

# Pull Factors Driving Female Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Italy

Federico de Andreis<sup>1</sup> and Paola Paoloni<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University “Giustino Fortunato”, Italy

<sup>2</sup>Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

[f.deandreis@unifortunato.eu](mailto:f.deandreis@unifortunato.eu)

[paola.paoloni@uniroma1.it](mailto:paola.paoloni@uniroma1.it)

**Abstract:** Over the past two decades, the relationship between migration and entrepreneurship has gained prominence in Western economies. The increasing number of businesses led by foreign nationals has reshaped the entrepreneurial landscape in many countries, including Italy. In Italy, regulatory flexibility, shifting migration patterns, and market demand—combined with an economy dominated by small enterprises—have fostered a favorable environment for entrepreneurship. Grounded in micro and small businesses, the Italian economy supports self-employment and small-scale enterprises, making it particularly welcoming for immigrant entrepreneurship. Micro and small enterprises have historically driven national economic growth. Within this framework, female immigrant entrepreneurship has become a significant and growing component, reflecting broader trends in women-led and migrant-owned businesses. Female immigrant entrepreneurship in Italy today represents a dynamic phenomenon shaped by territorial factors and relational capital. These elements enable immigrant women to overcome barriers and seize opportunities in the Italian market. The concept of territory includes resources within local contexts, such as infrastructure, economic frameworks, and institutional support. Immigrant women often identify market gaps, especially in ethnic products and services, gaining a competitive edge. Relational capital, comprising networks built through family, community, and professional connections, is equally crucial. These networks provide access to financing, partnerships, mentorship, and market insights, helping immigrant women navigate socio-economic challenges. Together, territorial factors and relational capital drive female immigrant entrepreneurship in Italy, promoting social inclusion and economic diversification. This study examines how these elements support the emergence and growth of female immigrant businesses.

**Keywords:** Business Attractiveness, Territory, Immigrant Entrepreneurship, Female Immigrant Entrepreneurship, C.A.O.S. Model

---

## 1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, the relationship between migration and entrepreneurship has gained increasing significance in Western economies. The rise of businesses initiated by immigrant foreign nationals has reshaped the entrepreneurial landscape in many countries, including Italy. Factors such as regulatory openness, market demand, evolving migration flows, and Italy’s small enterprise-oriented economic structure have supported the growth of self-employment and small ventures (Fellini, Guetto, 2019).

The high rate of entrepreneurship among migrants reflects their predisposition for planning, risk-taking, and adapting to complex environments—qualities often linked to the migration experience. Many migrants, upon integrating into the labor market, utilize these competencies to establish businesses, sometimes in sectors where they initially worked as employees. This pattern mirrors the historical experiences of Italian emigrants seeking opportunities abroad (Fairlie, Lofstrom, 2015; Fauri, 2015).

Immigrant entrepreneurship encompasses ventures initiated by individuals relocating for work, study, or family reasons. It drives economic diversification, commercial growth, and job creation in host communities. Migrants, often more risk-inclined than natives, pursue entrepreneurial opportunities despite challenges such as language, cultural, and regulatory barriers, alongside limited financial and institutional support (Irastorz, Peña, 2014; Barth, Zalkat, 2019).

Local contexts significantly shape immigrant entrepreneurship, emphasizing the influence of cultural and relational factors tied to the territory. Ethnic identity and social networks strongly impact entrepreneurial decisions and outcomes. Analyzing immigrant occupational trajectories in Italy reveals their economic contributions, particularly within small enterprises and self-employment.

Immigrant entrepreneurship is now a structural component of Italy’s economy, marked by demographic dynamism contrasting with the stagnation of Italian-owned businesses. Relational capital, built through connections with clients, suppliers, partners, and institutions, plays a vital role, particularly in the early stages of a business.

This analysis focuses on immigrant entrepreneurship in Italy, emphasizing the territorial and relational dimensions from a managerial perspective. Social and professional networks are critical for the success of

foreign-owned micro-enterprises, influencing development and sustainability. Establishing external relationships complements internal organizational competencies.

Understanding the structure of relational networks reveals recurring needs, such as access to financing and managerial skill development. Success often depends on the entrepreneur's ability to leverage intangible resources. The interpretive C.A.O.S. model provides a framework for examining the evolution of immigrant female entrepreneurship within Italy's socio-economic context (Capello, Faggian, 2005).

## **2. Context Analysis and Literature Review**

### **2.1 Immigrant Businesses in Italy**

The analysis of foreign entrepreneurship in Italy highlights its growing significance within the national economy. Over time, this phenomenon has become well-established, characterized primarily by micro-enterprises but also including partnerships and corporations. In 2020, one in ten businesses was managed by foreign nationals, totaling over 630,000 enterprises, with three-quarters classified as sole proprietorships (Unioncamere, 2021).

By 2022, foreign-owned businesses surpassed 650,000, accounting for over 10% of all businesses in Italy, which total slightly over six million (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2024). While Italian-managed businesses declined by 2.3% from 2018 to 2022, foreign-managed businesses grew by 7.6%, adding 45,617 new enterprises and offsetting the loss of 126,000 Italian-owned businesses.

Most non-EU foreign-owned businesses (76.2%) are sole proprietorships. In 2022, there were 50,669 new registrations and 29,581 closures, yielding a net increase of 21,088 businesses. The majority (80%) of these businesses employ between 0 and 1 worker, confirming their predominance in the micro-enterprise category.

Sectorally, non-EU business owners are concentrated in wholesale and retail trade (39.9%), construction (23.1%), manufacturing (7.8%), accommodation and food services (6.3%), and business support services (6.2%). In sectors like construction and trade, foreign-owned businesses form a significant share of the national total.

The most represented communities—Moroccans, Chinese, Albanians, and Bangladeshis—account for nearly half of all foreign-owned businesses. Certain groups dominate specific sectors, such as Romanians and Albanians in construction and Moroccans and Bangladeshis in retail trade. Geographically, Lombardy has the highest number of foreign-managed enterprises, with notable concentrations in Tuscany, Liguria, Lazio, and Emilia-Romagna. In municipalities like Prato, Sesto Fiorentino, and Castel Volturno, foreign-owned businesses exceed 50% of the total, often led by specific ethnic communities.

Foreign entrepreneurship is a dynamic and structural component of Italy's economy, with characteristics tied to sector, size, and nationality. Relational capital, including social networks and community support, is critical to their success (Paoloni et al., 2024). This phenomenon has transformed the entrepreneurial landscape in Italy and the EU, with long-term relevance anticipated (Dana, 2007).

Migration, defined by the UN as relocation for at least 12 months, has intensified in the globalized era, making immigrant entrepreneurship a key field of study (De Haas et al., 2007; Ambrosini, 2005). Since the 1990s, Italy has transitioned from a labor-exporting to a labor-receiving country, with migrants becoming an integral part of society (Colucci, 2018).

The 1970s marked a turning point, with reduced emigration and increased economic growth, alongside the rise of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These SMEs became a pillar of Italian economic development, evolving from traditional merchant-entrepreneur models into industrial opportunities (Becattini, 1975; Colli, 2002; Brusco, 2016; Amatori, Colli, 2012; Conti, Modiano, 2012).

The 1980s saw significant industrial restructuring, improving efficiency and profitability for medium and large enterprises. However, in the following decade, these companies slowed down, focusing on less competitive sectors (Onida, 2014). SMEs faced growing global competition, particularly from countries with lower production costs. In this context, the Italian labor market increasingly relied on immigrant labor, which contributed significantly as workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs, with their presence in the Italian entrepreneurial landscape rising notably since the 2000s (Brancati, 2018).

This scenario highlights why foreign entrepreneurship attracts attention across various disciplines, including ethnic studies, sociology, and business studies, spanning from complex enterprises to sole proprietorships (Light et al., 1993; Bonacich, 1987; Rath, Kloosterman, 2000; Aureli, 2005). Research on immigrant entrepreneurship

examines subjective factors, such as individual entrepreneurial traits, and environmental factors, including regulations, infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions (McClelland, 1961; Brockhaus, 1982; Waldinger et al., 1985; Bruno, Tyebjee, 1982; Clydesale, 2008).

Economic-institutional factors, such as regional policies and market opportunities, are crucial for attracting foreign entrepreneurs (Clydesale, 2008). Additionally, socio-economic factors like strong immigrant communities foster "spontaneous incubators," providing support through internal networks that drive entrepreneurial growth (Greene, Butler, 1996; Aureli, 2005).

Theories on immigrant entrepreneurship emphasize ethnic specificity and cultural factors, highlighting how ethnicity shapes market specialization and reduces risks through trust-based networks (Lieberson, 1980; Barberis, 2011). However, the culturalist approach has limitations, including its inability to fully address market dynamics and supply-demand interactions (Engelen, 2001).

The structural approach complements this by focusing on economic and institutional factors like market conditions, access to capital, and barriers to entry. It underscores the importance of host-country conditions in shaping entrepreneurial success (Scoville, 1960). Yet, it struggles to integrate cultural and relational dimensions.

The mixed embeddedness model bridges this gap by combining cultural, relational, and structural elements, offering a comprehensive understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship. It examines how public policies, migration regulations, and community resources interact to shape entrepreneurial strategies, providing a holistic framework for analyzing this evolving phenomenon (Solano, Barberis, 2018).

Within the framework of mixed embeddedness, the analysis does not focus solely on the characteristics of the ethnic group or the opportunities offered by the territorial context but also considers the crucial role of public policies and immigration regulations. Elements such as migration flow laws, residence permits, and policies promoting political and cultural integration become integral to understanding the phenomenon. This model assumes that structural and cultural factors do not operate independently but mutually influence each other, shaping the strategies adopted by immigrant entrepreneurs. These strategies are, therefore, the result of a complex interaction between the resources inherent to the ethnic group and the opportunities offered by the territory (Waldinger et al., 1990).

In light of this integrative perspective, the dynamics of immigrant entrepreneurship can be summarized into three major areas of influence:

- cultural and relational aspects, which define both the characteristics of immigrant entrepreneurs and those of their community of origin. These factors determine the degree of interaction and integration with the local environment and influence the success of entrepreneurial initiatives;
- characteristics of the target market, including structural specificities, economic conditions, and opportunities available in various sectors;
- public policies and migration flow regulations, which directly impact immigrants' ability to start and develop entrepreneurial activities (Rath, Kloosterman, 2000).

The mixed embeddedness approach allows for overcoming partial views, fostering a more nuanced understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship. Integrating cultural, structural, and political dimensions not only provides deeper insights into the strategies adopted by entrepreneurs but also highlights how these strategies are closely tied to the interaction between immigrant communities and the host environment. This approach is particularly effective in describing a constantly evolving phenomenon where culture, economy, and public policies are inextricably intertwined.

The conditions influencing immigrant entrepreneurship can be structural or cultural. Among these is the availability and proximity of relational capital. An immigrant entrepreneur cannot simply be regarded as a foreign citizen entirely influenced by their ethnic roots, nor as an entrepreneur solely driven by profit motives. Instead, they should be viewed as an individual who integrates both elements within a context where even intangible factors can guide their entrepreneurial choices (de Andreis, Rusciani, 2023; Paoloni et al., 2024).

An innovative aspect of theories linked to the mixed embeddedness approach lies in the inclusion of individual factors that influence an immigrant entrepreneur's decision to continue their activity in the host country. These factors include characteristics and skills that extend beyond the cultural dimension and contribute to shaping entrepreneurial capacity. Among them are the level of education, age, previous entrepreneurial experience, migration experience, and the degree of integration into the host country's social and economic context. These

elements enhance the understanding of entrepreneurial dynamics, demonstrating how the combination of personal and structural factors shapes immigrants' entrepreneurial trajectories.

After analyzing the numerical dimension of foreign-owned businesses in the country, it is useful to introduce a classification of entrepreneurial types as outlined in the literature. These businesses can be categorized into five main types: ethnic, intermediary, exotic, open, and refuge enterprises (Ambrosini, 2005).

Ethnic businesses develop within established immigrant communities, characterized by specific demands for products and services from their country of origin, which are often difficult to find in the local market. These businesses typically focus on the sale of traditional food products, catering to the cultural and consumption needs of their community.

Intermediary businesses, on the other hand, provide goods and services that go beyond strictly ethnic boundaries. Examples include legal services, consulting, or medical assistance, which require a trusted mediation between immigrant clients and professionals from their home country. This relational connection facilitates access to and understanding of such services within the community.

Exotic businesses are distinguished by their ability to offer traditional products and services from their country of origin to a diverse audience, including both fellow nationals and individuals from other backgrounds. A typical example is ethnic restaurants, which attract customers interested in exploring different cultures.

Among the most prevalent categories are open businesses, which operate in highly competitive, labor-intensive sectors such as construction, transportation, hospitality, and cleaning services. These businesses are characterized by flexible internal organization and the ability to draw on subordinate labor from the same ethnicity as the owner. These factors enable them to compete effectively with non-foreign-owned businesses.

Lastly, refuge businesses represent informal activities that are often difficult to identify by their products or target market. These businesses typically emerge due to the challenges immigrants face in accessing the formal market, hindered by regulations perceived as overly rigid relative to operational realities. A common example is unlicensed street vending, which meets economic survival needs in marginalized contexts.

This categorization highlights the diversity and complexity of foreign-owned business forms, shedding light on the strategies employed to address the specific social and economic demands of the contexts in which they operate.

## **2.2 Immigrant Female-owned Businesses**

The analysis of immigrant female entrepreneurship in Italy highlights its evolution and integration into the socio-economic fabric. Studies emphasize that immigrant women's entrepreneurial journeys are shaped not only by structural and territorial factors but also by personal skills, resources, motivations, and relational networks (Ndoro, Kanyangale, 2018). This narrative aligns with the broader phenomenon of foreign entrepreneurship, predominantly occurring in micro and small businesses, though some take the form of partnerships or corporations.

Female entrepreneurship, globally on the rise, signals a shift from male-dominated ventures to approaches integrating professional and personal dimensions, driven by networking and reduced barriers (Paoloni, 2011; Ferrera, Kyriazi, 2024; Wilson et al., 2007). While immigrant female entrepreneurship shares characteristics with general entrepreneurship, it also presents unique challenges tied to intersectionality—where identities as women and immigrants converge (de Andreis, Rusciani, 2023; Essers et al., 2010).

The literature explores various dimensions: entrepreneurial identity across contexts (Grohs et al., 2017; Kuhlmann, 2021), enabling factors and constraints for women entrepreneurs (Yunis et al., 2018; Sandhu et al., 2021), and relational approaches emphasizing nuanced classifications (Valeri, Paoloni, 2016; Paoloni et al., 2024).

The shift toward the tertiary sector in the 1970s marked a turning point for women's economic self-sufficiency, accelerating their participation in entrepreneurship (Ramadani et al., 2015). Although still a minority, female entrepreneurs have expanded their presence significantly (Itani et al., 2011). Businesses led by immigrant women, marked by demographic dynamism, reflect this trend. From 2018 to 2023, foreign-owned businesses grew by 45,617, while Italian-owned businesses declined by 126,013, resulting in a net reduction of 80,396 enterprises. Immigrant women now account for over half of Italy's immigrant population, which exceeds five million, with most coming from Romania, Albania, Morocco, Ukraine, and China.

As of 2022, women entrepreneurs made up 28.1% of all Italian and immigrant entrepreneurs. The largest numbers of female entrepreneurs were from China (35,304) and Romania (23,430). Proportionally, Russian (70.5%), Polish (60.7%), and Ukrainian (58.8%) entrepreneurs led the rankings for female-owned businesses within their national groups.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The study is based on Yin's (2009) case study method, using interviews to explore the phenomenon of immigrant female entrepreneurship. The interviews capture perceptions, motivations, and subjective experiences that quantitative data cannot reveal.

A multi-case approach was chosen to analyze the phenomenon, identifying similarities and differences between the cases (Stake, 1995; Baxter, Jack, 2008). This methodology is particularly useful for predicting contrasting or similar outcomes across different studies, allowing for the validation of results (Eisenhardt, 1991). The qualitative approach enables a deeper exploration of the research questions and supports theoretical development.

The focus of the investigation is immigrant female entrepreneurship in Italy, described as a journey of growth, interaction, and integration, reflecting the increasing diversity of Italian society. As highlighted in the literature, the contribution of migration to development depends not only on favorable structural conditions but also on the skills, resources, motivations, relationships, and personal stories of migrant entrepreneurs (Ndoro et al., 2018).

The study emphasizes the importance of social capital, understood as the overall value of relational resources within a business. This includes internal and external networks that promote cooperation, information sharing, and mutual trust, contributing to organizational success (Festa et al., 2019; Civitillo et al., 2019). It also encompasses forms of financing based on in-kind returns rather than capital dividends (Festa et al., 2022).

Information was collected through direct interviews with ten female entrepreneurs between January and May 2024. The interviews were based on an open-ended, flexible, and adaptable questionnaire tailored to the characteristics of the interviewees. They were conducted orally to overcome potential language barriers, leveraging non-verbal communication as well.

The objective was to determine whether relational capital established in the destination territory could facilitate foreign women in starting entrepreneurial activities. According to recent approaches to entrepreneurship, such as the knowledge-based perspective, possessing unique and rare knowledge is the primary resource for creating business value (Paoloni, Dumay, 2015; Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1995; Nájera-Sánchez, 2023).

The questionnaire was structured according to the C.A.O.S. model (Paoloni, 2021), which analyzes the following distinctive aspects of micro and small female-led enterprises:

- C: Personal characteristics of the entrepreneur.
- A: The environment in which the business operates.
- O: Organizational aspects and management style.
- S: The start-up process and motivations for creating the business.

The C.A.O.S. model is the result of recent research on female-led businesses and highlights the distinctive factors characterizing female enterprises compared to male-led ones (Paoloni, 2021).

### **4. Discussion of the Results**

The responses from the entrepreneurs highlight the main factors influencing immigrant women-owned micro and small businesses in Italy, focusing on four key areas: personal characteristics of the entrepreneur (C), the business environment (A), management style (O), and motivations for starting the business (S). These areas were explored through interviews, revealing their perceptions, motivations, and experiences.

Personal characteristics (C): The entrepreneurs manage small, individually owned businesses. They range in age from 39 to 60, with different levels of education and previous work experience in their home countries. All of them transitioned from being employees to entrepreneurs, supported by informal relationships.

Their motivations include personal fulfillment and using their skills, often driven by challenges or limited career options. They see self-employment as a way to gain independence and achieve their goals.

Business environment (A): Their relationships are mainly commercial, involving clients, suppliers, and consultants. These connections are both formal (with professionals and institutions) and informal (with friends and family), and both are critical for business success.

Before starting, they conducted market research to assess economic potential and continue exploring opportunities for growth and diversification.

Management style (O): Despite running small businesses, they use a participatory management approach, avoiding rigid or authoritarian styles. Their priority is to provide high-quality services that meet customer needs, supported by relationships with stakeholders.

They actively monitor business performance and collect customer feedback to ensure success.

Motivations for starting the business (S): None of the entrepreneurs come from entrepreneurial family backgrounds. They started their businesses independently, often inspired by their past work experience in Italy or family members.

The main challenges they face include difficulty accessing credit and achieving financial stability. Informal networks are essential during the start-up phase, offering financial and practical support.

The study shows that relationships, both formal and informal, are essential for the success of immigrant women entrepreneurs, especially at the start. Personal and professional connections help them identify opportunities and influence their motivation and strategies.

The analysis focused on four aspects of immigrant women-owned businesses: personal characteristics (C), the business environment (A), management style (O), and motivations (S). The results show that relational capital, or the networks they build in their new location, is crucial for their business success. It helps them manage their businesses effectively and reduces the risk of failure during the start-up phase.

Their relationships are mostly commercial, including formal ties with consultants and institutions and informal ones with friends and family. Informal networks are particularly important during the early stages, providing financial and practical support.

Using the C.A.O.S. model, the study found both similarities and differences among the entrepreneurs. It confirms that immigrant female entrepreneurship in Italy is not unusual but an established part of the economy. The strategic use of relational capital is a key resource for overcoming challenges like limited funding and business management issues.

The success of these businesses depends on the entrepreneurs' ability to build and maintain support networks in their new communities, drawing on their experiences and overcoming social and economic challenges. Strong relationships and networks are essential for addressing the unique difficulties of small businesses, particularly in the start-up phase.

## **5. Findings and Conclusions**

One of the most significant findings of the study is the crucial role of relational capital in the destination territory of immigrant women entrepreneurs. Relational capital refers to the network of personal and professional relationships that the entrepreneur can build and activate. Through these networks, immigrant women entrepreneurs obtain the necessary support to start and grow their businesses, especially during the critical start-up phase.

The interviews clearly demonstrate the central importance of relational capital in the establishment and development of immigrant women-owned businesses in Italy. Relational capital serves as a strategic and multifunctional resource, helping to address the typical barriers faced by start-ups and successfully navigate a complex economic and social environment. A clear distinction emerged between informal and formal relationships: while informal relationships, such as ties with family and friends, are crucial in the early stages for financial and motivational support, formal relationships, such as those with consultants, suppliers, and institutions, become vital for ensuring business sustainability and growth in the medium to long term.

A key finding from the analysis is the complexity and multidimensional nature of the motivations driving immigrant women toward entrepreneurship. Far from being merely a response to immediate economic needs,

self-employment often represents a path to self-realization and a means to overcome structural obstacles and labor market discrimination. Many of the interviewed entrepreneurs transformed skills acquired in previous jobs, both in their home countries and in Italy, into strong foundations for their businesses. However, these entrepreneurial trajectories are often hindered by structural barriers, including limited access to formal financing. In many cases, the entrepreneurs relied on personal savings or informal loans, highlighting the critical role of relational networks, particularly in their informal form, for securing initial capital.

The relevance of relational capital extends beyond the start-up phase. Over the long term, it continues to play a fundamental role in business development by facilitating professional collaborations, access to new market opportunities, and the economic and social integration of entrepreneurs into the local context. The relational networks operating in the business's territory act as catalysts for innovation and resilience, enabling entrepreneurs to address organizational, financial, and operational challenges more effectively.

The application of the C.A.O.S. model provided a structured analytical framework to examine the dynamics of immigrant female entrepreneurship. The primary insight from this model is the interconnectedness of its dimensions, which mutually influence one another through relational capital. Relational capital acts as a bridge linking the entrepreneur's personal background with the macroeconomic context and the business's organizational structure, supporting the transition from an entrepreneurial idea to its concrete and sustainable realization.

Immigrant female entrepreneurship significantly contributes to Italy's economic, social, and cultural fabric. Economically, these businesses enrich the market with new ideas and innovations, create jobs, and strengthen key sectors such as hospitality, personal services, and trade. Socially, they serve as a vehicle for economic independence for immigrant women, promoting social integration and reducing inequalities related to gender and migration status. Culturally, these businesses make a significant contribution to the diversity and plurality of the entrepreneurial landscape, challenging stereotypes and fostering greater inclusivity.

The analysis further highlighted that relational capital, while intangible, is a strategic resource with a tangible impact on business performance. It not only helps overcome practical obstacles but also acts as a catalyst for other forms of capital, such as financial, human, and emotional capital. The relational networks of the entrepreneurs interviewed played a crucial role not only in providing initial support but also in opening up long-term development opportunities.

The practical implications of this research are numerous. From a policy perspective, there is a clear need to develop targeted programs that facilitate access to credit for immigrant women entrepreneurs, such as microcredit or subsidized financing schemes. Promoting professional networks that connect entrepreneurs with mentors, consultants, and investors is also essential, providing them with practical and strategic support. In terms of training, specific courses are needed to equip entrepreneurs with management, legal, and financial skills, addressing knowledge gaps and enhancing their ability to navigate Italy's economic environment.

Immigrant female entrepreneurship is not only a well-established reality but also a dynamic phenomenon that enriches Italy's economy and society. Relational capital emerges as an indispensable element for the success of these businesses, demonstrating that building strong networks and leveraging personal skills can transform challenges into opportunities. Investing in support for these entrepreneurs means fostering an inclusive and sustainable development model that connects diversity, innovation, and economic progress. Finally, the study invites a broader reflection on the political, economic, and social implications of immigrant entrepreneurship, highlighting its role as a crucial resource for the country's future.

## References

- Amatori, F., & Colli, A. (2012). Imprese e imprenditori. *Rivista di storia economica*, 28(1), 203-230.
- Ambrosini, M. (2005). *Sociologia delle migrazioni*. Il Mulino.
- Aureli, S. (2005). Gli approcci di studio all'imprenditorialità straniera. *Piccola Impresa/Small Business*, 3, 109-148.
- Barberis, E. (2011). Imprenditori cinesi in Italia, fra kinship networks e legami territoriali. *Mondi migranti*, 2, 101-124.
- Barth, H., & Zalkat, G. (2019). Business values and motives of immigrant agricultural entrepreneurs in Sweden. In *Proceedings of the International Conference 2019 "Economic Science for Rural Development"* (pp. 21-28). Jelgava.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-556.
- Becattini, G. (1975). *Lo sviluppo economico della Toscana*. IRPET: Istituto Regionale Programmazione Economica della Toscana.

- Boissevain, J., & Grotenbreg, H. (1998). Culture, structure and ethnic enterprise: The Surinamese of Amsterdam. In M. Cross & H. Entzinger (Eds.), *Lost illusions: Caribbean minorities in Britain and the Netherlands* (pp. 221-249). Routledge.
- Bonacich, E. (1987). "Making it" in America: A social evaluation of the ethics of immigrant entrepreneurship. *Sociological Perspectives*, 30(4), 446-466.
- Bovenkerk, F., & Ruland, L. (1992). Artisan entrepreneurs: Two centuries of Italian immigration to the Netherlands. *International Migration Review*, 26(3), 927-939.
- Brancati, R. (2018). *Fatti in cerca di idee: Il sistema italiano delle imprese e le politiche tra desideri e realtà*. Donzelli Editore.
- Brockhaus, R. H. (1982). The psychology of the entrepreneur. In C. A. Kent, D. L. Sexton, & K. H. Vesper (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of entrepreneurship* (pp. 39-57). Prentice Hall.
- Bruno, A. V., & Tyebjee, T. T. (1982). The environment for entrepreneurship. In C. A. Kent, D. L. Sexton, & K. H. Vesper (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of entrepreneurship* (pp. 288-307). Prentice Hall.
- Brusco, S. (2016). Small firms and industrial districts: The experience of Italy. In D. Keeble & E. Wever (Eds.), *New firms and regional development in Europe* (pp. 184-202). Routledge.
- Butler, J. S., & Kozmetsky, G. (2004). *Immigrant and Minority Entrepreneurship: The Continuous Rebirth of American Communities*. Praeger.
- Capello, R., & Faggian, A. (2005). Collective learning and relational capital in local innovation processes. *Regional Studies*, 39(1), 75-87.
- Civitillo, R., Festa, G., Priporas, C. V., & Rossi, M. (2022). Intellectual capital in nonprofit organizations: A focus on social capital as a marketing enabler. *International Marketing Review*, 39(5), 1052-1068.
- Clydesale, G. (2008). Business immigrants and the entrepreneurial nexus. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 6, 123-142.
- Colucci, M. (2018). *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia: Dal 1945 ai nostri giorni*. Carocci Editore.
- Colli, A. (2002). *I volti di Proteo: Storia della piccola impresa in Italia nel Novecento*. Bollati Boringhieri.
- Conti, G., & Modiano, P. (2012). Problemi dei paesi a sviluppo tardivo in Europa: Riflessioni sul caso italiano. *L'industria*, 33(2), 221-236.
- Dana, L. P. (2007). *Handbook of research on ethnic minority entrepreneurship: A co-evolutionary view on resource management*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Davidsson, P. (1991). Continued entrepreneurship: Ability, need, and opportunity as determinants of small firm growth. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 6, 405-429.
- de Andreis, F., & Rusciani, F. A. (2023). An overview on immigrant female entrepreneurship in Italy. In P. Paoloni & R. Lombardi (Eds.), *When the crisis becomes an opportunity* (pp. 135-147). Springer.
- De Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2019). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Dyer, L., & Ross, C. A. (2003). Customer communication and the small ethnic firm. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 8(1), 19-40.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1991). Better stories and better constructs: The case for rigor and comparative logic. *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(3), 620-627.
- Engelen, E. (2001). "Breaking in" and "Breaking out": A Weberian approach to entrepreneurial opportunities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(2), 203-223.
- Essers, C., Benschop, Y., & Doorewaard, H. (2010). Female ethnicity: Understanding Muslim immigrant businesswomen in the Netherlands. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 17(3), 320-339.
- Fairlie, R. W., & Lofstrom, M. (2015). Immigration and entrepreneurship. In B. Chiswick & P. W. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of the Economics of International Migration: The Impact* (pp. 877-911). Elsevier.
- Fauri, F. (2015). *Storia economica delle migrazioni italiane*. Il Mulino.
- Fellini, I., & Guetto, R. (2019). Le traiettorie occupazionali degli immigrati nel mercato del lavoro italiano. *Mondi Migranti*, 1, 143-169.
- Ferrera, M., & Kyriazi, A. (2024). Transnational mobility and welfare rights: Are they compatible? In E. Recchi & M. Safi (Eds.), *Handbook of Human Mobility and Migration* (pp. 257-269). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Festa, G., Metallo, G., Cuomo, M. T., & Situm, M. (2019). Crowdfunding in wine business as a financing opportunity for smaller wineries. *International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business*, 10(3), 278-292.
- Festa, G., Elbahri, S., Cuomo, M. T., Ossorio, M., & Rossi, M. (2022). FinTech ecosystem as an influencer of young entrepreneurial intentions: Empirical findings from Tunisia. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 24(1), 205-226.
- Giaccone, S. C. (2014). Sviluppo dell'imprenditorialità immigrata e relazioni con il territorio ospitante: Il caso italiano. *Piccola Impresa/Small Business*, 1, 39-63.
- Goodman, J. P., Meany, J. W., & Pate, L. E. (1982). The government as entrepreneur: Industrial development and the creation of new ventures. In D. L. Sexton & J. D. Kasarda (Eds.), *The state of the art on entrepreneurship* (pp. 301-340). PSW-Kent.
- Greene, P. G., & Butler, J. S. (1996). The minority community as an incubator. *Journal of Business Research*, 36, 51-58.
- Grohs, S., Schneiders, K., & Heinze, R. G. (2017). Outsiders and intrapreneurs: The institutional embeddedness of social entrepreneurship in Germany. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 28, 2569-2591.

- Halkias, D., Thurman, P., Rishi, M., Harkiolakis, N., Ekonomon, L., & Caracatsanis, S. (2009). Economic and social characteristics of Albanian immigrant entrepreneurs in Greece. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 14(2), 143-164.
- Irastorz, N., & Peña, I. (2014). Earnings of immigrants: Does entrepreneurship matter? *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 23(1), 35-56.
- Itani, H., Sidani, Y., & Baalbaki, I. (2011). United Arab Emirates female entrepreneurs: Motivations and frustrations. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 30(5), 409-424.
- Knight, M. (2016). Race-ing, classing and gendering racialized women's participation in entrepreneurship. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3), 310-327.
- Kuhlmann, K. (2021). *Resetting the rules on trade and gender? A comparative assessment of gender approaches in regional trade agreements in the context of a possible gender protocol under the African Continental Free Trade Area*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lieberson, S. (1980). A piece of the pie: Black and white immigrants since 1880. *Politics & Society*, 11(4), 508-509.
- Lin, X., & Tao, S. (2012). Transnational entrepreneurs: Characteristics, drivers, and success factors. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 10(1), 50-69.
- Light, I., & Bonacich, E. (1991). *Immigrant entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles, 1965-1982*. University of California Press.
- Light, I., & Bhachu, P. (2004). *Immigration and entrepreneurship: Culture, capital, and ethnic networks*. Transaction Publishers.
- Light, I., Bhachu, P., & Karageorgis, S. (1993). Migration networks and immigrant entrepreneurship. In P. Bhachu (Ed.), *Immigration and entrepreneurship* (pp. 25-50). Routledge.
- Mahrous, A. A. (2019). Female entrepreneurship in Egypt: New theoretical and public policy implications. *Маркетинг і менеджмент інновацій*, 1, 151-160.
- McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. Van Nostrand.
- Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali. (2024). *XIII rapporto annuale: Gli stranieri nel mercato del lavoro in Italia*.
- Mlotshwa, S. H., & Murimbika, M. (2022). A phenomenological study on the entrepreneurial identity of female entrepreneurs in South Africa. *Journal of Management and Entrepreneurship Research*, 3(2), 134-147.
- Morris, M., & Schindehutte, M. (2005). Entrepreneurial values and the ethnic enterprise: An examination of six cultures. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 43(4), 453-479.
- Nájera-Sánchez, J. J., Pérez-Pérez, C., & González-Torres, T. (2023). Exploring the knowledge structure of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 19(2), 563-597.
- Ndoro, T. T. R., Louw, L., & Kanyangale, M. (2018). Practices in operating a small business in a host community: A social capital perspective of Chinese immigrant entrepreneurship within the South African business context. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 36(1-2), 148-163.
- Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1995). *The knowledge-creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation*. Oxford University Press.
- Onida, F. (2014). Industria e trasformazioni produttive in Italia: Crisi e privatizzazioni dagli anni '90. Alla ricerca di una nuova politica industriale. *Rivista di storia economica*, 30(3), 325-356.
- Paoloni, P. (2011). *La dimensione relazionale delle imprese femminili*. FrancoAngeli.
- Paoloni, P. (2021). *The C.A.O.S. model*. G. Giappichelli Editore.
- Paoloni, P., de Andreis, F., & Papa, A. (2024). Relational capital and immigrant entrepreneurship in Italy. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 20(19), 2703-2727.
- Paoloni, P., & Dumay, J. (2015). The relational capital of micro-enterprises run by women: The startup phase. *VINE*, 45(2), 172-197.
- Paoloni, P., & Serafini, G. (2018). Female entrepreneurship in perspective: A methodological issue. *Administrative Sciences*, 8(4), 67.
- Rath, J., & Kloosterman, R. (2000). Outsiders' business: A critical review of research on immigrant entrepreneurship. *International Migration Review*, 34(3), 657-681.
- Ramadani, V., Hisrich, R., & Gërguri-Rashiti, S. (2015). Female entrepreneurs in transition economies: Insights from Albania, Macedonia, and Kosovo. *World Review of Entrepreneurship Management and Sustainable Development*, 11(4), 391-413.
- Sandhu, M., Farooq, O., Khalid, S., & Farooq, M. (2021). Benchmarking entrepreneurial intentions of women in the United Arab Emirates. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 28(9), 2771-2785.
- Scoville, W. C. (1960). Review of *Business enterprise in its social setting*, by A. H. Cole. *The Journal of Economic History*, 20(1), 110-112.
- Solano, G., & Barberis, E. (2018). Mixed embeddedness and migrant entrepreneurship: Hints on past and future directions. *Sociologica*, 12(2), 1-22.
- Shane, S. (2003). *A general theory of entrepreneurship: The individual-opportunity nexus*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Surangi, H. (2022). A critical analysis of the networking experiences of female entrepreneurs: A study based on the small business tourism sector in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 11(1), 61.
- Surangi, H. (2024). Networking: The key to growth for female entrepreneurs: Evidence from the Sri Lankan small business tourism sector. *Middle East Journal of Management*, 11(1), 70-86.
- Takyi-Asiedu, S. (1993). The development of infrastructure for entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 8, 211-230.

- Unioncamere. (2021). *Osservatorio sull'inclusione socio-economica e finanziaria delle imprese gestite da migranti: Rapporto 2021*.
- Valeri, M., & Paoloni, P. (2016). Verso prospettive di consolidamento dell'imprenditoria femminile immigrata in Italia. *Esperienze d'Impresa, 1*, 101-124.
- Waldinger, R., Aldrich, R., & Ward, R. (1990). *Ethnic entrepreneurs: Immigrant business in industrial societies*. Sage.
- Waldinger, R., Ward, R., & Aldrich, R. (1985). Ethnic business and occupational mobility in advanced society. *Sociology, 19*(4), 586-597.
- Wang, Q., & Li, W. (2007). Entrepreneurship, ethnicity, and local contexts: Hispanic entrepreneurs in three U.S. southern metropolitan areas. *GeoJournal, 68*, 167-182.
- Wilson, F., Kickul, J., & Marlino, D. (2007). Gender, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial career intentions: Implications for entrepreneurship education. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 31*(3), 387-406.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage.
- Yunis, M., Hashim, H., & Anderson, A. (2018). Enablers and constraints of female entrepreneurship in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: Institutional and feminist perspectives. *Sustainability, 11*(1), 27.
- Zahra, S., & Newbaum, D. (1998). Environmental adversity and the entrepreneurial activities of new ventures. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship, 3*(2), 123-148.