



Social Networks and “Missing Entrepreneurs”

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Introduction

Increasingly, social networks have become a major area of interest, importance and research within the entrepreneurship domain. For example, social network theory, based on the competitive advantage perspective, illustrates how networks can provide advantage (and disadvantage), particularly for “disadvantaged entrepreneurs” (Burt 2019). Granovetter (1985) and Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) viewed entrepreneurship as being embedded in networks of continuing social relations and are often credited as being the instigators of the social embeddedness perspective. Social capital is “broadly perceived as an asset that exists in social relations and networks” (McKeever et al. 2014, p. 455). De Carolis et al. (2009) identified two measures of social capital, which were social networks and relational capital (the type of personal relationship derived via network usage), while from a policy perspective, Fayolle et al. (2016) stressed the importance of providing formal networks for entrepreneurs.

The OECD 2017 Report on Missing Entrepreneurs highlights the increased potential for self-employment and/or entrepreneurial success via the utilisation of social networks, but the report lacks specificity regarding

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how to leverage the advantages and minimise the disadvantages of social networks. It is the ambition of this chapter to provide insight into this particular phenomenon, utilising recent surveys and qualitative empirical studies. The aim is to provide new knowledge regarding the unique social network usage and problems experienced by those within the various “missing entrepreneur” groups. Potentially this will spur research effort to advance ways to overcome social network disadvantage in the establishment and growth of an entrepreneurial venture or self-employment endeavour by people from minority or disadvantaged communities.

Missing Entrepreneurs and Social Networks

The term “missing entrepreneurs” can be applied to “groups that are under-represented and disadvantaged in the labour market” (OECD 2017, p. 3), specifically, women, youth, seniors, immigrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled and unemployed.¹ There is also literature on missing entrepreneurs relating to additional disadvantaged communities such as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), ex-offender communities (Galloway and Cooney 2012), indigenous entrepreneurs (e.g. Aborigine, Maori) (Wood et al. 2012), and Roma (Foley and Cooney 2017). An important obstacle for members of these groups is ‘Cultural *habitus*’ which according to Light and Dana (2013) acts as a powerful regulator.

If a group’s cultural capital does not support and endorse the selection of entrepreneurship as a vocation, then the group’s strong social capital will not encourage entrepreneurship of group members. (Light and Dana 2013, p. 616)

Barriers, for example, of gender, caste, language, accent, background and age, can create disadvantages in terms of limiting the potential for social capital and social network advantages.

If resource-poor, nascent entrepreneurs cannot access resource-rich social networks, they probably cannot overcome their initial disadvantages. (Light and Dana 2013, p. 611)

¹Multidimensionality: See Liu et al. (2019b) “Individuals are inherently multidimensional, characterized by their bundles of simultaneously existing attributes and social relations” (p. 197). So although a “group” is discussed individually, there is also potential for a cumulative disadvantage perspective (e.g. female, immigrant, ex-offender, etc.).

The focus of this chapter will thus be on social networks, given their importance and potential. According to Jack (2010), in her review of approaches to studying networks:

the network of an individual is ... a series of sets of relationships. It exists as potential, all inter-connected but also inter-dependent. Moreover, a network includes both latent and active relationships that the individual maintains, consciously and unconsciously, in some fashion, and enacts to reflect his/her needs. (Jack 2010, p. 130)

A key component of social networks is often family-based networks, but some people within the missing entrepreneurs groups do not or cannot utilise family networks (e.g. some ex-offenders) (Brown and Ross 2010).² Family ties can be, for some, a strong component of an aspiring entrepreneur’s social network, providing direct resources and also sharing network ties. Arregle et al. (2015) distinguish three types of social networks as “business advice, emotional support and business resources” (p. 313) and find varying levels of family involvement in each. However, the advantage/disadvantage dichotomy of social networks is also very much apparent in relation to family-related social networks (e.g. Azmat and Fujimoto 2016). How can social networks be created, developed, utilised, enhanced and manipulated in a way that decreases the disadvantage inherently associated with being part of one or more of the missing entrepreneur groups? This is an important topic with financial, social and political implications at the individual, family, community and societal levels. As well as driving economic growth, entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as emancipatory (Al-Dajani et al. 2015), thus advancing our knowledge of social networks holds potential in both areas.

Methodology

This study utilises the Web of Science database, with a search of the Social Science published academic papers for the years 2014–2019, using the Boolean format for social network(s), entrepreneurship or self-employed and the following description of groups: women/female, immigrant, migrant, refugee, senior, youth, disabilities, unemployed, returning citizen/ex-offender. The results comprise a representative group of the papers published on

²As explained later in the chapter, families can cut-off ex-offenders and conversely, contact may be avoided for safety reasons (perhaps abuse from a former spouse/partner).

the topic. However, it is acknowledged that for a comprehensive review of academic papers, several databases, as well as a request to scholars in the discipline to assist with the search, would produce additional papers.

A total of 326 studies, across all groups, was identified in the 2019 Web of Science search. Each Abstract identified in the search was reviewed to determine if the focus of the research was on social networks, at the individual level (*vs* the firm), and that the topic was not a tangential focus. For example, many studies found in the search, reported on social capital in general, with only an occasional comment on social networks. In addition, only empirical studies, qualitative and quantitative, are included in the review. All studies included are from academic (reviewed) journals. The 48 relevant and robust studies, either quantitative or qualitative, are summarised in Table 1. The number of studies, by group in descending order, are as follows: migrant (18), women/female (15), immigrant (12), youth (excluding students) (2), and returning citizen/ex-offender (1). For the remaining missing entrepreneur groups, no papers were identified.³ To maximise information on recent research findings, the extensive research on each group, included in both conceptual and review papers, has not been included in this chapter.

Women and Social Networks

In five out of 15 of the studies that inquired into women and social networks, there was a comparison between men and women, of which three used survey methodology and two utilised interviews (see Table 1). Of the 10 studies that researched only women, six used interviews and four used surveys. The number of participants varied widely, as did the country, and almost all continents were represented. The focus of the research, in all instances, included social networks, but was not always the main research question. For example, research questions included: determinants of the gender gap, ownership structure, effects of gender hierarchy, how do female networks reinforce and challenge gender structures, why form a female-only network, gender differences in network formation, the impact of gender on entrepreneurship network and so forth. The conceptual focus included social networks, but also, for example, social capital, racialised women, team entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs' satisfaction, commitment, venture performance, intersectionality, enablers, constraints, information communication technology (ICT) use and the resource-based view. The findings across studies which compared

³There may be additional studies, however, they were not found using the methodology employed for this study or have been published since the cut-off date of June 2019.

Table 1 Social network “missing entrepreneur” selected empirical papers 2014–2019

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
<i>Gender/Women</i>					
40 European countries, vary by politics and institutions	Determinants of entrepreneurship gender gap	Broad-based including social networks, family and spouse social capital	Comprehensive European labour and (EV5) values surveys, 1981–2008	Social networks strongest correlate re women selecting entrepreneurship. Especially personal networks from parental and partner’s entrepreneurial activity, not professional associations	Cuberes et al. (2019)
USA, Nascent entrepreneurs	Nascent business ownership structure by gender?	Gender, female, family, team entrepreneurship	Panel Study Entrepreneurial Dynamics II (PSED II). About 1200 nascent identified	Lacking social capital constrains female nascent entrepreneurs. When females establish an entrepreneurial team, they utilise family ties rather than professional ones vs males	Lim and Suh (2019)
Developing world, 15 countries, Female entrepreneurs	Effect of gender hierarchy, networks on female entr. legitimacy and experiences	Networks, private and business sphere, gender hierarchy, job satisfaction, job commitment	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), surveys 5997 respondents	Difference female entr. network private and business. Gender hierarchy reduces legitimacy of female entrepreneurs, steepness, constrains legitimacy in private sphere more than in business sphere	Liu et al. (2019c)
Sweden rural communities, Female entrepreneurs	How does female entrepreneurship network reinforce and challenge gender structures?	Embeddedness, ethnographic study, women’s entrepreneurship	Interviews and observations, 30 participants.	Embeddedness interplays with social processes, furthers gender equality. Female entr. network: making entr. process, building relationships, engaging in change process, reinforce and challenge gender structures	Roos (2019)
Portugal, network of women wine producers	Purpose of women wine producers forming a women’s network	Women entrepreneurs, Networks, Networking	In-depth semi-structured interviews with seven wine producers and network manager	Unique network communicated with a single voice. Promoted networking, internationalisation, creativity and innovation	Santos et al. (2019)

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Table 1 (continued)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
Tunisia, Female entr. in training program	Access to key social networks and traditionalism	Social capital, religiosity, entr. performance	Survey, 84 women, non-entr., some planning and some entrepreneurs	Personal network important for business. Social capital (<i>wasta</i>) from husband. Religiosity not linked to entr. success. Nepotism and <i>wasta</i> linked to entr. success	Baranik et al. (2018)
US N.W. Mid-West, Incubators and accelerators	Use of intermediary network/mentor organizations by women tech entr.	Exclusion, gender inequality, social networks	Interviews, 21 observation, 21 participants, 14 women	Women experience inequalities in social capital and networking in tech incubators and accelerators. Replication of gender inequality. Need-inclusive climate	Ozkazanc-Pan and Muntean (2018)
Uganda, urban and rural entrepreneurs	Gender differences in formation of networks for women entr.	Gender differences, social networks	Interviews, 294 urban entrepreneurs, 314 rural	Males less likely to receive financing. Males in network more likely provide finance to female entr. Gender homophily negatively affects access to resources. Family key re venturing, downside financial reciprocity	Solano and Rooks (2018)
Egypt, Women entrepreneurs	Women's business performance determinants -political upheaval (2011-12)	RBV and institutional views embedded in gender-awareness	Self-administered survey, 117 responses from women who majorly owned and established business	Social capital, social networks, family social capital, gender-related personal problems, all unrelated to firm performance. Evidence of new boundary conditions in hostile environments	Welsh et al. (2018)
China, Yemen, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE Entr	Impact of gender and culture on entrepreneurship	Networks	Global Entr. Monitor (GEM) Surveys of from 6 countries	Female entrepreneurs networking more in private sphere than male entrepreneurs and have less tendency to network in public sphere than male entrepreneurs	Bertelsen et al. (2017)
UK, Women digital Internet entrepreneurs	How gender, race and class influence entrepreneurial experiences	Intersectionality, social factors, enablers, constraint tech. skills, challenges	26 in-depth interviews	Digital entr. is not a "great leveller" as social inequalities evident and replicate the offline social hierarchies. Unlikely the disadvantaged will find any advantage in digital entr	Dy et al. (2017)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
Pakistan, Women entr. Middle and lower-class	Do social restrictions, family networks, facilitate or hinder women entrepreneurs	Social capital, networks, context, resource acquisition	Semi-structured interviews and observations, 21 women	Social and cultural norms restrict others' willingness to encourage women to engage in entr. Close family interfere with women's resource acquisition	Lindvert et al. (2017)
India, Women entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurial opportunity and effects of strategic networks	Social network theory, discovery, creation, strategic networks	Panel Study of Entr. Dynamics (PSED II), survey	Entr. in discovery contexts homogeneity in networks, similar backgrounds. Entr. in creation contexts have heterogeneity in networks, diverse backgrounds	Upson et al. (2017)
India Women, rural	Initiation and success of women's entr. ventures	Social networks, information and communication tech. (ICT) use	seven-year study, field study, 20 rural villages	Interplay social networks and ICT use Family, community ties positive, men in power negative, relate to ICT use, entr. activity and profit	Venkatesh et al. (2017)
Canada, ON. Women entr. Afro-Caribbean descent	Structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal view, negotiate market constraints?	Racialized women, entrepreneurship, intersectoral/interlocking analysis Process focus	53 interviews, short questionnaire re demographic and business information. Almost 50% in 30s and highly educated	Processes of gendering, classing and racialization of wages influences participation in self-employment. Bureaucratic hierarchies, e.g. funding and mentorship, are racially gendered and exclude racialized women	Knight (2016)
<i>IMMIGRANT</i> Australia, Sydney and Canberra, Chinese immigrant businesses	A how-to of: Shift from low return start-up business to competitive business model, targeting mainstream clientele	Ethnic entrepreneurship, Breakout strategy, Value-add business processes	Semi-structured in-depth interviews of 55 business owners	Breakout strategy includes innovation, marketing, networking and personnel strategies. Resource type importance varies by stage of transition to new business model. Accumulating financial capital and capacity to learn and benefit from experience of social networks fundamental enabler for break-out	Wang and Warn (2019)

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Table 1 (continued)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
Spain, Italy immigrants, Moroccan, Senegalese, Gambians, Sri Lankan	Structural assimilation and transnationalism, embeddedness in social networks	Personal ego, social network, acculturation, transnationalism, connectivity	2 survey datasets, personal networks and individual attributes Spain 139, Italy 102 respondents, inc. 45 alters	Personal network important re-assimilation. Patterns of structural cohesion re personal contacts from different nationalities, countries. Personal networks: association structural assimilation, embeddedness, transnationalism, cultural and economic assimilation	Vacca et al. (2018)
Australia Indian immigrant entrepreneurs	Propensity for entrepreneurship, intergenerational mobility	Push and pull entrepreneurship, human capital, social networks	20 case studies from 152 per year 2000 and post-2000 arrivals Included surveys, observations and experiments	Third generation had higher human capital and entrepreneurial intentions at an earlier age than the first and second generation pulled into business—did not use social network of family or friends. Third generation used social networks more than first and second gen	Chavan and Taksa (2017)
Finnmark, rural Norway Russian immigrant entr. Women	Networking practices, spatial and ethnic embeddedness. Family, male partners support for entr.	Social, economic, culture contexts Network relationships	Semi-structured in-depth interviews with nine women started their own businesses (self-employed) Survey 2001–07, 1825 formerly unemployed immigrant entrepreneurs	Family especially male spouse key in start-up Women, via husbands and their family, have access to resources in host context, i.e. advisors, network of resources. Address immigrant disadvantage via affective ties	Munkejord (2017)
Immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden	Does family living in close proximity influence remaining in entrepreneurship?	Family/Relational/Social embeddedness	Survey 2001–07, 1825 formerly unemployed immigrant entrepreneurs	Family living in close proximity increases immigrant entrepreneurs' likelihood of remaining in entrepreneurship	Bird and Wennberg (2016)
Germany Immigrants from Central and E. Europe vs. others	Determinants of self-employment propensity	Immigrant self-employment, entrepreneurship, determinants, economic integration	German Socio-Economic Panel SOEP Telephone survey. 484 respondents	Country of birth, gender, level of education and cultural factors influence self-employment re Polish and Romanian immigrants in Germany. Social capital shown to be of less importance for self-employment than propensity	Szarucki et al. (2016)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
Canada, Toronto, Chinese Immigrant Entrepreneur	Gender re networks, Internet use, transnational entr., business success	Gender, social networks, internet, immigrant entrepreneurship	Random sample survey from businesses 308 face-to-face questionnaires with 53% response rate	Gaps in network composition by gender and kin. Men and women turn to men for resources. Women less successful converting network resources into advantages. Women participate less than men in voluntary organisations	Chen et al. (2015)
Singapore Chinese new immigrant entrepreneurs	Dual embeddedness. Integration and transnationalism re business ownership	Transnationalism, integration, dual embeddedness	Face-to-face interviews, 25 entrepreneurs and observation of participants	Transnationalism and integration mutually reinforcing. Access markets and networks from China. Reputation from networks in China strengthens networks in Singapore	Ren and Liu (2015)
Italy Immigrant entr. Information, communication Technology industry	Transnational ties, migrant firm performance: entr. attitude, institutional, socio-economic characteristics	Transnational entrepreneurship; ethnic business ties; firm performance ICT industry	Telephone survey, 485 entrepreneurs	Negligible direct impact of ties on firm sales, but confirm role of home-country characteristics on ties-performance relationship. Key is socio-economic characteristics and entrepreneurial attitude related to home-country	Brzozowski et al. (2014)
Italy, Prato Chinese immigrants working in fashion industry	Causes of immigrants' exceptional development and evolution for future of Prato	Immigrant entrepreneurship, Transnational business networks, Industrial districts	In-depth interviews with immigrants, exploring journals about immigrants' entrepreneurial activities	Migrants foster economic and social relations with relatives and co-ethnic immigrants in host country, but they also maintain regular relations with relatives and friends who have emigrated elsewhere or remained in-place, which increase potential for new business	Ottati (2014)

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Table 1 (continued)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
Australia Italian immigrant entrepreneurs	How entrepreneurs identify foreign market opportunities?	Social ties, kinship ties, ethnic ties	21 in-depth, semi-structured interviews, three groups: case study firms, Australian-Italian Ind. Experts, Australian-Italian Government Reps	Immigrant entrepreneurs prefer trusting social and country of origin (COO) regional-based ethnic ties to identify foreign market opportunities. Kinship ties are not preferred source of info, as to not "mix family and business"	Smans et al. (2014)
Germany Frankfurt micro-entrepreneurs of Italian origin	How immigrant entrepreneurship emerges and develops	Immigrant entrepreneurs, embeddedness, social capital, transnationalism	Semi-structured interviews with 23 pizzeria and 21 ice cream parlour owners, 10 key informant interviews union officials, scholars	Pizzeria: part of small networks, do business in predominantly local markets and are mainly shaped by mimetic isomorphism. Ice cream owners highly articulated networks, show specific aspects of economic transnationalism	Storti (2014)
<i>MIGRANT, DISPLACED, REGUGEE</i>					
Jordan Displaced Palestinian women, self-employed	Intermediaries role in emancipation prospects of poor female micro-entrepreneurs	Embeddedness, emancipatory, defiance, resistance	Eight-year longitudinal, In-depth interviews (Arabic), 43 women, 129 interviews	Critical role of "secret" production network. Conflicting roles as patron-donors and client-contractors. Local rules constrain women, re-shared production or establishing client-based relations with agencies	Al-Dajani et al. (2019)
Pakistan Displaced entr. war/conflict situations	Resources displaced entr. use. Bricolage role in development of entr. ventures	Entrepreneurship, network, bricolage; War, conflict; displaced	Semi-structured multiple interviews with 6 entrepreneurs	Bricolage assists with starting business. Utilise clandestine networks for acquisition of resources, competencies and knowledge, was established prior to displacement. Crucial for linking supply chain and sourcing customers	Kwong et al. (2019)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
China rural migrants	Human, social capital, community trust on entr. entry	Entrepreneurship, Firm performance	China Labour-force Dynamics Survey (CLDS). 2012:16,253, 2014: 23,594	Migrants more likely to engage in entr. vs. urban and rural non-migrants. Broader social network, a high personal drive facilitates business start-up. Community trust key	Liu et al. (2019a)
London Migrant Vietnamese business owners	Mixed embeddedness approach to businesses with a transnational mode of operation	Mixed embeddedness. Forms of capital, Opportunity structure, transnational	In-depth interviews with 286 owner-managers	Ethnic networks enable transnational entr. to navigate unfamiliar institutional contexts and expand production, moving family resources to favourable locations. Complex web of business networks extends beyond traditional links with homeland to multiple countries	Bagwell (2018)
Slovenia and Sweden rural migrants	Structural and individual peculiarities of lifestyle migrants	Embeddedness Lifestyle migrants New immigration destinations	19 biographical in-depth interviews	Migrants' backgrounds and aspirations influence how and why they make use of institutional assistance and support. Deploy multiple local and broad social networks for business purposes	Eimermann and Kordel (2018)
Scotland Glasgow Polish new migrant entr.	Breakout strategies and barriers to new markets and networks	Ethnic market, breakout strategies, diversification process	Observations, field notes, 2009/10 semi-structured interviews, 20 sole traders/owners	Limited access to support, finance, wider social and business networks. Use social networks, internet social media to exchange info. post ads, organise events. Use supply chain linkages in UK and Poland	Lassalle and Scott (2018)
Spain Migrant Workers	Propensity to be self-employed among foreign-born workers	Immigration Self-employment Networks Entrepreneurship	Spanish Labour Force Survey (LFS) 1999–2009, 130 nationalities included in survey	1st transition: ethnic network, education, years resident re self-employment vs employment; 2nd transition: own-account worker vs entr., no impact re networks. Networks relevant re self-employment but not entr. decision. Better network among close proximity co-nationals higher self-employment, likely network affects the self-employment decision	Martin-Montaner et al. (2018)

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Table 1 (continued)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
United States, Spain and Chile Peruvian entrepreneurs	Peruvian migrants use of ethnic networks for entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship, social networks, social capital	Formal/informal interviews with 100+ migrants, both sexes, different economic classes, also case studies	Successful entr. depends on personal skills and previous professional experiences (human capital) and social networks. Entr. Network with co-ethnic migrants to broaden clientele but can hamper business competitiveness. Use network closure to limit dependence	Paerregaard (2018)
Caribbean Diasporic and domestic entrepreneurs	Embeddedness in home and host society, networks spanning both societies. Innovation, exporting, growth advantages?	Diaspora, embeddedness, transnational, social networks	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) surveys, 21,539 adult Caribbeans and 2203 Diasporans	Diasporans become entrepreneurs more by pull and less by necessity push. Network more than domestic entrepreneurs in the transnational and operations sphere. Networks benefit outcomes, innovation, exporting and growth expectations, in contrast to negative effects from networking in private sphere	Schött (2018)
Germany Self-employed migrants from the former Soviet Union	Type of social capital used in, e.g. geographic and business networks re transnational entrepreneurship	Transnational entrepreneurship, social capital, network analysis	Interviews, 62 first-generation self-employed migrants	Intensive transnational entr. activities use larger pre-existing networks from homeland, strong and weak ties, gradually extended. Informal weak ties used for sporadic transnational activities, Transnational activities (not homeland) used for formal network	Sommer and Gamber (2018)
Netherlands Dutch and Wenzhou-Dutch entrepreneurs	Extent migrants embed themselves and businesses in local context and how ethnic roots impact entr.	Phenomenography; embeddedness; ethnic minority entrepreneurs	Interviews 10 Wenzhou-Dutch 10 Dutch	Co-ethnic ties benefit, not disadvantage, e.g. strongly impact perception of entr., enactment behaviours, embeddedness in local area, collaborative entr.—“Wenzhouese entrepreneurial organization form” Mixed Embeddedness evident	Szkudlarek and Wu (2018)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
Lebanon Displaced Syrians	How social capital influences success and survival of refugee-entr. start-ups	Refugee entrepreneurship; social capital theory; start-up characteristics	Single case study	Distinct network structure. Co-ethnic network, host-nation network, equally important extends network to business associates at peak times, so flexibility. Small, familiar network, built strong ties. Social capital, via structural dimension of network ties; influences performance of the start-up. Nature of ties keep evolving as business grows	Bizri (2017)
China Within China migrants	Factors that foster entrepreneurship of within China migrants e.g. re-human, financial, social capital	Returned migrants, rural, urban, social networks, human, financial capital	Questionnaire interviews, three samples, 8000 rural households, 5000 urban households and 5000 rural-urban migrant households	Migrants leaving hometown provinces lose rooted social networks but gain more human capital, new social networks and sources of financial capital, enable entry to entr. In return, especially in the East, greater human and social capital led to more starting businesses	Yu et al. (2017)
Australia Melbourne Indian women entrepreneurs	Complexities of entrepreneurship experience, family embeddedness	Embeddedness ethnic migrant women entrepreneurs	Semi-structured interviews, 15 women	Indian culture, family dynamics enabler and/or obstacle for women's entr dreams. Female = negative influence on family embeddedness as entrepreneurs. Lacking social network also inhibitor	Azmat and Fujimoto (2016)
China Six cities Entrepreneurs— International returnee ventures (IRV)	International networking capabilities re international business and performance	Networking capability, international knowledge, financial performance	Questionnaire to 836 returnee entrepreneurs re ventures	International networking capability has positive influence on international business knowledge, positively related to innovation performance, but has negative impact on financial performance	Bai et al. (2016)

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Table 1 (continued)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
Japan Migrants from Malma, Nepal mostly to work in restaurants	How and why many Nepalis migrated to Japan? Kinds of social networks and other transnational ties.	Migration, social networks, social capital, transnational ties, entrepreneurship	Interviews, observation, video and field journal, 125 participants	Social capital, bonding family ties, neighbours, friends, bridging ties with Indian restaurant owners and Japanese businessmen for employment opportunities and aspiring to entrepreneurship. Complex balance between solidarity, exploitation, trust and conflict within Malma migration networks	Kharel (2016)
Danish islands Rural entrepreneurs	How spatial context influences entrepreneurial opportunity	Embeddedness; rural entr. Space, place; opportunity creation; networks	Case studies, 7	Strong pattern of entrepreneurs leveraging their placial embeddedness and non-local strategic networks to create opportunities. Non-local networks leveraged were built after entrepreneurs had moved to new rural island settings	Korsgaard et al. (2015)
India Alumni, top Indian University Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)	What affects migrants' participation in entr. activities when moving back to home country. Social influences.	Social influence, networks, overseas alumni, peer networks	Web-based survey, in 2006, 3127 responses.	Social amplification effect through networks suggests informal networks, e.g. those connecting alumni and ethnic professionals, important channels to induce return migration and entrepreneurship for highly skilled migrants	Qin and Estrin (2015)
RETURNING CITIZEN/EX-OFFENDER					
USA Mississippi Maximum-security prison pre-release inmates	Evaluation of the Ice House Entr. 12-week programme	Entrepreneurial education as an alternative when released from prison, growth mindset, re-entry	29 males, 6–20 months pre-release. Shown how to network with entr. develop a Mentoring Board of Advisors from their home community	Most of those attending the Ice House programme wrote they struggled with the possibility of creating a community of support is unlikely to be allowed into entrepreneur networks	Keena and Simmons (2014)

Country and group	Research question	Conceptual focus	Data and method	Findings	Author(s) (year)
YOUTH Ghana Accra Mobile telephony business	Lived experiences of young entrepreneurs working in rapidly changing, technologically driven sector	Life transition markers	Interviews 2010–2013, 15 young people, life trajectory interviews over three years. eight already operating a business, seven in training re repairs 25 biographical interviews of young mobile business owners	Social network.; e.g. stress of relative moving abroad, finding a sponsor, meeting old and new friends, and contacting a “connection man/woman”. Social networks usually a repository of resources for young people, but not so (e.g. friend sold him a stolen phone). Social networks: get support and give support, e.g. part of transitioning to being viewed adult in Ghanaian context	Afutu-Kotey et al. (2017)
Bangladesh Dhaka city, street children	Do social networks help street children find and manage informal jobs	Social networks	Interviews at three sites. 75 street children aged 10–17	Network ties important for information, assistance for accessing informal jobs. (Can be assumed a form of self-employment)	Reza (2017)

Note Entr. = entrepreneur(s)

men and women included the following: social networks (especially parent or husband/partner personal network) was the strongest correlate for women selecting entrepreneurship. The studies suggested that females lacked social capital and networks, and used family ties more than men. In technology incubators, gender inequality and a lack of inclusivity for females was prevalent. In a study in Uganda, men were less likely to receive funding and males in a network more often financed females than males. Gender homophily was negatively related to accessing resources. Families were a frequent source of resources, but the downside was that the payback (reciprocity) happened in various forms.

In studies that looked at women only, most of which were business owners (entrepreneurs), the findings included that gender hierarchy reduced the legitimacy of female entrepreneurs and that women tended to team with family members rather than non-relatives. Embeddedness in context, plus social networking, furthers gender equality. A network of women entrepreneurs, speaking with one voice, was found to further networking, internationalisation and innovation. Nepotism was linked to success and a social network was critical, especially via one's husband. Digital entrepreneurs found that social inequalities persist, plus social and cultural norms restrict encouraging females to become entrepreneurs. Females in early stages of entrepreneurship use homogeneity in networks, but as they advance heterogeneity occurs through a more diverse network. Family and community networks were positive, however, including men in power, led to negative effects. Gendering, racialisation and bureaucratic hierarchies exclude women from self-employment. Regardless of the country of the study, there are common social network themes that attest to the disadvantage of women regarding their self-employment and entrepreneurial efforts and success.

The conclusion that women, in general, are disadvantaged in comparison to men, in terms of venture-related social networks, is a common finding across current research. Studies attest to male advantage and female disadvantage in the existence, extent and usage of social networks. The cited causes of disadvantage are often gender hierarchy, interwoven with social and cultural norms. Future research might focus on the way women pursuing entrepreneurship can be *advantaged* via social networks. For example, building on research to date future studies might explore the critical role for women of family social networks. Additionally, formal networks, discussed later, especially those created to focus on advancing female entrepreneurship, might be an important driver of equalising the usefulness of social networks.

Immigrants and Social Networks

Twelve of the review studies concerned immigrants and social networks (Table 1). The methodology of the studies comprised six interviews, one a case study and five used surveys. The number of participants varied widely. Studies were conducted in Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Spain and Singapore. The research questions included how to increase productivity and target non-co-ethnic clients, structural assimilation and transnationalism, embeddedness in social networks, networking practices, determinants of self-employment, gender and networks, dual embeddedness, transnational ties, identification of foreign markets, and how immigrant entrepreneurship emerges and develops. The conceptual focus of the studies included social networks, social ties, network relationships, family/relational/social embeddedness, transnational business networks, kinship, ethnic ties, ethnic entrepreneurship, transnationalism, push and pull entrepreneurship, and human capital.

Findings in relation to social networks across the immigrant group of studies found that for start-ups, a male spouse was critical, as was family social capital and networks. Accumulating financial capital and the capacity to learn and benefit from the experience of social networks was a fundamental enabler for breakout activity (non-ethnic client strategy). Personal networks were critical for structural assimilation, embeddedness, transnationalism, cultural and economic assimilation. Social networks were utilised more by third-generation immigrants. Network disadvantage was addressed by affective ties. Female immigrants were less successful converting network resources into an advantage. Integration into social networks within one's host country and the transnationalism of dual embeddedness was highly advantageous for business. Their social network reputation within their former country also greatly assisted an immigrant's network development in their new country. Social networks comprised relatives and friends in an immigrant's homeland, in their new country of residence and in other countries where people in their networks had settled. Trust was strongest within social networks from their country of origin and within new region ethnic-based ties. Interestingly, kinship ties were less trusted. Also, social networks were found to differ by industry segment; for example, pizza restaurant owners valued local mimetic isomorphism, while ice cream store owners used social network transnationalism.

As indicated in the OECD 2019 Report on Missing Entrepreneurs, despite being a member of a disadvantaged group, there can also be advantages in terms of social capital. For example, knowledge and experience of different

cultures and business practices, speaking multiple languages, maximising dual embeddedness, are likely components for developing a strong social network. This was found to be the case across the immigrant group of studies reviewed. Additionally, family members' social networks were mainly viewed as critical components for establishing and growing a business. Subsequent research might explore the positive and negative implications of utilising family social networks, particularly in relation to timing, and the issues around the trust aspects of the relationship. Additionally, the inability to maximise the advantage of social networks, is also a topic that deserves more research attention, due to the potential knowledge this might produce for all disadvantaged groups. A promising next stage for social network studies in general, would be to explore social networks by industry and avoid generalisations across industries.

Migrant, Displaced, Refugee and Social Networks

There are 18 studies within the migrant, displaced and refugee group, and this represents the largest number of studies by group (Table 1). The methodology of the studies comprised 11 using interviews, two used a case study and five used surveys. The number of participants in the studies varied widely. The countries in which the studies were conducted included Australia, the Caribbean, Chile, China, Danish islands, England, Germany, India, Lebanon, Japan, Jordan, Netherlands, Pakistan, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the USA. The research questions included the role of intermediaries in entrepreneurship, use of bricolage, human and social capital and community trust, business modes of operation, migrant lifestyle, breakout strategies and social networks, propensity for self-employment, ethnic networks, transnationalism and type of networks, dual transnational embeddedness and family embeddedness. The conceptual focus of the studies included social networks, networking capability, social capital theory, transnational ties, opportunity creation, migration, entrepreneurship, migrant women, embeddedness, human and financial capital, ethnic minorities, phenomenography, network analysis, self-employment, breakout strategies, lifestyle migrants, new migration destinations, firm performance, emancipation, defiance and resistance.

The findings across the studies included the critical role of "secret production" networks. Sometimes these included networks set-up prior to displacement, whereby entrepreneurs would set-up clandestine networks which were

critical for their supply chain and customers. Findings also revealed the conflicting roles of being patron-donors and client-contractors. Local rules constrained women versus men. Also, ethnic networks were essential for overcoming unfamiliar institutional contexts. A complex web of business networks was found to extend beyond traditional links with their homeland to multiple countries. The backgrounds and aspirations of the migrants were found to influence how and why they use local institutional networks. They use multiple local and transnational social networks for business purposes. In the decision to become self-employed, the ethnic network is vital, but not so important when more established and advancing to hiring others. Network closure is utilised to limit competition and dependence from co-ethnic migrants. Strong and weak ties were utilised for local and transnational social networks. Mixed embeddedness (Jones et al. 2014) is common, with the co-ethnic network and host-nation network equally important. Depending on the family culture, family-derived social networks were an enabler or an obstacle to female entrepreneurship. International networking capability was found to have a positive influence on business-related innovation, but a negative effect on financial performance. There was found to be a complex balance between solidarity, exploitation, trust and conflict in the social network of migrants.

Intriguingly, research studies for this group, allude to what one might call social networks based on self-interested realism. There appears to be a decisive, realistic perspective in the use of social networks, which include strong and weak, local and transnational ties, with mixed embeddedness. With the endgame of entrepreneurial success kept clearly in sight, there seems to be a timescale or time sequence, in relation to social network development and use. This leads to potentially important research questions to increase our knowledge of not just the “*who*” but also the “*when*” of social network composition and usage. Migrants, displaced people and refugees are currently, and will no doubt continue to be, increasingly prevalent groups, given the tumultuous times in which governments now preside and the associated economic, political, social and climatic challenges. Research into the time sequence in use of business-related local and transnational social networks is timely and highly warranted.

Returning Citizen/Ex-offender and Social Networks

There is a significant lack of recent studies on social networks and returning citizens/ex-offenders. However, the recent literature provides some insight

in addition to the study identified in Table 1. Ex-offenders face formidable barriers re-integrating into society. Anazodo et al. (2019) found that formerly incarcerated individuals have a “unique awareness of the social stigmatization associated with their criminal record and incarceration history” (p. 564). These authors classified the various coping strategies they encountered as follows: “conditional disclosure, deflection, identity substitution, defying expectations, withdrawal and avoidance strategies” (p. 564). It is critical to consider this issue within the context of social networks and trust-based relationships since a major challenge on leaving prison is finding ways to rebuild family and social networks. To address this, Baskaran (2019) advocated for the creation of locally based “Economic Justice Incubators (EJI)” supplying social services, but also support networks to suit the needs of returning citizens, especially those returning citizens who want to start their own business. An EJI provides, for example, business start-up assistance, finance, customer referrals and legal advice.

Patzelt et al. (2014) researched a 20-week entrepreneurship training programme in a German prison, developing 12 case studies of male participants. Surprisingly, however, there is no mention that the topic of social capital or networks was part of the curriculum, which centred on mindset and opportunity recognition. Meanwhile, in a US maximum-security prison, Keena and Simmons (2015) studied an ice house entrepreneurship 12-week programme. The 7th life lesson that inmates learned was how to become part of a network of entrepreneurs and develop their own MBA (Mentoring Board of Advisors) from their community. Recognising that “old habits die hard”, most inmates wrote that they struggled with the possibility of creating a community of support with entrepreneurs who had made good choices and probably would not want to share their networks with ex-offenders, who had made poor choices. Ex-offenders, when viewed through the perspective of intersectionality (Liu et al. 2019b) comprise many different groups. Griffith et al. (2019) found that some groups of ex-offenders are additionally disadvantaged; for example, those of African-American descent have particular difficulties with regard to obtaining employment when they return to their community. Meanwhile, Brown and Ross (2010) discussed the distinctly gendered nature of women’s post-prison experiences. For women, their former social network is frequently perceived as a danger to them re-offending. Alternatively, they might have been cut-off from family and friends due to drug use and incarceration. Despite the considerable gap in the social network literature regarding returning citizens/ex-offenders, researching this group provides unique opportunities. For example, some returning citizens/ex-offenders might need to sever some, most or all existing

members of their social network, and then develop additional or completely new social network ties. This provides a potential “greenfield study” along with an opportunity to employ a social network theory methodology.

Youth and Social Networks

Only two studies were found directly related to youth, social networks and self-employment or entrepreneurship. In Ghana, social networks were perceived by the interviewees as having advantages, but also disadvantages. In the study from Bangladesh, networks are essential for informal jobs. This is an area that, although difficult to research given the age of many of the potential participants, it has considerable potential for social networks, perhaps formal networks, to have a big impact on enhancing entrepreneurial opportunities for youth.

Formal Networks

Fayolle et al. (2016) suggested that creating formal networks for entrepreneurs might be a worthwhile initiative as a policy intervention tool. Roos (2019) advocated that a “process of embeddedness in context” (p. 279) can address the gender entrepreneurship challenge. Her ethnographic, rural study is of a Swedish government initiative to nurture start-up and growth of female-led businesses in a rural area, particularly the establishment and funding of women entrepreneurship networks. The programme reinforces gender norms, but also provides an opportunity to challenge the status quo via “embedding the network in their local context” (p. 288). Further support for the initiation of formal female networks is provided by Santos et al.’s (2019) study of female Portuguese wine producers. They found that formal networks were advantageous for:

sharing of knowledge and experiences and the level of internationalization and networking ... the strategy of co-competition – being both competitors and partners – fosters unity among network members. (p. 315)

For regions struggling with unemployment and lack of economic growth, it seems a worthwhile endeavour, of relatively low cost, with the potential to reverse a highly prevalent area of disadvantage among large sections of the community. However, Leitch et al. (2016) found that “the benefits of formal network membership are indirect and longer term” (p. 180) with varying

expectations by gender. However, it might be a first step in reversing the extreme disadvantage experienced by many aspiring entrepreneurs in these missing entrepreneur groups.

Conclusion

This study analysed quantitative and qualitative research studies from 2014 to 2019 regarding social networks and five of the missing entrepreneur groups. In terms of interest, it appears that the study of social networks for migrants, women and immigrants are very popular areas of research. Researchers have largely respected the advice of scholars in this area to conduct more qualitative studies to reveal the richness of the topic and capture the social embeddedness perspective (Jack and Anderson 2002). Geographically, few areas of the world have been omitted by researchers. The research questions have been varied and aimed at capturing the various nuances of social networks in relation to self-employment and entrepreneurship. These studies provide clues regarding where future studies might be situated in terms of theoretical foundation, conceptual focus and geographical area of interest. Findings also point to family social networks as having positive and also negative aspects (Anderson et al. 2005).

In terms of advancing existing knowledge of network theory in relation to missing entrepreneur groups, the literature is still at the early stages of building knowledge. According to Burt (2019):

current entrepreneurship research remains distant from network theory ... because network structure is so rarely observed as networks are currently measured (respondent summary opinion about their network is a poor indicator of structure). (Burt 2019, p. 21)

Network theory can provide valuable insights about social networks for entrepreneurs. For example, Burt advanced several hypotheses regarding the type of networks that are a disadvantage or an advantage at different stages in the entrepreneur's journey, as well as, for example, the role of network brokers. Burt also cited the:

documented positive effect of launching within a supportive closed network, [so] imagine the negative effect of launching within a denigrating closed network – as often happens to women recommended to stay in their place, or people in general with the wrong social origins. A denigrating closed network

can crush a venture before it begins, or drag it down during its vulnerable infancy. (Burt 2019, p. 44)

A major conclusion from this review is that more research on social networks is needed and greater use of social network theory should be employed. In the short term, formal networks utilising the current network theory principles (as proposed for example by Burt 2019) might enhance the chances for the disadvantaged. However, formal networks are a long-term financial commitment and take time to effect. Based on a review of recent literature, there is no quick-fix to maximising the advantages and minimising the disadvantages of social networks for those within the various missing entrepreneur groups.

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