

Chapter 13

Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Africa: A Zambian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter enriches the knowledge base on immigrant entrepreneurship and outlines the critical role immigrant entrepreneurs play in socio-economic settings of African communities. It particularly investigates the contributions of immigrant entrepreneurship to Zambia's economic development. The chapter is anchored on the embedded mixed theory and an African humanist philosophy of Ubuntu. It tries to change the perception of the native citizens towards immigrants as such, avert the social challenges that immigrants encounter in host countries such as xenophobia or afrophobia. By employing a qualitative methodology approach, the chapter argues that immigrant entrepreneurs have had a positive impact on Zambia's socio-economic development through the creation of jobs, transfer of skills and competences. The chapter recommends that immigrant entrepreneurship should be supported and mainstreamed into national economic development policies of African countries.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE CHAPTER

Introduction

Immigrant entrepreneurship is relatively a new and young research field in the entrepreneurship disciplines. This scholarship has only become popular approximately mid-20th century (Glinka, 2017). The field has of late attracted numerous discussions and debates across the world based on increasing population movements leading to globalization. As a result, concepts and models have been developed regarding this particular study area of the developmental disciplines such as Development Studies for example (Castles & Miller, 2011; Herman & Smith, 2010; Vorderwulbecke, 2013). The importance of this topical research area cannot be gainsaid. This chapter therefore, builds on the various discourses

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and narratives in this research area as it examines immigrant entrepreneurship/ entrepreneurs in one of the emerging economies in southern Africa; the Republic of Zambia from here-on Zambia.

The objective of this chapter is to change the negative perception that native citizens have towards immigrants as a threat to their social and economic *status quo* and in turn avert the social challenges of xenophobia that come about as a result of not understanding the benefits immigrants bring to the host nations. This study further, tries to change the narrative of immigrant entrepreneurship and propagates that immigrants could be potential business partners that bring into a host nation different skills, expertise and innovations that may not be available in the local economy. Therefore, the study argues that immigrants through their entrepreneurial adventures do contribute to job creation, improvement of standards of living and economic development of the host countries (Castles & Miller, 2011; Chrysostome, 2010; Herman and Smith, 2010; Vorderwulbecke, 2013; Nyamazana, Koyi, Funjika & Chibwili, 2017). This should motivate African countries to devise appropriate and sound policies that support immigrant entrepreneurs and ensure that the benefits are known to the native citizens to discourage possible occurrence of xenophobic attacks against those classified and known as foreign nationals.

A qualitative approach study that delved on direct observation and secondary data on immigration and entrepreneurship collected from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), books, a review of large volumes of journals and newspaper cuttings were used in this study. Lusaka, which is among the ten (10) Provinces in Zambia was selected as a study setting because it is the province with the second highest immigrant population after North-Western province (IOM, 2019). North-Western province was deemed inappropriate for the migrant entrepreneurship study as it hosts the country's largest refugee settlement as such, immigrants in this province are predominantly refugees (IOM, 2019). Furthermore, Lusaka Province was the epicentre of the past xenophobic attacks on the immigrants (Chinhoyi, 2016; Kaharnga, 2016; Kuo, 2016). For the purpose of this chapter, participants were purposively selected and collected from the following categories of informal sectors: four companies from the concrete bricks making firms (n=4); nine from the retail shops (n=9); three from construction sites (n =3) and nine from the creative industry [braiding] (n=9). Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2013) advise to use purposive (judgemental) sampling when working with small samples. The sampling method was chosen to best enable the author meet the objectives of this study. The researcher decided to collect data through direct observation because other data collection methods were deemed difficult to undertake. For example, the researcher tried to speak to a few owners of the migrant enterprises whether an interview could be conducted or scheduled but they were not keen to offer themselves for an interview stating different reasons. Some firm managers cited the advent of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic for not being available despite assuring them of strictly following public health guidelines as set by the Ministry of Health of Zambia. A compromise was reached with the selected participants where the author was allowed into their premises to conduct data collection through direct observation. Strictly abiding by the ethical issues, the author spent time observing the number of employees employed, different types of skills employed, different marketing techniques, the machinery and equipment used and the work ethics. Data collection was undertaken from April to May, 2020. Data collected was recorded as field notes for analysis.

Content analysis was used on the collected data. This method involved a systematic analysis as well as observation in deciphering pertinent information content from communication messages and field notes (Zikmund et al., 2013). The research was an analysis of a social phenomenon without necessarily being invasive in the immigrants' social economic settings hence the choice of content analysis was deemed appropriate.

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