Abstract

Female Entrepreneurs of Moroccan and Turkish Origin in the Netherlands

Caroline Essers, University of Nijmegen, Yvonne Benschop, University of Nijmegen, Hans Doorewaard, University of Nijmegen

Presented at Gender and Power in the New Europe, the 5th European Feminist Research Conference
August 20-24, 2003 Lund University, Sweden

Ethnic minority entrepreneurship is predominantly male. However, more and more examples of female ethnic minority entrepreneurs are documented, particularly in the UK, who have been successful in establishing a business in a still highly patriarchal world of migrant entrepreneurs (Westwood & Bhachu, 1987). In the Netherlands, 25% of all ethnic minority entrepreneurs are female (Poutsma & van den Tillaart, 1998). Yet, little is known about their socio-economic background and the way they construct their identities. Therefore, our research explores the way Female Entrepreneurs of Moroccan and Turkish Origin (hereafter called femtos) construct their identities in order to be successful. The concept of the dialogical self and multiple identity will be used in order to gather ‘situated knowledge’ (Haraway, 1991) on these female entrepreneurs.

The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework concerning the ongoing and changing multiple identities of femtos in relation to successful entrepreneurship. In a multiple case-study, eight femtos were interviewed and asked to describe their lives through ‘life-chapters’ (McAdams, 1993; Buitelaar, 2002). All of them were thoroughly analyzed, and four of them were used for this paper. Confronting and comparing theoretical notions with this empirical material lead to a description of five social practices and resulted in a first conceptualization of successful entrepreneurship among femtos. This conceptual model will serve as a guideline for further research.