Conceptualising Learning in Minorities Entrepreneurship

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Introduction

The field which is currently recognised as 'minority' or 'minorities' entrepreneurship has grown, developed and matured greatly since it became prevalent in modern entrepreneurial research during the 1990s (e.g. Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Dana 1997; Ram and Jones 2008). It has grown from roots in the fields of ethnic and migrant entrepreneurship to become a much wider, diverse and yet inclusive set of categories, which includes groups such as immigrants, people with disabilities, youth and many others. This chapter adopts the broad definition that 'Minority Entrepreneurship' includes any group who might be considered as disadvantaged or under-represented in terms of entrepreneurial activity. However, given the growth of the field, it is also necessary to reconsider what the use of the term 'minority' may mean in this context, since this is no longer a simple matter within a changing social context.

The aim of this chapter is to develop a conceptual model for learning in minorities entrepreneurship, which builds on and complements the other contributions in the field, and which can assist in advancing research, policy, educational and support measures. Whilst there has been extensive research in

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the minorities field, little prior work has addressed in depth the contribution of learning (especially social learning) to developing entrepreneurial identity and capability, which is a specific concern of this book. The proposed model addresses this gap by considering entrepreneurial learning as a dynamic agent for enhancing the capabilities of minority entrepreneurs. Whilst conceptual models have been developed in the context of ethnic minority, migrant, indigenous and female entrepreneurs, as well as intersectional cases across minority groups, these have generally not addressed learning as an enabler.

The prime focus of the chapter is to consider the entrepreneurial behaviours (including social norms, values and practices) which minority groups may use when enacting entrepreneurial opportunities and which create multiple forms of value, for themselves and others (Baumol et al. 2007; Lackéus 2018). This approach places the conceptualisation in the space of human and social learning with cultural dynamics. A review of the literature leads to a structured overview of prior work within and across the categories of minority entrepreneurship which inform the development of key concepts to be deployed as the foundations for the proposed model. The conceptual framework is then introduced and described, together with an illustrative example. The scope, implications and limitations of the model will be discussed in the closing sections.

New Lenses on Minorities Research

This chapter is based on a review and development of selected and relevant prior works including new conceptual ideas but not entirely new empirical work. A selection of contributions to the study of entrepreneurship within minority groups, and which address entrepreneurial learning behaviour in relation to these groups, are considered. There is a tradition of research into minority entrepreneurship which can be traced back over several decades (e.g. Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Dana 1997; Ram et al. 2008). Initially this tended to concentrate on ethnic minority businesses in general, and on specific groups such as Asian, African and other migrant populations. This body of work continues to develop in scale and depth (e.g. Kloosterman 2010), but there has been a recognition of both the increasing range of ethnic groups, their interconnections with other social strata and the ways in which exclusion and discrimination can be practised (or experienced) within societies towards minorities. Given greater social awareness towards minorities, combined with progress by minority groups in securing their rights in society towards equality and participation, the agenda has moved to become more

inclusive. Three new perspectives have emerged in the past two decades which have altered significantly the landscape of minorities entrepreneurship.

First, a major contribution is the intersectional perspective, in which analysis of the combined factors of ethnicity, gender, social class, faith, disability and other factors can be the basis of discrimination, thereby limiting social and economic equality and access. This has enabled a more complex understanding of minorities entrepreneurship to be developed from the initial Black critical feminist perspective (Crenshaw 1989; Romero and Valdez 2016) including a critical realist perspective (Dy et al. 2014). Whilst women may not be seen as a minority group in society, as entrepreneurs they constitute a minority in almost all economies (GEM 2019). The intersectional lens can make apparent the combined effects of factors which further disadvantage them, or lead to their contributions to entrepreneurial work being undervalued, for example through an expectation of providing free or low-cost labour in family enterprises (Ram et al. 2017). As many world cities and nation states become much more diverse in many aspects, not only in ethnic groups, but also through linguistic, faith, gender orientation and in other ways, the notion of 'majority' itself is fragmenting.

The second new concept is the ascendance of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec 2007) which highlights the prevalence and complexity of multiple migrant groups and the policy issues this raises in cities such as London (Sepulveda et al. 2011), in a way that has since become normalised in urban life. Vertovec identified a useful classification of factors which shaped complex interplays of economic and social relations related to incoming groups, including:

- Country of origin (comprising possible subset traits such as ethnicity, language[s], religious tradition, regional and local identities, cultural values and practices);
- Migration channel (often related to highly gendered flows and specific social networks);
- Legal status (determining entitlement to rights), migrants' human capital (particularly educational background) and access to employment (which may or may not be in immigrants' hands);
- Locality (related especially to material conditions, but also the nature and extent of other immigrant and ethnic minority presence);
- Transnationalism (emphasising how migrants' lives are lived with significant reference to places and peoples elsewhere) and responses by local authorities, service providers and local residents.

Vertovec argued that novel responses to these complex interplays were required to move beyond earlier frameworks of social formation (Vertovec 2007). As Foner (2017) commented, there is nothing particularly new about superdiversity, partly because whilst it is an accepted phenomenon in many cities, there is a continuing 'nativist' and nationalist resistance to accepting multiculturalism from groups who feel this compromises their sense of dominant identity (Chin 2017). This continues to be manifested in such political movements as Trumpism and Brexitism. It may be accentuated when a dominant majority group itself becomes a statistical minority, such as the case of 'white' populations under the age of 18 falling below 50 per cent in some states and cities in the USA (Brookings 2019). Powerful minority groups have occasionally exerted hegemony over larger groups of subsidiary populations, both historically (for example as occurred in 'Apartheid' and colonial Southern Africa) and in contemporary societies (Laurie and Khan 2017). Hence, superdiversity is an important (if contested) factor in the fragmentation of a perceived dominant national majority identity. In this social and cultural context, new ways of framing 'minority' group identities are required, without this necessarily being contingent on its reference to a dominant majority. The 'majority' may increasingly be an aggregation of many other minority groups.

The third, and fundamental, insight which alters the frame of minorities entrepreneurship is the mixed embeddedness perspective, developed by Kloosterman et al. (1999) and Kloosterman (2010), based on foundations from researchers such as Granovetter (1985). Mixed embeddedness was developed for application in ethnic minority entrepreneurship and has broader conceptual applicability for other minorities. It provides a social interactionist framework which explains both the interactions between market opportunity access and human capital, with the societal embeddedness of minority groups. The mixed embeddedness perspective has been widely adopted and has significantly raised the level of analysis of ethnic and more general minority entrepreneurship.

An important consideration in framing 'minority' groups is that they should not be defined simply by their status as a 'minority', that is in relation to a perceived 'majority' or mainstream, dominant norm or group. Implicitly, this assumption is often made. Yet their relationship with a majority group in a particular context should not in itself define their identity as a group. Minority groups can be defined as those who experience disadvantage from being treated differently and unfairly, or from lacking equal rights, representation and power, arising from perceived 'difference' (Wirth 1945). For example, in the case of Black West African entrepreneurs originating from

native countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, where they constitute an ethnic majority, they only form a minority by being entrepreneurs, or being from specific minority groups (such as Igbo speakers) within the population. Yet in a European context, they become identifiable as a recognisable minority in relation to the overall population because of their ethnic difference. The mixed embeddedness perspective was applied to Ghanaian entrepreneurs in the Netherlands (Kloosterman et al. 2016), resulting in new insights into migrants' lack of access to opportunities. Whilst this tends to create a visible identity in the eyes of the majority population, this in itself should not define the group, because their cultural characteristics and entrepreneurial approaches exist in their own right, and are not defined simply by being a minority within a particular context. However, within this context they may need to learn to adapt their behaviours in order to become economically and socially embedded.

This principle, which is fundamentally about the right to equality for people in all minority groups, clearly applies more generally. It is essential to enable people who are individually or in a group experiencing disadvantage to realise their full potential and contribute to their full participation in economic, social, political, cultural and civil life (Equal Rights Trust 2008). It is necessary to argue this, since increasing intolerance towards minorities (evident in Europe, the USA and worldwide), partly as a consequence of 'nationalist' movements, continues to require a response (Hedetoft 2018). If entrepreneurship is truly to be recognised as a universal human right, this must also be accompanied by working towards equality of access to opportunities, means and resources to achieve such an ambition (Vinod 2005; Aerni 2015; Rae 2019). Simply providing equal rights and access is insufficient. It must be accompanied by providing the access to education and to applied learning methods which will enable people to overcome discrimination and to develop the capabilities and confidence to use their access to opportunities and resources effectively.

Structured Overview of Prior Works

This section summarises important contributions to conceptual framing for entrepreneurial minorities, which provides a foundation for the model proposed subsequently. Table 1 provides a general structure of minority groups for the purpose of entrepreneurship study, using eight categories: ethnicity; gender; sexual orientation; ability; linguistic; faith group; age group; and other forms of peripherality. Even this classification is incomplete

Table 1 Minority groups for entrepreneurship

Category	Groups
Ethnic	Numerous: the table in Wikipedia lists 498 ethnic groups with populations over 100,000, excluding smaller indigenous groups https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_contemporary_ethnic_groups
Gender	Female; transsexual; intersex
Sexual orientation	Homosexual (lesbian, gay); bisexual; transgender; other
Ability	Physical, sensory, intellectual impairment; permanent health condition impairing capability
Linguistic	Native tongue differing from the majority language
Faith group	Faith/religious group differing from the majority, including Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; Hindu; Jain in Western countries; Christian minorities
Age group	Young (below 18); elderly (over 65 or retirement age)
Peripherality	Additional to above, including: migrants; refugees; forced displacees; unadopted orphans; ex-services personnel; ex-offenders; transient and homeless people; living in remote places such as small islands and 'off-grid'; other unrecognised groups

(note the long list of ethnic groups referenced) and would not be accepted by all groups. The list may even be seen (unintentionally) as culturally biased and subjective. It allows for new categories to be included, as in the case of 'peripheral' groups who are excluded, marginal or disadvantaged for additional reasons (such as geography). It does not include 'culture' as a discrete category, since cultural minority tends to arise from a combination of the other categories, such as ethnicity, language and faith. Additionally, individuals within each category will often be members of other groups also, hence experiencing intersectional minority and consequent disadvantages.

It is arguable that there is a need to move beyond an overemphasis on 'minorities' given the inexactitude of the term and the problematic issues in its relations with whatever the 'majority' (or heteronormativity) may be. Laurie and Khan (2017) suggested that:

The role of culture and commerce in transforming the meanings attached to 'minority' cannot be understood in terms of a singular trajectory from the minor to the major…. the demographic imaginary of majority and minority does not adequately account for the production of the social worlds in which 'majority' and 'minority' acquire their cultural, political and commercial force. (Laurie and Khan 2017, 9)

So, whilst accepting that minorities are the starting point, the direction of this chapter is towards an understanding of how such *cultural groups* learn to create value through developing entrepreneurial behaviours and capabilities. The term cultural group recognises that whilst these groups will normally be formed from people in minorities, they are overlapping and intersectional; also it is frequently their cultural resources and how they are used which initiates their entrepreneurial activities. However, the existing canon of entrepreneurship literature regarding the study of minorities is largely found within the categories tabled above. These cannot all be included in the space of a single chapter, and are cited selectively where they inform the development of a conceptual model.

The area of research which has arguably done most to advance the study, understanding and possibly the practice of entrepreneurship in a 'minority' field continues to be women's entrepreneurship. From this body of work, a study by Brush et al. (2009) proposed a gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship, based on a thorough review of literature in the field to date. This proposed a '5M' framework for women's entrepreneurship research, consisting of a central idea of 'Motherhood' or 'MHER' expressing her role in the family and the contribution of gender in business ownership. Around this were located the spheres of Market opportunity; Money and Management; within a context framing the Macro and Meso Environment. The authors used this to classify prior research and to consider the need for a separate theory on female entrepreneurship, which they considered was not required since:

> with the 'stretch' to capture family embeddedness (motherhood), as well as the macro-meso environment, coupled with appropriate approaches and methods, current theory and conceptualisations can go a long way to understanding the phenomena and process of women's entrepreneurship. (Brush et al. 2009, 18)

Hence, related research can contribute and connect with this conceptualisation. There are growing contributions from an intersectional perspective on female entrepreneurship, such as work by Verduyn and Essers (2017) providing a critical reflection on female migrant entrepreneurship in the Netherlands, with promising indications that the scale, depth and quality of this work will continue to develop. There have also been studies by researchers such as Dhaliwal (2000) providing insights into the learning experiences of Asian female entrepreneurs in the UK, which provided an early link into the area of learning.

Turning to the field of ethnic minority entrepreneurship, there have been a number of conceptual frameworks developed of ethnic entrepreneurship, such as prior work by Pütz (2003) and Waldinger et al. (1990) that proposed an interaction between Opportunity structure (Market conditions; access to ownership; job market and legal conditions) with Resources (cultural traditions and ethnic social networks) which produced ethnic strategies. Volery (2007) considered the mixed embeddedness approach, but disregarded it as unproven at that time, proposing instead an enhanced interactive model of an entrepreneurial process, situated within four dimensions of: creative processing; cognitive heuristics; psychological characteristics; information; and knowledge. These in turn rest within the four domains of: ethnic group resources; ethnic strategies; opportunity structure; and metropolitan characteristics. The two models aimed to combine 'culturalist' and 'structuralist' approaches into an interactive concept.

There have also been important studies of specific ethnic and indigenous groups which have contributed conceptual understandings. Notable within these is the work of Dana (1997), who in an early study explored self-employment in ethnocultural communities, an ethnocultural milieu characterised by entrepreneurial behaviours influenced by culture, thrift, frugality, asceticism and ethnic resources. Recent work by Dana et al. (2019) has studied the social reproduction of family, community and ethnic capital in a Menon ethnic enclave. This framework expressed how social capital resources and norms of group cohesion and social responsibility are socially learned and practised within a familial culture which facilitates individual entrepreneurship, situated in an entrepreneurial community structure and social dynamics. Notable within this study was the attention to entrepreneurial values and behaviours based upon a philosophy of 'building our future by sacrificing our today'. The philosophy also advocated social cohesion for collective welfare, habits of frugality and work ethic, cooperation and inter-trading. Through fine-grained ethnographic analysis, this study demonstrated how the Menon group had sustained a higher rate of entrepreneurial activity and economic prosperity than other ethnic communities, both in their native Karachi and in other diasporic communities. Dana et al. proposed that:

> only a complex analytic-systemic perspective can describe the dynamic interdependence encountered in many entrepreneurially oriented communities, and unveil the social, economic and physical factors that determine a specific community structure and evolution. (Dana et al. 2019, 15)

Within the canon of ethnic minority research, it is important to distinguish between the studies of ethnic groups as migrants to new countries and as indigenous populations. Transnational entrepreneurship has been explored for example by Drori et al. (2009) and Lundberg and Rehnfors (2018). Jones et al. (2019) found in studying new migrant entrepreneurs and their diversity, that their contributions to economic development were polarised between a few 'high flyers' and a majority who struggle at the margins with limited resources to survive economically, yet who contribute to local communities through creating employment, services, culture and crime reduction. In relation to migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs working internationally, Elo et al. (2018) explored the complex factors related to migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs in international contexts and highlighted the roles of 'expat-preneurs', their spouses and families, with the contributions of experience and decision-making, such as in forced migration. This work also signalled the effects of distance, weak networks and cultural isolation.

In comparison, the field of indigenous entrepreneurship has explored how groups in their native lands have responded to challenges and changes such as colonisation, conflict, deprival of lands, regulation and (more recently) environmental and climate change. Croce (2017) conducted a major review of indigenous entrepreneurship literature and concentrated on a location-based model of urban, rural and remote indigenous entrepreneurship as differentiating factors. Ratten and Dana (2017) offered a gendered perspective on indigenous entrepreneurship as a promising and evolving field. They suggested incorporating more feminine explanations for the distinctiveness of Indigenous entrepreneurship to give recognition to the connection to the land and community that is part of Indigenous culture (Ratten and Dana 2017).

There have been several studies on Aboriginal entrepreneurship, including Moroz and Kayseas (2012) who developed a research framework on indigenous entrepreneurship from prior work (covering entrepreneurial actors, their motivations, principal and emergent themes), but finding diverse evidence. In the Canadian context, a growing number of studies have explored indigenous entrepreneurship (including Anderson 2002; Anderson et al. 2006; and Johnstone 2008) and considered the community economic development (CED) approach to collective entrepreneurship by Aboriginal Bands. These communities have included the Mi'Kmaq Band at Membertou, Cape Breton (Canada), which has achieved remarkable economic and social regeneration through community entrepreneurship and also by collaborative cultural and infrastructure projects with the wider community which generate shared value. This example is developed further as a case in this study (Rae 2020).

It also appears from the literature that some minority groups have developed greater cohesion, collaboration and an ability to assert entrepreneurial freedoms, whilst others have been less able to do so. Ethnic, Aboriginal and female entrepreneurship has increasingly demonstrated this over the past two decades, though varying significantly between individual groups and the national and cultural contexts within which they operate. This seems less apparent from studies of some other minorities, which have not yet developed strong ties, networks and organising abilities, possibly caused to some degree because of their wide geographic dispersal and experiences of exclusion or discrimination. Two sets of studies tend to support this, one relating to migrants and the other to LGBT entrepreneurs. New migrants, refugees and victims of forced displacement are discrete groups which have all increased in scale in recent years, driven in part by conflicts, civil wars and oppression, as well as by economic and environmental forces. Elo et al. (2018) considered the role of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs in international entrepreneurship, finding research and cases of entrepreneurs outside mainstream categories and conceptualising interdisciplinary lenses in understanding migrant and diasporic entrepreneurs. The fragility of both community and international networks and connection on which internationally mobile migrant and displaced entrepreneurs often depend is notable, together with the inadequate nature of institutional support (Sepulveda et al. 2011; Jones et al. 2014). A small number of studies has explored Gay and LGBT entrepreneurship including Galloway (2012), Marlow et al. (2018) and Rumens and Ozturk (2019). What emerges from these contributions is a sense of fragmented communities, in which Gay and Lesbian people may view entrepreneurship as an option, partly in response to experiences of discrimination and limited career opportunities in mainstream organisations. However, Marlow et al. (2018) found few differences in entrepreneurial activity patterns between homosexuals and heterosexuals and no evidence of entrepreneurship as a 'safe haven'. Individuals operate frequently in relative isolation, with weak entrepreneurial networks outside the more concentrated 'Pink economies' of cities such as Manchester. Heteronormativity was noted as a factor discouraging entrepreneurs from declaring their identity and further research is required to understand the role of gendered identities, experiences and behaviours in LGBT entrepreneurship (Rumens and Ozturk 2019). However, there is some evidence of a growing adoption of LGBT business and professional networks, such as mygwork.com which offers a safe space where people from the LGBT community can connect with inclusive employers, find jobs, mentors, professional events and news. This, and other networks at city level, suggest a growing acceptance of LGBT entrepreneurial

participation in organisations and business, at least within tolerant societies. This brief exploration of selected studies on minority groups presages the development of a boundary-spanning approach in the next section.

The Approach

The concern of this chapter is to understand entrepreneurial behaviours and value creation within minority groups, but to do this using a simple lens of ethnicity or any other single demographic characteristic is too broad. Rather, it is necessary to explore how minorities may share cultural and behavioural characteristics which enable entrepreneurial practices to occur. Demography does not, in itself, produce entrepreneurial behaviours. It is the interaction of socially learned and shared values, traditions and behaviours within communities, of production, trading and exchange of value which do so (Rae 2020). To explore these, it is necessary to use better ways of understanding entrepreneurial cultures, learning and behaviours and how they are learned socially. The proposed model integrates three perspectives to develop a model for minority entrepreneurship. These include:

- The role of microcultures to explore entrepreneurial behaviours in creating different forms of value within and between cultural groups;
- The role of social and shared learning as a process for generating entrepreneurial behaviours which reflect and embody learned discourses and practices within groups;
- The mixed embeddedness approach (Kloosterman 2010) as an established lens for analysing the connection between ethnic minority entrepreneurs and market opportunities, based on social, relational and structural capital.

The mixed embeddedness approach is helpful in explaining patterns of entrepreneurship by systematically linking the supply side of entrepreneurs with their specific set of resources, with opportunity structure and market access on the other side (Kloosterman et al. 2016). Mixed embeddedness can be extended to include minority groups beyond ethnic minorities. However, there is a legitimate critique of its limitations in relation to assessing how these sources of capital can be used sociologically, such as Ram et al. (2008) in relation to Somali entrepreneurs. It also explores in less depth and detail than is ideal how minority groups structure and use their shared learning of cultural resources in relation to entrepreneurial work. This is important in understanding the generation and application of learning to entrepreneurial

opportunities. It can be developed through using a group microcultural lens to better understand entrepreneurial learning and behaviours within and between groups, and how these may assist groups in moving from peripheral to mainstream social and economic participation (Rae 2017, 2020).

A neglected aspect of minorities entrepreneurship research is the role of learning. A few studies have provided some insights into entrepreneurial learning within ethnic minority entrepreneurship, such as Dhaliwal (2000) and Ekanem and Wyer (2007), but it is otherwise reasonable to argue that recent advances in understanding entrepreneurial learning have yet to provide useful conceptual insights for minorities entrepreneurship. There is a significant body of work in the field of entrepreneurial learning, that is in learning to recognise and act on value-creating opportunities, by working with other people and by initiating, organising and managing ventures in social and behavioural ways and in the context of the wider environment (e.g. Politis 2005; Cope 2005; Rae 2015; Rae and Wang 2015; Toutain et al. 2017). For this study, it will include naturalistic learning in everyday environments and exclude the related but separate field of formal entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurial learning can be held to include the development of an entrepreneurial identity (sense of self), mindset (ways of thinking and perceiving the world) and capabilities (competent ways of working), which together result in entrepreneurial effectiveness and the ability to achieve desired results (QAA 2018). This concept is valid in both naturalistic and educational learning environments. The question is how entrepreneurial learning and effective behaviours are learned within the cultural contexts of minority groups? There has been little exploration of this topic within the entrepreneurial learning literature, although a major review by Toutain et al. (2017) on the influence of the environment on learning noted the influence of community culture. It also advocated sociological and anthropological approaches to the study of learning as a localised social construct, which is not a new, but a helpful direction in relation to collective learning in minority communities.

Within the social organisations of minority communities and cultural groups, it is useful to understand the *microcultures* which provide live environments and resources for learning. A microculture may describe an ethnic, linguistic, geographic, faith or place-based group, or a combination of these categories, which express the distinctive characteristics of a definable group of people, possibly within a given geographical area or within an organisation, belief or identity system, and which may share cultural characteristics with one or more macro, or prevailing cultures (Rae 2020). The significance

of small cultural groups was researched in relation to cultural organisational literature (e.g. Bolon and Bolon 1994; Fine and Hallett 2014). Whilst recognising that related terms such as 'subculture' and 'co-culture' are used, the term 'microculture' defines a recognisably distinct group who share a common set of values, beliefs and behaviours, who possess a common history, and who use a common verbal and nonverbal symbol system (Rae 2020). They may share features with, yet differ subtly from, a dominant or normative culture (Banks 1994; Nieuliep 2017). Microculture is not synonymous with ethnic identity, since ethnicity is simply one 'given' (albeit important) aspect of cultural identity, whilst other aspects are more socially mutable. The many finer distinctions of faith, gender, sexual orientation, attachment to locus, membership and other aspects of sectionality are also relevant in defining microcultural identity. As ethnic categories are relatively broad, a microculture can exist both within and across ethnic groups. For example, people of 'Indian' ethnic origin in Britain may come from a Gujarati or other background, from East Africa, may be of Hindu, Sikh, Moslem, Jain or Christian faith, or they may belong to a caste group. These, and other variables, would affect their microcultural identity (Jivraj and Finney 2013).

The related concept of idioculture has also been used to develop understanding of small-group cultures (see Fine 1979; Bolon and Bolon 1994; Fine and Hallett 2014). Fine explains an idio (from Greek for 'own') as:

> a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and employ as the basis of further interaction. (Fine 1979, 734)

An idio emerges from effective interaction by a group to address a problem or shared interest. Fine identifies five criteria to be met, which explain how a 'cultural item' is selected to form part of a group's idioculture, that it is:

> perceived as Known, Usable, Functional and Appropriate in terms of the group's status system and Triggered by some experienced event. (Fine 1979, 738)

Fine's (1979) idiocultural categories can be used to analyse cultural groups and activity, whilst the cultural creation process can assist in understanding how products reach a wider audience.

The idiocultural approach reconceptualised 'subculture' within a symbolic interactionist framework, showing subcultural variations, cultural changes and the diffusion of cultural elements. By clarifying 'subculture' as a process involving the creation, negotiation and diffusion of cultural items,

it provides a framework for research on subcultures (Bolon and Bolon 1994), whilst 'Interlocking' group memberships through weak social structures (Granovetter 1985) provides a conceptual basis for understanding how cultural content can be defined and transformed through intergroup negotiation. Peredo and Chrisman (2006) theorised Community-Based Enterprise as an influential movement within minority cultures. They proposed that community enterprise arises from a combination of unacceptable economic, social and other conditions into a collective knowledge and ability to organise and gain access to social resources. These can be combined to translate social organising into economic organisation. This insight helps to connect collective cultural learning, skills and resources with entrepreneurial action, using learning gained from previous opportunities and ventures.

Proposing a Conceptual Model

In seeking to develop a conceptual model that offers a greater understanding of Minorities Entrepreneurship Learning, many factors need to be considered. Figure 1 presents the proposed model, which is explained in detail in this section. The sources of capital reflect the embedded resources described by Granovetter (1985) and Kloosterman (2010) as a group's available social, relational and institutional capital. The learning process involves appreciating these, understanding how they can be accessed socially, and translated into ways of creating value, without (ideally) putting them at undue risk,
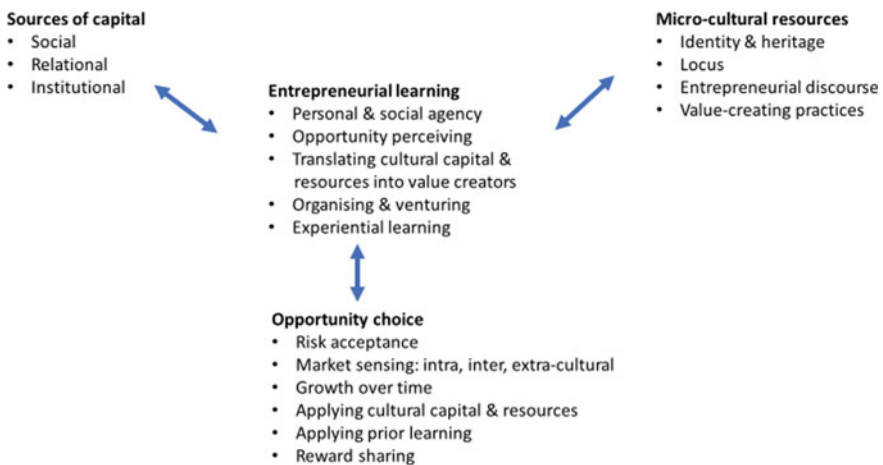

Sources of capital
- Social
- Relational
- Institutional

Micro-cultural resources
- Identity & heritage
- Locus
- Entrepreneurial discourse
- Value-creating practices

Entrepreneurial learning
- Personal & social agency
- Opportunity perceiving
- Translating cultural capital & resources into value creators
- Organising & venturing
- Experiential learning

Opportunity choice
- Risk acceptance
- Market sensing: intra, inter, extra-cultural
- Growth over time
- Applying cultural capital & resources
- Applying prior learning
- Reward sharing

Fig. 1 A learning model for entrepreneurship in minority groups

such as by compromising the group's reputation amongst others. Microcultural resources are derived from an intercultural entrepreneurship model (Rae 2020) which suggested that the group identity and its heritage are often fundamental to a shared sense of belonging and kinship. Many groups have a sense of geographical locus or 'home', whether that be ancestral lands in a country of origin, or a settled space in a new destination, or indeed both. It may be a district, such as South Koreans clustering around New Malden in the UK, or a symbolic building such as a temple or market which forms part of their entrepreneurial milieu as a locus for social exchange. Entrepreneurial discourse and practices are socially shared and learned as cultural resources. The discourse includes narratives such as stories, rules and principles, plus practical theories of 'what works'. The value-creating practices are based on using learned approaches of social exchange for organising, negotiating, trading, competing, customer acquisition, mitigating risk and so forth, which may be seen in use in markets worldwide.

Entrepreneurial learning includes processes of personal and social development, which generate individual and collective agency and effectiveness, including organising and working with others, plus perceiving opportunities from shared experiences as well as novel ones. Cultural capital and resources available from the group can be recognised and useful relationships, assets and relevant ideas are used and applied or recycled. New ventures, which may be anything from a novel product, event, expedition or legal trading entity, are organised. Experiential learning is an essential dimension of this iterative process, which tests continually what is (and what is not) working. The choice of opportunity is a critical decision. The understandings of opportunity structure refer to Aldrich and Waldinger (1990), Kloosterman and Rath (2001) and Kloosterman (2010). This was developed by Lassalle and McElwee (2016) as a visual mapping of market and non-market dimensions and demand–supply side factors on to local, regional and national markets. International market opportunities can be added to this useful concept which advances beyond the simplistic limitation of a single '2 × 2' matrix commonly referred to in mixed embeddedness studies.

The learning process involved in opportunity selection involves the judgement, acceptance and mitigation of risk of loss. It also involves the sensing or research into the nature of market opportunities, including the extent to which these exist within the group (intracultural), or involve trading and exchange between group (intercultural), or meeting a need entirely for an external market (extracultural). There is also an appreciation of the market over time, including its capacity for growth (or decline) and its duration, from ephemeral (such as a unique event), seasonality and cyclical, to permanence.

The selection of opportunities includes careful and intuitive judgements being made about the best ways in which cultural capital and resources and prior learning can be applied to create value. A final but essential consideration is reward sharing: how retained value is distributed within the social organisation, which may be a trading entity, family or community. The model is illustrated through a single case of an Aboriginal community in Canada, which aims to convey the embedded, contextual nature of entrepreneurial working and learning in a recognisable cultural group, who also engage in intercultural enterprise within the meso- and macro-environment.

Case Study: Membertou Welcoming the World!

The legend 'Membertou welcoming the world' on a roadside sign greets visitors to the Membertou First Nation reserve in Cape Breton, northern Nova Scotia, Canada. The case is framed by using as a structure the four categories of minority entrepreneurship proposed in Fig. 1: microcultural resources; sources of capital; entrepreneurial learning; and opportunity choice. Whilst there is some overlap between these categories, it enables the conceptual map to be illustrated through an example which is well-documented and demonstrates how a minority community creates shared value in its wider social and economic context. The case is quite well-known, yet continues to develop in significance and incorporates prior work from Scott (2004), Johnstone (2008) and Rae (2017, 2020).

1. *Microcultural resources: Identity, heritage and locus*

Cape Breton is a small island, located at the remote Northern tip of Nova Scotia, on the Canadian Atlantic coast. Also known as Unama'ki ('The land of fog') it was inhabited from time out of mind by the Aboriginal Mi'Kmaq people, whose deep understanding of the land and waters enabled them to live by fishing from the birchbark canoes they built, to make tepees to live in, clothes to wear and to share rich oral traditions of culture, storytelling, community rituals and order, based on the wisdom of their elders. European fishermen 'discovered' the island in the 1500s, which was contested in subsequent centuries by French, English and Scots colonisers. The French entreatied the Mi'Kmaq people, introducing them to Catholicism, with the name Membertou originating from Grand Chief Henri who became the first convert. The Mi'Kmaq people have a multifaceted relationship with their land and water. This is spiritual, cultural and constitutes their identity, as well

as their means of practical survival, through the generations. They learned over time to adapt and to live sustainably in the harsh frozen winters. Their habits were to take just enough from the natural reserves of forest, wildlife and fisheries.

When the Mi'Kmaq met settlers, incomers were welcomed and the French learnt how to survive from them. They traded and developed a coexistent relationship, but when the island fell to British colonial rule, many French were deported, although some were permitted to resettle. The Mi'Kmaq were less fortunate, steadily being deprived of their lands, ways of life, heritage and language, mainly by Scots and Irish settlers under British laws. The draconian goals of Canadian colonial and subsequently Federal policy were to cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious and racial entities in Canada (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). The cultural legacy of this oppression is still remembered through brutal Residential Schools and legal sanctions which deprived Mi'Kmaq of their waterside reserve and fishing rights. Excluded from mainstream employment opportunities, they subsisted through small-scale necessity entrepreneurship, traditional crafts and providing services. Under British dominion, the island became a naval and industrial centre as deep coal reserves were mined. Iron and steel works were built in a bid to become 'the Pittsburgh of Canada', before this industrial economy collapsed in the late twentieth century. The island struggled to reinvent itself in a context of economic and social decline, depopulation and erosion of its national role and identity. Its principal means of creating a new identity and meaning has been cultural, building on enduring qualities of stoic persistence, community, hard work and creative expression.

2. *Social, relational and institutional capital*

Within the island there is a 'Caper' meso-culture formed of interactions between numerous diverse microcultures, which are constantly affected by its interactions with the macro-culture of Federal Canada and the dominant North American influences of corporations, economic policies and political actions from the USA. The different microcultures, including Acadian French, Scots-Irish and Polish (as well as Aboriginal) influences, are framed by ethnic and linguistic identities, faith group memberships, economic activities, cultural participation and production and leadership. There is extensive intercultural social, cultural, economic and entrepreneurial activity, and the Mi'Kmaq community have become increasingly and strategically active in

all of these. The Membertou community, or 'Band', consists of interrelated expanded families, in which recurrent patronyms such as Christmas, Marshall, Paul, Denny and Googoo can be traced back through its history. After centuries of oppression, the Mi'Kmaq were granted, and increasingly assert, equal rights of self-determination. Whilst the renaissance of Mi'Kmaq culture is a remarkable story of growing confidence from great adversity (Scott 2004), there are strong connections of social capital through close links and ties with the Chiefs of other First Nations in Canada. These provide mutual assistance and are important sources of networked learning, such as in gaining legal advice and in handling negotiations with government agencies and corporations. For example, Canadian First Nations have gained statutory rights to consultation and consent over the development on their traditional lands. The social capital of family and kinship networks is enhanced through its interconnectedness with governance, senior members of the Band acting as Board members on public organisations, and as a member of the Canadian Senate. This has brought greater governmental and political awareness of the developmental role and economic contribution of Membertou, and in turn helped in levering further investments and support.

3. *Entrepreneurial learning*

The elected Chief, Terry Paul, had encountered community economic development ideas through working with the Boston Indian Council in the USA, before returning to Membertou and becoming Chief in 1984. He started to apply principles later documented by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (https://hpaied.org/), that sovereignty, institutions of governance, culture and leadership are all fundamental to Aboriginal nation-building. Initial business ventures encountered mixed results with some setbacks, but from this experience a 'First Nations Progression Model' of capacity-building was created, to develop leadership and systems for management, accountability and governance, based on principles of conservation, sustainability, innovation and success (Scott 2004). The Membertou Development Corporation was established as the commercial and ownership vehicle for business development in 1989. Over the subsequent 30 years, this developed a growing number of business ventures, based mainly on the reserve and through partnering with corporate organisations. These included a Gaming Commission, hotel and convention centre, sports and leisure complex and arena and other businesses including geomatics, data management, insurance and fishing. Since 2013, Membertou has acquired

large areas of land to develop retail, logistics, a new harbour wharf and a boat-building business.

Membertou makes explicit to business partners that it prioritises wealth creation over job creation through business development strategies to enhance community members' participation and to ensure that jobs created are sustainable over the long term. The success of its business development lies substantially in a learning strategy of developing its leadership and human capital, with a strong focus on education, training and involving young people in Band leadership. Young First Nations people still encounter multiple disadvantages and discrimination in accessing health, education, employment, housing and other services. Membertou has contributed to Federal initiatives to address these disadvantages, such as through an 'In Business' mentorship programme which connects High School indigenous students with indigenous business mentors across Canada. Membertou set out to provide services at least as good as those in mainstream society and to eliminate barriers to access, whilst developing a healthy economy which creates good quality jobs.

The entrepreneurial practices in Membertou continue to be resource-based, in using land, water and natural resources as a basis for sustainable activity, whilst creating higher levels of value by introducing their people as well-educated, technologically savvy, resident and socialised to work in locally based organisations. This is also being achieved by translating cultural resources (such as heritage) into contemporary value creators, for example through partnering with the 'Celtic Colours' music festival (Rae 2020). Young people from the Mi'Kmaq community are poised to play influential roles locally, across Canada and beyond. One can encounter a young man who plays different roles by managing the Heritage Centre, as well as being a ceremonial drummer, an MBA graduate and an emerging leader within the community. Learning as a resource for indigenous business development is researched, shared and taught through the prestigious Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies at the nearby Cape Breton University, which is held by the daughter of a Mi'Kmaq schoolteacher.

4. *Opportunity choice*

This community entrepreneurship approach, based on principles of community economic development and enterprise (Peredo and Chrisman 2006; Johnstone 2008) has become recognised nationally and internationally, partly because of the impact it has generated in transforming the quality of life of its community in the wider context of a struggling island economy. In

relation to opportunity choice, it has advanced beyond the community enterprise model with a level of ambition in the direction of 'an entrepreneurial micro-state' by making strategic decisions and investments in community development with long-term implications, whilst making a growing contribution to value creation within the wider provincial economy (Mazzucato 2011). For example, the decisions to acquire significant areas of land for future development freed it from old Reserve boundaries, opened access to the Trans-Canada Highway route to facilitate logistics investment and to waterfront access for growing future maritime businesses. These ambitious projects involve corporate joint ventures which introduce external capital investment and expertise to achieve faster and more assured results. This approach reduces risks to the Band, whilst creating career opportunities for a population which is becoming more skilled and qualified. They are outcomes of entrepreneurial learning at a strategic, collective level, applied to long-term opportunity choice and development.

As a result of these actions, Membertou has become the third largest employer and the fastest growing community in the region. Its leadership is enabled by their economic model of community entrepreneurship, providing new employment, housing, health care and education for the growing, young population (Membertou 2018). This strategy is not dependent on generating autonomous start-ups, as these form an outcome of community cultural support, through the Membertou Entrepreneur Centre which provides training and support for new entrepreneurs, and there has been an increase in self-employment (albeit not yet on a comparable scale with the corporate entrepreneurship). The community economic development philosophy of collective action can challenge institutional constraints by creating new institutions, relationships and ways of working. Where this activism spans boundaries to become intercultural, it can achieve greater multiplier effects than within one community alone, as is demonstrated across the wider provincial economy. The Membertou case is an example of intercultural innovation by a minority group which addresses the causes of disadvantage and of economic and demographic decline, through creating institutional and community capability to respond creatively to these challenges (One Nova Scotia Commission 2014).

Conclusion

The proposed model is generic in nature. It is informed by prior work but untested and conceptual. To that extent it is propositional and open to further work which may well challenge, add to and ultimately replace it. However, its contribution is to situate entrepreneurial learning as a dynamic set of connectors and enablers between the capital and resources of minority groups, and the ways in which they select and develop opportunities, based on prior, social and experiential learning. Given the wide range of variables which apply both within and between minority group entrepreneurial activities, the model provides a set of categories and headings which can be populated through specific individual and comparative studies, and which may use both qualitative material and quantitative data, rather than attempt to be more detailed and over-specific. The model may have applications in education, community development and research with minority entrepreneurs and groups. For example, it can provide a structure for users to map their own interpretation of the factors they perceive in relation to each of the headings and categories. Some may be judged as being less significant for that case; for example, 'locus' will be seen as highly relevant for some, but possibly less applicable by others.

Given that, to date, there has been exploration of opportunity structure and selection by minority groups, and some studies on entrepreneurship education with minorities, but little work on the connections between learning and minority entrepreneurship, this is an area which is worthy of development, for which this model aims to provide a starting point. Given also the strong interest in entrepreneurship education, this is an area in which further work is required in relation to the application of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge within and across cultural groups. The development of entrepreneurial opportunities through intercultural working or 'multicultural hybridity' (Alessandro et al. 2014) is an example of the new directions of such research which need to be underpinned by a better understanding of the learning processes involved in going beyond intracultural market perceptions. Some of the research questions which could usefully be explored, both generally and in relation to specific minority groups, may include, for example:

- How do individuals and groups within minorities learn to access microcultural resources and capital, and translate these into value creators for opportunities they identify?
- How is prior learning of entrepreneurship shared, applied, validated and updated within, and between, minority groups?

- What are the relationships between entrepreneurial capabilities acquired through formal education, and informal social and experiential learning gained within minority groups and wider society?
- How do minority entrepreneurs acquire and share new experiential learning from opportunity and venture creation actions to refresh socially acquired prior learning?
- How does entrepreneurial learning facilitate intercultural venture creation and development?

This chapter proposes that learning is an important enabler in minority entrepreneurship, and one which is under-recognised and explored to date. This position may not be universally accepted, nor was the proposition some 20 years ago that learning was a vital dynamic in developing entrepreneurial identity and capability (Rae 2000). If entrepreneurial learning is recognised for, and new understanding developed of, its contribution to understanding entrepreneurial behaviours in minority groups, then this approach may provide a means of enhancing access, connectivity and exploitation of capabilities and opportunities within, between and across different minority and cultural groups, at micro, meso and macro levels of societies.

There are, sadly, growing nationalist and populist movements internationally which are too often intolerant or even opposed to the equality and rights of minority groups (Chin 2017; Hedetoft 2018). Learning, both through access to formal education and also through recognising and appreciating the naturalistic, social and informal learning within and between communities, has a vital contribution towards enabling minority groups to develop their entrepreneurial capabilities and potential in this context. The academic study of minorities and entrepreneurship has made many advances over recent decades, but the question of how learning can enable this has received too little attention theoretically, even within many minority communities where it is seen as vital.

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