



**Contesting the Boundaries of Marianismo and
Entrepreneurial Identity:
Meanings of Motherhood amongst Latin American Migrant
Women Entrepreneurs**

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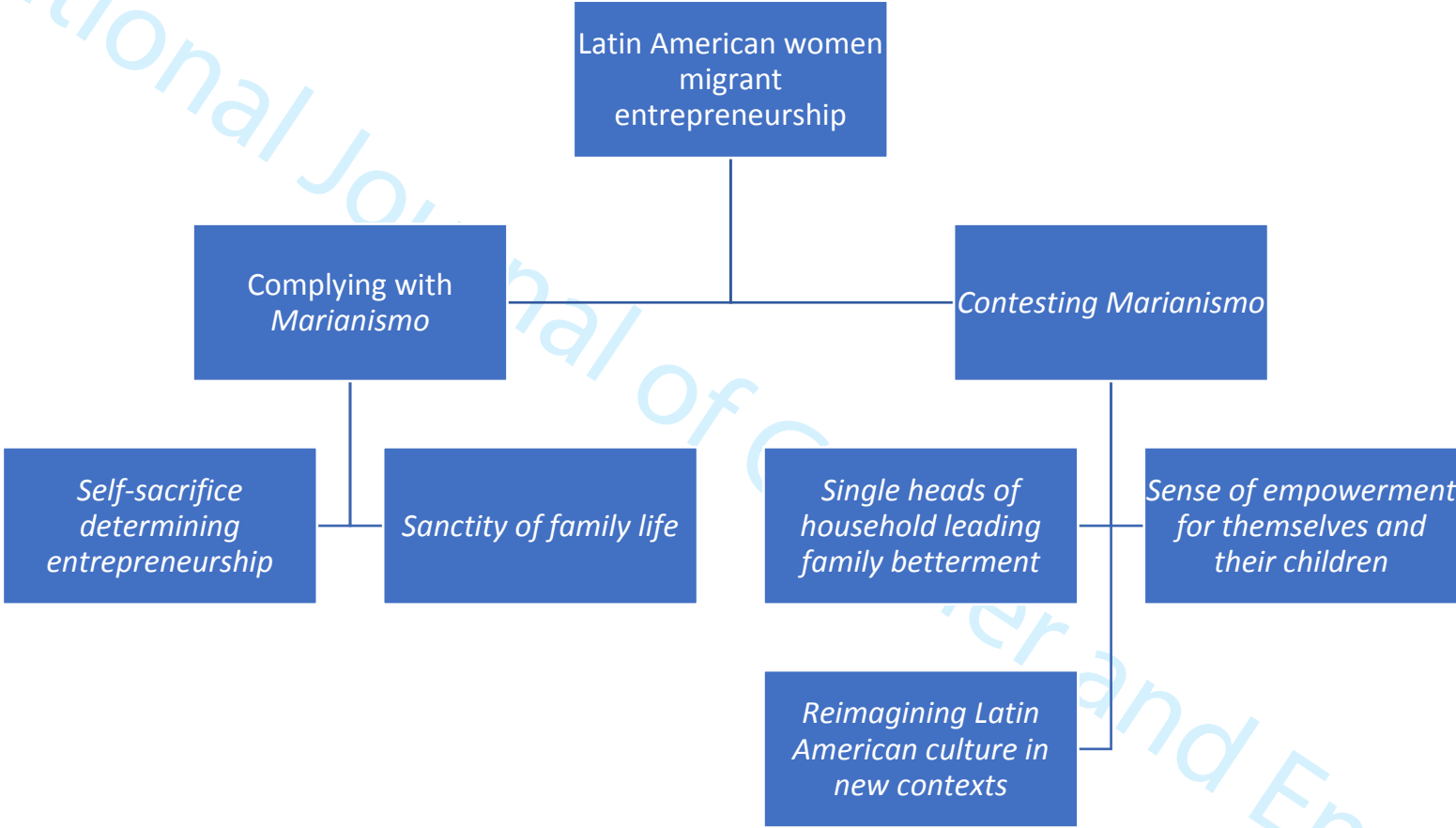


Figure 1. Summary of findings. Latin American migrant women entrepreneurship and marianismo

Table 1. Summary of linkages between literature and findings

Topics from the literature review and theoretical framework	Topics from the interviews
- Motherhood as one of the key aspects in shaping family and business cycles for migrant women entrepreneurs.	- Prioritisation of motherhood before, during and after setting up the business.
- <i>Marianismo</i> , the ideal mother is one who sacrifices her own needs and happiness for the sake of her children and family	- <i>Marianismo</i> values were central to setting up the business, placing children and family values first.
- The 'push' element of 'mumpreneurship' in the global North remains/is exacerbated for migrant women.	- Without female solidarity care chains, their businesses are the only viable option to sustain motherhood expectations.
- Intersectionality to illuminate how a multiplicity of categories explain how/why women set up businesses.	- Compliance with <i>marianismo</i> when choosing and setting up their businesses was also shaped by their divorced/separated status and the lack of female solidary care chains.
- Translocational positionality to ascertain the transformation of the role of the sacred mother figure in Latin America through migration ('transferred motherhood').	- Crucial to understand the contradictory stance embodied in entrepreneurship and motherhood in the context of migration (compliance and reinvention of <i>marianismo</i>).
- Reinvention of motherhood/ <i>marianismo</i> through migration and entrepreneurship.	
Business ownership as a means of independence, self-realisation and integration in the receiving country	A sense of strength as migrant women, and empowerment for their children but also for themselves as initiators.
Business ownership as a means to challenge the dominant ideas about traditional gender roles in their countries of origin.	Detachment from traditional gender roles, such as <i>marianismo</i> , and their businesses contribute to creating this distance.

**Contesting the Boundaries of *Marianismo* and Entrepreneurial Identity:
Meanings of Motherhood amongst Latin American Migrant Women Entrepreneurs**

Abstract

Purpose: To critically analyse how Latin American migrant women entrepreneurs living in Ireland and the UK negotiate their entrepreneurial and motherhood identities in transnational settings. The paper explores (1) how motherhood influences the choices of becoming entrepreneurs; (2) how women reconcile the social imaginaries of motherhood from their country of origin in the new contexts of settlement; and (3) the impact of these transformations on their businesses.

Design/methodology/approach: This paper draws on six biographical case studies (3 in Ireland and 3 in the UK) and employs the theoretical lens of translocational positionality to analyse entrepreneurship as context-specific and relational processes that bring together a multiplicity of social and geographical locales.

Findings: Latin American women entrepreneurs navigate their roles as 'good mothers' and 'good businesswomen' by simultaneously (1) complying with core values of *marianismo* that confine them to traditional gender roles and (2) renegotiating these values in ways that empower them through entrepreneurship. Finally, juxtaposing these two contexts (Ireland and the UK), this study (3) illuminates the similarities of the ever-continuing gender power struggles of egalitarianism for Latin American migrant women in both contexts.

Originality: Despite the agreed need for exploring motherhood as one of the critical aspects shaping family and business cycles, this area needs to be sufficiently analysed in its intersection with ethnicity or migratory status, particularly with participants from the global South. This article aims at bridging that gap.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, motherhood, migration, Latin America, UK, Ireland.

Introduction

Scholarly work on female migrant entrepreneurship has gone from a stage of invisibility and victimisation of the business experience to seeing enterprise ownership as a means to empowerment (Morokvasic, 1999; Apistzch and Kontos, 2003; Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018). Gender blindness has been overcome with crucial contributions from feminist scholars by shedding light on the interaction between productive and reproductive spheres (Phizacklea, 1998; Meliou and Edwards, 2017) and the contestation and/or compliance with expected gender roles within their families and beyond (Katila, 2008; Essers *et al.*, 2010; Vershinina *et al.*, 2019). Extant research has shown how studying family and gender dynamics (Sanders and Nee, 1996; Marlow, 2014; Honig, 2020) is crucial to understand how resources are distributed between the business and the family realms and how entrepreneurs navigate their own identities and trajectories in their entrepreneurial journeys. Looking at the importance of family and the role of motherhood challenges dominant notions of entrepreneurship against the backdrop of neoliberal societies and it illuminates the complexities of becoming a woman entrepreneur. These specificities are exacerbated for migrant women, who must navigate further constraints in their settlement contexts (reference blinded for review).

Most of the studies incorporating motherhood in the study of entrepreneurship have taken as their model that of intense mothering in the global North, such as Brush and colleagues 5M model of entrepreneurship (2009) and more recent studies on the concept of 'mumpreneurship' (Leung, 2011; Lewis *et al.*, 2021). However, this article aims to introduce a different mothering style emerging from the global South and to understand its intersection with entrepreneurship and migration. Latin American culture has been known to be embedded in specific notions of traditional gender roles, known as *machismo* and *marianismo* (Englander *et al.*, 2012), the last one defined as the expectations for women to mirror the qualities of the Virgin Mary. This framework of gender ideology is characterised by the ideals and performance of womanhood linked to sacrifice, submissiveness, giving, being primarily dedicated to her husband and children (Villegas *et al.*, 2010; Englander *et al.*, 2012) and purity (i.e. chastity outside of marriage) (Carranza, 2012). The male figures in these women's lives (husband, father, brothers, sons) tend to be placed at the centre of their existence (Englander *et al.*, 2012).

In the case of migrant women entrepreneurs from Latin America, these cultural meanings associated with motherhood are also mediated by the interplay between the specific socio-cultural characteristics of migrant women (family structure, urban vs rural, etc.) and the contexts of settlement. For this reason, we employ a translocational positionality framework

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(Anthias, 2016) that enables us to analyse entrepreneurship as a context-specific, relational process that brings together a multiplicity of social and geographical locales. Thus, drawing on six biographical case studies, this paper critically analyses how Latin American migrant women entrepreneurs living in Ireland and the UK negotiate their, at times contested, entrepreneurial and motherhood identities in transnational settings. We explore here three main aspects: (1) In the context of migration, how productive, and reproductive roles -motherhood- influence each other in business creation. (2) To what extent a culture-specific view of motherhood emerging from the country of origin may influence women’s choice of entrepreneurship; and (3) how the different contexts of settlement (UK and Ireland) and the women’s different positionings as migrants in these contexts may further transform their roles as mothers and entrepreneurs.

In this paper, we argue that Latin American women entrepreneurs navigate their roles as 'good mothers' and 'good businesswomen' by simultaneously (1) complying with core values of *marianismo* that confine these women to traditional gender roles and (2) expanding and renegotiating these core values in ways that empower them, their families and beyond in creative and constructive ways. Finally, juxtaposing these similar and yet distinct contexts (Ireland and the UK) with regards to their tradition and experience with migration and entrepreneurship, we avoid a comparison between cultures to instead (3) bringing to light similarities of the ever-continuing gender power struggles of egalitarianism for Latin American migrant women and their strategies to overcome them. By exploring these critical aspects of their entrepreneurial experiences, we contribute to the increasingly extensive debates on gender and migrant entrepreneurship (Essers *et al.*, 2010; Bijedić and Piper. 2019, Brieger and Gielnik, 2021).

To explore these issues, this article is structured as follows. We start by detailing the phenomenon of migrant women entrepreneurship and the incorporation of motherhood in entrepreneurial research. Then, we contextualise *marianismo* in Latin America and beyond through the phenomenon of migration. We then draw upon theories of translocational positionality to analytically consider how gender is reproduced and contested within this realm by exploring the inter-relationships between motherhood, migration and entrepreneurship. Finally, the implications of these arguments are evaluated in the discussion and conclusion.

Migrant entrepreneurship, motherhood and *marianismo*
Entrepreneurship, migration and motherhood

Entrepreneurship has been studied as one of the crucial ways in which migrants can reinvent themselves in migratory contexts and one of the stepping stones towards empowerment and realisation for migrant men and, to a lesser extent, for migrant women (Morokvasic, 1999; Ho and Alcorso, 2004; reference blinded for review; Brieger and Gielnik, 2021). Bringing women's experiences has rarely been addressed in the core theoretical accounts explaining migrant entrepreneurship (i.e. mixed embeddedness, interactionist model, supply side accounts) (reference blinded for review). Feminist scholarly work has addressed this gap, from studying how women have remained invisible in migrant-led enterprises to seeing business ownership as a means of independence and self-realisation (Morokvasic, 1999; Apistzch and Kontos, 2003; Carter *et al.*, 2015; Vershinina, 2019). Fundamental to these accounts has been how migrant women have been the pillar of family businesses in labour-intensive sectors characteristic of the ethnic economy with general high reliance on a flexible and cheap labour force and with blurred lines between work and household dynamics (Ram, 1994; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Raijman and Tienda, 2003; Dang and Harima, 2020). As we argued elsewhere (reference blinded for review), although this might give an idea of balanced cooperation between family and business, the actual contribution of women might go generally invisible and unequal gender relations might conceal inequalities both at work and home (Anthias and Mehta, 2003; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021).

Alternative accounts show migrant women as business owners leading their enterprises in their own right and challenging traditional gender ideologies through entrepreneurship (Apistzch and Kontos, 2003; Morokvasic, 1999; Pio, 2007; De Luca and Ambrosini, 2019). In the context of women developing branches of their family business abroad, these transnational spaces can enable women to overcome structural constraints by creating strategies which prioritise their own business aspirations without jeopardising their family linkages (Vershinina *et al.*, 2019). Transnational spaces can then be viewed as conduits for women to claim their business legitimacy and challenge the dominant ideas about their roles in their countries of origin (Voigt-Graft, 2004; Vershinina *et al.*, 2019). Essers and colleagues (2010) put forward a more nuanced analysis by using an intersectional approach and showcasing how compliance and resistance to domestic orders can occur simultaneously when analysing Muslim women's experiences in the Netherlands. This is all resulting in both an increasing visibility of women that head small businesses (Hughes, 2003; MacGregor and Tweed, 2002; Brieger and Gielnik, 2021) and a change in the agency of women, instrumental in increasing the economic value

within the family and in improving their job satisfaction and integration in the country of settlement (Sáiz López, 2012; Anthias and Mehta, 2003; Bijedi and Piper, 2019).

Despite the agreed need for looking at both productive and reproductive roles, the latter is not sufficiently explored in the field of migrant entrepreneurship. Amongst the reproductive duties and tasks, motherhood emerges as one of the critical aspects shaping family and business cycles for migrant women entrepreneurs; however, this area has not been sufficiently analysed in its intersection with ethnicity or migratory status, and this article aims at increasing the visibility of this under-researched topic (research question 1).

Incorporating motherhood into business ownership for women has been theorised by Brush and colleagues (2009) when building on the 3Ms model of entrepreneurship (market, money and management) by adding two extra Ms: motherhood and the meso/macro environment. Motherhood in their model 'is a metaphor representing the household/family context, thus drawing attention to the fact that family/household contexts might have a larger impact on women than men' (Brush *et al.*, 2009: 9). Here household composition considers gendered power relations since by deepening our understanding of these intra-family relationships we can understand better the nature, processes, and outcomes of women's entrepreneurship (Brush *et al.*, 2009).

Building on this crucial work, scholars considered the impact of combining childcare responsibilities with entrepreneurship in the area of 'mumpreneurship' (Ekymsmith, 2011, 2014; Leung, 2011; Duberley and Carrigan, 2013; Lewis *et al.*, 2022). A 'mumpreneur' can be defined as 'an individual who discovers and exploits new business opportunities within a social and geographical context that seeks to integrate the demands of motherhood and business ownership. It is often a self-confessed attempt to achieve higher levels of work-life integration, and a desire to be, simultaneously, a 'good mother' and a 'successful business owner' (Ekymsmith, 2011, p. 105). This form of labour incorporation seeks to aid women into 'having it all': being mothers and having thriving careers, although scholars have pointed out the multiple tensions in both productive and reproductive realms for women entrepreneurs (Duberley and Carrigan, 2013). Becoming a mum and a thriving entrepreneur can address competing and difficult to reconcile narratives. Childcare and other reproductive responsibilities may demand full time involvement to be a 'good mum', which disrupts the demands of a thriving enterprise. Hence, scholars have studied how, for 'mumpreneurs',

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3 motherhood can push women into entrepreneurship but also their gender roles and feminine
4 identity can define the business they set up (Leung, 2011).
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9 In Carrigan and Duberley's (2013) paper they study one of the dominant motherhood
10 ideologies in the global North, that of 'intensive mothering', which is centred on the child and
11 requires a high level of emotional involvement (Garey, 1995 in Carrigan and Duberley, 2013).
12 The study of the balance between motherhood and entrepreneurship has rarely looked at other
13 types of 'motherhood' styles, and in this article, we aim to bridge this gap by including a form
14 of motherhood and femininity emerging from the global South, in particular Latin American
15 countries, and known as *marianismo* to explore how it may influence women's choice of
16 entrepreneurship in a transnational setting (research question 2)
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24 *Marianismo, motherhood in Latin America*

25 The lack of balance of power between males and females is patent in most cultures in the world;
26 however, the manifestation and intensity of the power structure vary by country and culture
27 (Gilly, 1988). In Latin American gender studies, two frequently cited dimensions are *machismo*
28 (an exaggerated masculinity for men) and *marianismo* (a passive, nurturing role for women)
29 (DeSouza *et al.*, 2004). *Marianismo* is a Latina gender role phenomenon based on traditional
30 cultural norms and the values of Catholicism; it is used primarily in the context of Mexico
31 (Stevens, 1973), although it has been extended to other Latin American countries (Gil and
32 Vazquez, 1996). The concept of *marianismo* is often likened to the martyrdom of the Virgin
33 Mary (*María* in Spanish), and it encompasses the concepts of subordination to men,
34 subservience, self-sacrifice, chastity before marriage, sexual passivity after marriage and
35 caretaking duty (Gil and Vasquez, 1996; Jezzini, 2008; Mendes-Luck, 2016). While
36 *marianismo* is not limited to mothers, an important aspect is the sense of responsibility to the
37 family and the children (Hubbell, 1993). In this role, a woman is expected to be submissive
38 and deferential to her husband and to perform self-sacrificing behaviours that benefit her family
39 (Hubbell, 1993; Englander, 2012). Thus, the ideal mother sacrifices her own needs and
40 happiness for the sake of her children; family rewards should be the most compelling for her
41 (Hubbell, 1993; Englander, 2012).
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56 Today, the concepts of *marianismo* and *machismo* need to be understood alongside changes in
57 Latin American culture and society. Sequeira (2009) argues that *marianismo*, as a product of
58 the strong Catholic influence in Latin America, has changed due to Catholicism's retrenchment
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in the last decades. Consequently, today’s young Latin American women are negotiating the traditional roles valued by parents, religious organisations, and society and more modern and equalitarian perspectives (Kjeldgaard and Nielsen, 2010).

Global mobility has also shaped the meanings of *marianismo*. When mothers are pushed to migrate to provide economic returns and educational opportunities for their families, the role of the sacred mother figure is further transformed (Raijman, 2003). In these debates, the concept of ‘transnational motherhood’ (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997) has been widely used to deconstruct motherhood as it openly subverts traditional conceptions of mother-child bonds nurtured daily within the home and conventional views that employment and mothering are mutually exclusive (Raijman, 2003; Dağdelen, 2018).

The link between migration and motherhood in the Latin American context has been broadened to highlight the ways in which gender and nation define each other through the reproduction of family hierarchies across their migration journeys (Fouon and Glick Schiller, 2001; Agius Vallejo and Keister, 2020); and by illuminating the process of ‘transferred motherhood’, understood as ‘the relationships between mothers and children in the host society, taking into account the changes in the family performance, conflicts in the host society, and the strategies mothers devise to create harmony and wellbeing for their families’ (Hernández-Arbújar, 2004, p. 66).

This paper aligns with this last line of inquiry by examining how, while motherhood in its different cultural ramifications influences these women’s decision to set up their own business, there are other variables exerting a significant influence on their decision. Further to the impact of these different intersections, their position in the host country and their positioning as fluid subjects with biographical trajectories, values and ideas is of relevance to understanding the complexities of motherhood and its link to entrepreneurship, as research question 3 aims to explore. In this regard, translocational positionality (Anthias, 2016) seems pertinent to theoretically frame this study of gender/motherhood, migration and entrepreneurship, as the following section addresses.

Theoretical framework: Translocational positionality

The experiences of women in the migrant economy have been studied using an intersectional stance (Crenshaw, 1991; Holvino, 2010; Clarke and McCall, 2014) to illuminate how a

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3 multiplicity of categories such as religion, ethnicity, class, and/or race explain how women set
4 up businesses and their everyday experiences. Initially developed to shed light onto the
5 experiences of oppression of black women (Crenshaw, 1991), this theoretical approach has
6 shaped the field of gender and (migrant) entrepreneurship. Notable contributions are those of
7 Essers and Benschop (2007), Essers *et al.* (2010); Valdez (2016); Ozasir Kacar and Essers
8 (2019) and Martinez Dy and Jayawarna (2020).
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15 An intersectional framework should also be sensitive to the contextual opportunity structures
16 entrepreneur have. For example, Ozasir Kacar and Essers (2019) showcase how the process of
17 identity construction of entrepreneurs relate to class-based consciousness, politization
18 processes and the transnational positions of migrant women. Alongside this approach, scholars
19 have discussed how place and space are crucial to make sense of this multiplicity of positions,
20 both geographical and social (Anthias, 2016). Within entrepreneurship studies, research has
21 also signalled the importance of attending to context (Welter, 2011) to problematise the field
22 using an intersectional and positional stance (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2017).
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31 In this article we use a positionality approach since it is particularly useful to grasp the
32 experiences of women who occupy a multiplicity of social positions in time and space, such is
33 the case for migrant women entrepreneurs (reference blinded for review). This approach,
34 translocational positionality, 'is one structured by the interplay of different locations relating
35 to gender, ethnicity, race and class (among others), and their at times *contradictory* effects'
36 (Anthias, 2002, p. 275). As Anthias (2008) puts it:
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43 '[p]ositionality combines a reference to social position (as a set of effectivities: as
44 outcome) and social positioning (as a set of practices, actions and meanings: as process).
45 That is, positionality is the space at the intersection of structure (social position/social
46 effects) and agency (social positioning/meaning and practice). The notion of 'location'
47 recognises the importance of context, the situated nature of claims and attributions and
48 their production in complex and shifting locales [...] The term 'translocational'
49 references the complex nature of positionality faced by those who are at the interplay of
50 a range of locations and dislocations in relation to gender, ethnicity, national belonging,
51 class and racialization' (Anthias 2008, pp. 15-16) –originally underlined–.
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This approach has been utilised to explain processes of identity formation amongst migrant communities (Barber, 2015), identity and sexualities (Rogers and Ahmed, 2017), and the negotiation of class and femininity for entrepreneurs (reference blinded for review), amongst other topics. In our study, a translocational positional approach is particularly relevant for ‘addressing modalities of power [...] stressing relationality, the spatio-temporal and the processual in social relations, building on what has come to be called an intersectional heuristic’ (Anthias, 2021: 10). The augmentation of intersectionality emerges as a ‘way of addressing the quandaries about how different forms of hierarchy connect’ (Anthias, 2021, p. 26). The study of motherhood and entrepreneurship requires us to refer to different places and locales that migrant women relate to in their journeys, i.e. what being a mother means in the country of origin and destination, the class-based and marital-based positions achieved between paid employment and business ownership, and the connection with both contexts of settlement, (Ireland and the UK). Hence, we argue here that a translocational position is particularly useful to explore how migrant women identify in relation to a multiplicity of spaces and times and how their business trajectories relate to these varied conceptualisations of motherhood.

Research design, methods and context

This paper takes an interpretive epistemological stance (Bryman, 2016) to capture the meanings and interpretations of motherhood and entrepreneurship for migrant women business owners. We draw on six case studies of in-depth biographical interviews with migrant women entrepreneurs from Latin American countries living in Ireland and the UK. Both authors have gathered the data as part of separate projects on the trajectories of migrant women entrepreneurs (detailed information anonymised), by using a biographical approach. This methodological stance is an apt perspective to research women business owners' entrepreneurial journey and identity formation. This follows calls to study entrepreneurship as a process intertwined with other life-cycle circumstances, such as migration, household formation and labour market trajectories, all of which shape the development of the self (Kontos, 2003). The biographical interviews touched upon a wide range of topics addressing the family and work situation in their countries of origin and destination (e.g. describe your migration and occupational trajectory, previous migration, year of arrival, etc.), educational trajectory (e.g. level of education in country of origin, professional development required for the business activity), aspirations to set up their businesses (e.g. how the idea emerged, support required at the beginning of the venture, etc.), opportunities and constraints (e.g. what support they had, financial resources, knowledge required, etc.), networks they have relied on (e.g. previous

business experience, family ties, other businesses, interactions with the banking sector, other support groups, etc.), family life and gender relations (e.g. intersections of the family and business cycle, changes linked to the birth and raising of children), and aspirations for the future (e.g. satisfaction, ideas of growth, consolidation, new businesses, etc.), amongst others.

Although interviews in the UK and in Ireland were carried out in separate research projects, the overall sampling strategy was similar since they are all first-generation migrant women entrepreneurs of Latin American origin. For this article we have selected those who have children because we wanted to isolate motherhood and the role it plays out in the setting up of their enterprises and its intersection with different variables, such as married vs divorced/separated.

We approached the participants using a wide range of entry points to the field, such as informal contacts and associations supporting women entrepreneurs and migrants, followed by snowball sampling. Reference-based sampling was crucial as the first informants were key in pointing the researchers in the direction to which other informant/s could be exemplars of the researched topic (Patton 1990; Neergaard, 2007). After that, and due to its networking characteristics and flexibility, we followed snowball sampling as the main objective was not to find subjects who 'knew about' the topic but hard-to-reach participants who were mothers, migrants and entrepreneurs. (Woodley and Lockard, 2016). In both the UK and Ireland Latin American immigrants are in low numbers and geographically dispersed and the topic required a degree of trust to become a willing participant, which both researchers felt could be better achieved with this recruitment technique. While the authors were aware that snowball sampling is criticised for its selection bias as well as a lack of external validity, generalisability, and representativeness, in order to counteract this, the authors interviewed all the women recommended even if they may not have fulfilled all the requirements clearly. The objective was that the women were in control of the sampling and not just the researchers.

Migrant women entrepreneurs based in the UK are from Ecuador, Brazil and Colombia, with small businesses in the cleaning, beauty and catering sectors. From our sample in Ireland women entrepreneurs are from Brazil/Bolivia, Mexico, and Chile, with small businesses in health and fitness, cleaning, and counselling services.

Both authors are from Spain and carried out the interviews in their mother tongue except with Brazilian interviewees which were done in English. On the one hand, the outsider position of the interviewers concerning the country of origin of their interviewees probably had an impact on the way in which participants discussed being a Latin American mother and business owner. On the other hand, the insider positions with the interviewees came from the authors being both women, and foreigners in both the UK and Ireland.

The biographical interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to capture the main understandings of motherhood and entrepreneurship in both countries of origin and destination. This analysis grasped the way in which aspirations to set up an enterprise were linked to their occupational position as foreigners and how their life and family cycles intertwined with their entrepreneurial journeys. Both authors discussed their findings of the content analysis carried out separately and compiled a list of emerging themes and patterns. Following Braun and Clarke's six step process of thematic analysis, themes were checked that they worked in relation to the coded extracts for this study and the entire data set, generating a thematic map of the analysis (2006). The authors then discussed which cases were the most representative of the theoretical issues they wanted to reflect on in this article. Subsequently, they discussed the converging and diverging narratives, and evaluated the cross-comparability of country-specific analyses. While the sample size is small (3 case studies per country), the themes in the sample were representative of the entire data set. Furthermore, because this paper links two distant positionings, that of the women in their native countries and their transformative positioning in Ireland/UK with regards to motherhood and entrepreneurship, it was crucial that these biographical linkages and connections would remain in readers' minds. They could have been lost if more case studies had been included and this is a common strategy for qualitative research on migrant women entrepreneurship based on biographical interviews (Essers, 2009; Duchek, 2018; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; reference blinded for review).

Context of the research

The UK and Ireland are different contexts when it comes to the migration and settlement patterns. Migration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Ireland, emerging mostly in the 90s after the economic boom. The number of migrants is generally low (McNamara and Quinn, 2020); with a population of 4.9 million, in 2016 there were 535,475 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland. Just 12 countries, each with over 10,000 residents, accounted for 73.6 per cent of

all non-Irish nationals in 2016. Brazil is the only Latin American country in this category and this influx mainly occurred after the 2008 world crisis (McGrath, 2010).

Research on the resident migrant population indicates that while the migrant population is more likely to be self-employed in comparison to the native population in most EU States, the trend is reversed in the case of Ireland (Cooney and Flynn, 2008; OECD and the European Commission, 2013). In contrast to the significantly high rate of non-migrant self-employment, the rate of migrant self-employment is low, concentrated in locally traded services and operating at the margins of the mainstream economic environment (Cooney and Flynn, 2008; Cooney et al., 2011). This trend of low migrant self-employment cannot be attributed to a weak overall entrepreneurial culture or business environment as becoming self-employed in Ireland is a relatively efficient process. The lack of migrant self-employment has rather been studied as the result of the social and economic capitals which migrant generally tend to lack as well as low consumer demand of their products and more recently, the relatively high living costs (Lucas, 2016).

The UK has traditionally received migrants from former colonies, and it is not until the last 20 years that it has accommodated new flows from alternative countries. The openness of the liberal British market for self-employment and entrepreneurship has been maximised by many migrants settling in the country with approximately 14 per cent of new ventures opened by a foreign entrepreneur (Duedil, 2014). Amongst the new flows of 'new migrants' we find migrants from Latin American countries that have emigrated towards the largest global cities in the country. Key studies on Latin American migrants in the UK show the creation of transnational spaces with their countries of origin and Spain (McIlwaine, 2012), and the implications of gender ideologies in migration processes (McIlwaine, 2010). Very little is known about the experiences of Latin American entrepreneurs in the UK, with the exception of the work done by Roman Velazquez (2014) in London on urban regeneration and Latin American migration.

In our analytical strategy, we turned to juxtaposition in order to avoid putting the two contexts next to each other and making one the example to be imitated; in this case, the UK with a more established tradition of migration and migrant entrepreneurship. In juxtaposing the two cases the purpose is to see one context in the other and vice versa, and to "let the collision of the two items make the reader/viewer stand back and think anew" (Sørensen, 2014, p. 48). This process

of questioning and defamiliarization and of reading the Irish and UK cases “into each other” was particularly key in making us return to the interviewees with ‘new’ perspectives. For example, reading the UK mothers and the role their motherhood and the absence of family network had in choosing to open up their own business guided us to return to the Irish context and focus on understanding their marital relationships (married or separated), which the women did not discuss openly in the initial interviews, but reflected on during the questioning. Then, it was evident that that this was indeed a factor not only in the way they opted for opening up their businesses but also in the ways these businesses may empower them.

Findings

Confinement to marianismo in the entrepreneurial journey

A translocational positional framework is useful to analyse the back and forth between representations of the countries of origin and destination for our research participants. For example, the prioritisation of motherhood manifested already before setting up a business, in their motivations to migrate from Latin American countries due to better work and education opportunities for their children, as Alicia (Ecuador, owner of a cleaning company) succinctly conveys it:

‘When I left Quito I did it for my children. It was the toughest thing I’ve ever done [...] It’s up to them what they want to do in the future, but I want them to know their mum did this for them, all the sacrifices are for them’ (Ana, Ecuador, business owner of a cleaning company in the UK).

Some hinted at how this prioritisation of motherhood may have been influenced by the Latin American culture and their experiences back home:

‘In my country it is very difficult to get a job when you are pregnant or have children, the employer thinks that you will be more absent than present. I think that is why it took me so long to look for work in Ireland because I thought it would be the same here’ (Carolina, Chile, owner of therapy business in Ireland)

But they also agreed that migration came as a result of social and economic inequalities between the countries of origin and destination and these became more apparent after the migration process. While in their native countries, they did jobs seemingly more professional (all bar one had university studies and had a myriad of work experience in different areas of

business and entrepreneurship), these did not provide them with financial security, stability, and peace of mind for themselves or their children.

‘In my country you need to be born in the right family if you want to prosper. Having an education or a job does not mean anything’ (Carolina, Chile, owner of therapy business in Ireland)

‘You change your career for the welfare of your children, that’s how I feel about emigrating [...] Knowing that my children are now bilingual, they can get any job they want, they can stay in the business if they want in the future, that gives me peace of mind.’ (Ana, Brazilian, owner of beauty salon in the UK).

These, at times, contradictory social positions explain how migrant women entrepreneurs have made sense of their choices when it comes to forging their occupational trajectories. Their entrepreneurial journeys, understood within this translocational positionality, explain what entrepreneurship means for them now in the context of what they had experienced before and how that view may be clashing with what they are experiencing now.

The social imaginaries regarding gender ideologies drive the perspectives in their countries of destination and therefore, values emerging from *marianismo*, such as self-sacrifice, were central to the way in which participants explained the decision to set up a business. For example, Alicia in the UK explains the differences she sees in relation to local British women, who might prioritise their careers and leisure time at the expense of spending time with their children. Her business helps place her children first and maintain the family values as she had experienced them in her country of origin.

‘I’ve worked before for local families, cleaning, and you see how the structure of the day is around the couple: school run, after school run, activities, dinner, and bed-time around 6:30 [...] there is not much sense of family time as we have back home so it was important for me to be able to do the same. I am with my children whenever I am not working and having a business has helped me with that’ (Alicia, Ecuador, owner of cleaning company in the UK).

These views were also shared by the Irish participants. However, compliance with *marianismo* values and particularly this idea of self-sacrifice embedded in setting up their own business did not simply emerge from cultural norms regarding gender and motherhood in their native

countries but also from societal and institutional constraints that in both contexts (countries of origin and countries of destination) continue to limit women (rather than men) to the caring of the children. Participants referred in particular to the absence of family networks and their marital status (married or separated/divorced) with the reduced involvement (or none at all) of the father figure in their children's lives.

Access to trusted childcare was a crucial element in the way in which participants discussed the setting up of their businesses. Female solidarity care chains amongst women are vital to sustain the costs (financial and emotional) of migration, and not being able to rely on them in their countries of settlement meant that they saw their businesses as the only viable option to sustain their motherhood expectations.

'Back home I had my mum, even my grandmother, available to help out. In fact, my children stayed behind with them when I left for some months. So you know you can trust their care [...] That's a very different experience than being dropped off at nursery from 8 to 6 pm with people you don't know'. (Alicia, Ecuador, owner of cleaning company in the UK).

Alongside the difficulties in 'substituting' their motherly figure in care in the UK, she continues explaining that in paid employment in the cleaning sector it was very difficult to juggle reliance on caregiving due to unsocial hours she had to cover, which partially led to opening up her business:

'Now here [in the UK], childcare is really expensive, and the hours are difficult [...]. When I changed sector then [into retailing], it was easier to get a place in nursery, and had someone to do school run but I felt like a failure to my children because I was not fully involved in their care [...] that was one of the main reasons I set up the company. I can now work around their schedule. (Alicia, Ecuador, owner of cleaning company in the UK).

Compliance with *marianismo* values was also shaped by their marital status, particularly as separated or divorced mothers. Those women heads of household seem to invoke the fundamental role of women in the rearing of sons and daughters and how single and separated mothers have to do well in migration regardless of the role of fathers for the sake of their children's future. These understandings of motherhood seem to be understood as innate and different from fathers' experiences, as conveyed by Ana (Brazil, owner of beauty salon in the

UK), when she describes how generally the mother's role is much more reliable than the father's.

'We [women] are natural caregivers, aren't we? You know, you see my little daughter and she is maternal, she looks out for her little brother since very young. Some men are like this too, but rare. So in our culture we carry this and we are good at it and you know that' (Ana, Brazil, owner of beauty salon in the UK).

While this innate, natural view of motherhood was touched by most participants, there were more examples of how for the separated/divorced women, the pressure to do well financially for their children is more concrete and manifested, for instance, in the limited range of business choices. This was the case of Amanda in the cleaning sector in Ireland with a high level of instability though she also mentioned the positives of this industry to her personal situation as a divorced woman without the father's support:

'There is no shortage of jobs in this sector and the flexibility offered was welcome in my situation as I could take or turn down customers as the jobs fitted my children's school needs' (Amanda, Brazil/Bolivia, owner of cleaning business in Ireland).

This flexibility and availability were crucial to her and even when she was more settled in Ireland and she could have changed to a less labour-intense profession, she stayed with her cleaning business:

'I have developed a very loyal set of customers. I can ask them to change my times around and that is not a problem [...] now I have what I want, all the houses I clean are near each other, in good cleaning conditions and the owners are flexible, and understanding' (Amanda, Brazil/Bolivia, owner of cleaning business in Ireland).

The business opened by another separated research participant in Ireland was more related to her expertise and interests (exercise instructor). Nonetheless, choosing this type of entrepreneurial venture was also determined by the flexibility it offered to attend her children, which reflects the centrality of motherhood in these decisions. This is also the case of Claudia (Colombia, owner of café-bakery in the UK), who explains how opening up her business was vital to comply with her motherhood expectations and how different was to juggle this in paid employment in the UK:

'I could not bring my children to work, that's more common back home [in Colombia] [...] but here you would not even think of doing that [...] so opening this was mainly

for them. I chose this area because there are lots of offices, so I get the bulk of customers around lunchtime, and then I can close early or have someone cover me for a couple of hours' (Claudia, Colombian, owner of café-bakery in the UK).

Thus, while institutional and societal barriers continue to impact negatively on the business choices women entrepreneurs make and this further exacerbates for migrant women coming from countries with traditional gender ideologies, without a close family network and in the case of separated/divorced women, without the other parent's regular involvement, the narratives of these migrant women entrepreneurs were simultaneously permeated with a sense of reinvention of traditional gender roles that can transform them, their families and the communities their businesses target. This transformation already filtered through the flexibility and availability already discussed influencing their business choices. While this flexibility confines these women into *marianismo*, it can also contribute to an increased pride in having a sense of personal strength and independence that reinvents traditional gender ideologies in a transnational setting, as we further discuss in the next section.

Reinvention of marianismo

Comparing the social positions regarding gender ideologies in both their countries of origin and destination was central to the narratives of our research participants. Ireland-based ones agreed that the role of the woman and the mother has not advanced in Latin America to the same extent as it has in Ireland. Raquel owner of a fitness business from Mexico said, 'we are at least twenty years behind'. Some more optimistically recognise recent societal changes expanding the role of women and mothers in Latin America and some more critically and defensively assess how in Ireland, the high cost of childcare and lack of government support have relegated many women, migrant but also native, to the role of motherhood. However, participants did not feel directly attached to traditional gender roles, such as *marianismo*, or at least not to the same extent as their mothers/sisters/female friends back home.

'In my country a lot of my friends give up their jobs when they have children. It is normal and it is when the father figure does not provide for the family that the mother goes out to work. In Ireland, there are fewer barriers for women' (Carolina, Chile, owner of therapy business in Ireland).

They feel more detached from their countries' perceptions of gender roles and their business contributes to creating this distance and transforming these roles into positive manifestations,

such as a sense of strength, liberation and empowerment for their children but also for themselves as the ones in charge of making it happen. This is conveyed by Carolina, who stated that her therapy business provided her with coping mechanisms and tools to pass on to her children to learn to deal with mental issues in an individualistic society, like the Irish, and there is a palpable element of self-respect and pride in herself as initiator:

‘My business provides me with strategies for myself and my children to learn to express themselves and talk about their emotions. People here live in very closed societies but since we now all live here, we need to learn tools to deal with emotions.[...] Apart from learning, I make a living out of it’ (Carolina, Chile, owner of therapy business in Ireland).

This element of pride goes beyond what their business means for their families to what it means for themselves as migrant women. While none were working in occupations mapping onto their educational credentials at the time of the interview, they perceive this seemingly deskilling as reskilling, where many of the soft skills they acquired in their countries (communication and sales skills; entrepreneurial experience; endurance, resilience and reliability) have transferred across in businesses that combine these abilities with other interests and passions they have developed in the countries of settlement (counselling, cooking, physical exercise) or that they always had but had never pursued.

‘Music and dancing are part and parcel of the Latino culture. I love dancing and I could see that a lot of the Zumba instructors were from Eastern European countries. I thought to myself, if they can do it, then I can too’ (Raquel, Mexico, owner of fitness business in Ireland).

The UK-based participants shared similar narratives of renegotiating their individual entrepreneurial journeys with accommodating their role as mothers. Ana (Brazilian, owner of beauty salon) explains how although financially she is worse off as a business owner, she takes pride in what she has achieved as a separated migrant woman in the UK, showcasing the centrality of ideas of motherhood and the migration process (before and after) in her entrepreneurial journey:

‘It is tough to do this on your own so I look back and I think ‘Wow, look at all you have achieved on your own’, you feel you can take on the world and that you can do it all over again if you had to [...] I also saw that I gained more respect from my ex-husband when I managed to do this on my own. And I used to get a bit more money working in

paid employment, but I am free now and I feel I am a better mum than I used to be, so it is a win-win for me'. (Ana, Brazilian, owner of beauty salon in the UK).

This idea of personal strength as a result of migration first and entrepreneurship second contributed to their integration but also to a reimagining of the Irish and UK communities that their businesses touch. Through their enterprises, they are bringing positive aspects of their Latin American cultures (music, dancing, culture and family values) to their new contexts. Raquel, owner of a fitness business in Ireland, commented on how Irish clients laud her Latina personality, her honesty, energy and the emotions that she brings to the classes and that can help her customers in powerful ways:

'My classes helped when I was going through the separation from my ex. They were part of the healing process. Even if I feel tired or sad before them, I transform when I'm there. It is the same for the women who come. I love it when they come out with a wide smile and many have told that it is medicine for their mental health' (Raquel, Mexico, owner of a fitness business in Ireland).

The counselling therapy business owner spoke of combining her counselling studies with her native culture, more open and communicative, to help her clients express their feelings and emotions, especially women who struggle with traditional gender roles.

'I am using a type of therapy that is quite frequent in Spain and Latin America and it comes from our ancient civilizations [...] Most of my clients are women. Today women think they have to imitate men to be successful. My therapy helps them find their feminine origins beyond gender' (Carolina, Chile, therapy business in Ireland).

Similarly, the UK-based participants who opened businesses in cleaning and beauty services, discussed how they connect through their businesses with a specific idea of Latin femininity, bridging their social positions from home to the context of settlement. The morality of cleaning associated with being a woman was an important part of the narrative put forward by Alicia (Ecuador, business owner of cleaning company), who explains how 'cleaning other's dirt' has special value for her as a means to feeling equalised in power relations with her employers, and also by helping her enact a feminised role in her business by supporting British mothers in their role. Here her class-based social position is re-negotiated by rethinking the meanings of her everyday work.

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3 'You know some people think less of you because you are a cleaner, and even more if
4 you are a foreigner. But I see it the other way around, I am the one seeing what nobody
5 wants to show from their home, their dirty dishes, the dust, the dirty toilets and
6 bathrooms, so I see that, and for me that makes my employers more human [...] So it
7 makes me feel like I have something to contribute, to help that mum in that home to be
8 a better mum too, because that time she is not cleaning she is helping her children with
9 homework...' (Alicia, Ecuador, owner of cleaning company in the UK).

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12 For Ana (Brazil, owner of beauty salon in the UK), helping women 'look their best' is also a
13 re-enactment of femininity and beauty ideals from her country of origin:

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21 'What I love about my business is that women come in through the door, they are
22 stressed out maybe, and then after one hour here and the treatment they get they leave
23 much happier and feeling better about themselves. [...] In Brazil women do this weekly,
24 here is not that regular for most women, but with lower prices I am trying to make it
25 accessible so British women can enjoy these little pleasures too and look their best'
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27 (Ana, Brazil, owner of beauty salon in the UK).

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Discussion and conclusions

This article contributes to the increasing debate on the inclusion of productive and reproductive work in shaping family and business cycles for migrant women entrepreneurs. Motherhood is one key aspect of reproductive work and this article has moved beyond a unified view of motherhood and entrepreneurship in the context of the global North by exploring the experiences of Latin American migrant entrepreneurs in Ireland and the UK.

We have argued how the identifying characteristics of what a 'good' mother and a 'good woman' are can influence the business they set up and are culture specific. While there is an aura of universalism and essentialism surrounding motherhood, the intensity of how these maternal obligations is perceived relates to the culture from which migrant women originate. Latin American '*Machismo*' with features of male strength, dominance, pride, and aggression has travelled borders, and cinematic and mediatic representations of the Latino macho man have fuelled the imagination of this stereotype worldwide (De la Mora, 2006). Less

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internationally known is the concept of *marianismo* associated with Latin American women, particularly its core values of self-sacrifice and submissiveness to their families. In response to the research question, ‘how this culture-specific view of motherhood may influence women’s choice of entrepreneurship and their working lives’, we argue that these cultural influences feed the ways in which entrepreneurs see themselves as mothers, their duties and obligations, and the choices of businesses they establish and how these develop. Self-sacrifice for their families was apparent in all interviews and so was the influence their cultures of origin can exert on their views of motherhood. There was an intrinsic link between caring for their children and setting up their own business and, at times, this view of motherhood was perceived as innate and above their businesses.

However, cultural influences from the country of origin only partly explain the participants’ choices. The absence of a family network that can care for the children and the marital status of these women played a significant role in their business choices. The separated and divorced women did not receive enough support (if any) from their ex-partners and therefore their businesses were a matter of necessity and not simply choice. Thus, while it is welcome to include motherhood as a crucial factor in family business creation to ascertain the intrinsic relationship between productive and reproductive work, we argue that we need to include other intersections (e.g. family networks, marital status), to showcase the structural constraints that continue to relegate the role of parenthood to the figure of the mother, whether the father is present or not. This inclusion of different intersections helps highlight the added challenges for migrant women, given that they embody a further marginal position in the host country due to their migrant status and racialised social positions. In addition, the inclusion of intersections reduces the shortcomings of understanding motherhood styles through the lens of traditional views of gender, such as *machismo* or *marianismo*, which do not encompass the complexities brought by transnational settings.

To avoid looking at intersections as a decontextualised list of categories, we have shown the analytical purchase of using a translocational positional framework (Anthias, 2016), a theoretical lens that has been already used to explain identity formation and entrepreneurial strategies. In our research, this approach has proven useful to stress the spatial-temporal element of social positions by illustrating how shifts in occupation, business ownership and motherhood are crucial to understand how women live entrepreneurship and the decisions they take. By bringing the life cycle (e.g. motherhood) to this model we explain the importance of

social and geographical locales to illuminate the entrepreneurial journeys of Latin American migrant women entrepreneurs.

Thus, in answer to the research question, 'how the different contexts of settlement (UK and Ireland) and the women's different positionings as migrants in these contexts may further transform their roles as mothers and entrepreneurs, we argue that migrant women also reinvent themselves and their business activity by flagging female independence, integration and emancipation that should not be ignored or considered less impactful for entrepreneurship and society at large.

Beyond a sense of achievement for their children, there is a strong sense of personal growth and pride in what they have achieved as women and more acutely, as migrant women and entrepreneurs with different degrees of adversity. A more palpable sense of female independence and emancipation existed for those separated/divorced women who had achieved financial and emotional independence despite being migrant and sole head of the household; thus, speaking to previous work on theories of empowerment (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018) which question power structures through entrepreneurship. The positive impact of their enterprises also goes beyond the individual. Their businesses add value and improve the lives of the Irish/British population (mostly women) by providing services they needed in their busy lives (cleaning, therapy, beauty, dancing) at affordable rates. In addition, setting up these businesses can lead to better integration for the migrant women in the countries where they settle (see table 1 for a summary of the linkages between the literature and the findings).

Whilst the contexts of settlement included in this study (Ireland and the UK) share many cultural and economic similarities, they differ in terms of size, variety and entrepreneurial tradition of the migrant population. While the UK context is the one with more varied and established migration flows and the one offering more visibility of migrant entrepreneurs in theory and practice, the researchers have found more similarities between the two contexts with regards to the study of migrant women entrepreneurs and the influence motherhood may exert on their entrepreneurial path. This perhaps highlights the argument that regarding migrant women entrepreneurs, it is not simply about having a more visible and established migrant population but rather about having research and policies that include the role of reproductive work (motherhood) in entrepreneurship and acknowledge the different social positions and

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positionings that migrant mothers adopt in setting up their businesses. In this regard, both Ireland and the UK perhaps remain at a similar infancy stage.

Table 1 about here

Policy relevance

Some policy recommendations emerge from this study. First, due to the potential for individual empowerment, economic betterment and social integration, more governmental support is needed to identify the needs of migrant women entrepreneurs who are perceived at best as a hard-to-reach group or at worst as the wife of a man from a hard-to-reach group. Despite the significant internal diversity of this group, research shows that migrant women entrepreneurs are among the most disadvantaged groups when pursuing business ownership (Azmat, 2013) due to inequalities in access to resources and racialised social positions in the countries of destination (Ozasir-Kacar and Essers, 2021). Second, more business support is needed to encourage entrepreneurship among women migrants. Still, these must be gender sensitive and inclusive of the reproductive work of mother entrepreneurs, which is exacerbated for migrant women without a family network and more so if they are separated or divorced without financial support from their partners. As highlighted by other contributions (Ozasir-Kacar and Essers, 2021), the advantages of entrepreneurship often do not hold for migrant women due to the challenges mentioned above. Third, migrant women, like the ones in this study, generally come from countries with more traditional gender-cultural norms and through the migration process and entrepreneurship, these norms might be interrogated and, as in the case of our participants, positively transformed. Interestingly, this transfer of knowledge can be reciprocal. In more economically advanced countries, migrant women and their businesses exemplify how gender relations are renegotiated, thus raising awareness about the deconstruction of power. The impact of these ideological changes in both the country of origin and destination overarches society, education and ultimately, politics. Therefore, we claim the urgent need for governments to bring entrepreneurial gains beyond economic growth (Rindova et al., 2009).

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