

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN SMALL OPEN ECONOMIES

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Editors

Olja Munitlak Ivanović
Isidora Ljumović
Aleksandra Bradić-Martinović



**International Scientific Conference:
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN SMALL OPEN ECONOMIES**

*26th October, 2017
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3.13. MIGRATION, INTEGRATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: INSIGHTS FROM THE SERBIAN EXPERIENCE

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OBJECTIVES

The objective of this article is to explore entrepreneurship as a form of economic integration within two migrant groups: long term settled refugees and returnees in Serbia, and to investigate their motives as well as macro, meso and micro factors affecting their business practices. Economic integration outcomes of migrants can be a valuable indicator in helping policy makers tackling unequal growth challenges. ,

METHODOLOGY

This paper summarizes recent studies, some of which have not yet been published. The results of two qualitative research are outlined, whose target groups are transnational entrepreneurs returnees (TNE) in Serbia and long term settled refugee entrepreneurs (LSRE) from the former republics of Yugoslavia in Serbia. All but two respondents are the owners of micro and micro and small business enterprises. The first research was conducted in 2013 through semi-structured face-to-face interviews (15) and on-line survey (47) with TNE. The second research was conducted in 2014 through focus groups (3 FG with LSRE from Croatia and BiH), referring also to the additionally processed 2011 census data.

The qualitative method was applicable because of insufficient quantitative data and novelty of the phenomenon not enough recognized by the official statistics. The presented views and opinions of the entrepreneurs enable better revealing the challenges of economic integration.

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RESULTS

In spite of different motives for starting the firms (emergency for LSRE vs. opportunity solution for TNE), the outcome is good economic integration. Both groups rely on family and their own social networks, especially for starting and developing business.

Through transnational activities, both LSRE and TNE use opportunities and overcome obstacles by maximizing material and non-material profits. Innovation of their business come from the fact that they rely on networks spanning borders.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings contribute to better understanding both determinants and obstacles of migrant entrepreneurship (ME), which are important public policy issues, given the strong increase in different types of mobility worldwide, modes of integration and links between societies of origin and destination. Adjusting political response towards measures that promote ME aids to recognizing the potential of ME contribution to the development through direct economic investment, but also through bringing entrepreneurial spirit, knowledge transfers, etc.

ORIGINALITY VALUE

Scientific knowledge about the relation between migration and entrepreneurship is limited in transition economy countries without large immigration pressure, such as Serbia. The results of our research provide the evidence that entrepreneurship, especially through transnational economic activity, facilitates integration for different migrant groups. The focus on migration-entrepreneurship nexus can also contribute to better definition of national and regional level tools for monitoring socioeconomic inequalities.

KEY WORDS

Migration, entrepreneurship, economic development, transnationalism, integration, Serbia

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