively working in many different regions of the world and earning benefits from both sides through offering dream jobs and a new life. Such as, for many Filipinas, the American and currently Canadian dream up to today is very much popular and kind of common imaginary among these female domestic workers. So, in the case of Filipinas’ labor migration to the world, colonial histories of the Philippines should be considered at first. Today, millions of women still emigrate from the Philippines to the other countries especially with dreams of travelling more easily to Canada and/or the United States (it is also known as “American and/or Canadian dream”).

Another example is Diana’s reason to be in Turkey. She talked about how her momentary feelings led her to come to Turkey at the end. I was often told by her that the application to work in Turkey actually resulted of being bored in Singapore.

I worked in Singapore for seven years and I felt bored. So, when this opportunity came I saw this agency offering work in Turkey and Russia. I asked my current boss in Singapore “Which one is the better country for me?” So, he suggested that between the two it is tendency Turkey is better than Russia. So, I pursued in applying here in Turkey in 2016 (43, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:141).

The role of unemployed and/or cheating husbands in the Philippines

The interviews I conducted within the scope of my fieldwork on Filipinas' labor migration in Turkey shows us the complexity of these female migrants' marital statuses; as of seventeen Filipinas, only one was married with a Turkish man and has a daughter; one of them was married with a Filipino and living and working together in Turkey for many years; eleven were married but almost most of them had their marriages annulled or were separated from their husbands in the Philippines and some have relationships with Turkish men, one of them was single mother and has a boy from a Turkish man who left them, two of them single but have relationships with Filipinos at that moment, one of them was in relationship with an African man and has two daughters from him. Out of the two married interviewees, eleven had children and/or a partner in Turkey. There are also many international marriages between Filipinas and Turkish men, and I have met some of them during the research.

In addition to this, the deception of husbands is a frequent case for Filipinas. In the Philippines, the perception of "ideal husband" and "ideal wife" (Miralao, 1992:47) endangers the nation with the risk of disintegrating the traditional family institution with the large number of transnational "broken" families and officially still married couples. For this reason, as Rhacel Parreñas (2005:35) pointed out, "Transnational families are not the right kind of family in the Philippines." According to Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild (2003:11), apart from economic reasons, migration decisions also can be taken due to 'failed marriages', and thus aim to take care of children without any help from the fathers. Moreover, there are also 'almost' single mothers whose husbands are alcoholics or gamblers, who decide to migrate in order to sustain their families (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). The study shows that married women whose husbands do not work in the Philippines are being very poor, and then in need of money to support their families they are more likely to migrate and work hard abroad. Such as, 38-years-old Louise married up with her husband at 19 years old. After one year, she gave birth to her eldest son. During this time, her husband did not find any job. He had a work before but after they got married he stopped working. Furthermore, she does not even know why he disregards his responsibilities. After two years she gave birth to the second baby. Unfortunately, it was very difficult for her at that time. So, she had many problems because of her husband's lifestyle. He has worked in some jobs several times but after he stops working. So, that's how she started to improve herself, working hard, tried to keep the job for her husband and applied to work abroad. Another example is Carmel (42, 2018). Her story actually begins with her husband's question:

In 2012, my husband asked me "When you are going to work abroad?" and then I was shocked because most of the husbands they don't want their wife go to work very far and they will get angry. Yes, he is very crazy. So, I was shocked and that's my purpose of course for working abroad but I am just shocked because he is the one who asked me. He doesn't wait that it is my initiate to tell "Okay can I work abroad now?" like that but he asked me "When you are going to work abroad?" because at that time he has already another woman. Many many women (Carmel, 42, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:170).

Another informant from the Philippines who works and lives in Turkey is Lea. After working in Hong Kong, Lea returns to her country, and after that she learns that her husband is cheating on her. Then she decided to come to Turkey upon the recommendation of her sister. She stated: "When you come back your husband find another woman. This is Filipino nature. When I come back from Hong Kong my sister just told me to go to work in Turkey. And then I said what I can do? I am going abroad again" (Lea, 40, 2018).

Nina has applied to work abroad several times before but received negative results. Rather, according to her, the first movement of her from the Philippines to Hong Kong as a domestic worker was not a coincidence.

When I was graduated in high school in 1996, I tried to apply my first Philippine passport. At the age of 18 years old in Pasay City I got already my passport then I tried to go to work abroad in Taiwan like that but unfortunate at the age of 18 I could not go and since that I worked in a factory in Laguna. So, I missed my passport. I lost it but it is good luck because I write down the number. So, at the age of 24 I pursue my application going abroad and that is Hong Kong but before it happens I have my previous relationship and then for almost five years that we were planning to get married like this but because he is cheating on me. So, unfortunate we broke up before I go to Hong Kong. I am so devastated that I tried to kill myself to jump in the you know in the building (Nina, 41, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:170).

Many studies show that marriage is a “sacred” thing in the Philippines. At first, it seems to be because of Catholic beliefs. For this reason, a broken and transnational family is perceived as a bad thing in the Philippines. In addition to this, overseas female domestic workers try to avoid divorce from their husbands especially for the children. This is because they have been raised in a culture which almost prohibits divorce. Even though Filipinas are being cheated they might also want to save their marriage for the children. In this context, I would exemplify Nadine. Her husband works as a police officer in the Philippines and she works abroad for the last five years. When Nadine found out that her husband had been cheating on her with his co-worker for a year, she expressed her feelings that happened until now.

My husband is cheating on me for one year. It's more woman sacrifices. When I found out it I transferred the woman from my husband's place (Jamindan City) to her own husband's place (Pilar, Capiz). I was going to tell her husband but my friend stopped me and said “Don't tell him because he might kill your husband.” Family is problematic. Women work here in Turkey and their husbands deceive them in the Philippines. Then they get upset and do the same thing here. I didn't do that. I said him “I want to divorce but he didn't accept.” I love him but I cannot trust him anymore. I am broken. I am not getting a divorce for my children. When I was talking to my family they spoke loudly because they don't pay attention to such things and then my eldest son heard it and started crying (Nadine, 39, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:171).

Briefly, we must consider that there are many reasons to migrate for female domestic workers from the Philippines. And among these multiplicities, most of the women I interviewed decided to migrate because of their ‘irresponsible’ husbands. I believe that similar findings were already found in other researches in different parts of the world. It shows that women have different reasons to leave the Philippines, and work abroad. They also benefit from a wide range of information sources and social networks during the international recruitment process (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003:19).

Working conditions and slavery of Filipina domestic workers: “nannies are like robots. You do this do that?”

Historically, the body of Filipinas has been discursively constructed. For example, they are transformed into a robot with brochures prepared by the Philippine government and also promotional videos prepared by intermediary agencies as catalogues. As Roland Tolentino (1996:68) pointed out, “The slave of the colonial era is transformed into a post-Fordist robot.” In the contemporary debates on migrant domestic labor ‘slavery’ is used as an analogical term to compare domestic workers’ situation to slaves exist in the past. Kevin Bales (1999) calls them “disposable domestics” and many researchers term as a new form of “contract slavery.” According to Cemile Gizem Dinçer (2014:32), “Generally, in the migration literature, slavery is used for the migrant domestic workers to remark their dire living and working condition and to put similarities with the past.” Virginia Miralao (1997:192) terms this kind of dehumanization as “robotization” in her research. In response to robotization, many domestic workers resist against the robotization of disciplining children. My interviewee, Lea, expressed herself as

follows.

Zeynep [the Turkish girl that Lea took care before] this is in her mind. She says “I want to go to study in Harvard, Oxford.” Her mom is telling that’s her nanny. “If I have money, why I will go to school?” She asked me one day. I said “Money can be stolen but education is never.” I am lucky because my employer allows me to do like that to her daughter. Other employers do not allow like that. They are like robots. Nannies are like robots. You do this do that. If I said “You cannot eat ice cream” and then the mom will say “No, you cannot eat ice cream.” I don’t allow my boss to control I control (40, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:115).

Specifically, women are recruited to do gendered work abroad and especially caring viewed historically as ‘women’s work,’ is outsourced to female migrants because it is also considered to be a migrant job, one in which ‘women from some parts of the world are givers and the others are receivers of care’ (Cuban, 2013:124). Most of the women interviewed in this study reported that Arabic, Asian and Turkish employers are the most discriminatory towards their ‘maids’ while Western expatriates generally provide better working conditions including the disciplining of children in Turkey. All these women I interviewed are critical of their work such as disciplining the children in Turkey. For example, Trisha described comparatively her previous Cypriot employer and Turkish employer within the context of disciplining children. She mentions the difficulty of disciplining children in Turkey and that the main reason for this difficulty is not being able to say “No” to children as a domestic worker. After that, she says “The caregiver has to obey the children.”

For me the employer in Turkey is difficult to handle. For now, they want this one and then the next day they want different like that. So, it is difficult for me and also the kids. You must obey them. You should always say you know “Okay” like that. You cannot say “No” to the child. It is difficult you cannot discipline them because after that the employer will be angry. So, I decided to leave it is just only three months I worked with that employer in Turkey. After that I left and I started to work as massage therapist. Being nanny for two years is that in Cyprus. In Cyprus, it is different the employer they will tell you okay discipline the child like that (29, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:150).

In addition to the Trisha’s review given above, another one is Louise. According to Louise, the reason “Why you cannot say ‘No’ to children in Turkey is just because Turkish employers do not want to discuss with their children.”

Some kids are here very spoiled. *Yani* what they want they follow. You are the mom and I am the kid If I say “I want this I want to do this” you just say “Okay” you don’t say “No.” What they say what they want you will just say “Yes yes yes.” They (Turkish employers) never say “No” because they don’t want argument. They don’t want to make them [the children] angry (38, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:151).

The women interviewed within the scope of this study are all powerful women who have faced similar difficulties and survived the hardships. According to Belkıs Kümbetoğlu (2005), that she entitles this as “double blindness” situation of migrant domestic service perpetuates the exploitation of immigrant women, especially who are already in a subordinated position because of their gender, race, class, illegal status and religion. The treatment of live-in domestic workers is concerned in the dehumanising behaviours of their employers in a variety of areas. For example, Valerie was in Qatar and Dubai before coming to Turkey. She comparatively shares her experiences of dehumanising through salary,⁵ day off and dining by the employers in the Middle East.

⁵ Filipinas’ salary is mostly paid in US dollars on the global market. The most important determinant of salaries is the bilateral agreements between the Philippines and the host country. But there is no bilateral agreement to protect the right to have at least a minimum wage between the two governments (Philippine and Turkish). Therefore, salaries are determined by tripartite negotiations including employers, migrant domestic workers and the intermediary recruitment agencies. For this reason, sudden decreases in wages are more likely in times

Salary in Turkey is double compared with the Middle East. There is very lower salary. Even they are rich when it comes to their worker they are not good. They are not good on funding money. They are just giving limitations. The minimum. In Qatar, their money is Qatari Riyal and in Dubai Dirham. To sum it up in Istanbul they just give 2000 lira. Those housemaids in Qatar and Dubai have very low salary. If you watch news even some Filipinas are having some problems. First is they don't have day off. They cannot even go outside. If they want to send money to their family, they just give to the driver and the driver will send. That's our scenario of being a housemaid in the Middle East. They don't have any rights. Some of the employer also in the Middle East they are not giving food to their worker. They just give food after they eat. One time also when I go out to a restaurant there is an Arab family they are eating but the housemaid is outside waiting for them (27, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:152).

At this point, we can also underline that the dominant religion in the countries where these female migrant domestic workers had worked affects their speaking habits. For example, during the interviews, most of women who do not have the same cultural background as the people have both in Turkey and the other Middle Eastern countries use some expressions; "Mashallah (*Maşallah*), Inshallah (*İnşallah*), Allah Allah, Ya, and Yani" have been observed a kind of cultural explanandum. These expressions, which we are used to hear, usually appear in countries where the majority of religion is Islam. For example, Valerie (27, 2018) often said that she used to say *Mashallah* in Dubai, and also Hannah (35, 2018) "*Yani* and *Insallah*," while Lea (40, 2018) said "*Allah Allah*."

What if Turkish employers and Filipina employees' class identity is challenged?

Many of my interviewees are well educated and skilled workers both in the Philippines and abroad. Filipina domestic workers in Turkey are usually stay-in workers which means they live with their employers. Turkish employers are usually upper class, highly educated, and especially female employers are often being 'housewives.' Although I could only have conducted one interview with a Turkish female employer in Istanbul, nevertheless I evaluated the employers from the Filipina domestic workers' points of view.

There are many studies which focus on female migrant domestic workers' socio-economic conditions (wages, labor force), and socio-cultural categories of them (gender, language, education, class, living standards, religion, ethnicity, etc.). However, the data collected within the scope of the research shows that all these factors are very crucial to analyse power relations between the relationship between the Filipina domestic workers and mostly their female employers. Moreover, Filipina domestic workers are generally well-educated, have college diplomas and held middle-class jobs in their own country (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003) and typically have a better knowledge of English.

Employers in Turkey usually tend to analyse many things of their domestic workers. However, these analyses are primarily related to their appearance because most of the employers consider them inferior. For example, psychical appearance, clothing, marital status and even the assets of Filipina domestic workers might cause a jealousy on the part of the Turkish female employers as a source of conflict between them. Among the main issues are those of abovementioned also lead us to think about the power relations between them. Nevertheless, as societies change over time, sometimes social class boundaries are crossed, and many employers in the privileged class feel threatened when their class identity is challenged. From the employer's points of view, their domestic workers were not supposed to

of economic crisis. The result of the interviews in Turkey, the lowest salary paid in Turkey is 800 American dollars and the highest salary is paid 2000 American dollars. In addition to the salary, 50 TL (Turkish Lira) is paid weekly for the allowance, but the salaries vary in this range from employer to employer.

follow the employers' lifestyle. Aslı, one of my interviewees and the only female employer I interviewed, alleges about Sarah who take cares of her only son in Turkey.

Divorce papers are here. She has been married for three years with a Turkish man in England. She always wears high-priced branded clothes. She owns a house in the Philippines and still she is saving money. She taught her family members. For example, her brother is a dentist in the Philippines who often goes abroad (37, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:148).

At this point, I can assume "that employers liked subservient behavior and did not like a domestic worker's (or their relatives) being too much educated or intelligent" (Rollins, 1985:147); the employers also do not like them wearing too much branded clothes, etc. According to Judith Rollins (1985:147), it can be said that "part of being a domestic was acting like the person the employer wanted her domestic to be." Moreover, types of linguistic deference are extremely mentioned by Aslı. Regardless of age she complains about Sarah, her Filipina domestic worker, who calls Aslı by her first Turkish name and does not use the deferential term "Ma'am." Moreover, the attitude of most employers towards their domestic workers for those who have or may have boyfriend is negative. If I continue from Aslı, she said that with a bad hint: "There is someone she is flirting with." So, it is very important to emphasize at this point, most of the employers in Turkey like the obedient behavior of their domestic workers and do not like a worker being highly educated, financially wealthy and wearing branded clothes, calling their employers by their names, being not enough 'hygienic', using cell-phones including having a boyfriend which was generally embraced by Turkish employers.

Another example shows us the common way of separation, categorizations of things and unequal power relations between the employer and employee at work in Turkey. Mostly, the worker-employer relationship is based on contradictory relationships that can be easily distressed.

When I was in that family [in Izmir] really, I did not forget that. They have toasted bread and that toasted bread already have molds. The bread came from the fridge and it was prepared by an Uzbek nanny which I replaced. Because before I came in there they have an Uzbek nanny and she is the one I am going to replace. So, she is teaching me what I have to do in that family. We prepared the food. I see the molds and I said to her "Ohh this bread is not fresh anymore. We have to throw it." Because I knew I was working in a food company in Afghanistan. We are supplying food for soldiers. So, I know what is the cost of that. If you eat that bread with the molds you will get food poison because it is not good for the health. I said "Okay we have to throw it because this is expired already." She said "No! You only have to remove the green color then you can eat." I said "What?" That is what she said to me. And she said "Employers also doing the same. They are also eating the same bread." The Uzbek and me are not eating that. My employer actually did not eat she just told me to eat. I said "Ohh is this the practice here?" Because even we are not rich in the Philippines If the bread is like that we are throwing it. We are not eating a stale bread because every bread has own specific date of expiry. I know in the USA they are very strict on that. Because I was working in a military food company which is supplying food to soldiers US military based and they are very strict. When we are eating in the dining area for example, we eat breakfast all the foods that was lab covered during that time. If it is expired, it has thrown even lunch and the dinner it is the same. I am just observing them [employers] If they are going to touch the bread they did not even touch it (Angelica, 44, 2018; Çeltikci, 2019:123).

Conclusion

Today, migration is inevitably a global practice for Filipina domestic workers. Therefore, by mentioning the tradition of migration and their motivations to migrate should be considered without ignoring the historical background of the Philippines and also that individual decisions

can be effective. However, migration theories generally deal with the background of migration with its macro and micro reasons including economic reasons and unemployment in the home countries as well as socio-cultural dimensions of migration (*migration systems theory*). Despite this, today it can easily be seen that gender, ethnicity, race and class in migration theories and the literature on migrant women in general has grown rapidly all over the world.

This paper shows us how differentiable women's labor migration from the Philippines to Turkey can be, as well as their experiences in here. Contemporary studies on Filipina domestic workers has grown rapidly all over the world and also by focusing their experiences in Turkey tries to contribute the literature on women's labor migration and/or paid domestic work. Even they all come here to work as domestic workers some might get married with Turkish men. This study shows us once again that they have a great place in global women's labor migration including Turkey. And it also gives us opportunities to explore the concept of feminization of migration in order to understand the different patterns of women's labor migration such as Filipina domestic workers in Turkey.

In addition to the bad behaviors they faced with the employers in Turkey, we can say that they are more likely to think positive about Turkey and being female domestic workers in Turkey compared to other Middle Eastern countries. This paper highlights not just the transnational movement of Filipina domestic workers, but also its impact on relations within the host countries. Therefore, the paper also reveals the power relations between the employers and Filipina domestic workers in Turkey. The study shows us, once again, that Filipina domestic workers who migrate abroad to work may have various motivations or reasons.

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