Care Chains and Agents of a “Transnational Welfare”: New Perspective for Migrant Women in the Care and Domestic Sector in Italy

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Plan

- Context
- Research question
- Novelty of the research
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New Immigrant countries –
transnational migration of women
→ “feminazion of migration” (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Sainsbury, 1994; Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1993 and 1996; Lutz 2008)

Care sector as a structural part of the WS whereas it is a marchandised recruitment of immigrant

Care chain in the origin countries (Parrenas 2001, 2005)

Southern Europe – Italy
“mercantile logic” of quota system
insufficient elderly care services within the WS
flexibility of labor market
undocumented immigrants
irregular work
underground economy
rapid flows of immigration

Ethnic labour niche (enclaves) for care and domestic jobs in the host countries
The research underscores that the expansion of the care-giving sector means that migrant women are **agents of change and pioneers of transnational lifestyles**, while providing care services for their employers they perform “well-being” (from an economic and materialistic point of view) for their families back home. **Domestic workers respond to welfare needs “here” and “there”** (Lutz, 2008)

Transnational welfare is explained as **two-times process**: in the first time, care workers are an important figure in the domestic and private sphere of native employee. In the second time, the role of care workers is essential for the sending states. In both cases, they feed the deficiency of the public intervention and in the -receiving countries they are asked by those families who need assistance for their elderly.
Novelty of the research

This work tackles migration and caring as transnational processes, involving family and kin in the home as well as in the host country.

Transnationalism brings the gender back into immigration studies by giving a perspective from the Southern Europe whereas the foreign women are employed as care and domestic workers.

An “(in)formal path” is followed within the care and domestic sector as the possibility to “(un)succeed” and/or to raise the social and labor scale, together with findings from the ethnographic approach, which pinpoints “strategies/needs” of the migration process by understanding the living and working conditions in the destination countries and the care chain occurred in the native lands.
Intersectionality

interlocks categories of gender, migrant status and ethnic minority within multiple and simultaneously levels of social position within the domestic and care sector (Crenshaw, 1991; Lutz 2008; Andall, 2000).

helps to describe the location of migrant women both within a system of subordination in the household and at the margin of legality in the immigration law of the destination country.

Feminism

pinpoints multiple inequalities, different gender treatment between native and migrants in the private household and in the care labor (Lutz, 2008; Bilge, 2006).

Care resource extraction of care workers generates gender inequalities shaped by welfare regime in globalization (Parrenas, 2005).

Transnationalism

transnational welfare might be the outcome for migrant women who are “at home but not at home”, as they are being a breadwinner for their families back home and an important source of emotional and social support for Italian families.
Northern Italian regions such as Trentino Alto-Adige (North East) and Piemonte (North West)

Women aged between 25 and 55 years old.

Networks of domestic workers, chain and snowball referrals and soliciting research participants by visiting community sites such as parks, plazas and if needed religious sites.
Conclusion

Systematic availability of foreign workers to care for dependent people and to do household work.

Once women migrate on their own, they start a care chain of kin and siblings at home that connects the care and domestic sector with the transnational movement of women. When women arrive at their destination, they face a segmented and ethno-stratified labour market that places them in and characterizes care and domestic work.

Migrant women are located in this labour sector because on the one hand, Italian families are more inclined to hire a foreigner to provide care due to a lack of affordable social services for elderly; and on the other hand, migrant women act strategically to achieve their migration goals by working as care givers or domestic workers.
Thank you

Merci

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