



Woman in Development and Politics

From Spirituality to Rationality, Exploring the Paths of Adaptation and Survival of Marginalized Immigrant Women in Yazd City

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

The endeavor and movement of the populace are indicative of the dynamics and limitations of those who view their geographical field as their own. Migration is thus a logical and natural process in which they engage (Akbari et al., 2020). Furthermore, the feminization of immigration is regarded by Castells & Miller as a defining feature of the immigration era (Mushfiq & Khazaei, 2015). Changes in the quantitative and qualitative aspects of women's migration are supported by research. Similar to the quantitative aspect, women constitute nearly half of the immigrant population. Furthermore, in terms of quality, they no longer merely exist as dependent immigrants, but rather exert a significant and proactive influence on migration patterns (Radowicz, 2021: 39). An essential component of the feminization of immigration is gender. Gender influences migration outcomes and impacts at both the origin and destination, influences whether individuals are motivated to migrate or dissuade them from doing so, and significantly impacts the identity formation and integration of migrants (Sadeghi & Valadvand, 2015:59; Jolly et al., 2015:1). With this in mind, the extent to which women attain advantages such as improved employment prospects and academic environments can expedite their adjustment and potential for assimilation into the host society (Alaadini & Rahimi, 2022:31; Nouri et al., 2019: 106). Insofar as securing a suitable occupation is a determinant of acceptability during the acculturation process in the host society, this issue is significant. Migration is a survival mechanism for women in low human capital and a solution for career and personal advancement in countries with a high human capital (Mushfiq & Khazaei, 2015: 85-86). As of 2020, the proportion of immigrant women relative to the global female population stood at 3.5%, while the corresponding figure for immigrant men was 3.7% (United Nations, 2022). Additionally, surveys conducted in Iran reveal a rise in the proportion of women participating in intra-provincial migrations, surpassing that of men. Yazd province, which is a desirable and suitable immigration destination for both sexes, is among the first four provinces in the country to welcome immigrants, according to net migration data from 2006 to 2011 and 2011 to 2016 (Mahmoudian & Mahmoudiani, 2018: 60). This study endeavors to address the following fundamental inquiries: How do marginal and low-income immigrant women in Yazd city survive? Do their actions stem from spirituality or rationality? How are their activities shaped and what is the trajectory of their existence from the point of origin to the final destination?

Methodology

The present study employed qualitative methodology and a grounded theory approach, following Strauss and Corbin's (2008) systematic methodology. The selection of participants for this study was conducted using purposive and theoretical sampling techniques. The participants were required to meet the following inclusion criteria: they must be female and possess experience in immigration, either as an independent or subordinate. An endeavor has been undertaken to incorporate diversity in the sample selection process, encompassing factors such as the occupation, purpose, and classification of migration (independent-subordinate), as well as the provinces of origin and the age and marital status of women. To ensure the acquisition of dependable data, the interviews persisted until data saturation was achieved. With this in mind, an interview was conducted in October 2022 with 21 women who had immigrated to Yazd from various provinces of the country and had been residing in this city for a minimum of two years. These women possessed the aforementioned qualities. The method employed to gather data for this study was a semi-structured interview.

Results

Consistent, continuous, and systematic data analysis resulted in the development of the

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fundamental category of survival, which encompasses everything from spirituality to reason. Origin bonds, incapacity at the origin, unlived life, fear of migration, generational gap, and persistent tension were identified as causal conditions that contributed to the formation of the central phenomenon of survival from spirituality to reason. The participant's strategies have been impacted by personal and social characteristics, including individualism, self-defeating tendencies, and fatalism, which have further influenced the phenomenon. The implementation of the strategy has been facilitated or hindered by structural and macro conditions, including the lack of security at the origin, the vortex of origin, normative-hegemonic pressures against women, and policy errors that serve as interfering conditions. Due to the intervening and contextual factors that influence the phenomenon, immigrant women have developed coping mechanisms including the substitution of childhood aspirations for assimilation tendencies, maintenance of standing, and constructive hope. Adoption of the strategies has resulted in a transformation of the destination, institutionalized mistrust, a sense of community characterized by poverty and misery, and a dread of living in the destination.

Conclusion

Due to the correlation between material possessions and human survival in the actual world, rational strategies are required to ensure and facilitate survival. Consequently, the escalating repulsions stemming from the origins, such as the shift in perspective among young women and girls, particularly mothers, regarding accepting fate in opposition to their predecessors, and political blunders manifesting in the form of an unjust allocation of national resources and the government's abandonment of certain platforms, constitute circumstances that jeopardize survival and the attainment of objectives. It renders a satisfactory standard of living unattainable, compels women to embrace practical means of subsistence, and ultimately compels them to migrate for their own and their children's sake. Conversely, women who adopt a solely rational stance, mirroring the fatalism of their predecessors, find it difficult to endure the arduous conditions of migration. This includes overcoming the fear of migration and the anxiety associated with settling in a new city and severing ties with their hometowns of origin. While materialism continues to be regarded as the primary motivating factor along this path, the presence of spirituality among immigrant women serves to instill hope and facilitate healing, mitigate the psychological harm caused by this significant transition, enhance their adaptability, and offer assistance in their endeavors to ensure and facilitate survival. Notwithstanding the escalating emigration of women, the body of research in this particular domain remains limited. The various facets of women's migration necessitate additional quantitative and qualitative research, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary inquiry. This facilitates a deeper comprehension of the migration process undertaken by this demographic and enables the implementation of more effective policies to support their existence in the host country. Ultimately, this can promote a more seamless integration of these individuals by mitigating the social anomalies that arise from the escalating difficulties they encounter in their new urban environment.

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