


Chapter 7

The Sublime Emerald: From the Dark Rock to the Precious Jewel – How Education May Shape Talented Migrant Women Into Successful Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

Talented migrant women constitute a main stake for Western economies, especially when they become entrepreneurs. Most international organisations insist on their role in the economic growth. Unfortunately, they face much more ostracism than men during their path to success. In this context, the chapter aims at identifying how education may sustain their challenge first isolating talented migrant women, then giving them managerial tools to transform their technical talent into successful business. The chapter is divided into three sections. First, it analyses the importance of migrant talented women for the host economy. Then, it explores the ways education may shape female migrant talent by avoiding disqualification of recognised talents and identifying raw talents. At last, it highlights the role of education transforming migrant women into successful entrepreneur. Beyond the technical skills, it is suggested that education has to help resizing the role of (migrant) women in the society and of course dispense the appropriate missing skills.

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INTRODUCTION

Lorsqu'elle vient d'être dégagée de sa gangue blanche et noire, l'émeraude n'a pas fini son voyage, elle le commence au contraire. Évaluée, marchandée, passant de main en main, taillée, transportée, parfois améliorée, calibrée, répertoriée, elle passe de l'enfer glauque du Guaquero boueux à l'univers feutré et aseptisé du lapidaire en blouse blanche. Entre temps, le cristal originel, souvent imparfait, s'est mué en une splendide pierre, pour beaucoup la plus belle qui soit... Chenevière (1990)¹

No doubt is now allowed: “policy makers have recognized the importance of migrant entrepreneurs as potentially important economic agents in an increasingly globalized economy characterized by great movements of products, services and labour” (OECD / ILO, 2018; Zimmermann, 2016). Considering the number of women in the international migratory flux, the question to identify and to shape the talent of migrant female entrepreneurs is a first-rate target for the future competitiveness of our societies: “gender is central, not tangential, to our understanding of skill, labour, and immigration” (Boucher, 2016, p. 65). So, several challenges arise.

In order to understand and to overcome those difficulties, an allegory will be used here: the emerald. To become the sublime jewel, which enlightens our souls and the society, the stone pass through a long, perilous and technical process, so perfectly summed up by Chenevière in the introductive quotation. Everything begins in the mud where the gem is not only hidden in a mass of dark rocks, but also in a white gangue. Only the tireless work of mineworkers allows the stone to see the sky. Then, then only, its journey really begins. The mineral is observed, analysed, tailored by the artists who will make it a jewel.

When we hear the life story of many immigrated talented women, the analogy seems obvious. In one hand, the trip from their homeland to their country of adoption, often difficult, sometimes horrible, may be symbolized through procedure of extraction of the emerald. In the second hand, the process of talents' recognition to become a successful female entrepreneur is at least as arduous that the steps need to transform the gross stone into a sumptuous jewel.

Thus, naturally follows the problematic of this chapter: how education may shape talented migrant women into successful entrepreneur?

Immediately two semantic difficulties occur: from its key words, at least two are far from being unequivocal: talent and entrepreneur. The purpose of this chapter is not to go deeper in those definitions, others, have done it elsewhere (Dejoux & Thévenet, 2015; Rougé 2015). This work will consider that talented entrepreneurs may blossom in whatever activity, even the less technologically advanced. It will be assumed as an hypothesis, that those entrepreneurs are only motivated only by pool factors: a deep willingness to create, to catch an opportunity to undertake something they particularly value. It will not consider as entrepreneurs those only motivated by push factors as: economic necessity, unemployment, glass ceiling...

Despite the still open debate between researchers to determine the actual place of personality in entrepreneurship. Most of them - Yadav and Unni (2016) and the author for example - emphasize it, some minimize it: “research has not shown a strong relationship between personality traits such as the need to show efficiency, independence persistence authority and urge to organize, and the likewood to become entrepreneur.” (Johnsson, 2015, p. 38).

In order to clarify this issue, it will be processed in two sections. First, it will be suggested that education has a challenging function identifying immigrated talented women. It can be compared to the geologist who has to identify the suitable soil for emerald; it also must achieve the duties of mineworkers

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