



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

This is a repository copy of *Gender Paradoxes in the Context of Refugee Entrepreneurship*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/190834/>

Version: Presentation

Conference or Workshop Item:

Al Taji, F and Refai, D orcid.org/0000-0001-6805-7466 (Accepted: 2022) Gender Paradoxes in the Context of Refugee Entrepreneurship. In: War, Gender and Displacement: The Impact of Forced Migration on Families in the Middle East and North Africa, 09 Oct 2022, Amman, Jordan. (Unpublished)

This item is protected by copyright. This is an author produced version of a conference paper originally presented at War, Gender and Displacement: The Impact of Forced Migration on Families in the Middle East and North Africa, Amman, Jordan, 10 September 2022.

Reuse

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

Gender Paradoxes in the Context of Refugee Entrepreneurship¹

Farah Al Taji & Deema Refai

Introduction

Refugee entrepreneurship is regarded as a means to enhance the integration of refugees in host communities (Crawley et al. 2018). There has been a notable growth in the literature on refugee entrepreneurship broadly over the past few years (e.g. Bizri 2017; Refai et al., 2018; Turner 2020). Yet, the field is still in its infancy, and much less attention has been directed towards women in this context (e.g. Huq and Venugopal 2021). Nevertheless, in light of the difficult circumstances that refugees face after displacement due to constraining legal, economic, social and political pressures (Refai et al., 2018; Ajil et al., 2020), more refugee women are likely to engage in financial activities to support their households (Al-Dajani and Marlow 2010). Engagement in entrepreneurship can mean that women will confront societal obstacles as gender roles start to change. This change has consequences on the marital relationships and family dynamics (Al-Dajani and Marlow 2010), which in turn create additional loads of responsibility on women to maintain a balance between life and business. Nevertheless, and despite those challenges, entrepreneurship activities have been shown to empower women and enhance the financial situation of their families (Krause 2014).

In this chapter, similar to Hmieleski and Sheppard (2019), we view women entrepreneurs to be entrepreneurs who embrace their femininity, whilst simultaneously working to achieve a balance between their lives and businesses. We view the entrepreneurial actions of women to be largely

¹ This chapter is part of the on-going British Academy funded project: **Negotiating Relationships and Redefining Traditions:**

Syrian and Iraqi Women Refugees in Jordan based at the University of Birmingham (UK).

shaped and impacted by their gendered roles as mothers and wives in the first place, but also as entrepreneurs (Kodagoda 2014). Our approach is in line with emerging research around the concept of “mumpreneurs” (Duberley and Carrigan 2012) who strive to achieve an ultimate balance between both their gendered and entrepreneurial roles (Ekinsmyth 2011). As such, the term entrepreneur in this chapter refers to women engaging in different forms of self-employment, which do not necessarily always generate macro-economic growth, thus, supporting the notion that value in entrepreneurship should not be confined to economic outcomes, and can involve various meanings that are of value to the entrepreneur (Kapasi et al. 2021; Loi et al. forthcoming). For instance, considering the contextual challenges facing refugees, refugee entrepreneurship can largely build on embedded dispositions of survivability (Refai et al., 2018), which is also in line with Bizri (2017, 849) who argues, based on the discrimination theory, that “immigrant entrepreneurs are necessity-driven rather than opportunity-driven”.

The impact of changing gender roles on family relations in the context of refugee entrepreneurship remains largely under-researched (Al-Dajani et al. 2019; Al-Dajani and Marlow 2010; Gangamma 2018). Some exceptions include Al-Dajani and Marlow (2010) investigating the impact of home-based enterprises run by Palestinian refugee women in Jordan on family relations, where they highlight how gender identity is strongly dependent on context and is a dynamic social construct that is influenced by various structures. Krause (2014) also examines how renegotiation of gender roles can have an empowering impact on the lives of women in refugee camps and settlements.