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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Challenge to the Concept of Transnational Motherhood in Migration Studies from Radical Feminist Perspectives

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Abstract

In the last thirty years, and owing to the extent of global women's migration, academic research has concentrated on migrant mothers and their motherhood experiences in the transnational context. It is claimed that an academic consideration of the specific mothering experience of migrant women is missing in the feminist discipline. In order to address this, a new transnational feminist perspective is suggested on migration studies, reconceptualising motherhood. This paper analyses the historical background to the concept of motherhood and progress made therein from feminist perspectives. A response to the question of whether the radical feminist perspectives, which have shown much interest in the motherhood concept, are able to challenge today's transnational motherhood, is considered by examining the critiques of both these radical and transnational feminist perspectives towards each other.

Keywords

Globalisation • Motherhood • Transnationalism • Feminism

Göç Çalışmalarındaki Ulusötesi Annelik Kavramını Radikal Feminist Perspektiften Okuma

Öz

Artan küresel kadın göçü sebebiyle göçmen anneler ve onların annelik deneyimleri konusunda ulusötesicilik bağlamında akademik araştırmalar son otuz yılda yoğunlaşmaya başlamıştır. Bu özel annelik deneyiminin bilimsel kavranışının feminist yazındaki eksikliğine dikkat çekilmiştir. Bunun bir adım ötesinde, annelik yeniden kavramsallaştırılarak, yeni bir ulusötesi feminist bakış açısı göçmen çalışmalarıyla tanıştırılmıştır. Bu makale annelik kavramının tarihsel arka planını ve kavramın feminist ele alınışı ile kaydedilen gelişmeleri analiz etmektedir. Bahsedilen radikal ve ulusötesi feminist perspektiflerin karşılıklı eleştirileri göz önünde bulundurularak, günümüze kadar annelik kavramına en çok ilgi göstermiş disiplin olan radikal feminizmin bugünün ulusötesi anneliğini nasıl okuduğu tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Küreselleşme • Annelik • Ulusötesicilik • Feminizm

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The Challenge to the Concept of Transnational Motherhood in Migration Studies from Radical Feminist Perspectives

Since the 1970s, the mobility of migrant women has been seen on a large scale, as a result of the high female labour demand globally. Since the 1990s this has led theorists to examine global woman's migration in varied contexts such as sociological, political and economic. Transnational conceptualisations, which have been centre stage in migration studies in recent years, have been used to understand how migrant women themselves, and their families, spouses and children, are influenced by migration. Thus, the notion of transnational motherhood has emerged as a result of this new academic concern. In particular, transnational mothers of transnational families, and the children left behind, have become recent research topics.

Transnational motherhood is a new research field for social sciences. It is a field in migration studies which is being afforded differing and diverse academic contributions from different disciplines. Researchers who have an interest in migrant motherhood (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003, Hochschild, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Parrenas, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2005, 2009) have undertaken considerable research and worked from a gender perspective. Their research concluded by examining women's exposure to gender inequalities in transnational migration. These researchers attempted to develop a transnational feminist perspective, specifically criticising the radical feminist approaches of the previous period. They provided three main critiques of radical feminism related to their approaches to the motherhood concept. Firstly, it was claimed that radical feminist perspectives on motherhood lacked research on migrant mothers and a conceptualisation of their motherhood (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003). The potential of transnational feminism to fill this theoretical and methodological gap was pointed out. Secondly, the transnational feminists supported the postmodernist criticism of radical feminism, revealing the blindness of radical feminism to diversified motherhood categories of different women by ethnicity, class or gender. In addition, they concluded that there could be no more feminist sisterhood based on these differentiations. Thirdly, they argued that radical feminism reproduced the duality of femininity and masculinity, while at the same time claiming that this dualism was the first area to struggle against patriarchy.

I identify a major problem in the reconceptualisation of motherhood in transnational feminism. Although this concept is directly a field of radical feminist interest, many radical feminist discussions, arguments and academic efforts related to motherhood have been overlooked by transnational feminists. The contributions of radical feminism to the literature on the contestation of family and motherhood myths have not been embodied in transnational feminism. This inattention calls to question how it can be possible to have a feminist perspective without mentioning the main discussions of maternity and without targeting the patriarch primarily and directly. The argument in

this paper is that this problem in the conceptualisation of transnational motherhood can be overcome by means of a critical, radical feminist point of view in accommodating its main arguments about motherhood, although some criticism on the part of transnational feminists of radical feminism can be accepted. In the first part, I will look at the historical background of the motherhood concept to illustrate the academic contribution of radical feminist perspectives on the issue. In the second part, I will examine the transnational feminist approach, in which transnational motherhood is conceptualised. Finally, I will discuss the three criticisms on the part of transnational feminism of radical feminism mentioned above and the possible responses to them.

The interest of feminism in the concept of motherhood and the change in this interest over time

There cannot be a single definition of motherhood as a role, concept or social aspect. Although it is usually regarded as a biological phenomenon, motherhood is essentially the phenomenon that changes in definition according to cultural, social, political, historical, religious, and scientific factors depending on various social processes. For this reason, it is necessary to look at feminist history because feminism is the discipline in which the latter academic topic was firstly introduced, raising awareness of the fact that the motherhood concept is socially constructed. It is the guide showing how the conception of motherhood should be properly perceived. Moreover, considering the fight of feminism against patriarchy, which is defined as the social system suppressing not only women's labour but also her sexuality, body and reproduction, the simultaneity of feminist history and the discussion of the motherhood concept socially is not surprising. In this section, I will pursue the historical progress of the motherhood concept before and after feminism to identify what has been changed in this area by feminist contributions.

Before the contemporary feminist approach to the motherhood concept

It is hard to give a definite date for the point at which human beings began to be aware of and give greater consideration to their own bodies, but that they have always been consciously or unconsciously associated with their bodies can easily be understood by looking at efforts to interpret them and their functions. This intercommunication between human beings and their bodies became the subject of a profound philosophical discourse, beginning with Plato and Aristotle, continuing with Descartes and Kant, and extending to post-structuralists today (Lennon, 2014). While the human and body relationship was observed in the context of religion before the Age of Enlightenment, it has since been approached from the context of modernisation. No matter if it is religious or modernist, it is clear that women's fertility, maternity and motherhood have been discussed throughout human history, but rarely by women themselves until the feminist efforts.

At this point, it may be useful to mention the previous period that feminist awareness of women about their bodies and their fertility occurred, and from which the subsequent feminist consciousness of motherhood arose. Before starting, and to avoid confusion, I want to highlight that, with or without a feminist perspective critical or not, there have always been women who embrace and do not embrace motherhood. It is crucial to highlight this since there has been discussion even among feminists about whether a woman should be a mother, and to what extent and in which conditions she should maintain the motherhood role. If this discussion is left aside for now, the most important point here is the feminist recognition of the fact that motherhood is a socially structured phenomenon and an area in which patriarchal coercion is seen.

In the Middle Ages, motherhood roles were taken by women to have equal rights with men and to survive against the sexist constraints of religions. 'A woman's primary function remained to marry and have children that would carry on her husband's family line, especially important due to the high mortality rates of both mothers and children. Mothers assumed the role of primary caregivers for their children, nursing them and providing the instruction needed for them to become productive adult members of society in Middle Age communal cities and rural villages (Trevino, 2010, p. 2). In the following centuries covering the Renaissance period spanning the 1300s to the 1500s, the acceptance of women in society was realised on the condition of her ability to give birth, bring up children and meet marital debt. Women were burdened with this debt for the continuation of familial lineage. They had to give children to their men, preferably sons, to keep their marital status given by the system of laws and social directives. The value of a woman was appreciated by her 'fruitfulness'. This term, shamefully, culminated with witch hunts against women rejecting the fulfilment of motherhood tasks, by charging them with sexual misbehaviour, nudity, sexual orgies, and infanticide (Herzog, 2010).

The resistance to the 'motherhood; the social status bringer' practice and the usage of motherhood as a weapon against patriarchy started to be seen in the 17th century. After that, in the first wave of feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, the idea arose that women deserve to have equal human rights with men, not because of their maternal status, but rather simply by virtue of being human. Wollstonecraft (2014, p. 24) in her book 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman', first published in 1792, demanded justice for one-half of the human race, for women. Even if, in later periods, she was criticised for "her commitment to the middle-class family, and specifically…her belief that motherhood should form the vital center of female cultural identity, with motherhood usually understood…in opposition to embodied feminine sexuality", it is clear that this was another milestone in academic history. Furthermore, it was the step which led to the academic awakening that the exposure of woman is not because of her biology, but because of society.

The rhetoric of motherhood has always lent itself to the use of many adjectives. These adjectives have been the instructions telling a woman how to be a 'good mother' and they have changed according to the mothering ideology of each age (Glenn et al 1994, p. 9). To exemplify, whereas it was 'holy motherhood' in the Middle Ages, by the 20th century, it had become 'national motherhood' (Kandiyoti, 2000; L'Estrange, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 1993; Walby, 1992). It was the time when industrialisation was at its peak, with the wars of the modern age, World War I and II, and thereafter when nation-states emerged. Women were the mothers who were bearing and raising the soldiers for homeland defence and, when men were making war, they were 'the reserve army of labour' (Anthias, 1980; Beechey, 1977).

The fact that women in the West were able to obtain suffrage was to a great extent possible only after World War I, on account of the fact that they had sacrificed themselves during the war and shown their loyalty to their nation (Berktay, 2015, p. 5). 'In some parts of Europe, mothers were given incentives such as medals, financial support, and the approval of daycare to bear children, which became the patriotic duty of women in Germany during World War I and World War II' (Porter, 2010, pp. 2–3). With the return of men to the homeland after the Second World War, the demand for female workers in industry decreased. Most of the women workers returned to domestic and maternity duties. Being a good mother, then, was defined as staying at home, taking care of the children and of their education.

Radical Feminist Conceptualisation of Motherhood

The exploration of motherhood as a socially structured concept was finally carried out properly by second wave feminists, in the second half of the 20th century. These women writers looked at human history from feminist perspectives and noticed that social perceptions of and scientific approaches to the woman's body and reproduction were full of patriarchy-based discriminations. The scientific, political, social and cultural biases were intrinsic to patriarchal practices and the woman's body was defined, oppressed, abused and controlled by those institutions. Aksit (2010, p. 3) compares ancient definitions of female fertility and modernist reflections on them by asserting that "the modernist politics of reproduction, which rooted itself in ancient Greek concepts, also took over the ancient Greek definitions of women's wombs as mere receptacles. This transfer of meaning that influenced modernist practices on the levels of statistics, medicine, and education suggests that transitions are experienced not only in the field of demographics, but also in the meanings attributed to fertility." Özkazanç (2010, p. 6) shows the common scientific use of gender discriminative metaphors in the modern age to be the evidence of this sexism, and asserts that the strong dualist system of science, containing the subject-object, mind-nature, mind-spirit, mind-body, substance-spirit dichotomies, is all based on the sexist dualism of feminine and masculine.

Second wave feminists, particularly radical feminists, emphasised any subject related to the woman's body and sexuality, such as sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, abortion, to name but a few. This was the period in which the most fervent debate on motherhood took place and the concept of motherhood was clearly used in feminist literature. On the one hand, of course, by sticking to the argument that motherhood is socially structured, some of the radical feminists castigated motherhood by emphasising the vitality of the denial of being a mother. They were defending that being fertile could be a disadvantageous biological aspect for women. To exemplify, de Beauvoir (2011, p. 612), in 'The Second Sex', first published in 1949, asserted that 'pregnancy is…a drama playing itself out in the woman between her and herself. She experiences it both as an enrichment and a mutilation; the fetus is part of her body, and it is a parasite exploiting her; she possesses it, and she is possessed by it; it encapsulates the whole future, and in carrying it, she feels as vast as the world; but this very richness annihilates her, she has the impression of not being anything else. A new existence is going to manifest itself and justify her own existence, she is proud of it; but she also feels like the plaything of obscure forces, she is tossed about, assaulted.' Simone de Beauvoir clearly underlined that motherhood is a dichotomous and deterministic concept for women and that being a mother is not necessarily a free choice and 'fun' all the time.

Shulamith Firestone (1972), in her book dedicated to de Beauvoir, criticised patriarchal terms like 'nuclear patriarchal family', 'the childhood myth', 'the femininity myth', 'love', 'romance', and so on. She made her point by addressing that 'the first demand for any alternative system must be: the freeing of women from the tyranny of their reproductive biology by every means available, and the diffusion of the child-bearing and childrearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women.' In the same vein, the loneliness of the woman as a mother was emphasised by Adrienne Rich (1984, p. 12). In her opinion, the choices of women, such as abortion, suicide, abandonment of the child, infanticide, having the child 'illegitimately', would be painful in any of these instances, and the mother's body would change irreversibly, and her mind, definitely, would never be the same.

Regarding giving birth, the infiltration of the second-wave feminism to the academy can be shown as the evidence of the nourishment of the sociological study on childbirth. This sociological curiosity triggered the research on medicalisation and commodification of childbirth. These arguments are based on the determination that female reproduction is subject to medical technology affected by patriarchy, which is why the claim that childbirth shaped by modernity is a natural -isolated from medical and social interventions- incident cannot be acceptable. The body of the woman is controlled by these interventions from abortions to Caesarean surgeries (Oakley 2005). Finally, Pateman (1988, p. 116–126) defined marriage as a contract between men and women, yet differently from the ones in the public sphere such as commercial or employment

contracts. She maintained by her argument that 'to become a wife entails becoming a housewife; that is, a wife is someone who works for her husband in the marital home' and this work includes child-rearing. Pateman expanded her argument to the domestic service tasks of women and, eventually, the sexual division of labour.

In fact, Pateman's argument had already been made by Hartmann (1979, p. 12, 17) approximately ten years earlier. Hartmann had made her point by demonstrating the material base of patriarchy; 'the material base of patriarchy…does not rest solely on childrearing in the family, but on all the social structures that enable men to control women's labor.' She supported her argument by identifying male domination in the family, which works in two ways. First, the inequality between wages earned by men and women, in which women earn less, pushes women to become wives. Secondly, 'women do housework, childcare, and perform other services at home which benefit men directly. Women's home responsibilities in turn reinforce their inferior labor market position.' (Hartmann, 1979)

Some other feminists argued that women should strive to save motherhood from the hegemony of patriarchy. They suggested that women should embrace their motherhood identities and protect them instead of denying them, and that this would be the only way to salvation. Neyer and Bernardi (2011, p. 164) elaborated further onthe given dualism above; "most women become mothers, and many feminists have regarded motherhood as a uniting element among women and have based their claims to rights for women on it. On the other hand, the issue of motherhood has also been one of the anchor points for denying women rights and equality and for discriminating against them." Coulter (2010) identified that "many feminists do not see maternal feminism as feminists." This might be a true observation because, as long as women demand their rights only because of their motherhood status, women who cannot have children or do not want to have children would face the danger of being excluded from these rights. Moreover, even if these rights relieve women's inferiority temporarily, it is ineffective to make permanent changes in the patriarchal system and its claims on the female body in the long run.

Transnational Feminism Presents Transnational Motherhood

In the concept of transnational motherhood, three phenomena have been influential globally; transnationalism, labour feminisation, and postmodernism. Starting with transnationalism, "broadly speaking, immigrant transnationalism refers to the regular engagement in activities that span national borders by foreign-born residents as part of their daily routines. It is important to note that this definition distinguishes regular engagement in economic, political, and socio-cultural activities from more occasional or one-off engagement such as the rare trip to the home country or a

singular cross-border monetary transaction" (Lima, 2010). There has always been a migration management discussion conducted by policy-makers, academics and the general public of the countries which send and receive migrants. This discussion has been situated on the dichotomy of whether migration should be controlled or not. On the one hand, migration can no longer be entirely controlled by the states themselves which witness migration in the global world. Some other global actors are involved in this issue, like the bilateral or multilateral institutions of countries and other global organisations. On the other hand, states still have enough power to control their own migration issues and to make the decision to let migrants in or not (Hampshire, 2013). The transnational approach in migration studies was used to build a conciliative bridge between these two opposing ideas and it emphasised the inclusiveness of these actors and their effectiveness in the migration management processes. This transnational approach was then extended to the point of understanding migrants' personal experiences and situations.

In relation to this enhanced transnationalism, transnational families were initially defined "as families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely 'familyhood', even across national borders." (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 3) "Recently, however, scholars have begun looking more closely at the experiences of parents, children and the elderly, and at how they are gendered." (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007, p. 138) Transnational feminism has been the product of this effort and the adoption of feminism to women migrants' issues. Mahler and Pessar (2001), for example, regarding the relationship of gender and transnationalism, applied a theoretical framework as "gendered geographies of power". This referred to the reaffirmation of gender ideologies and relations by power, yet at different levels according to different geographies. They used this framework to analyse "people`s social agency -corporal and cognitive- given their own initiative as well as their positioning within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains." The subjects of their research were at times the Guatemalan refugee women who did not have the same property ownership rights as their male counterparts, at other times the Haitian women who emigrated from the U.S. and encountered the obstacles of race, class and legal status, and at yet another time, the Dominican women who found little actual liberation after their migration.

Another point to be mentioned is that the specification of mother migrants widely became arguable after the conceptualisation of their migration as "feminisation of labour" (Standing, 1999). This conceptualisation referred to three trends; "the types of employment and labor force involvement traditionally associated with women - insecure, low-paid, irregular, etc. - have been spreading relative to the type of employment traditionally associated with men - regular, unionized, stable, manual

or craft-based, etc." Also, "more men have been forced into the margins of the labor market, if not out of it altogether." A third trend is the rising number of domestic women workers who are from 'half of the world's 120 million legal and illegal migrants' (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003, p. 5). The key motivation of women workers was no longer family reunification, rather these women were single mothers migrating for job opportunities (Hochschild, 2003a, p. 20). In her book, Parrenas (2001b) called the Filipina domestic workers the "servants of globalization" and remarked on their 'disturbingly painful experience' and daily routines, such as part-time work, elderly care, and live-in housekeeping.

Finally, in this period covering the 1990s to the present, the effects of postmodernist trends on social science have been obvious. This postmodernity covers and refers to more diversified ethnic, religious and gender categories in societies than in the past. Post-modern theories, including even the scientific traditions they stem from, criticised all main vein and macro theories claiming that the broad scientific look is not enough to examine the new dynamics of the global world and its effects at the local level. This critical change has been also valid for feminism itself. "Since around 1980, many feminist scholars have come to abandon the project of grand social theory. They have stopped looking for the causes of sexism and have turned to more concrete inquiry with more limited aims." The reasons for this change were explained as the "greater division of scholarly labour" and the necessity to examine the new narratives of women in the postmodern age. This means that the narratives of "poor and working-class women, women of color, and lesbians" should be considered rather than "white, middle-class, heterosexual women who dominated the beginnings of the second wave" (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, pp. 31–33).

Under the effects of these factors stemming from globalisation, the notion of being a mother for migrant women has taken its present state. In respect of global mothering, the questions of how the mothers communicate with their children, whether mothers maintain their motherhood tasks when they migrate, and what both mothers and children think about this separation have been tested. Parrenas (2001a, p. 361), as the prominent researcher on transnational motherhood, discussed 'mothering from a distance' in the case of Filipina worker mothers trying to maintain connections with their children from a distance, from Asia, Europe and America. She explained the separation as a suffering process; 'the pain of family separation creates various feelings, including helplessness, regret, and guilt for mothers, and loneliness, vulnerability, and insecurity for children.' The motherhood ideology in societies was the one of primary causes of this sense of guilt. However, the reason for this ideology was not frankly patriarchy, rather 'inequalities including legal barriers preventing the migration of dependents; social stratification and the segregation of Filipino migrant workers to informal service employment in most host societies; economic globalization and the unequal level of

development among nations; post-industrialization and the demand for female migrant workers; and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments in receiving nation'. Finally, she concluded by hoping for a 'reconstitution of mothering'. This was the hope for a shift from the consciousness, values, and ideologies of the general public to the acceptance of multiple variances of family life in the Philippines.

In other literature, it has been argued that a healthy communication between migrant mothers and their children is fundamental to maintaining maternity duties and relieving the motherhood experience. Parrenas (2005), argued that, thanks to transnational communication, for example exchanging ideas, information, goods, money and emotions, Filipina mothers can develop intimacy towards their children left behind. Similarly, Madianou and Miller (2011), taking this argument a step further, discussed mobile communication of Filipina mothers with their children. This work looked at both perspectives of mothers and children and, overall, drew an optimistic frame for the potential of telecommunication to overcome family separation problems supporting mothers' intimacy and care. However, there were some other problematic points for these women like not affording this technology on a regular basis.

Conclusion: Radical Feminism versus Transnational Feminism

In this section, three criticisms of transnational feminist perspective on the motherhood conceptualisation of radical feminism are considered. First, as mentioned above, radical feminism has been criticised for lacking the awareness of migrant women's experience when coming from different classes and ethnic backgrounds. In responding to this criticism, it was stated that it was too early for the radical feminism to conceptualise global motherhood because the phenomenon of transnational mothering has been seen recently could be used as an excuse. Moreover, the shortcoming of the motherhood concept in the context of transnationalism in radical feminism could be justified by different centres and methodologies of the perspectives in a way of neutral academic progress. However, all these rationales would not have changed the reality that different motherhood categories were ignored by radical feminism. Parrenas (2009, p. 6) expresses her academic position, identifying herself as a transnational feminist; 'I focus not on gender but instead on gender inequalities because I am a feminist, one that has been strongly influenced by Black feminist scholarship of the 1970s.' This is a fair charge to make, because the second-wave feminists had determined mostly the motherhood dilemmas of white and middle-class women, and its arguments were western-centric.

This confession leads the discussion to a consideration of why transnational motherhood does not use a female based academic style but rather a gender point of view, and the reasons for the shifted focus from 'women and migration' to 'gender and migration' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000). This shift refers to the high awareness of the

intersectionality of race, class and gender relations and the recognition of the fluidity of gender relations in the academy (Crenshaw, 1991; Segal & Chow 2015). Collins (1994, p. 46) explains the different dominations of women exploitation: 'while male domination certainly has been an important theme for racial ethnic women in the United States, gender inequality has long worked in tandem with racial domination and economic exploitation.' However, from my point of view, the essence of the motherhood concept is missed by transnationalism because, even if the motherhood experience differentiates according to geographies, power relations, economies and other such factors, the basic principle of the motherhood concept is still the patriarchal pressure on women, which is already forgotten in transnationalism. Conversely, when a male and a female from the same ethnic background, and even from the same class were called to mind, the inequality between them in the motherhood issue would most probably have been based on their genders.

The second criticism underlies almost the same phenomenon, namely 'international division of reproductive labour' according to Parrenas' (2000) conceptualisation and Hochschild's "global care chain" (2001). When women who migrate from developing or undeveloped countries to developed countries to care for their offspring or to fulfil what Hochschild (2003b) describes as the general 'care deficit' in the country, they need care provision for the children whom they have left behind in their countries of origin. The providers of this service might be the relatives of these migrant women, their mothers, or their sisters. However, sometimes they have to purchase other women's labour for this job. In this case, the wages of migrant women in the developed country are always higher than the wages of the women they hire for their children. This chain refers to the hierarchies between employer women and domestic workers and among domestic workers themselves. 'The First World extracts love from the Third World' (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003, p. 25).

Taking this hierarchy among women as the focus, Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003, p. 11) propose that there is no longer a feminist sisterhood sense and alliance among women as second-wave feminists imagined, 'instead they come together as mistress and maid, employer and employee, across a great divide of privilege and opportunity.' I find this point problematic because, while transnational feminists emphasise the differentiation of women's experiences of motherhood according to class and race, expanding this approach to the point of claiming that there is no more sisterhood would break up and harm the struggle of women against patriarchy. I agree with Hochschild's (2003c) argument that 'commercialization of human feeling', which refers to the idea that purchasing "emotional labour", is the new economic and imperial strategy of developed countries. However, these discussions completely lack the critical radical feminist way of thinking that only women are responsible for childcare. This approach has nothing to say about where the 'fatherly love' side stands on this issue (Firestone, 1972, p. 50).

Thirdly and finally, it is argued that the radical feminist approach, in fact, reproduces the patriarchal dichotomy of femininity and masculinity while it tries to develop its arguments against patriarchy. Therefore, rather than a radical feminist point of view, a gender perspective is preferred by transnational feminists because this approach is thought to change the women's focus on care work and to share this responsibility with men. However, it is obvious that this strategy does not work very well. This is an over-optimism of transnational feminists hoping that today's men will share women's domestic burden, although they have had lots of counterproof in their own research. Unfortunately, if they continue to shift the focus away from women's exploitation, men will never take the responsibility on this issue. Furthermore, using the discourse of 'gender' is normally supposed to include all gender categories within this topic, yet there is as yet no such academic effort in transnational feminism, except for a wasted effort to include men.

In conclusion, the conceptualisation of transnational motherhood is, of course, helpful in contemporary migration studies and feminism. However, in this context, I believe that radical feminism should remind transnational feminism of some important points about the motherhood concept. Unfortunately, there are few groundbreaking and new findings in transnational feminism to make a contribution to this concept and to the feminist struggle against patriarchy. The attempt to address the concept of migrant mothering in the context of globalisation and transnationalism is a useful academic effort in the light of the empirical data obtained in research. However, it is not possible to carry out a real feminist struggle by releasing the motherhood concept from its original radical feminist context. Areas such as femininity and maternity are still the areas where women are oppressed by men and subjected to gender inequalities in the 21st century. Despite their race or class differences, in these fields women should always struggle together against the gender roles that are socially imposed on them. Otherwise, a perspective which leaves no space for women to fight together against patriarchy, other than a feminist perspective, is nothing but a superficial and poor scientific attempt trying to capture the postmodern science trends of the age.

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