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Systematic review of immigrant entrepreneurship literature: previous findings and ways forward

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Immigrant entrepreneurship is an important socio-economic phenomenon today. Many studies have been developed in academic arenas of different disciplines. This paper aims to present a systematic review of academic literature related to immigrant entrepreneurship. In doing so, two questions are addressed: what has been done in international immigrant entrepreneurship research? and what are the trends that marked this phenomenon in research arenas? For this purpose, 45 articles published in academic journals are examined based on their (a) objectives, (b) theoretical frameworks and (c) methodologies. This paper provides evidence that most papers on immigrant entrepreneurship have focused on the reality of the USA, followed by Europe and Oceania. Furthermore, the review has identified the individual level of analysis and the deductive perspective as a common trend. There is a shortage in theory-building and qualitative studies in this field of knowledge. On the basis of the review, several gaps in the literature are identified that need to be filled in future research in order to enlarge the scientific knowledge on immigrant entrepreneurship.

Keywords: immigrant; entrepreneurship; entrepreneur; systematic review

Jel Classification: L26; M13

1. Introduction

From a global perspective, currently many people are permanently on the move, being international migration a key feature of a modern open society (Kourtit and Nijkamp 2011, 167; Massey et al. 1993; Simon 1999). Worldwide, migrant settlement is predominantly concentrated in specific demographic attractive regions, in particular in the metropolitan agglomerations of the developed world (Waldinger 1989). Europe has become one of the important destination regions for international migration. For instance, there has been a significant increase in international migrants coming to the EU-27 in the last years, ranged between 1.15 and 2.03 million per annum between 2001 and 2005 (Eurostat 2008).

For many reasons, immigrant communities exist in such countries: for example, countries that need a labour force for regional development, to repopulate geographical areas, such is the case of Australia and Canada (Froschauer 2001), the ageing population, such is the case of European countries (Bos and Von Weizsacker 1989; Lutz, O'Neill, and Scherbov 2003) and the lower fertility rates in the European Union (EU) in the last decades. The total fertility rate of the EU-27 declined from almost 2.6 in 1960s to about 1.4 until 2005 (Eurostat 2008), among others. As a consequence, immigrant communities

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have largely been seen as a source of economic revitalization and social renewal. For example, in many large metropolitan areas, immigration reinforces agglomeration dynamics. Over recent years, the 'new geography of migration' has generated various new insights into the socio-economic and spatial effects of migrants, in particular on local/regional labour markets (Kourtit and Nijkamp 2012, 168; Lalich 2006; Longhi, Nijkamp, and Poot 2010; Waldinger 1989).

Therefore, the rapid increase of international immigration in developed countries and their contribution to economic growth and regional development spawned a plethora of studies on immigrants and their participation in the labour markets, not only as employees but rather as entrepreneurs, creating businesses (Dana 1993; Head and Ries 1998; Wong 2003; Wong and Primecz 2011). Consequently, the interest in this field by academicians, practitioners and policy-makers has been noticeable (Collins 2003; van Delft, Gorter, and Nijkamp 2000; Kloosterman and Rath 2003; Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990).

Based on the interest of several agents on immigrant entrepreneurship as a field of research, we propose to conduct the first systematic literature review of the immigrant entrepreneurship field. To address this purpose, the following general questions are stressed: what has been done in immigrant entrepreneurship research? and what are the trends that marked this phenomenon in research arenas? To address these questions, some specific objectives are stated, which are related to three issues: (a) objectives of the papers: to examine the main countries/cities where this phenomenon is developed and to examine the immigrant population that is involved in this phenomenon; (b) theoretical frameworks: to explore the design of the theoretical sections of the articles and to explore what the main theoretical frameworks are and (c) methodological approaches: to explore what kind of methodologies have been used, to examine in which kind of data the research on immigrant entrepreneurship relies, to examine what kind of variables have been used and to explore what the prevalent techniques of analysis in this field are. By answering these questions, we aim to contribute to finding gaps for future lines of research and creating critical conscious of how this field of knowledge has evolved.

Furthermore, for this study, an immigrant entrepreneurship definition is considered to differentiate it from other groups such as ethnic or internal migration. To focus on immigrants means they belong to a first generation, and it implies considering characteristics they have acquired in other contexts, which is different from that for co-ethnics, who are born in the host country (Achidi and Priem 2011). Moreover, this distinction is reinforced with the definition that migrants are people who have been outside their origin country for at least 12 months (Sasse and Thielemann 2005). The fact of focusing on immigrant entrepreneurship represents researching in the literature. So, this study addresses this review scrutinizing 45 articles on immigrant entrepreneurship, which have been published in 21 journals indexed in the *Thomson Reuters' Social Sciences Citation Index®*.

In general, this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 is dedicated to describe the methodology used, Section 3 is dedicated to map the objectives of the articles, Section 4 is dedicated to map theoretical sections surrounding the articles, methodologies and methods are described in Section 5, discussion and research directions are depicted in Section 6, limitations of the study is commented in Section 7 and finally Section 8 the conclusion is presented.

2. Methodology

The systematic review of the literature is applied for this study because this method limits bias, with the overall aim of producing a scientific summary of the evidence in a specific area of

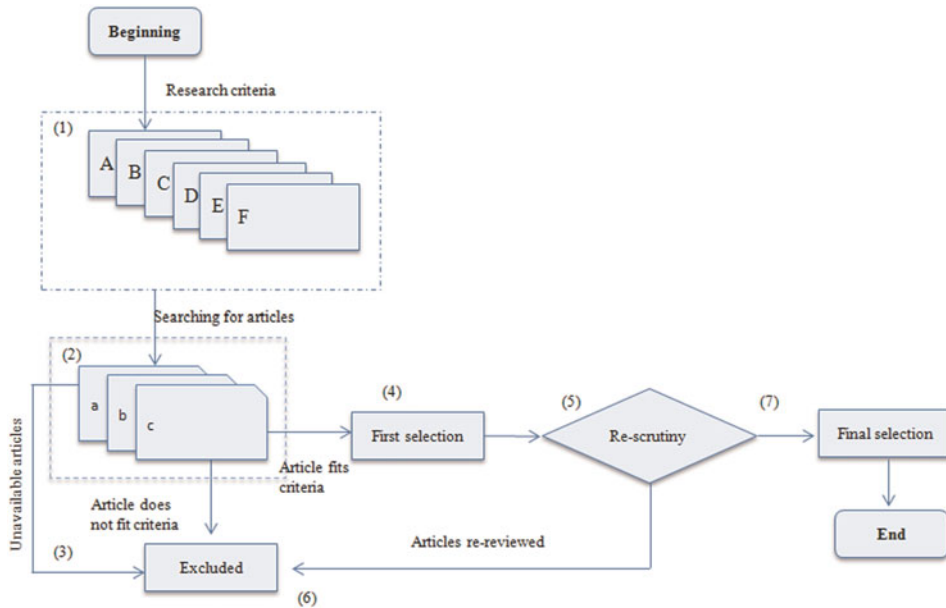


Figure 1. Logical flow chart of the protocol to search for the articles.

knowledge (Petticrew 2006). Its purpose is based on some basic principles highlighted by Thorpe et al. (2005): transparency, clarity, focus, unifies research and practitioner communities, equality, accessibility, broad coverage and synthesis which allow for the replicability of the study by future researchers (Jones, Coviello, and Tang 2011).

In this study, a systematic review is designed, regarding the immigrant entrepreneurship literature to enhance the understanding of the relevance of this phenomenon for regional development. The value of this review is to examine what has been done in academic arenas and what have been the objectives of articles on immigrant entrepreneurship field. So, we give a panorama of this subject through this systematic review. To do so, a flowchart of the research protocol is designed using SmartDraw and it is described in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows the process of conducting a literature review in a systematic way. Some steps are followed to accomplish this purpose: (1) in order to delimit which article will be included or excluded, the research criteria are established. In this sense, the following criteria were taken into account: (A) international immigrant entrepreneurship definition: the topic of international immigrant entrepreneurship is defined as ‘individuals who, as recent arrivals in the country, start a business as a means of economic survival...’ (Chaganti and Greene 2002). Also, migrants are defined as people who have been outside their origin country for at least 12 months (Sasse and Thielemann 2005). These definitions are considered to distinguish from ethnic entrepreneurs, which is a similar concept but with important differences (Achidi and Priem 2011). (B) Entrepreneurship scope: self-employed and business owner/manager are considered as entrepreneurship (Acs, Audretsch, and Evans 1994; Vinogradov and Kolvereid 2007; Wennekers et al. 2003). (C) Language: only articles published in English are included due to the majority of search engines containing journals in English, the majority of journals with impact factor are in English, and also due to the linguistic limitation. (D) Quality: articles published in academic journals with an impact factor in 2010 were considered (Kiss, Danis, and

Cavusgil 2012). Specifically, we try to be consistent with academic trends; this does not mean, in any case, that other publications do not contribute or are less relevant for academic arenas. Moreover, the journal articles with an impact factor can be considered as validated knowledge in the field, so we feel that this criterion could provide an accurate picture of relevant scholarly research (Keupp, Palmié, and Gassmann 2012) on immigrant entrepreneurship. (E) Empirical and conceptual articles: these were included in the study because they help to understand the advance in this field of knowledge. (F) Multidisciplinary: the nature of the entrepreneurship field is multidisciplinary, then, together with immigrant issues, the ‘immigrant entrepreneurship’ topic is studied in a variety of branches within social sciences.

After establishing the research criteria, the following step is searching for the articles (2). Also, this step has a procedure: (a) the selection of the articles was made using electronic databases. Electronic searching was carried out using different electronic databases such as EBSCO and EconLit, as well as the ISI Web of Knowledge. (b) Unavailable articles electronically were excluded (Jones, Coviello, and Tang 2011). Consistent with prior approaches to identify relevant articles (Nielsen 2010; Thorpe et al. 2005), some keywords on the subject were identified and were also constructed into search strings. For example, the main keywords were ‘immigrant’ and ‘entrepreneurship’, so they were combined into immigrant AND entrepreneur* OR foreign* business AND creation, also some ‘*gentilicios*’ such Latin-American, Asian and so on were used to reach the articles. (c) Then, these keywords were searched for in titles and abstracts of each paper. When reading the abstract, we took care that each study was based on first-generation immigrants. (3) Some articles that did not explicitly mention the generation of immigrants, but when the title and abstract of the articles spoke about ‘immigrants’ they passed the first selection and the rest of them were excluded. (4) The first selection yielded 70 articles. (5) Then, the author re-scrutinized each of these articles, re-reading the abstract and also the introduction to be sure that the article fit the established criteria. (6) From these 70 articles, those published in journals without an impact factor and those that spoke about ethnic community, minority entrepreneurs, books, theses, conference proceedings and other kinds of material were excluded (Jones, Coviello, and Tang 2011; Matthias, Palmié, and Gassmann 2012) and (7) finally selected if they fit the criteria. After the scrutiny of these papers, only 45 articles were finally selected for this systematic literature review according to the criteria mentioned above.

Considering the 45 articles, an Excel workbook was created (Petticrew 2006) to dissect and code the content of the objectives, theoretical frameworks and methodologies of each article.

2.1. Dealing with research challenges

The subject of immigrant entrepreneurship has been widely studied in many disciplines using a series of research designs. Reinforcing the idea mentioned before, our desire is to focus on immigrant entrepreneurship; this was a challenge for us since publications sometimes use the term ethnic and/or minority entrepreneurs which include immigrants (Masurel and Nijkamp 2004). What is our concern with immigrant entrepreneurs? It is because we consider that immigrants have a particular configuration of their human and social capital and behaviour that influences in start-up activities in a different way, as compared to their counterparts who are born in a specific host country (Achidi and Priem 2011). Our point of view is supported by some studies that compared first- and second-generation immigrants (Masurel and Nijkamp 2004). Dealing with the multidisciplinary nature of the subject was another challenge: we had to analyse and scrutinize each device

from different perspectives. In this sense, the different research design of the papers was taken into account at the moment of analysing the themes in each one. For instance, the classification of the articles regarding the kind of theoretical framework was a big effort and a challenge because theoretical frameworks are like scaffolding full of different tools (Rocco and Plakhotnik 2009). Contrary to other studies, we decided not only to count and mention the theories the articles have but to review the design they have.

2.2. Distribution of the articles by publication outlet

This search has not had time constraint; there are three articles from the past millennium (Bates 1997; Fernandez and Kim 1998; Kim and Hurh 1985) and others are from the 2000s. Table 1 shows that the majority of articles on international immigrant entrepreneurship have been published in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* – ERD (8), *International Migration Review* – IMR (6) and *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* – JEMS (4). However, *International Business Review* – IBR (3), *Small Business Economics* – SBE (3), *Economic Development Quarterly* – EDQ (2), *Journal of Business Venturing* – JBV

Table 1. List of journals used for the literature review.

No.	Academic journals	Author	Number of papers	Impact factor 2010	Empirical–non-empirical
1	GWO	Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard (2010)	1	0.733	Empirical
2	REH	Lofstrom (2011)	1	0.732	Empirical
3	JOM	Achidi and Priem (2011)	1	4.595	Empirical
4	EDQ	Hart and Acs (2011); Saxenian (2002)	2	0.630	Empirical
5	IBR	Chand and Ghorbani (2011) Dai, Wang, and Teo (2011); Yang et al. (2011)	3	1.511	Non-empirical Empirical
6	SBE	Bates (1999); Constant and Zimmermann (2006); Levie (2007)	3	1.549	Empirical
7	I	Vinogradov and Kolvereid (2010)	1	2.669	Empirical
8	JBV	Chaganti et al. (2008); Bates (1997)	2	3.062	Empirical
9	ERD	Mora and Dávila (2005) Kloosterman (2010); Kloosterman (2003); Collins (2003); Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (2009) Kontos (2003); Collins and Low (2010); Vinogradov and Kolvereid (2007)	8	0.943	Empirical Non-empirical Empirical
10	WO	Kanas, van Tubergen, and van der Lippe (2009)	1	0.857	Empirical
11	JEMS	Kloosterman and Rath (2001); Engelen (2001) Froschauer (2001); Miera (2008)	4	1.041	Non-empirical Empirical
12	JSBM	Shim and Eastlick (1998); Shinnar and Young (2008)	2	1.189	Empirical
13	ABS	McQuaid, Smith-Doerr, and Monti (2010)	1	0.492	Empirical
14	IMR	Li (2001); Fernandez and Kim (1998); Raijman and Tienda (2000); Kim and Hurh (1985); Min and Bozorgmehr (2000); Le (2000)	6	1.188	Empirical
15	EPC	Teixeira et al. (2007); Masurel and Nijkamp (2004); van Delft, Gorter, and Nijkamp (2000)	3	1.126	Empirical
16	ERS	Raijman and Tienda (2003)	1	1.319	Empirical
17	JPE	Blume et al. (2009)	1	0.948	Empirical
18	WSIF	González-González et al. (2011)	1	0.333	Empirical
19	IJURR	Kloosterman, Leun, and Rath (1999)	1	1.339	Empirical
20	ARS	Sahin, Nijkamp, and Stough (2011)	1	1.026	Empirical
21	APJM	Yang, Ho, and Chang (2012)	1	3.062	Non-empirical
	Total		45		

(2), *Journal of Small Business Management* – JSBM (2), *Gender, Work and Organizations* – GWO (1), *Review of Economics Household* – REH (1), *Journal of Management* – JOM (1), *Intelligence* – I (1), *Work and Occupations* – WO (1), *American Behavioral Scientist* – ABS (1), *Environment and Planning* – EPC (3), *Ethnic and Racial Studies* – ERS (1), *Journal of Population Economics* – JPE (1), *Women's Studies International Forum* – WSIF (1), *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* – IJURR (1), *Annals of Regional Science* – ARS (1) and *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* – APJM (1) have also published articles related to immigrant entrepreneurship. The distribution of these articles gives us an idea of the multidisciplinary and rich character of the topic. Table 1 shows that 35 articles are empirical and 8 articles are non-empirical studies.

3. Mapping the objectives of the articles

Before selecting the papers, the exploration was conducted. To do so, we have followed the example suggested by Petticrew (2006) related to extracting data from the papers. Thus, an Excel workbook was prepared for recording and comparing the data content. Reviewing the codes in Excel, we realized that articles can be grouped into only three geographical areas where this phenomenon has been developed: (A) North America, (B) Europe and (C) Oceania. So, we decided to conduct the analysis considering these areas even though having the possibility to deal with repetitive themes in these geographical areas.

3.1. North American region

Immigrant entrepreneurship literature in this area is dominated by the USA, with Chicago, Los Angeles, the Midwest, the Silicon Valley, Las Vegas, Massachusetts and New England having been the focus of some articles. However, there are other articles that focus on the USA as a whole. Despite the USA having the primacy in research about immigrant entrepreneurship, Canada is also present but has published less on this topic in journals with an impact factor.

Scholars have used a variety of lenses to explore the immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon in the North American context. Also, it is clear that empirical studies have reigned in this region as well as the individual level of analysis. Thus, the objectives are mostly centred on characteristics of immigrants from different countries (Li 2001). For instance, Hispanics, Chinese, Koreans, Indians, Iranians and Filipinos were the major groups of immigrants that were the focus of research in North America. This fact is also consistent with a statistical report of the Census Bureau in the USA,² which shows Mexicans, Chinese, Indians and Filipinos as the major inflow of immigrants.

Objectives of articles that have centred on characteristics of immigrants were studied, taking into account different perspectives. Characteristics of East Asian and European immigrant entrepreneurs that entered British Columbia in Canada were examined considering their pre- and post-experiences as business owners (Froschauer 2001). Furthermore, the immigrant's human, social and financial capitals were considered in the analysis to see the effect at the moment of pursuing a venture considering the ethnic enclave. Also, motivations of Hispanic immigrants to create their own businesses in Las Vegas were an objective (Shinnar and Young 2008). Despite this paper has had as an objective to examine immigrants' motivations, the context of Las Vegas was considered as a pull factor rather than a push factor. In addition, the literature has shown that being an immigrant has certain disadvantages because there are limitations due to the fit of cultures, experiences and knowledge. In this sense, circumstances that help and hinder entrepreneurship are examined among Mexican

business owners that operate in the immigrant community in Chicago (Rajman and Tienda 2003). Immigrants also experienced challenges and barriers in their host country, so this was an objective examined by Teixeira, Lo, and Truelove (2007). The authors have examined the challenges and barriers experienced by Polish, Portuguese, Caribbean, Korean and Somali immigrants who have created their own businesses in Toronto.

Moreover, the comparison among immigrant groups was also identified as an objective. Hispanics, Korean, non-Hispanic white and Middle Eastern/South Asian immigrant entrepreneurs were analysed in their pathways to business ownership (Rajman and Tienda 2000). And, finally, the role of women and immigrants in founding biotechnology firms in Massachusetts and New England was an objective (McQuaid, Smith-Doerr, and Monti 2010). In the same vein, economic contributions of skilled Asian immigrants in the Silicon Valley were examined by Saxenian (2002). To do so, authors based their analyses on individual characteristics of founders.

Despite characteristics of immigrants having been the focus of several studies, the role of ethnic resources has also been examined in the process of creating a business by Koreans (Kim and Hurh 1985) and Iranians in Los Angeles (Min and Bozorgmehr 2000).

3.2. European region

Different from North America, Europe is constituted by many countries; in this sense, the analysis and comparison of various modalities of migrant entrepreneurship in some European countries are pointed out as an objective of one article. The article tried to classify key factors of this phenomenon in Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK (Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp 2009). So, for the rest of the European articles, the objectives are reviewed and grouped by country.

Immigrant entrepreneurship research in this region is dominated by studies of the Netherlands and Germany. Also, empirical articles have reigned in this region. In the Netherlands, one article focused on the development of a concept related to female ethnicity in order to understand the meanings of femininity for Muslim immigrant businesswomen (Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard 2010, 321). Moreover, characteristics of immigrants established in the Netherlands have also been highlighted as an objective. Specifically, the role of human capital that has been acquired in the origin and host countries was analysed in immigrant self-employment (Kanas, van Tubergen, and van der Lippe 2009). The policy to promote self-employment in the Netherlands has also been studied in order to see the effects on starting a business among immigrants; furthermore, the authors have suggested taking into account the structure of opportunities for future analysis of immigrant entrepreneurship (Kloosterman 2003).

One issue of interest in the objectives of the articles in Germany was the comparison of immigrant groups, such is the case of Polish and Turkish immigrants in Berlin (Miera 2008). This study explored the structure and strategies of such immigrants, taking into account the concept of transitional social space to the 'mixed embeddedness' perspective of ethnic businesses. The determinants of the self-employed immigrants and natives also are compared (Constant and Zimmermann 2006). Characteristics of immigrants acquired in pre- and post-migration periods were considered for the analysis. Then, as Germany has also experienced the advent of immigration, its self-employment policy has been the focus of research (Kontos 2003). In the same vein, the first and second generations of immigrant's start-ups have been considered as an objective (Masurel and Nijkamp 2004).

Other studies in immigrant entrepreneurship conducted in other European countries have only a slight presence in journals with an impact factor. For instance, some

characteristics of immigrant entrepreneurs were the focus of attention of researchers in Norway. So, the objectives of articles are based upon the analysis of the effect of human capital and its cultural background upon self-employment (Vinogradov 2011). In the same sense, home-country national intelligence was analysed as a characteristic that can influence the propensity of self-employment among immigrants in Norway (Vinogradov and Kolvereid 2010). In Spain, there is an article that focused its objective on the entrepreneurial behaviour of female immigrants who settled in the region of Andalusia (González-González et al. 2011). Moreover, the objective of another article was to examine differences in transition patterns across labour market states among immigrants and natives in Denmark (Blume et al. 2009). Migrant status and ethnicity were analysed regarding the influence upon entrepreneurship in the UK (Levie 2007).

3.3. Oceania region

This region is composed of two main countries, of which Australia has received the most attention in research on immigrant entrepreneurship. Australia has a long history of immigrant entrepreneurship, with many ethnic groups involved in small business sectors of the Australian economy (Collins 2003, 138). Despite the few studies published in journals with an impact factor on immigrant entrepreneurship in this region, the existing factors are empirical. Regarding objectives of these articles, characteristics of immigrants have also been the focus of attention in Australia to study the immigrant's propensity to self-employment or business creation. Furthermore, an analysis based on immigrant characteristics that have been acquired in pre- and post-migration periods was considered. For instance, education acquired in Australia or overseas and labour market experience acquired in Australia or overseas was considered, among others (Le 2000).

Furthermore, the influence of some institutions such as the migration and settlement policy upon the formation of ethnic enterprises was considered. The changing policy context shapes the engagement of immigrants in entrepreneurship, while a macro-analysis of policy also considered three key areas: education and training, policy design to encourage unemployed immigrants to become entrepreneurs and policy focusing on strategies for improving communication with immigrants (Collins 2003). Regarding the influence of environment, the network marketing organization was studied to see whether it encourages Chinese immigrants to establish their own business in their host country (Dai, Wang, and Teo 2011). Also, the impact of ethnic diversity and gender was considered for studying female immigrant entrepreneurship (Collins and Low 2010). Few studies have focused on a specific region and also on specific groups of immigrants in Australia. For instance, one study has focused on Sydney, and among immigrant groups, Chinese and Asians, in general, were taken into consideration for studies in this region.

Summarizing this section, the objective of some articles has been to formulate a theoretical framework in order to better understand the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship (Chand and Ghorbani 2011; Engelen 2001; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Kloosterman 2003, 2010; Yang, Ho, and Chang 2012). These articles are going to be reviewed in the next section.

4. Mapping theoretical sections surrounding the articles

Turning the attention to theoretical sections in the papers, we shall identify and classify them according to their nature. Articles were classified by considering the structure of their theoretical section in order to better explore the content and to provide a more nuanced

understanding of the theories used. Two main groups were considered: Group 1 are those articles that have used a literature review, and Group 2 are those that have used theoretical frameworks.

4.1. Group 1 literature reviews

Table 3 shows the classification of the papers. Group 1 considered all of the papers that have used a literature review. According to Cooper (1998, 3), a literature review is a narrow structure that usually introduces the new study. It is based on those theoretical works and empirical studies related to the specific issue addressed by the new study. Also, a literature review is made to determine if a topic is researchable (Rocco and Plakhotnik 2009), so some authors have used it to justify their study. Thus, under this definition, we found articles that have focused on previous literature on policy related to a specific country. These literature reviews were built based on secondary data with the aim of describing the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship in a specific context. For example, the study of Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (2009) has not used specific theory, with the whole description relying on previous studies and secondary data. Such previous studies are related to immigrant entrepreneurship in Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal Sweden and the UK with the aim to compare them and identify key elements of immigrant entrepreneurship in Europe. In the same vein, the study of Collins (2003) has a similar structure. The paper describes and explores the changing of Australian immigration and settlement policy as well as the taxation policy that indirectly impacts on the rates of immigrant minority entrepreneurship and survival of their businesses. Similarly, Froschauer (2001) examines the pre- and post-migration experiences of business owners who have entered Canada through the business immigration programme. Self-employment policies and immigrant entrepreneurship in Germany are also described by Kontos (2003). Moreover, there is a study that compares various assistance programmes and urban policies in several European cities (van Delft, Gorter, and Nijkamp 2000).

A literature review based on ethnic entrepreneurship is used in some studies to analyse the relationship of ethnic entrepreneurship with immigrant entrepreneurship. Ethnic entrepreneurship has been identified as a relevant factor for immigrants, especially those who have just arrived in the host country. It is common that certain resources are searched for in the co-ethnic community, such as information and job opportunities (Bates 1997; Min and Bozorgmehr 2000; Raijman and Tienda 2003). The formation of businesses created by ethnic groups contributes to the formation of ethnic enclaves. These ethnic groups preserve their culture although they are located in their host country; this theoretical perspective has been used in some studies that explain immigrant entrepreneurship (Chaganti et al. 2008; Levie 2007).

Furthermore, studies that base their literature review on previous studies on immigrant self-employment and ethnic-immigrant entrepreneurship have been identified (Bates 1999; Constant and Zimmermann 2006; Le 2000; Masurel and Nijkamp 2004). Moreover, an empirical study has focused on certain characteristics of women (Shim and Eastlick 1998) involved in entrepreneurship in biotechnology firms (McQuaid, Smith-Doerr, and Monti 2010). The study of Hart and Acs (2011) also reviews the literature regarding immigrants involved in high-tech entrepreneurial activities in the USA. A literature review on certain characteristics of immigrants was found. For example, the importance of language among immigrants as well as the size of the ethnic group upon self-employment was focused on by Mora and Dávila (2005). In addition, some motivations that influenced

the decision to become self-employed are highlighted in the literature review. The authors have focused on the pull and push factors that trigger or constrain an immigrant's entrepreneurial behaviour (Shinnar and Young 2008).

Finally, Saxenian (2002) makes a literature review of previous studies on the topic that she is analysing. For example, she examined the entrepreneurial contribution of skilled immigrants in Silicon Valley in the USA. The study quantifies the immigrant engineers and entrepreneurs' presence in this region. Also, she examines the ethnic networks in which Indians and Chinese are organizing. In the same way, Lofstrom (2011) has analysed the return to self-employment among low-skilled immigrants in the USA using previous studies on self-employed immigrants as a literature review.

4.2. Group 2 theoretical frameworks

Articles that have used theoretical frameworks are in Group 2. According to Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009), a theoretical framework involves a presentation of a specific theory accompanied by empirical and conceptual work concerning this theory. In this section, existing theories and related concepts are usually synthesized. Considering this structure, some articles were identified. For instance, human capital theory is used as a theoretical framework to analyse characteristics of immigrants that have been acquired in their home and host countries (Fernandez and Kim 1998; Kanas, van Tubergen, and van der Lippe 2009; Vinogradov and Kolvereid 2007). In this branch, the social cognitive theory is identified to study Chinese immigrants in Western host countries. This theory gives special attention to the influence of the social environment upon pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities (Dai, Wang, and Teo 2011). Furthermore, the human and social capital theories have been used to investigate similarities between immigrant entrepreneurs located in Amsterdam and in Fairfax, Virginia (Sahin, Nijkamp, and Stough 2011).

Furthermore, analysing immigrant entrepreneurship has implied to focus on national culture. It is known that immigrants are from different countries of origin and these countries are culturally different to each other. In this sense, the influence of national culture upon entrepreneurship has been taken into account for empirical analysis. Dimensions of Hofstede were used to study national culture (Vinogradov and Kolvereid 2007), specifically individualistic and collectivistic dimensions (Chand and Ghorbani 2011). The cultural theory argues that when immigrants are overrepresented in societies they can be analysed as a group by showing their cultural characteristics. This theory points out that entrepreneurship is culturally attributed to some ethnic groups (Kim and Hurh 1985; Teixeira, Lo, and Truelove 2007). In the same branch, Vinogradov and Kolvereid (2010) used the concept of national intelligence as a theoretical framework. They argue that intellectual capacity will positively influence individuals in the decision of becoming entrepreneurs and/or identifying entrepreneurial opportunities.

The disadvantage and cultural theories were also used as a theoretical framework by Li (2001). The first theory states that immigrants are at a disadvantageous position in the host labour market due to their limitations, such as language, education credentials and discrimination, among others. Also, the blocked mobility theory, which is similar to the disadvantage theory, was highlighted. This theory focuses on the limitations that immigrants have in the host countries. Blocked mobility theory is also used to analyse the immigrant's pathways to ownership (Raijman and Tienda 2000).

The participation of women in entrepreneurial activities has also been studied. For example, intersectionality theories are used to develop the concept of female ethnicity to understand the meaning of femininity for Muslim immigrant businesswomen in

entrepreneurship. These theories help the author to develop such a concept. Female ethnicity refers to the meaning of femininity within ethnic contexts (Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard 2010). In the same branch, the psychological gender perspective is used to analyse the entrepreneurial behaviour of female immigrants who have settled in Andalucía, Spain (González-González et al. 2011). Also, Collins and Low (2010) explore aspects of immigrant women in small enterprises; to do so, the authors have focused on resources such as education and social capital. The impact of family, ethnic ties and cultural background is examined upon their entry to entrepreneurship in Australia. Also, other kinds of resources have focused on the immigrant's strategy to pursue a venture. Achidi and Priem (2011) highlighted the ethnic enclave as a strategy as well as the immigrant's capital endowments, so for his theoretical framework he has used social and human capital theories.

The evolutionary psychological perspective has been used to examine adaptive functions of kin and ethnic altruism in start-up businesses by immigrants. This perspective is a 'synthesis of neo-Darwinian evolutionary biology and the information processing theory of mind ... the fundamental assumption of evolutionary psychology is that the human mind is a complex device equipped with domain-specific modules that have been sculpted by natural selection' (Yang et al. 2011, 754).

Finally, some studies have proposed definitions and concepts. For instance, Blume et al. (2009) defined eight transitional types of immigrants to study differences between the native and immigrant in transition patterns across the labour market in Denmark. In the same vein, one study proposes the introduction of the concept of transnational social spaces into the mixed embeddedness perspective because these transnational spaces have an impact on the social and economic situation in both the country of origin and the host country (Miera 2008).

Furthermore, some theoretical articles have used some theories in their theoretical section. For instance, the mixed embeddedness perspective to analyse entrepreneurship and self-employment in a specific country has been used. This perspective is based on the idea that entrepreneurship and self-employment by immigrants cannot be understood by focusing on the micro-level, but rather has to include the macro- and meso-structures because of the impact on the actor's choices (Kloosterman, Leun, and Rath 1999; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Kloosterman 2003, 2010). Regarding the structure of opportunities, the Weberian approach was proposed. This approach points out 'that market allocation is a natural or spontaneous form of social coordination is empirically untenable' (Weber 1961). Markets are seen as historical and social constructs and should be considered as institutions (Engelen 2001, 206). Grounded in Weber's approach, the author has elaborated the following dimensions: the objects of trade, the subjects of trade, the structure of the market, its level of institutionalization, the locality of the market, its degree of social embeddedness and the mode referring to the level as well as the object of regulation. The aim of these dimensions is to demonstrate the importance of Weber's approach for the study of immigrant entrepreneurship. In the same manner, one study combines the national culture frameworks and social capital theory to explain the formation and management of entrepreneurial ventures among immigrants (Chand and Ghorbani 2011). Furthermore, the author reviews the previous literature on the Indian and Chinese communities in the USA and presents some theoretical propositions. In the same vein, a new integrated framework based on the resource base view and transaction cost economics is presented to explain the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship (Yang, Ho, and Chang 2012).

To sum up, Figure 2 shows the domain of immigrant entrepreneurship literature, for instance the level of analysis is clearly showed through main categories. These categories are in a circle such as immigrant endowments, kind of business, policy structure and transnational strategies, individual characteristics, marginalization, institutional discrimination and venture performance. Circles are categories used at micro-and meso level of analysis. Moreover, subcategories are linked to each main category. For example, subcategories of ‘immigrant endowments’ are financing, ethnic resource and social networks which at the same time these categories use specific theory such as cultural theory and social cognitive theory. In this sense, the diversity of theories used in this paper is showed in Figure 2, where a map of relationships among theories and categories is presented. This figure gives an idea of the complexity of the analysis, because it is not structured but rather dynamic. So, we are consistent with Merriam (2001) when describes theoretical frameworks like a scaffolding.

5. Mapping methodologies and methods

A wide range of methods has been used in the papers selected concerning immigrant entrepreneurship, a phenomenon that characterizes developed countries around the world. Articles were classified into empirical papers (37) and non-empirical papers (8) (Table 1). For reviewing this section, only empirical papers were considered.

5.1. Data collection and sample techniques

Data used in the papers are classified into (a) data from institutional organizations and (b) self-collected data. For instance, some studies have used data from institutions of a specific country, such is the case of Danish administrative registers that contain information about the immigrant population in Denmark (Blume et al. 2009). The most common data used come from the census of many countries, for example, Australia (Le 2000), the US Census Bureau specifically uses the Characteristics of Business Owners (CBO) (Bates 1997, 1999; Fernandez and Kim 1998; Lofstrom 2011; Saxenian 2002; Shim and Eastlick 1998), Integrated Public Use Microdata Series – IPUMS, from the USA (Mora and Dávila 2005), Longitudinal Immigration Database – IMDB, from Canada (Li 2001), Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – GEM, in the UK, German Socioeconomic Panel – GSOEP (Constant and Zimmermann 2006), Sociale Positie en Voorzieningengebruik ven Allochtonen, in the Netherlands (Kanas, van Tubergen, and van der Lippe 2009) and Statistics Norway (Vinogradov and Kolvereid 2007, 2010). A German project conducted in Frankfurt am Main was used to select the sample for studying female immigrant entrepreneurship (Kontos 2003). Furthermore, local institutions such as associations with specific ethnic groups, municipal business licence registries, embassies and immigration offices were used to locate the immigrants for some studies (Froschauer 2001). Institutional data have also been used to extract a sub-sample to be used for specific study. In this case, a questionnaire is used to gather data from an institutional database. This is a common method when the research focuses on a specific population or sector of activity (Hart and Acs 2011).

Some studies created their own lists of contacts, for example, a journal that contained the most important firms such as the *Boston Business Journal* (BBJ) was used. Also, a list of firms was taken from the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council (McQuaid, Smith-Doerr, and Monti 2010). In this case, the list was used to select the sample; after this selection, financial data were gathered from the company’s websites. Moreover, the

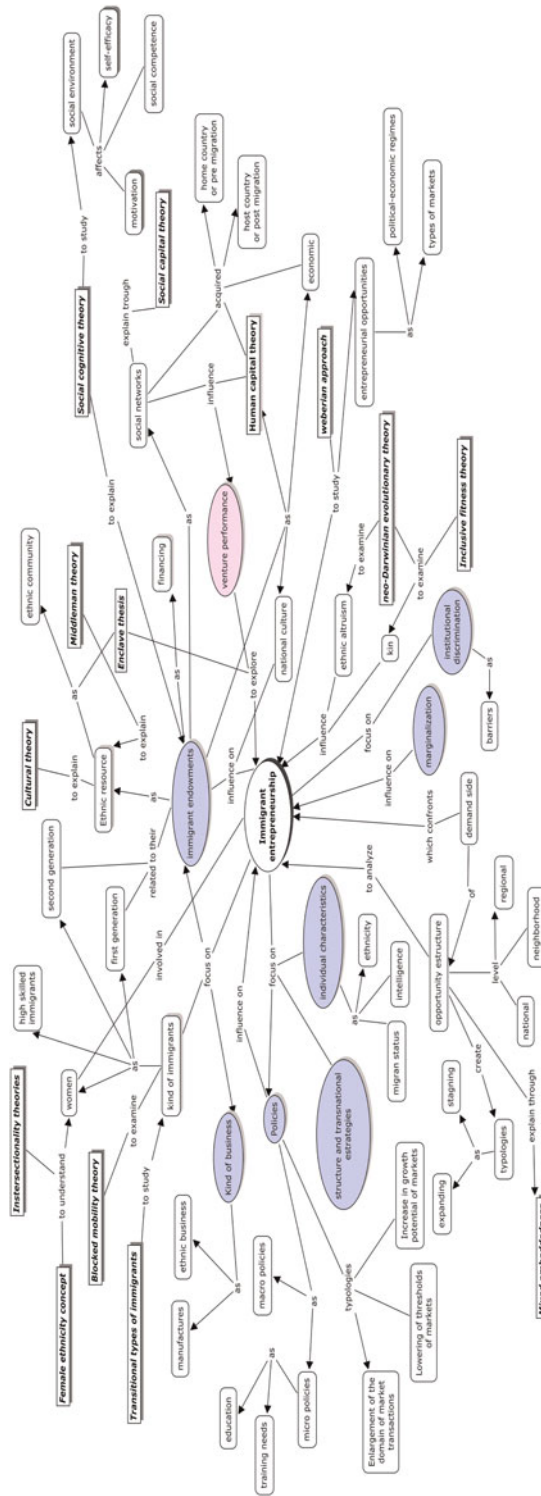


Figure 2. Mapping the domain of immigrant entrepreneurship literature.

Minority Business Enterprise programme in the USA was used to list a group of businesses to email the survey to [Achidi and Priem \(2011\)](#). From the Chamber of Crafts in Berlin was taken a list of contacts to conduct an interview with immigrant entrepreneurs ([Miera 2008](#)). It was identified that some immigrant countries usually have a Chamber of Commerce in the host country. Thus, these institutions have been used to obtain a list of immigrant entrepreneurs for conducting studies in this topic ([Kim and Hurh 1985](#)).

A **survey method was** applied in some studies; this survey was based on a stratified random sample ([Rajman and Tienda 2000](#)) of businesses in a specific city and country. The questionnaire is used as an instrument to gather information ([Rajman and Tienda 2003](#)). Moreover, the snowballing sampling methodology has been designed to find a sample of immigrant entrepreneurs ([Collins and Low 2010](#); [Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard 2010](#)). Also, personal contacts such as acquaintances were used as middlemen for collecting data; the middleman is from the same ethnic group and his major task is to locate entrepreneur co-nationals and encourage them to return the questionnaire by email ([Yang et al. 2011](#)).

Another way of locating immigrants who have created their businesses is by using previous surveys and white pages in the telephone directories. For example, when the research is focused on a specific immigrant group such as Koreans, the ‘Kim Sampling Technique’ was applied. There is a high probability that a household with the surname ‘Kim’ comes from Korea. Once the list of contacts is found, researchers usually conduct interviews ([Min and Bozorgmehr 2000](#)). A similar process was applied for studying the Hispanic population in the USA ([Shinnar and Young 2008](#)).

Furthermore, qualitative studies have collected data **using semi-structure interviews,** phone, email, website, snowballing, among others ([van Delft, Gorter, and Nijkamp 2000](#); [Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard 2010](#); [González-González et al. 2011](#); [Kim and Hurh 1985](#); [Kontos 2003](#); [Miera 2008](#); [Teixeira, Lo, and Truelove 2007](#)).

5.2 Variables and categories of analysis

Papers that have used quantitative techniques usually used dependent, independent and, control variables as well as some interactions ([Table 2](#)). The most common dependent variable is self-employment, which has been used as a proxy of entrepreneurship ([Constant and Zimmermann 2006](#); [Fernandez and Kim 1998](#); [Kanas, van Tubergen, and van der Lippe 2009](#); [Le 2000](#); [Levie 2007](#); [Li 2001](#); [Vinogradov and Kolvereid 2007, 2010](#)). However, there is an article that has used performance as dependent variable ([Sahin, Nijkamp, and Stough 2011](#)). Characteristics of immigrants were used as independent and control variables; also, as some studies have compared natives with immigrants, some interactions were used ([Bates 1999](#); [Chaganti et al. 2008](#); [Constant and Zimmermann 2006](#); [Mora and Dávila 2005](#)).

Some variables that characterized immigrants are peculiar because they were classified by the place where they were acquired. For example, education acquired in the country of origin is differently valued from that acquired in the host country, and so on ([Constant and Zimmermann 2006](#); [Kanas, van Tubergen, and van der Lippe 2009](#); [Le 2000](#); [Mora and Dávila 2005](#)). Regarding the kind of variables, it has been identified that the most common level of analysis in the papers was the individual, independent of whether they are quantitative or qualitative.

On the other hand, qualitative studies have usually used categories for analysing immigrant entrepreneurship. For instance, ethnic resources and their utilization have focused on the study of [Kim and Hurh \(1985\)](#) regarding the Koreans who have settled in Chicago. More general objectives have led to more general categories, such as gender and

Table 2. Types of variables used in the articles.

Dependent	Independent	Control	Interactions
Self-employment, proportion of self-employment, enclave strategy, performance, TEA (Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Activity), locked mobility, high technological performance, prospector strategy, owner perseverance in entrepreneurship, log weekly earnings, loan amount and performance	Education, previous managerial work experience, previous entrepreneurial experience, social capital, social identity, fit index, performance (salaries and net profit), intelligence, company age, gender, residence time, class of admission, country of origin, English proficiency, immigrant group size, homeowner, discriminated, age, vocational training, ethnic enclave, marital status, total number of people working in the enterprise, funding and items about business strategy	Size of business, industry sector, ethnicities, generation of immigrants, education in host country, experience in host country, family support, individualism index, goal (growth vs. stability), age mean, % males, % post-education, % in work, opportunities, skills, fear of failure, knowing an entrepreneur, shutdown own business, funded an entrepreneur, retail firm, skill intensive firm, ongoing, ethnic origin, education, English proficiency, tenure in the country, age, age squared, male, gender, survey year, concentration rate, number of employees	Ethnic immigrant presence * founding team size, ethnic immigrant presence * age of founding team size, English proficiency * group size, education * immigrant, immigrant * exposure to Germany, immigrant * education in Germany, immigrants * regional unemployment, immigrant * married, immigrant * young children, immigrant * good health, immigrant * homeownership, immigrant * optimism, immigrant * financial worries, immigrant * self-employment parents

Source: Extracted from the papers under study.

the motives to enter entrepreneurship (González-González et al. 2011), the policy of self-employment and its influence on immigrant entrepreneurship (Kontos 2003), among others.

5.3 Techniques for analysing data

A diversity of techniques was used in the analysis of the studies, as mentioned before, with the majority of the studies being empirically and quantitatively approached. So, simple description of statistics up to more complex econometric analysis, such as ordinary least squares (OLS), multivariate and bivariate logistic regressions, Heckman two-stage regression, steady-stage probabilities, structural equation and matched-pair design have been used. Moreover, the usage of econometric techniques carried out the use of some post-estimation tests in order to see the goodness of fit of the model and/or correct any kind of bias. For instance, an endogenous relationship was corrected with the Heckman test (Achidi and Priem 2011), and the multicollinearity test was commonly used. Moreover, the research tool used to assess performance was Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) this technique is used to compare efficiency of organizations (Sahin, Nijkamp, and Stough 2011).

However, in qualitative studies, life stories (Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard 2010), autobiographical narratives (Kontos 2003) and content analysis (González-González et al. 2011) were used as techniques of data analysis.

6. Discussion and research directions

The aim of this study is to examine the trends and what has been done on immigrant entrepreneurship research with the aim to identify future lines of research. To do so, we have relied on the review of the objectives, theoretical frameworks and methodologies of previous studies (45), which have been published in journals with an impact factor.

6.1. Regarding objectives

Based on the review of the objectives of previous studies, it can be seen that the majority of the articles have analysed the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship in developed countries. So, the articles under study fit into three main regions: North America, Europe and Oceania. The majority of studies in this topic have focused on the reality of the USA (Achidi and Priem 2011; Bates 1997; Chaganti et al. 2008; Chand and Ghorbani 2011; Fernandez and Kim 1998; Hart and Acs 2011; Kim and Hurh 1985; McQuaid, Smith-Doerr, and Monti 2010; Min and Bozorgmehr 2000; Mora and Dávila 2005; Saxenian 2002; Shim and Eastlick 1998; Shinnar and Young 2008; Yang et al. 2011). However, in Europe, more attention has been paid to the reality of the Netherlands and Germany, while in Spain, Norway, Denmark and the UK this phenomenon has also been studied. It can be seen that the majority of these European countries are members of the European Union (EU). And, Oceania, last but not least, has been represented through studies focused on Australian reality (Figure 3).

It has been identified that research on immigrant entrepreneurship followed the same path of many advanced economies in the twentieth century. This means that international migration has become a key feature of industrialized countries around the globe, immigrants from less-developed countries have moved to advanced economies (Kloosterman and Rath 2003). However, there is a study that focused on European and Asian immigrants in British Columbia in Canada (Froschauer 2001).

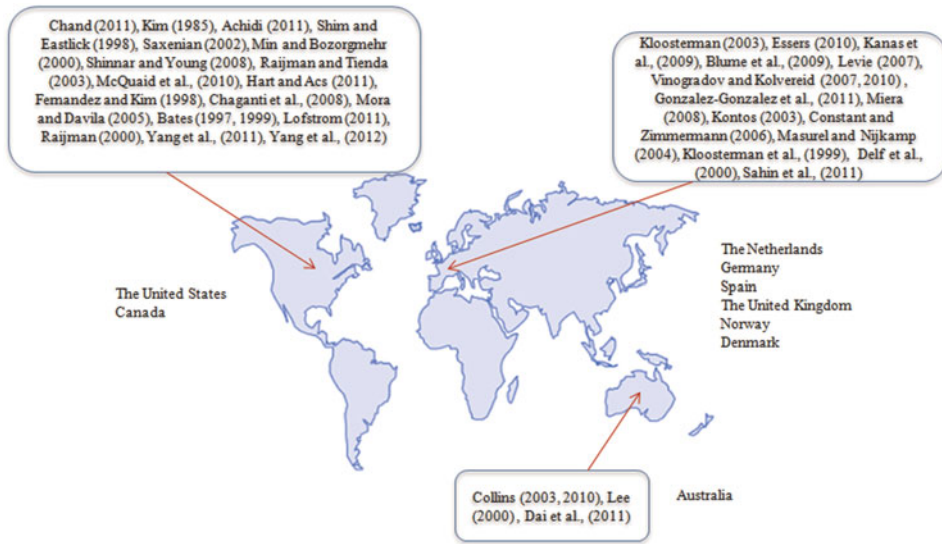


Figure 3. Classification of the selected articles according to the country.

As is shown, all of the articles have focused on developed countries. However, immigration occurs in other contexts; above all, today, as a consequence of the financial crisis, the panorama of immigration is changing. Individuals from developed countries are moving to emerging economies. This includes immigrants in developed countries and also the natives. This change is bringing new opportunities for researching new contexts. In this sense, we encourage scholars to see emerging economies such as the BRIC and some Latin-American countries, which are growing economically, as a fruitful field for researching immigrant entrepreneurship.

Moreover, comparative studies are lacking. Institutional contexts of where immigrant entrepreneurship is developed are different, so focus on comparisons of different contexts provides a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon. For example, few studies are focused on policies that promote and/or constrain immigrant entrepreneurship (Collins 2003; Kloosterman 2003; Kontos 2003). As a consequence, studies that analyse the policies of a specific country in order to understand why some countries promote and others constrain the development of immigrant entrepreneurship will be interesting.

Some articles have attempted to study the immigrant's characteristics acquired in the pre- and post-migration periods (Kanas, van Tubergen, and van der Lippe 2009). Characteristics acquired in migration periods are important to study immigrant entrepreneurship. Since immigrants have lived in a different socio-cultural context, they acquire different characteristics. In the same sense, the first and second generation will be considered as an important characteristic to compare both groups. For instance, experiences are analysed, comparing European and Asian immigrant manufacturers in British Columbia to see whether their baggage fits with the Canadian reality (Froschauer 2001). In this sense, human capital is studied, regarding where it was acquired, because the way of doing things depends on the socio-economic context. The characteristics of immigrants have been analysed as determinants of self-employment and/or business creation. However, entrepreneurship is not only creating a business, it also involves opportunity recognition. So, how do immigrants recognize entrepreneurial opportunities in their host country? Regarding this question, we suggest the introduction of

entrepreneurship as a process (Shane 2003) into the immigrant entrepreneurship research. It is necessary to focus on the role that the prior knowledge of immigrants plays in the process of opportunity recognition. Moreover, other kinds of resources play a role in recognition opportunities such as information (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp 2012; Shane 2000), networks and technologies. For example, how does the immigrant use and get information to recognize opportunities? To address this question, it would be a good idea to focus on comparative studies regarding the resources acquired in migration periods.

Moreover, some objectives of the papers have focused on a specific community of immigrants. For instance, the Asian community seems to be relevant for some countries (Bates 1997; Collins and Low 2010; Dai, Wang, and Teo 2011; Fernandez and Kim 1998; Froschauer 2001; Kim and Hurh 1985; Saxenian 2002; Yang et al. 2011) as well as Hispanics (Rajman and Tienda 2000, 2003; Shim and Eastlick 1998; Shinnar and Young 2008). So, specific traits and characteristics of these groups and their influence on entrepreneurship have been highlighted as objectives of the articles. As a consequence, more attention at the different layers of context in which immigrants are embedded is required. Thus, the multilevel research should be a way of understanding the micro-characteristics of immigrants.

However, immigrant entrepreneurship has been little studied in Europe. We think this context has rich source and configuration to study this phenomenon. For instance, countries of the EU have free entrance to work in member countries due to the Maastricht Treaty. As a consequence, two kinds of immigrant population exist in member countries of the EU. For example, in Spain, there are EU immigrants and non-EU immigrants. So, the reality of immigrant entrepreneurship among EU immigrants has not been studied yet. Adjacent to this issue, objectives centred on classifying the kinds of immigrant entrepreneurship in EU countries are lacking. The literature has shown that immigrants tend to engage in entrepreneurial activities by necessity and/or by opportunity, so this kind of approach will be convenient. Furthermore, how does the immigrant find financial support to engage in entrepreneurial opportunities? Probably, there will be interesting differences regarding EU and non-EU immigrants. For example, little attention has been paid to how immigrants find financial support. The literature has shown that immigrants usually rely on informal investors (Day 2002), but will it be the same with EU immigrants? So, this branch has opportunities for research.

Thus, it was identified that most studies have focused their analysis at the micro-level. So, studies at the meso- and macro-levels would be appreciated. The review shows that very few studies have focused on the venture strategy and venture performance of immigrant businesses (Achidi and Priem 2011). Thus, studies with objectives focusing on the management of immigrant business, strategies to become established business or to grow in the market are lacking.

6.2. Regarding theoretical frameworks

Turning the attention to theoretical framework sections in this paper, we identified and classified them according to their nature. Two main groups were considered, those that have used (1) a literature review and those that have built (2) theoretical frameworks. We have found that most studies are based on theoretical frameworks (23) and the rest have used a literature review (22) of previous studies related to the subject under study.

For instance, some studies have focused on classical theories such as human, social capital and immigrant entrepreneurship theories (Collins and Low 2010; Dai, Wang, and Teo 2011; Fernandez and Kim 1998; Hart and Acs 2011). Furthermore, there are some

versions of the mixed embeddedness approach to study immigrant entrepreneurship (Kloosterman 2003, 2010). The mixed embeddedness approach advocates the incorporation of macro- and meso-structures of opportunities into the host countries to understand immigrant entrepreneurship. Moreover, this approach is proposed regarding the reality of immigrant entrepreneurship in the Netherlands. Considering this, we suggest the empirical test of this approach with the reality not only in the Netherlands, but also in other contexts. In our opinion, theoretical approaches could go hand in hand with empirical evidence.

The review also revealed a heavy reliance on sociological theories (Table 3) which, on one hand, have enriched the understanding of the topic but, on the other hand, in a certain way is troubling, considering the multidisciplinary character of immigrant entrepreneurship. As we suggested before in the objectives, the incorporation of theories and perspectives from management would be interesting to study the performance of immigrant businesses. In addition, the literature shows that entrepreneurship is a process that involves the identification of entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman 2000), among others. So, how immigrants identify entrepreneurial opportunities in their host country is an interesting issue for future studies on immigrant entrepreneurship.

Table 3. Scrutinizing the theoretical sections in the papers.

Groups	Theoretical section	Articles
1	Literature reviews Policy and migration programme Motivations to self-employment Linguistic isolation and ethnic group size Female entrepreneurs High-tech entrepreneurs Foreign-born life scientist Ethnic-immigrant entrepreneurship Top management team Self-employed immigrants Skilled immigrants Economic opportunities of ethnic minorities Informal economic activities	22
2	Theoretical frameworks Middleman theory Cultural theory Enclave thesis Blocked mobility theory Social cognitive theory Intersectionality theories Immigrant entrepreneurship theories Human capital theory Social capital theory Transitional types of immigrants Evolutionary psychology Inclusive fitness theory Mixed embeddedness Weberian approach Cultural theory Social capital theory Resource base view Transaction cost economics	23

Moreover, although immigrant entrepreneurship research had used sociological theories, there are some that need to be considered for specific issues. For instance, gender has been analysed by comparing females with males (Collins and Low 2010; McQuaid, Smith-Doerr, and Monti 2010; Shim and Eastlick 1998), while other studies have only focused on females (Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard 2010; González-González et al. 2011). Regarding these articles, we suggest that gender as performativity may be regarded as a heterogeneous framework. This framework can be used to contextualize social changes across time and location (Butler 1993). Thus, it may help scholars to understand societal differences to better discern the engagement of women in entrepreneurship in their host countries. Also, we advocate the use of psychological theories as well as gender as a performativity perspective to study immigrant gender entrepreneurship.

On the basis of this literature review, it has been identified that the individual level of analysis is a common trend in research of immigrant entrepreneurship. In our opinion, the individual level of analysis is important because it helps us to understand the heterogeneity of immigrant communities and its influence upon immigrant entrepreneurship. However, as mentioned before, future research should take into account the meso- and macro-levels because institutional context plays a relevant role in the development of immigrant entrepreneurship in host countries. For instance, traditional countries in immigration, such as Canada, Australia, Germany and the USA, have specific institutions that promote or constrain immigrant entrepreneurship (Collins 2003; Kloosterman 2003; Kontos 2003). Furthermore, macro-indicators are also relevant in the influence of creating a business by immigrants. So, studies that focus on macro-characteristics of the host countries are needed to better understand the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship. In the same manner, the analysis of other countries, which have experienced the proliferation of international migration, should be analysed to enlarge the knowledge in this field. For example, Spain, which has experienced an exponential growth of its immigrant population, with clear participation in the Spanish labour market (Fernández and Ortega 2008), should be taken into account to develop more studies.

Finally, this review has shown that some articles are descriptive, limited to certain space and time, and focused on specific events; as a consequence, there is a shortage in theory-building that could help in the understanding of this phenomenon. There is a variety of empirical studies on immigrant entrepreneurship that have been developed in different contexts that could help to identify some theoretical patterns to explain this phenomenon in a more generalizing way.

6.3. Regarding methodologies

Methodologies and methods are varied in the studies. Usually, they are consistent with the objectives and with the kind of data used. As mentioned before, empirical studies are predominant, and among them the quantitative approach is the trend in immigrant entrepreneurship research. Moreover, the deductive method is identified in the review of articles. In this sense, we advocate the use of qualitative research and mixed methods in immigrant entrepreneurship to provide a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. For example, case studies, grounded theory, narrative and/or phenomenology should be welcomed as methods to reach on sensitive topics that cannot be quantifiable for conducting empirical studies and for creating theories that can explain the phenomenon of international immigrant entrepreneurship.

In focusing on data, the most common data used in the studies were from institutions, like the census of specific countries; however, data have also been self-collected for

conducting some studies. This fact yielded a dearth of relevant statistical data of the immigrant population, and information on immigrant businesses is hard to come by in many countries (Kloosterman and Rath 2003). Consequently, to conduct research on immigrant businesses is limited. Perhaps, due to the importance of immigrant communities for the economic development of many countries, an effort to create official data of immigrant businesses should be desirable in order to foster research on this topic. Furthermore, most studies have used cross-sectional data, indicating the lack of suitable data for conducting longitudinal studies to analyse the changes of this phenomenon over time. In this sense, to overcome this limitation, we encourage the use of the pseudo-panel approach, a technique that will allow researchers to track individuals over time (Baltagi 2005; Deaton 1985).

In terms of techniques used for analysing data, the review revealed that statistical and econometric analyses are the techniques most used in the research on immigrant entrepreneurship. So, the kind of variables most used in the studies was binary and, as a consequence, the most used techniques were logit and probit. However, in order to enrich the analysis, we suggest the use of more qualitative variables like the likert scale, so researchers would have more options to measure some constructs without constraining them to a binary selection. This suggestion goes hand in hand with my previous encouragement related to the introduction of theories from management and psychological fields. Finally, as mentioned before, we consider that more qualitative studies are lacking, perhaps the positivist approach could be combined with the interpretivist and post-modernist paradigms.

7. Limitations of the study

Like most studies, this one also has its limitations. As mentioned before, this systematic literature review has finally relied on 45 articles published in 21 academic journals with an impact factor. As our desire was to make an overview of this phenomenon in order to identify future lines of research, two questions were addressing, i.e. what has been done in immigrant entrepreneurship research? and what are the trends that marked this phenomenon in research arenas? However, we are aware that some omissions could exist. The scope of this survey is limited for the following reasons. First, not all the papers published in journal with impact factor related to immigrant entrepreneurship were included in the study because some of them are unavailable electronically. Also, as this study focused only in articles published in journals with an impact factor, some bias could exit regarding the papers published on academic journals without an impact factor. However, it could be seen as an opportunity for future studies.

Second, not all the aspects of the methodologies and methods applied in the articles have been analysed. Despite the examination, aspects such as response rates and measurement of variables could be interesting exercises for future studies. A classification of the studies by their theoretical frameworks was made. However, to classify the articles according to their theoretical perspectives regarding their epistemological position could be interesting. We think that this exercise should contribute to understand why certain research was performed so, even though one has to deal with a wardrobe full of different objects.

Finally, in spite of such limitations, this study is the first review on immigrant entrepreneurship that we know, which provides a representative account of the immigrant entrepreneurship knowledge produced in academic arenas and published in journals with an impact factor.

8. Conclusion

It is noteworthy that immigrant entrepreneurship field of research has a wide variety of studies contributing in the understanding of this phenomenon. So, with this article, we have attempted to contribute to the immigrant entrepreneurship literature. We offer a summary of the immigrant entrepreneurship literature that has been published in academic journals with an impact factor. Forty-five articles were scrutinized with the objective to answer what has been done in international immigrant entrepreneurship research? and what are the trends that marked this phenomenon in research arenas? To do so, their objectives, theoretical frameworks and methodologies were examined. Analysing the objective sections of articles, we identified the focus, the object and the level of the study. Moreover, the scrutiny of theoretical framework sections of the articles gives a general idea of what has been done in this field, what kind of theories has been used and what theories have been proposed to study this phenomenon. So, we can see the richness and the complexity of the theories linked with factors and categories under study in Figure 2. All these factors were identified in the methodological sections of the articles. How were they treated and what was the technique used to treat these factors were identified in the articles. So, the revision of these sections gives a panorama of what has been the interest of scholars researching immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon around the world. However, based on the revision of these articles, another contribution is to highlight future lines of research. When analysing the articles we could identify the trend that immigrant entrepreneurship has followed. So, based on it, we highlight several lines for future research.

Notes

1. Email: ale.rialp@uab.es
2. For more information, see www.census.gov

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