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Host as Entrepreneurs: Female Commercial Home Entrepreneurs in Gaeltacht Areas in the West of Ireland

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**HOSTS AS ENTREPRENEURS: FEMALE COMMERCIAL HOME
ENTREPRENEURS IN GAELTACHT AREAS IN THE WEST OF IRELAND**

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INTRODUCTION

The commercial home literature, as the phrase implies, concentrates on the home as a place where hospitality is provided for tourists. An important contribution to this literature has been the discussion of what actually defines a commercial home (Lynch and MacWhannell 2000). A clear area of interest has also been in the social interactions that occur within that home between host and guest. This relationship must be examined in the context of the fact that studies such as Stringer (1981) show that gaining an insight into the realities of family life is a key attraction for the visitor. However, the shared use of family space can lead to tensions. Darke and Gurney (2000) describe hospitality in commercial homes as a performance which the host undertakes for the guest. In a similar vein, Dann and Cohen (1991: 163) discuss 'social exchange and the profit motive masquerading behind a phoney front of friendliness'. Mottiar and Tucker (2007) examine the web of power that the host spins in Goereme, Turkey, as the host controls which local businesses 'their' guests visit.

Another area of interest has been the gendered nature of commercial homes. As Lynch (2000: 106) states, 'hosting in the home is generally perceived as a gendered occupation'. Darke and Gurney (2000: 83) note that 'it remains the case that women's identity is much more closely tied up with the home than men's [and they argue] that the hospitality in the commercial sector offers the services of a surrogate mother or wife'. Dart (2006) considers issues of the blurring boundaries of work and leisure space and argues that many, who work at home, experience a sense of 'disembeddeness' with a loss of the traditional home space. Similarly, Sullivan (2000: 202) notes that 'some co-residents experience loss of space, which can cause them dissatisfaction and lead to conflict', while Mirchandani (2000:

