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Women-on-Women Oppression in Female Migrant Experiences: A Study of selected Nollywood films

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Abstract

The narratives of female migrant experiences in Nigeria have never been told without enumerating its attendant vulnerabilities and prejudices that are unavoidably linked to irregular migration. This has manifested in various forms such as physical, mental, and emotional abuse, trafficking, exploitation, and domestic servitude. In all of these, patriarchy has mostly been blamed as the major source of women's subjugation. With the proliferation of gender discourses in search of equality in the relationship between men and women, little or no result has been recorded. Considering the multiple streams of women's oppression, there is a need to look inward to dig out the roles women play in the sustenance of patriarchal structures that form the bedrock of women's subjugation. This research work interrogates the intra-gender relations in two Nollywood films, Kenneth Gyang's Oloture (2019), and Lonzo Nzekwe's Anchor Baby (2010). Employing the purposive sampling technique of the qualitative research methodology, these six migration-themed films were carefully selected and interrogated through content analysis. The research argument is framed around Crenshaw Kimberley's theory of Intersectional Feminism and Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh's theory of Intra-genderism. Findings reveal that there are hidden rivalries that constantly exist among women which inhibit the actualization of female bonding. This study thus suggests that the female gender should break down all internal structures that are detrimental to their peaceful co-existence and focus more on genuine love and support for one another.

Keywords: women-on-women, oppression, Nollywood films

Introduction

Transborder migration has been an age-long experience in Nigeria. The need to make a better living or to escape economic hardships has most times occasioned the movement of people from one place to another in search of better settlements. Nigeria however, has experienced a deluge of emigration activities most especially among its youths whose inability to clinch good opportunities within the country has continued to push them across international borders in search of better alternatives. Migration primarily is a natural human phenomenon which is as old as man. Its basic driver is need. Thus, the propensity to move is need-driven. For some, it is the need to find better sources of livelihood while for others it may be the need to escape threats posed by environmental hazards, political stranglehold, war, famine or other artificially induced causes. Whatever the cause, human relocation and resettlement movements are geared towards achieving goals and personal/group desires.

However, migration beyond national or continental borders has great consequences both for the originating, transit or destination countries. Destination countries most times are countries that have good socio-economic conditions. It is the desire to escape harsh economic realities that pushes migrants to places with good socio-economic platforms that hold a promise of better livelihood. The West African sub-region for example experienced most of its migration activities internally. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that "West Africa provides the strongest example of intra-regional migration flows in sub-Saharan Africa, with 70 per cent of migratory movements mainly linked to employment taking place within the sub-region" (par. 1). However, with the continued downturn in the fortunes of most of its member states, the migratory pattern of the region

is beginning to experience a significant curve with Europe at the receiving end of its migratory exercise. In its 2021 report, IOM observes that:

In recent years, irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa towards Europe, and between West and Central Africa, has substantially increased. States in the region, previously considered as countries of origin, are becoming transit and destination countries, with irregular migration featuring prominently in the political agendas of most of the governments concerned. (par. 2)

Stiffer migration policies have made it difficult for many migrants to access their destination countries through the regular routes. As a result, most of those who fall within this group embark on their journeys through the backdoor with many facing untold hardship and degradation in their quest to access their destination countries. Unfortunately, many who eventually succeed are not documented and in effect are not legally recognized in the new countries they have migrated to. It is this group of persons that are widely referred to as irregular migrants. The implications are much for this set of migrants as they lack legal protection in their places of stay. As a consequence of this, they find it extremely difficult to access social welfare schemes, and employment or to move freely without the fear of being arrested, detained or repatriated to their countries of origin. The implications on the lives of these migrants are numerous as they are subjected to different grades of abuse, dehumanizing experiences and subjugation in their bid to survive. Basic human rights provisions are most times not applied to this set of migrants.

More so, while these abuses occur to everyone irrespective of their gender, women seem to be the most hit as many of them go through unspeakable abuses in the quest to survive. Unfortunately, many enablers of these excruciating experiences are also women who

merchandise migration as a means of livelihood. Thus, the different forms of subjugation ranging from sex slavery to organ harvesting experienced by female migrants sometimes also have women as their major enablers.

Gender discourses have most times focused on inter-gender relations. Feminism as a movement was organized to counter the overreaching arms of patriarchy which had hitherto prejudiced social institutions in favor of men. Thus, for many years, feminist discourses have been centred on the emancipation of the female folk from the stranglehold of a men-designed world. Thus, the subjugation of women most times are outrightly attributed to patriarchy and the activities of the male gender. Little attention is paid to the activities of women who through their actions and inactions jeopardize the welfare of other women. Espousing this, Emmanuel Ebekue observes that "Women discrimination on women is less discussed as opposed to patriarchy which most times is accused of subjecting women to the second fiddle…" (86). It is these activities of dehumanization experienced by women in the hands of other women in the migration process that are the focus of this research. The researcher through the eyes of selected Nollywood films is motivated to query the contributions of women to the dehumanization of other women in the migration process. The research is modelled to provide answers to the following research questions;

a. What shades of subjugation do women experience in the irregular migration process?
b. To what extent are women involved in the subjugation of other women in the irregular migration process?
c. How has Nollywood been able to engage intra-gender subjugation practices in the migration process?

d. How can Nollywood contribute to policies to mitigate subjugation and oppression in migration?

By providing answers to these questions, the research will be shedding light on an aspect of the migration process that is seldom discussed.

Intra-gender relations have been scantily studied within different social models to portray the behaviours of women to other women. Sharon Mavin, Gina Grandy and Jannine Williams while studying intra-gender micro-violence between women agree that "women in organizations are complex, contradictory and under-researched" (439). However, quite a number of studies have been conducted within the borders of film, creative writing and prose fiction about intra-gender relations in Nigeria. Ebele Okpala and Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh's 'Intra-gender relationships and the role of women in sustaining widowhood practices in Nigeria' interrogates the practice of widowhood in some Nigerian communities and the frameworks that have made women the willful enablers of the mundane practices that accompany it. As a sequel, Okpala and Utoh-Ezeajugh in "Inter and Intra- Gender Discourse in African Prose" further interrogate intra-gender relations in select African prose fictions as a way of further exposing the mostly overlooked contributions of women to the subjugation of other women. Anthonia Makwemoisa Yakubu on the other hand underscores the contributions of women as violence enablers against other women. She observes that "Women are also inflictors of pain on other women" (2). Enajite Ojaruega in his work "Feminist Perspectives and Intra-Gender Conflict in Tess Onwueme's *Tell It To Women"* underscores the hypocrisy deception, exploitation and denigration that sometimes define feminism through the lens of intragender relations. Olubukola Karik-Namiji in his work "Feminism and Intra-Gender Relations in Africa: A Theoretical and Conceptual

Framework" assesses the success of the feminist ideology in Africa while focusing on intragender relations amongst women.

More so, Migration and Nollywood also have been studied variedly. Omega Arthur in "Glocal Nollywood: the Politics of Culture, Identity, and Migration in African Films Set on American Shores" analyses how Nollywood film-makers represent the response of African migrants to their peculiar challenges in America. Olufadekemi Adagbada's research focuses on intracontinental mobilities in West Africa and the lots of women in it. He observes that while representing the experiences of these female migrants, the filmmaker glosses over the importance of documentation in the migration process which itself does not help the experiences of those women in the migration process**.** Elizabeth Olayiwola's "Migration and the Feminization of Power: A Reading of Mike Bamiloye Transnational Films" gives an insight into the gender role shift that comes with cross-border migration.

However, though all these scholars have made various discoveries in intra-gender, Nollywood and migration studies, it is pertinent to note that none of the works was dedicated to the study of marginalization, subjugation and dehumanization of women by other women within the national and international migration process. This is the gap this research has contributed in scholarship.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on the theory of Intersectional feminism which was constructed by a civil right activist and professor, Kimberley Williams Crenshaw in the year 1989. By intersectionality, Crenshaw means "the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarding as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage" (1).

This is a concept that takes into cognizance, people's variegated identities and circumstances in other to comprehend the complexities of the prejudices they face. Intersectional feminism unlike the mainstream feminism-which advocates for women's right and equality of sexes, aims to understand as Aimee Noel Mbiyozo posits, the "multiple and simultaneous threats of discrimination when an individual's identity includes multiple hierarchical classifications" (11). Crenshaw recognizes the futility of addressing all issues of oppression in one breath. This is because, white and black women experience discrimination and oppression differently due to their differences in race, religion, identity, economic standing and orientation. For instance, black feminists hold the opinion that black women suffer dual oppression; first for being black and second, for being a woman. Therefore, this theory seeks to tackle the various prejudices and socio-cultural structures that frustrate individuals or a group of women by disregarding the streamlined approach to addressing women's challenges. This implies that, if there are multiple sources of women oppression, different strategies should be employed in tackling them.

In the context of this study, intersectional feminism is embraced to de-popularize the notion of patriarchy as the major source of subjugation against women in Africa. It suggests that in addressing the issue of women oppression in Africa, there's need to look inwards to consider other contributory factors in that regard. African Feminist discourses underscore internal imbalances among women which are connected to social class divides and sometimes greed. This manifests in intra-gender discrimination amongst the privileged and non-privileged ones. According to Vianise Ortiz, "Ordinarily, female elites would not want to be closely linked to the paupers among women; more so, whenever the need arises, well-positioned women exploit, manipulate or even sacrifice their poor counterparts for pecuniary gains" (4). This is the clear picture painted in the two Nollywood films discussed in this work. They x-ray the dimensions of oppression meted on female migrants by their

fellow women, who by virtue of placement in the society take advantage of their incapacitation.

This study is further situated on a broader framework of intra-genderism as postulated by Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh in the year 2023. According to her, “intra-genderism describes the varied levels, situations, negotiations and constructions of gender identity especially in relation to social interactions between individuals or groups of the same gender.” (2) This can apply to any gender, either male or female. Intra-genderism hence, refers to those actions taken by any member of a particular gender which trample, dehumanize, violate, oppress, harm as well as disempower other members of the same gender, especially the less privileged ones.

In her exploration of the African feminist experiences and relations in patriarchal institutions, for the purpose of finding possible and workable solutions and adaptable frameworks for intellectual discourse, she attests to the fact that patriarchy is sustained by male domination of women, however, in the African cultural milieu; female subjugation is mostly enforced through traditionally established cultural structures. These structures are more often than not, administered by women who insist on fellow women performing certain oppressive cultural exercises and adhering to obnoxious and sometimes life-threatening customs and cultural norms and practices. (17)

However, she deviated from the popular narratives of other notable scholars which emphasize male domination against women, to discuss women’s domination of fellow women. In her seminal treatise titled; "Intra-Genderism" In African Feminist Discourse: The Dynamics Of Female "Unbonding" In Ifeoma Okoye's *The Trial* And *Between Women*”, Utoh-Ezeajugh recognizes how seemingly inappropriate, as well as how difficult it is to

come up with a single theory that can address major issues of the African women's oppression, subjugation and empowerment considering the socio-cultural diversities in Africa. Her view aligns with the ideals of intersectionality hence, she disapproves of the creation of a monolithic voice for the expression of women's experiences as a result of the diversity in cultures that affect women differently. By implication, women in Africa experience subjugation not only in the hands of men in their cultural environments but also in the hands of fellow women who are older, better positioned and more priviledged. In her analysis, she posits that, The different ways in which female relationships are encountered and managed in African culture, draw critical attention to the traditional institutions and cultural structures placed in charge of women, that encourage intra-gender subjugation and other levels of discordant relationships. An example of such traditional institutions is the Umuada which is a very active and highly organized association in terms of its activities, hierarchical structure, membership and administration. Although the activities of the Umuada sometimes involve the enforcement of certain breach of communal codes against men; their main focus is the administration of the affairs of women in their communities. Their activities sustain intra-gender interactions at different levels and often place women at the mercy of their fellow women. (7).

Using a more appropriate and specific term, Gynojugation, Utoh-Ezeajugh points to the various actions taken by women, mostly in a bid to promote the cultural practices, which turn out to be quite oppressive, harmful, traumatizing, debasing, dehumanizing, violating and generally disempowering to the womenfolk within their communities of jurisdiction. Consequently, these actions instead of consolidating the women's collective efforts to gain their desired freedom from patriarchal forces, rather truncate it. Gynojugation, a term she derived from gyno and subjugation is described as, the strive by women to please men by

oppressing other women; or the desire to inflict pain or suffering on fellow women; or the disposition to see or enforce actions that would make fellow women to undergo the same traumatizing experiences as other woman had passed through; or for women to support the sustenance of obnoxious customs or oppressive cultural structures that dehumanize and traumatize other women; or for women to assume authority and utilize it to enforce oppressive norms that dispossess other women of their self-esteem. (9)

Recognizing that the oppression and subjugation of women come in different forms, shapes, and magnitudes depending on each woman's cultural background and circumstances, Utoh-Ezeajugh categorized the experiences of many African women under widowhood practices, or the conflicts in polygamous family settings or the maltreatment and abuse of domestic servants, and posits that they would be best interrogated within the framework of gynojugation. (9) . Thus, she proposes the need for female bonding amongst females within the African cultural environment through a critical re-examination of the roles they are often encouraged and empowered to play (whether directly or indirectly) in the perpetuation of patriarchy (17).

Utoh-Ezeajugh's theories of intra-genderism and gynojugation try to fill the gap created by scholars in gender discourses who upheld the view that patriarchal and socio-cultural structures are responsible for women's marginalization and subjugation. She succeeded in expressing her concern for intra-gender rivalries that exist among women in their spheres of engagement and proposes female bonding as a panacea for women-on-women oppression. In agreement with this line of thought, Okpala asserts that, Although the socio-cultural oppressive structures in most cases are entrenched in society, yet ladies are typically the specialists for execution. There are different types of persecution, damage, and oppression by ladies against ladies that are neither systematized nor constrained on ladies

by men, culture or religion. For example, who powers the harsh and some of the time despising connections a few ladies have with their housemaids, sisters, mothers, daughters, sisters-in-law, mothers-in-law? Should men, custom, or male-controlled society be considered answerable for these?... "a lady is generally answerable for most broken homes either as a mother-in-law, sister in-law or the other lady outside, who edges herself in eventually". (377)

Intra-genderism theory thus reemphasizes that there is no better version of subjugation, oppression, and persecution irrespective of source. It encourages the notion of cooperation in the search for women's freedom because of the plurality of the difficulties and circumstances they are confronted with. Utoh-Ezeajugh also urges women to cultivate the habit of genuine bonding and the spirit of sportsmanship in other to be supportive of one another. This theory thus as Okpala sums up, "centers around self, if each woman focuses around herself, attempts self-assessment and soul-search and pursues her well-being and that of other women, female subjugation may be minimized. (378)

The import of the theories of Intra-genderism and gynojugation in this study is to concretize through the eyes of the selected two Nollywood films that the source of the oppressive experiences of female migrants' cuts across gender. It helps to put in perspective the involvement of women in activities that impinge on the rights and freedom of other females in both rural, urban, and international migration processes. Its tenets thereby, disagree with the very popular feminist discourses that project patriarchy and culture as the major sources of women's subjugation. With an in-depth analysis, this study further x-rays the various categories of oppression faced by girls and women during regular and irregular migration and carefully points out the contributory roles of women in that regard.

Synopsis of Kenneth Gyang's "Oloture"

This Nollywood film chronicles the ordeals of Ehi (real name Oloture), a young and vibrant freelance journalist who goes undercover as a prostitute in other to expose the complex dimensions and operations of prostitutes and human traffickers in Lagos state, Nigeria. She quickly discovers the complex web of violence, transactional sex, rape, murder, madams, pimps, politicians and unbridled exploitation.

Ehi fakes her identity as a prostitute, living with some girls in a shabby brothel managed by a madam, who charges them a particular amount of money for accommodation at the end of every week. She meandered to escape the advances of men who find her attractive. By the help of Emeka Okoye, her supervisor and colleague in the Newspaper establishment, who comes to pick her up as a "customer", she was able to sustain her new identity. Her friendship with Linda, her roommate in the brothel exposed her to Madam Alero, an ex-international Prostitute and a discreet human trafficker, who uses her clothing business as a camouflage. Madam Alero, who also functions as a pimp, organizes girls for big politicians. In one of the outings hosted by Sir Philip Ondaje, Ehi ran out of Luck, being unable to use her tricks on the big host, whom Alero introduced her to as a "special Package". Sir Philip drugged and raped Ehi without protection. After receiving medical attention, in her devastation, Ehi, not deterred, swore to see to the root of the investigation no matter how hard it seems. With the help and persuasion of Linda, Madam Alero agrees to take Ehi to Europe alongside with Beauty; her younger sister, if they are able to afford the payment of $1200 (one thousand, two hundred dollars). To the Prostitutes, Europe is the main hub for their craft- where they'll make real cash.

As they get ready for departure to Europe, Alero and her violent and aggressive men took the girls to a secluded house on the outskirts of the town. There, they were stripped of every communication gadget and were made to take a diabolic oath which warranted them to go naked and enter a coffin. They were given guidelines on their comportment when they get to Europe. Madam Alero forced the girls to sign a deed of contract that indentures them to their new smugglers. They were also given travel passports with fake names and nationalities.

Linda gets caught with a phone (which Ehi smuggled in) as she puts a call through to her mum in the village and this leads to her being beheaded in the presence of her naïve younger sister and all. This got Ehi and all the girls so emotional and apprehensive as she plans to escape with Linda's sister at the Benin-Nigeria border. Ehi mets her waterloo when she was caught by one of the men and beaten to pulp and was returned back to the bus which immediately crossed the border before Emeka, could get access to cross the border.

Synopsis of Lonzo Nzekwe's *Anchor Baby*

This Nollywood thriller that tells the story of a desperate undocumented Nigerian immigrant couple, Joyce and Paul Unanga who were on the run from the immigration officials. Paul's utmost desire was to have their son born in the United states of America by all means. To him, every child born in that clime is sure of a secured future. Their undocumented status subjected them to endure so many hardships while they anticipate the birth of their "Golden American Citizen", who will give them access to the US and other accompanying benefits.

Paul got arrested by the immigration officials and was deported back to Nigeria, leaving his five months pregnant wife to continue with the struggle. Joyce had a fair share of challenges, having to get a new accommodation and access to medical care. With her limited income, she had to pay to put up in a motel but could not afford an ante-natal clinic session with a consultant, being undocumented.

In her frustration, Susan Backley, a married freelance writer walked up to her and offered to help her with an accommodation in her house's basement, after she had narrated her ordeal. She thankfully accepts the offer as the couple rejoiced over a phone conversation, hoping to have their dream come true. Susan, also agreed to duplicate her medical insurance identity card with the help of her supposedly attorney friend, John (who eventually happened to be Susan's husband). Susan ensured that Joyce was comfortable until she was delivered of her baby boy, Uchenna. Their joy knew no bounds as she started getting ready to depart to Nigeria. When her son's much anticipated documents arrived, she realized that the fake identity she used for her ante natal care had affected their son's documentation. This implies that she cannot travel with the child to Nigeria. With the help of attorney John, they came up with the plan to have Susan accompany her and the baby to Nigeria. When they got to the airport, Joyce turned herself in for voluntary deportation as advised by the lawyer only to return to see that Susan had disappeared with her son. She arrived Nigeria devastated without her "Anchor baby".

Intra-Gender Oppressions Exemplified in Oloture

Nollywood had produced films with storylines that addressed trafficking in the recent past but according to Xavier Burke, "Oloture is a poignant social critique of Nigeria which is less like a movie and more so a documentary". He went further to explain that the film was

created not just to captivate and entertain the viewers with its realism but also a call to action. He hopes that "the Nigerian state and civil society would be compelled to address the societal woes that push so many innocent young women to risk limb and freedom for hopes of a better future abroad- and ultimately disband the trafficking syndicates". (1-2). This film makes gross commentaries on the various vulnerabilities encountered by female migrants whose major aim of movement is to secure a better life. Suffice to say that most irregular migrations by young women whether international or internally as Aimee-Noel posits, "are at elevated risks of forced labour, trafficking, exploitation and abuse at all stages of their migration journeys". (12) These gender-based violence and abuses are generally believed to be perpetrated by men. Alexander Zavos, plainly explains that;

> References to women migrants' isolation and family dependence, or to their oppression from male compatriots, always identify them in relation to men, or masculine power (the patriarchal family, the pimp, the state), and never in their own right. Telling examples occur most frequently in descriptions of female migrant sex workers as victims of trafficking to be used, bought and sold at will, without any resistance. (22)

According to intersectional feminism, female discrimination is not monolithic in nature, having multiple, intersecting systems of oppression. The film Oloture, portrays the female dimensions of subjugation against fellow women. These were exemplified in relationships between;

* Madam Alero and the prostitutes

* Ehi and Vanessa

* The madam at the brothel and the prostitutes.

Oloture presents the character of Madam Alero as a desperate, greedy and materialistic woman; who against all odds is bent on satisfying her desires, ego and needs. These character traits are at the root of intra-gender wars. Madam Alero Show-cased her selfishness first, at the party in Sir Philip's house. All that mattered to her was the dollars to be paid afterwards and not the welfare of the girls. At the point where, Sir Philip drugged Ehi and raped her, she felt unperturbed and didn't inquire to know how she faired later on. As a woman, Madam Ehi was so heartless to engage in a business that trampled on women's rights and privileges. She would not hesitate to order for the killing or punishment of any defaulter among the girls. She was so shrewd and always orders the girls to do the bidding of her clients.

Again, in the relationship of Ehi and Vanessa, hatred and jealousy were portrayed. These traits are predominant amongst women in every working environment. Vanessa sees Ehi as a threat, who uses her charm to cart away all her clients. Throughout the film, she did not hide her feelings for Ehi. She always called her a "witch". Some women are fond of seeing other women as the source of their woes. They are always threatened by fellow woman's beauty or qualities. This instigates unhealthy competition amongst the women. Keela Starr quoted in Sharon Mavin et al, agrees with this by saying that,

> Competition between women may go deeper than professional rivalry, to include subconscious jealousy and competition based on age or appearance (attractiveness, weight, dress sense). This suggests that at times women may read each other's sexed bodies through men's eyes in sexual competition.

> At other times the perception of separation and competition is explained in work related terms through factors such as intellectual ability, professional connections, reputation, etc. Furthermore, unlike the more open forms of hostility exhibited by men, women observe that competition or opposition from women is more likely to manifest as passive resistance. (26)

Finally, there is a slice of woman -on -woman subjugation between the owner of the brothel and the prostitutes. She assumes the superior role of a demi-god when she threatens to eject any occupant who could not meet up with her weekly charges. She was portrayed in the film as an arrogant and inconsiderate character, who is only concerned about her personal welfare.

Intra-Gender Subjugation in Lonzo Nzekwe's Anchor Baby

The thematic thrusts of the film *Anchor Baby (2010)* range from international migration, fraud, deception, and exploitation to a more tacitly loud subjugation and economic opportunism. While irregular undocumented migrants are being monitored with an eagle eye to ensure that they do not access vital social services, proper housing, medical care, and justice, the system somehow feigns ignorance when it involves the illegal migrants' labour and economic opportunism.

The unfolding story paints a picture of connivance between Joyce and her supposed benefactor- Susan, as they circumvent the legal system by duplicating Susan's medical Insurance card. The willingness of legal citizens and their knowledge of ways to illegally

achieve their goals- clone cards, hide fugitives, steal babies, point to the legality cum justification of means to an end and evident corruption in different societies.

Intra-gender subjugation was primarily showcased in the film *Anchor Baby* through the relationship between Joyce and Susan. Going by the context of intersectionality, one can assert that class and race played major roles in the oppression of Joyce, as a black African, undocumented migrant woman by Susan, who by racial privilege is a white American citizen. The socio-economic class divide between both ladies placed them at different levels in society which translates to inequality between the two women. While Susan belonged to the upper class, Joyce remained in the lower class, and as observed by Caroline Ramazanoglu, "Once the class relations between women are taken into account, women's dream of unity is almost certainly illusory. Social class creates both divisions between women in the course of our daily lives and also divisions between feminists in their interpretations of where women's political interests lie" (96). This goes to say that the variations in the class disposition and power available to women can be very significant in the evaluation of intra-gender relationships between women. In a quest for survival in a foreign land, Joyce became enslaved to Susan who lured her into losing her identity, and thus became a fugitive in a bid to accomplish a fraudulent feat. Susan, being a fully documented citizen capitalized on Joyce's unfortunate situation to manipulate her into doing her bidding. The class distinction as usual in every capitalist society places the more privileged women in a vantage position to dominate the less privileged amongst them, thus women of high socio-economic standing in most cases manifest anti-feminism behaviours towards other females.

Deception is one of the major tools of oppression and exploitation of female migrants. Aside from being lured into believing that better job opportunities await them abroad,

many migrant women experience lots of deception via fake promises from men and women in the course of their sojourn for a better life. This is usually possible because out of their desperation, potential victims are "naive and unaware of the dangers that they might face from trusting strangers or acquaintances who make them false promises of a better life" (Ingrid Palmary, 2010) . In the case of Joyce, her desperation to have her 'anchor baby' birthed in the United States of America made her vulnerable to Susan, who deployed lies and deceit to rob her of her baby. In her conversation with the lawyer, she sounded so genuine as she expressed with passion her concern for her fellow woman which eventually turned out to be a lie. Here's an excerpt of their conversation:

> Susan: so, if the owner doesn't report their ID stolen, then the person using their information may never get caught?
>
> John: that's right
>
> Susan: (smiles) I'll do it
>
> John: you'll do what?
>
> Susan: I'll do it for her. She can use my personal details.
>
> John: what a hell are you talking about? Do you know what you're trying to get yourself into?
>
> Susan: why not? Why can't I do it for her? Do you know how long I've been trying to get pregnant for Tim with no luck?
>
> John: what does that have to do with her?

> Susan: John, you wouldn't understand because you're not a woman. I mean, can you imagine the hell she's going through right now? All she wants is a better life for her baby. And you sit there and tell me that I can't help her?

The tone of the conversation above is enough to convince Joyce that Susan is passionate about her condition and is desperate to help. One dares to wonder how a woman like Susan, who had waited to have a baby for several years could even think of depriving another woman of her bundle of joy. This is sheer wickedness and man's inhumanity to man. Susan exhibited the character of selfishness which in turn, shows the extent to which people are ready to go to satisfy their needs. Judging from previous research, avarice has proven to be at the root of the failure of female bonding. As most women begin to develop an undying passion to amass more wealth, material things, high social status, power, love, and physical attraction than their counterparts, it tends to create a social conflict, which leads to an imbalance in female relationships, hence frustrating the ideals of feminism. One major mantra of feminism which is 'be your sister's keeper' was contradicted in the relationship between Susan and Joyce. For feminism to thrive, it is expected that every form of discrimination against women should be abjured. Utoh Ezeajugh in favour of this assertion upholds that,

> Female bonding encourages the nurturing of responsive and beneficial actions carried out by women to encourage fellow women in their individual and collective struggle for freedom, identity, and self-assertion. It is the formation and sustenance of personal and supportive

> relationships between women based on the giving and receiving of emotional and moral support and on the sharing of experiences and the disposition to give care and provide nurture to fellow women. (2-3)

Some African feminist discourses emphasize internal disparities which exist among women such as social class divides, jealousy and greed. These in most cases manifest in intra-gender discrimination between privileged and non- privileged ones as upheld by Vianise Ortiz who believes that "ordinarily. female elites would not want to be closely linked to the paupers among women; more so, whenever the need arises, well-positioned women exploit, manipulate or even sacrifice their poor counterparts for pecuniary gains." (4).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the feminization of migration has kept females in Nigeria to be on the move despite the barriers. Whether regular or irregular, female migrants are more liable to fall prey to migration associated discrimination more than their male counterparts. However, irregular migrants are mostly exposed to severe exploitations in the hands of men and also women. This study shows, that women play vital roles in dehumanizing fellow women on transit for reasons such as class, race and hidden rivalries predominant in women -on -women relationships. Thus, this research calls for an intra-gender reconciliation. The two films analyzed in this study, captured varied situations of intragender subjugation and women-on-women violence in the process of female migration within their home country and in their destination countries. From the analysis of the realities captured in these films, it is obvious that most marginalization and violence that female migrants encounter in their course of transition, which ranges

from sex trafficking, hard labour, restrictions, deceptions, denial of basic human rights, lack of agency and so on, are perpetrated not only by men but also by their fellow women for their self-gratification. The researchers therefore call for a reassessment and re-branding of women's relationships with fellow women as a bridge to more fulfilling and accomplished future.

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