

MSc Entrepreneurship: New Venture Creation

ENTN09

Theoretical Reflection

Author: Catherine Uju Ugochukwu Okechukwu

E-mail: uju40@hotmail.com/kate@globalugoben.com

**Transnational Entrepreneurs: Exploiting of opportunities
through networks**



LUND UNIVERSITY

Supervisor: Tomas Karlsson

Department of Business Administration,

School of Economics and Management

Lund University

May 26st, 2012

Abstract

These theoretical reflections addresses the question of how networks can contribute to opportunity development among transnational entrepreneurs and an understanding of how transnational entrepreneurs come to be embedded in existing networks operating their home, host or even global market. Transnational entrepreneurs considered as immigrant entrepreneurs who conduct border-crossing business activities could facilitate development through exploiting opportunities in a globalizing economy. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on own practical business experiences which are currently highly influenced by these circumstances and apparently, it seems that there are not much theoretical contributions thinking and elaborated ad-hoc theories on this subject. Additionally, this paper will reflect on my experience of using my network to develop a business opportunity as an international student participating in a start-up challenge. Approaching transnational entrepreneurship through globalized networks could facilitate development of further research that could respond to challenging questions like what kind of networks, under what circumstances and in which ways bring out what returns in the context of transnationalism and how entrepreneurs cultivate such networks. Such an approach will contribute to both research on transnational entrepreneurship and the larger entrepreneurship literature

Key words: Networks, Transnational Entrepreneurs, Globalization, Diasporas, immigrants, Opportunities, Development, Resources

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	4-5
2. Purpose.....	5
3. Literature Review.....	6
3.1. Transnational Entrepreneurship.....	6-9
3.2. Networks.....	9-12
4. Methodology.....	12
5. Analysis.....	13-18
6. Conclusion.....	18-19
7. References.....	19-20

1. INTRODUCTION

“Transnational entrepreneurs are immigrant entrepreneurs who conduct border-crossing business activities. Accordingly, transnational entrepreneurship is a multi-faceted process, in which immigrant entrepreneurs discover and enact business opportunities across national borders”. (Chen and Tan, 2009, p.1080) Although immigrant entrepreneurs may have more global ties than their native born counterparts, globalization is not an exclusive feature of immigrant networks, rather examining transnational entrepreneurship through the lens of globalized networks will contribute to the entrepreneurship literature in general and the international and ethnic entrepreneurship in particular. (Chen & Tan, 2009, p.1087). Transnational entrepreneurs facilitate development through exploiting opportunities in a globalizing economy. Stevenson et al., 1985 (cited in Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray, 2000, p.106) states that among the most important abilities of a successful entrepreneur is that of identification and selection of the right opportunities for new businesses and Venkatamaran, 1997, (cited in Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray, 2000, p.106) indicated that, “explaining the discovery and development of opportunities is a key part of entrepreneurship research. Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray (2000, p.106) asserts that while elements of opportunities may be “recognized,” **opportunities are made, not found** and that careful investigation of and sensitivity to market needs and as well as an ability to spot suboptimal deployment of resources may help an entrepreneur begin to develop an opportunity which may or may not result in the formation of a business. They claimed however, that the need or resource “recognized” or “perceived” cannot become a viable business without this “development.” Among the major factors mentioned by Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray (2000) that influence this core process of opportunity recognition and development leading to business formation include social networks.

Chen and Tan (2009) argued that there has been a lack of theoretical and methodological engagement with social network analysis in transnational entrepreneurship research, despite that Levitt & Jaworsky (2007) as well as Vertovec (2003) as cited in Chen and Tan (2009) claim that different theories of networks have

been developed, as essential characteristic of transnationalism as well as being the basic means of mobilizing resources for transnational practices. In reference to this, Chen and Tan (2009) argued that many studies in transnational entrepreneurship research have treated networks as a metaphor, by saying that networks matter rather than exploring how and under what circumstances networks matter and they insisted that few transnational entrepreneurship studies have severely used network measurement.

The question is how do networks contribute to opportunity development among transnational entrepreneurs and to the wider scope of entrepreneurship literature? The intention of this theoretical reflection is to build on observation of social networks of immigrant studies in the area of entrepreneurial opportunity identification and development. Development of a theoretical framework for the study of transnational entrepreneurship requires the use of analytical tool capable of determining dual culture require the use of literature in the field of social network theory and entrepreneurship. An understanding of how transnational entrepreneurs come to be embedded in existing networks operating their home, host or even global market (Wakkee, Groenewegen & Danskin Englis, 2010) should be taken into account.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this study is because my practical business experiences are currently highly influenced by these circumstances and it seems that there are not much theoretical contributions thinking and elaborated ad-hoc theories on this subject. It is a very surprising phenomenon considering the increasing globalization and the lack of theoretical development of entrepreneurship on the immigrant network. When certain business objectives are accomplished, sometimes one wonders how those objectives got to be achieved being an immigrant and in an environment that he or she does not dominate. In reality, this means that when doing business, network is really important. An understanding of more challenging questions such as what kind of networks, under what circumstances and in which ways has it been a benefit, in the context of transnationalism and how entrepreneurs cultivate such networks, can serve as contributions to both research on transnational entrepreneurship and the wider scope of entrepreneurship literature.

3. Literature Review

It is usually presumed that the departure of highly skilled people imposes a cost on those remaining at home. Theories with respect to these impacts are well-developed, though the estimates of any losses imposed are scarce (Lucas, 2001). Meanwhile, in his research, he observed that a newer literature is emphasizing channels through which international movements of highly skilled people may actually benefit those who stay behind. Many migrants have different options open to them and some of these options could be an opportunity to direct connection to a diaspora. Depending on their choice, they could return to the ancestral hometown or the city, they could as well remain where they are, or pick the option of moving to another location within the host country, or even move entirely to other country. All these options also involve reassessing their relationship with the transnational entrepreneurs and home.

3.1. Transnational Entrepreneurship

Transnational entrepreneurs are conceptualized as ‘business persons who take specific proactive action to overcome inherent problems and difficulties associated with international business activities’ Yeung (2002: 30 as cited in Wakkee, Groenewegen & Danskin Englis, 2010, p.77). Actions of transnational entrepreneurs are highly influenced by the social and business networks, in which they are embedded, political and economic structures and dominant organization and practices in the home and host countries (Wakkee, Groenewegen & Danskin Englis, 2010)

Chen & Tan (2009) claimed that transnational entrepreneurship is shaped by a confluence of social forces at multiple levels and networks have been considered the link that connects the supply side and the demand side, the structure and resources, and opportunity and individual characteristics at different levels. Chen & Tan (2009) declared that entrepreneurship is shaped by the opportunity structure at the macro level and individuals’ access to resources at the micro level. It was found in their research

that at the macro level, it is the key to understanding the impact of the institutional context in the host and the home country, such as “globalization, market conditions in the host countries, the rise of ethnic pluralism in the host countries, and pre-immigration context in the home countries (Portes, 2003 cited in Chen & Tan, 2009). While at individual level, studies done by Portes et al. (2002 cited in Chen & Tan, 2009) suggested that transnational entrepreneurs are often the better-off members in their ethnic communities in terms of human, social, financial capital, and legal standing. It is said in the research done by Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002, that immigrants turn to entrepreneurship when, frustrated in their goals to join the mainstream society, they can find a protected niche in the ethnic enclave. Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping (2002) observed that while many stress the social solidarity behind entrepreneurship, few have actually traced the process by which they turn to entrepreneurship and suggested that transnational entrepreneurship is shaped by a confluence of social forces at multiple levels. Drori, Honig, & Ginsberg (in Honig, Drori and Carmichael Eds., 2010) mentioned that while the diverse approaches to the study of transnational entrepreneurship are linked by a common desire to understand how, why, and when individuals and /or organizations build new business organizations in the host countries, they rely on resources and opportunities that originate from maintaining business related linkages with their countries of origin.

The globalized networks perspective helps to advance the understanding of transnational entrepreneurship through taking into account immigrants’ on-going linkages to the home country or a global diaspora. Picking up Drori, Honig and Ginsberg’s (2010, p.3) comment that, ‘transnational entrepreneurs are individuals who migrate from one country to another, concurrently maintaining business related linkages with their country of origin and their adopted countries and communities’, the view is that by traveling both physically and virtually, transnational entrepreneurs are drawn simultaneously in two or more socially embedded environment, granting them to maintain critical global relations that augment their ability to creatively and efficiently maximize their resource base. These increasing impacts of transnational entrepreneurship, according to Drori, Honig and Ginsberg (2010), have been attributed to the changing nature of international migration and Diasporas as well as complex characteristics of international business activities.

Drori, Honig, & Gisenberg (2010) illustrated the growing phenomenon of transnational entrepreneurship with the case of a Chinese prosecuting attorney whose initial purpose of coming to Ireland was to study English. She met and married a farmer residing far away from Belfast where the networks of Chinese foreigners live and presently living in a rural farming community in Northern Ireland. The curiosity of her neighbours about daily lives in China led her to identification of business opportunities and further expansion of her business activities, starting with establishing tourist business adapted to the particular cultural and demographic composition of her organizing special tours with her friends and family back home to customers interested in visiting ordinary Chinese in their homes and social cultural engagements.

For Drori, Honig, & Gisenberg (2010), the attempt of transnational entrepreneur to translate, innovate and modify structures, at the same time running business in two different cultural paradigms represent entrepreneurial activities and therefore define entrepreneurs as “social actors who enact networks, ideas, information, and practices for the purpose of seeking business opportunities or maintaining businesses within multiple social fields, which in turn forces them to engage in varied strategies of action to promote their entrepreneurial activities and societal changes” (Drori, Honig, & Gisenberg, 2010, p.4).

While most transnational entrepreneurs operate between the host country and the home country, Chen, W.& Tan, (2009) insisted to notice that transnational entrepreneurship may involve immigrants’ boundary-crossing entrepreneurial activities between the host countries, the home country, and/or a third country, augmenting that within the border-crossing business practices, ‘transnational entrepreneurship is a multi-faceted process, in which immigrant entrepreneurs discover and enact business opportunities across national borders’ (Chen, W.& Tan, 2009, p.1080).

It was mentioned by Venkataraman (1997, cited in Wakkee, Groenewegen and Danskin Englis, 2010) that the recognition of opportunity is at the heart of entrepreneurship and in this regard entrepreneurship studies differentiate from other management and strategy

disciplines. Hills (1995) and De Koning (1999) stated that “what most literature in entrepreneurship calls “opportunity recognition” appears to include three distinct processes: (1) sensing or perceiving market needs and/or underemployed resources, (2) recognizing or discovering a “fit” between particular market needs and specified resources, and (3) creating a new “fit” between heretofore separate needs and resources in the form of a business concept” Christensen et al. (1989), Conway and McGuinness (1986) and Singh et al. (1999) claimed that these respective processes represent perception, discovery, and creation and not simply “recognition” (Cited in Ardichvili, Cardozo & Ray, 2000, p.110).

In summary, even though networks have been fundamental in the theorizing on immigrant transnationalism, as well as existing transnational entrepreneurship research, few studies have explored the structure and implications of entrepreneurs’ networks across geographic boundaries. The literature on transnational entrepreneurship has highlighted the impact of globalized network on transnational entrepreneurship and how to capture the structure such networks. From the transnational perspective, it becomes obvious the oversimplified focus in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature on ethnic enclaves. However, ethnic entrepreneurship is no longer bounded in enclaves, spatially or socially defined, rather it has outgrown the theoretical gaze on enclaves and becomes increasingly multifaceted (Fong, Chen, & Luk, 2007, cited in Chen & Tan, 2009). The globalized networks perspective helps to advance the understanding of ethnic entrepreneurship through taking into account immigrants’ on-going linkages to the home country or a global diaspora. Attempt to look into transnational entrepreneurship from the globalized networks point of view will contribute to the entrepreneurship literature in general and the international and ethnic entrepreneurship in particular.

3.2. Networks

In an attempt to explain the activities of transnational entrepreneurs, network connections maybe quite helpful and they could serve as links for structural holes (Drori, Honig and Ginsberg, 2010), thereby making entrepreneurs to be more aware of business opportunities and how to exploit such business opportunities. Drori, Honig and

Ginsberg, (2010 p.14) claimed that “the history of emigration has been that of unequal opportunities whereby increasing integration between two economies results in the development of networks of economic migrants”, thus these network structures serve as the linkage between migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in both origin and destination communities (Massey, 1998, cited in Drori, Honig and Ginsberg, 2010, p.14) and gradually established relationships that results to social capital accessible to them. Among the three main fields for simultaneous network formation mentioned by Drori, Honig and Ginsberg, 2010; network of origin (ethnic and national), network of destination and network of practice, they claimed that network of origin influence the selection of destinations, including adaptation and acclimatization to the new environment in that certain countries and communities favour particular destination. However, Kyle’s (1999, cited in Drori, Honig and Ginsberg, 2010, p.14) study of Ecuador’s Otavalo trade diaspora in the United States contends that, by saying in-group social capital is not sufficient enough for grassroots transnational entrepreneurship.

Nevertheless, in addressing immigration, networks of destinations, according to Drori, Honig and Ginsberg (2010) provide fundamental affinity that supply social capital in the form of affection and trust thus leading to enhancement of business possibilities and cross-national partnership, risks reduction and uncertainty arising from complex and unpredictable global markets, thus within the context of social capital, transnational entrepreneurs may be capable of converting, providing or acquiring different social, economic, tangible or symbolic assets within specific social networks, hence, as a result of membership in dual setting and the scope of transnational entrepreneurship, social capital needed for their business enterprises is provided.

While Network of practice, according to Barley and Kunda (2004:271 cited in Drori, Honig and Ginsberg, 2010. P.16) is advantages provided by ethnic and/or community relations, as members embrace a unique and common language and a shares culture, provide access to essential resources such as jobs, knowledge, and customer, as well as relying upon trust and reputation in their communities, knowledge of the culture, language, and market in the home country, which used to be marginalized or considered irrelevant in the host society (Chen & Tan, 2009) could be competitive advantage in transnational practice.

Entrepreneurs draw on kin and non-kin to different degrees (Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002) and one of the factors five major factors identified Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray (2000) that influences the identification and development of opportunity by entrepreneurs is that of social network. Opportunity identification is associated with the existence and use of an extended social network, which includes the following four elements: weak ties, action set, partnerships, and inner circle and the lack of any of these elements reduces the probability of such success is associated with successful opportunity identification (Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray, 2000)

Granovetter (1973, in Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray, 2000, p.115) also claimed that weak ties, including casual acquaintances, are “bridges” to information sources not necessarily contained within an individual’s strong-tie network, including friends and family, and for the fact that most people have more weak ties than strong ones, casual acquaintance is more likely to provide unique information than are close friends. Indeed, they use weak ties to pass on information they would not get from their close ties (Granovetter, 1973, cited in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002). Social networks are not fixed; they are the social context of businesses and can be activated according to different needs (Granovetter, 1985; Burt, 1992 in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002). “To fit their enterprise needs, entrepreneurs bring both those that are closer and distant to them into their business decisions (Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002) and family members can play a critical part because “new entrepreneurs often have families that were in business (Greve & Salaff, 2002; Min, 1988; Wong, 1988; Zimmer & Aldrich, 1986 cited in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002, p.4).

Talking about the structure of social networks, Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping (2002) declared that a great majority of social relations include more than one type of activity and each tie has other ties, which can be considered a separate network, thus, a relation with two or more types of ties is called a multiplex network. Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping (2002) claimed that multiplex network is particularly useful in starting a business as they bring more people into the helping relationship, hence those they know in one context maybe of a help in another, and friends of friends as well, may cooperate in starting a business. Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping (2002) also mentioned that multiplex network could be seen through the lens of indirect ties. Lai, et al.’s (1998, cited in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002, p.4) view is that links to others reflects one’s position in a network thereby creating status and credibility. While

Putnam (1993, cited in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002, p.4) is saying that “associations of individuals in the community further generate trust”, Bourdieu (1986, cited in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002, p.4) is suggesting that in a more general note, “one’s social standing sends signals to others of the same background, providing confidence”. Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping (2002) are therefore saying that those that are already in established networks get easier access to others that recognize these networks, thereby being in good position to set up a business, while on the other hand those that are outside known social networks have more trouble establishing a business.

4. Methodology

To develop an analytical framework for the study network of transnational entrepreneurship, I use the method of auto ethnography to highlight my experiences as Master Student within this framework. “Autoethnography is a genre of writing and research that connects the personal to the cultural, placing the self within a social context (Reed-Danahay, 1997, cited in Holt, 2003) “These texts are usually written in the first person and feature dialogue, emotion, and self-consciousness as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, cited in Holt, 2003). My reflection is based on my personal experiences supported by existing viewpoint suggested in the literature review. Since is subjective to my personal experiences, this analysis has been attempting to identify different aspects of transnational entrepreneurial networking from my point of view and my personal experience as entrepreneurial start-up, as well as my experience as immigrant entrepreneur and then connect it with the case study used in the literature review. This is a way of reflecting on what I have achieved and people I have met in the course of my trajectory as an immigrant, international student, as well as transnational entrepreneur.

5. Analysis

Although there are so many successful transnational entrepreneurs without degree qualification, the continuous growth of world population and the expected increase in daily consumption are expected to create major changes in how the market will operate in the future. I believe therefore that there is a growing linkage between the practice of transnationalism and entrepreneurship.

As stated by Wakkee, Groenewegen & Danskin Englis, (2010), ‘transnational entrepreneurs come to be embedded in existing networks operating their home, host or even global market’. In support of this claim, I would say that I was born in Africa, I’m married with a Spaniard and I have Spanish nationality, and currently we live in Denmark. This additional nationality and added cultures are another development in my transnational configuration of entrepreneur. I left my country in 1998 and I have been visiting Nigeria for personal and professional reason. All the knowledge, experiences and connections from the host countries I lived, have gradually developed my abilities to accommodate to the local circumstances: new languages, new habits, new legal system, etc. Despite the fact that I currently live in Denmark, my companies are based in Spain and Nigeria, and I’m able to ship and export cargo from different countries of the EU with our modest SME. My embedment in the host societies has been a combination of necessity and genuine interest to know more about the countries hosting me. To be able to accommodate was always a permanent challenge, sometimes was not very pleasant or difficult. But with the support of my loved ones, I was able to get new skills and even train some newcomers how to adapt. These learning exercises keep me alive and attentive to overcome challenges.

My immediate challenge when entering international market which is already largely supplied by national and international suppliers are what type of business opportunities available, how to get a product distributed and how to get a new product introduced, taking into account that consumers are generally very particular in taste and brand preferences. However, I try to leverage these challenges through my social and professional networks.

Besides, to develop analytical framework of the study of transnational entrepreneurship requires looking into cumulative history of action and interaction just the as case study described by Drori, Honig and Ginsberg, 2010. In my opinion, such ventures utilize truly global connections throughout loosely defined networks. Observing my own networking experience based on this analytical framework reflects to what Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray (2000, p.106) asserts that while elements of opportunities may be “recognized,” ‘opportunities are made, not found’. Although through family network, we were able to identify a business opportunity (export of fish feed in West Africa) during my Master Programme in Entrepreneurship at Lund University, however, it was my accurate research during approximately 9 months that allowed us to present a good business proposal to one of the leading exporting companies in the fish feed production business. The company was able to appreciate the capacity of our network, the high level of knowledge of the product and the market. Additionally, our business estimations transformed an opportunity identified into a business plan to represent their products in Nigeria. The final deal was set in the south of France, and I went with my brother and my husband to give me moral support, and to add their comments if necessary, because they are directly involved in the business. I was very prepared and everything went fine. I felt very happy when the agreement was reached. It was long work but it is paying off.

There is no doubt that the ability to maintain contact with home is part of what marks transnational entrepreneurship, though the novel thing is that technology intensify connection and increase the frequency of exchanges that enable them to support development at home. The globalization phenomenon has triggered and accelerated the population movement and makes it more volatile and many times not permanent because people come and go to the home country. Nowadays people uses internet, telephone, Skype, airplanes, taxis, fax machines. And simple electronic mail facilitates contacts and exchange among common people on a large scale, what could not have been done even 20 years earlier. This reflects to what Chen, W. & Tan, 2009, p.1080 suggest that ‘transnational entrepreneurship is a multi-faceted process, in which immigrant entrepreneurs discover and enact business opportunities across national borders’. For instance, I have companies in Nigeria and Spain, I’m based in Denmark, I studied in England and Sweden and one of my main partners now works in Afghanistan

and we have regular Skype meetings discussing about business. We represent a French/Danish company in Nigeria and West Africa.

While it cannot be proved that there is a 'typical' pattern to these transnational entrepreneurial activities, my personal story as an African immigrant earning a living through different entrepreneurial activities, also captured these complex networks. My present line of business consists of exporting high quality of aquaculture products currently from France to sell to Nigerian importers of such products. To deal with the problems of doing business and finding my way in different countries, cities, languages and cultures, I try to take advantage of my family members and my membership in the Ethnic Association and Virtual Organizations, 'characterized by digitized social interaction and production processes within the organization and in relation to external ties' (Wakkee, Groenewegen, & Danskin Englis, 2010, p.78).

I would say that Africans living abroad in general draw on wide-ranging 'ties' which facilitate their economic and social well-being outside of their homes. But these ties, as Giles Mohan (2002) argued, could also extend back home, through individual connections to family, formal inter-community linkages, or globally networked co-operation between peoples of the same nation and may also be used simultaneously, with an individual sending remittances home or attending cultural events. Hence, such ties and affinities are multi-scaled and may be used flexibly for different developmental activities (Giles Mohan, 2010). Rosenblatt, de Mik, Anderson, & Johnson (1985) also argued that family members can play a critical part. As they entertain, plan for, and actually set up a firm, entrepreneurs call on their family and others in their networks for different kinds of help and support (In Salaff, Greve, Wong & Xu Li Ping, 2002). This has been the basis for initiating my current start-up venture.

My senior brother was the first person who identified a business opportunity, and I developed all the research and the business plan. Both of us were spending much of our time in Europe (Netherlands and Denmark respectively). Like many virtual organizations, we were communicating extensively by mail and telephone to share information and coordinate regular export tasks. But the interest in the new project and the faith and need for being present in Nigeria to kick off forced my brother to spend more time in the country and develop a distribution network, composed mostly with younger relatives and close friends to believe in the new initiative. Unfortunately my

senior brother and one of the fundamental pillars of the business in Nigeria passed away recently and this unfortunate event apart from affecting me personally had very important implications with the course of events in the country. All administrative, organizational and legal arrangements needed to be re-organized, he was not only my brother, and rather he was also one of the business partners and one of the leaders in the family. I'm still recovering myself from this family loss and another, and I needed to find the strength to deal with the business problems. It is a moral set back but I managed to re-organize the companies and we continue.

Despite the fact that I recognize the extreme difficulty and riskiness of doing business in most Africa countries due to political instability, corruption, institutional weaknesses, poor infrastructure, national or local strikes, fuel scarcity crisis, or security curfews, to mention but few, however optimistic, I intend to develop entrepreneurial business with Nigeria because it is demographically and socially an excellent entry point into Africa due to its large population, burgeoning economy and cultural diversity and I have personal connections there. Besides, it is a way of creating job opportunities for those at home and responding to the need for farming. I already know importers and network of farmers eager to buy other aquaculture accessories. I am being realistic of what Arthur (2000, pg.129 in Giles Mohan, 2002) claimed that 'Most African immigrants structure their economic decision-making by focusing on the long-term economic potential of their homelands and that participation in the economic development of their countries of origin is paramount'

Through my network of friends and virtual network, I also plan to extend same line of business in other African countries, where I have other connections. However, "internationalization of new ventures 'does not appear to be a simple matter of applying established strategies and procedures developed for a domestic arena' rather 'successful internationalization happens to be accompanied by changes in venture strategy'" (McDougal and Oviatt, 1996:36, cited in Wakkee, Groenewegen and Danskin Englis, 2010). I do not discard that.

My links with home are maintained through circular trips, either for business or to visit relations. Within this circumstances market signals, commercial articles, money and

goodwill are continuously passing through transnational entrepreneur and benefiting members both home and abroad.

In line of what Wakkee, Groenewegen & Danskin Englis, (2010) say that ‘actions of transnational entrepreneurs are highly influenced by the social and business networks, in which they are embedded, political and economic structures and dominant organization and practices in the home and host countries’, I’m belonging to the Igbo tribe in Nigeria, and we are famous for being business oriented people, hard-working, and with large number of entrepreneurs in every family. My traditional family business was dealing in car spare parts and the business entrepreneurship was embedded in some of the family members. This is my family background; additionally my husband is a free-lance consultant, providing services for different companies and agencies in different countries. So the interest for business, customers, new ideas, research training, etc., is part of my/our DNA and I will always be involved with new business ideas.

In support of the claim by Drori, Honig and Ginsberg (2010) that within the context of social capital, transnational entrepreneurs may be capable of converting, providing or acquiring different social, economic, tangible or symbolic assets within specific social networks, I would say that in my business case I represent two symbolic assets, I’m the educated responsible Nigerian able to conduct business with European standards for my European partners or customers and on the other hand, I can easily relate to other family members and proxy related people developing all the trust and complicity necessary to start up and develop a business in the African set up.

Since networks have been considered the link that connects the supply side and the demand side, the structure and resources, as well as opportunity and individual characteristics at different levels (Chen and Tan, 2009), it make it easier for entrepreneurs to access instrumental resources like information, capital, market, technology, and expressive resources such as emotional support (Davidson & Honig, 2003; Light & Gold, 2000 in Chen and Tan, 2009, p.1081). So I definitely agree with Aldrich’s (1999, cited in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002, p.3) comment that “social networks make social capital available to help newcomers start businesses and by social capital, Coleman (1988, cited in Salaff, Greve, Wong, & Xu Li Ping, 2002, p.3) stated that it is the interpersonal resources people have that help them achieve their

goals and that many forms of relations give rise to social capital. Being an immigrant, I have learnt that participation in pre-existing ethnic or non-ethnic economy can influence the composition of networks and can have positive economic consequences, including a greater opportunity for self-employment.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to build on observation of theoretical and methodological engagement with social network analysis in transnational entrepreneurship research. As Chen Tan (2009) pointed out, few studies have systematically examined the structure and implications of entrepreneurs' networks across geographic boundaries despite the fact that networks have been fundamental in the theorizing on immigrant transnationalism as well as existing transnational entrepreneurship research. Addressing conceptual and methodological issues about transnational entrepreneurship research, this paper discusses how to capture that structure through global production of network. Based on the theories, I also reflect on my personal experience as immigrant start-up and as an international entrepreneur. As Wakkee, Groenewegen, & Danskin Englis, (2010) claimed, to develop a theoretical framework for the study of transnational entrepreneurship requires the use of analytical tool capable of determining dual culture as well as the use of literature in the field of social network theory and entrepreneurship.

This paper is directed on the understanding of how transnational entrepreneurs come to be embedded in existing networks operating their home, host or even global market. Through a globalized networks approach, further research may be able to respond to the 'more challenging questions of what kind of networks under what circumstances and in which ways bring out what returns in the context of transnationalism and how entrepreneurs cultivate such networks. Such an approach will contribute to both research on transnational entrepreneurship and the larger entrepreneurship literature' (Chen Justin Tan, 2009). In general, academic research in the area of team entrepreneurship is lacking. Hopefully further research may contribute a meaningful part to globalized networks that focuses on entrepreneurs' connections in two or more markets.

This analysis has limitations in that the attempt to identify different aspects of transnational entrepreneurial networking from my point of view is subjective to my personal experiences, and thus may overestimate the impact of social network on transnational entrepreneurship. The discussion about the impact of network on transnational entrepreneurship needs to incorporate comparative data on the process of network formation to be able to demonstrate the extent to which group variations in transnational entrepreneurship come from the pattern, wider scope, and diversity of globalized networks.

7. REFERENCES

- Ardichvili, A., Cardozo, R. & Ray, S., 2000. A theory of entrepreneurial opportunity identification and development. *Journal of Business Venturing* 18 (2003) 105–123
- Chen, W., & Tan, J., 2009. Understanding Transnational Entrepreneurship Through a Network Lens: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 1042-2587, Baylor University.
- Drori, I., Honig, B. & Ginsberg, A., 2010. Researching Transnational Entrepreneurship: An Approach Based on the Theory of Practice. In: Honig, B., Drori, I. & Carmichel, B. (Eds.), *Transnational and Immigrant Entrepreneurship in a Globalized World*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto Buffalo London.
- Kerr, G. & Schlosser, F.K., 2010. The progression of International Students into Transnational Entrepreneurs: A conceptual Framework. In: Honig, B., Drori, I. & Carmichel, B. (Eds.), *Transnational and Immigrant Entrepreneurship in a Globalized World*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto Buffalo London.
- Hisrich, R.D., Peters, M.P., Shepherd, D.A., 2010. *Entrepreneurship Eighth Edition*. McGraw –Hills/Irvin: New York.

Holt, N.L., 2003, 2(1). Representation, Legitimation, and Autoethnography: An Autoethnographic Writing Story. International Institute for Qualitative Methodology. University of Alberta.

Lucas, R., 2001. Diaspora and Development: Highly Skilled Migrants from East Asia. Boston University. Report prepared for the World Bank.

Mohan, G., 2002. Diaspora and development. In: Jenny Robinson (Ed.), Development and Displacement, U312 International Development: Challenges for a world in Transition, Milton Keynes, The Open University in association with Oxford University Press

Oliver, A.L. & Montgomery, K., 2010. Transnational Scientific Entrepreneurship: A Conceptual Framework. In: Honig, B., Drori, I. & Carmichel, B. (Eds.), Transnational and Immigrant Entrepreneurship in a Globalized World. University of Toronto Press: Toronto Buffalo London.

Read, S., Sarasvathy, S., Dew, N., Wiltbank, R. & Ohlsson, A.V., 2011. Effectual Entrepreneurship. Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group. London and New York

Salaff, J., Greve, A., Wong, S. & Xu Li Ping, L., 2002. Ethnic Entrepreneurship, Social Networks and the Enclave. In: Yeoh, B., Kiong, T.C. & Walter Charney, M. (Eds.), Approaching Transnationalism: Transnational Societies, Multicultural Contacts, and Imaginings of Home, CHAPTER 4, p. 61-82. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston, 2003

Wakkee, I., Groenewegen, P. & Danskin Englis, P., 2010. Building Effective Networks: Network Strategy & Emerging Virtual Organization. In: Honig, B., Drori, I. & Carmichel, B. (Eds.), Transnational and Immigrant Entrepreneurship in a Globalized World. University of Toronto Press: Toronto Buffalo London.