

Portuguese Women: Entrepreneurs in Sao Paulo City

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Received 19 February 2014; revised 25 March 2014; accepted 4 April 2014

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Abstract

This paper presents the trajectory of Portuguese female immigrants who came to the city of Sao Paulo in the last two decades of 20th century and records their surviving strategies, initially looking for work and subsequently as entrepreneurs in their own business: restaurants, travel agency, fado singer, and others. Its primary aim is to identify, from their narratives, the entrepreneurship level of these women and the capital stock equity of their ownership, use, and from which they could be able to develop over four decades living in this huge metropolis. In this context, it is also sought the way social networks supporting their arrival were accessed during their period adapting to the city and on performing their business ventures. The analytical and interpretative path from the face to face interviews with these Portuguese immigrants allows us to conclude that social capital is an extremely relevant resource to entrepreneurship.

Keywords

Portuguese Immigrants; Entrepreneurship; Social Capital

1. Introduction

This paper presents episodes from the lives and experiences of five Portuguese women, from different regions in Portugal, who migrated to São Paulo and here devoted themselves to the most varied professions to then undertake activities such as singing fado, running companies in the Portuguese gastronomy and tourism industry. Navigating through the field of people's migratory experience who motivated by different reasons and emotions left their origins, heading to lands beyond the sea driven by the spirit of adventure but, mainly by the desire for a better life, to escape from the difficulties in surviving in their homelands or from the moments of social and po-

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litical instability, sense the need to construct new concepts of entrepreneurship because the acts of emigrating and immigrating are entrepreneurial actions themselves. To comprehend the issues related to migration, it is necessary to go beyond the personal, familiar, psychological motivations and to understand the social, political, economic matters of the countries of origin and destination, in this globalized world, because before being an immigrant, the person is an emigrant [1].

To understand the circumstances of life of others, it is necessary to go beyond the conventional field of research and to explore other perspectives as did Angelo [2] in his paper on Azorean immigrants in São Paulo by seeking inspiration in Tarsila do Amaral's painting—Second Class—to portray the situation of the rural exodus and immigration in Brazil in the 30s. The traces of dark colors and gloomy expressions thrill and engage, for the families melancholic faces represented there, nevertheless the alliance, holding hands, the sense of coziness of children on the parents' lap, clinging to a thread of hope, for better days in the future, in the new period of time and place, because “deep inside, the primary reason that moves the emigrant to become an immigrant is the need to make a living.” [3].

Apart from reports on the life stories of Portuguese immigrants, we try to understand, from the narratives, some of their experiences in the city of São Paulo, such as the entrepreneur women, with the contributions of the social capital they held, used and built, considering the access to the social networks support at the moment of arrival, the adaptation period and all conducted business deals. And, taking into account that such experiences were all successful, we intend to understand and analyze the factors which boosted these successes. So, the present study intends to evaluate how and how much the social capital of the Portuguese immigrants women interviewed, contributed to their personal and professional experiences in the city of Sao Paulo. It is worth pointing out that their social capital may positively have affected their activities in this city.

1.1. The Entrepreneurs

By ship or airplane, children or adolescents, alone or with their parents, they arrived to the city of São Paulo between the decades of 1950 and 1980, extending the statistics of Portuguese immigrants living in the city. Sao Paulo in the 1950s became the major pole of attraction of the country due to new industrial and economic growth prospects, particularly during Juscelino Kubitschek government. In that period, there were 1,085,287 foreign residents in the country of whom 310,261 were Portuguese, and 135,428 lived in Sao Paulo [4].

To find women entrepreneurs in the city of Sao Paulo, Casa de Portugal de São Paulo, an institute which exists for more than 70 years, whose mission is to preserve the historical and cultural values of the Portuguese people in Sao Paulo, gave the necessary help and support. This indication sped up the process, facilitated the approach and the scheduling of presential interviews which were all performed in their workplace surrounded by a friendly, cordial and emotional atmosphere. As a support to the interviews, we used a script containing open-ended questions covering the following topics:

1) profile data, 2) the migration process, 3) career, 4) characterization of entrepreneurship, 5) in reconciling work and family, 6) connection to the place of origin; 7) access to support networks, friendships and involvement with the city of Sao Paulo.

Table 1 shows the period in which the immigrants arrived and their respective ages at that time. Except for Maria Isabel who was 3 years old when arriving in São Paulo, the other women still keep memories of their trip by ship while Maria Sofia recalls her trip by plane. Maria Isabel and Maria Sofia, travelled with their parents. Rosa, whose parents still live in their home country, came alone. Maria Gloria and Tereza also came by themselves but their parents came later.

Each woman worked in different areas before starting their own business. Maria da Gloria took off earlier in her carrier as “fado” singer at the age of 19, **Table 2**, but before this she worked for 2 years as a housemaid. Maria Isabel and Maria Sofia chose other ways to make a living, and did University. Tereza got married, raised a family and dedicated herself to her children until they finished University. Rosa had already finished high school when she came to São Paulo and started working in management. Profiting from the experience acquired in management along with the cooking skills learned from her grandmother since young age, she was able to open her own restaurant, which she successfully maintains until today.

1.2. Professional Careers

In the late fifties, there was a resumption of the Portuguese immigrants flow, particularly after the signing of the

Table 1. Data about the Portuguese women interviewed.

Name	Age of migration	Age when migrated	Current age	School level
Maria Isabel	1959	3	54	University degreee
Maria Glória	1961	17	67	4th
Tereza	1961	15	65	4th
Rosa	1971	18	58	High school
Maria Sofia	1976	9	45	University degreee

Source: Portuguese immigrants interviewed, 2012.

Table 2. Data about the Portuguese women interviewed.

Name	Age when started up the business	Year of starting up the business	Marital status	Number of children
Maria Isabel	27	1984	Single	-
Maria Glória	19	1963	Widow	1
Tereza	58	2004	Widow	2
Rosa	39	1992	Divorced	2
Maria Sofia	35	2001	Married	4

Source: Portuguese immigrants interviewed, 2012.

Treaty of Friendship and Consultation (1953), which allowed the expansion trading and financial relations between the two countries [4]. One of the requirements imposed by the Brazilian government for the entry of the Portuguese in the country at the time was the letter of invitation¹ which needed to be sent by a relative up to third degree. In Sao Paulo, the Portuguese were a socially diversified group, there were from wealthy industrialists and merchants to humble household workers. In Sao Paulo, there is a huge amount of bakeries, bars and restaurants whose owners are Portuguese. Three out of the five Portuguese immigrants who were interviewed are restaurants owners and they all went through different work experience before starting their own business.

Maria Isabel, 54 years old, outgoing, says that arrived in Sao Paulo when she was 3 and started working full time when she was 8 years at his father's bar. Despite this behavior, her father has always been a great encourager of her studies. She applied for a public position contest and because she liked tourism very much, she gave up everything to work as a receptionist in a travel company. Within a short time she had already migrated to other functions which enabled her to learn a bit about various aspects of the activity. In 1984, with two relatives, she started a tourism agency. The relatives had the financial resources and she had the expertise. After a few years she and a friend of hers, who is also Portuguese, bought her relatives' share and run the company till today.

Maria Gloria, 67 years old, looking centered and restful relates that migrated at 17 and worked as a maid in a family home. After two years of her arrival, encouraged by her older sister who was already living in São Paulo and was the responsible one for her coming, she joined and won a contest as a singer of Portuguese music, on Tupi² TV show. This event changed her life and since then she lives with and for the music, which justifies our considerations related to the beginning of her entrepreneurial activity in 1963, two years after her arrival in Sao Paulo. She reveals she had never imagined being a singer, but with her sister's encouragement, she "discovered this talent and the satisfaction that she has embraced throughout his life." For several years she was a producer, directed concerts in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and traveled to many capitals of Brazil. In 1997, together with two business partners (friends), she opened a restaurant of Portuguese cuisine, but sold after seven years, for difficulties in reconciling the management of the business with the music. Currently, she devotes herself entirely to music; she works/sings/undertakes every weekend.

Tereza, 65 years old, very excited and enthusiastic says that started her life in São Paulo when she was 15

¹This was the first document to provide. In it, the calling party, a relative to the third degree, was responsible not only for the coming as well as the maintenance and support to find employment. ALBINO, Adriano. *Emigration (100 years) Twentieth Century: The diaspora of Portuguese*. New York: CJE / ECA / USP, 1994.

²First TV station in Brazil and South America.

years old, working as a maid. She got married at 17 and during the time dedicated to the two children, she developed various volunteer works in the Portuguese community, organizing charity events (teas and dinners). She took oil painting lessons in order to teach the elderly in the Portuguese Trasmontano Club, an activity that she has been doing once a week for over 40 years. She did not want to pursue a career as an artist, but she participated in exhibitions in various countries. In 2004 he bought a Portuguese food restaurant with two partners.

Rose, 58 years old, confident, speaks steadily and declares that she was 18 years old when she took a job at Mappin³ and she believes that it was a great school for those who until then had only worked on the country, although she had studied up to high school. After that she worked as manager in a sportswear clothing store for a few years. The company closed and she opened a buffet-style restaurant with the indemnification money she received starting a business partnership with an aunt, but her greatest dream was to open a Portuguese food restaurant. And she did so in 1992. She started from scratch, the location point up to the business identity and the building construction which she owns till today.

Maria Sofia, 44 years old, the youngest interviewed, was born in a middle class family in Lisbon and migrated to São Paulo in 1976. Her father feared the social, political and military instability in the post-revolution period (April 25, 1974). She was nine years old at the time. In adolescence, she had to balance her studies with work in her father's weaving. During the Communication Course at College she worked in an advertising agency until 2001, she lost her job. With her brother's encouragement, she decided to open a Portuguese food restaurant in a business partnership. She traveled to Portugal and went on a training period for three months in her family and friends' restaurants. When she came back to Brazil, her brother had already found the spot and they started the activities. Today, they own a second restaurant and they are planning to open a third one, all of them in the city of Sao Paulo.

Even though those five women are not tycoon reaching a new market, they were firmly determined to takeoff in their own business which makes them quite different from the Brazilian women and even from some Portuguese ones. Another remarkable point is how their roots influence in their business choices. For instance, restaurants offering Portuguese dishes, travel agency focusing trips to Portugal and "fado" singer. Their link with the roots can be seen in their everyday lives, at work, in family relationships and among friends living in São Paulo. They still keep in touch with family and friends living in Portugal. According to these immigrants statements, these close relationships play a sound role to help them in their struggle to make a living and strengths their friendship which reinforces their growth and success in their enterprises.

2. Analysis of Entrepreneurship of the Immigrants

Mizrahi [5] in her description about a family of immigrants from the Middle East, highlights that they moved to Mooca neighborhood in Sao Paulo in the fifties. She emphasizes the efforts, tenacity and strong will to evolve as important traits of immigrants, which make it possible for many of them to make fortunes. Those immigrants lived in communities and profited from the support of their families and friends, creating associations intended to social familiarity. Also, started business partnerships, created synagogues, shared ideas about art, religion and strong desire to win. São Paulo's intense urbanization in the early 20th century arising from the industrial expansion opened great expectations for commercial activities which offered a niche to the immigrants from the Middle East in the Brazilian market, trading umbrellas, bags, tapestry, fabrics among others. These items could be paid in times, sold by peddlers due to the propitious shape of the Brazilian economy at the time. Those immigrants adventurous and enterprising behavior resembles that of the Portuguese interviewed, mainly concerning the search for support from family and friends.

Entrepreneurship as a concept is changing, not only because of its broad social content, but also because it is increasingly the result of a collective effort and not just an individual one [6]. Today, more often than not, the new medium-sized company in Europe and the United States is created by a team rather than by a single individual and the team activity is probably a common feature on new entrepreneurial trends found among women, young people and other minority groups, for instance, the immigrants.

Entrepreneurship is a multidisciplinary expertise that can be taught in schools, in companies, in families through the exchange and sharing of knowledge and experience. Meanwhile, promoting entrepreneurship is not an easy task: its defining characteristics—such as the ability to identify and seize opportunities or to build trust, networks and projects—are intangible and not always easily and quickly understood, translated and assimilated.

³A traditional department store that operated in the city center of Sao Paulo during 86 years in the twentieth century.

It is also necessary that people be venturesome, fearless, disciplined, deep-seated in order to face challenges. Most immigrants and entrepreneurs have these characteristics rooted in themselves. These characteristics are also found in Jewish immigrants women from Europe, Middle East and North Africa who came to Sao Paulo and started small and one-to-one businesses from 1945 to 1956. They started sewing workshops, clothes sales in Public offices, tapestry imports, confectionery, meals delivery, among others [7]. When questioned about the reasons for their entrepreneurship, they declared they need to increase the family income and enhance their children education. Also they started that the struggle for a living together with the status as immigrants granted them freedom of choice and audacity showing them new horizons and providing new contacts and friendship. Actually, the entrepreneurs themselves are responsible for great part of their success. However, they are also subject to the environment conditions where their business takes place [8]. If the economic conditions are favorable and there is offer and demand concerning services offered in a certain place, chances for success are likely to happen, as it can be observed among the Portuguese women, as immigrants, rolling out their business in Sao Paulo highlighted in their own statements.

They Speak for Themselves

Maria Isabel

“Sao Paulo is a land with magnet, with energy for work, a land that does not discriminate against anyone and this fills the eye of the immigrant. In Portugal we were told that in Brazil, “money grows on trees”, but what really matters is perseverance and reliability; friendship and customers’ feedback ...”

Maria Gloria

“A city where everything is possible ... Being an immigrant.... When you are an immigrant you cannot count on anyone but you have the commitment to win, my satisfaction is singing, chanting and singing”.

Tereza

“It is a city that works on a 24/7 basis and it has everything you need, to win here you need good humor and patience, in my personal experience it is to be able to conciliate business management, the relationship with your bank, the volunteer work and personal life ...”

Rosa

“Sao Paulo gave me roots, it has a good climate and it has abundance; discipline, friendship with the clients”.

Maria Sofia

“Sao Paulo reminds work, offers opportunities, represents the strength of all these people coming from abroad, who leave his birthplace, do their very best to build something in the new land, and make it happen!”

In addition to the many concepts of entrepreneur/entrepreneurship discussed here and for the purpose of this study, it is considered an entrepreneur, the Portuguese immigrant woman who dreams, acts, build, learn from her mistakes, working individually, in groups and networks, starts her own business and is able to manage it and make it operational with positive results.

3. Social Capital—Theoretical Considerations

Despite the multiple meanings that social capital has, it will be discussed in this text as a foundation to promote entrepreneurship as social structures existing in it; there are resources that will be made available to actors in the realization of their interests and goals, either in enterprises of small business, individual companies or self-employment. The origin of interest in the concept of social capital, in Sociology, can be traced from the importance of social relationships in Weber [9] and more recently in the ideas and concepts of Bourdieu [10] and Coleman [11], among others. Thus, for Max Weber the social relations have their origin in social actions that occur reciprocally between individuals and institutions and they can be classified into:⁴

Participants in a social relationship, in turn, perceive opportunities in it for the satisfaction of their interests “aiming to the end or to the result, whether through joint action or because the balance of compatible interests”. Thus we can see in Weber’s, the importance of social relations which are formed from family ties of affection and common interests of its members in order to achieve positive results. Further reflection on the importance of social capital can be found in Bourdieu [10], in the second half of the twentieth century who produced a series of

⁴Community institutions when and to the extent that the attitude in social action lies in the participants’ subjective investment of belonging (affective or traditionally to the same group), or associative institutions when and to the extent that the attitude in social action lies in a setting or in a union of interests rationally motivated with reference to values or purposes (Weber 1994, pp. 25-27).

studies characterizing the culture not only as a dynamic and creative phenomenon, but structured as well. Social capital is based on cultural capital and on economic capital as “home”, where the likely accumulations return. Thus, the social capital.⁵

In this perspective social capital comprises the volume of economic capital (immediately and directly convertible into money), and cultural or symbolic (also convertible into cash under certain conditions). For the author “the volume of capital possessed by a given agent depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected.” To this extent, the existence of a network of connections is not a natural given, or even a social given, but the product of an endless effort, *i.e.*, a network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short and long term, at transforming contingent relations, such as those of neighborhood, the workplace, or even into relationships that are once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship) or institutionally guaranteed (rights).

The social capital has a different relationship for each individual. It can arouse the enthusiasm of the action to perform and contribute successfully to the challenges of individual members of these relations. A broader conceptual scope appears in Coleman [11] who defines social capital as the value that certain aspects of social structure to represent to the agents in the form of resources they can use to realize their interests and goals. The author highlights three types of capital: physical (tools, machines and other equipment), the human (skills and capabilities) and social (comes about through changes in relations among persons). All three types of capital facilitate productive activities in common and the physical capital more tangible and the social capital is the less tangible of the three. It also emphasizes the effects of social capital in the creation of human capital, both within the family and outside it. In the family, the baggage of this would be analytically separated into three components: financial capital (measured by family’s economic position), human capital (measured by adults’ educational background and their influence on children’s education) and social capital (measured by the relationships between adults and children, but depending on the physical presence of adults in the family and the attention given by adults to children). Yet the social capital outside the family is found in the community institution, *i.e.* social relationships between parents and between them and the community institutions. Thus, “social capital is an important resource for individuals and can greatly affect their ability to act and their perceived quality of life, with such individuals, the ability to give birth to such capital” [11].

Within the concepts mentioned, the capital incorporates a set of social norms and networks of cooperation grounded in trust, solidarity, cultural and social practices which give quality, intensity and durability to the interpersonal relations in a society. Apart from the aspect of trust as an intrinsic component of the capital, [12] emphasizes its relevance as a conceptual and practical instrument in the consolidation of public policies for sustainable development and the revitalization of civil society in order to increase the level of trust between people and encourage greater participation in matters involving the community.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to evaluate how and how much the social capital of the Portuguese immigrants women interviewed, contributed to their personal and professional experiences in the city of Sao Paulo. It is worth pointing out that their social capital may positively have affected their activities in this city.

4. Analysis of the Social Capital of Immigrants Entrepreneurs

The information obtained in the interviewees pinpoints successful cases of entrepreneurship, with consolidated business, which overcame the implementation phase critical period, the first five years of existence, in which 58% of small businesses close down in the city of Sao Paulo⁶. Considering these facts, what is the explanation for the success? What are the reasons for this thriving business? The activity for itself? The entrepreneur’s talent? Would these women be visionary people, winners, endowed with a unique talent [13]? What are the motivations

⁵... is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word Bourdieu (1986, p. 248).

⁶According to a study conducted by the Brazilian Service to Support Micro and Small Enterprises (SEBRAE) in 2010, published in *Epoca-Negócios*, under the title: Training helps mortality rate of small businesses decrease.

for them to undertake? A research conducted on entrepreneurship of minorities (black and white women), in the state of New York, [14] reported that the main reason for these women to have their own businesses comes from the major disadvantages offered by the market. Other reasons are linked to the possibility to earn more running their own businesses, and better time management among others.

With regard to the motivations of the interviewees to have their own business, there are several points of convergence as the desire for autonomy, more flexible hours, even working more than when being employed, doing something they enjoy, that gives them satisfaction, even if it means having to study and learning about the activity and managing the business itself. Indeed, as [15] earlier mentioned in this study, no one was born being an entrepreneur, it's a learning process throughout life, in the family, at school and in networks. Culture had a decisive role in the type of business. As noted in **Table 3**, the activities carried out by the interviewees are attached to the branches of restaurants, tourism agency and the artistic field, in the case of the fado singer and the artist. They are all, in one way or another, connected to the Portuguese roots as a means of preserving the customs, traditions, of keeping alive the cultural and emotional ties. Maria Isabel travels at least once a year to Portugal to discover and experience new touristic attractions because her expertise lies in "selling the charms of her land."

Regarding the type of entrepreneurship, there are those who believe that there are two ways: entrepreneurship by necessity and by opportunity [8]. Entrepreneurs by opportunity see the lack of a product or service in the market and new trends as business to be explored, while the entrepreneurs by necessity aim the survival, the need to overcome the loss of jobs or supplement their income. In these particular cases, one could say that it is a matter of entrepreneurship by necessity and survival, however, they were planned businesses, studied and constructed step by step, with great commitment, dedication, some with their own resources, others with the help of relatives and business partners but none of them appealed to banks. This clearly indicates the importance and the bonds of kinship and friendship which ensure, as part of strategies of social networks that the financial support consolidate the relationships and expand the networks of solidarity among community members.

Studies carried out on entrepreneurship by the Canadian Louis Jacques Filion⁷, report that women have distinguished themselves in leadership activities due to high interpersonal skills. Also highlight some female characteristics, revealed in small business management: they are good planners, have emotional stability to deal with the instabilities of the market, progress slowly and also show a greater integration between family and business dimensions.

While interviewing the immigrant entrepreneur one could notice the concern in all of them, with the preservation of the Portuguese roots, including through their business. In the collective community context, the recreational and cultural associations seek to keep the Portuguese traditions through festivals, civic and religious events and even folkloric ones. On individual basis, the house and the family are the locus of preserving memories, culture and traditions. In many cases the personal pronoun is preserved in the second person singular (with the use of "tu" or thou) in the language used between parents and children, maintaining the language spoken in Portugal, even after many years of residence in Brazil. The house is the place of memory par excellence where they preserve the symbols and signs that refer to Portuguese culture traditions such as the presence of images and the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, St. Joseph image made of ceramic tile near the door and the roses cultivated in the garden or in flowerpots inside the house. But the workplace and the ways of performing their

Table 3. Activities developed by Portuguese immigrants interviewed.

Name	Place of origin	Neighborhood	Type of activity	Activity (years)
M. Isabel	Vila Real—Trás-os-Montes	Higienópolis	Tourism Agency (1)	27
M. Glória	Sendim—Miranda do Douro	Moema	Fado Singer	48
Tereza	Sendim—Miranda do Douro	Vila Mascote	Restaurant (2)	7
Rosa	Gilmonde—Barcelos	Vila Mariana	Restaurant (2)	19
M. Sofia	Lisboa	Vila Madalena	Restaurant (2)	10

(1) Company specialized in trips to Portugal

(2) Typical Portuguese food

Source: Portuguese Immigrants Interviewed, 2012.

⁷Canadian expert coordinator of research on female entrepreneurship, whose results are published in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2010.

professional activity also, in fact, very often fulfill the same role. It's also in the workplace that the means to demonstrate and reaffirm the "Portuguese identity" are expressed and by keeping a certain ambiguity, it merges into the "Brazilian identity", acquired and shaped through life in the country of destination. It is mainly in the generation, as in the case of these women, who was born and spent the childhood in Portugal, but grew up and became adults in Brazil that the construction of identity process incorporates Portuguese and Brazilian roots with almost equal intensity, generating a "Luso-Brazilian identity." [16]. Identity which was built based on the challenges and the numerous achievements of these immigrants.

5. Conclusions

The analytical and interpretative path followed from the conducted interviews can claim that social capital is an extremely relevant resource for entrepreneurship and has been a strong ally in the Portuguese immigrant's enterprises performance. They knew, with greater mastery, how to use the networks support within the family and friends scope, especially members of the Portuguese community in order to meet the needs of financial resources (M. Isabel, Teresa and Rosa), expertise (Maria Sofia) and as an incentive to give vent to her own talent, as in the case of Maria Gloria, who discovered herself as a Fado singer after winning a contest which enrollment was made by her sister. The support, information and knowledge gained by Portuguese immigrants in and out of social networks, with clear and defined objectives are undoubtedly, an important type of capital.

Maria Isabel works for a radio program which has been on the air for over two decades focusing the Portuguese community. She is also a member of a folkloric ranch and participates in a Portuguese group dancing and singing along with adults and youngsters in the "Santuário de Nossa Senhora de Fátima", where they have weekly meetings and rehearsals for performances countrywide and also in Portugal. This fact shows perseverance and stamina to keep their roots alive and is paved on artistic and cultural values, religion, patriotism and eventually on bravery, enthusiasm and achievement, so distinctive among the Portuguese women interviewed.

Teresa participates in the boards of directors of four Portuguese community associations in São Paulo and therefore has an intense schedule of meetings and events. This feature combined with other skills resulted in an invitation from a Portuguese bank in Sao Paulo to work as a relationship manager with the members of the Portuguese community. She performs this occupation for more than seven years and she has started this activity at the age of 58, while simultaneously she runs her own restaurant. With flexibility, autonomy on working hours and with the help of communication technologies she can meet all the demands of her schedule and considers herself an accomplished woman.

According to the narrative and except for Maria Sophia, daughter of a middle class family in Lisbon, the other immigrants had with their families, a simple life of hard work and no comfort, financial difficulties and shortages of assets. They emphasized that in an invariable way, the values like discipline, dedication and perseverance that they admired in their parents, grandparents, and uncles, among others were responsible to guide their behavior, and their journey. If, at an early stage, they lacked financial capital, the family support played a vital role and served as a guide for their strategies to build, use and preserve their social capital in their trajectories as entrepreneurs.

The social capital as any other capital depreciates over time; it needs to be carefully nurtured with cultural and social practices, backed by complicity, solidarity and trust, which provide quality, intensity and perennity to the interpersonal relations in family, social and professional relationships. As already quoted in this text, trust is an intrinsic component of the social capital and this, despite its intangibility and invisibility, is one of the pillars of entrepreneurship and an essential ingredient to the entrepreneur, in this case, the Portuguese female entrepreneurs immigrants interviewed in this study.

Finally, based on the theories discussed, on researches about other immigrants who came to Sao Paulo and successfully developed a great gamma of occupations in businesses and also assertion from Portuguese women who have been keeping their enterprises for four decades, we can reckon that social capital represents not only the foundation for the businesses carried out by the women presented in this study but also freedom and accomplishment paved on responsibility and courage to carry on their businesses. According to them, "when they leave their country they must strive for success in the new country".

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