

Invisibility of Different Mothering Types In the Face of Mothering Ideology

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Mothering ideology as a historical, social and cultural construction and project continues its dominance in different ways in many communities. In male-dominant communities, mothering practices that demand "the protection of children (including supervising both children and their environment), their upbringing (including providing conditions for physical, social, emotional and mental development) and making children acceptable individuals in the society (including educating children to become "ideal adults" in the society) as part of mothering ideology have been made exclusive to women, claiming that motherhood is integral to women's nature. Furthermore, according to this ideology, mothers need to be only child-centered and dedicate their time, energy and love as well as resources to their children in order to become a good mother. If mothers fail in fulfilling their obligations and/or their children prefer 'unusual' lifestyles and exhibit inappropriate behaviors", dominant mothering ideology in the society displays "the perception of not being a good mother" and blames these mothers. Such idealization of the mothering practice tends to invalidate individual experiences and present different mothering practices as failure (not being a good mother). The experiences of mothers who are regarded as "not ideal" such as convicted mothers, mothers with disabled, LGBTI or addicted children against such dominant narratives are not pointed out adequately. This study aims to explore the reflections of mothering ideology in social work with examples from Turkey in terms of different mothering experiences such as convicted mothers, mothers with disabled, LGBTI or addicted children that we meet in social work practices and are not accepted as part of mothering ideology. For this purpose, the results of the research on the subject and social work experiences in Turkey will be discussed in the study.

Keywords: Mothering ideology, Social work practice, Mothering experience

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