The Feminization of Migration

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Introduction

Migration has become a way of life in Africa, with more and more women migrating independently. Yet, women’s migration remains understudied. The reasons why men and women migrate are different. Men mostly migrate to try and find formal employment, while women’s migration is often linked to and impeded by their reproductive roles. Women therefore often only migrate for short periods of time to trade or to do seasonal work, while men migrate for longer periods. In the past women migrated as dependents of men while many single women or women with children now migrate.

There are both push and pull factors involved in the migration of women. The push factors include severe gender based violence against women as a consequence of civil wars, food insecurity, economic instability, human rights violations, corruptions and attempts to escape human trafficking (see Crush and Williams, 2001). The pull factors are linked to greater opportunities for women as traders and for those who want to become entrepreneurs in economic climates that are conducive to these types of economic enterprises.

Very often migrants find their integration into other countries where they can make an economic contribution very difficult due to immigration regulations and xenophobia of the indigenous population. Immigration regulations in many countries also reflect a bias toward male migrants, only allowing women to accompany men as their dependents.

The migration of women independent of men is called the “feminization of migration” and this is often linked to the “feminization of poverty” because of an increasing impoverishment of women and children due to severe economic instability in some developing countries, and specifically in sub-Saharan Africa.
As Adepoju (1:11) indicates successive political and economic crises have caused migration flows to new destinations with which there are no prior links historical, political or economic. Single and married women are now migrating independently in search of secure jobs in countries in the North or inter regionally, in order for families to survive, thus redefining traditional gender roles within families and societies.

Reasons for women’s migration have to be understood in the context of greater economic globalization that has a differential impact on developed and developing countries, as well as causing the establishment of transnational patterns of migration where people develop hybrid identities moving back and forth between countries.

**The link between globalization on migration**

Connections to the market have historically been different for men and women, especially in developing countries and these connections have consequences for their preferences and behavior (Beneria 2003, 74). In developing countries large proportions of the population are active in unpaid production that is only indirectly linked to the market. Women are disproportionately concentrated in work of this nature – agriculture, family labor, domestic work and volunteer work, most of it unpaid. Beneria (2003, 74) argues that if unpaid activities were valued at prevailing wages (in 2003) they would amount to $16 trillion, or about 70% of the world’s output.

For women in developing countries unpaid care work consumes a large amount of their time and with 70% of the world’s AIDS cases residing in Sub-Saharan Africa large amounts of the time of primary care givers (mainly women) go into caring for the AIDS sick, where altruism and not self-interest plays a main role. The norms and behaviors associated with the market do not apply to unpaid work which produces goods and services for use, rather than for exchange. Even where women are part of the informal sector goods are sold below market value.

As markets have become more complex men have moved into higher skilled and technical jobs, while women have become employed in larger numbers in low-wage
production for export or for labor-intensive manufacturing. The greater feminization of the labor force has been combined with the use of temporary contracts, part time work, unstable working conditions and limited or no benefits (Beneria 2003, 78; Moghadam 1999, 375). While the feminization of the labor force takes place on a large scale it does not change women’s share in child care and child rearing responsibilities.

Joekes (1995: ii) indicates that women have benefited from the growth in international trade and the effects of globalization that have increased women’s participation in paid employment. Women have been absorbed into manufacturing due to changes in trade and women have become the preferred workers in manufacturing. Because women are the preferred labor force in exporting industries they made up one third of all industrial workers in 1995. Due to the development of the information based technologies women are used for cheap educated labor such as data processing, relying on “the nimble fingers” of women. The expansion of fruit, flowers and vegetables have also increased the use of women’s labor (Joekes, 1995: iii). The use of women in this industry is related to women’s very low levels of skills in some regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya is an example of women’s labor being used in the export of perishable goods.

As women’s skills levels increase they also seem to be preferred in the service sector, such as banking. The concentration of women in the arts and humanities in tertiary education in developing countries contributes to women being concentrated in lower paid jobs compared to those who get a training in professions such as law, medicine and engineering. When women enter professional jobs it is common that they choose care professions such as nursing and social work, that are also lower paid.

What happens in developing countries is a reflection of the characteristics of North-South trade in which there is a gender bias related to a preference for women to work in low wage sectors of the economy (Joekes, 1995: iii). Large multi-national corporations like Nike, exports their factories to developing countries for cheap labor that is most often that of women with low levels of education.

Women are concentrated as workers in most parts of relatively labor intensive operations in the industrial sector both in the North and the South. Women are the lowest paid of
low wage labor where the ration of female: male wages is about one third to two thirds (Joekes, 1995: iv).

Beneria (2003, 80-82) categorizes the changes in women’s labor due to increased globalization into three categories: (1) low-skilled women in pink collar work such as data entry and processing, mail order business and other clerical work, (2) sex work and related services with its gender based violence and exploitation, (3) domestic and daycare work, most often performed by women from developing countries who migrate to developed countries to enable other (middle class) women to have more high ranking jobs. She does, however, not consider the link between migration and trade and the involvement of migrating in trade.

The feminization of the labor force has paralleled processes of labor market deregularization and flexibilization due to neo-liberal economic policies. This development has affected men and women differently. Feminization has also been linked to deteriorating working conditions which also lead to the feminization of poverty and a development of greater migration by women.

Problems created by globalization are compounded in developing countries that have accepted structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) (Beneria 2003, 108). Many countries in Africa accepted SAPs as prescribed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The conditionalities of SAPs have had detrimental affects for women. When SAPs are implemented governments have difficulty in dealing with persistent poverty and austerity measures. Market deregulation leaves large sectors of the population performing activities on the periphery of the economy in the informal sector.

In developing countries where low skills levels prevail and with little or no social security from the state, unstable working conditions, low levels of earnings and poverty, women carry the brunt thereof. In many African countries where women used to survive on subsistence farming prescriptions of structural adjustment programmes have eroded what little farming they were able to do. Where women are involved in survival activities there is no capital accumulation and or integration into the formal market. As a consequence women have started to migrate to enhance family income.
Structural adjustment programmes have a differential impact on women and men in the following ways (Moghadam 2003: 378): customary biases and intrahousehold inequalities lead fewer benefits for women; free market economies do not take women’s constraints of family and children into account; SAPs stretches women’s labor time increasing women’s productive activities as well as their reproductive obligations. The working class and urban poor suffer disproportionately. Privatization affects women worse than men because they are generally the first to lose their jobs and labor market job segregation result in women being concentrated in low wage employment. The concentration of women in low wage sectors is linked to women’s reproductive activities and life cycle decision and low levels of education that keeps the inequitable gender order in place (Joekes, 1995: v).

Migration draws women into a regime of transnational relationships that link them with their countries of origin as well as with new host countries.

**Transnationalism**

When people start to migrate they may go to host countries for longer or shorter periods of time and may even become integrated into the host country, yet they may still feel an allegiance toward their countries of origin, thus developing hybrid identities, connected with the phenomenon of transnationalism.

Transnationalism as a phenomenon is not the rejection of the significance or durability of borders, as well as the variations in state, economic or political power but an understanding that the links between citizen and the state is multiple, rather than disappearing (Levitt and Javorsky, 2007: 134). How transnational practices are shaped depends on how states enable or constrain the movement and political claims of migrants.

Transnational migration has certain characteristics. Firstly, it represents a high intensity of exchanges by migrants between host country and country of origin. There are thus ongoing relationships with the country of origin and the creation of new relationships with the host country – also referred to as the simultaneous embeddedness in more than
one society (Crush and McDonald, 2000: 9). It requires cross-border travel and contacts on a sustainable basis.

Secondly, transnational activities are linked to the expansion and internationalization of a capitalist mode of production. As the demand for cheap labor grows in the North people from the South migrate in the hope of finding work. Information technology of making instant communication possible has changed the dynamics of migration at the end of the twentieth century.

Thirdly, transnationalism is a new way of understanding and coming to grips with migrant identities. Instead of becoming assimilated into new communities and cultures transnational identities display a hybridity that is embedded in the old and new communities.

In the fourth instance transnational migration is an iterative process that eventually becomes independent of the conditions that caused it in the first place. Transnationalism implies a system of networks and linkages that forms the complex web of relationships.

And fifthly, the size and diversity of migrant communities and new technologies of communication open spaces for migrants that make it possible to resist exploitation and discrimination, even if it may be within the confines of a global economic system (Crush and McDonald, 2000: 11).

Globalization has not lessened the role of the nation state or the exploitation of the least developed countries (Stasiulis and Bakan 2005, 2). Increased international mobility gives rise to larger numbers of non-citizens or foreign nationals working and staying in countries other than their own.

As Stasiulis and Bakan (2005, 11-14) point out international migration shows up the universalistic claims of the modern nation state and the ways in which migrants are marginalized in an inequitable context. The inequitability lies in the functioning of migration policies that are highly racialized and gendered, as well as connected to regional discrimination. The hierarchy of nation states in the global relations of power
creates conditions where people migrate mainly from the South to the North but are increasingly denied citizenship in host countries. As a consequence of the lack of citizenship labor is exploited and people become vulnerable to the threat of deportation. Migrants therefore have to negotiate their citizenship and legal provision of rights all the time and women even more so.

As a consequence citizenship has become transnational in character, due to the networks that are being built by migrants in their countries of origin and the host country. But states also act in a transnational way – homogenizing regulations and policies on migrants and strengthening cross-border power relations.

But even in the case of transnational citizenship women’s exclusion and subordination are still predicated on a specific sexual division of labor as demonstrated by the public/private divide. When women migrate adopting household strategies that will put in place care for children and elderly kin are core components of how they will negotiate their transnational relationships.

Adepoju (2011) argues that new trade opportunities opening up for foreign entrepreneurs from neighboring countries point to the “thickening” of the socioeconomic web of relations that forms the basis of transnationalism. Women’s migration can be viewed as part of a household strategy approach in which remittances play an important role.

From an economic perspective remittances are a very important aspect of migration. Remittances are used individually or collectively and they support family members who stay behind, fund small or large businesses, support public works and social services projects in sending countries (Levitt and Javorsky, 2007: 135).

Economic activities and entrepreneurship vary by class. Levitt and Javorsky (2007: 135) refer to the Nigerian “suitcase entrepreneur” who sells things on street corners and the CEO of a multi-million dollar software company living in the USA. But migration should also be understood in a sub-regional context. Yeoh and Chang (in Levitt and Javorsky, 2007: 135) distinguish among four categories of transnational labor and capital.
flows: 1. a transnational business class of highly mobile and skilled professional, managerial and entrepreneurial elites; 2. immigrants filling unskilled and semi-skilled low-wage jobs in the urban service economy; 3. expressive specialists in cultural and artistic arenas; 4. world tourists.

Transnational migration has specific advantages that are linked to the social networks and social capital that migrants bring to the host countries, which are often not acknowledged. Transnational entrepreneurship can advance individuals but may also bring social capital to the receiving communities. On the macro level if migrants are well received they can favorably affect the status of transnational communities in the receiving countries and the broader global system (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007: 144). There also needs to be a better understanding of the developmental impact of transfer, transport, tourism, telecommunications and trade (the 5Ts). Many argue that migration affects (through remittances) these sectors in economically beneficial ways but it is unclear what the impact on household level is. Are remittances spent productively or are they merely used for consumption? (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007: 145). One of the main questions would be what the gendered nature of the remittances process is. Some research suggests that women start to migrate exactly because the remittances from male family members have dried up.

While many of the above arguments are applicable to Africa, there are transnational dynamics that are unique to the African context.

**The Economic Importance of Transnational Migration in Africa**

Peberdy and Rogerson (2000: 21) suggest that despite the transnational discourse that exists with a focus on migration, borders and movement the relationships between migrant and immigrant entrepreneurs tend to be overlooked. Informal cross border trade seems to be excluded from the discourse of transnationalism but as already indicated the development of entrepreneurial enterprises may be advantageous to the host economy. Transnational networks of trade and migration in Africa have only recently started to be explored. Entrepreneurs are involved in a wide range of activities that include cross-
border trading, street trading as well as operating small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) (Peberdy and Rogerson, 2000: 22).

Trade has, however, also a gendered nature. SMMEs are mainly run by young, single male migrant entrepreneurs. A survey in Johannesburg showed that 84% of these types of businesses were male run and only 16% female. But of the female run businesses 64% were run by women from the SADC region. Informal street trade is also dominated by men.

This visible male entrepreneurship masks women migrants’ participation in, for example, the South African economy, because women entrepreneurs are more likely to be involved in cross-border trade, they often travel and only sell one week per month and many sell directly to shops and customers and they are also more likely to be involved in cross-border shopping (Peberdy and Rogerson, 2000: 32). For example, over 70% cross border traders between South Africa and Mozambique are women and 66% between South Africa and Zimbabwe are women. According to Peberdy and Rogerson (2000: 32) South African immigration officials indicate that 95% of people applying for visas to trade or shop are women.

Ulicki and Crush (2000: 65) quote Dodson as follows on women’s migration:

> Men and women migrate to South Africa for different reasons. Men go primarily in search of employment, whereas women’ migration is driven by a wide range of social and reproductive factors in addition to economic incentives. Even the economic motives for migration are gender specific, with women going to South Africa largely to trade and men to work, mostly in formal employment.

As in the past mine work is still the prerogative of men while other sectors who use migrant workers, such as agriculture used to prefer men until very recently. Women migrants were relegated to informal trading, shopping and sex work.

Because of the set patterns of employment for migrant workers women’s contract migration and certain forms of wage employment may be overlooked. As Ulicki and Crush (2000: 65) argue more attention need to be paid to the gendered dynamics of
regional labour markets and the redefinition of gender relations that change gender roles and household strategies when women are away.

In their study of women’s migration from Lesotho it becomes clear that women are more and more becoming the preferred labor force for agriculture. Farmers prefer women and on some farms in the Free State over 50% of the labor force are women. Women migrate for seasonal work and then return home. The study also showed that there is a difference between the age profiles of women and men migrants. Women are older, married, divorced or widowed, while men are young and single. It is also clear that male migrants can rely on existing social networks while women cannot because their migration is more recent and clandestine (Ulikcki and Crush, 2000).

This gender reconfiguration of migration started in the 1980s and is now unprecedented in scale, scope and complexity (Ulicki and Crush, 2000:77). Ulicki and Crush contribute this to the following reasons: the need of the commercial sector for reliable work, a change in the discourse around women’s migration that make them now more desirable than in the past and shifting material conditions in countries of origin that put pressure on women to migrate (Ulicki and Crush, 2000: 66).

Women become breadwinners as men lose jobs in mining. Work is often seasonal. Most women work only 4 months or less. And it is clear that women are replacing men as foreign employees in low wage sectors such as agriculture (Crush and McDonald, 2000: 5). In these sectors women can migrate for shorter periods and maybe as such be able to negotiate productive and reproductive responsibilities in the countries of origin. As they argue “the ‘traditional’ concept of the household in the migration literature as a spatially-bounded rural unit with an entrenched gendered division of labor (males go, females stay) is increasingly redundant” (p15). New household forms and cross-border rural-urban linkages where people develop hybrid identities are formed.

Different regions may have different migration patterns and configurations;

**Migration in Southern Africa**
Southern Africa has a long history of intra-regional migration, already starting in the mid-nineteenth century but it has undergone major restructuring in the last two decades (Crush, Williams and Peberdy, 2005: 11). Greater democratization in the region, as well as the end of apartheid, opening the borders of the country with the strongest economy on the continent accelerated migration. Other factors include the region’s reintegration into the global economy, growing rural and urban poverty, as well as the gender reconfiguration of the migration stream (Crush, Williams and Peberdy, 2005: 1). In the last decade the implosion of the Zimbabwean economy has seriously affected the migration of Zimbabweans, but specifically Zimbabwean women to neighboring countries.

As Crush, Williams and Peberdy (2005: 14) notes migration in Southern Africa is deeply gendered. Women who migrate have higher educational levels but are involved in less skilled and informal work and may therefore be more irregular migrants because it is more difficult to access legal migration channels. For them migration is a significant livelihood strategy and they may be more often than not involved in cross border trade.

Informal cross-border trade is important to the transfer of goods and commodities in the region for the following reasons:

- The movement of food and agricultural goods in the region,
- Food security,
- The development of small and medium enterprises,
- A household livelihood strategy,
- The engagement of a large number of women,
- It constitutes an significant proportion of cross border traffic in the region (Crush, Williams and Peberdy (2005: 16).

Sub-Saharan African that includes Southern Africa is characterized by different migration configuration such as contract workers, labour migrants, skilled professionals, refugees and displaced persons – with movement internal, intra-regional and international. It includes a brain drain as well as “brain circulation” of professionals (Adepoju, 14).
Important about this migration configuration are the changes due to female migration, the diversification of destinations and the transformation of labor flows (Adepoju, :18).

In Sub-Saharan Africa women have been migrating since the 1960s when female migration was 42.2%. At that time women’s migration was linked to the migration of men. Now African women migrate independently and the percentage of women migrating in 2005 was 47.4% of all international migrants (Adepoju :21). The remittances that women send is are necessary for family survival. As more women become educated they migrate independently to support their own economic independence and to follow professional careers such as nursing, for example. Globalization has increased demand for health care professionals. Many African countries lose important highly skilled nursing staff to, for example, the UK. Sub Saharan nurses and midwives leaving Africa rose to 3 800 in 2001/2002 (Adepoju :22).

As men have moved to towns women remained behind doing agricultural work and becoming resource managers and decision makers, often leading them to use these skills to engage the formal and informal sectors in towns (Adepoju. :22).

Adepoju ( :6) argues that migration can be an engine for cooperation and integration in the socio-economic development of the continent. If migration is well managed it could be win-win scenario for migrants, countries of origin and destination. The management of migration is a complex process that should go beyond punitive measures. He suggests that migration can be promoted as a circular measure to enhance the economic contribution to host countries.

In the case of South Africa the contemporary immigration network is largely hostile towards the entry of small entrepreneurs. Access to host countries through this route is therefore limited. While some have permanent residence, most enter on visitor’s visas. Very few entrepreneurs qualify for “business permits” (Pederby and Rogerson, 2000: 23).

After the end of apartheid the relaxation and lifting of racial restrictions on movement and residence new spaces were opened for entrepreneurial activity in retail and manufacturing in South African cities. Migrant entrepreneurs are involved in small,
medium and micro enterprises of which the textile industry is of importance (Pederby and Rogerson, 2000: 27).

Non-South African participants in the retail informal sector are involved in four interconnecting and overlapping categories; mobile street traders, fixed street traders, street traders involved in cross-border trade traders and shoppers. Fixed and mobile street traders sell crafts, curios, wire goods, crochet doilies, bedspreads, traditional dresses and cloth as well as perishable food products (Pederby and Rogerson, 2000: 29).

Women find work in certain categories – deskilling.

**West Africa**

In West Africa people have migrated in response to demographic, economic, political and factors related to civil wars, as well as macro-economic adjustment programmes to such an extent that migration has become a way of life. Socio-economic conditions in West-Africa gave rise certain migration patterns, one of them independent female migration. Women have become part of intra-regional migration patterns but also migration patterns that take them to countries in the North (Adepoju, 2002: 4). Migrants within the sub-region include temporary cross-border workers, professionals, clandestine workers, and refugees. Migration is sustained by poverty that is widespread and intense in the region. Rural to urban migration has also become common because landless farm laborers attempt to improve their living conditions by migrating to urban areas (Adepoju, 2002: 4).

Highly skilled professionals like doctors, nurses, teachers, lecturers, engineers and scientist move from West-Africa to other African countries and to the North in search of higher salaries and better working conditions. A high number of migrants are cross-border traders who circulate within West-Africa.
As Adepoju (2002: 6) states:

…the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in West-Africa in the late 1960s
and early 1970s, the small scale of national population and markets, the miniscule
intraregional trade, and the inconvertible currencies that constrained intraregional
trade, hindered rather than promoted intraregional migration. Poverty has
propelled a wide variety of migration configurations, including autonomous
female migration and trafficking in migrants.

The migration of women is a survival strategy in response to increasing poverty in the
region. Migration that has been male dominated, long term, long distance has become
increasingly feminized. Women now migrate independently intra regionally but also
internationally. The feminization of migration has contributed to a change in gender
roles in West-Africa. Where male migration has lead to female headed, single parent
households putting increasing pressure on women to combine work en family
responsibilities.

Many women move to improve their economic status and to gain control over their lives
(Adepoju, 2002: 7). Women’s migration also reflects the pressure on rural families since
women migrants tend to be concentrated in low paid, low skilled market sectors where
they have to put up with discrimination, limited access to credit and political
marginalization. Adding the impact of structural adjustment programmes it is clear that
women have been seriously disadvantaged.

Adepoju (2002: 8) also argues that the removal of subsidies on basic goods and services
and the introduction of charges for heath care and education force women into paid
employment. SAPs have affected women’s roles in the household but also as reproducers
since they have to do more with less money and migration becomes a survival strategy.
It has in a sense reversed gender roles because women now migrate and leave behind
children in care of husbands or extended families. This is especially the case for
professional women who migrate internationally. Women in the sub-region of West-
Africa therefore struggle to combine productive work such as providing for their families
and reproductive work such as caring for their well-being. This is a consequence of the
fact that they are disadvantaged with regard to productive resources (such as a job) and do not have control over the labor process. Often gender specific responsibilities will be an obstacle to women’s ability to migrate or migration will have to be combined with ways that may incorporate reproductive and caring responsibilities. Very often cross-border trade is the most viable option.

But as Tager (    : 270) shows in many West African societies women migrants maintain ties with family in their countries of origin but also with the communities by participating in organizations in their home town and contributing to community development. This often enhances their status in the home societies and therefore keeping these ties is important.

The Creation of ECOWAS to regulate migration

Conclusion

The feminization of migration in Africa is a reality. The analysis has shown that women migrate in large numbers. The ones who have low levels of skills as well as lower levels of education mainly migrate transnationally and mainly do cross-border trading as entrepreneurs in small, medium and micro enterprises, or as street vendors who come for a limited time to trade varying between one week and four months.

One of the problems is that unless there are certain migration arrangements for small scale entrepreneurs and cross border trading host countries do not gain from the benefits that entrepreneurs can deliver to host countries. Putting certain migration arrangements in place may help to empower women who are the biggest sector in cross border trading.

In the case of South Africa we witnessed large scale xenophobic violence aimed at foreign migrants, a period during which the hostility toward small scale entrepreneurs became very clear. Foreigners were accused of “stealing work from locals” in a difficult economic climate. Somali small traders and entrepreneurs were accused of undercutting the prices of the locals and many of them were killed in the xenophobic attacks. As has
been discussed the treatment of cross-border traders shows that South Africa’s contemporary immigration network is hostile toward the entry of small entrepreneurs. Solutions to the problematic treatment of entrepreneurs and cross-border traders, many of whom are women should be sought in policy changes around migration, as well as possibilities for women traders to get credit from financial institutions in order for them to better manage their enterprises. Regional solutions of free trade may also go a long way to alleviate the plight of women cross border traders. Some recommendations will be discussed in the next section.

**Recommendations**

South Africa’s trade policies pays little attention to the activities of small entrepreneurs who are involved in cross-border trade and who are part of the involvement of goods and capital through the region, and are mainly hostile toward the entry of small entrepreneurs (Pederby and Rogerson, 2000: 23).

In the case of South Africa immigration policy does not deep pace with initiatives to free the movement of trade and capital in the region. There is no legislation to facilitate the businesses of these entrepreneurs in the region that are overshadowed by big business and capital (Peberdy, :35).

Cross border trade includes entrepreneurs who travel for short periods (less than a week), others travel for one to two weeks to sell in retail markets. They also travel across more than one country, buying and selling as they go (Peberdy, :36). Cross border traders who work in the informal economy do not access preferential tariff agreement, but because it is called informal this type of trader obscures the multiple linkages between formal and informal sectors. Cross border trading that includes women varies from smale survivalist activities to a wide range of entrepreneurial activity that needs to be regulated. Because some these activities are marginal they obscure the relatively significant contribution of entrepreneurs in regional trade (Peberdy :37). Because the volumes of trade is large it creates opportunities for small entrepreneurs and it has a direct bearing on food security. While women are more likely to do trade as a survivalist mechanism they are the entrepreneurs who trade the largest volumes, helping them to maintain many
dependents (Peberdry :40). The average number of dependents are 3.2 for children and 3.1 for other dependents who are not children.

No country has specific visa or permits that will allow cross-border traders to cross legally but with access to markets. Most enter on visitor’s visas (Peberdy :43). Some countries have formal and informal bi-lateral agreements. The policy environment remains unfavorable or unresponsive to the activities of these entrepreneurs. Changes in policy could facilitate individual economic empowerment (and specifically the empowerment of women) as well as enhance trade in the region significantly. It is important that cross border trade be included in the conceptualization of regional trade (p46). It will also contribute to the development of new markets.

Peberdy ( :47) suggests that trader’s permits be developed that will offer multiple entry, for people carrying goods under a certain amount. This will allow them to sell goods in the informal and formal markets. Regulation should include strong penalties for those who abuse the permits.

Regional cooperation becomes an imperative to deal with cross border trade and especially the conditions of women. As a Roundtable of the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) has indicated in 2009 only a minority of populations migrate and this migration will not determine the fate of large nations. These entrepreneurial enterprises of cross border traders will create new businesses and jobs, link countries to global markets and pass on skills to the local population (2009: 4). If policies are not develop to accommodate smaller traders, illegal entry into countries will just increase. The best practice would be to make a regulatory system simple because complex systems cost money and are too difficult to deal with.

In West Africa the Economic Community of West African S (ECOWAS) has introduced regional measures to deal with changing patterns of migration. One of the main achievements of ECOWAS is the free movement of people without visas in the West-African sub-region. Progress has also been made in the area of monetary policy, communication, trade and related matters such as ECOWAS travellers’ checks to
harm onize the subregion’s monetary policy and to facilitate cross-border trade transactions (Adepoju, 2002: 14).

Gender concerns are most often excluded when new immigration/migration policies are developed. This lack of attention to women migrants needs and conditions is to the detriment of host countries. Far more attentions needs to be paid to the positive benefits of women’s migration.

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