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Family across borders social capital and diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness

Family across
borders

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to study the way in which family ties influence the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner.

Design/methodology/approach – In-depth interviews were carried out with 15 Cypriot family business owners hosted in various countries. The paper draws on social capital theory and uses an abductive analytical approach.

Findings – The findings of this paper illustrate that family ties coming from the family across borders play a significant role for diaspora family business owners' entrepreneurial preparedness. Hidden values deriving from the interpersonal relationships within the family across borders drive the diaspora family business owners to learn upon self-reflection and become entrepreneurially prepared, led by both urgency and esteem.

Practical implications – This study provides practical implications for the entrepreneurial preparedness of diaspora family business owners and those who wish to become family business owners in a diaspora context.

Originality/value – This study contributes theoretically through the conceptualization of “family across borders social capital” and “diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness”. It also contributes empirically to the fields of diaspora family business, entrepreneurial learning and diaspora entrepreneurship through new knowledge regarding the role of family across borders social capital in the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner.

Keywords Family business, Family social capital, Diaspora entrepreneurial learning and preparedness, Diaspora entrepreneurship

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Diaspora entrepreneurship is fostered by the global phenomenon of migration (Elo and Dana, 2019; Singh and Koiri, 2018). As diasporas move around the world, they establish and



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sustain family ties in host countries, alongside maintaining contacts with family members in other countries and their home country (Evansluong *et al.*, 2019; Ojo, 2017). The study adopts the term that scholars refer to regarding such ties and contacts, which is “family across borders” (Evansluong *et al.*, 2019). “Diasporas” (often referred to as migrants), are the people who live outside their home country and “whose identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their migration experience and background” (McAuliffe and Ruhs, 2017, p. 305). Diasporas are dispersed in a multitude of countries (Féron and Lefort, 2019) and maintain a psychic link with their homeland (Gillespie *et al.*, 1999; Riddle *et al.*, 2008). While they establish contacts in the host countries as part of their migration experience, they keep drawing on resources and advice from friends, relatives, and ethnic/cultural communities abroad (Dahles, 2010; Elo and Dana, 2019), and more importantly from family in their home country (Evansluong and Ramirez Pasillas, 2019). According to research (Berry, 1997), when the immigrant maintains interaction with both the host and their home country, integration is achieved through formed “linkages”, combining dedication to the home country and commitment to the host country (Epstein and Heizler, 2016, p. 15). These linkages are important for the creation of diaspora networks, where members can obtain access to knowledge and trade channels in both host and home markets, financial resources, and opportunities to create and enhance business partnerships with other network members (Epstein and Heizler, 2016; Thompson, 2014).

Diaspora entrepreneurship literature posits three key reasons that drive individual diasporas to retain connections and ties with homeland actors. First, diaspora family business owners foster business development (Elo *et al.*, 2018) that links home and host contexts (Discua Cruz *et al.*, 2013; Drori *et al.*, 2009; Elo and Volovelsky, 2017; Emontspool and Servais, 2017; Jones and Coviello, 2005; Terjesen and Elam, 2009; Turunen and Nummela, 2017). Second, diasporas retain ties with their home country due to a “sense of obligation” (Lee, 2009, p. 17), reciprocity (Evansluong and Ramirez-Pasillas, 2019), and altruistic motivation (Gillespie *et al.*, 1999; Nielsen and Riddle, 2009). Third, the connections with the home country enable diaspora family business owners to mobilize their ties with extended family members to benefit from cheap or unpaid family labor (Dahles, 2013). Literature also provides insights on the way diaspora family business owners leverage and mobilize their networks to create new ventures and support existing businesses (Bagwell, 2018). Specifically, with communication technology advancements and the cheaper cost of travel, links with home and host countries have become more easily maintained than in the past (Vertovec, 2004). As a result, there is an increase of diaspora business owners who are economically and socially embedded in both countries (Bagwell, 2018). Due to such economic and social embeddedness, many diaspora entrepreneurs utilize their links and knowledge of systems and markets from both worlds to develop and support their business in some shape or form (Chen and Tan, 2009; Wang and Liu, 2015).

The diasporas’ family in the host and home country provides financial capital (Ram *et al.*, 2008), voluntary or cheap labor (Ram *et al.*, 2008; Sanders and Nee, 1996), and other forms of support, which are instrumental in the venture creation/development process. At the nexus of host and home country, influences stemming from family ties take diverse forms, such as family-across-borders influences on opportunity development (Bagwell, 2018; Chen and Tan, 2009; Evansluong and Ramirez Pasillas, 2019; Shneikat and Alrawadieh, 2019), social capital (Bizri, 2017; Galbraith *et al.*, 2007; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Ram *et al.*, 2008; Vershinina *et al.*, 2011), symbolic capital (Rodgers *et al.*, 2019), cultural capital (Yeröz, 2019), and religious belongingness (Dana, 2010; Elo and Volovelsky, 2017). Besides this, the family acts as an institutional provider of trust, collective action and the sense of community; hence, they are recognized for fostering entrepreneurial learning, which is essential in the

venture creation/development process (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Jack and Anderson, 2002).

Much knowledge on diaspora entrepreneurship remains largely focused on venture creation and development opportunities from historical, geographical, institutional, spatial, and social contexts (Pasillas *et al.*, 2017), as well as on how the diaspora entrepreneurs shape such contexts to establish and keep their businesses (Elo *et al.*, 2018; Johannisson *et al.*, 2002; Vershinina *et al.*, 2019). Hence, the need for entrepreneurial preparedness in relation to diaspora entrepreneurship is indispensable, since cumulative learning through doing can lead to knowledge acquisition and social capital accumulation, which may be critical to the success of the diaspora entrepreneur. Therefore, considering that migration is continuously increasing (Simba and Ojong, 2018), it is imperative to understand the network dynamics of diasporas (Elo, 2014). Moreover, entrepreneurship scholars perceive entrepreneurial preparedness as a foundation for entrepreneurialism, from where the individual draws resources such as entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to become entrepreneurial (Coduras *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the role of family ties and influences from the family across borders (Bird and Wennberg, 2016) toward diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness is considered, because little is known about the way these networks and family ties foster preparedness in a diaspora context, which is needed for the entrepreneur to embark on the creation or development of new businesses in host countries and to become entrepreneurially prepared to do so. In responding to this gap, the study draws on the concept of entrepreneurial preparedness, which is found within the entrepreneurial learning literature and refers to “a cumulative learning process”, emphasizing the developmental nature of the entrepreneur (Cope, 2005, p. 378).

Besides this, essential entrepreneurial resources such as human, social and financial capital, which become available to individuals or groups as a result of family affiliation (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Jack and Anderson, 2002; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), have not yet been linked to entrepreneurial preparedness. This is particularly so in the case of diaspora family businesses (Cheung and Gomez, 2012), where there is a paucity of research. Thus, understanding the influential role that family relationships across borders have on diaspora entrepreneurship can help broaden the existing knowledge on diaspora entrepreneurial learning and diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness. It is, therefore, the aim of this paper is to investigate the way that the family across borders influences diaspora family business owners to learn and therefore prepare for entrepreneurship. The research question is set as follows:

RQ1. How do family ties support/trigger entrepreneurial learning accumulation as family business owners embark on entrepreneurial actions in the host country?

The influence of the family, and specifically the family across borders, can inevitably lead to theoretical insights from family social capital (Coleman, 1994) in a diaspora context. This is an emergent concept in the present study, which we term “family across borders social capital”; it includes the bridging and bonding ties between family business entrepreneurs and their family in host and home countries. Besides the theoretical extension of family social capital (Salvato and Melin, 2008), the present study contributes empirically to the fields of diaspora family business, entrepreneurial learning, and diaspora entrepreneurship by highlighting the role of family across borders social capital in the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner.

The paper is structured as follows. First of all, a review of extant literature on family across borders entrepreneurship, diaspora entrepreneurial learning, and diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness is offered, followed by a rationale on the use of abductive

reasoning as methodology and a justification of the qualitative methods employed. Next, an analysis of data collected from the participants is made, which is followed by a graphical representation of the findings. This is then succeeded by a discussion of the findings, before the paper concludes with the key contributions stemming from this work, future research directions, and the limitations of this study.

2. Literature review

2.1 “Family across borders” entrepreneurship

Over recent decades, and due to increased migration flows (Dahles, 2010; Habti and Elo, 2018; Volery, 2007), diaspora family businesses and diaspora entrepreneurs have increased their salience and visibility (Dahles, 2013; Volery, 2007), while several factors have been noticed to influence the establishment of diaspora family businesses. These are traced to, among other causes, the multifaceted and variable profile of the diaspora family business owner, such as the attributes that determine who they are, e.g. their education, economic situation, cultural and religious idiosyncrasies (Volery, 2007), influences coming from their home country (Dahles, 2013; Volery, 2007), and their family considerations (Habti and Elo, 2018). For example, diaspora family business owners capitalize on their diasporic and transnational resources in terms of language skills, cultural knowledge, business connections and management abilities (Habti and Elo, 2018), along with the active support of their family, to pursue their entrepreneurial endeavors (Habti and Elo, 2018). After all, it is the family that provides backing and support for venture development (Astrachan *et al.*, 2003) and plays a significant role in developing or hindering entrepreneurial behaviors (Bettinelli *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is often the case that family businesses are entrepreneurial ventures, since entrepreneurial behaviors of individuals are rooted in the family context (Randerson *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, family business owners are tied to entrepreneurial actions (Chandler *et al.*, 2009; Chen and Tan, 2009) that involve the exploitation of opportunities (Jones and Coviello, 2005), through which knowledge is gained and new behaviors are developed and understood. Such entrepreneurial behaviors develop family entrepreneurship (Heck *et al.*, 2008), where family, family business and entrepreneurship overlap (Randerson *et al.*, 2015). As for the diaspora family business owner: in this process, family configurations and ties are created with individuals in their home and host countries, termed as “family across borders” (Evansluong *et al.*, 2019), where “family across borders” entrepreneurship can emerge. Subsequently, the overlap between family, family business, and entrepreneurship can enhance the development of diaspora entrepreneurial learning, which underpins entrepreneurial preparedness (Cope, 2005; Politis, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2015) for the diaspora family business owner.

2.2 Diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness

Entrepreneurial preparedness falls within the broader entrepreneurial learning literature (Cope, 2005; Politis, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2015), emerging from both the entrepreneur’s hands-on experiences and ongoing critical reflection on those experiences (Cope, 2005; Kayne and Altman, 2005; Politis, 2005). Since the desirable characteristics of entrepreneurial preparedness point to both a dynamic and an ongoing learning process, these also evaluate the structures and context that shape the individual and the business (Cope, 2005; Politis, 2005). Entrepreneurial learning, at the same time, is seen as a cumulative process of events, adding to the individual’s prior knowledge, and is therefore central to the very nature of entrepreneurial preparedness (Cope, 2005). Consequently, experiential learning is an important mechanism in assisting business owners to become entrepreneurially prepared, as it involves a combination of experiences, reflection on the experiences, and, thereon, transformation of those experiences

into knowledge (Cope, 2005; Hadjielias *et al.*, 2013; Kolb, 1984). While entrepreneurial preparedness is catered for by experiential learning, and has preparatory effects in regard to individuals' entrepreneurial careers (Ahsan *et al.*, 2018; Harvey and Evans, 1995; Starr and Fondas, 1992), prior accumulated knowledge, skills, and experiences cumulatively shape the diaspora individuals' attitudes, beliefs and abilities. While such attributes are developed from moving from one country to another (Thai and Turkina, 2013), diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness is not always inherent in experiential learning, as diasporas do not choose what to experience to maximize their preparedness; this rather comes spontaneously from the "family across borders", while being in a diaspora context.

Individuals become prepared for future entrepreneurial endeavors (Scherer *et al.*, 1989) in an implicit, unplanned and rather spontaneous manner, as this type of learning occurs through close contact with people, observation of them, and imitating behaviors of role models (Bandura and Walters, 1977; Williams, 2001). As such, diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness is affected by place, since human behavior is central to learning, as it is a function affected by personal and environmental factors, where the person influences the environment in which learning takes place (Kreitner and Luthans, 1984). Furthermore, the entrepreneur's learning is influenced by past experiences, which are interwoven in the socialization process (Jones and Tullous, 2002), such as the social groups the entrepreneur relates to and the situation the entrepreneur has to confront (Cope, 2005). For the diaspora family business owner, these social groups are part of their family across borders (Evansluong and Ramirez Pasillas, 2019), such as organized bodies within diaspora communities, the family unit in the host and home country, as well as groups of individuals beyond the diaspora community. Moreover, learning occurs from moments (Rae, 2013), a series of events (Morris *et al.*, 2012), and especially critical events (Cope, 2003) that trigger the entrepreneurial learning process, while transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) focuses on the capacity of learning to trigger and change the self-awareness of entrepreneurs (Cope, 2003; Cope, 2005). The first reason why this occurs is because within an organization setting, such as in a diaspora family business context, emotional dimensions pervade human behavior and interaction (Brundin and Härtel, 2014), due to emotional as well as rational expectations (Hollander and Elman, 1988; Kepner, 1983; Whiteside and Brown, 1991). The second reason is because success or failure of the family business has an impact on the family as a unit (Randerson *et al.*, 2015). Further to the above exemplifications of learning, entrepreneurial preparedness also involves learning accumulated from the pursuit of an entrepreneurial goal, and is perceived as purposeful learning or goal-orientated learning (Scherer *et al.*, 1989). For the entrepreneur, this form of learning would refer to the process undertaken to reach a goal and is often illustrated by efforts and actions to build up knowledge to be entrepreneurially prepared (Festervand and Forrest, 1993; Seijts and Latham, 2005). Yet, entrepreneurial preparedness has not been sufficiently addressed in relation to diaspora entrepreneurs and business families in diaspora.

2.3 Diaspora entrepreneurship, family across borders and social capital

While the diaspora concept is a global phenomenon, giving place to diaspora entrepreneurship, there is no set definition yet of what it is, nor has a theory been developed to articulate it (Volery, 2007). However, according to scholars, it is referred to as ethnic entrepreneurship and as "a set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing common national background or migration experiences" (Waldinger *et al.*, 1990, p. 3). In addition, it is described as the business activities, commenced by foreign migrants, which aim to cover the socio-economic needs of a variety of ethnicities and socio-cultural immigrant groups (Rath, 2010). Moreover, some contemporary theories are

dominant in this field, providing a framework for understanding diaspora entrepreneurship by covering two major strands, namely the culturalist and the structuralist approaches (Volery, 2007). While the culturalist approach considers that diaspora entrepreneurship is driven by socio-cultural values, the structuralist approach suggests that external factors, such as discrimination or barriers to enter the labor market, force the diaspora individual toward self-employment (Volery, 2007).

While the significance that socio-cultural values and external factors have on the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner is recognized, empirical research suggests that social networks (Basu, 1998; Light *et al.*, 1993; Phan and Luk, 2008; Salaff, 2005) are also important pull or push factors of diaspora entrepreneurship (Ilhan-Nas *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, various studies have examined diasporas' identity and belongingness, as well as the multiple networks in which they are embedded (Ionescu, 2006, p. 10), highlighting the global character of diasporas' connections and the linkages that diasporas establish and keep with people in both their home and host countries (Ionescu, 2006). Besides the increasing relevance that social capital has in economic, social, and migration policies, defined as "networks together with shared norms, values, and understanding that facilitate cooperation within and among groups" (Healy and Côté, 2001, p. 41), the importance of the family across borders is also highlighted (Evansluong and Ramirez Pasillas, 2019) with respect to diaspora entrepreneurship and the process by which the diaspora entrepreneur becomes entrepreneurially prepared in a diaspora context. Moreover, social capital literature suggests that individuals who connect with others through common values and attachments as members of a network and community (ethnic, religious, occupational, etc.) (Keles, 2015) allow for the exploitation of resources, which can lead to multiple benefits and improvements in their living conditions (Bourdieu, 1986; Cheung and Gomez, 2012; Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1985; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Salvato and Melin, 2008). In other words, diaspora individuals, as members of ethnic communities (Keles, 2015), have access to and take advantage of social capital anchored in their host countries, since it is "the capacity of individuals to command scarce resources by virtue of their membership in networks or broader social structures" (Portes, 1995, p. 12). Considering the latter as well as Waldinger *et al.*'s (1990, p. 3) definition on diaspora entrepreneurship, the structural dimension of social capital is underlined (Granovetter, 1992), where a pattern of connections between actors creates social interaction ties and network configurations (Salvato and Melin, 2008). Therefore, the diaspora family business owners take advantage of a broad span of network influences (Elo and Dana, 2019; Santamaria-Alvarez and Ś liwa, 2016), to the extent that all actors within the network have relationships with one another (Coleman, 1988). By placing the diaspora family business owner in the center of the creation of diaspora network configurations, relational dimensions of family social capital (Salvato and Melin, 2008) become apparent, which are interweaved with the cognitive dimension of family social capital (Chou, 2006; Grootaert *et al.*, 2004; Krishna and Shrader, 1999; Uphoff, 2000). This is because the resources attainable through the structural dimension are a product of social relationships, which involve interrelations between relational and cognitive family social capital, such as trust, mutual confidence (Riddle *et al.*, 2008), norms, obligations, expectations, reputation, identity, identification (Orr, 1990), shared language, values, attitudes and beliefs (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). According to Coleman (1988, p. 110), family social capital "is the relations between children and parents and, when families include other members, relationships with them as well". Therefore, family social capital in a diaspora involves relationships that develop networks that go beyond the relations that children have with their parents and extends to the family across borders. Among diasporas, "the family remains a central and sacred focus"

(Georgiou, 2001, p. 317), and they approach it as “an extension of themselves” (Georgiou, 2001, p. 318). Therefore, the interactive, dynamic and trusting relationships amongst the family across borders develop family social capital, which becomes available only to family members across borders (Salvato and Melin, 2008). Besides this, the diaspora family business owner benefits from the cognitive dimension of family social capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), where shared systems of meanings, common language and beliefs are shared with the home country, but also with family as well as kith and kin there (Mustafa and Chen, 2010). Moreover, network ties and configurations create different structural dimensions of family social capital (Salvato and Melin, 2008), while the relational dimension of family social capital from the family across borders is underpinned by trust, mutual confidence (Riddle *et al.*, 2008), norms, obligations, expectations, reputation, identity, and identification (Orr, 1990). The social capital of the family across borders can act as a bridge for the diaspora family business owner who, as a member of the family across borders, is placed between host and home country (Chang *et al.*, 2007).

The two main types of social capital, namely “bonding” and “bridging” (Salvato and Melin, 2008), can relate to the diaspora entrepreneur’s family ties in host and home countries (Ionescu, 2006). After all, diaspora networks involving family and kin are those which are the most easily accessible for diaspora entrepreneurs (Mustafa and Chen, 2010). In relation to bonding social capital, previous work highlights that cultural, national, and religious connections can keep diaspora entrepreneurs in contact with one another both within and across countries (Elo and Dana, 2019; Light *et al.*, 1993). Also referred to as “linking” social capital (Woolcock, 1998), bridging social capital examines the capacity of social capital in establishing and maintaining networks based on trust and reciprocity (Reynolds, 2006). Networks based on trust allow diasporas to access different formal or informal resources in the host country (Reynolds, 2006). Bridging social capital in a diaspora setting lies in the fact that inherent social gaps, information asymmetries, and institutional differences (Harima, 2015) between home country norms and the values with those of the host country need to be bridged to create links with other individuals outside of the diaspora community (Ionescu, 2006). Such linkages allow the transfer of information across broader networks. In the present study, we draw on social capital, alongside its bonding and bridging dimensions, to examine the way family ties influence the entrepreneurial preparedness of family business owners.

The point of departure for this research lies in the existing body of literature on diaspora entrepreneurship, which provides fruitful information on migrants who engage in business while influenced by place and space (Dana, 2007; Elo and Vemuri, 2016; Galbraith *et al.*, 2007; Light *et al.*, 1993; Munkejord, 2017; Ramadani *et al.*, 2019; Urbano *et al.*, 2011). Because migrants move from one country to another, they create family configurations and ties with other individuals in both the home country and the host country (Evansluong and Ramírez Pasillas, 2019). However, the influence that these configurations and ties have on the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora individual remains unexplored (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003). Because the social capital of the family across borders is a valuable resource, it enables the diaspora family business owner to draw further resources from it (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1985; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). This paper draws attention to these networks, placing the family across borders as a source of influence on the diaspora family business owners’ entrepreneurial preparedness, which in turn raises the importance of family across borders social capital. As far as it can be observed, there is a dearth of research on how the family across borders influences the diaspora family business owner’s entrepreneurial preparedness; as such, it is this process of entrepreneurial pursuit that the paper seeks to contribute to.

3. Methodology

To examine the social phenomenon of entrepreneurial preparedness (Coduras *et al.*, 2016; Cope, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2015), this paper relies on the subjective and context-specific viewpoints of the participants in this study. Meanings, views and beliefs, and insights on learning processes (Labuschagne, 2003; Lambert and Loiselle, 2007) can best be examined through qualitative research and hence through an in-depth interview approach, allowing for in-depth analysis and rigorous understandings of these human facets. To explore and help understand in detail the phenomenon under study, qualitative data was collected by deploying face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Ryan *et al.*, 2009) with fifteen Cypriot diaspora entrepreneurs who had established successful ventures abroad. The number of interviews, lasting on average 50 minutes each, was determined by theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 61), and an abductive logic was used to analyse data (Gioia *et al.*, 2013). The interviews were carried out in Cyprus and specific host countries (e.g. the USA, the UK, Australia and South Africa).

The data have been interpreted by applying the interpretative approach, as such an approach encompasses social theories and perspectives that embrace the actors' views of their socially constructed reality or are made meaningful through their understandings of events (Putnam and Banghart, 2017). To offer insights into how the Cypriot diaspora family business owners make sense of the phenomenon under study, their lived experiences are presented in the form of quotes, linking in this way data to theory.

3.1 *The cypriot diaspora*

The Cypriot diaspora family business owners were chosen to be examined for a number of reasons. First, Cypriot diasporas represent a significant segment of the migration of people from the under-developed countries of the Commonwealth taking place after 1945 (Krausz, 1971). Prior to the country's independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Cyprus was administered sequentially from 1878 to 1914 as a British protectorate, as a unilaterally annexed military occupation from 1914 to 1925 and as a Crown colony from 1925 to 1960. Therefore, Cyprus has a long history of migrant populations. Second, nearly half the population of Cyprus is located in host countries. According to the Cyprus Statistical Services, the population of Cyprus in 2018 was estimated at 876,000, while over 300,000 Greek Cypriots are based in the diaspora. Third, while many Cypriots are scattered in the diaspora, they maintain inseparable and strong ties with their home country (MOF, 2019). Fourth, the Cyprus Government ensures continuous and close contact with the diaspora Cypriot communities, contributing to the preservation of the Cypriot identity, traditions, and culture in the diaspora, while also helping diaspora Cypriots maintain their connection to their home country. Fifth, the organized diaspora Cypriot bodies undertake actions formulated in a common orientation and cooperation framework of the home country's policy, such as to make an end to the illegal Turkish occupation of the island, as well as matters of youth, entrepreneurship, education among the diaspora communities, and economic, financial, and trade activities (Presidential Commissioner, 2019). Finally, while the majority of diaspora Cypriots are absorbed in the food and hotel service industry, as well as the clothing industry, mainly in establishments owned by other Cypriot community members, many second generation Cypriot diasporas have moved away from their family businesses, seeking professional careers (National Federation of Cypriots in the UK). Table 1 offers an indication of Cypriot diasporas per country (the numbers are approximate and are according to the Cyprus diaspora world organizations and federations).

3.2 Sampling strategy

3.2.1 Sample selection. The participants were identified through personal networks, while following Patton’s purposeful sampling approach (Patton, 1990), focusing on identifying and selecting data from those who were directly related to the phenomenon under study (Proctor *et al.*, 2009). Besides this, purposeful sampling defends the use of small samples (Cope, 2005), since the study had only fifteen participants. The criterion to judge that the sampling reached saturation was based on when the researcher felt “empirically confident” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 61), hence the researcher took more individual cases into account to continue data collection until no significant new findings were revealed or nothing new was added (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As the privacy and anonymity of the participants was of paramount importance, they were given assurances that their names would be concealed by the use of pseudonyms (Table 2).

3.2.2 Criterion sampling. Heterogeneity was a key criterion, which was considered in the selection of research participants. Participants, male and female, from diverse host country contexts, generations, business activities, age bands, and business experience levels were chosen. The intention was to compile a heterogenous sample to allow the research to offer maximum variation to the perspectives of the participants, thus ensuring a more rounded and broadened view (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, a heterogenous sample in terms of demographic characteristics and experiences would allow controlling for other factors (apart from preparedness and learning) that might have influenced the success of diaspora entrepreneurs, such as significant financial capital from a wealthy business family. Therefore, with such diversity between the participants, the aim was to add rigor and give richness to the findings of this qualitative study (Table 2).

3.3 Analysis

Following an abductive research design (Gioia *et al.*, 2013), the data were approached with open coding to establish first-order codes (Kepner, 1983) by gaining a deep understanding of the raw data from the transcribed interviews. At this point, themes/codes emerged from the data, suggesting influences from families across borders, learning spaces and emotional influences. During the second coding cycle, the participants’ views were compared by looking into differences and similarities between the initial codes to group them into fewer second-order categories (Gioia *et al.*, 2013), while seeking to bring to the surface concepts that could give answers to the research question. Therefore, the second round of coding led to fewer codes, which were not only related to influences from the cognitive, relational, and structural dimensions of family across borders social capital, but also to learning instruments and spaces and learning influences in a diaspora setting. During the third coding cycle, the study proceeded with an additional distillation of the second-order themes through a second-order “aggregate dimension” (Gioia *et al.*, 2013, p. 20). During this round, the

Organisation	Country	Population
<i>The National Federation of Cypriots in the United Kingdom</i>	UK	150,000–200,000
<i>Federation of Cyprus Communities of Australia and New Zealand</i>	Australia and New Zealand	70,000–80,000
<i>Federation of Cypriot Organizations in Greece</i>	Greece	30,000–40,000
<i>Cyprus Federation of America</i>	USA	20,000–25,000
<i>Cyprus Federation of South Africa</i>	South Africa	25,000–30,000
<i>Cypriot Federation of Canada</i>	Canada	10,000–12,000
<i>Other</i>	Other countries	8,000–10,000

Table 1.
Cypriot diaspora
communities per
country

Table 2.
Participants-Case
cohort

Name	Gender	Age (at interview)	Interview location	Length of interview	Generation	Business activities	Host country	Ownership	Management
Andrew	Male	Late 70 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	55min	1st	Food/Services	U.K	Yes	Manager
Stephanie	Female	Early 40 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	1hr	2nd	Food/Services	U.K	Yes	Manager
George	Male	Late 60 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	2hrs	1st	Trading	U.K	Yes	Managing Director
Androulla	Female	Late 70 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	45min	1st	Clothing	U.K	Yes	Manager
Nikolas	Male	Late 70 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	50min	1st	Food	U.K	Yes	Manager
Andrys	Male	Early 60 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	1hr	1st	Food/Services	South Africa	Yes	Managing Director
Panayiotis	Male	Late 50 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	45min	2nd	Food/Services	South Africa	Yes	Managing Director
Vasilis	Male	Early 60 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	50min	2nd	Food/Services	South Africa	Yes	Manager
Panayiota	Female	Early 70 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	50min	1st	Clothing	U.K	Yes	Manager
Yianna	Female	Early 60 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	40min	1st	Trading	Australia	Yes	Manager
Dimitris	Male	Early 70 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	50min	1st	Clothing	Australia	Yes	Manager
Maria	Female	Early 40 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	45min	2nd	Food/Services	South Africa	Yes	Manager
Marios	Male	Early 60 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	1hr	2nd	Food/Services	U.K	Yes	Manager
Sakis	Male	Early 40 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	1hr	1st	Web company/Stock analyst	U.S.A	Yes	Managing Director
Theodora	Female	Early 60 <i>s</i>	Cyprus	45min	1 st	Clothing	U.K	Yes	Manager

aim was to compare the informants' views with the established theories (Gioia et al., 2013) to see whether there was any new concept emerging from the findings that could not be reconciled by existing theories, providing therefore for theoretical discovery (Gioia et al., 2013). A graphical representation of the data structure is presented in Figure 1 (see also the supplementary table, which shows interview extracts in line with this data structure).

4. Findings

The findings, as emerging from the study, are articulated alongside two key dimensions: family across borders social capital influences and triggers on diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness. The sections that follow elaborate on these dimensions.

4.1 "Family across borders" social capital: influences on entrepreneurial preparedness

Family across borders social capital influences on entrepreneurial preparedness appear to be critical in explaining how diaspora family business owners are influenced in their preparedness toward entrepreneurship. The findings illustrate that the diaspora family

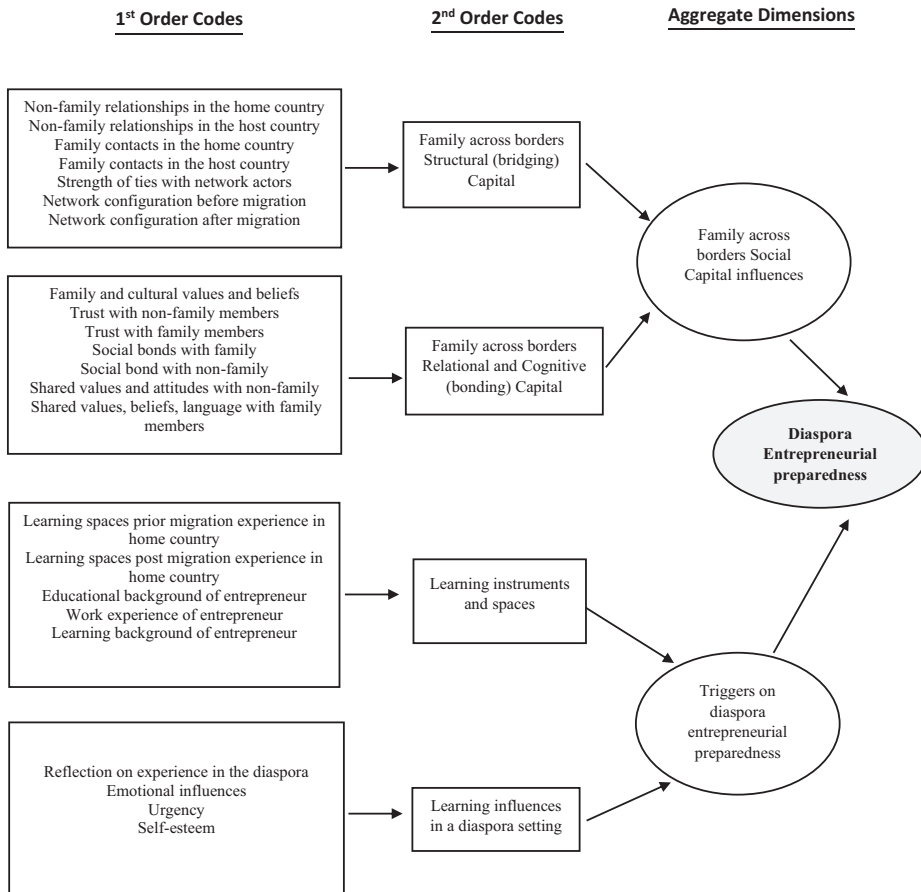


Figure 1. Data structure

business owner is a recipient of influences prior and/or post the migration experience; these influences come from their family across borders and are inherent in structural (bridging), relational and cognitive (bonding) dimensions of family across borders social capital.

4.1.1 *Bridging “family across borders” social capital.* The structural dimension of family across borders social capital is illustrated from the findings in the form of tangible relationships and network configurations between family across borders and diaspora family business owners. These structural relationships exist in the home and host country, prior and post the migration experience, and include the roles, rules, and precedents between them. Networks such as ties and contacts are resources accumulated by the members of the family over time and used when the diaspora family business owner seeks to become entrepreneurially prepared, to help draw information and assistance.

Specifically, Mrs Stephanie, a family business owner in the UK, shares that:

My dad knows people [...] not only Cypriots but English people too, and they were the ones that connected us with our new suppliers; well my dad was more talking to them with his hands rather than with his mouth, because his English isn't that good! We got on so well with them that they bought a holiday house next to our one, back home.

It is in the participants' view that regardless of the fact that family networks, such as non-diasporas, have different language, values, attitudes and beliefs (*my dad's English isn't that good*), they act as bridging figures, creating links to other networks in the host country that one could not reach without them (*they were the ones that connected us with our new suppliers*). She continues by saying:

My dad knew the bank manager and he could see that my father was a successful businessman and an ideal guarantor for me. He also knew the man in the council and managed to book an appointment with them sooner than expected, which was good because I wanted to get the business running as soon as possible.

Hence, in her own words, contacts (*the bank manager [...] the man in the council*) as a result of network configurations are an important mechanism to be utilized to rapidly become entrepreneurially prepared. This occurs because where the diaspora family business owner establishes relationships with people holding key positions, processes and procedures are executed faster, giving them a head start in business. Moreover, Mr Vasilis in South Africa adds in this respect;

I became friends with a few executives of the chain-stores, and they offered me the opportunity to get more shops, but I had to learn the way they did things. I would visit their stores as a customer and observe the way they work!

By taking advantage of the strength of ties with network actors (*I became friends with a few executives*), such as opportunities to embark on business growth, they take necessary steps such as “visit their stores as a customer and observe the way they work” to become entrepreneurially prepared to handle their new endeavors.

4.1.2 *Bonding “family across borders” social capital.* Diaspora ties between family business owners and family members are characterized by trust, norms, identity, and shared understandings such as shared language, family and cultural values and beliefs. These ties bond the diaspora family business owners with their family members in the host and home countries, through which influences are made from family and cultural values and beliefs, strengthening their knowledge base and, in consequence, their readiness for entrepreneurship. The family influences and values are shared amongst the family members, warning the diaspora family business owners as to what or who to avoid, or urging them in what to do or who to contact. Mrs Stephanie talks about family influences

and knowledge transfer and the influence they had on her to become entrepreneurially prepared:

My father had the same business and it was successful, so we decided to enter into the same thing because he was going to help us [...] because if you have somebody that can help you and who knows about the same business you learn faster and that's always a good thing if you want to be ahead of others.

The findings show that the family is a provider of knowledge (*my father [...] somebody who knows about the same business*), which is transferred to other family members (*my father [...] was going to help us*). By doing so, not only does knowledge remain within the family, but it also strengthens the knowledge base of the diaspora family business owner by solidifying a rapid entrepreneurial preparedness (*you learn faster*) for successful business endeavors (*it's always a good thing if you want to be ahead of others*). She adds that:

I definitely do the same with my children [...] we try to transfer it to our children and for me it's the most important thing, because what I learnt from my dad will go to my children and what they learn from me will go to their children.

Therefore, knowledge is transferred from one generation to the other (*I definitely do the same with my children*) and in doing so, the knowledge accumulated by the family (*we try to transfer it to our children*) adds to the existing family business knowledge base and therefore is strengthened in time. Moreover, by creating a strong knowledge base for future family business members, a useful source from which to accumulate necessary information to become entrepreneurially prepared is formed.

Besides ties with immediate family members, family business owners draw on relationships with other actors within their home and host countries. These involve non-blood-related ties, such as friends, customers, or other members of the diaspora community with whom the diaspora family business owner prior or post migration creates social bonds based on trust. Such ties act as critical agents, influencing and facilitating the diaspora family business owners' attempts to become entrepreneurially prepared. The nature and quality of the relationships between the diaspora family business owner and these actors is characterized by trust, obligations, norms, expectations, and identification, and they have shared understandings, values and beliefs. Hence, the character the relationship has is directed toward the relational and cognitive dimensions of family across borders social capital, which are interweaved and bond the diaspora family business owner with non-family members. Mr Andy's confession shows the importance of such bonds, as in his words:

A family friend [...] is going to help you to have that contact with the other person forever [...] We (the family) seek information from somebody we know [...] I know all the leaders of the Greek society and we go out for dinner: you know, to keep them happy.

It is in the words of Mr Andy that we see the bonding and relational dimension of family across borders social capital, as the word "forever" shows the long lasting nature of the tie, while "from somebody we know" indicates the trust they have with non-family members and the way they retain a social bond, such as to "go out for dinner, you know, to keep them happy". Mr Andy carries on by saying:

[...] if you have connections you must continue having them even if you don't need them now; you may need them in five years to help you out with your businesses, because you never know who they know [...] we invite them every now and then at our events at the community centre!

Hence, it is the belief of the participant that diaspora family business owners sustain non-family ties, even if they are not needed at the present time, as they become resources that can be utilized in the future (*you may need them in five years*) to help in becoming entrepreneurially prepared for new business endeavors (*you never know who they know*). To sustain such ties, they enhance their social bonding relationship by including them in the diaspora community (*we invite them every now and then at our events*), where someone would go only if they were an existing member. The findings also illustrate the cognitive dimension of family across borders social capital, where shared understandings and shared stories are developed in the host country with non-family members. Mrs Yianna, a family business owner in Australia, expresses her views that:

It wasn't difficult to go back to business because we (the family) already knew the necessary people [...] everybody knew us (the family) [...] we (the family) had good connections [...] everybody helped us. Today you need me and tomorrow I need you, so we all stuck together [...] we did things in the same way" and Mr. Andy's point of view that "[...] we spoke in the same business language [...] they knew what I wanted to say just by looking at them.

It is the participants' belief that relying on each other (*Today you need me and tomorrow I need you*), keeping close contacts with each other (*stuck together*) and having shared business attitudes (*we did things in the same way*), shared business language (*we spoke the same language*), and shared business codes (*just by looking at them*), facilitate the diaspora family business owner when they seek to become entrepreneurially prepared to re-enter, re-activate, or re-surge their business activities (*It wasn't difficult to go back to business because [...] everybody helped us*).

4.2 Triggers of diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness

The findings explained in this section show how diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness further develops in the presence of learning instruments and spaces, as well as learning influences in a diaspora setting. The learning instruments appear in spaces prior and post the migration experience, blending in with the findings from learning influences in the diaspora. Together, they reinforce the diaspora family business owner's attitudes toward self-reflection. The findings are articulated in the sections below.

4.2.1 Learning instruments. The findings direct the study toward learning instruments that relate to the diaspora family business owners' learning spaces, where past work experiences and/or education are accumulated, prior and post the migration experience. The findings show that it is the learning accumulated post the migration experience that plays a significant role in the development of diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness, since the diaspora family business owner not only accumulates learning from experiences in the host country, but relationships are also developed as a result of this process, which on the one hand broadens in this way the family across borders social capital, and on the other hand gives space for the development of learning from them. First, the words of Mr Andrew, a family business owner in the UK, and secondly, the words of Mr Sakis, illustrate that the Cypriot diaspora in the US is evidence of the cumulative learning that took place in the diaspora, starting from the learning instruments and then the networks created from this learning process. Mr Andrew said:

I was washing plates and then I was a waiter [...] I worked as a baker, milkman, in the ice for fish markets, I went to the city and helped my sister at her restaurant and then opened a restaurant of my own [...] I knew everybody I needed", while Mr. Sakis declared: "I studied at the university [...] In restaurants as a pass boy [...] teaching afternoon classes at Greek school [...] part timer

in an econometrics firm [...] a programmer and then I established my own stock exchange company [...] I knew quite a few people by then.

Additionally, the words of Mr George in the UK and Mr Andy in South Africa demonstrate their belief that it is the blend of learning backgrounds in the diaspora and the learning accumulated from the relationships developed from these that helped them become entrepreneurially prepared; Mr George explained:

I studied in the UK, got a job in a company [...] I started at the lowest level [...] a simple officer [...] I decided to make my parents' café into a café in the evening with music, you see many people in the community knew my parents and I met even more in the café [...] that was the start of me as an entrepreneur [...] it was key" while Mr. Andy said: "I had good communication, good relations and good friendships with the people I worked for [...] they knew me and I knew them for my business.

4.2.2 Learning influences in a diaspora setting. The findings reveal hidden learning influences in a diaspora setting, which place the diaspora family business owners between family across borders social capital and family members. Since they all co-exist within facets of interpersonal relationships, this urges the diaspora family business owner to self-reflect on their present situation. As a result of their experiences in the diaspora and such self-reflection, emotions of urgency and esteem appear. While the sense of urgency relates to the situation in which the diaspora family business owner has to respond in a quick manner, esteem, on the other hand, is apparent, as the family business owners pursue respect and admiration, both in their home and host countries. In the words of Mrs Androulla, a family business owner in the UK: "I always wanted to become somebody! To be financially independent and to help our children! And this is what made me push the business". Hence, it is the participants' belief that the business push was made because of the necessity to become financially independent, putting the family as core to this, while urged on by the idea of "becoming somebody". If to "become somebody" is associated with being admired, and admiration affects the family business owner emotionally, then being admired boosts esteem, since esteem is immediately connected to the self. Moreover, the views of Mr Sakis, a family business owner in the US were:

You have to see things differently, you have to adapt to move on [...] you start to work with the sense of urgency [...] you say I am here for a reason and the reason only, and I need to succeed and I need to start succeeding today [...] and in the front of your head you think, so what's my next step?

Our participants' views point to socio-cultural differences between host and home country (*you have to adapt*), and that adapting had to occur immediately to remain focused on the purpose of becoming a diaspora in the first place, which is to "succeed". Such focus on success creates the sense of "urgency", because if "I need to start succeeding today" relates to an immediate and urgent response toward their present situation, then "what's my next step?" is evidence of that urgency, which triggers the diaspora entrepreneur to think about the process needed to be followed to become entrepreneurially prepared.

5. Discussion

This study has allowed the close examination of the influences of family social capital on the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner. The analysis of data has shown that "family across borders social capital", plays a significant role for the diaspora family business owners' entrepreneurial preparedness. This is due to the "bonding" and "bridging" (Salvato and Melin, 2008) family ties of the diaspora business

owner in both the host and home countries (see [Figure 2](#)). The bonding ties between the diaspora family business owner and family contacts in both host and home countries contribute toward the bridging ([Salvato and Melin, 2008](#)) of the diaspora family business owner with other networks in the host countries ([Ionescu, 2006](#)). Consequently, family across borders social capital is important in supporting diaspora family businesses to establish linkages as part of their post migration experience ([Epstein and Heizler, 2016](#), p. 15). This study has identified that the diaspora family business owner, in an attempt to become entrepreneurially prepared, absorbs resources from cognitive ([Chou, 2006](#); [Grootaert et al., 2004](#); [Krishna and Shrader, 1999](#); [Uphoff, 2000](#)), relational ([Salvato and Melin, 2008](#)) and structural ([Granovetter, 1992](#)) dimensions of family social capital in the diaspora by creating a solid knowledge base, which becomes the grounds for diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness. These findings build on previous work on the dependence of diaspora entrepreneurs on social ties with the family across borders ([Elo and Dana, 2019](#); [Evansluong and Ramirez Pasillas, 2019](#)) and on family support in diaspora entrepreneurial efforts ([Evansluong and Ramirez Pasillas, 2019](#); [Habt and Elo, 2018](#)). Yet, they add new knowledge on the way that diaspora entrepreneurs leverage resources ([Bagwell, 2018](#)), particularly knowledge, as part of the mobilization of their family across borders social capital. Further, while previous work emphasizes the interconnectedness of diaspora entrepreneurs and their firm with global ethnic, cultural and family ties ([Elo and Dana, 2019](#); [Evansluong and](#)

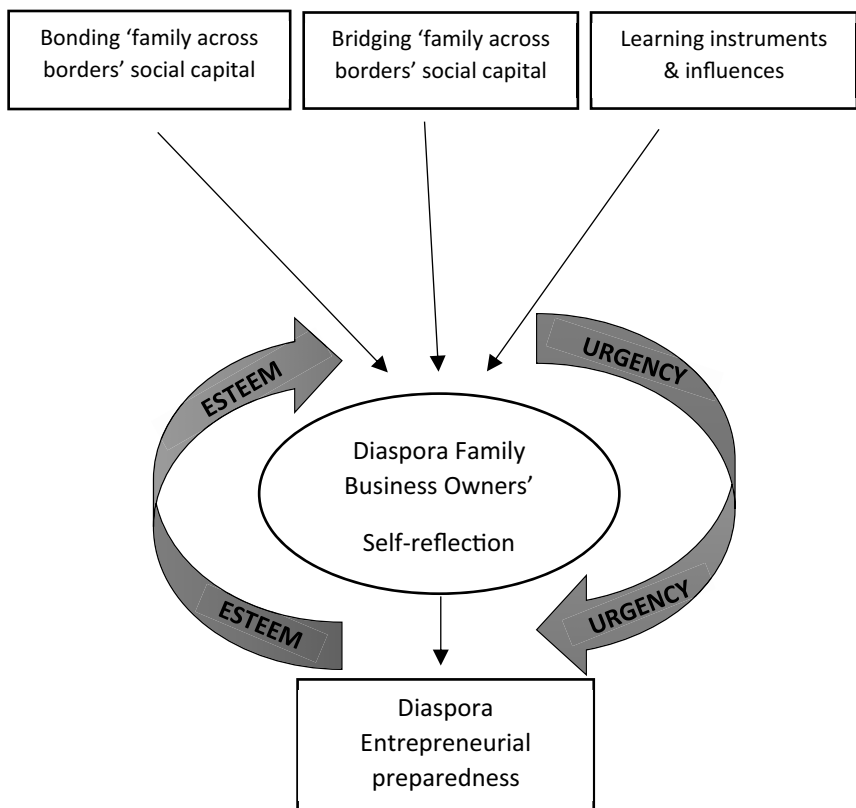


Figure 2.
Urgency and esteem-
led entrepreneurial
preparedness

Ramírez Pasillas, 2019), the present study looks specifically into family ties at the nexus between home and host countries. It therefore substantiates the role of social capital in mobilizing family ties and resources between the host and home countries for the preparedness of the diaspora family business entrepreneur. The context, therefore, in which such entrepreneurial preparedness occurs is characterized by cross-border dynamics, as it is an outcome of influences stemming from both host and home countries.

Thus, considering the above, a *first contribution* of the present study is the conceptualization of “family across borders social capital”. “Family across borders social capital”, in the present study, reflects the bridging and bonding family ties of diaspora family business owners in host and home countries. It also explains the way that the mobilization of this type of social capital provides access to learning resources for the diaspora family business owner. While the social ties with the family across borders have been highlighted as important for diasporas (Elo and Dana, 2019; Evansluong and Ramírez Pasillas, 2019), the bridging, bonding and mobilization dynamics of these ties have not been sufficiently researched. Through the conceptualization of “family across borders social capital”, the present study contributes theoretically by extending family social capital theory (Salvato and Melin, 2008), which has yet to address cross-border family ties linked to diaspora family business entrepreneurs.

Further, the findings confirm that entrepreneurial preparedness in the diaspora relies on experiential learning (Cope, 2005; Politis, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2015). Yet, this is the first study to provide insights on entrepreneurial preparedness in a diaspora setting. The diaspora family business owners’ past experiences in the home country, and experiences accumulated in the host country, are both resources for diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness, which translate into what the diaspora family business owner should do or should avoid doing. In addition to this, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to examine the role of family ties and influences from the family across borders (Elo and Dana, 2019; Evansluong and Ramírez Pasillas, 2019) on the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora entrepreneur. Previous work highlights that diaspora entrepreneurs capitalize on their diasporic and transnational resources in terms of language skills, cultural knowledge, business connections and management abilities (Habti and Elo, 2018) to create networks post the migration experience in the host country. Yet, such networks and their resources have not been linked to diaspora entrepreneurial learning or preparedness. The present study illustrates that the diaspora family business owners’ learning instruments, whether these are learning spaces prior or post the migration experience, blend with ties in home and host countries. Family across borders social capital, through its structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions, provides to the diaspora family business owner the opportunity of becoming entrepreneurially prepared across time. This leads to the *second contribution* of the present study, which provides new empirical knowledge on the linkages between the social capital of the family across borders and the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner. The present study contributes to the fields of diaspora entrepreneurship, family business, and entrepreneurial learning through new understandings on the way diaspora entrepreneurs draw on family ties in host and home countries to establish and expand family businesses in diaspora.

Moreover, the present study joins a conversation on the role of emotions and reflections in family business settings and associated human behaviors and interactions (Bertschi-Michel *et al.*, 2020; Brundin and Härtel, 2014). The present study highlights the importance of hidden emotional values that are linked to family across borders social capital. The diaspora family business owner feels burdened by the family across borders, and to feel like a worthily included member, acts in a sense of urgency and esteem, allowing entrepreneurial

preparedness to unfold radically (see Figure 2). The family in the home country prior to the migration experience applauds the decision of the immigrants, and so the immigrants inevitably become obligated to be the new providers to their family in the home country as well as their own family in the host country, where financial support is expected (Ram *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, the existing family in the host country expects the incoming diaspora to appreciate their acceptance and urges them to work within the family business or businesses of friends (Ram *et al.*, 2008; Sanders and Nee, 1996). Therefore, the diaspora family business owner learns in a sense of *urgency* while being caught between the family across borders. This occurs because the family business owner becomes entrepreneurially prepared to support the family in the home and host countries while being accepted by the family and diaspora community in the host country. Moreover, the diaspora family business owner becomes entrepreneurially prepared in a sense of *esteem*, by positioning themselves between the host and home countries. The family across borders has high expectations (Orr, 1990) from the diaspora, since in the home country they are proud of the courage of the emigrant, thus making the diaspora family business owner highly respected and admired, and hence they do not want to disappoint or lose such admiration. On the other hand, the diaspora family business owner wants to prove worthy of the acceptance shown by the family in the host country and aims to create a good reputation (Orr, 1990) within the family across borders. To retain this reputation, the diaspora family business owner attempts to learn and to become entrepreneurially prepared through a sense of esteem. This not only benefits the diaspora family business owner in becoming entrepreneurially prepared, but also strengthens the family across borders social capital by retaining and increasing their networks, having additional valuable resources for future endeavors and making a visible presence as representatives of their home country in the host countries. Additionally, the findings illustrate that diaspora family business owners are urged by their family configurations across borders to act emotionally, while ties with other individuals and networks urge them to act rationally. The emotion-rationality tension brings the diaspora family business owner into the realm of self-reflection, which enables the diaspora family business owner to balance urgency and esteem needs as they prepare entrepreneurially.

The above discussion leads to the *third contribution* of the present study, which provides new empirical knowledge on the influence of emotions (specifically urgency and esteem) and self-reflection on the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora entrepreneur. Emotional and rational expectations are inherent in family businesses (Hollander and Elman, 1988; Kepner, 1983; Whiteside and Brown, 1991). Yet, current knowledge in the family business field has yet to address the way that emotions linked to urgency and esteem, and the practice of self-reflection, are influencing the entrepreneurial preparedness of family business owners. The present study fills this void by shedding light on the way emotions and self-reflection act in the midst of family across borders social capital to facilitate the entrepreneurial learning or entrepreneurial preparedness of diaspora entrepreneurs and diaspora business families.

In a nutshell, the present research builds on previous work on the dynamics and meaning of entrepreneurial preparedness (Coduras *et al.*, 2016; Cope, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2015), the practice of diaspora entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Volery, 2007), and the idiosyncrasies of family social capital (Salvato and Melin, 2008) and emotions within family businesses (Bertschi-Michel *et al.*, 2020; Brundin and Härtel, 2014). Yet, this is the first known study to empirically link entrepreneurial preparedness with family social capital and emotions. Further, while the diaspora concept has been examined within a family business context (Dahles, 2013; Habti and Elo, 2018; Volery, 2007), this is the first study to examine the entrepreneurial preparedness of family business entrepreneurs in a diasporic, cross-

border setting. This leads to the *fourth contribution* of the present study, which is the conceptualization of the entrepreneurial preparedness of diaspora family business owners (see [Figure 2](#)). Diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness has not yet been thoroughly researched nor well documented, neither in the field of family business nor within the domain of diaspora entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial preparedness, as it is conceptualized in the present study, explains the role and influences exerted by the family across borders on the preparedness of the diaspora family business owner. It also sheds light on the dynamics linked to the mobilization of bridging and bonding social capital through family ties in host and home countries. The entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner is also influenced by learning practices before and after the migration, in the midst of an emotion-rationality tension driven by urgency, esteem, and self-reflection.

6. Conclusions

The findings shed light on the way the social capital of family across borders influences the entrepreneurial preparedness of the diaspora family business owner. Entrepreneurial preparedness and the mobilization and use of the social capital of family across borders are areas that have not been sufficiently researched within diaspora entrepreneurship. Drawing on social capital and the concepts of “family across borders” ([Evansluong et al., 2019](#)) and entrepreneurial preparedness ([Cope, 2005](#)), the present study offers a dynamic understanding of the way diaspora family business owners accumulate knowledge to get prepared to act entrepreneurially in host countries. Thus, the concept of “diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness” that the present study introduces is dynamic, in that it captures social interactions and learning processes contributing to the preparedness of the family business entrepreneur. Being embedded within social relations in both the host and home countries, diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness can also be conceived as a co-creating process, since the focal entrepreneur accumulates knowledge socially and in relation to others, with emphasis on the role of family ties.

Although the results are not fully generalizable, insights and learning have been gained from the chosen context. In conclusion, this qualitative study adds knowledge to the phenomenon of diaspora entrepreneurial learning, as it extends the understanding of the role of family across borders social capital in relation to this social phenomenon by developing an urgency and esteem-led diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness model. The findings of this study offer insights and respond to the question in research of how family ties support/trigger the diaspora family business owner in their attempt to become entrepreneurially prepared in the host country.

6.1 Implications to practice

The findings of the present study can be of use to diaspora entrepreneurs and business families preparing to establish and run family businesses in host countries. The findings suggest that the preparedness of diaspora entrepreneurs and business families depends on the presence and mobilization of family across borders social capital. Family ties with home and host countries carry valuable resources such as knowledge and bridges to other entrepreneurial networks, which are essential for aspiring diaspora entrepreneurs. An implication is that diaspora entrepreneurs need to strategize the use of their family social capital at the nexus of host and home countries to make an effective use of the resources that are situated within family social networks. Besides knowledge and advice, such networks can provide the diaspora entrepreneur with other important resources such as financial capital, labor, and equipment and premises that are essential when starting up and running a venture in a host country.

Second, the findings highlight other aspects, such as learning tools and spaces, the role of urgency and esteem, and the use of self-reflection in the entrepreneurial preparedness of diaspora entrepreneurs and business families. Diaspora family business owners and their successors can become better entrepreneurially prepared if acting based on a plan, which incorporates actions for learning, the management of urgency and esteem, and the practice of self-reflection. For instance, an action can encompass the use of a reflective diary by diaspora entrepreneurs, where they can map what led them to act in a sense of urgency and esteem, and what they are taking out of associated experiences. Another action can prescribe ways in which diaspora entrepreneurs and business families can access and use entrepreneurial knowledge embedded within their cross-border family networks.

6.2 Limitations and paths for future research

The present study contains a number of limitations, which set paths for future research. First, the present study draws on a small sample of 15 in-depth interviews with separate family business owners. Therefore, the findings need to be treated with caution, since generalizations beyond this rather small sample can be risky. Future qualitative studies need to draw on larger samples and embark on more triangulated investigations through the use of multiple case study research designs to enhance data validity. Additionally, quantitative studies drawing on large samples can help measure and test the concepts and relationships that have emerged in the present study. This can allow the findings to be generalized across a larger population of diaspora entrepreneurs and diaspora business families.

Second, the context of the study is linked to diaspora Cypriot family business owners, who carry their own idiosyncrasies linked to their culture and norms. Therefore, the results may not be applicable to diasporas who do not bear similar characteristics to Cypriots. Future qualitative studies can draw on cross-national research designs to study the influence of family across borders social capital on the diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness of entrepreneurs and business families. This can allow comparison of the findings to understand similarities and differences across contexts, and yield insights on the influence that the context can exert on entrepreneurial preparedness.

Finally, since this is the first study to conceptualize “family across borders social capital” and “diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness”, there is a need for qualitative work to confirm and improve the validity of the concepts and proposed relationships, and to enable measurement of the concepts. Additionally, future qualitative studies should investigate further the concept of diaspora entrepreneurial preparedness, ideally through longitudinal or ethnographic research designs, to understand dynamics that unfold over time and contribute to the preparedness of diaspora entrepreneurs and business families in host country contexts.

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