

**“Ethnic Entrepreneurship,
Family And Gender Relations:
Latin American Female
Entrepreneurs in Spain”**

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Hypothesis:

Does female immigrant entrepreneur play a secondary role in business activity, and reproduce traditional gender relations between couples?

In Spain a series of differing situations exist, conditioned by the **type of migratory model and the type of family**

Hypothesis:

Dominican females as pioneers and heads of transnational households, **would tend to generate situations of greater empowerment**, in the light of absence of the male migrant.

Argentinean and Venezuelan women, who migrate with their partners **may reproduce the secondary role of wife in the ethnic economy.**

General characteristics of the businesses

Dominican women businesses:

- Type of business: hairdressing salon, “locutorios”(private telephone booths); food stores, etc.
- Clientele: co-ethnics
- Entrepreneurship as an strategy of escape from **domestic service**

Argentina and Venezuela women businesses:

- Type of business: service sector: food, retail trade, textile, etc.
- Clientele: Spanish
- Several of our interviewees set up businesses that represented a continuation of their careers (veterinary and dentist´s surgeries, etc.)

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Migratory context	Social capital, ethnic and family support networks, etc.	Existence of a transnational household for lone women	<p>The absence of the male facilitates the empowerment discourse of lone Dominican female migrants, yet creates added difficulties in setting up the business and therefore in achieving occupational mobility.</p> <p>The status as “immigrant returnees” for Argentinean and Venezuelan women facilitates emigration and also speeds up the process of setting a business.</p>

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Legal status	Facilities for regularising their legal status and the possibility of applying for nationality in the case of Argentinean and Venezuelan (2nd and 3rd generations of Spaniards)	Difficulties in regularising their legal status	<p>In the case of Dominican females, the existence of an occupational niche in domestic service allows them to work despite their irregular status, and become a female breadwinner.</p> <p>But working as irregular immigrants implies occupational stagnation and a lack of rights.</p> <hr/> <p>Argentinean and Venezuelan women occasionally act as a gateway to regular legal status for their husbands</p>

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Family type	Migration as part of a couple with/ without children	Migration of lone women	Empowerment discourse of lone Dominican female migrants yet with increased difficulties in achieving the goal of setting up a business, and therefore occupational mobility
			The interests of Argentinean and Venezuelan women take second place to family goals
Level of Education	Medium – high level of education	Low level of education	The lower level of education of Dominican women leads to cloistering domestic service. In the long term, the business represents occupational mobility
			In the short term, the higher level of education of Argentinean and Venezuelan females facilitates the setting up of a business, although the business strategy may restrict their long term occupational trajectory

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Occupational trajectory in the country of origin	Experience in employment in management or business tasks. Socialisation in their parents' business from an early age.	No business or management experience	<p>The financial difficulties normally experienced in the Dominican Republic by women mean that they tend to become embedded in a culture of “making a living”</p> <p>Although there is a clear lack of the business know-how necessary in order to set up a business in the formal economy in Spain</p> <p>For Argentinean and Venezuelan women, experience in management or family businesses in the country of origin generates a human capital that feeds the business strategy</p>

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Occupational trajectory in Spain	Being able for setting up a business without first spending time in paid employment.	Cloistering in domestic service	<p>For Dominican women, setting up a business is the only way to get away from domestic service</p> <p>For Argentinean and Venezuelan women, their businesses become part of a strategy of resistance not to fall into domestic service</p>

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Access to capital for initial investment	Having personal resources or easier access to bank loans	Needing to save up for many years in paid employment	<p>Dominican women need to save up for many years using their wages from domestic service and those of a male partner (Dominican or Spanish)</p> <p>Situation of dependence on the male which reduces their situation of empowerment</p> <p>For Argentinean and Venezuelan women, the capital tends to belong to the family unit</p> <p>If the woman heads this family network and possesses the necessary initial capital she is better positioned than her male counterpart as far as gender relations are concerned</p>

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Existence of an ethnic enclave	Existence of networks, previous experiences, inclusion in paid job in the ethnic enclave, etc.	Inclusion in an “open market” leads to difficulties in the early phases although it allows a wider customer spread	<p>The existence of an enclave allows for greater specialisation of the offer for Dominican women, who are able to optimise their social-ethnic capital</p> <p>Prior experience in co-ethnic businesses enables Dominican female entrepreneurs to overcome their lack of training</p>
			<p>For Argentinean and Venezuelan women, their inclusion in an open market will require them to adopt more sophisticated strategies</p>

Variables	Facilitating the business strategy	Blocking the business strategy	Impact on gender relations and occupational mobility
Reproductive work	Shared	The female entrepreneur takes on a “double workload”	<p>In the case of Dominican women, reproductive work is delegated to other female family members in the country of origin.</p> <p>Argentinean and Venezuelan women take on a heavier part of the reproductive work in Spain than in the country of origin (where they were helped by a network of female family members or hired domestic service).</p>