Exclusion of Women in Migration Studies

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Abstract
This paper bases on the literature review to signify that women have been largely invisible in migration studies. It shows that there are different factors for migration, referred to as push and pull factors. Generally migration is considered as a strategy for livelihood promotion as people always migrate to seek better living condition. However, though factors for migration do apply to both men and women, there has been invisibility of women in migration studies. There are both empirical and theoretical evidence that substantiate such women invisibility. Empirically, this paper clarifies that, the exclusion of women has been in terms of patriarchal geared data collection methods and partial migration spectrum coverage in migration studies. Since 1980s there has been three phases for Inclusion of Women in migration studies. These phases of inclusion of women in migration studies signify that efforts have changed from just adding women as a variable inside migratory processes; to looking at a woman in migration through a gender lens and specifically considering gender as a key element of immigration. Theoretically, it is deduced from Ravenstein’s Theories of Migration and Lee’s Push-Pull Migration Model, that gender relations have been ignored as basic in influencing processes of movements among migrants.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Human migration
Human Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. Migration can be permanent, temporary, voluntary or forced. It can be international or internal. Migration can occur as result of push and pull factors. Push factors are those which force a person to move. This can include drought, famine, lack of jobs, over population and civil war. Pull factors are those which encourage a person to move. These include a chance of a better job, better education, a better standard of living (www.internetgeography.net: October, 2013).

Migration as a strategy for livelihood promotion
Generally, migration is considered as a strategy for livelihood promotion. It is agreed by most researchers that, in the majority of cases, people migrate internationally in an effort “to get ahead” (Malkin 2004), to provide a better life for themselves, their children, or their family members left at home. For Holms (2002) and Mabogunje (1980), a higher quality of life is a motive for migration because people tend to migrate because of business, wage labor, access to family or friends, health services, and transport facilities.

History of migration in Africa
Historically, migration in Africa is an issue that took place before and after colonialization, and it is completely linked with political, economic and historical evolution of African Societies (Adepoju, 1995). Before colonial period, population movements are explained as a result for search for subsistence food, greater security and shelter. During the colonial period most people’s movements become a logical response to the economic benefit of colonial governments. For example, the colonial economies needed an expanded labor force to work in copper mines in Zambia, to export cotton in Angola and Mozambique and to construct railway lines in Tanganyika.
The available literature on migration does also confirm that most population movements became a logical response to the regional inequalities in development, income and employment. Migration became eminent in meeting the needs of labor demand (Adepoju, 1995).

**Existence, causes and impact of migration**

With time, migration flows are changing the political, social and economic map of Africa. The environmental disasters (drought and desertification) as well as wars in Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Southern Sudan are the cause of refugees’ movements in East African countries. For Central Africa, migration is associated with ethnic conflicts, which became highly significant in 1994 following genocide in Rwanda, civil wars in Burundi and disintegration of the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1997 (IOM, 2000).

In Tanzania, given the fact that unemployment has been seen as a major problem since independence, there has always been rural-urban migration (URT 2003). Thus, migration in Tanzania is explained as based on social, economic, and individual factors, with the main theory based on free migration due people’s differential opportunities, which either push or pull them to urban areas, or to rural areas (Mascarenhas 1996) for better livelihood standards (Von Troil 1992).

2. **METHODOLOGY**

This paper forms part of a research work on the ‘influence of patriarchy ideology on Women Rural-urban migration in Tanzania’ that has been carried out by the first author in selected areas in Dodoma region and Dar es Salaam city. The article is based on the information obtained through a desk review of the scientific literature, and research reports on migration in general and the position of women in migration studies in particular. This implies that the whole analysis and discussion relies on the literature review. The next section we discuss the empirical and theoretical evidence on the exclusion of women in migration studies.

3.0 **Exclusion of women in migration studies: (theoretical and empirical support)**

3.1: Empirical support (and research gap) on existence of exclusion of women in migration studies.

Women have been invisible in migration studies. Feminism in Africa is located in the continent’s historical realities of marginalization, oppression and domination brought about by slavery, sexism, racism, ethnicity and class. It is therefore important that before one talks about feminism in Africa, he/she has first to understand how these issues have shaped the lives of African women and their world view. Because of continued domestication of women under patriarchy today in some parts of Africa, women are invisible; some are powerless and homeless. Women are homeless because in their parent’s homes, girls are treated as visitors because at some point, they will marry and move to husband’s family.

Empirically, different scholars have vividly indicated the way women have been excluded in migration studies. The foundation for their concern on women exclusion in migration studies is based on sociological fact that both men and women are shaped by society and they shape the society as well. This means that they are all products of society. Basing on behavioral approach it is assumed that both men and women are influenced by the ideologies and cultural norms that determine gender roles, which make them prone to adapt to the expectations that are placed on them (Chant and Radcliffe, 1992). This approach has also been identified by other scholars, who argue that it is important for examining the interaction of a migrant’s individual characteristics with the prevailing norms and values that determine gender relations and gender roles in female migration (Lim, 1995; Thandani and Todaro, 1984).

This signifies that it has been a great error in academics, that for a long time a woman has been given a little attention in matters pertaining to migration. John Anarfi (1998) explains that, until the 1970’s female migration was in general not observed such as male migration. Though there have been early efforts to promote equality between men and women, still there has been patriarchy based way of looking at the issue of rural-urban migration. Rural-urban migration has always been considered to be mainly motivated by men’s search for employment in the industries located in the urban centres (Anthias and Lazardis 2000; Berry 2000; Wright 1995).

**Exclusion of women in migration research (in data collection and migration experiences & contexts)**

The exclusion of women in migration studies has been revealed in migration research. Basically, there
has been patriarchy based way of looking at the issue of rural-urban migration in terms of data collection methods and migration spectrum coverage in the study. Technically, women have been excluded or not taken seriously in quantitative migration scholarship specifically within research. This has been in terms of who has been regarded has important respondent as far as issues of migration need answers; but on the other hand there has been a failure to observe pre- and post-migration experiences and contexts (migration spectrum coverage) in migration works (Tienda and Booth, 1991), which gives chance for exclusion of women in studies. Consequently, such two limitations have had different implications on both men and women. On the first instance, as far as data collection is concerned, there has been the male bias embedded in migration studies, e.g., the longstanding practice of interviewing only (or largely) men (Pessar, 2003). By asking most questions to household heads (for the most part these are identified as men), these projects have limited data about women (Hugo, 1993; Zlotnik, 1993, 1995; Hondagneau-Sotelo, 2003; Pessar, 2003).

Secondly, failure to observe pre- and post-migration experiences and contexts has resulted into a situation where researchers only focus on migrants, losing sight of non-migrants (frequently women). Therefore, without these data, quantitative studies on gender and migration are biased toward the experiences of men, especially for migration flows where men migrate first and then women follow. The discrepancy above signifies the existence of a gap in migration information that can be only filled by getting information from both men and women. When studying issues of gender and migration the inclusion of both men and women will give a room for getting information on the role of patriarchy ideology on women migration.

**Phases for Inclusion of Women in migration studies: What was wrong in them?**

With awareness on the need to include women in migration studies, there have been different phases of studies aiming at including women as subjects and objects of research. These have been induced by the Development of the Migration Theory that requires inclusion of social relations as an important factor inducing migration. Referring to the international literature on female migrations and gender-migration, we can distinguish three phases:

The early phase (1980s) of research on “women and migration” sought to remedy the exclusion of women subjects from immigration research and to counter sexist as well as andocentric biases (Hondagneau-Sotelo, 2003). The majority of studies of this phase do not analyze how gender, as social system, shapes migratory processes for everyone, men and women. They just either add women as a variable inside migratory processes or present some ethnographic description of immigrant women in different contexts. Although this phase was the beginning of inclusion of women in migration studies, it lacked a critical look on women in migration. Nevertheless, there was a special number of the *International Migration Review* from 1984, dedicated to female migrations, which is in some way the threshold between first and second phase.

In the second phase, (correspondent to the eighties) and to the beginning of the nineties, gender is recognized as a “set of social practices that shape and are shaped by migration.” The recognition of gender in migration was the beginning of having a critical look on women in migration. Prompted in part by the disruption of the universal category of women in feminist scholarship, by heightened awareness of the intersectionality of race, class and gender relations, by the observation that men possess, display and enact a variety of masculinities, and by the recognition of the variability of gender relations, this research focused on two aspects: the gendering of migration patterns and how migration reconfigures new systems of gender inequality for women and men. (Hondagneau Sotelo, 2003).

The third phase, 2000s and beyond, looks at gender as a key element of immigration. In this phase, (by the year 2003), research begun to look at the extent to which gender permeates a variety of practices, identities and institutions implicated in immigration. (Hondagneau-Sotelo, 2003). Generally, rural-urban migration has been explained as a function of several indicators but more importantly is the cost-benefit calculation between the point of sending and destination (Todaro, 1980). On this basis, the differentials in income levels between the sending and destination areas serve as the basis for such movements. But there are no data on role of gender on income levels in both areas and how it determines the whole process of sending remittances to rural areas. This being the case, a study on women rural-urban migration would be required to look at a life of a woman migrant in destination areas and the
way she maintains networks with relatives from her area of origin.

3.2. Exclusion of women in migration: a theoretical deduction

The exclusion of women in migration studies is also observed within different theories of migration. This is in terms of how they fail to capture issues of gender in factors of migration. Ravenstein’s Theories of Migration and Lee’s Push-Pull Migration Model do signify this weakness.

Ravenstein’s Theories of Migration

His theories of 1980s give a starting point for many other theories. His theories stated the main characteristics of migration and their relationship to physical and level of development of an area. In his second law, he states that the movement of migrants often occurs like chain-migration, first the migrant move from the rural area to the nearest town and then from the town to a larger town. However, he does not indicate how gender relations influence such a process of movement among migrants. By so doing it fails to capture social relations (a basic element in migration) in which the gender position of women would be taken care in migration process.

Push-Pull Migration Model

According to Lee (1966), under this model, both at the place of origin and the place of destination, there are positive and negative factors that encourage and/or discourage people to live in that area. Lee divides the factors of migration into four different groups, the first group involves the factors that are linked to the area of origin and the second group links factors to the area of destination, the third and the fourth group treats intervening factors and personal factors. Lee explains that every one of the four groups has numerous factors that intervene with people’s choice to stay or to leave the area. The groups involve factors that tend to pull people towards one area and factors that push them away from another area. Lee points out that the factors are different for every migrant and it is difficult to understand every factor though the factors tend to be inexact. The factors associated with the four groups are different because of the judgments the migrants have about the origin area therefore the factors are better defined when the decision to migrate have been thoroughly reconsidered. The images of the area of destination are usually inexact because there is usually a lack of knowledge of the area of destination. Furthermore, there are factors that cannot be discovered until living there. Lee explains that a person’s own individual emotions, knowledge and intelligence can affect the outcome of a decision to migrate or not. Some people need more convincing reasons to migrate than others. Lee also explains that migration can occur because of different life cycle stages for example, employment opportunities, retirement and marriage.

The main factors that encourage someone to remain in the area of origin may include property ownership like land and houses, and the favorable physical conditions like climate and environment. The factors which tend to push people out of the area of origin include wars, bad climate and disease, while others which are classified as “o” make people essentially indifferent or not decide to migrate or not. These factors include low education attainment and commitment to family obligations. This model is criticized for not explaining the factors of migration and the intervening obstacles explicitly (Todaro, 1976).

However, both push-pull factors cannot exclude a woman at all. Lee does not show the extent to which these positive and negative factors may be gendered i.e. the way both men and women play within these factors in the migration process. He does not show how gender relations may influence judgments the migrants have about the origin area; and the knowledge they have on area of destination. Furthermore, there are factors that cannot be discovered until living there. He does not show how gender relations may determine property ownership that encourages someone to remain in the area or just leave.

CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that though migration is a livelihood promotion strategy for both men and women, existing literature substantiate that there has been little or uncritical consideration of women as migration subjects. Practically researches on migration studies have for a long time in the past failed to capture issues of women in migration by just relying on men as researchers on one side and men as the only respondents on the other. Theories of migration which tend to identify factors for migration do also fail to consider the way gender relations may determine the nature of factors that both man and women experience and the way they experience
them. A critical consideration of women in migration studies would therefore begin by regarding gender as a key element of immigration. This will be by examining the extent to which gender permeates a variety of practices, identities and institutions implicated in immigration. By so doing, issues of women in migration processes will be given room for analysis and understanding. Specifically it will be understood on how gender inequality creates different experiences between men and women within a migration spectrum. Such knowledge is important in development planning where issues of both men and women have to be taken aboard.

REFERENCES


