

Chapter 6

The Potential and Limitations of Entrepreneurship in Migratory Context: The ProMigra Experience

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ABSTRACT

ProMigra (Project for the Promotion of the Rights of Migrants) is a university extension linked to the University of São Paulo that started its activities in 2015. In this chapter, the authors discuss a term that has been constantly linked to the contemporary reality of the migrant subject: entrepreneurship. To achieve this purpose, they gather the framework of experiences that ProMigra has accumulated over the last years, especially those linked to professional training and the viability of income generation of migrants. While on the one hand it's important to recognize the relevance of promoting labor opportunities for migrants, on the other hand it's necessary to also consider that the entrepreneurship discourse should be employed with caution, so that it doesn't cover up the ineffectiveness of public institutions and doesn't exempt them from social responsibility to guarantee the basic rights of socially vulnerable migrants. Hopefully, the proposed discussion will contribute to the deconstruction of problematic ideas

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-2925-6.ch006

linked to this entrepreneurial narrative.

INTRODUCTION

Although the various processes of human mobility, including migration, constitute fundamental phenomena for the development of contemporary societies; paradoxically, it is possible to observe a growing process of restriction or hardening of migratory policies around the world, accompanied, at the same time, by policies of openness to financial and commercial capital (Nogueira, Fernandes, Ruseishvili, & Vecchio, 2018).

Most of these restrictive policies are aimed at the entry of people moving between countries (especially from the South to the Global North), usually in situations of social and economic vulnerability. These discriminatory border closure policies lead to an increase in the situation of irregularity and vulnerability of these groups, hindering their integration and insertion in the destination country. This scenario is aggravated by the lack of adequate and efficient public policies directed to the attention and assistance, specifically, of these population groups.

Facing this problem, in Brazilian contemporaneity, it is observed the growing tendency for civil society initiatives to assume for themselves actions that, historically, had been and continue to be the duty of the State. In this process, civil society organizations appropriate social problems so that certain demands are properly contemplated.

Among these social demands are those related to the generation of economic income and insertion in the labor market, as a way to overcome situations of inequality and social and economic vulnerability. It is in this context that various civil organizations - and sometimes the state itself - give place to the discourse of entrepreneurship. The discourse of entrepreneurship is strengthened among individuals who come to value attitudes aimed at a supposed citizenship that promotes autonomy and proactivity.

At this time, entrepreneurship becomes a way of life that guides the different social relationships. In this way, the core of social problems is hidden, since it is up to the subjects to confront them. Mészáros (1996) states that the main consequence of this entrepreneurial behavior, so much valued today, is that the solution to social problems is no longer based on collective conflicts and cooperation, but through individualistic formulas that depend almost exclusively on a supposed willpower.

However, this entrepreneurial perspective ignores that overcoming social problems must recognize the particularities that are imbricated in them. In this article, we will address the relationship between the discourse of entrepreneurship and migration, especially migration in conditions of social vulnerability, in order to promote and establish some questions about it.

For this, we will discuss the conceptual approach of entrepreneurship and then the limitations and potentials of entrepreneurship at migratory context. After that, based on the experiences and knowledge accumulated by ProMigra over the last years, we will address three main subtopics: **Labor market and Inclusion; Recurring Abuses and Difficulties of Regularization**. Finally, we will present our conclusions.

Entrepreneurship: Preliminary Discussion and Conceptual Approach

Initially, to elaborate the proposed questions about the discourse of entrepreneurship, we consider it necessary to briefly conceptualize the term. Different perspectives of study were in charge to focus and define it. The first considerations made about entrepreneurship date back to the 18th century and emerged in the field of economics. With the work “The essay on the nature of commerce”, Cantillon (1755) made efforts to define the profile of entrepreneurs.

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