
Editorial: On the heterogeneity of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship

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1 Introduction

Migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship belongs to the up-and-coming fields of entrepreneurship research. As the reference section of this editorial reveals, the number of publications is growing fast and the understanding of the peculiarities of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship increases over time. This fosters orientation within a bigger number of similar concepts like transnational entrepreneurship or ethnic entrepreneurship and helps carving out the differences. So far, so good – one may think. With a growing body of research, however, it comes to the fore that migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship is not a cohesive body at all. There are already good reasons to distinguish between migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship and to treat them as two different fields of research. Despite this ‘external heterogeneity’, there may also be

‘internal heterogeneity’ as there are striking differences depending on circumstances and contexts in which entrepreneurial activities take place.

However, what are these differences about? To name but a few, the migration route seems to matter much. If people from developed countries found a new business in a less-developed country, the context is very much different from the case when people move the other way around and found – which is the more typical direction (Harima, 2016, 2019; Harima et al., 2016). Moreover, it makes a difference when people only move from one location to another or when they move from country to country with substantial learning effects in the respective countries. These contexts, however, differ much from ‘circular’ migration routes where people finally come back to their country-of-origin as returnee entrepreneurs (Mayer et al., 2015; Saxenian 2005). Moreover and more content-related, it makes a huge difference if people leave their country-of-origin enforcedly as is the case when refugees leave their home country, sometimes without a clear destination.

Against this background, the common ground of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship has become already well prepared by research within the last couple of years. However, the growing number of publications already reveals that there is so much to be discovered behind these commonalities. This calls for a deeper analysis of both the internal and external heterogeneity of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. The current special issue is a response to this more or less implicit call. The overall ambition is to connect heterogeneity with the common ground. We consider this step meaningful as otherwise research fields tend to proliferate and/or to fragment into unrelated pieces.

Before we move closer to the core ambition of this special issue, we highlight research on migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship to locate the particular fields we aim to address.

2 Migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship

The history of research on immigrants’ entrepreneurial activities is rather long. We can trace it back to the 1970s, where sociologists started arguing their entrepreneurial activities in the context of ethnic enclaves (Model, 1985; Portes and Jensen, 1989; Waldinger, 1993; Wilson and Martin, 1982; Wilson and Portes, 1980) and middleman minorities (Bonacich, 1973; Kitano, 1974). In the 1980s and 1990s, predominantly sociologists started researching this phenomenon. As also pointed out by Rath and Kloosterman (2000), sociologists made significant contributions to the emergence of this research field, but their approach often puts too much focus on ethnocultural characteristics and processes of ethnocultural incorporation. From the 2000s on, there have been an increasing number of publications on this phenomenon in business and economic studies, while it has continued to attract sociologists’ research interest. Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013), who conducted an extensive systematic literature review on immigrant entrepreneurship in business studies, point out that business research on this phenomenon focuses on the reality of the USA and other Western countries and this research field has an urgent call for efforts in theoretical foundations.

The previous research on entrepreneurship of migrants and diasporans has mainly addressed three domains:

- 1 contributions and outputs
- 2 resources and capital
- 3 influencing factors.

The follow-up sub-sections contain some selected results in the light of this special issue.

2.1 Socio-economic contributions and output

Firstly, migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs have been seen as economic agents to make contributions to the economy of both the host and home countries. By exploring and exploiting unique opportunities, migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs are seen as job creators in host countries (Eraydin et al., 2010; Kalitanyi, 2010). For instance, Neville et al. (2014) recently found that young firms owned by recent immigrants outperform young domestically-founded firms. They argue that one possible source for their strength is the access to international networks which provide entrepreneurs with competitive advantages with regard to internationalisation strategies. Entrepreneurs with migration backgrounds, however, do not only make contributions to the host economy, but to the home country economy as well. This materialises by remittances, investments from outside of the country (Debass and Ardovino, 2009; Fuller, 2010; Styan, 2007), or by entrepreneurial activities as returnees (Dai and Liu, 2009; Liu et al., 2015; Wright et al., 2008).

Notably, their contributions to the host and home countries go far beyond the economic sphere. Diasporans and migrants also transfer intangible assets to foster innovation and institutions in their home countries. After investigating how Chinese, Taiwanese and Indian migrants in the USA transfer their knowledge and experience back to their home countries, Saxenian coined the term ‘brain circulation’ as an alternative concept to ‘brain drain’, emphasising the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in fostering innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems in home countries (Saxenian, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2005). Apart from innovation, previous studies highlight impacts of returnee entrepreneurs on globalisation process and development of the homeland industries (Kenney et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2010; Liu, 2017; Wang et al., 2011). Baron (2015) also explores the role of diaspora entrepreneurs during the emergence and development of entrepreneurial ecosystem in host countries.

2.2 Resources of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs

Besides these evident contributions, scholars shed light on unique resources of entrepreneurs with migration backgrounds. One of the oldest but still powerful concepts to explain their resources is ethnic capital. Light (1984, p.201) argues that ethnic resources include “orthodox cultural endowments, relative satisfaction, reactive solidarities, sojourning orientation.” Ethnic resources are often investigated in contrast to class resources which are “private property in the means of production and distribution, human capital, and money to invest” [Light, (1984) p.201] and “bourgeois value, attitudes, knowledge and skill transmitted intergenerationally in the course of primary socialization” [Light, (1984) p.202]. How immigrant entrepreneurs use such ethnic

resources highly depends on ethnic groups and their location (Min and Bozorgmehr, 2000). It is a common thought among scholars that the ability to use ethnic resources is essential for migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs to explore and exploit unique opportunities (Dai and Liu, 2009; Van Gelderen, 2007).

Another type of resource which often comes up in previous studies is social capital of migrants and diasporans. Scholars have discussed how family ties influence their entrepreneurial activities (Cobas and Deollos, 1989; Zimmer and Aldrich, 1987). While early studies found rather minor support for the impact of family ties on migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship, Mustafa and Chen (2010) coin the term 'transnational family network' which is utilised by migrant entrepreneurs for internationalising their business. Munkejord (2015) also supports their argument by noting that family members can be located both locally and transnationally and play significant roles in supporting immigrant female entrepreneurs. More recently, the unique relation between family and migrant entrepreneurs has been further investigated in business studies. For instance, Bird and Wennberg (2016) found that family support can increase the chance that immigrant entrepreneurs continue their entrepreneurial activities for a longer time. Moreover, Azmat and Fujimoto (2016) argue that the relation to the family significantly influences female immigrant entrepreneurs, as entrepreneurs are embedded in host and home institutions, as well as in their family contexts.

Migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs have access to networks related to their ethnicity. Such networks can be called as ethnic ties (Cobas and Deollos, 1989) and diaspora networks (Dutia 2012; Kshetri et al., 2015; Kuznetsov, 2006). Entrepreneurs who engage in transnational business mobilise resources embedded within ethnic ties and make decisions related to geographical expansion of their business depending on the availability of professional and personal ethnic ties (Chaganti and Greene, 2002; Pruthi et al., 2018). Similar to family ties, ethnic ties exist not only in single locations such as ethnic enclaves, but also in the form of transnational network. Such networks facilitate collaboration between specialists in different countries (Saxenian, 2001, 2002b; Kuznetsov, 2006). Having transnational networks allow entrepreneurs to access and combine diverse sets of resources from multiple locations, which drive them to build competitive advantages or at least achieve a state of competitiveness (Dai and Liu, 2009; Kariv et al., 2009). Diaspora networks are not exclusive for migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs. When diasporans motivate to contribute to the development of their homelands, Nanda and Khanna (2010) point out that local entrepreneurs can also benefit from diaspora networks through financial investment and knowledge transfer. The purposes for formation of diaspora networks are diverse, which range from creation of informal broad knowledge connections between people with same ethnic backgrounds to formation of business networks with concrete aims such as knowledge transfer and diaspora investment (Newland and Tanaka, 2010).

Entrepreneurs with migration backgrounds do not only rely on ethnic and transnational diaspora networks. As migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs are embedded in dual environments (Kloosterman et al., 1999), they also have access to other types of networks in host countries and how they balance the mobilisation of different networks determine nature and outputs of their entrepreneurial activities (Chen and Tan, 2009; Mayer et al., 2015; Patel and Conklin, 2009; Patel and Terjesen, 2011; Portes et al., 2002). Migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs proactively mobilise different types of

networks in order to overcome institutional constraints by recruiting local managers or co-founding with local partners (Harima, 2014, 2015; Pruthi and Wright, 2017). Engagement in the wider community influences intercultural skills which enables entrepreneurs to deal with uncertainty (Liu and Almor, 2014), to develop unique business models (Harima and Vemuri, 2015), to internationalise the business (Solano, 2015), to generate venture ideas (Pruthi, 2014), and to recognise unique opportunities (Harima et al., 2016). While strong potentials of diaspora networks for entrepreneurial activities by migrants and diasporans are widely acknowledged, scholars point out more recently that the positive effects of transnational networks on entrepreneurial activities are moderated by homeland conditions (Brzozowski et al., 2014; Santamaria-Alvarez et al., 2018), learning capabilities of entrepreneurs (Liu et al., 2015), and personal characteristics and gender of entrepreneurs (Cheraghi and Schött 2016).

2.3 Factors influencing migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship

Previous studies investigate how institutions of home and host countries as well as socio-cultural issues may influence migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. Due to the transnational nature of their business, migrants and diasporans face considerable structural and regulatory constraints (Drori and Lerner, 2002; Harima, 2015; Moyo, 2014). For instance, when entrepreneurs conduct business in countries with weak institutions, they may be required to balance formal and informal economic activities (Lin et al., 2015). Moreover, the policies of the home and host countries influence migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs. Immigration and taxation policies of host-country governments influence immigrants' decision to become entrepreneurs and their economic outputs (Collins, 2003). Recent studies find, however, that there are complex relations between policy and immigrants' entrepreneurial activities. For instance, Lin et al. (2015) observe complex relations between returnee entrepreneurial activities and informal institutions. Besides that, Bao et al. (2016) argue that regulatory transparency may discourage returnees to pursue entrepreneurial career.

Institutional environments influence so-called 'opportunity structures' on three levels: national, regional/urban, and neighbourhood (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Kloosterman and Rath, 2001). On the national level, institutions such as law, rules and regulations determine what is marketable and what not. Regulations may also influence legal rights of migrants and diasporans to conduct business in the particular location. On the regional/urban level, institutions can drive or hinder immigrants' entrepreneurial activities. For instance, the emergence of entrepreneurial ecosystems can change the institutions of the region (Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015). Kloosterman and Rath (2001) also argue that global cities where a number of international headquarters are located generate their own regional opportunity structure. On the neighbourhood level, institutions such as spatial patterns of the distribution in terms of population and positionings of social networks have immediate impact on the opportunity structure. Based on the opportunity structure, Kloosterman and his colleagues developed a well-known theoretical concept called 'mixed embeddedness' (Kloosterman et al., 1999; Kloosterman and Rath, 2001).

Apart from institutional factors, socio-cultural determinants such as personal motivation and social drivers for migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs have been regarded as strong influential factors. On one side, their entrepreneurial activities have commonly been regarded as outcomes of labour market disadvantages (e.g., Min, 1987). Yet, recent

studies have revealed several pull motivations as well (Kotabe et al., 2013; Pruthi et al., 2018). Debass and Ardovino (2009) coin a novel concept called ‘diaspora direct investment (DDI) by exploring diasporans’ motivation to invest in homelands. Diasporans invest in homelands not only for economic reasons, but also for homeland orientation (Brubaker 2005) and diaspora philanthropy (Newland et al., 2010) – a strong obligative feeling to contribute to the development of homelands.

3 Motivation for the special issue ‘Tackling the heterogeneity of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship’

While migration will remain a pervasive development in the world with sending and receiving countries that change over time, there is already evidence that societies evaluate migration as well as migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship differently. There may be some consensus that some kinds of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship may be beneficial for the national economies. Nevertheless, the debate on refugees and the still neglected field of refugee entrepreneurship reveal that people are also skeptical when they take a look at the process and outcome of such developments. In fact, the heterogeneity of the phenomenon makes it challenging to come across with general assessments.

More generally, there seems to be a most recent trend around the globe: the transnational age with growing international relations and a strong globalisation already seems to have reached the climax. First indications of a trend to re-nationalisation are already visible and cast a shadow on migration debates as well – calling for more fine-grained approaches. Insofar, tackling the heterogeneity of the phenomenon implies to take this into account and to develop more differentiated perspectives (e.g., Elo, 2016) being aware that a common ground exists.

The editors of this volume hosted a series of workshops and international conferences on migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship at the University of Bremen, Germany, some of them co-hosted by Maria Elo from Turku University, Finland. Commencing in 2014, up to 2017 three international conferences and four workshops took place with participants from all over the world. The presented papers made excellent contributions to address the heterogeneity of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship and encouraged to launch a call. Six papers responding to the call have been considered for publication in this issue. They help addressing some of the most pressing research questions as for example:

What are the cognitive and motivational drivers of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship? In this regard it is still open how far context matters.

4 Approaching migration and diaspora entrepreneurship academically

For investigating migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship, scholars face challenges mainly due to three factors:

- 1 the inter and multidisciplinary nature of the phenomenon
- 2 methodological challenges
- 3 theoretical foundations.

The first challenge is related to the strong multi- and interdisciplinary nature of this phenomenon. While the majority of early contributors mostly originates from sociology (cf. Bonacich, 1973; Waldinger, 1984; Zimmer and Aldrich, 1987; Portes and Jensen, 1989), entrepreneurial activities of immigrants have attracted large interest from scholars in other disciplines such as history (Godley, 1996), cultural studies (Dahles, 2005; Nyíri, 2011), development studies (Newland et al., 2010), economic and business geography (Henn, 2013; Kloosterman, 2010; Waldinger, 1993), regional studies (Munkejord, 2015; Yu et al., 2017), psychology (Kushnirovich et al., 2017; Liargovas and Skandalis, 2012; Robertson and Grant, 2016), economics (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Hart and Acs, 2011; Lassmann and Busch, 2015; Stark and Bloom, 1985), and business studies (Drori et al., 2009; Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011; Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013; Harima et al., 2016; Pruthi et al., 2018). Due to this high multi- and interdisciplinarity, previous research findings tend to be fragmented and it is difficult to consolidate them. Tackling the heterogeneity insofar also implies to some extent to moderate and connect between the disciplines involved.

Second, as migrants and diasporans are embedded in different cultural contexts including ethnic communities in host countries (Kloosterman et al., 1999) and transnational diaspora networks (Kariv et al., 2009), scholars naturally face methodological challenges to capture the whole image of the reality of their entrepreneurial activities. Migrants and diasporans are often engaged in entrepreneurial activities in home and host countries by combining resources located transnationally. Researchers need to ask themselves to what extent they are able to consider such transnational dynamics for their studies and what methodologies are feasible to capture them. Moreover, each ethnic group has different histories and cultures and their current situation is strongly influenced by the conditions of both the host and home country. This makes it highly challenging to conduct comparative studies and to generalise findings. Furthermore, scholars are required to possess capabilities to understand and deal with culture in order to understand taken-for-granted rules and values, dynamics within the ethnic community, sources for ethnic ties as well as values of ethnic resources, as these factors are critical to outputs of immigrants' venture (Borjas, 1992; Kshetri et al., 2015; Pruthi et al., 2018; Waldinger, 1989).

Finally, due to its complex nature and settings, this research field suffers from lack of general theories (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013; Freiling, 2019). In early days, scholars attempted to explain the phenomenon of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship from sociological perspectives as represented in ethnic enclave theory (Model, 1985; Portes and Jensen, 1989; Waldinger, 1993; Wilson and Martin, 1982) and middleman minority theory (Bonacich, 1973; Kitano, 1974). One dominant stream which was recently developed is about the concept of mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman et al., 2016, 1999; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Peters, 2002). This concept developed by Dutch economic-geographers encompasses immigrant entrepreneurs' embeddedness in the socio-economic and politico-institutional environment of the host country and the ethnic community (Kloosterman et al., 1999). While it is a powerful conceptual tool to analyse entrepreneurial activities of migrants and diasporans, this concept cannot explain everything. For instance, since it focuses on interrelations between entrepreneurial individuals and host-country and ethnic institutions, it does not offer detailed aspects of business such as the opportunity creation process, resource mobilisation for business model development, internationalisation strategy and development of competitive

advantages. Furthermore, this concept focuses on ethnic communities in host countries and does not fully take transnational networks and homeland's dynamics into consideration. Moreover, this concept offers limited explanations for diaspora engagement and returnee entrepreneurial activities.

Responding to this research issue, business scholars have made remarkable efforts for theoretical foundations for immigrants' entrepreneurial engagements. For instance, Drori et al. (2009) promote different theoretical approaches from agency, cultural, institutional, power relations, and social capital perspectives. Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome (2013) develop a framework for successful diaspora international entrepreneurship, while integrating theoretical considerations from business studies such as opportunity identification and entrepreneurial attributes into settings of diaspora individuals. Yet, there is still large scope for improvement in developing and extending theoretical foundations.

5 Tackling the heterogeneity of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship

In order to tackle the heterogeneity of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship, scholars need to consider three dimensions of this phenomenon:

- 1 content
- 2 context
- 3 process issues.

5.1 Content issues

Investigating entrepreneurial activities of migrants and diasporans, scholars need to be aware of difficulties to define relevant concepts. It is unavoidable to face terminological complexity caused by the co-existence of similar concepts which yet addresses different characteristics of entrepreneurial individuals or their business's nature, including immigrant entrepreneurship (Kloosterman, 2005; Rath, 2000; Waldinger, 1984), ethnic entrepreneurship (Baycan-Levent et al., 2008; Cobas and Deollos, 1989; Volery, 2007), transnational entrepreneurship (Drori et al., 2009; Lin and Tao, 2012; Portes et al., 2002), transnational immigrant entrepreneurship (Kwak and Hiebert, 2010; Mustafa and Chen, 2010), returnee entrepreneurship (Dai and Liu, 2009; Kenney et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2010; Wright et al., 2008) and diaspora entrepreneurship (Newland and Tanaka, 2010; Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011; Elo et al., 2015; Harima et al., 2016). As a recent trend, responding to the ongoing refugee crisis, refugee entrepreneurship has attracted much research interest from scholars (Freiling and Harima, 2018; Bizri, 2017; Heilbrunn et al., 2018; Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008). The emergence of refugee entrepreneurship as a new research field raises the question whether and to what extent we need to consider and emphasise entrepreneurial activities of internally displaced persons as or within migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship (Mooney, 2005).

Despite the different faces and facets of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship, there is a considerable common ground as to the transnational nature of venturing. This transnational dimension causes a special kind of resource of founders. It is not only the knowledge and experience of at least two different nations that forms a kind of

cross-national knowledge base that is favourable for people prone to venturing. It is also the understanding of different cultural contexts that nurtures a superior orientation in different settings and related processes of interpretation (Démurger and Xu, 2011; Zikic et al., 2006). To some extent, this may also be beneficial for developing higher levels of empathy and understanding other people. Insofar, the transnational resource built by migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs has both cognitive and emotional implications.

The questions arise of what the common ground of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship is and what is different in terms of governance (structures). Governance issues of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship primarily relate to the following aspects:

- 1 formal versus informal intra-firm governance
- 2 formal versus informal inter-firm governance.

Commencing with intra-firm governance, there is no general blueprint to apply in case of founding a company in terms of governance. Instead, there are many different options as to the legal form, the team structure as well as the migration and diaspora entrepreneurship endeavour. Nevertheless, reality suggests that there is some heterogeneity, but there are also some commonalities. Particularly, migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs tend to favour informal rather than formal modes of governance. There are different reasons for that. One reason relates to the size of the company – with migrant and diaspora ventures often belonging to micro and small-business section. Smaller companies, however, simply do not need so much formalisation as the structures are transparent. Formal governance structures (e.g., contracts, internal institutions, organisation rules, monitoring) are often context-dependent and, thus related to the entire governance system of the host country. It takes intimate knowledge to deal with the formal governance modes efficiently. Often this intimate knowledge is not available or available at transaction costs levels that are too high. Moreover, informal governance (e.g., norms, values, agreements, trust and self-control) is often more flexible and causes a lower level of transaction costs (Calliess et al., 2008). Another question of internal governance relates to team structures. Different from start-ups, migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship is not necessarily driven by a team of founders. Sometimes families form migrant and diaspora ventures, sometimes also other relatives or friends from the same ethnic group become involved. However, it is not necessarily that they become founders. It is also possible that they become something like ‘privileged business supporters’ or crucial gatekeepers.

As for inter-firm governance, the most important feature is the use of networks. As elaborated above in more detail, home country, host country and diaspora networks in close connection are powerful levers of venture development for migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs – be it in terms of ideation to develop unique business concepts or be it in terms of implementing the business. Once again, informal governance dominates modes of formal governance for similar reasons as above.

5.2 Context issues

As for contextual issues, it is usual to differentiate inner and outer context. Elements of the outer context enabling and surrounding migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship have already been mentioned. Particularly, the role of social media, the business and social

digitalisation as well as new logistics solutions cause a visible shift from traditional migrant entrepreneurship with a strong emphasis on the host country context to a ‘new picture of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship’. This picture of global connectedness allows migrants to transfer almost all kinds of resources around the globe – including ideas, knowledge, reputation and money (Tung and Lazarova, 2006). Against this background, it is possible to speak of a ‘new wave’ of migrant entrepreneurship with tremendous opportunities of scaling a business.

The opportunity structure is a link to the inner context of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Kloosterman and Rath, 2001). However, what is exactly the opportunity structure about in this particular setting. We know from previous research that opportunities are constellations where entrepreneurs can take action to make a profit due to unrecognised or unrealised business potentials (Davidsson, 2015; Dean and McMullen, 2007; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Kirzner (1973) pointed to the need of opportunity recognition and the role of expectations within the recognition process. Based on uncertainty and incomplete, asymmetric information, entrepreneurs develop different expectations. Some of them recognise opportunities that are invisible for others. Migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs have a unique opportunity recognition capacity. This capacity rests on their international and intercultural experience (Harima et al., 2016). The different perspectives allow also different and broader views and understandings of business. Moreover, their diverse network structure provides migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs with specific relationships that can be beneficial for opportunity recognition.

5.3 *Process issues*

Entrepreneurship literature suggests typical patterns of how entrepreneurs start when forming a venture and how the follow-up steps looks like (e.g., Bhawe, 1994). In general, there do not seem to be striking differences from other modes of entrepreneurship as to the run of events. However, this does not imply that the entrepreneurial is conventional. It is simply so that this topic is under-researched. What we can expect is considerable heterogeneity, as some venture processes run fast while others develop in a much slower fashion. It seems to be so that migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs need some time to prepare for the foundation – particularly in terms of activating their resources. Once they get utilised, however, they may unfold and drive the business. Nevertheless, generalisations are very dangerous as market definitions of these ventures are quite diverse. It is up to future research to contribute to a better understanding of the process dimension of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship and to identify the evolution mechanisms.

6 Recent and prospective research streams: an overview on contributions in this special issue

Recently, the up-and-coming body of research on entrepreneurial ecosystems suggests that those ecosystems are to a large extent driven by migrants and diasporans (Brown and Mason, 2017; Saxenian, 2000). There seems to be evidence that migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs help ecosystems in their development by accelerating the dynamics. If so, we can expect much more attention for migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship in the

future as start-up ecosystems come to the fore in the minds of policy makers in agglomerations.

The new wave of migration and diaspora entrepreneurship rests to a large extent on the new possibilities leading-edge ICT offers in connection with modern logistics. What we can identify already is the trend to diaspora entrepreneurship rather than migrant entrepreneurship, as more and more entrepreneurs in this realm stay connected to their home country and keep relationships and traditions alive. There is no real doubt about the future development that modern ICT and logistics will further improve – and offer new opportunities. We can expect that the role of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship will still be strong, maybe stronger than today. This, however, depends on the uncertain development of two further issues:

- a the above-mentioned trend of re-nationalisation in the political and social sphere
- b the role of wars, disasters and other reasons that make people leave their country by force.

The two developments in the global society may have a large impact on the role of refugees and refugee entrepreneurship. Whereas the first development will possibly decrease the number of founded businesses by refugees, the latter one may have a positive influence. Taking the considerations by Huntington (1996) seriously, the clash of civilisations and cultures may be the biggest threat of peace and pervade the 21st century. Taking most recent trends around the globe into account, there is some evidence that there is something about Huntington's (1996) view – with the potential impact that both trends may unfold.

The articles of this volume make different kinds of progress in understanding the heterogeneity of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. Muñoz-Castro et al. provide an overview of transnational entrepreneurship by reviewing this up-and-coming research field based on a systematic literature review that takes into account relevant publications of the last two decades. The findings stem from different disciplines and, thus, respond to the above-mentioned multi-disciplinary nature of the phenomenon. The article adds to the special issue by both considering common ground factors and aspects that create the heterogeneity of the field. In this vein, they identify factors such as personal characteristics, agency, networks, or institutional environments. Muñoz-Castro et al. point out the more or less undisputed role of institutions for transnational entrepreneurs. However, they also qualify the role by pointing to the relevance of networks, human capital and entrepreneurial motivation to overcome structural constraints. Their call for a more developed theoretical framework for studies in transnational entrepreneurship is already considered within this special issue as we point out below.

The article of Brzozowski tackles the delicate issue of integration of migrant entrepreneurs. Reviewing the growing body of literature, Brzozowski focuses on the linkage between immigrant entrepreneurship and the immigrant's economic integration in the host country. Based on a systematic literature review, he notices a huge research gap and a limited understanding of this issue and observes that the bare state of self-employment of migrant entrepreneurs is often already understood as the desired outcome of integration. Moreover, the debate is overly income-based and neglects other outcome measures. The literature review reveals a strong application of the linear assimilation

approach of migrants in host countries. Against this background, one important contribution of this article to the special issue is the call for awareness of the heterogeneity of different assimilation and integration paths of migrants – with outcomes different from and beyond self-employment.

While Brzozowski also reflects dominant applications of theories in the realm of his particular topic, Decker address theory applications to respond to the contextual dimension of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. One contribution of this article is the illumination of structuration theory and its academic potential in this field in connection with institutional theory and cognitive science research. In this vein, it is possible to address the important role of cognition that forms a bridge between individual action of entrepreneurs and the context of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. As mentioned above, context is one dimension that is core to the understanding of the very nature of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. Insofar, the article of Decker provides the reader with a clear conceptualisation of context.

Besides cognition, motivation of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs stands at the fore. It is up to the article of Lucas to address this issue in the light of re-thinking entrepreneurial agency. Being aware of the limited systematic effort in research to understand the role of context in motivating entrepreneurial behaviour, the article regards context as an important factor influencing entrepreneurial motivation. In particular, Lucas points out the active role context plays in the setting of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. The article points to the rather individual perception of context by (migrant and diaspora) entrepreneurs. Drawing on the embeddedness debate, the article identifies time and place as core factors constituting context. By questioning the universality of the entrepreneurial process, the article directly contributes to the heterogeneity debate of the special issue.

The two final articles of this special issue deal with resources that may fuel migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship endeavours of the different kinds. Cheung et al. address the role of social media during the development of a social enterprise in a conflict context (civil war) paying special attention to interaction and value co-production. The situation also takes into account obstacles to business development like the delicate aspect of excluding harmful and threatening forces. The article reveals in a differentiated fashion the supportive role of social media (networks) when such a social enterprise is founded. The authors employ a phase-differentiated approach for a more nuanced understanding of the specific role of social media. They identify bricolage as a powerful concept to deal with the particular situation of social entrepreneurship in penurious settings.

Fonrouge and Bolzani, finally, tackle the important issue of entrepreneurial finance in case of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship by focusing on crowd-lending. In more detail, they focus on entrepreneurial finance projects in their homeland. The term ‘crowd’ suggests a broad scope of funding. In case of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship, however, the diaspora stands at the fore when it comes to funding issues. The article focuses on those variables that relate to the motivations of diasporans and the barriers of their engagement in online micro-lending compared to traditional investment alternatives. Both for the motivations and the barriers, the article considers affective as well as utilitarian factors. As to the results, the role of contingencies is evident and adds in this way to this special issue.

We do hope that this special issue stimulates the vibrant debate on migration and diaspora entrepreneurship and encourage all readers to join the dialogue. Maybe future workshops and conferences on migration and diaspora entrepreneurship (cf. <http://www.mde-conferences.com>) are a forum to meet, think and share ideas.

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