



**Immigrant entrepreneurs in rural England- an examination
of the socio-cultural barriers facing migrant small
businesses in Lincolnshire**

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Keywords:	Immigrant entrepreneurs, Rural England., Mixed embeddedness, Lincolnshire, Socio-cultural barriers
Abstract:	<p>A growing body of literature recognises the important roles played by immigrant entrepreneurs. However, there are certain socio-cultural barriers that adversely affect their businesses in rural areas. This article examines the socio-cultural barriers facing immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire. Eleven semi-structured interviews were held with businesses owned by immigrants from diverse ethnic backgrounds in a rural context. The findings identified migrant ethnocentrism, stereotypes, cultural differences and language differences as key socio-cultural barriers adversely affecting immigrant businesses in Lincolnshire. The research found that immigrant enterprises experienced growth issues, not just owing to the size of the market but also due to issues of embeddedness in the socio-economic nomenclature. Notwithstanding, a reasonable approach to reducing the effects of socio-cultural barriers on immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire lies in mixed embeddedness, an articulation of the local institutional fabric. This involves immigrant adaptation to develop relational embeddedness with the hosts, involvement with its social, structural and institutional frameworks. Previous studies looked at immigrant entrepreneurship largely in urban contexts. The UK rural context has been neglected in the literature. The study contributes to our understanding of the role of social, relational, structural and institutional embeddedness in steering fertile approaches to immigrant entrepreneurship in rural England.</p>

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Immigrant entrepreneurs in rural England- an examination of the socio-cultural barriers facing migrant small businesses in Lincolnshire

ABSTRACT

A growing body of literature recognises the crucial role played by immigrant entrepreneurs. However, certain socio-cultural barriers that adversely affect their businesses in rural areas. Thus, this article examines the socio-cultural barriers facing immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire. Eleven semi-structured interviews were held with businesses owned by immigrants from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The findings identified migrant ethnocentrism, stereotypes, cultural differences and language differences as key socio-cultural barriers adversely affecting immigrant businesses in Lincolnshire. The research found that immigrant enterprises experienced growth issues, not just owing to the size of the market but also due to issues of embeddedness in the socio-economic nomenclature. **The study found mixed embeddedness to be key to immigrant entrepreneurial success.** This involves immigrant adaptation to develop relational embeddedness with the hosts, involvement with its social, structural and institutional frameworks. The study contributes to our understanding of the role of social, relational, structural and institutional embeddedness in steering fertile approaches to immigrant entrepreneurship in rural England **which has been under-researched.**

Keywords: Immigrant entrepreneurs; rural England; mixed embeddedness; socio-cultural barriers.

INTRODUCTION

Investigating immigrant entrepreneurs is a continuing concern within the spheres of the local economy. This is necessitated by the movement of people across the borders of their home countries in search of greener pastures in foreign lands. However, previous studies have mostly considered urban immigrant entrepreneurship. The rural context in developed countries such as the UK has been overlooked in the literature (e.g., Hack-Polay, 2019; Munkejord Mai, 2017; Walks and Bourne, 2006). Khosa Risimati and Kalitanyi (2015) argued that many immigrants necessity-entrepreneurs, meaning that they engage with entrepreneurship to survive in the host country and confront discrimination in the job market. (!!! INVALID CITATION !!! (e.g., Hack-Polay, 2019; Munkejord Mai, 2017; Walks and Bourne, 2006)) Helinska-Hughes et al. (2011) maintained that most migrants adopt entrepreneurial solutions and contribute significantly to the host country through enterprise development. This explains why Kerr (2010) contended that immigrant entrepreneurs are essential in terms of creative activities, thus, supporting the perspective that immigrant entrepreneurs make significant contributions to local economies in terms of creativity and wealth generation.

There is increasing concern that some immigrant entrepreneurs are disadvantaged because of the differences associated between running their businesses in their home countries and other countries. Kloosterman and Rath (2001) confirmed that immigrant entrepreneurs tend to be different and disadvantaged in comparison to native entrepreneurs when their human, financial, social and cultural capitals are considered. Additionally, Dimitratos et al. (2016) explained how the Chinese transnational entrepreneurial cultural influence can inadequately meet the environmental needs of host countries. However, Engelen (2010) found that using a social approach in a market could contribute to a better understanding of immigrant entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, Scott (1998) and Storper (1997) **This is a valid assumption because market and opportunity structures are socially constructed** (Scott, 1998; Storper, 1997).

Gomez et al. (2015) advised that social capital is highly beneficial to immigrant entrepreneurs and their businesses. However, Kushnirovich and Heilbrunn (2008) claimed that the scope of funding of immigrant businesses is significantly smaller when compared to native businesses. Basu and Goswami (1999) found that entrepreneurs who serve larger markets are more

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3 likely to own a faster-growing business. Ram and Jones (1998) concluded that entrepreneurs who
4 adopt a non-local and non-ethnic customer strategy have the best opportunity for success. This
5 evidence provides important insights into concerns about the growth prospect of immigrant
6 enterprises.
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11 Recently researchers have shown increased interest in immigrant entrepreneurship. Despite
12 language and cultural issues, Chen et al. (2019) and Ruiz et al. (2017) consider an individual's
13 ability and willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities as critical ingredients for success.
14 Brzowski (2017), Bewaji et al. (2015) and Khosa Risimati and Kalitanyi (2015) discussed
15 migrant entrepreneurship and economic adaptation, focusing on the empirical analysis of minority
16 entrepreneurship. They revealed migration reasons, traits, and entrepreneurial motivation of
17 immigrant entrepreneurs, e.g. a way out of unemployment and underemployment.
18 Underemployment has been noted in contemporary research on the migrant workforce, and it
19 refers to the insufficient use of worker skills or qualifications because the jobs available do not use
20 the talents that the migrant workers harbour (Hack-Polay and Igwe, 2019; Ikafa et al., 2020; Hack-
21 Polay and Mendy, 2017). Building on the functionalism philosophy in psychology, we define
22 adaptation as the use of mental abilities to fit or cope with contextual/cultural changes. Previous
23 studies (Mendy and Hack-Polay, 2018; Nwankwo, 2005; Barnes and Cox, 2007) examined various
24 barriers encountered by immigrant entrepreneurs generally and particularly in urban settings.
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36 However, little is known about immigrant entrepreneurs in rural England, especially in the
37 county of Lincolnshire. The research adds to the existing body of literature by examining, from a
38 mixed embeddedness theoretical perspective (Kloosterman, 2010; Lai, 2017), the socio-cultural
39 barriers of immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire. Embeddedness relates to the qualitative facets
40 as well as the nature of relationships (Andersson et al., 2005) where people choose to deal with
41 those that they know well because of trustworthiness and mutual understanding formed by prior
42 experiences (Lai, 2017). Mixed embeddedness refers to the embedding course of immigrant
43 entrepreneurs in the social, economic, and institutional settings of the host country, which helps
44 immigrant entrepreneurs overcome barriers with regards to capital, labour, market information,
45 protocols, and such like in the host countries (Zhu et al., 2019; Kloosterman et al., 1999). The
46 choice of Lincolnshire is linked to the fact that the county typifies rural England since it is the
47 second-largest county in England (Barnes and Cox, 2007), yet with fewer cities and urban areas
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3 and has critical issues with transport (Ward et al., 2013). For Barnes and Cox (2007), due to its
4 ruralness with an economy dominated by agriculture and farming, the county of Lincolnshire lacks
5 ethnic diversity and as a result, migrants face several barriers in the economic system. The main
6 research question centres on identifying the key socio-cultural barriers that affect immigrant
7 entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire. This research contributes to this growing area of research by
8 examining the socio-cultural barriers of immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire. This provides a
9 breadth of thoughts about the current migrant entrepreneurship and enables researchers and
10 policymakers to forecast the outlook of migrant entrepreneurship in local economies post-Brexit
11 (UK leaving the European Union). The review of the literature shows that our study is the first of
12 this kind in Lincolnshire and adds to the national literature on rural migrant entrepreneurship.
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24 LITERATURE REVIEW

25 Migrant Entrepreneurship

26 Bygrave and Minniti (2000) argued that entrepreneurs enhance national economic activities.
27 Besides, OECD (1998) found that a country with vigorous entrepreneurial activities regularly
28 generates improved products and services. The role of migrants in the national entrepreneurial
29 fabric is not argued. In fact, as Mendy and Hack-Polay (2018) and Barnes and Cox (2007) pointed
30 out, migrant businesses contribute to the national economy in many forms, e.g. creating self-
31 employment, jobs for others and increasing the gross national product (GNP) as well as meeting
32 the needs of their co-ethnics. Nonetheless, Volery (2007) revealed that markets occupied by ethnic
33 entrepreneurs are usually attributed by low impediments of entry relatively to required capital and
34 educational qualifications, small-scale production, high labour intensity and low added value, and
35 subjected to aggressive competition. There is, therefore, an interplay between being an immigrant,
36 being an entrepreneur, and sense of nationality (Glinka and Brzozowska, 2015). To some extent,
37 this indicates that immigrant entrepreneurship supports citizenship formation as the migrants
38 aspire to be part of host collectivities (Hack-Polay and Igwe, 2019). The implication of this is that
39 immigrant entrepreneurship cannot be divorced from the debate about national identity
40 construction; the struggle to establish successful businesses demonstrates their drive to contribute
41 to the local community and to their host nation (See also Chen et al., 2019). The following sections
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3 would discuss immigrant entrepreneurs and the socio-cultural factors affecting immigrant
4 entrepreneurs.
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10 It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the existence of immigrant entrepreneurs.
11 They seem to have evolved with the tenets of globalisation. Over the past century, the term
12 immigrant entrepreneurship has significantly evolved (Chrysostome, 2010). From a homogeneous
13 meaning which linked starting a business and survival in foreign countries, immigrant
14 entrepreneurship has in recent times had a more heterogeneous meaning. There are currently a
15 number of immigrant entrepreneurs who start businesses to exploit a business opportunity (Abd
16 Hamid et al., 2019), rather than a reaction to barriers in the employment market, leading to
17 unemployment or under-employment as previously argued. This perspective also indicates that
18 immigrant entrepreneurs have developed a degree of resilience in host countries and attempt to
19 challenge traditional obstacles to migrant entrepreneurship (Hack-Polay et al., 2020; Kloosterman,
20 2010).
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29 Chen et al. (2019), (Abd Hamid et al., 2019) and Bird (1988) described such
30 entrepreneurial intention and resilience as the willingness by immigrants to start a new business
31 venture and to plan deliberately. Such resilience is further documented by Thompson (2009). He
32 argued that establishing a successful business venture is increasingly less dependent on factors
33 such as parental background, educational level, but more linked to individual cognition of new
34 business opportunities, broader economic, environmental and institutional. Thus, this presents
35 opportunities for ethnic and migrant entrepreneurship which was traditionally hampered by a
36 complex amalgamation of barriers. Elali and Al-Yacoub (2016) argued that the most significant
37 factor, which determines whether young immigrants would set up businesses, was the need for
38 achievement factor. The sense of accomplishment enables the migrant entrepreneur to feel a sense
39 of self-worth and contribution to their new communities (Hack-Polay et al., 2020).
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51 **Socio-cultural factors affecting immigrant enterprises**

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54 This section would focus on the socio-cultural aspects, as it relates to identifying the factors acting
55 as barriers to immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire, as a largely rural county in the UK. Abd
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3 Hamid et al. (2019) identified immigration status as one of the key challenges facing immigrants
4 in positioning themselves in the local economy. This would inevitably adversely affect several
5 immigrant entrepreneurs doing business or about to start a business in the UK, especially in
6 Lincolnshire. A significant effect of immigration status is that it widens the gap between native
7 and immigrant entrepreneurs. In fact, Barnes and Cox (2007) relationships between immigration
8 status and immigrant entrepreneurs' disadvantage in accessing entrepreneurial finance,
9 understanding domestic business legislation, forming valuable social networks, etc. While Barnes
10 and Cox's study shed some light on the plight of migrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire, it is limited
11 in scope as it focuses only on the European Union (EU) migrants. Our study takes a broader
12 perspective and considers the experiences of a range of migrants. In addition to immigration status,
13 Ward and Kus (2012) and Berry (1990) assert that acculturation plays a role in the
14 underperformance of immigrant enterprises, at least in the early stages. Acculturation is defined
15 as the process of psychological and cultural change that occurs because of contact between ethnic
16 groups and their members (Berry, 2017). Following the migration, acculturation continues in
17 culturally plural societies amongst ethnocultural groups (Berry, 2017), and many scholars have
18 identified acculturation as a critical factor in the mental health and wellbeing of immigrants (e.g.,
19 Ikafa et al., 2020; Hack-Polay, 2020; Madianos, 2010; Gonzalez and Rosales, 2010). Berry's
20 (1990) acculturation four-dimension model (integration, assimilation, separation and
21 marginalisation) provides an understanding with the protracted nature of adjustment to a new
22 culture before the migrants could become fully-fledged members of their new communities and,
23 thus, become conversant with the practical ways in which the new society operates. Adjustment
24 processes are also linked to identity issues. Abd Hamid et al. (2019) argue that in the pursuit of
25 integration, migrants often have to find a compromise between their native culture and that of the
26 new location. This exacerbates the home-host culture divide, which can hinder relationships
27 between the two sides and impede effective migrant participation.

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Berry's model and much literature evidence suggest that socio-cultural factors are among the poignant factors affecting immigrant entrepreneurs. Doole et al. (2016) confirmed religion and language as critical socio-cultural factors which affect marketing communications, among others. Usunier and Lee (2013), Powers and Loyka (2010) and Kotabe (1998) identified as additional critical factors impeding immigrant entrepreneurs, e.g. understanding customer needs and size of

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3 markets, lifestyle, buying habits, stereotypes, minority status, and social class. Mendy and Hack-
4 Polay (2018) found that ethnicity and the lack of cultural capital were vital determinants of the
5 underperformance of migrant businesses. Constant and Zimmermann (2006) accept this
6 perspective when they argue that discrimination can be an essential factor leading immigrants
7 towards self-employment. Discrimination could be one of the most important factors affecting
8 them in Lincolnshire, an area with limited ethnic diversity in England (Pickard, 2017; Lumsden et
9 al., 2018). Cox and Jennings (1995) additionally acknowledged certain personality traits such as
10 the need for achievement, risk-taking ability, innovation orientation, need for autonomy and
11 decision-making skills, as critical factors which influence entrepreneurship. Rahman et al. (2018)
12 argued that the opportunities exploited by the entrepreneurs are limited by the weakening of the
13 ethnic resource atmosphere. However, they are still exposed to external forces from the regulatory
14 microsphere.

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Robinson et al. (1991) identified the importance of different demographic variables such
as age, gender, education, work experience, role models, religion, etc. as factors which affect
entrepreneurs. Ajzen (1991) and Shapero and Sokol (1982) criticised these perspectives for their
low explanatory capacity. Nonetheless, Turker and Sonmez Selcuk (2009) saw strong impacts of
the following factors: risk tolerance, self-confidence and perception of self-efficacy, the locus of
control, a need for achievement, stress tolerance, and fear of failure. **Though these factors were
originally arrived at in the context of entrepreneurs in general, they tend to bear particular
significance in migrant entrepreneurship given the cultural and institutional difficulties that
migrants have to overcome** (Hack-Polay et al., 2020; Kloosterman, 2010). Contín-pilart and
Larraza-kintana (2015) also observed, using a large database of 28,306 individuals in 50 Spanish
provinces, that because of lower socio-cultural fit, immigrants are influenced in their
entrepreneurial activity by past socio-cultural capitals that may not be relevant in the host country
(Kloosterman, 2003; Kloosterman et al., 1999; Lai, 2017). This view has been supported by Mendy
and Hack-Polay (2018) in their examination of Black African entrepreneurship in the UK and
could be a visible factor for Lincolnshire migrant entrepreneurs.

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Acknowledging the weight of these factors, Cruickshank and Dupuis (2015) suggested that
to enhance the economic potential of immigrant entrepreneurs, it is crucial to address the

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3 adaptation issue. This will ensure immigrants' successful deployment of their financial and social
4 capital.
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11 In examining immigrant entrepreneurs' place in the economic fabric of the host country,
12 Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Shapero & Sokol's (1982) model of the
13 Entrepreneurial Event (EE) proved relevant. Ajzen (1991) argued that **three major antecedents**
14 **determine intention toward entrepreneurial behaviour**. The first is the personal attitude toward the
15 behaviour, referring to the degree to which an individual has a positive or negative assessment of
16 being an entrepreneur. The second is the subjective norms or the perceived social pressure to
17 perform the behaviour; this refers to the expectations of an individual's family, colleagues and
18 friends regarding the desirability of becoming an entrepreneur. The third is perceived self-efficacy,
19 which entails the perceived ease or difficulty for one to become an entrepreneur. Among these
20 three antecedents identified by Ajzen, the most significant in Elali and Al-Yacoub's (2016) view
21 is a favourable attitude to entrepreneurship; this helps the individual gain self-trust and control
22 capabilities. Krueger et al. (2000) argued that TPB provides a general and coherent framework
23 which helps to understand and predict the entrepreneurial intention of a person by focussing not
24 only on personal factors but also on social factors.
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38 The second model of interest to the examination of the place of immigrant entrepreneurs
39 in the host economy is Shapero & Sokol's (1982) Entrepreneurial Event (EE). The EE model
40 consists of three factors that determine entrepreneurial intentions: perceived desirability, perceived
41 feasibility, and the propensity to act upon opportunities. The first, perceived desirability, refers to
42 the attractiveness of starting up a business and becoming an entrepreneur. The second, perceived
43 feasibility, exemplifies to the degree to which an individual feels that they can start a new venture,
44 considering the available resources and entrepreneurial skills. The third factor in the EE model is
45 the propensity to act and refers to the individual's willingness to act on decision in relation to
46 starting a new business (see Chen et al., 2019). Krueger et al. (2000) saw similarities between the
47 EE and TPB models. Several entrepreneurship researchers also found a strong relationship
48 between TPB and EE as they are both largely homologous to one another. In contrast, Elfving et
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3 al. (2009) argued that these entrepreneurial intention models have often been linear and static.
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5 Nevertheless, the theoretical perspective of the EE model was empirically validated by Krueger
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7 (1993). Both TPB and EE models prove that intention is a key predictor of planned behaviour,
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9 including becoming an entrepreneur. This mitigates the argument that pull-and-push factors in
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11 setting up businesses. Some evidence suggests that push-and-pull factors are among the most
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13 important factors influencing immigrant entrepreneurial motivation (García-Cabrera Antonia et
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15 al., 2020). Sahasranamam and Sud (2016) pointed out certain push-and-pull factors that necessitate
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17 both opportunity and necessity-based entrepreneurship. According to Dana and Morris (2007), pull
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19 people are driven into entrepreneurial behaviours because of the need for accomplishment, desire
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21 for autonomy, higher social status, control of one's future, use of one's initiative and the yearning
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23 for steering one's skills and abilities (Nwankwo, 2005; García-Cabrera Antonia et al., 2020). This
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25 relates to the Cultural Theory which concentrates on particular characteristics of immigrants, deep-
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27 seated in culture, that make them more apt to entrepreneurship (Dana et al., 2019).

26 On the contrary, push people are move into entrepreneurship (necessity-based
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28 entrepreneurship), because of negative situational factors concerning social marginality,
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30 unemployment, discrimination in the job market, family circumstances and under-payment let
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32 alone the limited opportunities within a host country (García-Cabrera Antonia et al., 2020). This
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34 pertains to the disadvantage theory. It proposes that immigrant entrepreneurship occurs because it
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36 is the only way that an immigrant can make a living in the host country (Chrysostome, 2010). In
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38 this regard, Baptista et al. (2014) established that pre-entry capabilities play a significant role in
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40 the early success of opportunity-based entrepreneurs, but have little influence on the success of
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42 necessity-based ones. Furthermore, Zaouali et al. (2015) discovered that necessity and opportunity
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44 motivations do not have the same intensity in each economic sector.

46 47 **METHODOLOGY**

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50 We interviewed 11 immigrant businesses in Lincolnshire, using semi-structured interviews, to
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52 understand the reasons for their intention to set up businesses in Lincolnshire and the challenges
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54 they faced. The main criteria for selection were to be migrants and have a business operating in
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56 Lincolnshire for at least one year. One year was thought to be a benchmark to establish that a

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3 business has sufficient experience of the local context to be able to articulate such experience. The
4 choice of the semi-structured interview was founded on the need to gather detailed accounts (Dana
5 and Dana, 2005) of the participant planned entrepreneurial behaviours. The number of businesses
6 interviewed may appear limited, but this reflects the limited number of migrant businesses in
7 Lincolnshire compared with large urban areas in the UK. We contacted the migrant businesses
8 using a snowball sampling technique. We first contacted two businesses that the researchers found
9 on a noticeboard in the local supermarket's community. The two businesses led the researchers to
10 other similar businesses. The snowball sampling technique was adopted due to the lack of a register
11 of migrant enterprises in Lincolnshire. The researchers approached the local Chamber of
12 Commerce and Lincolnshire County Council for such a register but the authorities explained that
13 they did not have one. The significant spread of the region further complicated access to small
14 migrant businesses as it was not feasible to map all migrant small businesses within the scope of
15 this study; thus, reliance on referrals through snowball sampling was adequate despite its possible
16 limitations, e.g. reliability and possible bias effect. In fact, initial contacts tended to refer the
17 researchers to businesses of migrants within their own nationality or ethnicity and similar sectors
18 of activity. The researchers asked them specifically if they knew migrant enterprises in other
19 migrant communities. As a result, we interviewed a diverse range of businesses from different
20 migrant backgrounds as shown in Table 1 below. The interviews were conducted in English as all
21 the participants had a good command of the language. The participants were interviewed in Spring
22 2018 and lasted about 40 minutes on average. In order to ensure anonymity, the names of the
23 business owners were substituted with nicknames as most participants did not wish to be identified.

TABLE1-HERE...

47 Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data. First, a coding structure was developed,
48 which captured the distribution of discourses of the immigrant entrepreneurs and aspects of
49 perspectivization (Graumann and Kallmeyer, 2002). We identified the main aspects of the
50 immigrant entrepreneurs' discourses that frequently appeared in the narratives created. We then
51 organised the emerging patterns around analytical themes. The researchers finally evaluated the
52 emotions expressed by the entrepreneurs to identify expressed positive and negative strategies for

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3 running a business. The participants' experiences were analysed in stages with the participants'
4 further support in interpreting some assumptions and statements and elaborating on the approaches
5 to establishing themselves in the competitive entrepreneurial market. This approach departs from
6 the "traditional hypothetico-deductive approach" to exploit the potency of qualitative methodology
7 in sense-making (Dana and Dana, 2005). The next section presents the data from the interviews.
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17 **FINDINGS**

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21 This section presents the findings of the research. It provides an analytical summary of the views
22 of the participants. The majority of businesses interviewed were in the retail and restaurant sector.
23 Only two of the 11 businesses interviewed were in the service and financial sectors, an IT business
24 founded by a South African immigrant and Financial service (mortgage brokerage) founded by a
25 Polish immigrant.
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33 **Immigrants' motives for entrepreneurial behaviour in rural Lincolnshire**

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35 Most of the participants did not come to Lincolnshire because they saw it as home in the first place,
36 but they were rather opportunity-driven. Eight respondents came to Lincolnshire because they saw
37 good opportunities in addition to the fact that there was less competition to their businesses. At the
38 time of the interviews, all the respondents considered Lincolnshire as their 'home town' and a
39 good place to escape to. Violet, a Polish financial service owner who provides mortgage advice,
40 explained:
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46 I came here because my husband had a job here. I could not find a good job. I decided to set up this company
47 as opposed to spending a long time finding a job. I thought I could use my previous skills to help Polish
48 people buying their own house as opposed to renting (Polish business).
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54 Other participants echoed Violet's experience. The Russian owner of Moskito (a
55 decorating business) came to Lincolnshire to join the family. As he puts:
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3 Most of my family members live in Lincolnshire. They've been living here and doing this business for many
4 years. After working for others drawing low wages, they decided to set up the businesses. When I came, they
5 said that would be the best option for me (Russian business).
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8 Isah, a Cameroonian who owns an African shop, also came to Lincolnshire because he had
9 some relatives here. However, other migrant business owners such as Janet, a Chinese restaurant
10 owner, came to Lincolnshire because she saw the opportunity. She said:
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14 I came to Lincolnshire because we have many Chinese people in Lincoln. I knew a Chinese restaurant would
15 do well (Chinese business).
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20 Two of the entrepreneurs came to Lincolnshire to study but decided to stay due to business
21 opportunities that they identified. Besides, they felt that Lincoln was a family-orientated place,
22 safe for raising children. The combination of the two factors met their requirements for continuous
23 residence in the county. Paul, a South African, IT business owner, summed this up:
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27 I didn't know much about the city before coming here. I came to study here but later, I built up IT skills
28 which helped me in starting my own business; then fell in love with the city because of its small nature. It is
29 a bit culturally diverse and not much in terms of our own culture. My family likes the city as well, and we
30 decided to just stay (South African business).
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36 All the businesses interviewed preferred employing mainly family members. This stems
37 from cost-saving, trust, language barriers. The desire to help family members out of unemployment
38 was also a significant motive to employ relatives who would otherwise/or have struggled to find
39 jobs in the open market. A participant who did not want to be named explained that:
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44 I use my mum and dad as employees when they come to visit from Poland. They help distribute flyers and
45 get paid for it. I don't trust those who aren't from my family because some of them would just stuff the flyers
46 in bins and get paid. But my mum and dad take it house to house for deliveries (Polish business).
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51 Other immigrant businesses owners employed relatives in order to maximise the amount
52 of profit that remains in the family network. In addition, there was also an intention to use the
53 employment of relatives as a way of forming and maintaining a closed socio-cultural network
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3 which removes the sense of loneliness and isolation for both the entrepreneurs themselves and the
4 relatives due to language and cultural issues. Within this line of analysis, Isah argued:

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7 I use family members because I pay less. But then the savings would go back to the family to cater for the
8 needs of the family. [...]that's why it's profitable (African business).
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13 For Vivian:

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15 Most people that work for me are family members because we can speak the same language and plan together
16 even when we go home. So, we get more work done because at home we continue to work to plan the next day
17 (Chinese business).
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23 Even the entrepreneurs that employ people other than relatives tend to draw workers from
24 within their ethnic group, also for the reasons of language, trust and lower wages. Two responded
25 particularly confirmed this:
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29 I employ Chinese people because of the language. They don't speak good enough English to work for local
30 businesses. Lots of them are students and I spend less money on pay (Chinese business).
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35 Being an African immigrant entrepreneur in Lincolnshire is a big challenge for me. I feel lonely most times;
36 so, I usually want other Africans around me, most especially those in similar business to discuss with (African
37 Business)
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42 Only two businesses had workers from other communities to help with the business.
43 Luxshan (a Sri Lankan entrepreneur) and Claudia (a Caribbean entrepreneur) understand the
44 challenges trying to serve the wider community and believe that hiring different ethnicities
45 increases the community support for his business. However, people other than his relatives bring
46 numerical flexibility to the business operation and avoid rift in the family. They explained:
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51 You need committed members who can ensure the business is open when you're not available. With relatives
52 only, if you have a family event or family holidays, or an unexpected family event, then you have nobody to
53 look after your business (Sri Lankan business).
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5 With me I don't like using family in business, I just feel family should stay being family, and business stay
6 being business. I could hire and use friends, but don't think I could employ immediate or close family
7 members. It's not like I don't trust them, but I feel like family and business should have their own pace
8 (Caribbean business).
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11 12 13 14 **Challenges facing the embeddedness of immigrant businesses in Lincolnshire** 15

16 The barriers facing immigrant entrepreneurs are manifold. There is a perceived sense of exclusion
17 of immigrant business by host country customers, particularly in the early period of the business
18 start. This stems from culture distance, language but also product. A Polish business owner's view
19 translates the exclusion of immigrant businesses based on host customer preferences:
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24 I'm still facing cultural barriers. In my opinion the English customers feel comfortable doing business with
25 their English counterparts than with foreigners. It affected me a lot when I first started, but few have started
26 doing business with me because I'm now established (Polish business)
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31 African entrepreneurs reported similar issues which show that immigrant entrepreneurs are
32 conscious of the early reticence of host customers and expect their attitude to initially be one of
33 wariness and exclusion, though this may change in the long term. This was shared by a Chinese
34 immigrant and an Iranian immigrant builder. The participants argued:
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39 This is always expected when you do business in a place with diverse cultures, especially when the language
40 and product you offer differ (African business)
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45 I face the problem of communicating with people from other cultures/ most especially English (Chinese
46 business).
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51 Some local people give me jobs but maybe I'm not their first choice because I don't have the network. Most
52 of my clients are Iranian or people from other countries. I get referrals from immigrants mainly (Iranian
53 business).
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3 Some of the barriers that immigrant entrepreneurs face in Lincolnshire centres on the
4 exclusivity of the products that they offer. This becomes a significant barrier because, given the
5 limited diversity in Lincolnshire and the business offering many ethnic products, the customer-
6 base to tap into for exclusive immigrant products is limited. This is clearly voiced by Claudia
7 (Caribbean hairdresser) and Staff (a Greek founder of recruitment agency):
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12 One barrier is that Lincoln isn't as diverse as many other cities. I said diversity because I'm specialised in
13 Afro-Caribbean hairs, and these people are African-Caribbeans in Lincolnshire. But the Afro-Caribbeans
14 staying in Lincolnshire are less compared to Caucasians, so I feel like that is a barrier (Caribbean business).
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20 Sometimes some clients don't want to work with you because of trust issues, and also because some think
21 you are an immigrant employer. Almost all the people that work for me and with me are from other European
22 countries (Greek business).
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30 DISCUSSION

31 Discussion of the main findings

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33 Key social barriers are affecting migrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire. In this section, we discuss
34 the significant barriers in the light of relevant literature in the field—these impediments centre on
35 language, culture, stereotypes, and migrants' own ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism refers to the
36 tendency of seeing the world through the lens of one's own cultural beliefs. That is to say;
37 individuals tend to judge others' attitudes, traditions, beliefs, and behaviours by their own cultural
38 norms (Brewer, 2005).
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46 *Planned entrepreneurial behaviour and migrant ethnocentrism*

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48 Local preferences negatively affect a range of minority entrepreneurial activities in Lincolnshire
49 to some extent. This affects immigrant entrepreneurs who initially restrict their services to satisfy
50 the needs of the minority groups or those with similar cultural backgrounds (Abd Hamid et al.,
51 2019); this signals deficient mixed embeddedness (the ability to navigate and cross cultural
52 boundaries). Local people in Lincolnshire do not frequently attempt to try a foreign product, e.g.
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3 food, clothing, etc. A possible consequence of this might is, as Kloosterman and Rath (2001)
4 found, that immigrant entrepreneurs tend to be disadvantaged in comparison to native
5 entrepreneurs when their human, financial, social, and cultural capital is considered. Additionally,
6 it supports the findings of Usunier and Lee (2013) who identified local preferences, among others,
7 as social factors that affect customer needs and size of markets. Scott (1998) and Storper (1997)
8 advised that market and opportunity structures take different time and place dimensions when the
9 social context is considered. Hence Winch Graham and Bianchi's (2006) perspective that in order
10 to gain full market entry and grow, immigrant enterprises need to stretch their capabilities in
11 supporting customers in unfamiliar markets. This means that the participating immigrant
12 businesses ought to step out of ethnocentrism (i.e. the sole use of their own cultural standards –
13 thus cultural comfort zone) and be more inclusive by diversifying and reaching out to the local
14 rural market. Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that customer preferences and
15 habits impact negatively upon a range of minority entrepreneurial activities in Lincolnshire.
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29 *Stereotypes*

30 There is increasing concern that some immigrant entrepreneurs are being disadvantaged owing to
31 stereotypes. A stereotypical person believes that what people from other cultural backgrounds
32 value are not only different but wrong to some extent. Our participants were concerned that some
33 members of the community saw immigrant businesses as selling low quality products. Usunier and
34 Lee (2013) identified stereotypes, among others, as social factors that influence customer needs
35 and size of markets. This outcome is consistent with Sullivan (2007), who pointed out that minority
36 entrepreneurs have lower rates of success in entrepreneurial activities in host countries. This
37 corroborates the views of Contin-Pilart and Larraza-Kintana (2015) and who. They believed that
38 because of lower socio-cultural fit, immigrants find it challenging to deploy past developed
39 entrepreneurial capabilities. Blanchard (2013) found that a mix of new businesses being set up by
40 in-migrants trading alongside long-established businesses in Lincolnshire. However, the
41 participants felt that more migrants could have the propensity to become entrepreneurs in a more
42 inclusive market where socio-cultural barriers and stereotypes do not deter them from entering the
43 market.
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3 Successful migrant entrepreneurs seek to recruit people from the locality in Lincolnshire
4 to help them penetrate the unfamiliar environment and bring more success to the enterprise. This
5 is a tenable perspective from a mixed embeddedness viewpoint since the use of local labour would
6 exemplify a degree of integration but also help market penetration by migrant businesses (See Abd
7 Hamid et al., 2019; Kloosterman, 2010). This instrumentality corroborates the idea exposed by Ali
8 Abbas and Al-Kazemi Ali (2007), who concluded that exposure to a multi-cultural environment
9 stimulates entrepreneurial intentions. It also explains how Immigrants Entrepreneurs in
10 Lincolnshire intends to sustain their businesses despite the challenges faced by stereotypical
11 people.
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22 *Language*

23 One of the greatest challenges affecting immigrant entrepreneurs is language differences. **The**
24 **Chinese and Asian participants show more language issues than other communities, despite the**
25 **fact that they were relatively conversant to run the business. However, not having sufficient**
26 **language competence to penetrate the local community hinders business expansion.** This affects
27 the way they relate with their clients and people from other ethnic backgrounds. They face the
28 problem of communicating with people from other cultures, most especially native English
29 speakers. This result may be explained by the lack of language skills and limited time and energy
30 devoted to acquiring (Barnes and Cox, 2007) **identified that immigrants are at a relative**
31 **disadvantage because of language differences. These inadequate career-related skills** hinder their
32 market opportunities. However, Rwordzi (2011) explained that cultural traits, ideas and attitudes
33 are supposed to change when migration occurs. Barnes and Cox (2007) argued that with improved
34 language skills, there is potential for migrants to develop sustainable businesses in Lincolnshire.
35 This finding has important implications for immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire.
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46 Hence, immigrant entrepreneurs are active in attempting to solve the language barriers, as
47 they perceive language as a key ingredient for mixing well with the locality (see Kloosterman,
48 2010). They show a willingness to start a business or maintain an existing one irrespective of the
49 language differences between the host and home countries.
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Culture

Cultural difference is of particular concern as it affects people from diverse cultural backgrounds, having to relate or do business together in a place, most especially the immigrant entrepreneurs. Many of the migrants find it difficult relating to people who are not from their culture. Cultural differences and consumer preferences, among others, are factors that have strong market influence (Ashkezari and Ashkezari, 2013; Kotabe, 1998). Fletcher (2017) contended that, in acknowledgement of the potency of these factors, our participating immigrant entrepreneurs increase their cultural experience as they move to rural areas to start business ventures (Munkejord Mai, 2017). The steady numbers of immigrants in small rural localities, such as Boston in Lincolnshire, bring a degree of culture shock to locals, many of whom have limited experience of cultural and ethnic diversity (Fletcher, 2017).

Implications

The research shows that continued efforts are needed on the part of immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire to integrate effectively. This involves integrating critical elements of the local culture. As Abd Hamid et al. (2019) argue, migrant entrepreneurs need to balance the need to preserve the home culture and absorb necessary elements of the host culture in order to be effective in their enterprises. This would help develop good relationships between immigrant entrepreneurs and other people or clients from various cultural backgrounds. Integrating the local culture would help the immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire achieve what Barnes and Cox (2007) referred to as migrant businesses supplying the needs of their co-ethnic market and providing for customers from a wider market in Lincolnshire. This would reduce the effect of cultural shock on the locals and improve ethnic relations (Fletcher, 2017). The author reported Councillor Alison Austin of Lincolnshire County Council as acknowledging shock to numbers of locals who were not accustomed to much ethnic diversity.

Further significant societal and policy implications of our study centre on the need for academics and policymakers to pay greater attention to the needs of migrant entrepreneurs in rural areas. As argued earlier, currently, much research and governments' work on migrants largely focus on urban centres where the majority of immigrants traditionally settled (Hack-Polay, 2019; Munkejord Mai, 2017). However, with more and more migrants settling in smaller towns and

villages around the country, it is critical to invest more in research and policy framework that help understand needs and provide support to rural migrant entrepreneurs. In fact, the emerging diversity in rural areas can occasion friction between newcomers and locals (Barnes and Cox, 2007) if educational action is not put in place to help existing communities and their hosts develop cultural intelligence. Such efforts could help migrant entrepreneurs to **deploy their social and cultural capital better, and** develop greater dynamic capabilities for the benefits of all rural communities.

CONCLUSION

Summary

This is the first research that examines the socio-cultural impediments to immigrant entrepreneurship in a rural context in the UK (i.e., Lincolnshire). This study has responded to the growing policymakers' interests and efforts in promoting entrepreneurship in rural areas as a means of bridging the gap with the most vibrant urban regions.

The study also found that social barriers affect migrant businesses in Lincolnshire. The findings complement those of earlier studies supporting views that migrant entrepreneurs have lower rates of success in entrepreneurial activities, most especially in rural and small urban areas.

We have identified the following as key socio-cultural barriers of immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire; language differences, cultural differences, stereotype, and migrant ethnocentrism. This is examined using Ajzen's (1991) TPB and Shapero and Sokol's (1982) Entrepreneurial Event (EE). This also corroborates the perspectives of Ashkezari and Ashkezari (2013), who considered the socio-cultural dimension as the highest and most important dimension.

This research showed the relative importance of key socio-cultural barriers facing immigrant entrepreneurs in rural spheres such as Lincolnshire. Our findings are consistent with previous studies (Barnes and Cox, 2007; Hack-Polay and Mendy, 2017) who found that with the right support migrants can break out of the co-ethnic market and develop sustainable businesses in Lincolnshire. Additionally, this finding is exemplified in Fletcher's (2017) study which found relatively high support for the argument that immigrants brought a different set of cultural experience to the Borough of Boston, a small town within Lincolnshire County, by moving into

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3 the area while opening shops and building lives. This finding is in line with Blanchard (2013) who
4 found that there is a mix of new businesses being set up by in-migrants trading alongside long-
5 established businesses in Lincolnshire.
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11 A reasonable approach to reducing the effect of socio-cultural barriers on immigrant
12 entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire could be to employ the host country nationals and people from
13 different cultural backgrounds. This acknowledges the conclusion made by Basu (2011) who
14 demonstrates that minority entrepreneurs become more heterogeneous, both within the individual
15 ethnic community and across various ethnic groups.
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23 However, culture has become a central issue for immigrant entrepreneurs to address when
24 expanding their businesses into foreign countries. This is because of the different cultural norms
25 associated with immigrant entrepreneurs in terms of service delivery and/or production. Mason
26 (2003) confirmed that immigrants are at a relative disadvantage because of language differences,
27 inadequate career-related skills and which hinders their market opportunities. Hofstede et al. (2010)
28 established using different cultural dimensions, how people from different cultural backgrounds
29 behave differently, and how decisions made are based on cultural differences. Dimitratos et al.
30 (2016) also argued that nationality and culture consistently influence entrepreneurial orientation.
31 Cruickshank and Dupuis (2016) argues that the different cultures and attributes that immigrant
32 entrepreneurs bring do not necessarily represent impediments to successful entrepreneurship.
33 However, the migrants could be more strategic in terms of deploying their cultural and social
34 capital and consequently more capable of enhancing their own business and more broadly
35 economic development in the host markets. What could be a significant barrier associated with the
36 migrants' experience may be over-reliance on previous entrepreneurship experience in their home
37 country whose contexts may contrast with that of the host country. Culture could, thus, be a double-
38 edged sword, i.e. with positive or negative influences on immigrant entrepreneurs. Recent
39 developments have heightened that immigrant entrepreneurial success involves the strategic use
40 of their social and cultural capital as resources and breaking out of the ethnic market to embrace
41 diversity (Brzozowski, 2017; Basu, 2011).
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Further research

A cross-national study may be needed which involves the examination of socio-cultural barriers in other countries. This would help us better understand the differences and similarities across countries as it relates to socio-cultural barriers. Further studies examining other barriers affecting immigrant entrepreneurs other than socio-cultural barriers would be fascinating, as socio-cultural barriers do not solely determine how immigrant entrepreneurs operate businesses in host countries. For instance, Ashkezari & Ashkezari (2013) found that barriers to immigrant entrepreneurship could be a gendered issue, with women entrepreneurship facing added issues.

Although this research is based on a small sample size of participants, the findings suggest the key socio-cultural barriers to include; migrant ethnocentrism, language differences, cultural differences and stereotypes. This research confirms the findings of Ashkezari & Ashkezari (2013), who considered the socio-cultural dimension as potential critical impediments.. .

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For Peer Review

Table 1 – Characteristics of the migrant enterprises

National/ethnic background of owner	Business activity	Age of business (years)
African (Cameroon)	Restaurant	2
African (South Africa)	IT	4
Caribbean	Hair dressing	10
Chinese	Shop	4
Chinese	Restaurant	6
Greek	HR/Recruitment agency	8
Iranian	Construction/decoration	3
Polish	Financial services	8
Polish	Delivery	2
Russian	Decorating	10
Turkish	Hair dressing	6