Chapter 12
Advancing the Socioeconomic Development and Integration of Migrant Women Through Entrepreneurship Education:
The Case of Ireland

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ABSTRACT

The discourse on female migrant entrepreneurship/female migrant entrepreneurs (FME/FMEs) and entrepreneurship education and training (EET) is one which is gradually gaining interest among scholars because of the relevance of these areas to increasing our understanding of entrepreneurship generally and migrant entrepreneurship in particular. Various studies have alluded to the potential positive impact and contributions of FMEs to the development of host countries, as well as the strong link between education, entrepreneurial performance, and economic growth and development. EET plays a significant role in equipping aspiring and nascent FMEs with the relevant skills, knowledge, and competencies, thereby enhancing the quality of entrepreneurs and facilitating entrepreneurial success among this migrant group. Situating within the Irish context, this chapter examines some of the issues associated with FME, the socioeconomic development of FMEs, and how EET can serve as a strategic tool and catalyst for advancing the socio-economic development and integration of migrant women.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a research field that continues to attract the interest of scholars (Jovanovic, 2019; Maritz & Donovan, 2015; Azmat, 2014; Aramand, 2012), and the last number of years has also witnessed increasing research interest in issues relating to ethnic / migrant entrepreneurship (for example, see Williams & Krasniqi, 2017; Ramadani, Rexhepi, Gërguri-Rashiti, Ibraimi, & Dana, 2014; Dana & Morris, 2007; Birdthistle, 2012; Power & Szlovak, 2012). However, while **Female Migrant Entrepreneurship / Female Migrant Entrepreneurs [FME/FMEs]** remains largely under-investigated within the entrepreneurship literature - despite the crucial role they play in the economic growth of their host countries (Levent & Nijkamp, 2006; Azmat, 2014; Munkejord, 2017) - some researchers have made significant contributions to the body of knowledge.

For example, Pio (2007) investigated the reasons why migrant women from India in New Zealand chose to become entrepreneurs, while Al-Dajani and Marlow (2013) developed a conceptual framework on the gendered relationship between (women) empowerment and entrepreneurship, with displaced Palestinian migrant women operating home-based enterprises in Jordan as a unit of analysis. Also, Azmat (2014) investigated the possible barriers to entrepreneurship for migrant women, while Lockyer and George (2012) examined the main barriers to female entrepreneurship in the West Midlands in the UK. Similar to Azmat (2014) but specifically relating to **Migrant African Women Entrepreneurs [MAWE]** in the Australian context, Njaramba, Chigeza, and Whitehouse (2018) also explored the barriers and challenges experienced by migrant women.

Entrepreneurship is recognised as a powerful driver of economic growth - vital to the growth and development of economies (Downs, Lazuras, & Ketikidis, 2012; Bansal, 2012; Mondragón-Vélez, 2007), and research indicates that it is increasingly becoming popular and growing at a fast rate among migrants, especially in the U.S and in many countries in Europe (Levent & Nijkamp, 2006). Drawing on data provided by George Mason University, RIA Blog post (2017, September) note the "dramatic increase" from 1980, which sees migrant women making up a significant number of self-employed business people in the US.

Migrant Entrepreneurship has been linked to social integration (Njaramba et al., 2018), creation of opportunities as well as challenges (Dana & Morris, 2007), and the creation of new ventures (Lassalle & Scott, 2018). Migrants account for a significant proportion of the labour force in OECD countries (Levent & Nijkamp, 2006) and OECD figures confirm that, within the 10-year period of 1998 and 2008, migrants contributed immensely to job creation (Birdthistle, 2010).

Despite observations by some researchers (for example, Collins & Low, 2010) and international agencies (see OECD, 2014) that mainstream entrepreneurship research appears to be missing the opportunities for investigations, for contributions into the discourse on **female migrant entrepreneurship**, and for the development of models and conceptual frameworks in this area, a dearth of studies remains (Korpi, Hedberg, & Pettersson, 2013). While there is significant interest in female entrepreneurship among researchers and policymakers in Ireland (see Enterprise Ireland [enterprise-ireland.com; Report of the Entrepreneurship Forum, 2014); Cooney & Halabisky, 2016; siliconrepublic.com/femaleentrepreneurship) and a level of research interest in ethnic entrepreneurship (see Cooney, 2009; 2012; 2013; Cooney & Flynn, 2008; Hession, Birdthistle, & Cross, 2015), there is a paucity of studies on FME, despite an increasing level of awareness and support for migrant women entrepreneurs by state / semi-state agencies. As far as this researcher is aware, to date, there is no study which has explored how **Entrepreneurship**

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