

Looking at Post-Colonial Feminism: A Reading through the Views of Maria Mies ¹

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Abstract

Post-colonial feminism was born as a reaction to Western feminism. Feminist movements created by Western ways of thinking did not address the problems of non-Western women. Therefore, in countries freed from colonialism, a new feminist movement emerged that addressed the problems of non-Western women. This movement, called postcolonial feminism, addresses the problems experienced by women in postcolonial societies from different perspectives, not in a Western and uniform way. Postcolonial feminism criticizes the patriarchal system to which women are subjected in former colonial countries, along with global capitalism, which brings about gender-based labor exploitation, and in this context, it differs from Western feminism. Although Maria Mies was a Western woman, she focused on the problems of "other" women and looked for the source of the problem not only in patriarchy, but also in global capitalism and labor exploitation. The purpose of this study is to look at postcolonial feminism through her feminist approach.

Keywords: *Feminism, Postcolonial Feminism, Other Women, Maria Mies*

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Sömürgecilik Sonrası Feminizme Bakmak: Maria Mies'in Görüşleri Üzerinden Bir Okuma

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Öz

Sömürgecilik sonrası feminizm, Batı feminizmine bir tepki olarak doğmuştur. Batılı düşünce biçimlerinin oluşturduğu feminist akımlar, Batılı olmayan kadınların sorunlarına eğilmemiştir. Dolayısı ile sömürge olmaktan kurtulan ülkelerde, Batılı olmayan kadınların sorunlarına değinen yeni bir feminist akım ortaya çıkmıştır. Postkolonyal feminizm adı verilen bu akım sömürge sonrası toplumlarda kadınların yaşadığı sorunları Batılı ve tek düze bir şekilde değil, farklı açılardan ele almaktadır. Postkolonyal feminizm eski sömürge ülkelerinde kadınların maruz kaldıkları ataerkil sistemin küresel kapitalizm ile birlikte cinsiyete dayalı emek sömürsünü beraberinde getirmesini eleştirir ve bu bağlamda Batı feminizmden farklıdır. Maria Mies kendisi Batılı olduğu hâlde "öteki" kadınların sorunlarına eğilmiş, sorunun kaynağını sadece ataerkillikte değil; küresel kapitalizmde ve emek sömürsünde aramıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Maria Mies'in feminist yaklaşımı üzerinden postkolonyal feminizme bakmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminizm, Sömürgecilik Sonrası Feminizm, Öteki Kadınlar, Maria Mies

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Introduction

Feminism is an ideologically specific, politically autonomous movement. It was embarked upon the view that women had been in a discriminated, insignificant and inferior position in a society, and that they have always been dispirited and exploited (Çakır, 2016). With the enlightenment period of the 18th century, women gained their own rights in many social areas. They started some social and political movements to seek their rights. In this period. The movements that started, by adding equality between men and women, created a new dynamism and turned into the concept of "feminism". Feminism fundamentally opposes gender inequality advocating equality for women in the political and social spheres. It is an ideology that aims to fight all the oppression that women experienced throughout the years. However, feminist movements have not shown a homogeneous character in societies, and the social structure in which it functions, because they have been impressed by different excitements, ideals and dynamism and conditions (Metintaş, 2018).

Post-colonial feminism developed within the post-modern thought structure in the 1980s and has its origins in post-colonial theories. Post-colonial feminist theorists examine the problems of third world women, whom the Western world describes as "other". They oppose the universalizing tendencies of Western feminist ideas regarding gender (Mills, 1998). Postcolonial feminism focuses on various issues of both the international division of labor in global capitalism and the gender-based division of labor articulated with the patriarchal system, which essentially subjugates the former colonies. Postcolonial feminism covers the conceptual and methodological criticisms brought to the West feminism as this structure creates a difference in the perspective of the issues of the West and the issues of the third world women.

Maria Mies is a pioneer in feminist academic literature with her views combining postcolonial feminism and ecofeminism. While she argues that Western feminism, which is monotonous, is insufficient to understand "other" women, she attributes the still exploitation of women in post-colonial countries to global capitalism, women's confinement to housewives, and environmental destruction. The purpose of this study is to analyze her ideas by reviewing the relevant literature. The feminist understanding, she put forward has made a very important contribution to the common feminist history. She attributed the problems experienced by women, especially in third world countries, to the labor exploitation of global capitalism as well as to patriarchal state and social orders, and criticized capitalism and patriarchy at the same time on this issue. Therefore, it is considered that her thoughts will shed light on future studies in terms of understanding the effects of patriarchy, capitalism and environmental destruction on women.

Feminism as a Concept and Its Historical Development

The origin of feminism is based on the French word "femina", which means "woman". Feminism is a political movement and view that desires to alter the power relations between men and women and its main issue is women's freedom (Çelik, 2020). Feminism is a versatile struggle movement that aims to terminate sexism, abuse and oppression based on sex. All components of the social structure should take an active role in solving this problem. It is very important for men to be involved in this process and have feminist consciousness (Hooks, 2016). Since feminist politics is a struggle to eliminate the sexist exploitation suffered by everyone in society, the cooperation of women and men is necessary for this movement to succeed (Işık, 2022).

The historical development of feminism is named as "waves". The first wave, which started in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft's work "Vindication of the Rights of Women". Call for fundamental rights such as women's voting, official equality and property rights left their mark on this period. Feminists, who had a belief that women and their rights did not take enough concern in the American Averment of Independence and France's Declaration of Civil Rights, expressed this fact at every opportunity (Akbaş, 2020). Elisabeth Cady Stanton published a declaration on women's liberties. This work,

published in the USA, emphasizes that sexes had the same inherent rights and were not superior to each other in terms of any rights (Donovan, 1997). This process was a period in which women struggled more for their legal rights in the world including Turkey.

Second Wave Feminism occurred between 1963 and 1980. Betty Friedan's book "The Feminine Mystique" left its mark on these years. In the book, she said: "Instead of working as a mother, cook, or cleaner 24 hours a day, be yourself, become a doctor yourself instead of dreaming of marrying a doctor". The book changed the lives of thousands of women, directing women to relieve themselves of the burden of endless housework and find jobs where they could use their mental knowledge and abilities (Friedan, 2020). During this period, the slogan "The private sphere is political" came into prominence. Feminists did not see legal rights as sufficient for the liberation of women. A social transformation was necessary and gender discrimination had to be prevented. Beauty contests were protested because they served patriarchy. Women were struggling to have equal rights with men in business life, as well (Habib, 2020).

Third Wave Feminism emerged in the 1990s. The main discussion points of feminism during this period were the fight against sexual harassment in the workplace and the desire to increase the number of women in important decision-making positions. Additionally, the concept of "intersectionality" emerged. This concept was used to reveal a relationship between gender and other systems of discrimination. Offering a new perspective on gender, Judith Butler argued that gender is performative. According to Butler, power is both oppressive and productive. She explained that gender is not precise and consistent and that it is not possible to evaluate this concept by separating it from political-cultural identity attitudes (Butler, 2010). Women's movements during this period also aimed to prevent racism and discrimination (Habib, 2020).

The 2000s witnessed the fourth wave of feminism. Fourth wave feminists are opposed to the governments enacting laws supporting women's return to the family. The 4th Wave feminist movement, as a movement that emerged from the crisis of neo-liberalism and against the politics of misogyny. Although this wave of feminism is called "digital feminism" or "hashtag feminism" in some sources, it emerges as mass street actions that are not limited to digital only (Akdere, 2020).

From Colonialism to Neocolonialism

Colonialism" is defined as the expansion of a state outside the borders of its own country by taking other nations, states, and communities under its political and economic domination (Turkish Language Association Dictionary, 2023).

Although its origins date back to ancient times, it is known that colonial activities began with Geographical Discoveries in the world. The idea of dominating new trade routes led to colonial activities in European countries, reaching as far as India and Java in the 15th and 16th centuries. The quest for raw materials and markets, which increased with the Industrial Revolution in the 16th century, accelerated colonial activities. The first country to start these activities was Portugal, followed immediately by Spain. Historically, establishing colonies and owning large lands were seen as the basic condition of being a great state (Armaoğlu, 2010). The development of industry, population growth, the need for nature material resources and markets for the export of finished goods showed the great powers the necessity of expanding beyond Europe. The initiative for a new colonial empire, which first started in France, spread to other European states (Uygur and Uygur, 2014). European intellectuals began to support this movement intellectually. The aim was to spread European civilization by establishing colonies. Churches also appropriated these movements and began to support colonialism to spread their beliefs (Karal, 1999).

Colonialism, which has become systematic in the world since the 16th century, has left great traces in the exploited states due to the huge differences between the exploiting and exploited states (Ünver, 2022). In the

American continent, the countries of the indigenous people were invaded in a short time, their lands were taken away, the majority of them were subjected to genocidal massacres and their cultural assets were completely destroyed. Except the area of dominance and influence of the Ottoman Empire, all the countries were largely destroyed as the new colonies. From the coasts of South Africa until the second half of the 19th century, the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Dutch, the French, the British and traders from other European states enslaved and took away nearly 100 million people (Memmi, 1967).

In the historical context of the slave trade, an unprecedented phenomenon, the formerly free inhabitants of Africa were commodified and traded as commercial goods within intercontinental slave markets. This has led to significant demographic shifts in various regions across the globe. Voluntary migrations from homelands to colonies, transportation of nearly 100 million enslaved people from Africa to America, migration from one colony to another, Burkina Faso people to Ivory Coast, Bangladeshis to Burma, Indians to the British's Indian Ocean islands and island colonies in the Caribbean Sea., the relocation of Lebanese to French Africa were the most serious examples of this. Indigenous people were exterminated in countries where many people from Europe and especially England settled (Kavas, 2009).

England, which developed and became rich by realizing the industrial revolution in the 18th century, established a great empire with colonies spread all over the world. In the 19th century, industrialization accelerated in other countries such as Germany, France, Japan and the USA. Towards the end of the 19th century, Germany in particular was a rival for England. Trying to open up to the world to find colonies that would meet the needs of its growing economy and increasing population, Germany began to encounter with England and France in many places. There was also a conflict between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia, which tried to increase its political and economic influence in the Balkans (Güldal, 2009). Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East were important regions that witnessed conflict of interests between states seeking new colonies. The First World War, which broke out in 1914, was a war entered into by Western states to expand their colonial empires and emerged at a time when colonialism was at its peak (Avcıoğlu, 1999).

Despite all the suffering experienced during the war, colonial activities continued after the war, but there was a decrease in colonial activities after the war. Colonialism disappeared, or rather changed shape, when almost all of the former colonies gained their "independence" after the Second World War. For example, while there were no independent states in Asia before the Second World War, except for China and Japan, there are no colonies left on this continent today. Likewise, dozens of states gained independence in Africa after the 1960s (Armaoğlu, 2010). Even though the states apparently gained their independence, colonialism continued to exist in different forms in the world after these times.

The concept of "new colonialism", also called neo-colonialism, indicates that colonialism still continues in practice, but its method has been changed and it is done with different tools. Accordingly, neo-colonialism is a modern form of colonialism in which colonial powers indirectly exercise economic, political and cultural control over "developing" independent states, including former colonies (Kural, 2023).

According to Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, which gained independence in 1957, the former colonies achieved independence in theory, but they could not achieve sovereignty in real terms. The reason for this was the ongoing unilateral control of the economy and natural resources by external actors. Neo-colonialism is the worst form of imperialism because it is harder to detect and combat than classical colonialism and does not take responsibility for its actions (Nkrumah, 1965).

While African nations have achieved formal sovereignty, the specter of colonialism still pervades their socio-political landscape. The enduring impact of centuries-long colonial rule is evident in the collective consciousness of the people, the state structures in the post-independence period, and the realms of economy and culture. Neo-colonialism is a form of exploitation in which rich countries keep poor and weak countries

under control not directly by using military force, as in the past, but implicitly through economic and political manoeuvres. To achieve this, it would be sufficient to make the country in question economically dependent on itself and leave it with no other option. Since this method does not involve military intervention, it is out of the question to encounter resistance from the other side. After all, there is no “invasion” (Eckert, 2016).

Feminism after Colonialism: Postcolonial Feminism

Postcolonialism has basically been a movement that emerged in nations that were liberated from colonialism. This movement opposes the view that Western ways of thinking are superior and that European logic, morality and law have the most developed forms (Grovoqui, 2007). The East, which was thought to have been liberated and independent in the 1950-1960s, is still exposed to the cultural, political, military and economic attacks of the West and lives under its pressure. However, the West finds in itself the right to prove that it is an advanced society and to intervene in "underdeveloped" societies, with its efforts to show its power, culture, history, language, art, political structure, social relations, economy and art as superior (Çıtak, 2014).

This attitude against colonialists are also reflected in the feminist movement. Postcolonial feminism, which argues that feminism has been describing and addressing Western women from the very beginning, was born as a reaction to Western feminism. The article named “Can the Subaltern Speak?” by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak which was added to feminist literature, is considered the beginning of the third feminist wave (Spivak, 1988). Other important representatives are some writers such as Chandra Talapade Mohanty, Sara Suleri, Lata Mani and Kumkum Sangari. Post-colonial feminists are also closely related to feminists such as Alice Walker, Angela Davis, Kimberla Crenshaw, who highlight the rights of black women, because they both struggle with the sexist perspective in their own culture and the understanding of Western feminism that ignores them (Kumar, 2013).

In this sense, Postcolonial Feminism, one of the deconstructionist theories, objects to the "common experience" which Western Feminists have been revealing since the beginning of the feminist waves. For this reason, due to its efforts to remove the generally accepted understandings and beliefs from minds, it has taken its place among the deconstructionist theories by underlining that the demands of “other” women. There is a fact that they are not what Western Feminists say, they are what they want to be. The aim of Postcolonial Feminism was to save this theory, which was colonized by Western Feminism, from this situation (Arman and Şerbetçi, 2012).

Post-colonial feminists have tried to realize two important projects: first, to make an internal critique of dominant Western feminism, and second, to create an independent feminist strategy based on geographical, historical and cultural foundations. While the first project involved deconstruction; the second project aims to reconstruct a new theory (Mohanty, 1997). From this perspective, it is possible to say that post-colonial feminists are influenced by post-structuralists (Çelik, 2020).

The feminist view that emerged after colonialism showed up at a point when feminists in colonized regions such as Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America etc. thought that there was no point in being represented by foreigners (Kumar, 2013). Postcolonial feminists wanted to express themselves in their own terms. To erase the economic, social, cultural, psychological and linguistic remnants of the colonialists and to get rid of unfair power structures, local language and culture, which the West has never cared about, are one of the center points of postcolonial thought.

Maria Mies's View of Post-Colonial Feminism

Maria Mies is a German feminist activist, theorist and sociologist born in 1931. Mies, who died in 2023, closely observed the problems of "other" women while teaching German in India. She described those years as follows: “I embarked on my first research experience with the help of an Indian anthropology professor. I conducted a

survey among German language course participants. The result of the "Why German?" survey was as I expected for men: They wanted to go to Germany to study engineering, but women had very different motivations. Most of them attended the course to postpone their marriage and get married later. Participants in the course were women from the middle class. They were allowed to study until they received their bachelor's degrees, after which they had to marry. That was the first time I understood what patriarchy meant. "Not through theoretical studies, but through practice and experience. And this has been my method until today" (Akgökçe, 2023).

After returning to Germany, she studied at the University of Köln. With Sociologist Prof. René König she conducted research on patriarchy in India and Germany. The title of her thesis was "Role Conflicts of Educated Indian Women." This thesis was published in 1973 under the title "Indian Women between Patriarchy and Equal Opportunities: Role Conflicts of Studying and Working Women". Meanwhile, some changes were taking place in Germany and the world. Feminism gained serious momentum with the 1968 movement. Maria read Marx and Engels during this period (Bagley, 1999).

Defining herself as a feminist since 1971, Maria, together with Claudia von Werlhof, began to fight against the structural adjustment programs of imperialism, based on the example of Pakistan. Their relationship with Werlhof later continued on the platform they created against the use of gene technologies in the field of reproduction. She attended the 1st International UN Women Conference held in Mexico in 1975. She realized that she knew very little not only about feminist movements in other parts of the world, but also about the women's movement in Europe. For her, this meant that she needed new areas of knowledge and new forms of communication. She continued her academic writing career by writing about the problems of women in Third World countries (Akgökçe, 2023).

In 1982, she wrote "Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market". This article, which tells the story of these women who have to produce lace under harsh conditions for three cents so that their fellows in the West can wear lace underwear, and this exploitative relationship created reactions. Women in colonial countries were oppressed under imperialist oppression, and imperialism was not the only thing that caused their oppression (Mies, 1982).

The basis of Maria Mies' feminist views was the questioning and criticism of capitalism. In her work "The Last Colony: Women", she stated that capitalism brought with it new inequalities. "Women and colonies are two important realities that serve capitalism. The women's issue is linked to the colonial issue. There is a close relationship between the global capitalist order and patriarchy. In Third World countries, the situation of women in terms of working life, education, health and political participation is completely deteriorating. Our studies have shown that this situation cannot be explained only by sexism. At this point, we have seen that the current functioning of global capitalism has brought women to this situation. How could an economic and social system that is said to be based on individual freedom and promise happiness and prosperity to everyone continue women's deprivation of freedom and inequality? How was it that violence against women was increasing within this supposedly peaceful system? We have found the answer to this question, especially in Latin America and Asian countries. It was not only the patriarchal social order that caused women to fall behind, but also the capitalist system that supported and institutionalized this social order. After all, there would be no development without backwardness, no wealth without poverty, and no male domination without the dependence and subservience of women (Mies, Bennholdt, Werlhof, and Temurtürkan, 2008).

The central focus of this book lies in highlighting the often-overlooked aspect of women's labor, particularly in the context of household responsibilities. The author coins the concept of "housewifeization" to address the systemic negligence of women's domestic labor within the capitalist framework. In such a system, the labor of women, primarily relegated to housework, is systematically disregarded, contributing thus to the acceleration of global capitalism. The method of housewifeization expresses that women's unpaid work at home is naturalized by excluding them from GDP (gross domestic product) and making them invisible. In other words,

domestic labor is seen as a 'free good' by capitalist patriarchy. In society, women who worked outside the home were assigned a complementary role to the work of men. Thus, whether or not the GDP is included in the system, women's labor is devalued. She insists that all social qualities of women, including gender roles, are unfortunately seen as free resources in this system. Marx says that money is the 'queen of commodities'. In fact, in capitalism, this role is given more to women. The real queen of commodities in the capitalist system is women. There is no relationship where women are not presented, and there is no area where women are not used (Demir, 2023).

In the capitalist system, labor is considered a concept specific to men. Another issue where women's labor is ignored is wage labor. In colonial countries, the seizure of the surplus value produced by women workers by the owners of the means of production is seen as the source of both surplus value production and capital accumulation or economic growth. Unlimited growth of productive forces will increase social inequalities. It crystallizes and embodies relations of exploitation, and especially the extraordinary exploitation of women and children living in the so-called "cheap labor countries". This "alternative market" is part of the capitalist world market and the colonies are the cheapest producers. In the capitalist system, the source of abundance is the labor of exploited women (Mies and et.al. 2008).

In her work "Patriarchy and Accumulation", Maria Mies states that capitalist patriarchy dominates women in colonial countries. Capitalist patriarchy has divided the world into different regions at the same time and constructed femininities and masculinities. With the rise of positivist science, control over women's bodies increased and women were exposed to violence and coercion. The spread of family ideology and control over fertility has confined women to the home. While the capitalist order promises free labor to men, it has made women dependent. This historical analysis extended to the current state of capitalist patriarchy, the flexibilization of labor in parallel with the flexibilization of the mode of production, and the most appropriate formula for this new situation was the emergence of labor in the form of housewifery. While the centralized, unionized and male worker has now been replaced by the housewife, women in the colonized "Third World" countries have become the cheapest labor of the International Division of Labor Strategy (Mies, 2014).

Maria Mies is also one of the pioneers of ecofeminism. The book "Ecofeminism", co-written by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, explains the links between the mechanisms that serve to maintain the oppression over women and the destruction of nature, and the role of the understanding of science in the service of patriarchy. Both of them showed that the capitalist system, which threatens life on a global scale today, maintains its existence thanks to its colonization of women and the nature it harms. They believed that the concepts of "modernization," "development," and "progress" were used to destroy the natural world. From Germany to the Himalayas, from Kenya to Japan, in many struggles against ecological destruction, women are struggling to stop the destruction of nature. The system of exploitation fuels the oppression and violence against women that prevail in patriarchal and sexist communities and even in modern industrialized populations (Shiva and Mies, 2019).

In Maria Mies' ecofeminist understanding, the eradication of nature and the profiteering of women go parallel. Mies thinks a return from global capitalist economies to local economies as a solution to these problems. Humanity must see itself as part of the planet and its ecosystem. To recognize the limits of nature, including our own physicality, for the restoration of life; returning to pre-industrial food production; ending the growth frenzy, advocating abundance and diversity instead of monoculture; protecting the local economy and local commons are the most important solutions for her (Toksoy, 2021).

Maria Mies looked at feminism from different perspectives, searched for the causes of the problems experienced by women on a global scale and tried to produce solutions globally for the sake of every living creature. She viewed the oppression of women from a different approach as a Western woman and she was an

important questioner with feminist authors such as Vandana Shiva and Silvia Federici. Feminists who are sensitive for the nature are both activists and philosophers. Maria, who was an example of them, was also a great representative of “Only connect” movement (Lobo, 2023).

“Only connect” movement is an important movement among ecofeminists. The other political views cannot confirm what ecofeminists says and they never seek for answers to the questions like why some people are still thought like animals; why women don’t have the same rights as men; why images of sexually abused children generate thousands of dollars; why animals are killed for their flesh; or why the Earth experiences wars. Species loss is endemic; soils and the atmosphere are being damaged by chemicals (Salleh, 1992).

Maria Mies supported “only connect” movement from beginning to the end. She brought out the deep connections between patriarchy, global capitalism, and colonialism building a different theory for the freedom of “other” women. She challenged all the false facts. Her main issue is that the modern era has always depended on the bleeding of the lands and the people of these countries forcibly. She strongly believes that establishing a political attitude of appreciating the labor of women is essential and she tries to tell the difference between leisure and social labor (Salleh, 1992).

All of her above-mentioned contributions hold significant implications for the liberation of women's labor. In contemporary society, particularly in colonial regions, the majority of labor undertaken by women remains unnoticed and unacknowledged. On the other hand, they work hard at home and workplaces, but they are not mentioned or valued enough. So, appreciating women’s labor, placing it at the center of the economy, and making it visible as much as possible is essential. The labor of women mustn’t be underestimated. Furthermore, Maria Mies emphasizes these countries which have been colonized in a way for years must necessarily build their primacy with more sufficient economies. They must be stronger and they should protect their local values. By challenging the unfair attitudes, she came up with a more dispersed production and utilization model, which would inspire a positive and better nature-friendly tremor (Lobo, 2023).

Conclusion

Feminism is a movement born in the West. Western feminists looked at the problems of all women in the world from the same perspective, and found the problem only in general issues such as patriarchy or gender inequality. With the independence of colonial states in the world, feminism has undergone transformations within itself. Postcolonial feminism was born at this point, showing that the problems of women living in Third World countries are different than Western women. Postcolonial feminism emphasized cultural differences between women and emphasized the fact that problems cannot be solved from a single perspective. Maria Mies looked at postcolonial feminism from a different perspective and introduced new concepts to feminist literature.

As a postcolonial and ecofeminist, Maria Mies touched upon the problems of "other" women. Other women's problems are not only patriarchal and unequal social structures. The biggest problem is global capitalism because global capitalism exploits women's labor in these countries. Women are either seen as cheap labor or are condemned to be housewives. The labor of housewives is not paid; therefore, women are made to serve the capitalist order in some way. This global capitalist order that exploits women's labor also exploits the environment in the same way. In third world countries, these realities are more brutal and capitalism is more brutal. Women in third world countries are objects of exploitation in the global capitalist order under patriarchal states. The global capitalist order, supported by patriarchal perspectives, harms both women and the environment.

As a result, these countries should get rid of foreign dependency and give more importance to locality. In order to get rid of colonialism, it is important to highlight local cultures and differences. Only in this way can women

assert their existence in third world countries. A feminist approach in which all women and their problems are similar will not be able to overcome the problems. Feminism all over the world should transform into a global understanding with a unifying perspective, taking into account cultural differences, and fight against all systems that exploit women's labor, and draw attention to the destruction caused by global capitalism to the environment.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Amaç

Postkolonyal feminizm, Batı feminizmine bir tepki olarak doğmuştur. Bu makalenin amacı postkolonyal feminizme, kapitalizmin ve doğa talanının bir eleştirisini yaparak, yeni bir soluk getiren ve kadınların asıl sömürülme nedenini bu faktörlerde arayan Maria Mies'in görüşlerini ortaya koymaktır. Maria Mies postkolonyal feminizmi ekofeminizm ile birleştirmiş, kadın sorununa özellikle sömürge ülkelerde yaşayan kadınlar temelinden bakarak farklı bakış açıları getirmiştir. Batılı bir sosyolog olarak "öteki" kadınların sorunlarını anlatması feminist literatürde önemli bir yer edinmesini sağlamıştır. Bu çalışma önce feminist teoriyi tarihsel çerçevede ele almıştır. Daha sonra kolonyalizm, neokolonyalizm ve bu kavramların feminizme olan etkilerini kavramsal ve tarihsel olarak ortaya koymayı ve bu bağlamda son dönem postkolonyal feministlerden olan Maria Mies'in bütün bu kavramlara, tarihsel süreçlere ve Batılı olmayan kadınların sorunlarına olan farklı bakış açısını ve katkısını açığa çıkarmayı hedeflemiştir. Maria Mies'in feminist literatüre kazandırmış olduğu yeni bir kavram olan 'ev kadınlaştırma' ön plana çıkarılmıştır.

Tasarım ve Yöntem

Araştırmada öncelikle bir kavram ve teori olarak feminizmin tanımı, kökeni ve çıkış noktası irdelenmiştir. Daha sonra, feminizmin, tarihsel süreç içerisinde geçirdiği dönüşümlere ve değişimlere yer verilmiştir. Bu değişimler kadınların hak taleplerinin değişmesi üzerine kuruludur. Feminizm ‘dalgalar’ üzerinden ilerlemiş bir teoridir. Batı feminizmin Batılı olmayan kadınların sorunlarını anlama ve çözüm bulma noktasında eksik kaldığı düşüncesi, feminizmin üçüncü dalgasında özellikle sömürge sonrası ülkelerdeki feminist hareketlerin çıkış noktası olmuştur. Sömürge ülkelerde kadınların sorunlarını anlamak daha derin bir bakış açısı gerektirmektedir. Bu değişim sürecinde sömürgecilik kavramı ve sömürgecilik ile feminizmin kesişme noktası anlatılmıştır. Bu bağlamda ülkemizde ve dünyada yapılmış çalışmalar incelenmiş, feminist tarih yazımı üzerine önemli eserler incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, tarihi kaynaklardan elde edilen bilgiler ve akademik çalışmalar incelenmiştir.

Daha sonra Maria Mies’in kendi makaleleri ve kitapları üzerinden feminist literatüre katkıları ortaya konmuştur. Çalışmada yöntem olarak literatür taraması kullanılmış, birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan faydalanılmıştır. Bu konuda yabancı ve Türkçe literatürde yazılmış kaynaklar taranmış, Maria Mies’in Batılı bir kadın olarak Doğulu kadınları anlama süreci birincil kaynaklar eşliğinde ortaya konmuştur. Kendisinin feminist literatüre katkısı olan “ev kadınlştırma” kavramı üzerinde durulmuş, kapitalizmin kadınları maruz bıraktığı yaşam biçimi sorgulanmıştır. Bu bağlamda yazmış olduğu ünlü eseri “Son Sömürge: Kadınlar” incelenmiş, buradaki görüşleri ortaya konmuştur. Ayrıca ekofeminizmin de öncülerinden biri olması yine kendi eserlerinden izlerle makaleye yansıtılmıştır. Kendisi hakkında yazılmış makaleler de ortaya konmuş, başka yazarların da bu konuya olan bakış açısı yansıtılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Daha önce Türkçe feminist literatürde kendisi ve feminizme farklı yaklaşan bir postkolonyal ve ekofeminist olarak Maria Mies’in görüşleri hakkında bir makale yazılmamış olması, aynı zamanda Maria Mies’in kitaplarının kritiği dışında da onu ve görüşlerini anlatan İngilizce özgün makalelerin olmaması bu çalışmayı önemli kılmaktadır. Makalenin İngilizce yazılmış olması Maria Mies’in görüşlerinin daha geniş kitlelere ulaşması açısından da kolaylık sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Bulgular

Feminist akım 19.yüzyılda doğmuş, zaman içerisinde kadınların hak taleplerinin değişmesi üzerine değişimlere uğramıştır. Feminizmin temelinde kadınların uğradığı cinsiyetçilikler, eşitsizlikler ve arka plana atılmaları vardır, ancak dünyanın her yerinde kadınların yaşadıkları sorunlar ve mücadele etmek zorunda oldukları gerçekler aynı değildir. Batı’da doğmuş bir akım olarak feminizm, tâki üçüncü dalgaya kadar Batılı kadınların bakış açısını yansıtıyor, sorunları sadece ataerkillik ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğine indirgiyordu.

Dünyada sömürge devletler bağımsızlıklarını ilan ettiklerinde buralarda yaşayan kadınlar Batılı kadınların ve dolayısı ile onların ortaya koydukları sorunların kendilerini temsil etmediğini düşündüler. Bu bağlamda postkolonyal feminizm denen feminist akım ortaya çıktı.

Maria Mies postkolonyal feminizme katkı sağlayan önemli bir isimdi. “Öteki” kadınların yaşadıkları sorunların temelinde sömürgeciliği, onunla paralel giden kapitalizmi ve doğa tahribatını görmüştür. Kadınlar kapitalist sistemde ev kadını olmaya mahrum bırakılmakta, ücretsiz ağır işçilik yapmaktadır. Küresel kapitalist sistem kadınların emeğini yok saymaktadır. Bütün bu eşitsiz düzenden en çok sömürge sonrası ülkelerde yaşayan kadınlar etkilenmektedir. Bu ülkelerde yaşayan kadınlar her koşulda dezavantajlıdır. Hem bu ülkelerin ataerkil yaşam koşullarına hem de kapitalist sistemin yol açtığı eşit olamayan koşullara maruz kalmaktadırlar.

Batı feminizmi ise hiçbir zaman sömürge ülkelerdeki kadınların ezilişlerini ve sorunlarını anlamamakta, bütün bunları yok saymakta ya da bu gerçeklere yüzeysel bakmaktadır. Kadınların ev kadınlştırılması emeklerinin

ücretlendirilmemesi onların ataerkil kapitalist düzende yok sayılması anlamına geliyordu. Birçok kadının da ucuz işlerde çalıştırılması emek sömürüsü anlamına geliyordu.

Kapitalist sistemin doğaya verdiği zarar ile kadına verdiği zarar paralel gidiyordu. Her koşulda bütün bunlardan kadınlar etkileniyordu. Bu bağlamda sömürge sonrası ülkelerde yerel ekonomiler canlandırılmalı, dışa bağımlı değil, kendi kendine yeten ekonomik sistemler kurulmalıydı. Küresel kapitalist sistemin doğaya verdiği zararın önüne geçilmeli, bu ülkeler dışa bağımlılıktan her anlamda kurtulmalı, kendi içlerinde doğayı koruyacak önlemleri ivedilikle hayata geçirmeliydi.

Sömürge sonrası ülkeler her anlamda dışa bağımlı olmaktan kurtulmadıkça, resmîyette olmasa da sömürge olmaya devam etmektedirler. Diğer taraftan, kendi kendine yeter ülkeler hâline gelirlerse ancak kadınlar ve doğa özgürleşebilir. Sömürge ülkelerin özgürlüğü aynı zamanda kadının özgürlüğü demektir. Bütün bunları anlamak Batı dışındaki yaşamları irdeleyebilmek ile başlar.

Sınırlılıklar

Bu araştırmada en önemli sınırlılık Maria Mies'in hayatına ve görüşlerine dair Türkçe bir akademik kaynak olmaması ve bu konuda İngilizce akademik kaynakların da oldukça sınırlı olmasıdır. Ayrıca postkolonyal feminizmin, ekofeminizm ile olan yakın ilişkisini sorgulayan akademik kaynaklar, feminizmin diğer türleri ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalara göre daha az sayıda kalabilmektedir.

Öneriler

Türkiye'de her ne kadar feminist araştırmalar sıklıkla yapılsa da özellikle postkolonyal feminizm ile ilgili araştırmalar oldukça sınırlıdır. Yapılan feminist akademik çalışmalar, postkolonyal feminizmin kapitalizm ve ataerkillik ile ilişkisini daha fazla sorgulamalı ve ön plana çıkarmalıdır. Yapılan akademik çalışmalarda kapitalist düzenin kadınların emeğini arka planda bırakması vurgulanabilir ve ataerkil düzenin kapitalizm ile olan ilişkisi ülkemizde yaşanan tarihsel süreçler üzerinden açığa çıkarılabilir. Ayrıca postkolonyal feminizmin ekofeminizm ile olan yakın ilişkisi de ülkemizde yapılan akademik çalışmalarda üzerinde durulması gereken önemli bir konudur. Türkiye'de çevre tahribatları, küresel ısınma gibi sorunlara dikkat çeken ve bu konuda faaliyetler yürüten kadın örgütleri son dönemde oldukça aktif olarak varlıklarını sürdürmektedirler. Bu noktada Türkiye'de daha fazla nitel ve nicel çalışmalara yer verilebilir. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye'de kadın örgütlerinin ekofeminizme olan katkıları akademik çalışmalar ile sorgulanabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Özgün Değer

Postkolonyal feminizmin daha derinden incelenmesi, ataerkillik, kapitalizm ve doğa tahribatı arasındaki ilişkinin ortaya konması oldukça önemlidir. Batılı olmayan kadınların yaşadıkları sorunların tek boyutlu olmadığı gerçeği vurgulanması gereken bir gerçektir. Türkiye'de yazılan birçok makalede postkolonyal feminizm kavramı teorik olarak incelenmiş, belli başlı yazarların görüşleri üzerinden açıklanmıştır, ancak postkolonyal feminizme farklı bakış açıları getiren yazarların da görüşlerini ortaya koymak, feminist literatüre katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda Maria Mies'in görüşlerini ve feminist literatüre olan katkılarını ortaya koyan bir akademik çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Makalenin İngilizce yazılmış olması, yazarın görüşlerinin dünyada okunup anlaşılması açısından da kolaylık sağlayabilir.

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