

Immigrant Entrepreneurship

TAMARALAIYEFA HAROLD TIEMO

TOPICS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“This book offers a much-needed global perspective on immigrant entrepreneurship, moving beyond the traditional focus on North America and Western Europe. Through rigorous analysis and a rich comparative framework, it illuminates the diverse trajectories of immigrant entrepreneurs across varied institutional landscapes. It certainly makes a significant and timely contribution to the field of migration and entrepreneurship studies.”

Professor Nicholas Theodorakopoulos, *Aston Business School, Aston University, United Kingdom*

“This is an excellent resource to get an understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship in different contexts.”

Dr Nadeera Ranabahu, *UC Business School, University of Canterbury, New Zealand*



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IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Analysing immigration around the world, *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Opportunities, Ventures and Outcomes in a Global Market* illuminates how immigrant entrepreneurs overcome barriers to mobilise resources across diverse socio-economic environments.

Drawing on case studies from Africa, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere, the author explores how contemporary migration patterns, informal economies and digitalisation influence entrepreneurial outcomes. In emphasising entrepreneurial strategies that help adapt to exclusion and regulatory complexity, this book provides a nuanced understanding of the entire field of immigrant entrepreneurship.

The global comparative approach taken by this book sheds light on the vital role that immigration plays in driving entrepreneurial growth in economic development around the world. The result is a resource that is enlightening reading for researchers and advanced students of entrepreneurship, international business and development studies.

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Opportunities, Ventures and Outcomes in a Global Market

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INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of immigrant entrepreneurship

In an increasingly globalised world, immigrant entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant dimension of economic and social transformation. While immigrant entrepreneurs are widely recognised for their contributions to labour markets, innovation ecosystems and transnational trade, their experiences are deeply shaped by diverse institutional structures, migration policies and opportunity environments. Nevertheless, existing scholarship has largely centred on North American and Western European contexts, often neglecting the varied entrepreneurial practices and outcomes emerging across Oceania, the Middle East, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter first examines global trends and regional perspectives on immigrant entrepreneurship, before turning to conceptual debates distinguishing ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship, the impact of legal status and migration pathways, the influence of generational dynamics on economic integration and the scope and reach of entrepreneurial ventures. In addition, it situates immigrant entrepreneurship within broader theoretical frameworks that integrate notions of identity, agency and institutional embeddedness. Together, these discussions establish the conceptual foundation for understanding immigrant entrepreneurship as a dynamic, context-contingent phenomenon shaped by evolving global mobility patterns and structural barriers.

Global trends and regional perspectives

To contextualise the emergence and significance of immigrant entrepreneurship, it is important first to outline the foundational role of entrepreneurship in driving economic growth, innovation and market expansion. Entrepreneurship is widely recognised as a catalyst for economic growth, innovation and job creation, and entrepreneurial activity fosters economic dynamism by identifying emerging market opportunities, enhancing productivity and expanding industries (Carree & Thurik, 2010; Reynolds, 2022; Welter et al., 2017).

Within this landscape, immigrant entrepreneurs have played an increasingly pivotal role by bringing diverse skills, global networks and innovative approaches that span both dynamic, opportunity-driven sectors and more traditional, necessity-driven sectors (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001; Welter et al., 2017). Their contributions are evident across industries such as

technology, professional services and innovation-intensive enterprises (often associated with higher opportunity structures), as well as in traditional sectors including manufacturing, personal services and small-scale retail (frequently characterised by lower barriers to entry but more limited growth potential) (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013; Azoulay et al., 2022; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015).

In addition to their economic contributions, immigrant entrepreneurs help address labour shortages, diversify consumer markets and introduce innovative business models (Dana, 2007; Kourtiti et al., 2013). However, despite their significant role, they continue to face structural barriers such as restricted access to finance, regulatory complexity and systemic discrimination (Jones et al., 2022; Light & Dana, 2013). These conditions frequently push immigrant entrepreneurs towards informal strategies, community-based financing mechanisms and transnational entrepreneurial activities as means of sustaining and expanding their ventures (Barrett & Vershinina, 2017; Cruz et al., 2020). As a result, immigrant entrepreneurship emerges not simply as a reflection of structural opportunities but as a dynamic and situated process influenced by institutional settings, social relations and evolving patterns of mobility (Bhachu, 2017; Elo & Dana, 2023).

Recent scholarship increasingly highlights the role of digitalisation, transnational networks and hybrid identity practices in shaping immigrant entrepreneurial trajectories (Gurău et al., 2020; Harima, 2022). Digital technologies, online platforms and diaspora linkages have provided new avenues for entrepreneurs to access resources, expand into international markets and negotiate regulatory and institutional barriers (Onyima et al., 2024). These developments challenge nationally bounded models of entrepreneurship by emphasising the transnational nature of resource mobilisation, opportunity recognition and market participation. They also underscore the capacity of immigrant entrepreneurs to exercise strategic agency across multiple institutional and geographic contexts.

Immigrant entrepreneurship in North America and Western Europe has been relatively well-documented. In North America, particularly the United States (U.S.) and Canada, immigrant entrepreneurship has flourished within relatively open business environments and selective immigration regimes that favour skilled migrants (Azoulay et al., 2022; Kerr & Mandorff, 2023). Ethnic networking, transnational resource mobilisation and innovation-driven ventures have been central features in these contexts (Dana, 1997; Kariv et al., 2009). In Western Europe, although immigrant entrepreneurship is also well-researched, challenges such as labour market rigidity, credential devaluation and ethnic stereotyping remain prominent (Ram et al., 2017; Ram & Jones, 2008). Studies show how migrant entrepreneurs, including post-war Polish communities in England (Barrett & Vershinina, 2017) and Syrian refugee entrepreneurs (Refai et al., 2024; Refai & McElwee, 2022), adapt their strategies to navigate complex institutional settings and processes of social and economic integration.

By contrast, entrepreneurial activities in Oceania, the Middle East, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa remain underexamined despite growing significance. In Oceania, particularly Australia and New Zealand, immigrant entrepreneurship has been fostered through skilled migration policies and business investment incentives (Collins & Low, 2010), although persistent challenges related to underemployment and skills underutilisation are evident (Duan et al., 2021). Research on former refugee women entrepreneurs in New Zealand highlights how they strategically navigate visibility and invisibility paradoxes to access opportunities while mitigating structural barriers (Ranabahu et al., 2024). In the Middle East, particularly within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, immigrant entrepreneurs operate under restrictive regulatory conditions that limit ownership rights and access to finance (Zahra, 2019), yet many

mobilise transnational strategies and informal economic activities to sustain their ventures (Harima, 2022; Refai et al., 2024). In Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, immigrant entrepreneurs frequently rely on community-based financing, informal networks and hybrid business models to build resilience amidst widespread informality and political volatility (Fubah & Moos, 2022; Martínez Rivera, 2024; Simba et al., 2023).

Despite growing recognition of the vibrancy and diversity of immigrant entrepreneurship across global contexts, scholarly frameworks continue to disproportionately focus on North American and Western European experiences (Basu & Pruthi, 2021; Beckers & Blumberg, 2013; Chodavadia et al., 2024). This Western-centric orientation risks producing theoretical frameworks that inadequately account for the varied institutional, regulatory and socio-economic conditions shaping entrepreneurial outcomes elsewhere. Emerging research increasingly stresses the importance of examining differentiated entrepreneurial experiences, particularly those shaped by migration regimes, financial exclusion and informal economic structures (Elmasah et al., 2022; Martínez Rivera, 2024). Furthermore, prevailing approaches often generalise immigrant entrepreneurship, overlooking the structural asymmetries embedded in race, gender, migration status and class (David & Terstriep, 2025; Waldinger et al., 1990). Addressing these limitations requires reframing immigrant entrepreneurship not merely as a structural phenomenon but as a dynamic process shaped by the interplay of agency, identity and transnational resource mobilisation. A more nuanced conceptual foundation is therefore essential to situate immigrant entrepreneurship within broader debates on identity, opportunity and embeddedness.

Ethnic vs. immigrant entrepreneurship: conceptual considerations

The concepts of ethnic entrepreneurship and immigrant entrepreneurship are closely related, yet not synonymous, and their distinctions continue to generate debate within the academic literature. Some scholars, including Kloosterman & Rath (2003), Nwankwo (2005) and Ojo (2021), use the terms interchangeably, arguing that both groups encounter similar structural and institutional barriers in establishing and expanding businesses. However, other researchers, such as Blackburn & Smallbone (2015) and Ram et al. (2017), emphasise that ethnic entrepreneurship constitutes a broader category that includes not only first-generation immigrants but also native-born individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Ethnic entrepreneurship is typically characterised by business activities grounded in cultural identity, social networks and community-based resources. Entrepreneurs in this category often establish enterprises that serve ethnically defined markets, drawing on intra-community support systems such as informal financial mechanisms and collective social capital (Daniel et al., 2019; Light & Bonacich, 1988). While these networks can help entrepreneurs overcome initial barriers to entry, they may also result in market segmentation, limiting the potential for expansion into wider economic domains (Ram et al., 2017).

By contrast, immigrant entrepreneurship refers specifically to business activity undertaken by individuals who have migrated to a new country. These entrepreneurs are shaped by migration-specific dynamics, including legal status, access to the labour market and the complexity of regulatory environments (Sepulveda et al., 2008). First-generation immigrants often turn to entrepreneurship as a strategy for economic survival in response to limited employment opportunities, language barriers and the non-recognition of foreign qualifications (Davidavičienė & Lolat, 2016). Research suggests that immigrants are more likely than native-born individuals to enter self-employment, frequently driven by necessity rather than by strategic business intent (Kerr & Kerr, 2017).

Despite their significant economic contributions, immigrant entrepreneurs face considerable institutional challenges, including financial exclusion, restrictive regulatory frameworks and difficulties navigating formal markets (House of Commons Library, 2017). While some immigrant entrepreneurs target co-ethnic consumer bases, others engage with broader markets, depending on their level of integration and the availability of economic opportunities (Ojo, 2021).

Ultimately, the boundaries between ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship are fluid rather than fixed. They are shaped by a combination of legal status, migration history, generational status and market conditions. Recognising these conceptual nuances is essential for developing more inclusive and context-sensitive frameworks for understanding entrepreneurship among minority and migrant populations.

Legal status and migration circumstances

Entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges for migrants are significantly influenced by legal status and migration pathways. Some individuals migrate voluntarily in pursuit of economic opportunities, while others are forced to flee due to conflict or persecution. These factors shape access to capital, market participation and institutional support, thereby influencing business structures and growth potential. Legal status determines whether an entrepreneur can formally register a business, obtain financing and engage in long-term strategic planning, while migration pathways shape initial access to social and economic networks. Table 1.1 categorises immigrant entrepreneurs based on their legal and migration status, outlining key characteristics and examples of each group.

While legal status and migration pathways influence entrepreneurial opportunities at the outset, other structural factors, such as access to financial resources, regulatory barriers and market entry barriers, shape the long-term viability of immigrant-owned businesses. The legal framework in host countries plays a crucial role in determining whether migrant entrepreneurs can transition from informal survival-based activities to formally registered businesses with growth potential (House of Commons Library, 2017; Kloosterman & Rath, 2018). Policy frameworks must therefore account for the diverse legal circumstances of immigrant entrepreneurs, ensuring that tailored support mechanisms are in place to facilitate their economic contributions and integration.

Generational dynamics and economic integration

Generational dynamics play a critical role in shaping the entrepreneurial experiences of immigrant populations, with first- and second-generation entrepreneurs demonstrating distinct strategies, risk appetites and sectoral orientations. First-generation entrepreneurs, typically foreign-born, often establish businesses in response to economic necessity, prompted by restrictive immigration policies, labour market discrimination and limited access to formal employment channels (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013; Beckers & Blumberg, 2013). These entrepreneurs frequently adopt risk-averse approaches, drawing upon cultural ties and community-based resources to facilitate business creation and sustainability (Baycan et al., 2012). Their ventures tend to be concentrated in traditional, low-entry sectors such as hospitality, retail and small-scale manufacturing, where they can leverage existing demand and informal support systems (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013).

While ethnic networks provide initial stability, they may also constrain business scalability and integration into wider economic spaces (Ekwulugo, 2006; Ojo, 2013). The entrepreneurial practices of first-generation immigrants are often shaped by a deeply embedded habitus formed through pre-migration experiences, survivalist strategies and socialisation within ethnic

TABLE 1.1 Typology Of Immigrant Entrepreneurs Based On Legal Status And Migration Pathways

<i>Type of entrepreneur</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Key characteristics</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Asylum-seeker entrepreneurs</i> (Barak-Bianco & Rajjman, 2015; Fiddian-Qasmieh et al., 2014)	Individuals awaiting a decision on their asylum application who engage in self-employment as a survival strategy.	Limited legal rights to work, high uncertainty, reliance on informal business activities.	A displaced professional offering freelance digital services while awaiting asylum approval.
<i>Refugee entrepreneurs</i> (Desai et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2024)	Individuals granted refugee status who start businesses as part of economic reintegration.	Language barriers, financial barriers, reliance on non-governmental organisation (NGO) support and microfinance.	A refugee launching a bakery selling traditional foods from their home country.
<i>Undocumented (irregular) entrepreneurs</i> (Bloch & McKay, 2015; Gold, 2019)	Entrepreneurs operating without legal residency or work permits.	Vulnerability to exploitation, reliance on informal markets, inability to register businesses.	A street vendor selling handcrafted goods without legal documentation.
<i>Temporary migrant entrepreneurs</i> (Dustmann & Görlach, 2016; Witteveen & Alba, 2018)	Migrants on short-term visas who establish businesses within their legal barriers.	Uncertain long-term residency, limited business expansion opportunities, dependency on visa renewals.	A student running an online store while studying abroad.
<i>Skilled/investor migrant entrepreneurs</i> (Elo & Minto-Coy, 2019; Saxenian, 2002)	Entrepreneurs who migrate through investor or skills-based visa programmes.	High financial capital, access to business incentives, engagement in high-growth sectors.	A technology entrepreneur launching a startup under a host country's investor visa programme.

communities. This can reinforce a reliance on familiar, low-risk business models that prioritise short-term security over long-term innovation (Cooper, 2021).

In contrast, second-generation immigrant entrepreneurs are more likely to pursue innovation and seek opportunities beyond ethnic enclaves, benefiting from stronger integration into mainstream economic institutions (Chababi et al., 2017). With greater access to education, broader social networks and institutional resources, they are better positioned to engage in high-growth sectors such as biosciences, digital technologies and professional services (Pruthi & Tasavori, 2022). These entrepreneurs often utilise their bicultural competencies to bridge diverse markets and build transnational networks, allowing for the identification of novel opportunities and the implementation of advanced business strategies (Baycan et al., 2012; Chababi et al., 2017).

Second-generation entrepreneurs are also more likely to access formal funding sources, structured recruitment processes and business development programmes that were often inaccessible to the previous generation (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013). Nonetheless, increased integration and educational capital do not automatically translate into entrepreneurial success. Ojo (2019) argues that second-generation entrepreneurs may face delayed business development, partly due

to the complexity of navigating formal startup ecosystems and reconciling the expectations of their ethnic heritage with the norms of mainstream business culture.

Beyond these generational distinctions, the evolving nature of immigrant entrepreneurship reflects broader shifts in opportunity structures, resource mobilisation and urban economic dynamics. Kourtit et al. (2013) distinguish between the *forced entrepreneurship* often associated with first-generation migrants and the *voluntary entrepreneurship* increasingly characteristic of the second generation. These shifts illustrate how changing social and economic contexts influence the motivations and trajectories of immigrant business owners. Second-generation entrepreneurs are more likely to engage in strategic, innovation-driven enterprises that align with contemporary urban growth trends.

The intergenerational transmission of entrepreneurial knowledge and the influence of diaspora networks also play a critical role in this transition. Ojo (2013) highlights how second-generation entrepreneurs leverage tacit knowledge, systemic integration and enhanced market access to redefine entrepreneurial identity (EI) within immigrant communities. Although socio-cultural barriers persist, the entrepreneurial journey of the second generation signals a gradual but significant evolution in the agency of immigrant entrepreneurs, shaped by adaptation across generations and the ongoing reconfiguration of economic participation in host societies.

Business scope and market reach

The scope and market reach of immigrant entrepreneurs shape their business strategies and long-term sustainability. Some operate locally, while others engage in regional or global trade, leveraging transnational networks and investment opportunities. Their market reach is influenced by individual resources, host-country policies and broader economic conditions. Table 1.2 categorises immigrant entrepreneurs based on the reach of their ventures, outlining key characteristics, examples and economic contributions.

The classification of immigrant entrepreneurs by business scope reveals a spectrum of strategic approaches shaped by variations in market access, capital availability and policy environments (Dheer, 2018; Urban & Moti, 2024). Immigrant entrepreneurship is far from uniform. Instead, it encompasses a diverse set of practices that respond to institutional contexts and economic opportunities. Transnational entrepreneurs, for example, forge transnational trade networks and promote cultural exports, thereby strengthening global commercial linkages (Duan et al., 2021). Diaspora entrepreneurs often pursue economic integration within host societies while maintaining community-oriented business models that serve co-ethnic markets and reinforce diasporic solidarity (Syrett & Keles, 2022). Returnee entrepreneurs contribute to development in their countries of origin by facilitating capital reinvestment and knowledge transfer, frequently supporting the modernisation of domestic industries (Kassaye et al., 2025).

The scalability and success of these entrepreneurial forms depend significantly on financial access and the regulatory environment. Some countries support immigrant entrepreneurship through inclusive policies and targeted business incentives. Others impose legal and administrative barriers that hinder entry and restrict growth potential (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019; World Bank, 2019). These contextual differences highlight the need for nuanced policy frameworks and institutional support systems that can enable immigrant entrepreneurs to realise their full economic potential. For policymakers and business stakeholders alike, recognising the diversity of immigrant entrepreneurship is

TABLE 1.2 Typology of immigrant entrepreneurs based on market reach

<i>Type of entrepreneur</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Key characteristics</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Economic impact</i>
<i>Transnational entrepreneurs</i> (Drori et al., 2009; Duan et al., 2021)	Entrepreneurs who operate businesses across their home and host countries, leveraging transnational networks and resources.	Transnational business operations, dual-market strategies, leveraging cultural and trade connections.	An entrepreneur importing and selling home-country goods while running a store in the host country.	Facilitates international trade, promotes cultural exports and strengthens global business linkages.
<i>Diaspora entrepreneurs</i> (Elo & Riddle, 2016; Syrett & Keles, 2022)	Entrepreneurs who build ventures catering to their diaspora communities while integrating into the economic structures of the host country.	Strong cultural ties, community-focused businesses, ability to navigate both home and host markets.	A restaurant owner preserving home-country cuisine while adapting to local tastes.	Strengthens cultural identity, creates employment within ethnic communities and fosters local economic integration.
<i>Returnee entrepreneurs</i> (Gruenhagen et al., 2020; Kassaye et al., 2025)	Immigrants who return to their home country to start businesses, bringing back skills, capital and networks acquired abroad.	Leverage experience from abroad, invest in home-country development, transfer of knowledge and business practices.	A former expatriate launching a tech startup in their home country after gaining expertise abroad.	Drives innovation, contributes to knowledge transfer and supports economic development in home countries.

essential for developing effective interventions that enhance its contribution to both local and global economies.

This book conceptualises immigrant entrepreneurship as a dynamic and adaptive process, shaped by migration histories, institutional settings and socio-economic conditions. It is not confined by legal status, generational background, or geographic location. Rather, immigrant entrepreneurship operates along a continuum of business engagement, influenced by levels of integration, the strength of transnational networks and the nature of the surrounding regulatory systems. Immigrant entrepreneurs navigate complex institutional environments, utilising both ethnic and mainstream economic resources while overcoming policy constraints, social integration challenges and barriers to market entry.

Their business activities contribute to innovation, economic diversification, diaspora engagement and international trade. These contributions reflect a broader *entrepreneurial mobility*

nexus that captures the interplay between migration, economic adaptation and enterprise formation. This nexus underscores immigrant entrepreneurship as a transformative process that reshapes economic landscapes within and across national boundaries. By advancing this perspective, the book offers a multidimensional understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship that moves beyond rigid classifications and embraces its complexity within the global economy.

Overview of theoretical frameworks

Understanding immigrant entrepreneurship requires a multidimensional theoretical approach that incorporates access to resources, institutional structures, social networks and identity construction. Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital offers a foundational lens through which to analyse the resources immigrant entrepreneurs mobilise to establish and maintain businesses. Forms of capital, particularly social, cultural, human and financial, are critical in navigating economic constraints. Many immigrant entrepreneurs draw upon co-ethnic networks and community resources to compensate for limited access to mainstream financial systems (Gold & Light, 2000; Ram et al., 2008). These networks facilitate knowledge exchange, informal financing and trust-based partnerships, illustrating how resource mobilisation helps overcome barriers to entry.

However, capital access alone does not explain entrepreneurial outcomes. Institutional structures significantly influence business opportunities and constraints. North's (1990) institutional theory provides a framework for examining how formal institutions, including legal regulations, immigration policy and financial infrastructure, shape entrepreneurial contexts. Restrictive immigration laws may limit business registration, while financial exclusion often inhibits access to credit (Ram et al., 2017). As a result, many immigrant entrepreneurs turn to informal financial arrangements and co-ethnic investment networks.

Formal institutions do not function independently of informal arrangements. Helmke & Levitsky (2012) broaden the institutional perspective by examining how informal institutions such as unwritten norms, trust relationships and culturally embedded expectations shape entrepreneurial behaviour. Welter & Smallbone (2011) further demonstrate that in institutional voids, where formal support is weak or inconsistent, entrepreneurs develop adaptive strategies that rely on informal systems. This extended institutional framework highlights how both formal and informal mechanisms interact to influence entrepreneurial possibilities, especially in resource-constrained environments.

In addition to institutional dynamics, immigrant entrepreneurs operate within dual--embedded contexts that shape their strategic responses. The mixed embeddedness framework (MEF), proposed by Kloosterman et al. (1999), explains how immigrant entrepreneurs are simultaneously embedded in co-ethnic networks and the broader institutional and market structures of the host society. This dual positioning influences access to resources and affects the degree of market integration. Empirical studies by Berwing (2019) and Solano et al. (2022) show that long-term business sustainability often depends on balancing ethnic embeddedness with broader economic participation.

Yet the original formulation of MEF did not sufficiently address the transnational dimensions of immigrant entrepreneurship. Subsequent research by Bagwell (2008) and Yamamura & Lassalle (2022) incorporates the role of transnational entrepreneurship, emphasising how immigrant entrepreneurs utilise home-country networks, engage in transnational trade and mobilise knowledge across national boundaries. This expanded perspective captures the complex,

multi-layered environments in which immigrant entrepreneurs operate, shaped by interactions among ethnicity, institutional settings and global markets.

EI theory adds a further dimension by explaining how immigrant entrepreneurs construct their sense of self, interpret their social positioning and respond to changing institutional contexts. Schiller et al. (1992) argue that identity is fluid and formed through migrants' participation in transnational social fields. These fields involve navigating both host-country expectations and obligations to communities of origin. Work by Barrett & Vershinina (2017), Essers & Benschop (2007, 2009) and Romero & Valdez (2016) highlights the role of narrative and intersectionality in EI formation. These studies show that social structures, including gender, class and ethnicity, intersect with individual experiences to shape entrepreneurial trajectories.

Despite its robust psychological and behavioural foundations, research on EI has often been developed in isolation from structural and institutional analyses. While the MEF incorporates institutional conditions and forms of capital, it has tended to underrepresent the role of identity in shaping entrepreneurial agency. This book integrates EI into the MEF to offer a more comprehensive explanation of how immigrant entrepreneurs navigate barriers and shape their strategies. Identity is not only shaped by context but is also actively employed as a strategic resource. This integrated perspective allows for a deeper understanding of how entrepreneurs simultaneously respond to systemic barriers and craft their business pathways within diverse and complex environments.

Positioning the study and structure of the book

This book theorises immigrant entrepreneurship by integrating cross-regional research on how legal frameworks, economic structures and migration pathways shape entrepreneurial trajectories. It moves beyond dominant narratives by critically examining how immigrant entrepreneurs navigate barriers, mobilise resources, embed within institutional environments and negotiate participation across both ethnic and mainstream economic spheres. The analysis emphasises identity, transnational strategies and embeddedness as key dimensions of entrepreneurial agency across varied socio-economic contexts.

The book is organised into two main parts and a concluding chapter. Part I comprises two chapters that establish the theoretical and thematic foundations of the study. Chapter 1 introduces a reconceptualised mixed embeddedness framework (RMEF) developed through an integration of the MEF, EI, institutional theory and forms of capital. This framework positions identity as a strategic and dynamic mechanism through which immigrant entrepreneurs navigate structural barriers, mobilise transnational resources and negotiate embeddedness across intersecting dimensions such as race, gender, migration status and class. Chapter 2 offers a global thematic overview of immigrant entrepreneurship, documenting common barriers and illustrating how entrepreneurs adapt through informal networks, digital platforms and transnational linkages. Rather than applying the framework directly, this chapter serves as a bridge to the regional case studies by highlighting key themes and findings from the general literature on immigrant entrepreneurship.

Part II presents six regionally focused chapters based on documented case studies from North America, Western Europe, Oceania, the Middle East, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on secondary sources, these chapters analyse how immigrant entrepreneurs confront exclusion and implement adaptive strategies within diverse institutional and economic environments. Although not based on original empirical fieldwork, the chapters leverage documented examples of institutional barriers, adaptive strategies and identity negotiation to illustrate the

analytical value of the RMEF. The final chapter synthesises cross-regional findings, reflects on theoretical and practical contributions and outlines long-term policy directions and future research priorities for building inclusive and context-sensitive entrepreneurial ecosystems.

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