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Immigrant Entrepreneurship in an Emerging Economy: The Case of Turkey

by Rachel S. Shinnar and Dilek Zamantılı Nayır

This paper examines motivations for, and paths to, entrepreneurship among immigrants in Turkey based on interviews with 22 immigrant entrepreneurs in Istanbul. Findings suggest that immigrant entrepreneurs in a developing economy may be different from their counterparts in well-established economies. First, immigrant entrepreneurs rely on their unique human and social capital in the process of starting businesses thanks to their ability to identify opportunities based on insider knowledge of the market in their home and host countries. Second, their ability to foster trusting relationships thanks to language, cultural, and religious knowledge permits immigrant entrepreneurs in an emerging economy to engage in less economically marginal activities.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship among immigrants in the United States and Europe has received much research attention, for example, Turkish immigrants founding firms in Europe (Panayiotopoulos 2008) or Hispanic immigrants in the United States (Shinnar and Young 2008; Tienda and Raijman 2004). However, foreign-born entrepreneurs in developing nations remain largely understudied. We consider this lack of academic and practical attention an important gap in the literature, as market globalization has been accompanied by a major migratory movement of people from under-developed to more developed countries—both developed *and* developing—for political, economic, or social reasons leading to a rise in the numbers of economic migrants as well as refugees. Furthermore, studies find that the foreign born are more likely to start companies than the native born (Fairlie 2012). Whereas much of the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship took place in the European or North American contexts, very little work so far has investigated developing nations in Asia, Africa or the Middle East (Baird 2015). Furthermore, the few studies about immigration in these regions that have been conducted, focused on transit migration (Icduygu 2005; Icduygu and Yukseker 2012), irregular migration (Icduygu 2003), and forced migration (Yukseker and Brewer 2006), as opposed to immigrant entrepreneurship (Baird 2015).

In this paper, based on in-depth interviews with immigrant entrepreneurs in Turkey, we present an investigation of immigrant entrepreneurship in a developing nation. In doing so, we seek to fill the gap in research regarding immigrant entrepreneurs in developing economies. We chose Turkey as a research context because although there is an extended history of migration and refugee movements in Turkey, primarily from Middle Eastern countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan in the contemporary period, from the former Soviet Union beginning in the 1990s (Kirişci 2003) and Sub-Saharan

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Africa (Baird 2015), few studies have examined the entrepreneurial activities of these immigrants. This is surprising, given the indication that immigrants are becoming economic actors in Turkey not only in terms of their labor power but also their entrepreneurial skills. The number of companies opened by Syrians, for example, increased 40-fold between 2010 and 2014 (Başıhoş, Özpınar, and Kulaksız 2015). These companies have largely congregated in regions close to Turkey's border with Syria and big cities where the trade volume is higher. Due to its geographic location, Turkey is likely to become a country of first asylum, which represents a considerable administrative and economic burden in a country that itself is not a developed nation in the Western sense. It is therefore important to investigate and understand the possibilities entrepreneurship may be able to offer to immigrants entering Turkey. Doing so will allow us to assess how the paths to business ownership for immigrant entrepreneurs in a developing nation differ from what is common for their counterparts in developed nations. Indeed, Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013), in their systematic review of immigrant entrepreneurship literature, called for future studies to examine immigrant entrepreneurs outside the United States and Europe. These authors further recommend selecting alternative research methods such as the qualitative approach used in this paper. More specifically, this study examines the motivations for business entry and the paths to business ownership among immigrant entrepreneurs in Turkey. Elements including sector choice, business practices, unique challenges, and ways to overcome those challenges (such as scarce resources, lack of information, etc.) are assessed so as to better understand immigrant entrepreneurs in the context of a developing economy.

Theoretical Background

Various motivations drive individuals to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. These motivations are often grouped into two categories: push and pull, also referred to as opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship (Bates 1997; Reynolds et al. 2002; Taormina and Lao 2007). Opportunity entrepreneurs are those who are pulled into starting their own businesses because of the positive aspects associated with it, such as pursuing an idea/opportunity, controlling one's destiny, independence, reaping financial rewards, or gaining recognition. This turns entrepreneurship into an attractive endeavor, entered into by choice (Fairlie and Meyer 1996). Necessity entrepreneurs on the other hand are those who are pushed into entrepreneurship as a last resort, because of adverse circumstances such as job loss, unemployment, limited/blocked career mobility, or exclusion from the primary job market (Feldman, Koberg, and Dean 1991). In the following, we describe these motivations in the context of immigrant entrepreneurship.

Pull Factors

For immigrants, self-employment often appears more attractive than the wage and salary sector because it can offer higher earnings, enhanced professional standing, a greater sense of independence (Locke and Baum 2007; Shane, Locke, and Collins 2003), or flexibility to accommodate family needs (Zuiker 1998). In addition, self-employment can be seen as a way to achieve upward mobility and to "accelerate socioeconomic adaptation and progress" (De Freitas 1991, p. 171) in the host country. This view is often based on individual human capital characteristics. Human capital—an individual's productive potential—is measured through variables such as age, education, language proficiency, work experience, tenure in the host country, etc. (Bohon 2001). For immigrants, human capital acquired in their native land is often not transferable to the primary job market within the host country, but can be applied toward self-employment. For example, Tienda and Raijman (2004) suggest that well-educated immigrants in the United States opt for self-employment as a way to achieve economic mobility.

Push Factors

Push factors include those factors which block opportunities to pursue wage and salary employment in the primary job market, forcing immigrants into self-employment as a way out of poverty, unemployment or under-employment. Alvarez (1990) discusses labor market theory in the context of immigrant labor, dividing it into a primary sector, which includes large companies or government jobs and a secondary sector, which includes more peripheral, smaller companies. Wages, working conditions, and benefits are more attractive in the primary sector compared to the secondary sector, which is characterized by jobs with "high turnover rates,

low-paying, low-skill jobs that lack structured opportunities for promotions within the firm [and] low returns on human capital" (Sanders and Nee 1987, p. 746). Immigrants, who tend to be excluded from the primary job market, develop an alternative to this less desirable secondary job market through business ownership. This approach sees immigrant groups as being predominantly pushed into self-employment given their low prospective returns to wage/salary work because of discrimination, language barriers, incompatible education or training, and blocked promotional paths (Bates 1997; Clark and Drinkwater 2000; De Freitas 1991; Fairlie and Meyer 1996; Light 1984). The 2004 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report (Acs et al. 2005) adds that individuals from poorer, developing nations are more likely to be driven by necessity factors in comparison to aspiring entrepreneurs in developed nations. The study of immigrant entrepreneurship has also examined different paths to business ownership, these are discussed in the following section.

Paths to Business Ownership

In their extensive review of immigrant entrepreneurship, Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward (1990) suggest that immigrant entrepreneurs' choices are shaped by the opportunity structure in the host society as well as the unique characteristics and social structure of the immigrant community. The opportunity structure is shaped by market conditions (1) within the co-ethnic community and (2) beyond it. Those entrepreneurs seeking opportunities *within* the co-ethnic community, tend to focus on meeting the demand for the goods or services that they are *uniquely* positioned to offer such as the sale of "cultural products" (e.g., ethnic goods, books, or clothing) or providing services to aid in immigrant adjustment (e.g., in-language legal services). For unique goods of which the entrepreneur has insider knowledge (the just described "cultural products"), the ethnic entrepreneur has a special niche for which there is little to no competition from outsiders (Light 1972). Immigrant entrepreneurs' focus on the ethnic enclave as a primary target market has been extensively documented in the United States. Portes and Bach (1985) define an ethnic enclave as a "spatial concentration of immigrants who organize a variety of enterprises to serve their own ethnic market and the general population" (p. 203). These concentrations of a relatively homogeneous ethnic group have been found to create an increased demand for services and ethnic products catering to customers from the "old country," offering many opportunities for entrepreneurship (Bohon 2001; Logan, Alba, and McNulty 1994; Mann 2004; Portes and Bach 1985; Shinnar and Young 2008; Tienda and Raijman 2004).

Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward (1990) show that immigrant entrepreneurs targeting customers *beyond* the immigrant community tend to do so in four unique areas: (1) Markets that are *underserved or abandoned* by large organization such as the food retailing industry. Immigrant entrepreneurs have entered this niche of small neighborhood food stores in France, the United Kingdom, and large U.S. cities such as New York and Chicago; (2) Markets that offer *low economies of scale* such as retail stores with unique services (longer hours, credit, etc.) or the taxi industry; (3) Markets that are characterized by *instability or uncertainty* due to significant fluctuations in demand such as clothing or construction; Finally, (4) meeting a demand for *ethnic goods* among the native population (such as ethnic cuisine).

In addition to the opportunity structure outlined already, the unique characteristics and social structure of the immigrant community play an important role in resource mobilization among immigrant entrepreneurs. Existing research points to the fact that immigrant entrepreneurs are likely to mobilize unique resources to make up for the lack of access to mainstream credit or technical and/or other assistance. "Preference for familiarity, the efficiency of personal contacts, and social distance from the host society's institutions of assistance" (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990, p. 35) direct immigrants to rely on connections with co-ethnics, kin, or other individuals who can offer access to scarce resources. These can include start-up capital (through rotating credit associations), information about permits, laws or suppliers, identification of potential business partners, or access to reliable employees. While developed nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom feature significant government assistance programs to ethnic entrepreneurs, which also serve immigrants, those are less likely to exist in developing nations. Therefore, in this paper, we seek to identify the paths that immigrant entrepreneurs in Turkey follow in their pursuit of business ownership and the ways in which they overcome resource scarcity in this environment.

Methodology

Sampling Procedure

Our sample consisted of immigrant entrepreneurs in the city of Istanbul, Turkey. Istanbul was selected as the metropolitan area for data collection due to its strong entrepreneurial nature and the central role it plays in the Turkish Economy (Bayrasli 2012). Furthermore, Istanbul is also the primary center of ethnic entrepreneurship. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, immigrants from the former Soviet bloc came to the city and began to engage in informal "suitcase trading" between Istanbul and their countries, thereby leading to the transformation of commercial spaces in the city (Danis 2006; Yukseker 2004). European migrants were followed by North African and Middle Eastern migrants motivated to move away from high unemployment in their countries (Delos 2003). Entrepreneurs settled in the newly transformed commercial spaces of Istanbul creating numerous small-scale, informal, trading opportunities. The dynamic presence of informal traders from East Europe and North Africa transformed the market place of the districts of the inner city neighborhoods in the 1990s and 2000s (Baird 2015). Together, these factors made Istanbul an ideal location for studying immigrant entrepreneurs in Turkey.

Data were collected in two waves. The first wave took place between January and May 2013, and the second from October through December 2015. In order to identify immigrant business owners, the city's main area in which immigrant-owned business are located was scanned. Initially, of the immigrant-owned businesses identified and invited to participate in a face-to-face interview, four agreed to take part in the study. Once the interview was completed, those individuals were asked to provide a referral to an additional foreign-born individual who was a business owner. This resulted in a snowball sample of seven additional interviews with other immigrant business owners. In October 2015, the same process was repeated using referrals from the earlier data collection wave through which eleven additional interviews were conducted, bringing our total sample to 22 interviews with owners of 22 separate businesses. The interviewing process was concluded once theoretical saturation was reached (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Theoretical saturation occurs when further sampling and analyzing of the data does not appear to yield new concepts. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to three hours; all were conducted in Turkish, tape recorded, transcribed, and later translated to English.

The referral, or snowball sampling method, is a way of handling the problem of a proportionately small target population (Welch 1975). Our challenge was to select immigrant business owners among the total community of entrepreneurs in Istanbul. The city of Istanbul, with a population of approximately 14 million (Turkish Statistical Institute 2013), is the largest and most populous city in Turkey. According to the most recent GEM report (Karadeniz 2010), 8.6 percent of the Turkish population of approximately 78 million people was identified as being involved in entrepreneurial activity. While the snowball sampling method does not allow for random sampling, it is recommended when resources to screen an entire population of significant size are not available (Welch 1975).

We chose to conduct interviews rather than surveys for two main reasons. First, interviews allow for better data collection from a population that is unfamiliar with survey research or has limited language skills. Second, through interviews, one is able to build rapport with each interviewee, establishing trust and a positive relationship. Marín and Marín (1991) recommend that a researcher engage in some "small talk" before and after the interview so as to facilitate the respondent's satisfaction and cooperation. This is especially important in high context cultures that place great value on previous interactions, interpersonal relationships, trust, and reciprocity. Indeed, Arab cultures are included among those ranking higher on the continuum of context (Munter 1993).

The interviewers included five research assistants who were also university students. The principal investigator instructed the interviewers on interview etiquette and conducted a practice interview with them so as to gain experience in the phrasing of potentially sensitive questions. The interviewers were advised to initiate contact by sharing some information about themselves, disclosing that they are students, where they were from, what they were studying or why they were interested in immigrant business owners. Interviewers also explained to potential participants why this research was important and how each individual, through his or her participation, may contribute to the effort of increasing and enhancing business ownership among immigrants in Turkey.

Protocol Development

A semi-structured interview protocol was created based on other studies examining immigrant entrepreneurship (Masurel et al. 2002; Morris and Schindehutte 2005; Mustafa and Chen 2010; Raijman and Tienda 2000; Zhou and Cho 2010). The first part of the interview gathered demographic information on the entrepreneur including: age, age at immigration, reasons for immigration, reasons for choosing Turkey as a destination, work experience prior to business ownership, educational background, marital status, etc. Additional questions focused on the business itself including: industry, size, opening date, ownership, etc. Interviewees were then asked about the motivations for business start-up, the start-up process itself, personal challenges experienced during the start-up and subsequent running of the business, activities done in preparation, actual management practices once the business was open, and variables perceived to be important for success.

Data Analysis

Interviews were tape-recorded and interviewers took notes during the interview. Each interview was subsequently transcribed by the interviewer who completed it. Transcriptions were completed within 48 hours of the actual interview. All interviews were translated into English. The data analysis method used in this study was inductive in nature. The inductive approach to qualitative data analysis is usually focused on exploring new phenomena or looking at previously researched phenomena from a different perspective so as to generate new knowledge emerging from the data (Blackstone 2015; Thomas 2006). While immigrant entrepreneurship is by no means a new subject of investigation, the context of this study—an emerging economy—remains understudied. The researchers felt that a qualitative approach would allow for unique issues to emerge that would not be clearly identifiable when using a deductive approach rooted in available knowledge. Indeed, as Thomas (2006) explains: "the primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (p. 238).

"The outcome of an inductive analysis is the development of categories into a model or framework that summarizes the raw data and conveys key themes" (Thomas 2006, p. 240). Therefore, interviews were coded and quantified where possible so as to identify concepts, themes and/or patterns in the data. Lee (1999) recommends to "count the countable" (p. 121), by categorizing interview data into the most important themes as quantifiable categories or codes. This is the result of a close reading of the text and identification of text segments that contain meaningful units which are then labeled or categorized into themes. These categories or themes may also be linked to create a hierarchy of categories or a causal sequence (Thomas 2006) representing the data in a coherent framework (Neergaard and Ulhøi 2007). The coding process was completed by three individuals who evaluated each interview transcript separately to ensure consistency and conduct coding consistency checks (Thomas 2006). One individual analyzed the original Turkish version and two individuals analyzed the English translation. Differences among the three were few and each discrepancy was discussed to increase inter-rater reliability (Lee 1999). This assisted in the cross validation of the typology of recurring themes, which is the recommended approach when analyzing qualitative data (Miles and Huberman 1984; Thomas 2006). Following the inductive approach used to analyze our data, we came to recognize the importance of the entrepreneurs' social and human capital in shaping the paths to business ownership. Our results are presented in the following sections, along with our coding framework (see Table 1) and our conceptual model (see Figure 1).

Results

Sample Description

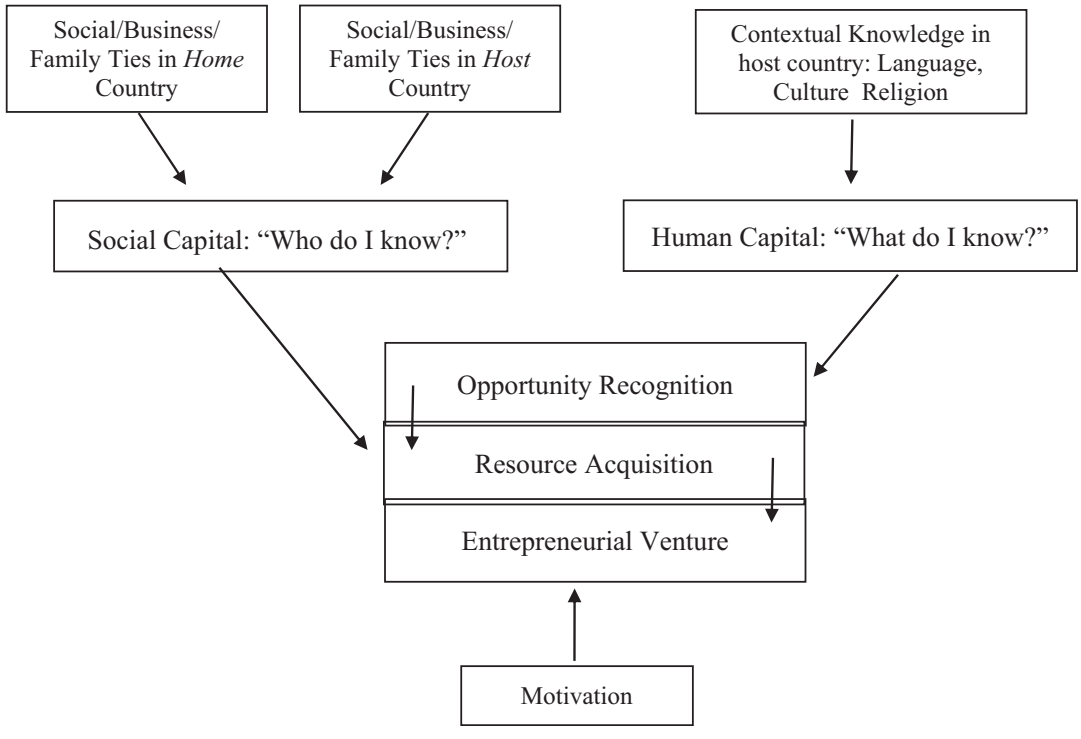
Of the 22 interviewees, 20 were male and all were married. This is not uncommon among immigrant entrepreneurs in other nations as well. Previous research findings show business owners are more likely to be married because family members often provide a source of trusted workers (Bates 1997). The interviewees' countries of origin varied greatly, including two from Iraq, one from Iran, three Palestinians, one Jordanian, two Syrians, one Egyptian, three from Ukraine, three from Turkestan, three from Kyrgyzstan, and three from Azerbaijan. The entrepreneurs' average age was 46.5, ranging from 34 to 63. Average number of years living in Turkey was 21, ranging from 1 to 44 years. Mean business age was 8.2 years, ranging from 1 to 19 years. Six of the firms were small, with

Table 1
Coding Categories and Themes

Interview Excerpts	Codes	Key Themes
- Same Religion as We Have	Shared Religion	Human Capital/ Contextual Knowledge
- Same Religion Eliminates Difficulties		
- Feel Closeness to Muslim Country		
- Honesty	Islamic Business Practices	
- Think of Allah		
- Trustworthy		
- Important to Learn Language	Language Skills	
- Speaking Foreign Languages		
- Speaking Arabic/English		
- Integration into Local Culture	Understanding Local Context	
- Integration into Local System		
- Learn Local Legal System		
- Importance Honesty	Customer Relations	
- Importance of Trust with Customer		
- Dialogue with Customers		
- Friendliness		
- The Local Sellers Trust Me	Trust with Host Country Counterparts	Social Capital
- Assistance from Turkish National		
- Assistance from Family in Turkey		
- Business Partnership with Turk		
- I Know People in My Home Country	Trust with Native Country Counterparts	
- Knowing People Brings Safety		
- A Turk Who Learns Arabic Is Not the Same		
- Can't Work with Someone from Outside		
- It Is Necessary to Be Familiar		
- Turkey Has Economic Potential	Market Potential	Motivations
- Turkey Has Customer Potential		
- Financial Potential		
- Working for Self/Independence	Personal Motivations	
- Avoid Abusive Employer		
- Apply Prior Business Experience		
- Satisfaction of Working for Self		

the entrepreneur him- or herself working alone or alongside a family member (spouse or child) or partner. Twelve firms had five to nine employees and four were larger with 13, 16, 18, and 25 employees each. Based on number of employees, all fall within the European Commission's (2015) definition of micro (under 10 employees) or small (under 50 employees) business. The businesses themselves belonged to different sectors within the goods and services industries with three also engaging in manufacturing. Most of the firms were involved in import and/or export of consumer goods. Of those, the three largest firms in terms of number of employees also manufactured their goods in Turkey. The remaining firms were in the service industry, two restaurants, two offering tourism related services, and three offering business

Figure 1
Paths to Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Developing Nations



services such as business consulting, marketing, or translation services. The last firm was in film production. This is in line with the most recent GEM data reporting "66 percent of entrepreneurial activity in Turkey took place in the consumer oriented sector" (Karadeniz 2010, p. 13).

Finally, in terms of human capital, three of the entrepreneurs in our sample had earned a high school education in their home countries. The remaining 15 were university educated, with 10 having earned that education in Turkey while the others had earned it in their home countries. Three individuals did not discuss their educational attainment level. Individual work experience varied greatly with only four having had any entrepreneurial activities prior to immigration to Turkey.

Motivations for Immigration

Six of our respondents immigrated to Turkey to escape limited opportunities and/or political turmoil in their home countries. The others immigrated to pursue higher education or because Turkey offered opportunities for career growth and business development. Indeed, Bayrasli (2012) described Turkey as "a tantalizing market for entrepreneurship. It is strategically located between key markets in Europe, the middle East, Russia and central Asia." Some of our respondents explained that they had selected Turkey for its geographic proximity to their home country. Others stressed the role of religion as a primary motivator, for example, interviewee #2 explains: "Why did I prefer Turkey? Because Turkey has the same religion as we have, also because Turkey was quite close to Syria." Indeed, for several interviewees, living in a country where Islam is the dominant religion was very important. As demonstrated in the following statement: "When you are in a country that has the same religion, you don't have any difficulty" (Interviewee #2). This was also stated by interviewee #16, who said: "I felt close to Turkey because it is a Muslim country."

Another motivator for immigration that was mentioned pertains to Turkey's economic and

political environment. A few of our interviewees cited Turkey's economic environment to be more supportive of entrepreneurial activity in comparison to their home countries as a result of its political stability, government programs and more lenient tax laws supportive of small businesses. Indeed, the 2010 GEM report cites policy reforms at the national, regional and municipal level as intending to support business endeavors in Turkey. "For example, with regard to government regulation, the experts believe that the tax and administration burden may have improved slightly over the last two years" (Karadeniz 2010, p. 14).

Motivations for Business Ownership

According to the most recent GEM report, the number of necessity driven entrepreneurs in Turkey "is relatively high on a global scale, implying that relatively more Turkish entrepreneurs have taken the entrepreneurial route out of necessity.... People are pushed into entrepreneurship because they have no other means of making a living" (Karadeniz 2010, p. 12). Among our respondents, however, it appears that most were drawn to business ownership because they had a strong desire to work for themselves rather than someone else and identified opportunities to do so. For example, interviewee #2 stated: "My aim was to graduate from school and go back, but then ... the economic potential of Turkey forced me to stay here." This individual was motivated to pursue business ownership for the growth potential it offered, as he explains: "I always looked up to big merchants and wanted to become like them ... I said to myself: One day I would like to be as big as they are." Similarly, Interviewee #7 stated that "Turkey has strong customer potential." Interviewee #3 explained that he was drawn to business ownership because of the financial opportunity it represented and the freedom gained by working for oneself rather than being employed by someone else. Similarly, interviewee #10 felt a desire to be self-employed because he did not wish to work as an employee, in his words: "How long can you work for someone else?" The strong desire to work for oneself rather than be an employee was mentioned by a majority of our interviewees. Indeed, Locke and Baum (2007) note that "independence as a value may be most relevant to the prediction of who will start a business" (p. 108). Three individuals, interviewees #4, #5, and #8 explained their motivation stemmed from a desire to extend their existing business from their home countries (a restaurant, a travel agency and a business consulting firm, respectively) to Turkey and reap higher rewards.

A few interviewees spoke about the challenge of being a foreigner and linked this to their decision to become an entrepreneur. For example, interviewee #1 explained: "There is no advantage at all of being a foreigner. Everything is more difficult for you than it would be for a local. Business, as such, requires courage of course." Interviewee #2 mentioned that as an immigrant, he did not enjoy the same rights and privileges that Turkish citizens benefitted from. Interviewee #8 perceived that, although government programs exist in Turkey to support small business owners, access to this type of support was very difficult and almost impossible to obtain for those not familiar with the system. A similar concern was voiced by interviewee #9 who perceived the tax benefits offered by the Turkish government for export oriented firms to be out of reach. Finally, interviewee #1 explained that: "Some employers have bad intentions, some let you work but don't pay you your money and fire you. As a foreigner, you are even weaker." He explained this to have been a strong motivation to work for himself. Similarly, interviewee #6 stated that he preferred not to have to work for a Turkish employer with an "ego, who may put immigrant workers down."

The large proportion of our interviewees drawn into entrepreneurship may be explained by their relatively high level of education with 15 being university educated. Indeed, "evidence from the GEM research from Turkey suggests that people who have attained higher levels of education tend to be opportunity-driven entrepreneurs" (Karadeniz 2010, p. 12). It appears that the large majority of our interviewees were drawn into entrepreneurship to benefit from the opportunities they were able to identify by relying on their unique human and social capital (to be further discussed below). Most were involved in import/export activities between Turkey and their home countries or offered services that they were uniquely positioned to provide based on their national origin and ties in their native lands.

While our interviewees appear to be predominantly motivated by pull factors, some also reported on push motivations while other cited both push and pull factors operating simultaneously. Therefore, our findings seem to indicate

that—in the context of a developing economy—one may *not* be able to differentiate among entrepreneurs based on the push/pull dichotomy or argue that push factors are more likely among entrepreneurs in developing nations. This is seconded by Rosa, Kodithuwakku, and Balunywa (2006), who based on their investigation of entrepreneurs in two developing nations (Uganda and Sri Lanka), suggest that "the theory that there are two forms of entrepreneurship . . . one necessity, prevalent in developing countries and the other, opportunity driven, prevalent in developed countries clearly needs re-examining." Indeed, while the parsimonious push-pull model has been used extensively in entrepreneurship research some questions regarding the validity of this simplistic approach have been raised. A possible flaw in this model mentioned by several researchers (Arias and Penas 2010; Block, Sandner, and Spiegel 2013; Caliendo and Kritikos 2010; Verheul et al. 2010) lies in its dichotomous nature which fails to recognize that an individual may be motivated by push and pull factors simultaneously. For example, an immigrant entrepreneur may be pushed toward entrepreneurship because of frustrations with career progression, but simultaneously pulled towards it because of the opportunity to establish financial stability for his/her family.

Contributions to Success

Several respondents discussed what they perceived as important for individual success. First, many considered that integrating oneself into the local system by learning the Turkish language and culture, familiarizing oneself with the local legal system or obtaining proper documentation to be important contributors to success. Interviewee #8, who was a business owner prior to immigration to Turkey, explains: "I had to learn everything over again, because laws, regulations, and conditions are different." Many reported on the support of a Turkish national as an invaluable part of their integration. For example, interviewee #1, who came to Turkey as a refugee, received support in the form of assistance with housing and work opportunity from an employer. With time, this support grew into an opportunity to learn the business and develop his skills before venturing out on his own. This was also the case for a different interviewee who came in pursuit of opportunities. He was given housing and a job by a Turkish national which allowed him to establish himself and start his own business. For others, the support came from family members or business associates residing in Turkey. Assistance came in the form of support in navigating government offices so as to obtain legal residency permits and citizenship as well as financial investment in the business. A total of seven individuals mentioned such support from host country nationals being a significant contributor to their own ability to succeed. For example, interviewees #15 and #22 partnered with a Turkish national as a way to start a business, while interviewee #17 started a business with her Turkish husband. Indeed, the importance of having access to a social support network in the process of business start-up was also identified by Tas, Citci, and Cesteneci (2012) who studied Balkan immigrant entrepreneurs in Turkey. These researchers argue that immigrant entrepreneurs "need information and guidance more than the local entrepreneurs" (p. 74) because they are less familiar with the host country's legal environment. Sahin, Nijkamp, and Baycan-Levent (2007) also identified the important role community-based, informal networks play among immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands in gaining experience-based training and mentoring. The importance of the social networks as a way to mobilize resources when starting a business was also identified by Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward (1990). Similarly, Sahin, Todiras, and Nijkamp (2011) state that "social networks appeared to be a crucial determinant to become self-employed in the case of the migrants" (p. 194).

A second key to success which was mentioned by most interviewees, regardless of nation of origin, was the importance of establishing strong interpersonal relationships and trust in order to succeed in business. This trust was perceived to be important not just between the entrepreneur and his or her customers but also between the entrepreneur and his or her business counterparts. Several individuals argued that Islamic law prescribes honesty among business owners as a basic element for success. In the words of interviewee #14: "You should not do something wrong, you should act honestly. When you do business with people, you absolutely have to be correct, you have to think of Allah." Interviewee #3 added that "our religion commands us that we do correct business and that you keep your promises; that you don't lie." Similarly, interviewee #19 argued that the "most important [factors to business success are] to have Allah's blessing, be honest, not hurt others' interests,

[and] keep your word." Arslan (2000) confirms that honesty may in fact be one of the most important ingredients of a successful business in part because Islamic values play an important role in conducting business. Indeed, Islam prescribes "specific virtues and manners that are appropriate for a Muslim businessman. . . . Politeness is considered to be a necessary condition for the establishment of goodwill and mutual trust" (Graafland, Mazereeuw, and Yahia 2006, p. 392)

Stressing the importance of honesty, interviewee #1 stated: "If you are honest, you are never disgraced in front of others. I have an excellent relationship with my customers, I have a very good dialogue with them, they trust me." Interviewee #2 added: "When your customers believe in you, when they have decided to work with you, they will never let you go. This is a matter of trust!" Interviewee #3 added that it is imperative: "to make no fault, whatever you do . . . to be correct and to give trust. These are important principles in my business." Indeed, in their study of Turkish entrepreneurs, Benzing, Chu, and Kara (2009) found that "entrepreneurs in Turkey rated their reputation for honesty as the most important success variable" (p. 72). Honesty, in terms of providing good customer service, was also cited as an important contributor to business success and a way of gaining repeat business through customer loyalty. Interviewee #7, whose company offered business translation services explained: "Straightforwardness is what counts! As translators, we have to be trustworthy, the customer should not [encounter any] difficulties as a result of the work we do." This issue was also voiced by interviewee #2 who mentioned that he: "always tried to be polite to customers and to help them in different ways . . . our main aim is to provide information to people and then to win them as our customers."

Some interviewees felt that knowing both countries and being able to establish strong bonds with their business counterparts overseas—in their native lands—as well as in Turkey, was a major contributor to their success. Those individuals identified this as their competitive advantage, because they were able to take advantage of their existing social networks in their home country, as well as in Turkey, to establish this high level of trust. For example, in the words of interviewee #3: "Producers . . . want to sell the products as soon as possible and they know me. When they can't sell, instead of [traveling overseas and] . . . spending much more money, they come to me. Because I know the prices . . . I have time, I know sellers. They trust me. I am always here, this is so important. I made a lot of friends." This individual was able to benefit from the trust established with local producers in Turkey and sell goods through his network in his home country, thus benefitting from his social capital. For others, trade partners were established post-immigration to Turkey, however, they felt that those bonds were stronger than they could be for a Turkish national because of cultural heritage and the ability to communicate in Arabic, which was perceived as an advantage. In the words of interviewee #11: "What makes work easy for us is that we are Arabs, that we speak Arabic, Turkish and English." This individual perceived that, as an Arab, he had many opportunities in Turkey to act as an intermediary between Turkish business owners wanting to engage in trade with partners in other Arab nations. He added: "most people. . ., they need people like us. One guy, for instance, doesn't speak foreign languages, and they look for people who speak the same language. And this is an advantage for us. The guy asks his questions the way he wants, [we] have answers for them. This situation brings safety." This same individual later added: "Arabs want to work with people who know Arabs. A Turk who learned Arabic is not the same as an Arab."

Business transactions with counterparts one does not have a relationship with was perceived as challenging. This is explained by interviewee #8 who stated that: "You can't work with someone who comes from outside, it is necessary to be familiar." Other interviewees, however, proposed that such exchanges are still possible, albeit with some restrictions. Interviewee #13 explained that when social ties are absent, business can be conducted but because of the lack of trust, transactions will be cash based stating that: "You work cash with those you don't know." This was also mentioned by interviewee #2 who explained that: "we don't sell on credit to a customer we don't know personally."

Discussion

Our findings seem to indicate that immigrant entrepreneurs in a developing economy, in this case Turkey, are not predominantly driven by necessity motivations as the literature seems to suggest is the case in developed economies.

Rather, our findings indicate the immigrant entrepreneurs in our sample relied on their unique human and social capital in the process of starting a business (see Figure 1). Their unique human capital lies in their understanding of the *host* country culture (in this case Turkish culture), religion and language, familiarity with the local market as well as ability to identify opportunities based on their knowledge of the market in their *home* countries. For example, two entrepreneurs in our sample offered business and consulting services serving Turkish entrepreneurs doing business in the owners' home countries and vice-versa. Others were able to identify opportunities for importing products, such as water pipes (which according to interviewee #2 were not traditionally sold in Turkey) to be sold to Turkey's large tourist market.

In addition, the entrepreneurs' ties in their native countries and their ability to foster trusting relationships with business counterparts in Turkey as well as abroad, was perceived as an important advantage. Because of the ability to communicate in Arabic with their business counterparts in other Arab nations and as a result establish strong trusting relationships, some interviewees perceived that they had an advantage when engaging in foreign trade (import and export) over non-Arabic-speaking Turks wishing to engage in foreign trade with Arab nations. The ability to communicate in Arabic, knowing the culture, and/or having insider knowledge of one's home country, was perceived to contribute to trust building and better comprehension. This is different from the conclusion reached by Kourtit, Nijkamp, and Arribas-Bel (2012) in their study of Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands. These authors state that "the migrants' capacities and resources matter—and their ethnicity less so—in achieving business performance and success" (p. 18). Among the respondents in our study it appears that ethnicity and relevant cultural, ethnic and/or language skills, are perceived as important contributors to success by enabling the formation of trusting ties with business counterparts.

Social capital and the value of social networks were also perceived to be an important factor for business start-up and success. As discussed earlier, many of the entrepreneurs perceived that their ability to establish strong trusting bonds with their business counterparts was an important factor in their success. Among the entrepreneurs in our sample, however, the social capital perceived as an advantage resulted from interpersonal relationships and family ties rather than from membership in professional associations. Low membership in professional associations was also identified by Wauters and Lambrecht (2008) in their study of refugee entrepreneurship in Belgium. The only associations mentioned by a few of our study's participants were social associations of co-ethnic individuals, which do not offer any type of business support. Indeed, Tas, Citci, and Cesteneci (2012) suggest that immigrant entrepreneurs may be disadvantaged in their ability to build strong social capital because "several informal institutions in Turkey such as primarily family, friendship, being a townsman and ideological groups have determinative effects on many activities, primarily shop keeping" (p. 77). The fact that foreign-born entrepreneurs often lack access to such networks in the host country may explain their focus on the external market and their concentration in import and export activities.

Limitations

This study's limitations stem from the small sample size and the sampling process. With only 22 interviews contacted mostly through referrals, it is possible that we did not have access to a sufficiently diverse group of entrepreneurs. Possibly, entrepreneurs residing in other parts of the Istanbul metropolitan area are different from the entrepreneurs we were able to reach. Also, having used a snowball sample, it is possible that isolated members of the community were under sampled, whereas others who may have more extensive contacts and acquaintances are oversampled (Welch 1975). This could lead to "biases in education, social class, and income level of the respondents since people with higher education and income are more likely to have wider circles of friends and greater participation in various groups" (Welch 1975, p. 238). It is possible that bias was introduced into our sample if business owners preferred to refer us to other business owners who they felt were successful. Bias could also have resulted in more referrals to male business owners rather than female business owners. It appears, however, given the diversity of our sample in terms of national origin, educational attainment and type of business, that it is not strongly biased. While our sample was predominantly male with only two female entrepreneurs, this was

also the case for the group of Muslim entrepreneurs in the Netherlands studied by Sahin, Todiras, and Nijkamp (2011). In spite of these limitations, our findings provide some preliminary answers and identify directions for future study.

Implications for Research and Practice

Our findings indicate that immigrant entrepreneurs in the context of a developing nation may pursue different paths than those suggested by Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward (1990). With the exception of the two restaurants included in our sample, which offered ethnic foods from the entrepreneurs' home country, none of the entrepreneurs offered goods and/or services targeting uniquely co-ethnic individuals. While this is a common path chosen by entrepreneurs in developed nations such as the United States (Bohon 2001; Logan, Alba, and McNulty 1994; Mann 2004; Portes and Bach 1985; Shinnar and Young 2008; Tienda and Raijman 2004) we did not find support for this in our sample. The large majority of the entrepreneurs we interviewed focused on export and/or import activities targeting the market at large, *not* their co-ethnic group. This may in fact also be argued for the two restaurateurs in our sample, whose clientele was not exclusively co-ethnic.

Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward (1990) indeed suggest that immigrant entrepreneurs can also focus on markets beyond the ethnic community. Those individuals, according to these authors, tend to concentrate on specific markets that are either *underserved or abandoned* by large organization, offer *low economies of scale*, are characterized by *instability or uncertainty* or focus on meeting a demand for *ethnic goods* among the native population. While the two restaurant owners may fall into the fourth category proposed by Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward (1990), namely meeting a demand for *ethnic goods* among the native population, the remaining businesses did not appear to fall within the specified markets. Our findings suggest that in the context of a developing economy, immigrants identify opportunities that are *less* at the margin of economic activity as may be the case in developed nations. Rather, immigrants recognize opportunities based on their unique abilities, as discussed earlier. Future research could further explore this proposition.

Similar to Rosa et al.'s (2006) argument, we did not find support for the proposition that immigrant entrepreneurs are driven predominantly by push or necessity factors. Rather, in the context of a developing economy, immigrant entrepreneurs appear to be attracted to entrepreneurship by opportunity factors or simultaneously pushed and pulled to pursue business ownership. Our findings seem to more closely align with the effectuation model proposed by Sarasvathy (2001). In her extensive study of company founders throughout the United States, she attempted to identify the factors that led these individuals to business start-up. While the traditional view is that entrepreneurship is as a goal driven, causal, and strategic process, Sarasvathy (2001) suggests that in fact entrepreneurs engage in effectual not causal reasoning. Rather than identifying an opportunity, assessing its viability, and attaining the necessary resources to exploit the opportunity, she suggests that entrepreneurs look at the means they already possess to "imagine and implement possible effects that can be created with them" (p. 3). Those means include three categories: "(1) Who they are—their traits, tastes and abilities; (2) What they know—their education, training, expertise and experience; and, (3) Whom they know—their social and professional networks" (Sarasvathy 2001, p. 3).

Effectuation dictates that in highly uncertain and dynamic environments goals change, are shaped and constructed over time, and are sometimes formed by chance. For example, target customers can only be defined ex post through whoever buys a product or service rather than initially as suggested by causal, predictive reasoning. Our findings suggest that in the case of immigrant entrepreneurs, who seek to establish and sustain a business in an environment with which they are often unfamiliar, effectual type reasoning is more likely. Thus, by building on their existing human capital (education, work experience, knowledge of the language, culture, and religion of the country) and their social capital (new networks established in the host country and preexisting networks in their home countries) the immigrant entrepreneurs in our sample were able to identify and pursue opportunities (see Figure 1). Additional studies could further explore this proposition.

Finally, it would be valuable to assess the role religion plays in sector choice and in the ways in which entrepreneurs manage their firms. Given that a large proportion of our

sample consisted of Muslim individuals—who perceived the laws and values of Islam to be important in how one manages a business and business relationships—it would be valuable to assess the role such religious values play in various decisions made by business owners. Indeed, Dana (2009) argues that because religions are value driven, religion has an impact on the degree to which entrepreneurship is valued, the opportunities entrepreneurs identify and are drawn to, and the ways in which entrepreneurs run their firms. It would be valuable to assess the role religious values and beliefs play in business ownership, how those guide the choices entrepreneurs make, and what impact they may have on entrepreneurial success.

In terms of practical and policy implications, our study makes a contribution as well. First, none of the entrepreneurs in our sample belonged to any formal business associations in Turkey. For example, Benzing, Chu, and Kara (2009) in their study of Turkish entrepreneurs, identify the high potential of business associations such as the chamber of commerce, chamber of industry and other more specialized associations (e.g., Textile and Raw Materials Exporters Association or the Shopping Malls and Retailers Association) to support entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activity through continuing education and serving as a vehicle for political lobbying. This is seconded by Bayirbağ (2010). It could thus be advantageous for these associations to proactively reach out to immigrant entrepreneurs, who may be reluctant to join. Such an initiative could serve to strengthen entrepreneurial activity in Turkey. As the Turkish government takes steps to facilitate legal employment for refugees entering the country (Ferris and Kirişci 2015), more foreign-born individuals may seek self-employment opportunities. Furthermore, seeking to include immigrant entrepreneurs among an association's membership, may benefit Turkish born entrepreneurs as well. This would facilitate knowledge exchange and partnership formation especially among those Turkish entrepreneurs who are interested in pursuing international opportunities. While some European nations such as Belgium can offer refugees integration programs providing language courses, introduction to Belgian customs, regulations, and guidance toward employment (Wauters and Lambrecht 2008), Turkey's current struggle with close to two million refugees and high domestic unemployment (Afanasieva 2015) represents some unique challenges. Permitting immigrant and refugee entrepreneurship and promoting access to professional associations could provide a possible alternative for some.

Second, our findings seem to indicate that foreign-born entrepreneurs in Turkey are indeed predominantly focused on export oriented businesses or providing services to firms engaged in cross-border business activities and/or trade. Therefore, supporting foreign-born entrepreneurs could strengthen Turkey's position in terms of export activities, which could be especially interesting for policy makers in this nation. It may thus be desirable, at a policy level, to identify ways to support immigrant entrepreneurs as a way to increase export oriented firms as these individuals' human and social capital appear to direct them toward export oriented ventures. Indeed, Professor Henri Barkey, a specialist on Turkey from the U.S. based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, proposes that Turkey's economic well-being is largely dependent on exports (Anonymous 2011). This trend has also been identified by others. For example, in their investigation of the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Bal and Kunday (2014) found a positive relationship between the entrepreneur's knowledge of a foreign language and his or her international experience. Their findings support Clarke's (2000) proposition that knowledge of a foreign language is a prerequisite for SME owner–managers who wish to play an active role in international markets.

On a final note, a large proportion of our sample consisted of university educated individuals. As mentioned earlier, GEM data from Turkey suggest a positive relationship between education level and entrepreneurial activity (Karadeniz 2010). It could therefore be beneficial, at a policy level, to facilitate immigration of educated individuals as a vehicle to stimulating entrepreneurial activity. A policy facilitating immigration for educated individuals is practiced in different nations such as Canada (Ibbitson 2014) and the United States (Brookings 2014). If Turkish policy makers would take such an approach, it could assist Turkey's economy in terms of boosting entrepreneurial activity. This could facilitate and speed up the integration of migrants, contributing to economic development and preventing further population movements into different nations in the region or beyond.

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