WHERE ARE WE REALLY CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT?

WOMEN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN THE NETHERLANDS

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Abstract

This paper argues that migrants in the Netherlands contribute significantly to the development of both, their host and country of origin. To illustrate this point, the stories of 4 women migrant entrepreneurs coming from outside of the EU will demonstrate the role migrants play in the Netherlands and what their contribution is to development. In the analysis of their contributions, there are three statements suggested by the data: first, migrants prefer self-employment as a response to the difficulties facing the labor market. Second, business creation represents an exercise of rediscovering cultural values and skills, which prove to contribute significantly to the development of both countries. Finally, the access to these skills and values demonstrates that migrant entrepreneurs live translocal lives. In doing so, they belong to both, serve as support, and also contribute to different networks in different locales.

Relevance to Development Studies

The development and migration nexus aims to explore a critical path into the analysis of both concepts. A possible link between the two reflects the work of migration policies and the ongoing process of challenging what development means. Bastia and Skeldon (2020: 1) proposed that "the relationship between migration and development is both complex and not always obvious. Migration is both the result and the cause of what can be broadly called development". Therefore, the following paper pretends to continue this dialogue. Claiming a link between migration and development allows an understanding of the effects and behaviors of migration in both origin and host countries. In this case, the stories of 4 women migrants look at a non-so obvious relationship between migration and development through the lens of entrepreneurship.

Abbreviations

EU: European Union.

KVK: Kamer van Koophandel (Chamber of commerce in Dutch).

U.K: United Kingdom.

VAT: Value added tax.

IND: The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Dutch: Immigratie en Naturalisatiedienst)

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WOMEN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN THE NETHERLANDS

"There are people in the world, I imagine, who are born and die in the same town, maybe even in the same house, or bed. Creatures without migration: have they not lived a life because they have not moved?"

– Rigoberto Gonzalez, Butterfly Boy: Memories of a Chicano Mariposa

Chapter 1: Where development meets migration

When I was in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, every day of work was aimed at migrating. I complained every single day about my country, and everything looked so bad that the only way to live instead of surviving was to leave, even in my bubble of privilege. I did not feel Colombian, and I did not know I was Colombian until I moved to the Netherlands. This happened because coming from my country, I grew up disliking who we are culturally, politically and economically. Thus, I was raised with the promise that one day I could live in the places we praised for their rich culture and progress, and I was going to a place where I would learn everything we lacked as a society.

Contrary to these ideas, it took me 24 years to migrate to finally understand that instead of migrating to belong, I migrated to be-longing. In this process, rediscovering my cultural values and skills showed a different scenario. Countries like the Netherlands need migrants and rely on them as a society, and the cultural skills they bring can contribute significantly to society. Therefore, this research paper flows with my own process of migration and its many stages and conflicts, and it narrates the stories of 4 women who through their voices allowed me to learn from their migration and entrepreneurial experience.

Even though my process has evolved enough to come to terms with the migration reality I decided to live in, this paper is an exploration of the process of other women like me, who decided to migrate to the North. The question of "where are we really contributing to development?" then focuses on what development might mean in a link with migration, and also

looks at understanding the reverse-knowledge role migrants play in the countries where they come from and their country of residence. Consequently, this research delves into the ways the Netherlands benefit from a specific group of migrants who traveled long distances to then start a life in a new country and aim to build a career. To do so, they are required to invest money, talent, and efforts in staying, many times even paying more than citizens coming from inside the EU for access to education and permits.

Hence, along with the stories I will further develop, this paper argues that migrants in the North, and specifically in the Netherlands, contribute significantly to the development of both host and country of origin. To illustrate this point, the stories of 4 women migrant entrepreneurs coming from outside of the EU will demonstrate the role migrants play in the Netherlands and what their contribution is to development. For this research, I will therefore build up the analysis on "the idea that 'development is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy' and that 'greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also influence the world" (Sen, 1999: 3,18, as cited by Zoomers and van Westen, 2011: 377).

1.2 Background

To deeply understand the reasoning behind choosing the Netherlands as a scenario of analysis, this background will serve as a very brief introduction to two topics I would like to link: the first one refers to the interest in researching migration and development concepts, and the second one refers to entrepreneurship. An analysis of both will allow me to understand what they mean in a context like the Netherlands. Here, years of experience on migration policies declare an intriguing path for research, and to deepen into it, Chapter 2 will further develop the exploration of these scenarios.

As a start, during the last decade studies showed that the number of entrepreneurs, and self-employed people crosses a billion, and there are more than 232 million migrants in the world (United Nations 2013, as cited by Naudé et al., 2017:1). Naturally, this trend brought with it a considerable amount of literature suggesting the possibility of a correlation between migrants and entrepreneurial activities (Berner et al., 2012; Berntsen et al., 2021; Naudé et al., 2017; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010; Sahin et al., 2011; Schiller, 2020; Sommer, 2020). Starting from there, authors like Kurian (2012), and Villares-Varela

(2019) aimed to look at women migrants, and critically challenged assumptions related to gendered migration. These sources called the attention of policymakers, NGOs, donors, and organizations in the development and humanitarian aid sector. As a result, policies and numerous studies have focused on the impact of transnational migration in relation to development (Bakewell, 2008; Berntsen et al., 2021; De Haas, 2019; 2020; Raghuram, 2009). In short, as a major area of interest for migration, development and entrepreneurial studies, these authors reflect a critique to policies, and to theory from Northern countries to deeply understand the role of migrants and migration for origin and host societies.

As part of the study of countries with migration backgrounds, the Netherlands drives special attention for two reasons: the first one refers to the radical change in its immigration policies during the last two decades (Uitermark, 2012). Due to this, topics like racism (Çankaya & Mepschen, 2019), integration (Favell, 2010), nativism and populism (Scholten, 2020; Van Ostaijen & Scholten, 2014; Kešić & Duyvendak, 2019) were included in the political and governance agenda aiming to switch an exclusionary discourse of migration policies. As stated by Schrover (2015), to change this, the efforts of the media and NGOs tried to drive attention to the cases of women whose legal statuses were at risk after the termination of marriage with their Dutch partners. The evident interest of this paper to focus on the Netherlands follows a continuous exercise of many theories and policies to understand how migration plays a role in migrants' life decisions, and how the Netherlands' migration history reveals the situation of the migrants I will later introduce.

The second reason focuses on the features of the Netherlands as a migration country. Setting the scenario of migration in a country like this allows a better understanding of its culture, and its general appeal for migrants to settle here. Scholten et al. (2019: 15), for instance, noted superdiversity as an important distinction of Dutch cities such as Rotterdam, in which the census demonstrated that the population in the city comes from more than 180 different nationalities, and it has been proved to be one of the most diverse cities in the world. City branding in the last couple of years also in Amsterdam demonstrates the attention to migration and the multi-cultural (and I refer to this term in the most literal way to avoid an erroneous conceptualization) environment of both cities. Due to this, the super-diversity that characterizes the biggest cities of the Netherlands proves its religious diversity, diverse origins and families, diverse genders,

diverse entrepreneurial activities, and jobs. The Netherlands, with its biggest cities, has become a hub for the coexistence of diversity. Given this perspective, to analyze migration in the Netherlands, the first place to look at is its capital cities. Previous research (Scholten et al., 2019) states that cases like New York and Amsterdam prove how centuries of immigration become their main part of their essence. With this, I would like to later reflect on the features that make this country attractive as a hub for *development* in the sense Sen (1999: 3,18, as cited by Zoomers and van Westen, 2011: 377) stated it, as a place in which people can enjoy real freedoms.

1.3 Justification, relevance, and statement of the problem

The migration-development nexus aims to explore a possible link between migration and development. It reflects the work of both, migration and development studies to understand what development means. Bastia and Skeldon (2020: 1) proposed that "the relationship between migration and development is both complex and not always obvious. Migration is both the result and the cause of what can be broadly called development". Therefore, this research paper pretends to continue the dialogue by looking closer to the effects of a group of migrants. To do so, a non-so obvious relationship will then be established through the lens of entrepreneurship, and the claim of a nexus will be supported through the stories of 4 women migrants in the Netherlands.

1.4 Research objectives and question

The objective of this research paper is to challenge and expand the territory in which the migration and development nexus is currently stated. From an angle of women migrant entrepreneurs, the interviews propose a case study to deepen into the contributions to origin and host countries. Added to it, this paper seeks to achieve three specific objectives: the first one is to place the stories and voices of women migrant entrepreneurs within the development context. The second aims at challenging the author of this research in the process of creating an enterprise, and the last one aims at expanding the possibilities to research on entrepreneurship, migration, and development.

To understand how entrepreneurship projects run by women migrants contribute to the development of the host and origin country, this research will try to provide an answer to the following questions:

1.4.1: Main question

In what ways do women migrant entrepreneurs contribute to the development of origin and host country?

1.4.2: Sub-questions

1. In what ways do skills affect migrants' decision to choose between self-employment and waged employment?

2. In what ways do migrant entrepreneur businesses contribute to development of both origin and host country?

3. How does business creation lead its owners to re-think their cultural heritage?

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

To introduce the notes that compose this conceptual framework, the initial question of "where are migrants contributing to development?" set an interest focus for this research. This has also been part of various migration discussions about policies (Schrover, 2015; Bakewell, 2008), and it had brought up critical views on political movements (Scholten, 2020; Van Ostaijen & Scholten, 2014; Kešić & Duyvendak, 2019).

Therefore, this chapter will be divided in a way that will satisfy the curiosity that motivated this research while exploring the main concepts of analysis to understand migration and development within a scenario of female entrepreneurship, and female migration. First, I will explore the field of migration studies to reach the development-migration nexus. Having done this, I will analyze migration as a gendered experience; and finally, translocal development as an approach for local development and entrepreneurship.

2.1 Migration studies, and the development-migration nexus.

To begin with, the development and migration nexus establishes the last piece of a critical path into the questions and objectives of this research. Claiming a link between migration and development allows an understanding of the effects and behaviors of migration in both origin and host countries. However, before getting to this link, Glick Schiller (2020) noted the debates around migration and its possible relation to development in consideration of what made migration a topic of interest for development studies. The focus, according to the author, was the consideration of Methodological nationalism as a starting point for all interests to explain migration as we know it now. This first concept is relevant due to the implication it has had in the definition of policies and decisions related to migration in Northern countries. For Glick Schiller (2020), methodological nationalism implies that nation-states represent societies' boundaries. Thus, governments and political parties establish their unity culturally, politically, and economically (Beck 2002; Smith 1983; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, as cited by Glick Schiller 2020: 32). This means that everything happening inside those boundaries is aimed to contribute to the development of that unity. In that case, countries in which there is a well-established unity economically, politically, and culturally would attract people to migrate and benefit from that unity. On the contrary, the so-called *underdeveloped* countries in which that unity is at risk would more likely have higher rates of people leaving and migrating to better opportunities.

Therefore, building upon methodological nationalism allows a clear picture to project the context in which many decisions are taken affecting migrants' lives and life choices. Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002: 309) concluded that historically, right after the Second World War the process of nation-state building determined how democracy, citizenship, and social security shaped a new world order. A key aspect of this new system was identified in the way citizenry represented a border between nation-states. Meaning that there was a distinction between the inside and the outside, making the territory a space to be defended from the foreign. This combination of a post-war period of the constitution of societies, and the definition of citizenship as a representation of peoplehood confirmed a starting point from which migration is a problematic concept. As summarized by the authors: "Nation-state building processes have fundamentally shaped the ways immigration has been perceived and received" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller

2002: 301). This statement set the ground for an ongoing debate on migration. Even though the concept refers mainly to the critique aimed at academia, it has indeed been echoed as a reality by media, governments, and politicians arguing that migration, and more specifically some groups of migrants represent a threat to their unity.

Methodological nationalism explains the reason why decision-makers have coincided in the assumption that mobility needed to be controlled, and the most natural way to do it was represented in the borders of national unities. In a way, this answers the question of 'why migration is estimated as a problem'. This happened due to the establishment of unity inside of a territory, making outsiders represent a problem that needed to be dealt with. In addition, as stated by Torpey (1998: 240), the monopolization of the means of movement between states was taken for granted and allowed an order within nation-states that was followed by policymakers too. In relation to this, his critique reveals an ironic truth: instead of ignoring the *state* and its role, migration studies have taken their borders as an unquestionable reality. The fact that now we own passports, IDs, and that we need to register in Municipality offices prove that methodological nationalism took place in decisions that now affect people's lives and mobilities.

It is relevant to note that this theory is not stated here as a mirror to acts of xenophobia or structural racism, but as an explanation to the reasoning of nation-states to create laws and policies to maintain order and control mobility within borders. As it was mentioned by Torpey (1998), these structures evolved enough over time until the point we reach today. For this paper, methodological nationalism, and the monopolization of means to move represent just a start in the long history of the ways migration became a process governments had *to deal with.* Moving forward on this, the following paragraphs account for a brief introduction to the Migration and development nexus.

2.2 The Migration and development nexus

Within migration studies there has always been a high concern about development in a broadest sense. As documented by Bastia and Skeldon (2020: 4); since 2002, critical theories from policy and academic angles have been exploring the many possible links between migration and development. Even with an unclear and very debatable meaning of *development*, the debates reached a point in which the question was looking at 'who benefits from which migration'.

Coming from this discussion, the concern of very linear perspectives seemed to limit the scope. Therefore, the following discussions aimed to measure development in a way it could be understood and put into an equitable comparison with migration. However, once again, any measurable intention ended up in the same linear circle in which development could mean high incomes or equal opportunities, or access to better ways of living. In the end, as proposed by Raghuram and Austin (2009 and 2007, as cited by Bastia and Skeldon, 2020: 7), measuring development was also looking at migrants and mobility in a polarizing way "until someone was left out invisible". Consequently, the need to look at migration and development coincided in one point: "the migration and development debate therefore needed to be considerably broadened in terms of the types of population movements included" (Bastia and Skeldon, 2020: 7). Given that the exploration of the nexus is thus broad, for this paper, the views by De Haas (2020), Bastia and Haagsman (2020), and Schiller (2020) will serve as a precise lens to support the claim of going deeper into the critical views about migrants and their role in development.

De Haas (2020), with an approach to understanding "the paradoxes of migration" proposed a critical analysis of the role of migrants as contributors and agents of development. First, in his views, high levels of migration were getting to 'more developed' societies, and 'more migration' was also an indication of development (be this as a receiver or as a sending country). This unfolded was unclear whether migration could be seen as an optimistic or pessimistic approach to development. However, one initial statement represented a significant gain for countries of origin in terms of monetary income and evidence of growth generated by diasporas. This represented an optimistic view on development that focused its attention on economic growth. Even though numerous advantages are surrounding the economic benefits migration can bring to origin countries, this possible nexus was still required to look at what migrants do for both origin and receiving countries beyond the economic factors.

The initial findings by De Haas (2020) promoted migrants as agents of development due to the economic contribution to their home countries through remittances. It was proved how every year the economic value of remittances increased, which somehow demonstrated that there was a source of economic development to origin countries coming from them (Raghuram, 2009). However, several studies (Geiger et al., 2013; De Haas, 2019; Bakewell, 2008) debated this statement due to findings that proved how there was a limited contribution of remittances to

actual investments in improving people's lives, and empirical research proposed money was spent in consumption and exclusively benefited migrants' network.

This phenomenon represented a conflict for the positive link between migrants and development, and the idea that economic benefits did not necessarily translate into what true development might mean was introduced. De Haas (2020) noted the same phenomenon as another paradox and added that in many ways migrants proved not to be the least fortunate of their origin countries, but instead populations with enough means to move. For him, the representation of binary mobility from South to North caused by poverty, war, and environmental disasters overlooked the fact that long-distance traveling is rarely achieved by the poorest groups, nor from the poorest countries (De Haas, 2020: 18).

Added to this, for the author, while newspapers, news broadcasts, and social media showed a problematic face of migration, reality claimed a different practice of it. In short, within the scenario proposed by De Haas (2020), the relationship between migration and development went beyond a cause-and-effect process and looked at the facts that attributed migrants as a privileged population. Therefore, within this understanding, the experience of migration represented a dilemma for a possible connection with development.

Consequently, the interest in researching entrepreneurship centered its attention on entrepreneurs as a figure of development. Their income supported the country of origin as contribution through remittances making entrepreneurs privileged actors whose migration became part of their agency and growth, and as a debatable category for policies, determination of visas, and mobility rights (Bastia and Skeldon, 2020).

Similarly, Bastia and Haagsman (2020) focused on explaining the same dilemma from a gendered experience perspective. For them, patterns of gender expressed an underexplored debate in which reproductive aspects of people's lives could tell more than what has been found until now. This happened for two main reasons: first because not so long-ago feminist studies were incorporated (around the 70s) to migration and development research, and the focus of their analyses was to acknowledge the negative issues surrounding women's agency when migrating (Hochschild 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2000, as cited by Bastia and Haagsman 2020: 104). Second, because within neoclassical theories of economics, the main

concerns of gender, migration, and development were limited to the economic and productive issues.

Nonetheless, the interest in focusing on different points of view from many migration experiences allowed gender to give a new angle of analysis. Since the 70s, a long line of studies on migration has been exploring the role femininities and masculinities play in different scenarios like the constitution of the family (Kraler and Bonizzoni, 2010), the impact on women and men migrants in different economies (Villares-Varela & Essers, 2019), the general views of gender in integration laws, and categorization of immigrant policies (Schrover, 2013), and they got far enough until today, the moment in which research allowed queer perspectives into research methodologies (Browne and Nash, 2010). The following paragraphs will briefly introduce a body of literature related to gender and migration as an intersection to the Migration and Development nexus.

2.3 Gender and migration

To begin with, historically studies of gender in migration and development aimed at the awareness of an issue that was overlooked for many years: equality and inclusion. As seen in the 5th SDG goal 'to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls', policies and academic research focused on this task and acknowledged the need to look at women as equals under the eye of the law, family practices, and agency. More specifically, migration studies worked through governance to understand if there was any contribution to the economic overview of the situation of countries with a migration background, and to the way women were vulnerable to exploitation due to migration. Also linked to governance, recent studies (Schrover 2013) demonstrated the need to approach migration and asylum from the angle of LBTQI+ persecution, which admitted a new challenge for governments. Development, on the other hand, focused on the exercise of dismantling systems of inequality and oppression to create awareness about minorities ignored for many years. The emergence of intersectionality, identities, freedom, body politics, equality and the challenge of traditional assumptions was noted (Sachs, 1992).

As mentioned before, the attention to gender issues in migration studies as it is known now has historically progressed. The focus on gender changed when feminist approaches of research and policies challenged the role of women as migrants. As a result, after years of letting the world

know what the issues were for women's security and trafficking, migration studies switched the focus to look at the role women played as contributors to economic growth in their home countries. This happened when indicators revealed how women migrants sent money to their homes, which under mainstream terms meant 'development'. However, this focus has been centered on migration as a profitable investment (Bastia and Haagsman, 2020: 104), and due to remittances sent by women increasing year after year, the role they represented to 'development' became important. Within this interest, the discourse surrounding gender focused on acknowledging and empowering. This has also influenced how migration as a gendered experience has been perceived.

2.4 Translocal Livelihoods and local development

> "Arriving at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of his that he did not know he had: the foreignness of what you no longer are or no longer possess lies in wait for you in foreign, unpossessed places".
>
> **— Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities**

The analysis of translocal livelihoods, although not very recent and underexplored, represents the core of this research paper. It demonstrates the aim to understand and dig deeper into migration and development boundaries. Even though in a neo-classic world the aim to explore what seems like a romantic idea of development might not be perceived as important, the surface of migration studies is not always enough. This is the reason why I consider meaningful this source of literature for the research. Challenging the assumptions of a world in which questioning has a limit, and in which academic research establishes fixed parameters and frameworks, translocal development gets closer to thinking outside of the box. Translocal development implies that people's mobility (far from being just related to their productive objectives) comes also with a set of stories, values, and relations impossible to be captured by monetary boundaries (Truong and Des Gasper, 2008: 287). It reflects the truth behind the voices of the actors of migration and accounts for a set of conclusions obtained after listening.

Linked to the unsolved challenges of the development-migration nexus and the exploration of gendered migrating beings, translocality aimed to closely observe the issues surrounding migrants' lives around the world (Zoomers and Westen, 2011; Truong and Des Gasper, 2008). By understanding that mobile beings belong to different societies, translocal development wanted to challenge the paradigms of the international agenda of migration. For Zoomers and Westen (2008: 377), the fact that globalization was pushing for new challenges resulted in what is seen as *translocality* against an idea of *transnationalism.* For them, people were connecting more to others in different localities, no matter how distant they were, but following a pattern that came from and went to different 'locales'.

In the case of Truong and Des Gasper (2008), translocality aimed to challenge assumptions like the 'container' in which nation-states were enclosed. Within that container, all relationships were measurable in a binary sending-receiving category, and representations of migrants' experiences focused only on the voices of males as economically productive beings. This perspective overlooked other migrants' voices and did not allow for a deeper understanding of what migration really meant for both women and men as mobile actors.

Within this analysis, translocality is borrowed by migration studies from scholars in the field of international relations. It followed the migration experience in the process of creating and forming communities in host countries, while at the same time keeping connected and maintaining relationships in the country of origin. It mainly refers to "the multi-faceted and multi-local processes of cross-border migration" (Truong and Des Gasper, 2008: 288). More than a way to conceptualize migration as a process, this perspective reflected a reality in which humans-individuals, being part of a family, move with a suitcase that carries livelihoods, money, goods, ideas, values, and networks. In contrast to the end-to-end imaginary in which migration implies integration or assimilation as a culmination of that process, thinking about trans-local admits the existence of the double life many migrants experience when they leave their countries of origin. This way of thinking offered an approach that analyzed the rights, security, and livelihoods maintained across multiple different locales, and what those mean for migrants and their host societies (Truong and Des Gasper, 2008: 288). In short, following closely and listening to migrants' stories narrated an overlooked reality hidden in infographics and numbers that

represent migration waves. As mentioned by Austin Bradford (1977, as cited in Truong and Des Gasper 2008: 287), "statistics represent people with the tears wiped off".

Within the experience of migration, as noted by Truong and Des Gasper (2008: 289), the stories surrounding migrants' identities as mobile beings who are part of multiple locales, cultures, and societies, also represent an important concept to the experience of migration: belonging. Understanding that migrants' identities are flexible, and they adapt to the context and the circumstances is also linked to how the different angles of their identities, such as gender, class, age, race, ethnicity, and even their legal order play a role in their sense of belonging and translocality. This means that transnational connections create transnational practices influenced by a collective (and indeed transnational) agency. The angles of people's identities, in the way they perceive themselves in society and the way they *are* and make decisions as transnational beings. The authors (Truong and Des Gasper, 2008) refer to this as a way to challenge the boundaries of 'society' as a concept strictly linked to the boundaries of the nation-state.

In the case of Zoomers and van Westen (2011: 378), the analysis of translocality aimed to place a strategic reality in the circumstances of a globalized world, which according to them was impossible to be ignored. They noted how attention is constantly paid to local development, but how the entire overview of what happens outside of the 'locales' is usually overlooked and yet it represents the biggest determinant. Within this discussion, the main argument focused on highlighting that what happens in 'the global' most likely influences the local. One of the examples provided by the authors referred to cotton prices, which were significantly influenced by world prices and therefore, were out of control of local actors. In short, one of their main conclusions was that "there is more room for understanding the specific nature of connections shaping local development" (Zoomers & van Westen, 2011: 378).

Regarding migration studies, the contribution of this theory focuses on addressing translocality and translocal migrants as people who live and shift power between several interconnected localities (Zoomers & van Westen, 2011: 379). For them, instead of simply being part of two binary containers (as nation-states are understood), migrants operate in different networks of their localities. This, also related to the way globalization allowed connecting people and places, and how these have a direct impact among them. According to the authors, the cases of

contribution to the production of translocalities included relationships and networking between actors in the traditional countryside or city and nomadic activities. In a few words, this meant that production networks supported the integration of localities in one value chain and exercising mobilities by migrants and diasporas made this possible in exchanging and interconnecting their locales. They found ways to create linkages to remit money, boost local tourism, and to established businesses and investments (Zoomers & van Westen, 2011: 380).

Linked to this, networking represented a meaningful way to operate in translocal entrepreneurship. For Bunse (2019: 9), networks were "hubs and relationships which can be formed by individuals or groups over time or at a point". These were a crucial for migrant entrepreneurship as they benefited the people involved in them. For the author (Bunse, 2019: 10), the advantages of networks went from information sharing to business expansion, access to contacts, support and many more. Support, as a crucial aspect of the networking process, revealed many possibilities in which migrant entrepreneurs were given support and also served as support for others. Migrant networks would then benefit other migrants in the access to jobs and contacts that made it easier for migrants to get into the labor market of their country of residence.

In a similar note, Greiner (2010, as cited by Greiner, 2011: 612) added to the concept of translocality the "emergence of multidirectional and overlapping networks created by migration that facilitate the circulation of resources, practices and ideas and thereby transform the particular localities they connect". Translocality, thus refers precisely to the multi-local networking space in which migrants connect between their areas of origin and residence. These concepts provided validity to the understanding of the role migrants played in the different societies they belonged to.

2.5 Entrepreneurship

Research about migrant entrepreneurship has long and very diverse angles of analysis. Going from migration studies to marketing, and fashion studies, entrepreneurs are always a significant source of questions. However, the focus on entrepreneurship processes created by migrants in the Netherlands drew attention from researchers and policy makers (Berner et al., 2012; Berntsen et al., 2021; Naudé et al., 2017; Sahin et al., 2011) due to exclusionary right-wing policies against

migration. Naudé et al. (2017) suggested questions that aimed at understanding the policy makers' approach to migrant entrepreneurship and challenged the assumption of addressing this group as what they called "super-entrepreneurs". This happened due to the high expectations governments made about migration, entrepreneurship, and development. First, because migration was thought of as a temporary process and efforts were focused on dealing with migration as a problem. Second, because entrepreneurs were considered a super population with abilities for job creation, but start-ups, and small businesses were not included. Finally, because development was understood mainly as economic growth. This theory, which allows a broad analysis of the issues of this paper, provides a critical perspective of the ways exclusionary policies do not allow migrant entrepreneurs to invest in their long-time future in host societies. Naudé et al. (2017) suggested to develop non-discrimination policies to achieve more productivity and ensure local contributions from migrants in establishing their businesses.

However, a common perspective among authors like Naudé et al. (2017: 10), and Sahin et al. (2011) is the reason for many migrants to get involved in self-employment and entrepreneurship is based on the exclusionary forms of discrimination they experience now to get involved in the labor market. This, which might be structural, as in legal status, or cultural, is one of the main drivers for enterprise creation among communities like the Turkish and Surinamese in the Netherlands. Linked to this argument, Berntsen et al. (2021) analyzed migrant entrepreneurship enablers. In their research, following more than 80 interviews, they found that enablers go from coincidental to ephemeral encounters, but there is a common pattern along most of the interviews: first, migrants' networks play an important role, and are basically crucial in business creation processes through the financial and motivational support; and second, exclusionary practices are evident in loan applications, partnership creation, and even in reaching out to customers.

Similarly, Sahin et al. (2011) noted how migrant entrepreneurs significantly impact the host country in different ways. On one hand, they diversify and contribute to the local/urban economy through acting in new market niches, and they also act as role models for integration of other migrants. According to Jacobs (1961, as cited by Sahin et al., 2011: 17), the role migrant entrepreneurs play in diversifying the sociocultural offer is crucial for the economic performance and vitality of the place they are located in. This, which represents a high value for cities where

diverse markets and populations serve as hosts, also determines an advantage for cities that have been cultivating diverse economies for years.

On an additional note, the case of ethnic and migrant entrepreneurship and the so-called enclaves as migrant networks have proven to be a support for diasporas. Page (2019), for instance, identified enclaves and migrant businesses as spaces benefiting shielding, economic and cultural aspects of migrants' lives. For him, the space created by Chinese diasporas created a safe environment for migrant to connect with each other and access resources, goods, services and even opportunities they do not have in the host country. Bunse (2019), in a similar view, added how ethnic-concentrated industries seemed like a better option for many migrants looking for a niche to explore market opportunities. This way, "immigrant entrepreneurs often choose a business which belongs to most businesses in their ethnic niche, such as African grocery stores in e.g., Germany" (Bunse, 2019: 7). By choosing this, not only were diasporas benefited, but also the local residents in the way they were able to access ethnic markets without leaving their country. Once again, these choices would also allow migrants to obtain the support they needed when they struggled with getting into the labor market for issues like the language barrier, legal circumstances, or exclusionary behaviors in the host society.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

This research follows the process of women migrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. It employs a qualitative approach through one-to-one interviews with four women about their migration stories, and their processes of establishment and maintenance of their businesses. For O'Leary (2017: 440), interviews are "the method of data collection that involves researchers seeking open-ended answers related to a number of questions, topic areas or themes", and it requires a special attention into listening.

The interviewees of this research paper were selected through both snowball sampling- and hand-picking method achieved through my network. According to O'Leary, "a snowball technique in which you generate a list of informants through a referral process" (O'Leary, 2017:

383) allows the access to populations that are not easily reachable. As a complementary sampling technique, hand-pick allows representativeness according to a specific criterion (O'Leary, 2017: 383). These methods were particularly useful due to the specificity of the criteria (women, migrant entrepreneurs living in the Netherlands and coming from outside of the EU), and it allowed for enough and accurate representativeness.

Even though the number of participants suggested a limitation, it allowed a privilege of enough accuracy and representation to the aim of the sampling exercise. In the following chart, a brief list of the participants introduces their backgrounds and description:

Name	Nationality	Business field
Karen	Mexican	Gastronomy
Eliana	Mexican	Gastronomy
Andiara	Brazilian	Beauty salon
Farida	Egyptian	Language teaching

As a secondary, but supportive source of data collection, an autoethnographic narration of my experience as a self-employed woman migrant provides another angle of analysis. An autoethnography, defined by Haynes (2017: 215) as a "genre of qualitative research and writing which analyses the self in a specific social and cultural context" allows the self-involvement of the researcher as a subject of inquiry. These methods will give a clear path to understand *what development* is supported and what the different options and paths are for migrant women in the Netherlands. Added to this, the data will be supported by the information provided in Dutch government sites, and other institutions' publications.

3.1 Sampling, ethical issues and considerations

The selection of women for this paper aimed to look at women from outside of the EU with established businesses or on-the-way-to create one. Despite looking for participants through

social media, reaching out online was not successful. As an additional alternative, knocking on doors and showing interest in shops proved not to be satisfactory. Instead, my network served as support to get in touch with each of them. It is important to note that talking to women from a Latin background allowed a smooth cultural connection. The advantage of sharing their native language resulted in a fluent conversation in which the research process became familiar. Although for these cases language represented an advantage, it also served as a barrier. This is the reason why one of the interviews was collected through a third person who offered to be the interpreter from Arabic to English, which allowed me to cross a language barrier I would have not been able to cross.

These interviews were collected in the Netherlands. Each of them proved to be a significant answer to the research questions and played a pivotal role in acquiring unexpected data and thus, results. All interviews lasted 50 minutes to an hour, they took place in person, and were recorded with prior consent. The names, collected in the notes of the following chapter, were modified in accordance with the interviewees request, as well as the places where they reside. However, to provide an accurate answer to the research questions, I kept the most significant details about their businesses and their process of business creation. In addition to interviews being a primary source of qualitative data collection, for this research this method allowed me to obtain detailed insights into the process of business creation and self-employment in the Netherlands. Added to this, an autoethnographic lens allowed me to go through the process myself, which gave me the opportunity to do an individual analysis, and to explore how business creation works from the beginning. All in all, the conversations and the additional information collected through the autoethnographic data enabled an in-depth understanding of the reality of being a self-employed woman, migrant on the way to become an entrepreneur in the Netherlands.

Finally, before introducing these notes, I would like to acknowledge a very important lesson I learned while collecting data: many women around the world cannot speak up freely and trusting another person to tell such intimate experiences requires the commitment of either a friendship or an extensive time as a researcher. Building trust as a newborn researcher was the first challenge. Secondly, reaching out to women around the Netherlands in a pandemic was not an effortless task.

3.2: Positionality

Since this research paper aims to contribute to the current migration and development nexus by exploring women migrant entrepreneurs' role as agents of development, my position as a woman migrant self-employed, but on the way to be an entrepreneur plays also a role in the research process. Even though the methodology of this project follows interviews, my experience in creating a business in the Netherlands serves as a participatory angle of analysis. Queer research approaches (Browne, 2010: 3) contemplate the importance of the origin of knowledge as a determinant of the results, and as "emotionally (inter)connected identities and subjectivities that occupy the researcher". Therefore, in this case, my position as a researcher is not placed far away from the women I will interview. I identify myself in this work as a Colombian student, dancer, researcher, woman, migrant on the way to become an entrepreneur. Conducting my research and at the same time going through the process of creating a lingerie business in the Netherlands, while being a freelance Zumba instructor thus complements the data collected about the role women migrants play within that context.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

4.1 Interviews

This chapter introduces the voices of 4 women migrants living in the Netherlands. As I previously mentioned, their personal details have been changed to protect their identities, but their migration and business experience remains true to their stories. Even though they seem to propose a detailed narration, the long years of establishing their businesses cannot be locked in such a reduced number of words. For the purpose of this paper, I paid special attention to the reason that brought them to the Netherlands, the story behind their businesses, their family status, and the time they have been as self-employed workers and migrants.

A. Karen: The Mexican owner of a tortilla factory.

I met Karla one night after one of her long workdays. She proposed to meet me in a train station to grab Mexican food in one of her customers' taquerías. When we arrived, Karen greeted the owner, who was also a Mexican woman. She introduced me to her and mentioned her taquería was her first client. I could tell it was a family business and a Latino restaurant because her husband was on the register, and the girl who took our order was Latina.

Karen arrived in the Netherlands 10 years ago to study with the idea of going back to Mexico. She decided to settle in the country because of Dutch her ex-partner. Karen's initial plan was to get a job in a field related to her studies, so she applied to many jobs, but the language barrier made it difficult for her to find anything. For this reason, she decided to start her own business. Her parents, who are also self-employed in Mexico, supported her with the first investment for supplies costs, machinery, adequation of a place, exports logistics, paperwork, lawyers, accountants, and labor. At the start, due to the challenge of the bureaucratic universe in the Netherlands, researching imports and exports, contacting suppliers, learning how to transport machinery, and having long conversations with customs offices allowed her a better understanding of the language, the culture, and the Dutch business environment. All this was an opportunity to challenge herself to learn the language, and to find the motivation and feel the urgency to study it.

After deciding that she wanted to open a business, her initial plan was to open a restaurant, but with limited knowledge on cooking and no fresh tortillas in the country, the idea to import the corn to make them from scratch became a market opportunity. Due to the lack of certified organic corn in Mexico, Karen decided to use corn from the U.S. After some time, importing the corn from Mexico happened thanks to a Mexican movement that intended to improve small farmers' labor conditions and preserve the original varieties of Mexican corn seeds. A battle against big companies taking over small crops to mix the seeds and abuse their workers allowed small companies like Karen's to produce and export corn all over the world. Thanks to this movement, Karen connected to a small crop interested in certifying its corn as organic. Thus, following the requirements from the product Karen wanted to sell here, her supplier became a

small crop in the village where she grew up, in which today they export more than 50 tons of corn per week, from which 5 tons come to the Netherlands for her factory.

Part of her business started by re-learning the tortilla making process. Even though she grew up making tortillas, she never imagined herself working in their production. Since she was so far away from her country, her only alternative to deal with machinery to make the tortillas was to be guided over the phone by the engineer in charge of the machines in her village. Therefore, re-learning the tortilla to make it a source of income became a process of understanding from a different angle the value of Mexican culture in the countryside, the crops, the families, and the numerous people who depend on corn and tortillas to live.

Now that her company grew enough to be an enterprise and it required a new investment in a second line of machinery, the process of being a startup is over. After 5 years, Karen can say her business escalated enough and it is running successfully around the Netherlands and Belgium with high chances of expansion. This year, during Covid-19, she saw herself affected due to the lack of festivals, but even with the situation, her business kept growing successfully. So far, her team is composed of Latino workers, Dutch accountants, Dutch lawyers, and a human resources contractor. With the arrival of new machinery, the expectation is indeed positive for more recruitments. For her, the most challenging part of business creation as a migrant was the lack of a network. In her case, because of the opportunities and connections she had back home. According to her, migrants need to learn a new culture, and if they want to invest in a business, they also need to learn a new language of business administration and negotiations.

B. Eliana: the story of a startup created during the Covid-19 pandemic

I met Eliana through a Facebook post for Hispanic speaker entrepreneurs and investors. Her business caught my attention because it is a startup, and even there, the Hispanic virtual community knows and recommends her product. Her story in the Netherlands started after

meeting a Dutch man back in Mexico. As a couple, they stayed there for 5 years until they had a strong relationship that resulted in the decision to move to the Netherlands.

Eliana's husband requested a Partnership visa, which following the IND (n.d) happens through an application in which the Dutch national requests a residence permit for their partner. Doing the paperwork from Mexico did not go well because her husband made a mistake twice when filling in the documents, which delayed her process for 2 years. Since they did not account for the mistakes and thought the process was going to be faster, during that time he went back to the Netherlands to work and to get everything ready for her arrival. Those 2 years apart became the biggest challenge, and after a year of long-distance she thought the relationship was over. Even though a couple of visits made a difference, Eliana thought she was not getting the visa, so she made the decision to go on with her life at home. She got a new job, decided to buy a house, and forgot about the idea of moving to the Netherlands.

In the end, after all this was finally solved, Eliana moved to the Netherlands, got a job in a Mexican restaurant. Since she wanted to have a baby, she was looking for a better job, which she found in an English company. She stayed there for a couple of years, and when the pandemic hit, she stayed at home with a contract extension of an extra year. Later, when Brexit came into force she had to stop working. Due to the focus of the company in the British market, Eliana did not see any future possibilities for her to stay working in the industry, so as a plan B she invested her money in a business. At first, due to the restrictions during the pandemic, Eliana opened a taquería in which she delivered Mexican food personally all around the country. Now with a daughter and the possibility to start a business, Eliana and her family settled in the North part of the Netherlands, and after buying a house, she decided to explore the option to make candies given that the restrictions to formally register a food company asked for an adaptation of her kitchen.

This business idea started with an investment of €400, and the candies she makes use dry fruits and chili peppers she buys from a Mexican importer who transports special products to the diaspora in the Netherlands. Getting chilis from them allows Eliana to get a higher revenue. This investment, as well as the accountant, and the suppliers she contacted for packaging and design has been the main expense to start her project. Over time, as a Covid-19 relief to her job status,

her candy business has been a successful source of income. Since people all around the world were not allowed to travel during this time, nor were restaurants open, all the Mexicans she knew were willing to buy her food and to pay for deliveries.

Working as a self-employed person allowed her to be home for her daughter but to still have time for herself, which worked better than a 9 to 5 job. Eliana has been running the business for around 5 months, and she has been trying to connect with Latino, Turkish, and Mexican restaurants to offer her candies. For her, as well as other ethnic entrepreneurs, the festival season in the Netherlands and Mexican holidays have been very helpful. In the meantime, her husband has been supporting the family financially with the household expenses, and Eliana keeps paying the house she once bought back home. Together with her husband, they aim to keep it as a holiday home, and as a safe investment in case of an emergency. Aside from this, all their investments are settled in the Netherlands.

C. Andiara: the legacy of the Brazilian beauty industry

Andiara owns a beauty salon in one of the biggest cities of the Netherlands. She currently lives with her son. I interviewed her in her workplace, and I arrived there one afternoon before her closing time while she was still with two Brazilian customers. Andiara arrived 12 years ago in the Netherlands. Before moving here, she lived 2 years in the U.K., and the reason she decided to migrate from Brazil was to move together with her ex-husband to have a family. Since he was an EU citizen based in the Netherlands, she obtained a partnership visa that allowed her to work here without restrictions. The only requirements she had were to translate her study certificates and authenticate them as valid for her profession. Back in the U.K. Andiara acquired a sufficient English level that allowed her work. However, soon after they moved here, her husband tried to convince her to open a beauty salon and offered her the first investment to start.

Right after making the decision, her husband found a place for rent, he bought furniture for it and equipment, named it after him, and then painted it in what she thought were the least appropriate colors for a hair salon. However, seeing it really happening pushed her to go on with it, and even with her extensive experience in her own salon back in Brazil, the language barrier was an intimidating obstacle. Knowing she has been working as a hairdresser her entire life and getting

the feeling there was nothing else she wanted to work on, the salon became a way to get an income doing what she knew and liked. After some years of hard work, she had to buy her now ex-husband's investment after they got divorced, she then remodeled the place, renamed it, and today she has other Latinas supporting her as employees of the salon.

Some of the biggest challenges for her were raising her son by herself without much help and maintaining the business during the pandemic. Andiara pictures a different pregnancy and migration experience if she would have had her family to support her. Loneliness and a very rough postpartum depression made her decide to raise her child closer to Dutch culture. This means that she does not speak Portuguese with him and tries her best to get him used to the rules and values of this country.

As she mentioned, she arrived in the Netherlands and planted her flag here, which included her son, her life, and her business. The second issue, related to Covid-19 and the lockdowns it caused, she feels grateful for having the support from the government. Without it, maintaining her business would not have been possible, and the possibility to permanently close was present the whole time.

Also due to Covid-19 and the situation in Brazil, Andiara assumed the responsibility to permanently support her mother financially. Given that the conditions back home did not allow her mom to work or leave the house, staying home was only possible with the money she received from Andiara. Added to this, the only other financial contribution she made was for her sister to travel and visit the Netherlands.

For her business, she mentioned she does invest in bringing supplies when she travels. Andiara has grown a financially stable business for 9 years. After 5 years, her business proved to be a source of enough income to buy a house here, her car, pay an accountant, afford the initial investment her ex-husband did, and the daily expenses of her family and the salon. For her, social media has been crucial in that expansion process, and the promise of authentic Brazilian quality keeps attracting customers every day.

D. Farida: an Arabic language teacher

I met Farida's daughter on a train. I got lost and I did not have Internet connection, so I asked a girl for help and we ended up sharing our life stories with each other. In our conversation she brought up that her mother was self-employed and that she worked as an Arabic language teacher. Her family, coming from Egypt, moved to Greece and later to the Netherlands through her father's job as a researcher and professor. Her mom, who has been in the Netherlands for more than 10 years, did not find it necessary to learn Dutch at 100% because her network in the mosque communicates in Arabic. Due to the language barrier, this interview was done with the support of Farida's daughter, who served as an interpreter for us. During the interview, she was traveling in Egypt for her summer break, so she had to do it online.

Originally from Egypt, Farida has been living abroad for the longest part of her life. At a young age she moved to Greece with her husband to study a master's degree, and she later moved to the Netherlands to give birth to her children. For them, a country like the Netherlands offered a promising future for them and their children. Today, Farida lives with her son, daughter, and her husband, and she gives Arabic lessons privately in her house.

Farida decided to start teaching for two reasons. The first one was that even before settling in the Netherlands, her experience living in Greece without a European passport taught her that getting a job was very difficult. In Greece, she managed to get a job just after she was proficient enough in Greek. The difficulty here mainly lay in the access to job positions aligned with her studies without speaking the language of the host country. Finding a job in the academic sector was not possible due to the requirement of a formal certificate of Dutch and English skills. Thus, the alternative to still pursue a career in teaching Arabic was self-employment through private teaching.

Freelancing was an easier path for her, and it freed her from the stress of job searching. If it was not for her decision to teach Arabic as a private teacher, she would be working in retail to fill her free time. However, being self-employed also allowed her to plan her time and structure her working hours in a way it suited her. Thus, due to her long experience with Arabic language studies, and the rest of her degrees in Oriental languages, the establishment of a business resulted as a better option.

The opportunity for Farida to get involved with teaching privately came from the Muslim community. Going to the mosque and meeting other women there allowed people to know Farida and her long experience as a teacher by word of mouth. Although many volunteers and paid teachers develop courses in mosques, and language classes are conventional in religious environments, Farida's profile was appealing for many first and second generations who wanted their children to formally learn the language of their country of origin. Whilst in the community many of the teachers focused on conversational skills, her formal expertise as a teacher gave her a special recognition.

Farida has been teaching for 9 years and her business expanded, her courses have gotten to the point in which she has to reject some of the students who reach out due to her busy schedule. Since Farida provides a service herself, she does not need employees, and the investments she did on self-employment were time, some improvements to the space where she teaches in her house, and the acquisition of language materials and books. Aside from the community, Farida mentioned that with the support of her children it was possible to manage her paperwork and taxes more easily.

Related to costs and investments, Farida mentioned that as well as her, most of her family left Egypt and now live all around the world. Therefore, she does not remit any money to her home country. Being self-employed requires investment time, and probably of money for a service like the one she provides. However, it is indeed an advantage for her to be in the Netherlands. This is mainly due to the high demand of students whose parents require her service, and because people outside of the Muslim community are interested in learning different languages. Thus, being self-employed to teach Arabic here makes it easier for her than being in Egypt.

Finally, although for Farida it was a big challenge to adjust to the Dutch culture, the different environment culturally and financially, her love for Arabic allowed her to do something she enjoys doing. Helping adults and children to achieve their goals through Arabic, be them religious duties, spiritual intentions or just by maintaining a cultural bond with their country of origin is very fulfilling for her.

4.2: Migration as a promise: the notes of a self-employed Zumba instructor

"El día que te fuiste entendí que no te volvería a ver. Ibas teñida de rojo por el sol de la tarde, por el crepúsculo ensangrentado del cielo; Sonreías. Dejabas atrás un pueblo del que muchas veces me dijiste: "Lo quiero por ti; pero lo odio por todo lo demás".

-Pedro Páramo, Juan Rulfo

Every time I reflect on migration Pedro Páramo comes to my mind. Pedro's mom, a woman who left her village following a man and a better future later sends his son to go back to her town and walk all her steps back. Migration *feels* this way to me. It burns over generations, right on the other side of what words can describe. In the end, migrating is exactly what it is for Pedro Páramo: a promise, and an encounter of a life walking in a ghost city like Comala.

As a Colombian citizen, I grew up building all my hopes on migrating to the North. Even now, when I talk to people back home, leaving is seen as *a remedy for all illnesses*. However, my experience of migration hit differently. Instead of a promise and a pill that solves it all, it turned to be very discouraging. Before getting to the promise of a better life, I have to walk in the ghost city of taxes and bureaucratic red tape.

To illustrate this, the first institution I would like to refer to is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND). In my case, the reason for this first encounter was that as a student coming from outside of the EU, many implications related to the visa I carry grant me different rights, obligations and restrictions. One of them is that for some cases, if I want to study in a public institution, I should pay more than EU citizens. I have the right to travel and move freely within the EU and the Schengen area, but I cannot get a full-time job while I study. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service or IND:

> Alongside your course you may work as an independent entrepreneur. You may also work in paid employment, but no more than 16 hours per week. Another option is to

> work full time (in paid employment) through June, July and August only. For paid employment your employer must apply for a work permit (IND, 2021:5).

Therefore, due to the limitations of my visa, the possibility to have a student job on the side were limited, but not completely restricted. However, given that the places to find a student job were not open because of the pandemic, and I could not find anything where I could speak English, there was one option with no restrictions to work: freelancing. For this to happen, after checking with the IND, I had to get in contact with the tax office (Belastingdienst in Dutch), and the Chamber of Commerce (KVK).

Checking-in with them first represented a second step into the bureaucratic walk. To my surprise, the Netherlands attributes strict formality to the way businesses are established. Contrary to the way it is done in my country, the Netherlands built a universe of taxes, and prescribed it as a norm for self-employment and business creation. Exploring development in its mainstream understanding as "economic growth" makes taxes a significant source of growth to an administration like the one the Netherlands created. Offering accountability and building trust in taxation represented a meaningful challenge to my mindset due to the political and economic situation of corruption in countries of the Global South. However, adding taxation as a source of analysis to this research is relevant due to the formality of the process, and the cultural power the Belastingdienst represents to this country. This is the reason why even in the last stage of research I decided to preserve it. Acknowledging the steps to build a business in an environment like the Dutch implies that getting in contact with institutions is part of the process. This is the reason why my first contact in freelancing and in writing this paper, was indeed to get to know the Belastingdienst. Contrary to the established by the IND, as an independent entrepreneur there are no limitations for the time worked nor for the type of activity. Thus, since this represented a possibility without restrictions to work, I decided to use my time as a student to earn money as a freelancer.

Coincidentally, after exploring my options for business creation by importing clothes from Colombia, I joined a gym to get active after the lockdowns. I went to the gym weekly for group dance lessons, and I noticed that the instructors were mainly Latinos. I had a short talk with one of them, who mentioned he was doing it as a freelancer and got the job with the support of

another instructor. After I told this to my partner, who was also subscribed to the gym, he asked her the next day if she needed any Zumba instructors because he knew an experienced person from Colombia. To this, she immediately replied she was looking for a permanent instructor, and after a short introduction, I got a job offer without many requirements, but a VAT number.

Not knowing if I was able to do it due to my visa, I was told by the manager that I only needed to register in the KVK and get a tax number to charge the VAT (BTW in Dutch) for the service I provided. No requirements aside from paying 50 euros to register a company are required. Even in the position of a student, the only obligation for a self-employed migrant whose residence situation is solved (in my case, a student visa) is to get a tax number and pay the previously mentioned fee. After doing this, every quarter of the year, the obligation of submitting taxes comes by mail in a blue envelope.

According to the Belastingdienst website (n.d.), the only requirement for foreign entrepreneurs is to get a tax representative in special cases to handle the business with the Tax office. In the case of imports and exports, a specific rule applies if benefits by reverse charge-mechanism of tax submission is aimed to be requested. This means that any entrepreneur who does not have Dutch citizenship needs tax representation by an agency or an accountant. In the case of imports and exports, institutions like the Douane (costumes office) and the embassies support investors into the exemptions and agreements favoring their countries of origin. Therefore, for entrepreneurs and self-employed people, taxes represent a significant issue to be learned when getting into business creation.

Since my case was related to a service, none of this was needed. Thus, after having registered myself in the KVK, the gym contacted me for classes according to my availability. As a student with no formal job, getting the chance to do a hobby by freelancing, and getting to do something so close to my culture was a relief. On the other side of reality, I was dealing with invoices, taxes, VAT return, and fines for not understanding how tax submissions worked. Nonetheless, in the end, the opportunity to work dancing Latin music, being in contact with other women, and making use of my skills gave me enough confidence to believe that against competing with other passports and language advantages, I could manage with self-employment.

In the end, the expectation of a promise comes in blue envelopes, and it requires to be reviewed every quarter of a year. However, it is important to note that contrary to the limitations stated by the IND, for the tax office migrants from all origins are assessed equally. Tax benefits and responsibilities apply according to income and not to nationality. This might be one of the reasons for many migrants to choose for self-employment over getting employed, and as in my case, getting to use their skills as an option for self-employment. Therefore, linked to this, the following chapter illustrates these arguments by introducing the stories of four women migrants in the Netherlands.

4.3: Self-employment and skills

To analyze the relationship between business creation and self-employment, Nijenhuis et al. (2021) serve as a starting point. In their work, the relationship between skills and global migration was crucial given that "knowledge and skills play an important role in shaping migrants' ability and experience of moving and staying abroad" (Nijenhuis et al., 2021:1). As I explained it with my case, dancing represented the rediscovery and exploration of my culture through abilities and skills I did not consider relevant for getting into the labor market. However, without planning on it, these shaped my experience of migration and path for generating an income.

In other cases, the alternatives for migrants to get employed in the Netherlands depend on many reasons. These can vary depending on their expertise and experience, their country of origin, residence status, and working permit. In the case of the women interviewed, their limitations for getting into the labor market were mainly the language expertise. Their legal status (the so-called 'family reunification' visa status) allowed them to work as permanent residents. In my case, as a student coming from outside of the EU, I am required to have a sponsored visa and in some cases I am requested to have enough language skills. As said by Nijenhuis et al. (2021:1), this as one of the main issues migrants have to deal with when migrating; "Numerous migrants cannot use their skills and knowledge because their job does not require or stimulate them to do so, or they cannot participate in the labor market at all" (Bodankin & Semyonov, 2016; Man, 2004; Raghuram & Kofman, 2004 as cited by Nijenhuis et al., 2021: 1). Even though many migrants count with enough qualifications and experience, they end up employed in lower levels than the

intended or in fields that do not correspond to their education. To illustrate this point, throughout this chapter, the cases of Karen, Farida, Eliana and Andiara represent the voices of women who opted for self-employment as a source of income after exploring the option of getting into the labor market.

Karen, as the first case, arrived in the Netherlands to do her professional studies. Although she wanted to return to her country, she decided to settle down in the Netherlands because of her ex-partner. She applied to many jobs, but in the end, starting a business had less limitations than getting a job in her field, which required enough Dutch proficiency. Since she could not open a restaurant, and there were not any resources to do this, she opened a tortilla factory. After 5 years, she runs a successful business, and imports the resources from Mexico. For Karen, accessing a culturally inherited skill granted her the option to explore a business strategy that now is her main source of income. Instead of applying to jobs, learning the language little by little, and escalating as an employee in a company, she was growing her own business idea.

Similarly, the case of Andiara illustrates this point in the way she profits from accessing her knowledge and skills on Brazilian beauty products and services. Andiara now runs a beauty salon, and she is very well-known within the Brazilian diaspora and the residents of the neighborhood.

> "She arrived 12 years ago in the Netherlands, and before moving here she lived 2 years in the U.K. The reason she decided to migrate from Brazil was to move together with her ex-husband to have a family. Back in the U.K. Andiara acquired a sufficient English level that allowed her to work, which in the Netherlands made it a little bit easier for her to communicate. Soon after they moved here, her husband convinced her to open a beauty salon and offered her the first investment. […] She was planning on getting a job and then slowly getting involved in the culture to later think about having her own salon. Contrary to her expectations, having her own place to work happened before getting a job" (See Chapter 4.1, C: Andiara: the legacy of Brazilian beauty industry).

Andiara's salon became her way to get an income doing something she enyoyed, even with the restricted language abilities. In this case, even though some skills represented a challenge, the ones she got expertise in allowed her to administrate her own business. Thus, managing her own place was notably a more convenient option for slowly learning the language, having a career,

and getting to make use of her skills to generate an income. Finally, Eliana and Farida's stories demonstrate that in many cases, women who come to the Netherlands through their partners find self-employment as a more feasible option that, once again, allows accessing skills and support their families.

In these cases, both Eliana and Farida arrived in the Netherlands through a partnership visa. For Eliana, her husband requested a Partnership visa, which following the IND (n.d) happens through an application in which the Dutch national requests a residence permit for their partner. Eliana moved to the Netherlands, got a job in a Mexican restaurant, and decided to prepare herself to have a child. This decision led her to get a new job, which she found again in an English company. Later, when Brexit hit, she stopped working due to the focus of the company in the British market. Eliana did not see any future possibilities for her to stay working in the industry, so as a plan B she invested her money in a business. At first, and due to the restrictions during the pandemic, Eliana opened a taquería in which she delivered Mexican food personally all around the country. Now with a daughter and the possibility to start a business, Eliana and her family settled in the North part of the Netherlands, and after buying a house, she decided to explore the option to make sweets and candies.

In the case of Farida, who currently teaches Arabic, her decision to be self-employed was two-fold. First, even before settling in the Netherlands, her experience living in Greece taught her that getting a job in her field of study was not an easy option due to the limitations of her student visa and the language barrier. For her, the difficulty here mainly lay in the access to job positions aligned with her studies without enough language proficiency. Therefore, even though her legal residency was solved for her when she moved to the Netherlands, she still could not get a good job because of the language. Even though her teaching experience and language skills in other languages were significant, without Dutch she could not get a job in her field of expertise. Thus, the alternative to still pursue a career in teaching Arabic was self-employment through private teaching.

The second reason is that, indeed, freelancing was an easier path for her, and it freed her from the stress of job searching. If it was not for her decision to teach Arabic as a private teacher, she would be working in retail to fill her free time. However, being self-employed also allowed her

to plan her time and structure her working hours in a way it suited her. Thus, due to her long experience with Arabic language studies and Oriental languages, the establishment of a business resulted as a better option. Being part of the Muslim community, Farida started teaching her neighbors, and this slowly evolved into a more professional setting as she expanded her teaching to include children of various ages as well.

As previously noted, the possibility for migrants to make use of culturally inherited skills and knowledge -or simply their own abilities- in contrast to the options for employment reveal an important determinant for business creation. The limitations for self-employment are significantly less and demonstrate to allow migrants to have better networking environments and growth opportunities. Even when it comes to legal status, in my case, as a student with visa restrictions, the options for self-employment did not have any limitations and allowed me to have more time flexibility and better income.

Chapter 5: Rediscovering cultural heritage through business creation

1.

hear them cry
the long dead
the long gone
speak to us
from beyond the grave
guide us
that we may learn
all the ways
to hold tender this land
hard clay direct
rock upon rock
charred earth
in time
strong green growth
will rise here
trees back to life
native flowers
pushing the fragrance of hope

the promise of resurrection

-Bell Hooks, Appalachian Elegy

One of the main struggles of my process was recognizing personal and cultural values as beneficial for the host society. In my views, the main interest in migrating had all the answers on the experience I could gain in the Netherlands. Thus, rediscovering cultural heritage resembled to the exercise of truly *listening to the long dead, long gone speak [...] to hold tender (my) this land*, as the poem states. For someone who was looking for knowledge abroad, this process required enough sense of belonging. Lacking this, it took me a while to resurrect in a new understanding of my culture, and it happened only when I embraced it and literally danced-it-out. Rediscovering the value of Colombian music and dancing culture was a process of learning to value a skill I inherited from my culture that people here appreciated for its authenticity.

As shown in the previous chapter, the connection between skills and self-employment determined a clear path for business creation in the cases of Andiara and Karen. In accordance with different sources of literature coming from marketing (Peng et al., 2017; Ambos et al., 2006; Jeong et al., 2017) and development studies (Nadvi et al., 2005; Pike et al., 2007; Lehmann, 2021), the analysis of South-North knowledge production -also sometimes called reverse knowledge transfer- reflects cases in which the value of skills coming from the South was significant for the growth of industries and job creation. In addition to economic contributions, the cultural value of diversity generated by migrants nourishes the appeal of many cities around the world. Therefore, the added value in diverse and superdiverse environments, as noted by Scholten et al. (2019), confirms one of the roles immigrants play in host societies.

In performing this role, migrants' businesses explore cultural heritage through skills and talents that allow their business growth while contributing to their host countries. In the case of the interviewees, their businesses accessed products and services they acquired from their cultural background. However, from their perspective, sometimes this rediscovery was unexpected. This creates a possibility to bet for a dialogical perspective on decolonization. Instead of polarizing knowledge in a South-North or North-South relationship, Hammam et al. (2020) proposed balancing knowledge in a way it avoids the polarization and hybridity of knowledge. This

pretends to initiate a dialogue in the constant and continuous process of colonialism in which we live. Therefore, the processes of business creation by the women interviewed show there is a possibility to exercise the rediscovery of the cultural values of their countries while setting a company in the Netherlands.

To illustrate this point, Karen's business reflects an unexpected rediscovery of Mexican gastronomy. In her case, by re-learning and rediscovering the tortilla making process. Even though she grew up following how tortillas were made, she never imagined herself working by producing them in a large scale. As well as many luxury businesses around the world where the 'how-to' is preserved for its value as art and cultural heritage, Karen rediscovered the meaning of the tortilla as a Mexican inheritance. In this case, re-learning the tortilla to make it a source of income became a process of understanding from a different angle the value of Mexican culture in the countryside, the crops, the families, and the numerous people who depend on corn and tortillas to live. Even though her studies focused on business creation, her expectations of accessing a cultural tradition through the rediscovery of Mexican gastronomy came as a surprise for her. Not only because she never considered the idea of creating a tortillería, but also because of the value recognized by her customers for the whole production process. In the end, Karen was creating a one-of-a-kind product in the Netherlands. The fact that she had a company where Mexicans produced tortillas from scratch, the quality of the corn seeds were proved to be organic, and that she offered an ethnic and authentic product gave a special recognition to her business.

On a similar note, Andiara's beauty salon in the Netherlands was the result of years of study and experience with the beauty industry in Brazil. Here, the authenticity of Brazilian products and services were seen as an added value to her business. However, since back in her country this was just the nature of her profession, she did not think there was a meaningful appeal to it. Andiara now recognizes that through social media, the Brazilian beauty industry has been expanding with the promotion of the quality of Keratins, nail products, waxing services and hair care. As I could tell from some friends from the Brazilian community, over the years Andiara has become well-known for both the diaspora and the residents of the neighborhood where the salon is located. Therefore, for her business, not only does this have an impact in the way other

nationalities in the host country perceive the Brazilian quality, but it also sets a preference for the Brazilian diaspora in accessing this type of products and services.

All in all, against their expectations, they rediscovered their cultural heritage through the exploration of their market options. For their customers, their products and services resulted attractive as they were not very common in the Netherlands, and they offered an original product and the quality of a service. However, to get to this point, they first need to go through the process of acquiring raw materials, supplies, machinery, and labor. To do so, networking is a crucial step, and due to the ethnic influence of their businesses, they need to maintain a long-distance relationship between their new host country and their homelands. Hence, the following chapter accounts for the way this relationship works and how it is crucial for migrant entrepreneurs.

5.1 Translocality and entrepreneurship

VILA FRANCA

I have always been here about to land
I have always been moving
Even sitting on my parents' living room
Here where the birds cross the sky
And language is a lullaby
I have always been here
Even when I'm already gone

- On the inside of a mollusk/En el interior de un molusco, Virginia Moreno Goitia.

More than a concept from Zoomers and Westen (2008) and Greiner (2011), translocality reminds me of the 'coming and going' relationship in which I go through migration. I exist here where I physically am, but I am mentally still living in the corridors of my parents' house almost every day of my life. I travel 'home' to see my family and visit my atelier, and I travel 'home' when I go to work in the gym, and I land in Schiphol. I pay taxes here where the Belastingdienst gets me by mail, but I buy supplies in the same neighborhood where I grew up buying fabrics since I was a child.

For me, working in the gym using the music I have been listening to my entire life is a constant going. Paying a salsa instructor online to support my classes from Colombia also implies a movement back home, but I still work and live in the Netherlands. Therefore, more than a physical movement, being translocal implies a mobility between two places in which I exist in different ways. I invest back there to create a business, but I position it here, where another network keeps growing.

As it was established in Chapter 2.3, translocality understands that mobile beings belong to different societies, connect in spaces that go beyond a sending-receiving relationship, and move in different 'locales' (Zoomers and Westen, 2008). In doing so, translocality applies to "the dynamics, linkages and interdependencies of the multidimensional social space connecting migrants' areas of origin and destination" (Greiner, 2011: 610). Based on the data collected, going beyond a sending-receiving relationship, and the natural co-existence of two cultures in which migrants are placed, there is a possibility to explore translocality within migrant entrepreneurship. The cases of Karen, Eliana and Andiara demonstrate that a constant connection to a local network in their home countries and in the Netherlands is precisely what, in one hand, adds value to their businesses; and on the other one, facilitates the performance of their businesses in the acquisition of goods and resources from their home countries to the Netherlands.

In addition to the previous statement, Greiner (2011: 612) noted this as something "achieved through the use of extensive networks that facilitate the circulation of people and resources". This also happened in different levels, and it suggested that indeed, translocality allows migrants to get and give support to different locales. For both cases, without looking at how distant the home and host countries were, opening the possibility to access a local product contributed to the investment in a local network in the Netherlands, and another local network their home country. To illustrate this, the case of Karen can be analyzed in the way she accessed and, at a certain degree, created two completely different networks to run her business: one established and supported in Mexico for the access to cornfields, logistic and transportation companies. These included the workers involved in the whole process going from farmers, crop owners, mechanics,

engineers, and many other actors contributing to the corn production and shipments for exportation to the Netherlands. In another level, the production process of tortillas required a network in charge of the local production, administration, and once again, deliveries and transportation in the Netherlands.

As noted by Bunse (2019), and Page (2019), networks represent a crucial intersection for both translocality and entrepreneurship. They enable migrant entrepreneurs to get support in many ways and allow them to support other networks. Once again, in the case of Karen, even over the phone she was getting support from engineers in Mexico, who guided her on how to use the machinery for production in the Netherlands. Since the machinery was produced in her homeland, the support she required to maintain it came directly from Mexico. She was in constant contact with a network in Mexico that supported another network in the Netherlands. In this way she was able to support her local staff through the support of another *local* back in Mexico.

Additionally, Karen acknowledged that at the initial stage of the establishment of her business, she thought of a tortillería as a market opportunity to supply Mexican restaurants and a market gap in the Mexican diaspora. However, after escalating the production with machinery and growing her team, she ended up supplying restaurants, organic stores, and small markets. This proved that her final consumer was not only the Mexican diaspora, but also the Dutch. Translocality, then supports the mobile relationship migrant entrepreneurs play in supplying and accessing different networks in different locales. This was only possible because her business was indeed supported by the contact between her country of origin and the host.

For the case of Eliana and Andiara, the same process occurred in a similar way: the access to networks in their home and host country helped them to acquire goods to then supply their businesses. With Eliana this happened in the Netherlands through the diaspora, who purchased and transported ingredients for her to make the final product, and through other networks from whom she was purchasing packaging, cooking materials, customers and contacting stores to sell. Andiara, on the other hand, used her time to visit her family to bring goods for her business, which linked her to a specific network in her town. Her translocal experience was evident in the

way she supplied her business with ingredients she could only buy in Brazil when she traveled to see her family. For her, offering Brazilian keratins and waxing products added an important value and quality to her business. Therefore, the easiest way for her to find a good, profitable access to it, was to invest in buying it personally during her trips. Back in the Netherlands, the use of those products was crucial for the recognition of the salon within her customers.

In the case of Farida, networking happened in one local, but it was mainly focused on the diaspora and religious groups. Her current success was achieved through the support of the Muslim community, which was compound by other families who through referrals helped her to get more customers. In her case, a different way of translocality applied as she was more in contact with other Arab women migrants than with nationals of the host country. Language teaching, in this case, supported what Bunse (2019) understood as the reason for migrants to opt for ethnic entrepreneurship as a choice for market exploration. The author noted that many "immigrant entrepreneurs often choose a business which belongs to most businesses in their ethnic niche". For Farida, teaching Arabic would then be focused on a specific group within her community that also served as a support network for her and her business. Since this was focused on language teaching, her main customers came from the Muslim community, and she was not fluent in Dutch or English, her business was a support network too.

In addition to this form of support, the interviews with Karen, Eliana and Andiara also demonstrated how entrepreneurs can play a supporting role for their local networks. Bunse (2019: 8) noted how networks in migrant entrepreneurship served as opportunities for job creation, and how "Members within ethnic enclaves do often have the opportunity of working in businesses established by group members". When I met Karen in one of her customers' taquerías, I noted how this was also a Mexican family business. There, other members of the family were employed by the owner, and part of the staff was composed of Latinos. Although this restaurant is not a network directly related to Karen, it illustrates the way in which ethnic businesses generate jobs within the Latin community, and once again, serve as a support to their network.

As a more directly focused example, Karen employs in the tortilla factory a significant number of people from the Mexican diaspora in the Netherlands. As I mentioned before, her production team is composed mainly by Mexicans and Latinos from other nationalities. In this *local*, not only is the diaspora benefited, but the Dutch network she relies on for accounting, transportation, logistics and other suppliers. For Andiara, this can be seen in a similar way: her staff in the salon comes is composed of other Brazilian and Latin women. Thus, job creation represents a significant space for migrant entrepreneurship to benefit different networks. Indirectly, many jobs in both, home country and country of residence, are connected to these businesses. The mobility and constant contact between both *locales* are precisely what gives the success to their existence. As it was noted by Priem (2011: 791, as cited by Bunse, 2019: 7), the choice for migrants to focus on an ethnic-concentrated industry is what gives the value to their culture in the country of residence.

Finally, as an exercise of translocality, Truong and Des Gasper (2008: 288) reflected in the many ways in which migrants created communities in host countries, while they remained connected and maintained relationships in their countries of origin. Andiara and Eliana represent this statement in two ways. First, Andiara mentioned she supports her mother economically since the pandemic hit Brazil. According to her, this economic support is now permanent due to the situation of the pandemic, since her mother's health restricted her to keep working. Therefore, she provides economic support for both, her family in the host country, and her family in the country of origin. Eliana, on the other hand, decided to invest in a house in Mexico during the time she was expecting her visa to come to the Netherlands. For her, the house is her backup investment. It generates an income for her, and it is also thought to be used as a vacation home for her family. She specifically mentioned how having the house required from her to be in contact with someone in Mexico to oversee the maintenance and administration of it.

Interestingly, translocality is exercised by migrant entrepreneurs in many ways. For the cases of the women interviewed, it does not remain strictly linked to their businesses, but it is also evident in their family lives and personal projects. For the cases previously analyzed, the mobile character of their businesses allowed them to also move within and create different networks to maintain a constant relationship with their home countries. A translocal experience is therefore

represented in the networks and groups they belong to. This experience demonstrates that women migrant networks are also established in a dual, translocal way, and they operate as mobile structures.

Chapter 6: Conclusion.

Where are we really contributing to development?

This research paper uncovered the evidence of the ways in which women migrant entrepreneurs contribute to the development of their origin and host countries. In this exploration, my experience as a self-employed woman migrant, and the stories of four other women allowed me to understand how even in unexpected ways migrants' contributions went beyond the economic. These findings respond to a process of business creation that becomes more than a work status, and follows different stages of the process of migration. Even though the women's businesses answered to different needs, and were focused on different niche markets, some intersections provided similarities to answer the questions of this paper.

The first finding suggested the idea that migrant entrepreneurs opt for self-employment and business creation because it represents a more feasible path for many migrants. Contrary to getting employed, the possibilities for migrants to make use of their skills and choose for a profession related to their studies and backgrounds have bigger chances on business creation. According to Naudé et al. (2017), migrant entrepreneurs get involved into entrepreneurial activity due to discriminatory practices, those being legal or linguistic. Therefore, through self-employment their options resulted less restricted, which gave them better prospects to get into the labor market. For the interviewees, this statement was demonstrated as their linguistic skills were not good enough to get a job in their field, and in one of the cases, the circumstances with the pandemic pushed them to explore different options to being employed. Additionally, choosing for business creation proved that migrants made use of their skills and put into practice their expertise in their field of study.

Within this first step into the process, making use of skills led to an exercise of rethinking and rediscovering cultural heritage. Due to the character of the interviewees' businesses, they needed to be in contact with their culture through the acquisition of a product or the delivery of a service. Since now they were based in a different country, the encounter of this process required from them to look and explore them from new angle. In doing so, a new appreciation of the values of an inherited culture was rediscovered. Linked to this, for their customers, their businesses were very attractive as they were innovative and drew attention precisely for the added value they represented in the market. Therefore, an appreciation from outside supported a process of rethinking an inherited culture that was most likely taken from granted.

As a second finding, their businesses were an exploration of a product or service coming from their countries of origin. Networking, as stated by Bunse (2019), facilitated this process by connecting people through the access and offer of a product and a service, which benefited both diasporas and residents. In doing so, re-thinking and rediscovering their cultural heritage allowed them to help themselves and influence different locales. In short, the answer to 'what development' responds the definition of development as freedom stated by Zoomers and van Westen (2011: 377). The interviewees' businesses enhance the ability of people to help themselves and influence the world. This exercise challenges the role of the women migrant entrepreneurs play in the development-migration nexus.

On the other hand, exploring the migration and development nexus, and as stated by De Haas (2020) in the paradoxes of migration, the interviewees are indeed a proof of the investment many migrants do to stay in the host country. The assumptions of a less privileged *South* where people aim to move to the *North* reproduce a discourse of inadequacy. As it was evident in the interviews, migrants who choose to migrate and come from the South, and specifically from outside of the EU to the Netherlands do not always represent the least privileged populations of their countries. The analysis showed that different socio-economic backgrounds, levels of study, and work industries allowed us to challenge this assumption. Many migrants invest large amounts of money into migrating, and into establishing a business. The investment, coming from the country of origin demonstrates that, indeed, there is clear evidence supporting the 'paradoxes of migration' stated by De Haas (2020) in the argument that long-distance migration is achieved by those with the means to move.

Linked to this, the evidence suggested a different approach: women migrant entrepreneurs invest in their migration process and settle in the host country. Their investments, expenses, and monetary contributions are focused on their businesses and their households in the host country. Remittances, in this case, did not prove to be a source of development or economic growth, and linked to Bakewell's (2008) arguments, benefited the migrant's network. Businesses, however, proved to be a source of development in countries of origin and host countries in terms of culture, monetary growth, job creation and skills. As seen in the interviewees' stories, investments in the country of origin can support the development of multiple locales, which also influences other networks, industries and communities.

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