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Entrepreneurship and employability in the tourism sector of women returned from Spain and other countries to the Province of El Oro (Ciudad de Machala, Ecuador)

Violante Martínez Quintana

Profa. Titular de Sociología III. Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociología. UNED
(Madrid, España)

vmartin@poli.uned.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6208-1318>

Miguel Ángel Ramón Pineda

Universidad Técnica de Machala (Ecuador)

mramon@utmachala.edu.ec



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ARTICLE SECTION

Entrepreneurship and employability in the tourism sector of women returned from Spain and other countries to the Province of El Oro (Ciudad de Machala, Ecuador)

Abstract: The entrepreneurship and employability in the tourist sector of returned immigrant women is the object of study of this work, which is linked to one of the stages of migration experienced by these women, and the difficulties of labor integration on the return to their country. The starting hypothesis affirms that tourism offers ample opportunities for job advancement to returned women. Firstly, the state in which the tourist cantons of the Province of El Oro are found, especially the most unspoiled and little exploited such as those in the interior, are analyzed. Secondly, two Focus Groups are held to learn through the narratives of the obstacles they face in their incorporation into the tourism sector, the most difficult sectors and the vital trajectories they have gone through. It is obtained that, despite the important training potential they possess, the consolidated work experience and the purchasing power achieved, it is not enough to obtain a satisfactory job incorporation in one of the richest and most productive sectors such as tourism, since its opportunities of labor progress are diminished by factors of gender, discrimination and inequality mainly.

Key words: job progress, discrimination, inland tourism, traditional tourism, immigrants.

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IDEAS CLAVE / HIGHLIGHTS / IDEES CLAU

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Se investigan las mujeres que han emigrado por cuestiones de supervivencia y falta de oportunidades laborales, y que por circunstancias económicas y de crisis se han visto obligadas a retornar a su país de origen.2. En América Latina el emprendimiento está muy vinculado a estas mujeres ante los problemas económicos y de reinserción laboral que encuentran en su regreso.3. Destaca su capacidad para adaptar sus capacidades y recursos a las necesidades del mercado laboral, particularmente, del sector turístico.4. Esta adaptación les favorece el progreso laboral, vía experiencias, conocimientos y habilidades de todo tipo adquiridas en el país de destino.5. Estas mujeres han de superar un trato diferente, perjudicial y desigual por distintos motivos. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Research is carried out on women who have migrated for reasons of survival and lack of work opportunities, and who have been forced to return to their country of origin due to economic circumstances and crises.2. In Latin America, entrepreneurship is closely linked to these women in the face of the economic and job reinsertion problems they encounter on their return.3. Stresses its ability to adapt its skills and resources to the needs of the labour market, particularly the tourism sector.4. This adaptation helps them to progress in their work, through experience, knowledge and skills of all kinds acquired in the destination country.5. These women have to overcome different, harmful and unequal treatment for various reasons. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. S'investiguen les dones que han emigrat per qüestions de supervivència i falta d'oportunitats laborals, i que per circumstàncies econòmiques i de crisis s'han vist obligades a retornar al seu país d'origen.2. A Amèrica Llatina l'emprenedoria està molt vinculat a aquestes dones davant els problemes econòmics i de reinserció laboral que troben en el seu retorn.3. Destaca la seua capacitat per a adaptar les seues capacitats i recursos a les necessitats del mercat laboral, particularment, del sector turístic.4. Aquesta adaptació els afavoreix el progrés laboral, via experiències, coneixements i habilitats de tota mena adquirides al país de destinació.5. Aquestes dones han de superar un tracte diferent, perjudicial i desigual per diferents motius. |
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT¹

The entrepreneurship and employability in the tourism sector of returned immigrant women is studied here to learn about the difficulties of labour integration upon returning to their country of origin. This objective leads to investigate the opportunities for progress that they usually find in the tourism sector, and more specifically, in the 14 cantons of the Province of El Oro in Ecuador. The tourist development reached especially in the most virgin and under-exploited territorial areas is carried out, and two Focus Groups that show the obstacles and difficulties in the development of labour reintegration.

In effect, Ecuadorian returned immigrant women have undergone significant changes in abandonment in the customs of a society of origin, Ecuador, being forced to modify their cultural patterns of home care, upbringing and basic education of children to undertake work activities of strenuous effort and foreign to their country of origin. With the migratory exodus, they left an intermittent gap in their families to focus fully on economic tasks that would bring significant benefits, thus paying the cost of the absence caused to their families in the place of origin.

The return process coincides with a level of economic development at different speeds in the host countries where they come from, especially in Spain. They are returned women who now have a training level, a work experience and purchasing power that enables them to face a job reintegration, and a return to the family vacuum that they left at the time of their departure or, where appropriate, the start of a new one. lifetime. From here, the incorporation into society occurs through the incorporation into the labour market that entails difficulties according to the economic sectors mainly, insertion that will be led by entrepreneurship and employability in the tourism sector.

In the tourist area, entrepreneurship constitutes an alternative for the return to work of returned women. Likewise Harold (2015) expresses that entrepreneurial ideas are processes that relate the entrepreneurial individual with the institutions and the State, and this leads to turning entrepreneurship into a very complex social and economic phenomenon. Starting a business offers greater opportunities to enter the State and the person, although the perception of self-efficacy is lower in women than in men, and it is a factor that will partially determine the decision to undertake.

In the tourism entrepreneurship of returned women, it is positively influenced that tourism is one of the main economic activities in both developed and developing countries, but asymmetries between men and women have increased historical inequality. The social juxtapositions of women vis-à-vis men must be improved so that strategic practices and interests are incorporated as a transformative potential to modify gender relations and subordination structures.

The first objective is to discover the perspectives offered by the tourism sector with a starting hypothesis that affirms that tourism offers ample opportunities for job advancement to returned women. The quantitative methodology uses the documentary and descriptive analysis of the under-exploited natural tourist resources, the cultural landscapes as destination images, and the number of visitors that frequent the cantons of the Province of El Oro in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

¹ Authors' exclusive translation. The full version of the article is available in Spanish.

The second objective aims to investigate the integration of returned women with training potential, consolidated work experience, and purchasing power achieved in the most difficult tourist sectors, and the vital trajectories they have had to go through. The methodology used has been qualitative through two Focus Groups for women returned from Spain and other countries.

Tourism with its dynamism and capacity for progress has become one of the potential axes for development in Ecuador, and although there are no figures on the productive ventures of returned migrant women (according to the global competitiveness report (ESPOL, 2015)), sustainable tourism is targeted as a still unexploited area in the natural resources of the Province of El Oro. The socioeconomic and local development context of the tourism sector is characterized by the polarization of traditional tourism and alternative tourism, where returned women are overrepresented in the first and underrepresented in the second.

There is enormous potential in the rural area of the Province of El Oro for the entrepreneurship of returned women, who can especially participate in local development with nature tourism. The places with the best possibilities for entrepreneurship and employability in the tourism sector are diverse, and most of them are located in the rural context. The city by its nature has become an area of high auditory, visual, and environmental contamination that affects the entire urban environment, which makes the resident look for new alternatives of oxygenation and recreation in the face of stressful modern life, and look for in rural and coastal areas contact with nature, which is the main patrimonial value of the Province of El Oro, since “nature tourism represents an enormous opportunity to contact the natural and healthy roots that people need in the habitats in which they live, and can act as compensation for the “comfort” of the polluted urban habitat and its stressful pace of life” (Martínez-Quintana, 2017:2).

From the two Focus Groups it is obtained that in the first one there is greater employability, while in the second one entrepreneurship predominates. Returned women are receptionists, hotel waitresses, restaurant employees and owners of restaurants in ports such as Jeli and Hualtaco, which correspond mainly to traditional tourism, although it must be taken into account, according to Moreno and Cañada (2018:14) “the tremendous responsibility that the tourism sector has if it intends to promote quality and decency in the employment it generates”. Integration into the world of work through entrepreneurship in the tourism sector has been very favourable and with prospects for the future, and it is a fact that is confirmed in the two groups of returned women. The Province of El Oro as a border area has an intense mobility of people both in its coastal and inland areas with a remarkable natural heritage and biodiversity.

The comparative advantages with respect to other sectors that have driven them to join the labour market for tourism development are based on training, work experience and the purchasing power achieved, and are elements that are reinforced with innate qualities and those developed as personal charm, the ability to have personal relationships, possess other added values, punctuality, knowledge of other countries, and empathy with the tourists who arrive.

The most difficult tourist sectors are found in alternative tourism, and more specifically, in adventure tourism, as is the case of the activities carried out by tourist guides in which men prevail, since they are areas that require more effort physical as required by employers.

The greatest satisfaction they achieve in their life trajectories is obtained precisely from having obtained opportunities for personal, cultural growth and economic fulfilment, and

having made profitable the previous experiences obtained in their life trajectory as migrants.

Finally, the life trajectories achieved include the discrimination experienced by age, educational level, sex, ethnicity, inequality in job opportunities for insertion into work, and its impact on the development of entrepreneurship and employability in the tourism sector, and it is a reality that hinders their work progress. Gender stereotypes, identities and traditional roles emerge in the collective imagination, both in women and in men. Consequently, the existence of the empowerment of returned women and inequality in the tourism sector are detected, when, according to Martínez-Quintana and Martínez-Gayo (2019), there is an exponential growth in tourism, in which women are in an anchored process of discontinuous progress and setbacks with permanent overrepresentation and underrepresentation in the job categories, without having yet reached a necessary adjustment between empowerment and equality.