

Entrepreneurship among female immigrants A case study in Madrid

Emprendimiento entre las mujeres inmigrantes Un caso de estudio en Madrid

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Abstract

The primary objective of this paper is to study and understand which factors determine the use or the non-use of ethnic resources in the business strategies of immigrant business women in Madrid. To achieve this goal, we studied the relationship between the structural factors of the host society, the resources that may be available to immigrant women in the context of their ethnic communities, and other individual characteristics. In this study, it is used a qualitative approach. We conducted 27 semi-structured interviews with immigrant entrepreneurs from Latin America (Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru), Africa (Morocco and Senegal), and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria and Romania). The main conclusions reveal that the difference regarding the use of ethnic resources lies in the following factors: social networks, legal status, having access to ethnic resources, business location, and entrepreneur women's origin.

Palabras clave: women, migrants, self-employment, ethnic resources, ethnic business, Madrid.

Resumen

El objetivo principal de este documento se centra en estudiar y comprender qué factores determinan el uso o no uso de los recursos étnicos en las estrategias comerciales de las mujeres de negocios inmigrantes en Madrid. Para lograr este objetivo, estudiamos la relación entre los factores estructurales de la sociedad de acogida, los recursos disponibles para las mujeres inmigrantes en el contexto de sus comunidades étnicas y otras características individuales. En este estudio, se utiliza un enfoque cualitativo. Realizamos 27 entrevistas semiestructuradas con empresarios inmigrantes de América Latina (Brasil, República Dominicana, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, Paraguay y Perú), África (Marruecos y Senegal) y Europa del Este (Bulgaria y Rumanía). Las principales conclusiones revelan que la diferencia con respecto al empleo de los recursos étnicos radica en los siguientes factores: redes sociales, estatus legal, acceso a los recursos étnicos, ubicación de negocios y origen de las mujeres empresarias.

Keywords: mujeres, migrantes, autoempleo, recursos étnicos, negocio étnico, Madrid.

1 Introduction

Causes of migration are very diverse but can be summarised as people seeking better living conditions. However, it must be stressed that the issue of migration directly affects 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) raised in the global development Agenda, 2013 (ONU 2015). Consequently, human mobility causes are also related to development problems, such as the exploitation of natural resources, gender inequality (ODS-5), land, and water-grabbing, among other social and economic problems.

The Spanish economic growth model, which relies on the expansion of intensive sectors in which contracted labour is necessary (construction, tourism, hospitality sector, etc.), and the transformation of Spanish society with the increasing presence of women in the workplace, are the two leading causes that explain the development of the demand for women's labour and therefore the increase in female immigrants arriving in Spain —especially, those from Latin America—. In Spain, these women have been pigeon-holed in limited types of work under insecure conditions, re-experiencing the labour inequalities they had in their country of origin (Aldaz & Eguía 2015, Bastia 2014). There is a lack of research and information on the business strategies developed by these women in their ethnic communities. For this reason, the objective of our study is to focus on the analysis of the factors that help explain the use or the non-use of ethnic resources by these women entrepreneurs.

2 Women/female migration and self-employment in Spain

Currently, 9.82% of the population living in Spain are foreign nationals. For this project, the Community of Madrid was selected as its geographical location of study. In this community, during the last fifteen years, the growth of the immigrant population has been more significant than the Spanish average. According to the ongoing population census of the National Institute of Statistics (INE), dated January 1, 2018, Madrid has a total of 893,276 people of immigrant origin, accounting for 13.4% of its total population (5,770,129). Of these, 52.2% are women, and 47.9% are men (Ministry of Social Policies and the Family, General Directorate of Social Services and Social Integration 2016-2018). The immigrants who live in Madrid come mostly from: Romania (21.7%), Morocco (8.8%), China (6.8%), Colombia (4.7%), Ecuador (4.4%), Venezuela (3.4%), Dominican Republic (2.9%), Peru (3.2%), Paraguay (2.8%)

and Bolivia (2.4%) (Ministry of Social Policies and the Family of the Community of Madrid. General Directorate of Social Services and Social Integration, Migrations Observatory 2016-2018). As we see, most of the countries in our study are among the 15 nationalities with the most immigrants in the Community of Madrid.

A significant fact that may contribute to the development of entrepreneurial initiatives is that 61.8% of the immigrants living in Madrid plan to settle in Spain, according to the Ministry of Social Policies and the Family, General Directorate of Social Services and Social Integration (2016-2018). Indeed, it is precisely in the most ethnically diverse communities where the most entrepreneurial initiatives emerge, the majority of which aim to meet the needs of immigrant people (Solé 2005).

A distinctive feature of the new migration models since the 1980s around the world has been the increase in female migration (OECD 2016). Some of the causes of these migrations are related to the demand for people for domestic service, the sex industry or the marriage (Pollitt *et al.* 2016). Moreover, the migration of refugees, especially women, has increased in recent years (UNDESA 2016). However, these are not the only causes of female immigration.

From the academic perspective, it is frequent to analyse the causes of migration from an economic perspective, ignoring migratory movements of women for academic motives (Pavajeau-Delgado 2018, Ciurlo *et al.* 2016), or other extra-economic reasons such as forced displacement (Sanz & García-Moreno 2016).

In Spain, the issue of people trafficking for sexual exploitation has grown, the victims being mostly women (Madrigal Martínez-Pereda 2015). Moreover, sexual exploitation and people trafficking, especially of women, are two factors that aggravate labour and social inequality (Liberato & Ratajczak 2017). The strong ethnic stratification of the Spanish labour market has resulted in immigrant women being marginalised into certain insecure occupations and sectors (cleaning, domestic service, and catering) which are well known for their low salaries and instability (Bover *et al.* 2015, Sallé *et al.* 2009). As well as this, there are other insecure jobs occupied by immigrants which, while they are not classified as jobs for women, have a considerable number of immigrant women, such as temporary workers in the agricultural sector —day labourers—, or hotel and catering (Rinken *et al.* 2016, Moreno-Colom & López-Roldán 2016, Gil-Alonso & Vidal-Coso 2015). It is for this reason that self-employment has more frequently become an attractive option as a survival strategy when compared to the increased barriers and worsening conditions to be found in the labour market (Aldaz & Eguía 2015, Del Río & Alonso-Villar 2012).

3

Review of the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship

Having contextualised the migratory situation in Spain and the employment alternatives available to Latin American women migrants, in this section we set out to look in more depth at female immigrant entrepreneurship and ethnic resources. Secondly, we will examine the theoretical perspectives of ethnic entrepreneurship, focusing on the cultural viewpoint, the structuralist viewpoint, and the theoretical viewpoint of the disadvantaged. And, thirdly, we will focus on the alternative of ICTs and networks.

3.1. Entrepreneurship of immigrant women and ethnic resources

The first studies regarding the participation of self-employed immigrant women did not appear until the end of the 1980s. Before then, in academic literature, the immigrant woman appeared solely as unpaid labour at the centre of businesses run by men (Soriano-Miras 2006).

To understand ethnic entrepreneurship, it is necessary to analyse briefly some concepts such as ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic resources, ethnic enclave, ethnic solidarity and the ethnic economy (Arjona Garrido & Checa Olmos 2006). For Isajiw (1993), ethnicity is the psychological and social process that gives the person a sense of belonging to a specific group. Ethnic identity emerges in this context as people positioning their ethnic background as a response to the social systems in which they live. According to Yinger (1985), the ethnic group is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have a common origin and to share essential parts of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common background and the culture are significant ingredients.

However, ethnicity cannot be analysed as the existence of «sealed compartments and limit oneself to observing ethnic patterns» (Rivera Cusicanqui 2015, p. 60), instead, it is a matter of the transformation and conflict of identities (Rivera Cusicanqui 2016) or in the processes of reaffirming the indigenous identity (Huarcaya 2014).

In order to start a business, many women resort to ethnic resources. Ethnic resources include values, knowledge, skills, information, attitudes, leadership, and solidarity, among others (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón 2016, Güell *et al.* 2015, Light & Rosenstein 1995, Light & Bonacich 1988). Ethnic resources are part of a person's social and cultural capital and facilitate the development of entrepreneurial attitudes (Parella 2005, Rath & Kloosterman 2000), while class resources are the different forms of capital that are possessed by a

group, access to financial resources, educational level, or heritage (Solé *et al.* 2005, Light & Gold 2000). The ethnic group is usually established within an ethnic enclave. The neighbourhood known as Little Havana in Miami, where there is an immigrant majority from Cuba to the United States, is an example of an ethnic economy studied since the 1980s (Wilson & Portes 1980). Min (1996) examined the case of the Koreans in different cities of the United States, when they began working as intermediaries between small traders and then became entrepreneurs themselves. They used their ethnic resources and entrepreneurship strategies to escape from the social and economic exclusion to which they were subjected. In Spain, the Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona is frequently mentioned as another important model of ethnic entrepreneurship (Güell 2012), as well as the Lavapiés neighbourhood in Madrid, in relation to the Pakistani population (Arjona Garrido & Checa Olmo 2006). Recently, we are witnessing the development of networks and the support of social capital of the Venezuelan population resident in Madrid (Castillo & Reguant 2017). Portes & Wilson (1980) conclude that an ethnic enclave refers to the concentration of a community in a physical space in which a proliferation of businesses arises providing services to the community.

From the theory of intermediary minorities, Bonacich (1973) argues that groups establish intragroup solidarity networks for the support of business; some authors call this phenomenon «ethnic solidarity» (Massey 1988). Likewise, the commercial initiatives developed in this type of space constitute a type of «ethnic economy», which is defined by racial origin, ethnicity, or national origin (Bonacich & Modell 1980). The debate about ethnic economy approaches has revolved around issues of social mobility (Portes 2000), social integration (López 2016), solidarity actions in the home country (Lacomba 2010), gender inequality (Oso & Villares 2005), or transnationalism (Elo & Freiling 2015).

3.2. Different approaches to ethnic entrepreneurship

3.2.1. Approach to ethnic entrepreneurship from the cultural viewpoint

The literature on migrant entrepreneurship emphasises the importance of ethnic resources for the establishment of ethnic businesses (López 2016, Oso & Villares 2005, Parella 2005, Portes & Wilson 1980) and highlights culture as one of the most outstanding ethnic resources. These authors, when referring to culture, argue that traditions, beliefs, values, and norms developed in the migrants' home countries constitute the basis of cultural capital and explain the differences noted by migrants in the host country. According to this line of thought, the differences that exist in terms of the manner in which the ethnic collectives join the workforce can be explained by looking at the distinct economic situations of

each, and the success or failure of a business depend to a significant degree on its singular cultural characteristics (Bonacich 1973, Light 1972), which means that all immigrants do not start from the same starting position nor do they follow symmetrical routes to work (García Lirios 2018). Furthermore, it happens that the ability to achieve success in business is contingent upon the starting point in terms of entrepreneurial experience (Correa *et al.* 2016). Kloosterman and Rath (2000) criticise culturalist theory claiming that it aims at reducing the ethnic entrepreneurship of the immigrant to an ethno-cultural phenomenon within an economic, institutional and structural gap.

One of the issues that needs to be addressed when we analyse cultural variables as enhancing social mobility for women entrepreneurs is the labour marginalisation of immigrant women in domestic work and the sustained care «global care chains» (O’Neil & Foresti 2016, Yeates 2004). In this regard, Brah’s conclusions (1996) regarding the cultural element being inherent in power relations are useful. According to the author, there are social mobility flows that facilitate equality but, really, they do not facilitate some issues in the same way others, such as school and work. In the same line of thinking, Anthias (2012) introduces the debate from her anthropological position among the categories of gender, class and race (and ethnicity). Without any doubt, currently, the gender variable should be analysed as part of the debate about ethnic entrepreneurship. Another issue that should be analysed in this debate is the contribution made by immigrants to the economic development and social innovation of the cultural heritage of both the country of origin and destination. Immigrants impact industries such as music, gastronomy, social media, and leisure (Osorio García de Oteyza & Jiménez Sosa 2018).

3.2.2. Approach to ethnic entrepreneurship from the structuralist viewpoint

Defenders of this theory argue that the emergence and continued existence of ethnic businesses are a consequence of a strategy determined by the group characteristics and the structure of the opportunities available (Waldinger *et al.* 1990). Structuralist theories look more towards the host societies contextual factors, which impose specific restrictions on immigrants (social exclusion, discrimination, lack of access to the labour market, precarious and poorly remunerated jobs, etc.), subsequently driving them towards self-employment (Portes 2000). For their part, Rath and Kloosterman (2000) point out structural factors as crucial determinants of ethnic businesses. Furthermore, they consider it necessary to pay more attention to the fundamental transformation that is taking place in urban economies, the institutional frameworks in the receiving country where the ethnic businesses operate, and the consequences of these types of companies on the international market.

Meanwhile, studies that focus on immigrant entrepreneurs from the gender perspective have found structural factors that determine a *dual disadvantage* in the case of immigrant women from developing countries (Raijman & Semyonov 1997). The dual disadvantage refers to being a woman and being an immigrant from a less advanced country in the labour market compared to men. Other authors believe that it would be more accurate to say that there is a three-fold discrimination: as a woman, an immigrant, and a worker (Portes *et al.* 2010, Parella 2003). Schrover *et al.* (2007) emphasise that, for many women, self-employment is a way of reconciling their family, personal, professional and working lives.

Corner and Ho (2010) refer in their study to the importance of finding opportunities to launch a business. This type of entrepreneurship is based more on necessity than on discovering an opportunity. On several occasions, the job insecurity of most immigrant women and the limited opportunities for social and labour mobility are what makes them become self-employed (Solé *et al.* 2009). However, although many businesses set up by immigrants seek to respond to the demands of specific goods and services by the immigrant population, they also end up changing the consumption and leisure habits of people in general (Cebrián de Miguel *et al.* 2016a).

3.2.3. Approach to ethnic entrepreneurship from the point of view of the theory of disadvantages

According to the studies conducted on this subject, in most cases, women do business in the service sector and in occupations that manifest what is considered a female stereotype. When businesses developed by men and women of the same nationality are compared, we find that they tend to have small companies which are not very productive and with little likelihood of growth (Startienė & Remeikienė 2015). In the same vein, Morokvasic (1991) reveals immigrant women as a minority within their ethnic minority, which makes access to collective and ethnic resources (mainly in the possession of men) even more difficult for them.

In the theory of disadvantage, it is stated that the proliferation of ethnic businesses has historically been linked with institutional discrimination. It is also postulated that the economic difficulties imposed (unemployment and fluctuations of the economic cycle) encourage self-employment, regardless of the worker's resources (Valenzuela 2002). Unemployment or insecure employment is a sufficient reason to find alternative ways to work other than being an employee. According to the theory of disadvantage, self-employment can be considered a means to upward social mobility. However, if we add deficient human resources to the constraints of a highly segmented labour market, the result is that self-employment of the immigrant population is normally a far cry from autonomy, flexibility, and a fair income, and tends to be more than a mere survival strategy (Light & Rosenstein 1995). Even though the

theory of disadvantage might insist that a position of disadvantage is propitious to initiatives of entrepreneurship, people with severely limited resources in terms of information, training or finances find it extremely hard to embark on an effective business project. In this case, the possibility of starting up such a project will depend on the ability to mobilise the resources of the ethnic community.

In Spain, many women set up their own business activity as a result of the obstacles arising from their three-fold condition of being a female, an immigrant and a worker from a developing country in a segmented labour market (Cebrián de Miguel *et al.* 2016b, Gualda 2005, Parella 2003). Researchers such as Oso and Villares (2005), and Solé *et al.* (2009), argue that other new variables have played an important role in constraining their chances for success in entrepreneurship: family situation, type of migration, social media and communities, family socialisation in self-employment, and culture of origin.

3.3. Networks and ICT theory

At present, considering the global context and technological advances beyond ethnic resources and the ethnic enclave, immigrant entrepreneurs are involved in dynamic and mobile processes (Elo & Freiling 2015). Therefore, it is essential to analyse the incidence of information and communication technologies (ICT) in ethnic, transnational (Elo & Freiling 2015), and technology-based businesses. This type of entrepreneurship is typical of immigrants with high levels of education, with access to ICT and with the ability to create and maintain virtual networks at different levels (Osorio García de Oteyza & Jiménez Sosa 2018). The Kauffman Foundation (2012) concluded that 24.3% of all the ICT companies that exist in the USA have at least one immigrant as a founder or co-founder. Likewise, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report (GEM 2012) reports that the rate of entrepreneurial activity of immigrants in many areas of innovation and ICT is higher than the rate for US citizens.

Other ethnic resources that are commonly used by migrant entrepreneurs are social networks and social capital (Light & Rosenstein 1995). Today, we must acknowledge that social networks are a determining variable in the formation of ethnic enclaves. Concerning this issue, some studies suggest that women have lower levels of networking (Katz & Williams 1997), while others report that women are using informal social networks rather than established formal networks. Levent *et al.* (2003) explain that unlike men, immigrant women need to develop their networks outside of the group to be able to become self-employed. This implies a different social trajectory, characterised by a backward step in terms of their development within the ethnic group.

4 Methodology

4.1. Method, sample and research techniques

The study that we present has a qualitative approach in the first instance, with the use of the semi-structured interview in depth as a data collection technique (Martínez 2006). The use of such a technique provides invaluable information and allows the researcher to have an opportunity for clarification and follow-up questions and answers (Valles 2007). There is a more straightforward, personalised and flexible interaction that allows us to gain access to and a better understanding of the trajectories, experiences, motivations and business strategies of self-employed women (see script in Appendix 1). And secondly, by participant observation. During the observation, contextual aspects regarding the work the immigrant women entrepreneurs carry out were observed.

Regarding the sample in this study, we have followed the work logic proposed by Patton (2002), who advocates that the choice of sampling type in qualitative research —and what determines its advantage— lie in ensuring that the cases selected provide the most significant possible information. In the same way, we have proceeded taking into account the theoretical saturation principle proposed by Morse (1995). We conducted 27 interviews considering that, with this number of interviews, we had reached the point of theoretical saturation. In the field of qualitative research, saturation is understood as the situation in which a great variety of ideas have been heard and, with each additional interview or observation, no other new elements appear.

4.2. Information-gathering strategies

The territorial dimension of this research is primarily limited to the city of Madrid because this city is the Spanish urban centre with the highest concentration of companies owned by immigrants. The districts where most of the businesses are established are Cuatro Caminos, Lavapiés, La Elipa, Vista Alegre, Moratalaz, and the city centre.

The process of conducting interviews started with the selection of the neighbourhoods in which the research would be conducted. Once this process commenced, the participant observation began, recording in the notebook the potential business establishments run by immigrant women. During the survey of the neighbourhoods, the information was systematised in a notebook supplemented with photographs.

Subsequently, once the monitoring of the establishments had been carried out, a non-random sampling was conducted, in which

potential migrant women entrepreneurs from commercial establishments were contacted and asked if they were entrepreneurs and if they would be willing to participate as subjects of the research, that is, were they women of immigrant origin who had been living in Madrid for more than four years and who had created entrepreneurial initiatives in different industries. Businesses in operation for more than six months were selected. If this was the case, an interview was set up with the woman immigrant entrepreneur.

The interviews were carried out in the workplaces of the women that were interviewed. To do so, they first identified themselves as the researchers of the study being carried out and then asked the women if they were interested in voluntarily collaborating by showing them an informed consent form, which they had to read and sign. This document endorses the confidentiality of the study, which ensures that nobody will use these data except for scientific purposes and the anonymity of the people interviewed is protected. The interviews were audiorecorded for subsequent analysis.

The interviews were conducted during the months of April and July 2016. They were conducted in the women's workplaces. Businesswomen from Latin America (Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru), Africa (Morocco and Senegal), and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria and Romania) participated. Their commercial activities involved various businesses (restaurants, hairdressers, food shops, electronics, legal consultancy, accounting, etcetera).

In total, of the 27 interviews conducted, the spatial distribution by the neighbourhoods of Madrid was: 7 in Cuatro Caminos, 10 in Lavapiés, 3 in La Elipa, 5 in Vista Alegre, 1 in Moratalaz and 1 in the city centre.

4.3. Data analysis techniques

After the field work was completed, the information was collated, and it was then transcribed into Word documents and Excel spreadsheets and analysed using the relationship of analysis categories identified in inter-textual matrices. The discourse analysis (DA) technique was used to proceed with the analysis of the resulting information, and we also relied on category analysis (CA), which provides a system of interconnected concepts (Santander 2011).

The first categories of analysis were captured in a semi-structured interview script. Through this script, it is elicited information regarding their personal situation (nationality, age, legal situation, family situation, and length of residence in Spain) and business details such as the business area, their motivations to become an entrepreneur, the business location, the time taken to establish the business, and how long it had been in existence. The interviews also analysed what the phase prior to the business opening was like,

including the time required to obtain the initial resources and why its location was chosen. Information about the management of the business was also collected, especially regarding the customers, the suppliers, the employees and the work-family life balance.

5 Discussion and main results of the study

The analysis of the in-depth interviews that took place at immigrant businesses allows us to draw some conclusions that can provide a series of indications with which to continue researching into this phenomenon in Madrid. What follows is a synthesis of the most noteworthy findings.

5.1. Sociodemographic profile of the interviewees

Twenty Latin-American, five African and two Eastern European women were interviewed. Most of them had received higher education in their country of origin (15 women); some had completed their secondary education (9 women), while only three (3 women) interviewees had only received primary education.

If we look at their sociodemographic profile in terms of family responsibilities, most of the women were parents. In some cases, their children migrated with them but, in most cases, their children arrived in Spain for the purpose of family reunification, and one the women were settled in Spain. It is also useful to point that, even in the cases in which their civil status was married, the women are the ones who have the greatest economic importance in their family structure:

I had two children. I had a husband, so I practically came here leaving a family behind [...]. Then, little by little, a year went by and my husband decided to come over because he told me: «No... Don't you come; I am coming». «Ah! Ok», I told him (María, Peru).

Most of them were of working age (96%). Only 2 women have lived in Spain for less than five years while 21 women have lived in Spain for more than ten years, 13 over fifteen years and only 3 for more than twenty years. Therefore, we are talking about women who have already settled in Spain. Only three women have owned their business for less than a year, six for more than five years and the rest have owned it for between once and five years.

5.2. Necessity and opportunity as ways to start a business

Consistent with the studies of Corner and Ho (2010), and Solé *et al.* (2009), the results of our research show that approximately 80% of the women interviewed started up a business driven by

necessity rather than due to an opportunity. The remaining 20% of the women interviewed started a business when they discovered a business opportunity in the new destination or to resume the businesses they had in their country of origin.

In the absence of opportunities and/or resources to do business in other economic sectors, the leveraging of these skills in order to become an entrepreneur is what Kupferberg (2003) defines as a «home skills strategy».

The reasons given for starting out in business were purely to survive after suffering great difficulties in finding work other than domestic service or due to suffering from illness and discomfort associated with being employed in this sector as is explained in the following interview:

After ten years of looking after children, I was as happy as a cat or a dog. All homes around here have a cat or a dog, and not only that: they treat them better than they do a person. Therefore, as I couldn't carry on with that and couldn't find work doing anything else, I came up with this idea of making cakes (Laura, Dominican Republic).

In this way, our interviewees developed, as explained by Light and Gold (2000), a basic self-defence strategy, which is common to all these immigrants suffered with continued exclusion and disadvantage in the labour market. This situation especially affected the Senegalese women, who had to face greater difficulties due to not being able to speak Spanish, more restrictive legal barriers and, in some cases, because of situations of ethnic, cultural or religious discrimination. Those immigrants from non-Latin American countries must prove they have lived in Spain for over ten years in order to obtain Spanish nationality (Spanish Ministry of Justice 2016). This circumstance puts the Senegalese women at an even greater disadvantage than those from Latin American countries (Spanish Ministry of Justice 2016):

I have been here since 2007, nine years. I have a five-year European Union residence permit, for a long duration. Every five years, I must renew it; it expires in 2019 and I must apply for citizenship. It is about to expire, so I have to apply for naturalisation (Diala, Senegal).

5.3. The main motivation is to ensure business continuity

Consistent with other research on immigrant entrepreneurship in Spain (Oso & Villares 2005), the entrepreneurial path for some of our respondents was not due to lack of income or an inconsistency of status in relation to the labour market; in fact, 32% of the interviewees reported that it was rather due to a strategy of continuing their business practice in the host country. We are talking here about women who owned businesses in their home country and came to Spain with the aim of doing likewise in a more favourable

economic context. Unlike the previous group, it took only five years after their arrival in Spain before they took the decision to resume their previous business project in their home country. This time was used to gather the necessary funds and explore the peculiarities of the Spanish market, and sometimes work as employees in the same sector. This is why we have considered this business strategy to be a way of continuing their entrepreneurship and professional career path and, in some cases, avoiding working as housekeepers or cleaners as their only employment path.

The profile of the entrepreneurs also changes, despite the fact that they work in the same sector as the women in the previous group (hairdressing, small retail outlets, etc.). In this group, they carry out their business activity by preference and not because there is no other option open to them, as this interviewee explained:

I have always liked business since I was little. In my home country, I also had a business. If you like something and you have the opportunity, then you must do it (Esperanza, Ecuador).

These are women with middle to higher education, with professional experience in the sector within which they operate and knowledge of business management.

This is the case of several Dominicans, Peruvians and of the Venezuelan women. As in the previous case, these types of entrepreneurship due to necessity are explained by the structuralist theory and the disadvantages theory.

5.4. Women with transnational businesses

Portes *et al.* (2002) and Elo and Freiling (2015) define transnational entrepreneurs as self-employed immigrants whose business activities require frequent trips abroad and for whom the success of their businesses depends on their contacts and partners in another country, usually their country of origin. In the context of our research, we found that some of our interviewees matched the above definition. However, this is a category with a high degree of heterogeneity and no common profile can be found. In our case, the interviewees came from Peru and Ecuador and their businesses in Madrid are in the textile and delivery services. Their average age is forty-three.

We found women who had received higher education and that had left previous well-paid employment to start their own businesses and exploit their skills, bi-culturalism and transnational networks to obtain material gains. The next statement reflects this reality:

I started working in a parcel and air freight company in Ecuador; in the end, I learned quite a lot about the business; they paid me very well but I'm ambitious. Why shouldn't I do the same? (Melinda, Ecuador).

We also found women who had received very little education, but who capitalised on the migratory flows of their family network

and their experience as street vendors to start out in transnational business. This type of businesswoman matches the second classification made by Landolt *et al.* (1999) to analyse the appearance and consolidation of the new ethnic business from a transnational point of view. This refers to the importation/exportation of various types of goods, mostly exotic craft work and traditional products from their home countries which, once they arrive in Spain, are re-distributed throughout Europe.

5.5. The mobilisation of ethnic resources as a business strategy

In the three previous categories, the mobilisation of ethnic resources is essential for the start-up and subsequent maintenance of the business project. These results are not consistent with those obtained by Morokvasic (1991) and Levent *et al.* (2003), who both argue that immigrant women are a minority within an ethnic minority and, for this reason, gaining access to the ethnic and collective resources (held mainly by men) is normally problematic. Here, immigrant women need to develop their networks outside the group to be able to become self-employed. This suggests a different social trajectory, characterised by taking a step backward with respect to their development within the ethnic group. In the case of women for whom self-employment is a survival strategy, ethnic solidarity compensates for the deficit in the resources (financial and human capital) which are necessary for the founding and subsequent maintaining of the business. We note that this solidarity consists not only in financial support, but also in information concerning official formalities, the search for suppliers and co-ethnic labour and, without this support and guidance, the sustainability of the business project cannot be assured. The following statement illustrates this idea very well:

These women come to lend me a hand, help me to survive, and I pay them what I can (Aminata, Senegal).

Ethnic solidarity is also present in businesses as a strategy of professional continuity. This is evident, for example, in the collective participation in readying a physical space for business, in the exchange of information regarding the required official formalities, in the founding of rotating savings and credit communities in order to finance the opening of a business, and in the informal importation of goods, as we can see in the following statement:

Most of the products that I work with are from the Dominican Republic; we import them from there. When I travel, or someone I know, or a client knows, I ask them to bring me something and as they are things that... Well, I ask them, and they bring them over in their luggage (Soledad, Dominican hairdresser).

Obviously, in the case of transnational businesses, the mobilisation of community and family networks play a central part in the busi-

ness strategy, especially the latter. Our interviewees see their businesses as family ventures, with the particular characteristic that the family members, who are at the same time their employees, operate in a transnational space which links the origin and destination countries, the business being a sort of intermediary between one and the other.

The mobilisation of social resources is a prominent aspect of transnational businesses; the entrepreneurs develop these resources thanks to a series of networks based on mutual trust. In the case of our interviewees, these were informal networks (family, friends, and co-ethnics) (González-González *et al.* 2011).

5.6. Profile and business strategies of immigrant women in the context of an open market economy

We have been able to identify immigrant women who have developed their own businesses in the context of an open market economy with characteristics that are resembling to those adopted by local entrepreneurs. We found a wide diversity both in the type of business (restaurants, beauty parlours, florists, and IT sales), and the nationalities of our interviewees, with respect to the previous categories. The presence of a certain type of immigrant woman should also be noted. We refer to women who decide to become independent and freelance professionals (lawyers, accountants, and consultants), after having their studies accredited and validated in Spain. These are women with a secondary, higher and even post-graduate level of studies, who in most cases have already gained business experience, both in their home countries and in Spain, and who see themselves as businesswomen, regardless of the type of business that they subsequently set up and develop. This self-identification comes, as our interviewees themselves bear out, from an entrepreneurial socialisation learned in their family environments. The motivation of these women ties in with the desire to enjoy a certain autonomy in terms of income, independence and control of their own destiny and stability as is clearly stated by some of the respondents:

A woman alone, although she is in a foreign country, can make a go of it, can do something. I'd never be happy with any old job; you can always do better (Asia, Romania).

I prefer to run the risks of starting up my own company and having the instability of running a business, not being accountable to another person. «Here, I am accountable for my own actions and those of my clients» (Laura, Brazil).

Ethnocultural factors are related to a negative view towards certain customs and practices in the society of origin. Some of our interviewees showed explicit rejection of the idea of working

with co-ethnic people or to directing their business activity towards them. This rejection towards their own ethnic community causes a greater diversification in the social resources employed by the businesswomen in the development of their business strategies. During our research, we found that many of them had professionally associated with Spanish people or had mixed marriages, thereby facilitating the business initiative by means of the transfer of cognitive, cultural and social skills which allowed them to be more competitive in the context of an open market economy. Moreover, talking to these women, it became apparent that they had even developed formal relationships in the business world (business associations, chambers of commerce, professional colleges, and associations) as a positioning strategy and a way to obtain new clients.

All these circumstances explain the observed differences in terms of business strategies adopted by the businesswomen. In this regard, we observed a greater diversification of the sources of financial resources needed to start up the business project. They use commercial banks to obtain loans, capitalise on the savings generated from previous business or from the sales of properties in their home countries, or obtain funds from public grants for entrepreneurship.

The decision concerning the location of the business is not governed by ethnic criteria, but by some criteria of opportunity (available property with a rent they can afford), sometimes selecting areas with high retail activity or the possibility of finding a going concern for sale.

6 Conclusions

In this article, we have explored the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneur women to determine and understand which factors circumscribe the use or non-use of ethnic resources in their entrepreneurial strategies, from the focus of Light and Gold (2000) and Arjona Garrido and Checa Olmos (2006). We have looked deeper into the relationship that exists between the structural factors of the host society (economy, or job market), from the approach of Structuralist Theory, following Rath and Kloosterman (2000), the resources that may be available to immigrant women in the context of their ethnic communities, and other individual aspects such as age, level of education, work experience, migratory project, and legal situation.

Among the most significant findings, ethnic resources constitute the main strategy used by some of the immigrant women interviewed when they start a business. However, the types of ethnic resources that are used will depend on the motivation that women have to become entrepreneurs. Among the interviewees, we find

women who set up their own business because they do not want to continue in the domestic service and care sector and have no other job option, or those who seek to reconcile work and family. This group of women creates survival initiatives, such as bars, hairdressers, and food stores, and they generally do not know all the ethnic resources they could use for the success of their small business. On the other hand, their low educational level, their limited training in ICT and the few networks in which they participate put them at a disadvantage, as the Disadvantage Theory (Startienė & Remeikienė 2015, Massey 1988) proposes. This is the case of many Dominicans, Senegalese, Moroccans, Bolivians, Paraguayans, and Ecuadorians women that we have interviewed. However, for other women, their entrepreneurship initiative is part of a strategy of professional continuity, since they cannot find a job that is the same or better than the one they had in their country of origin. Because of their educational level, their ability to create and take advantage of social networks (Massey 1998), and their knowledge of ICT, they have a broader vision of the benefits offered by the ethnic enclave and its resources to use them in their business. In addition, they try to create initiatives taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the broader context outside the ethnic enclave. These women also seek to obtain the social status they had originally, namely, they use all the resources of classes (Elo & Freiling 2015, Garcés 2011, Light & Gold 2000). Such is the case of Venezuelans, Peruvians, Brazilians, and Bulgarians. In another study, it is putted Colombians at this level (Osorio García de Oteyza & Jiménez Sosa 2018). On the other hand, we find women with transnational companies, whose activity makes frequent use of social, family and community networks that can be found in Spain and their countries of origin. For this type of enterprise, the use of ethnic resources is not an inherent characteristic. However, these women make frequent use of key resources (work experience, financial capital, education and training, ICT management, and the use of social networks).

All the groups of entrepreneur immigrant women interviewed have in common their dissatisfaction with the jobs that are normally assigned to them by the process of ethnic stratification of the Spanish labour market. In domestic service, where there is a higher demand for immigrant workers, this type of work is undervalued, offers meagre wages and the working conditions are (or are generally close) to labour exploitation.

The use or non-use of ethnic resources lies in the business strategies, the products offered, the clientele and the location of the businesses, how long the migratory project has been in existence, the ethnic «enclave», the social, family and community networks, the legal situation, the family situation, and the type of migration. These are the main variables of the reference framework that enhances the success of the entrepreneurship initiatives of immigrant women. In addition, the use of ICT is a key factor for the

success of the businesses because these tools help women to use transnational resources such as virtual networks.

Nevertheless, these immigrant women, regardless of whether they use the ethnic resources to start their businesses or not, today play an active role in the socioeconomic and cultural scenario of Madrid. In the near future, follow-up research should be done to pursue these initiatives to assess their capacity for endurance and projection, their contribution to gender equality, and to facilitate the social and economic mobility for these immigrant entrepreneur women with the gender approach of Anthias (2012) and Liberato and Ratajczak (2017). In order to facilitate and improve their entrepreneurial ventures, we would recommend our social agents provide supportive orientation sessions to get to know the nature of challenges and experiences that other women have faced before in their own businesses and provide solutions to these types of issues before starting their own businesses.

7 Bibliography

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Appendix 1

Interview script

0. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK

- Nationality of origin
- Age
- Time resident in Spain
- Legal situation
- Family situation
- Level of education
- Work experience
- Company details
 - Sector
 - Location
 - Duration
- Type of ownership

1. PHASE PRIOR TO SETTING UP THE BUSINESS

- Motivations for entrepreneurship and relations with the selected economic sector
- Financial resources (origin)
- Decision regarding the location of the business
- Information regarding legal and official red tape necessary to open the business
- Response of the family environment regarding the decision to set up a business enterprise
- Subjective perception of the possible situations related to gender discrimination in the phase prior to launching the business
- Social resources used by the businesswoman in the phase prior to launching the business

2. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE BUSINESS

- Human resources (if any): nationality, gender, and hiring criteria
- Suppliers: sources of information, selection criteria
- Customers: segment that the business targets, subjective viewpoint of the most important elements in customer service
- Education and training of the businesswoman: further education and training, external consulting, business networking (weak social resources)
- Work-life balance: business hours, time dedicated, social support resources

3. FINAL POINTS

A subjective evaluation of the performance of the business currently, the main difficulties observed, and prospects for the future