



Woman in Development and Politics

Construction of Split Identity: Conditions and Consequences of Independent Migration for Young Women

Hossein Afrasiabi¹  | Zahra Khoramian² 

1. Corresponding Author, Full Professor of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran. E-mail: hafrasiabi@yazd.ac.ir
 2. Master of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran. E-mail: zahra.khoramian@stu.yazd.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Research Article

Article history:

Received: 21 October 2023

Received in revised form: 5

April 2024

Accepted: 8 May 2024

Published online: 5 July 2024

ABSTRACT

Introduction

The advancement of women has resulted in greater economic, social, cultural, and political empowerment and mobility. Individual and familial geographical mobility and the role of women in migration have intensified in tandem with shifts in the status and responsibilities of women. As a result of changes in their lives, personal development, and increased independence, girls' independent migration has acquired momentum and is now a way of life. Transformations in societal values, alterations in gender roles, and fundamental changes in attitudes and social foundations have collectively created a fertile environment for their mobility. The new world has altered the perspectives of numerous women in our nation by offering a wide range of educational and employment prospects. These changes have enabled the spatial displacement and mobility of women, much like numerous other individuals in modern society. Recent years have seen the influx of migrants from all over Iran into Yazd. Census data from 1365 to 1395 indicate that the migrant population in the province of Yazd has increased steadily. Equally significant in this demographic transition have been the contributions of women. More than 47% of the interprovincial migrants in the nation are female. The aforementioned data suggests that women in Iran undertake domestic migrations autonomously. During the decade spanning from 1375 to 1365, the proportion of female migrants in Iran was 45 percent (Moshfegh, 1394). Yazd has emerged as a prominent destination for internal migrants owing to a multitude of factors, including technological and industrial progress, abundant employment prospects, the establishment of numerous educational and cultural institutions, security concerns, and its favorable reputation. Although to a restricted degree, Yazd has facilitated advancements and employment prospects for migrant females, which is consistent with the aspirations of progressive youth. We decided to investigate the city of Yazd for the aforementioned motives. The objective of this study is to investigate the holistic circumstances of migrant females, as they perceive them. This qualitative study seeks to comprehend the perceptions of young women regarding independent migration to the city of Yazd, as well as the repercussions of such migration. We aim to obtain responses to inquiries including the following: What motivates and provides context for the migration of young women to the city of Yazd? What are the repercussions of migration on young women?

Methodology

We employed a generic qualitative research approach. This methodology endeavors to comprehend the phenomenon and formulate a conceptualization of it by drawing upon the experiences and viewpoints of individuals who have encountered it (Merriam, 2016). To identify participants (samples), we implemented the snowball and purposive sampling techniques. 18 individuals were ultimately chosen for interviews on the basis of theoretical sampling. Sampling came to a close when theoretical saturation was reached and no further information could be obtained from additional samples. This investigation made use of semi-structured interviews. The classification procedure utilized in this research was conducted in accordance with the principles of grounded theory coding (Charmaz, 2015:50). The interview texts as a whole were initially perused, and initial concepts and overarching themes were identified. The interview data documents were subsequently reexamined with an attempt to decrease the quantity of themes. This iterative procedure proceeded from data to themes on multiple occasions. By means of coding, the process of data being converted into themes and vice versa was carried out line by line. The transcription process was conducted in accordance with ethical principles while capturing the conversations.

Results

We identified 130 initial concepts through this procedure; these were subsequently categorized into seven overarching themes according to semantic resemblances. Housing

Keywords:

Girls,

Women,

Migration,

Independent Migration,

Identity.

instability and overcrowding, aversion to oddity, job and financial security, preference for independent living, family pressure and control, personal advancement, and host community distancing are among these major themes. We ultimately developed the cycle of unstable life-identity (bipartite) as a central theme by synthesizing the primary themes and identifying the preponderant aspect of the interviewees' narratives. The life patterns and interpretations of immigrant females can be encapsulated within the framework of dual identity. This type of identity develops during a period of life instability. From their country of origin to their final destination, the lives of immigrant females have been impacted by an unstable or pendulum-like cycle. Migration is facilitated by instability at the point of origin; this instability is sustained by a lack of approval and support at the destination, which complicates migration and return and exacerbates problems and instability at the point of origin. Migrants often depart from precarious social backgrounds with the expectation of attaining stability in their new environment. However, histories and causes of instability at the destination must also be considered. Within this tunnel of precarious existence, they construct a dual and precarious identity. An identity comprising elements that are both valued and avoided. They desire autonomy and the ability to conduct their lives as they see fit. However, when placed in an unfamiliar cultural milieu and forced to endure isolation and loneliness, they are coerced into carrying out actions against their will, including role-playing and concealment. They construct a dual identity, which possesses both their desired and undesirable characteristics. Unstable life at the source: This indicates that migrant women have encountered instability in their country of origin prior to their migration, and this instability has served as the catalyst for their decision to migrate. The unstable environment has emerged as the primary impetus behind their migration. Bipartite life at the destination pertains to the dual experiences of positive and negative aspects that immigrant women encounter while at the destination. They are bipartite, which means that they attain substantial achievements, including employment and means of subsistence, by means of migration.

Conclusion

An integral component is the actors' authentic persona, whereas an additional component constitutes the socially acceptable persona they present to the audience. The tool, or displayed identity, enables them to adopt various personas and satisfy their needs in the shadow of role-playing. As a result, it can be asserted that independent living in a novel social context is not only effortless and secure, but also fraught with obstacles and demanding circumstances that force individuals to act in opposition to their will and even their personal framework. Particular behaviors must be strategically positioned in the realm of expatriate life so that individuals can maneuver between structural pressures and freedom of action, and possibly achieve a higher social standing than in their country of origin. Migrant girls attain independence through relationships, and their perceptions and experiences of independent living evolve.

Cite this article: Afrasiabi, H. & Khoramian, Z. (2024). Construction of Split Identity: Conditions and Consequences of Independent Migration for Young Women. *Women in Development and Politics*, 22(2), 407-433. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jwdp.2024.364939.1008381>



© The Author(s).

Publisher: University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jwdp.2024.364939.1008381>
