"Gender, migration and social protection in transnational families: exploring the intersections between care circulation and the de-familialization concept."

Merla, Laura

ABSTRACT

The defamilialization concept has been abundantly mobilized for the study of the gendered character of welfare States and, in particular, their action to diminish the burden of child and elder care that heavily rests on women's shoulders. But this theory needs to be revisited in the light of the growing importance of transnational mobilities of care, including the migration of care workers and the transnational « circulation of care » (Baldassar & Merla 2014) between these migrants and their geographically distant relatives. This presentation is based on Degavre and Merla (2016) and aims at revisiting the defamilialization theory in order to better acknowledge the profound transformations within contemporary welfare states in relation with these transnational mobilities of care. This is done through the identification of the points of intersection between the circulation of care and the defamilialization theory. Based on two case studies of domestic migrant workers in Belgium, the p...

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GENDER, MIGRATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN CARE CIRCULATION AND THE DE-FAMILIALIZATION CONCEPT

LAURA MERLA

Gendering Social Protection: Gender, Migration and Resistance
Frankfurt, 20 June 2017
In: Kilkey, Majella; Palenga-Möllenbeck, Ewa,
Family Life in an Age of Migration and Mobility: Global Perspectives through the Life Course,
• Feminist controversies around defamilialization
• Migration as a pathway towards defamilialization?
• Embedding defamilialization in a transnational context
• Moving forward... theoretically and politically
1. Feminist controversies around defamilialization

- Origins: Critique of Esping-Andersen’s typology of welfare regimes, which ignored the situation of women, both in the labour market and within families.
- Focus on women’s rights as workers, mothers and citizens (Sainsbury, 1994).
- Critique grounded in the social reproduction debate.
  - For Knijn and Kremer (1997: 331-2) de-gendered, inclusive citizenship should be based on the assumption that every citizen, male or female, ‘at some time or another has to take care of people they care about’ and will also ‘need care when they are ill, handicapped, or frail and old’.
- => Original definition of defamilialisation: “the degree to which individual adults can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living, independently of family relationships, either through paid work or through social security provisions’ (Lister, 1997:173)”.
- = emancipation of women through paid work, and/or social security provisions guaranteeing the right to provide care.
• Progressive shift towards focus on women’s emancipation through access to paid work, with caring conceived as a constraint
• => Defamilialization =

“the extent to which the Welfare State enables women to survive as independent workers and decreases the economic importance of family in women’s life’ (Bambra, 2007: 327)”.
• Today care work is in large part undertaken by migrant workers. But the own care needs of these workers and their relatives have not yet been taken into account by defamilialization scholars.

• = defamilialization is still understood in relation with ‘nationals of the global North’, and does not take into account the realities of both the ‘global north’ and the ‘global south’ – as well as East-West connections.

• Here I focus on third-country migrants working in low paid/low qualified jobs in Europe, including domestic work.
• Can migration be a form of defamilialization?

Yes...

BUT families ties, duties and obligations do not automatically fade away
CASE STUDIES

Carlita (ELS)  Tante Rosa (BE)

Yasmina (BE)  Sarah (USA)  Olga (USA)  Fausto (ELS)

Fille 1  Fille 2

Josefina (ELS)

Natalia (BE)  Marco (BE)  Alex (BE)  Ruben (ELS)

Fille 1  Fille 2  Garçon 1
• Definition:
Reciprocal, multidirectional and asymmetrical exchange of care within family networks of solidarities:
- that fluctuates over the life cycle,
- And is influenced by the political, economic, social and cultural context of the countries of origin and destination

Caregiving, in the form of services and goods, circulates:
- Horizontally and vertically
- Both upwards and downwards
- Over the family/life-cycle
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of care</th>
<th>Direct provision with physical co-presence</th>
<th>Co-ordination from a distance</th>
<th>Direct provision without physical co-presence</th>
<th>Delegation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>From complete withdrawal to ‘caring about’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cf ‘dormant’ family members (Bonvalet &amp; Ogg 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>visits: tourist, duty, special, routine</td>
<td>Communication technologies:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>letters, cards, telephone,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>email, fax, SMS, skype</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kilkey & Merla (2014)
**Migration: a pathway towards defamilialization?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defamilialization issue 1: Acceptable standard of living?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrants working conditions as obstacles for defamilialization:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cf Influence of legal and employment status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cf estimated wages in domestic/care sector in BE:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• au pair: 440€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• With illegal status: 1000€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Voucher system: 1700€ (b.t.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional care worker: 1800€ (b.t.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defamilialization issue 2: Right to provide/externalize care?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrants intrafamilial duties <strong>in the North</strong> (cf Wall &amp; Sao José 2004):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult access to daycare and work-family balance instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transnational</strong> intrafamilial care beyond the radar (cf Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck’s 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cf Ukrainian mothers living in Poland: lack of access to work-family arrangements in both the sending and receiving country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Migrants stand at the crossroads of 2 systems

« Home »
Country

Care needs and expectations

Migrants

« Host »
Country

Capacity to provide care
= Combining defamilialization, global care chains and transnational circulation of care:

=> Care chains (Hochschild 2005) describe a system of global exploitation of migrant workers in order to fill care needs in the North, and transnational ‘care circulation’ (Baldassar & Merla 2014) helps us understand the dynamics of intra-familial care flows and exchanges taking place within migrants’ families both transnationally and locally.

= A ‘circulation of care’ operates within transnational family networks of solidarity, in multiple directions, with various levels of intensity over the life course, both intra-and inter-generationally, and in situations of physical or virtual co-presence.
How do policies influence the circulation of care?

• Access to, and use of necessary resources for transnational flows of care
• Influenced by formal and informal policies at the cross-section of various regimes (Kilkey & Merla, 2014)
RESOURCES

- Care circulation
- Communication
- Social relations
- Finances
  - Time
  - Education and knowledge
  - Appropriate housing
- Mobility
### Influence of Institutional Contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migration regime</th>
<th>Gendered care regime</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry/exit/residency rights</td>
<td>Right to ‘give care’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to labour market and</td>
<td>Right to ‘receive care’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social security</td>
<td>Gendered care cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overarching approach of migration</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare regime</th>
<th>Social employment regime</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of social rights</td>
<td>Quality of employment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portability rules</td>
<td>- Wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Work/family balance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. MOVING FORWARD...

• Theoretically: We need a more substantive approach of defamilialization that simultaneously:
  • articulates a macro-level social policy analysis of defamilialization with the micro-level of the individuals who actually support or benefit from defamilialization policies;
  • critically addresses the fact that the desire to give and receive care has been marginalised in the current dominant conceptualization of defamilialization
  • Takes transnational phenomena into account

• Politically: It is necessary to think of the possibility to extend the coverage of defamilialization policies to migrant workers while facilitating their access to the resources that sustain family solidarity in a geographically ‘non proximate’ situation.