



REGEPE Entrepreneurship and Small Business Journal

ISSN: 2965-1506

regepe.esbj@anegepe.org.br

Associação Nacional de Estudos em Empreendedorismo e
Gestão de Pequenas Empresas

Brasil

Santos-Souza, Humberto Reis dos; Azevedo-Ferreira, Maxwell; Xavier Neto, Oseas

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REGEPE Entrepreneurship and Small Business Journal,
vol. 13, no. 3, e2485, 2024, September-December

Associação Nacional de Estudos em Empreendedorismo e Gestão de Pequenas Empresas
São Paulo, Brasil

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14211/regepe.esbj.e2485>

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Research Article

Embeddedness in complex networks: Theoretical central debate, policy implications, and research agenda in ethnic entrepreneurship

Humberto Reis dos Santos-Souza^{a,c}  , Maxwell Azevedo-Ferreira^{a,b}  , and Oseas Xavier Neto^c  

^aInstituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio de Janeiro (IFRJ), Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

^bUniversidade do Grande Rio - UNIGRANRIO, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

^cCentro Universitário FEL, São Paulo, SP, Brazil



Editorial Details

Sistema double-blind review


Article History

Received : Feb. 26, 2024
Accepted : Apr. 03, 2024
Available online : Sep. 20, 2024


Article ID: 2485

JEL classification: A14, F22, J15, P60

Editor-in-Chief¹ or Adjunct²:

¹ Dr. Edmundo Inácio Júnior 
Univ. Estadual de Campinas, UNICAMP

Associate Editor:

Dr. Roberto Pessoa de Queiroz Falcão 
Univ. UNIGRANRIO

Executive¹ or Assistant² Editor:

² M. Eng. Patrícia Trindade de Araújo

Translation / Proofreading:

The authors

Funding:

IFRJ, # 23828.000028/2022-20;
CAPES, #88887.907018/2023-00;
FAPERJ # E-26/010.100815/2018

How to cite:

Santos-Souza, H. R. dos. Azevedo-Ferreira, M. Xavier Neto, O. (2024). Embeddedness in complex networks: Theoretical central debate, policy implications, and research agenda in ethnic entrepreneurship. *REGEPE Entrepreneurship and Small Business Journal*. 13(3), e2485. <https://doi.org/10.14211/regepe.esbj.e2485>



Article verify by: 

Corresponding author

Humberto Reis dos Santos-Souza
humberto.souza@ifrj.edu.br

Abstract

Objective: This article explores ethnic entrepreneurship as an emerging organizational phenomenon, aiming to provide a comprehensive overview through a systematic literature review. **Method:** Triangulation employed bibliometric analysis, network analysis, citation and co-citation analysis, co-citation network, and a meta-analysis of bibliometrics over the period. It also includes content analysis demonstrating study characteristics, key findings, and suggestions for future research. **Key Findings:** The crucial role of ethnic networks in identity valorization and overcoming obstacles, exerting a moderating influence on entrepreneurial decisions, was identified. Furthermore, a broader theoretical framework for understanding the ethnic entrepreneurship phenomenon is synthesized. **Theoretical/Methodological Contributions:** A combined method of analyses is employed, offering an approach that can be adopted by similar research. The theoretical framework in which ethnic entrepreneurship studies are anchored is presented, emphasizing social immersion, co-ethnic network building, and Economic Sociology. **Relevance/Originality:** In a growing global migration movement, individuals have become entrepreneurs in the pursuit of ethnic valorization, equality, and survival. They face various barriers in host countries, influencing the decision to undertake entrepreneurship and their business. This study fills a gap by elucidating how research explains the interplay of these emerging phenomena. **Social/Management Contributions:** The article identifies future directions for ethnic entrepreneurship research, addressing crucial issues such as gender, network construction, financing, international refugee policies, public policies, ethnicity, ethnic markets, marginalization, and prejudice. Its conclusions offer valuable insights for managers, researchers, and policymakers.

Keywords: Ethnic entrepreneurship. Ethnic businesses. Ethnicity. Systematic review.

Imersos em Complexas Redes: Debate Teórico Central, Implicações Políticas e Agenda de Pesquisa em Empreendedorismo Étnico

Resumo

Objetivo: este artigo aborda o empreendedorismo étnico como um fenômeno organizacional emergente, visando proporcionar um panorama abrangente por meio de uma revisão sistemática de literatura. **Método:** a triangulação empregou análise bibliométrica, análise de redes, análise de citações e cocitações, rede de cocitações, além de uma meta-análise das bibliometrias do período. Também inclui a análise de conteúdo que demonstra as características dos estudos, seus principais achados e sugestões para futuras pesquisas. **Principais Resultados:** identificou-se o papel crucial das redes étnicas na valorização da identidade e na superação de obstáculos, exercendo influência moderadora sobre a decisão empreendedora. Ademais, sintetiza-se um quadro teórico explicativo mais amplo para a compreensão do fenômeno do empreendedorismo étnico. **Contribuições Teóricas/Metodológicas:** utiliza-se um método combinado de análises, oferecendo uma abordagem que pode ser adotada por pesquisas similares. Apresenta-se o quadro teórico em que os estudos em empreendedorismo étnico estão ancorados, com destaque para a imersão social, construção de redes coétnicas e Sociologia Econômica. **Relevância/Originalidade:** em um crescente movimento migratório global, indivíduos têm se tornado empreendedores na busca de valorização étnica, igualdade e sobrevivência. Eles enfrentam diversas barreiras nos países anfitriões, que influenciam a decisão de empreender e o seu negócio. Este estudo preenche uma lacuna ao esclarecer como as pesquisas explicam o encadeamento desses fenômenos emergentes. **Contribuições Sociais/De Gestão:** o artigo identifica direcionamentos futuros para pesquisas em empreendedorismo étnico, abordando questões cruciais como gênero, construção de redes, financiamento, política internacional para refugiados, políticas públicas, etnicidade, mercado étnico, marginalização e preconceito. Suas conclusões oferecem insights valiosos para gestores, pesquisadores e formuladores de políticas.

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo étnico. Negócios étnicos. Etnicidade. Revisão sistemática.

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic entrepreneurship is an emerging organizational phenomenon influenced by various factors such as culture, history, identity, religion, ethnicity, race, among others. It takes shape when individuals migrate for work to countries with more lucrative income and opportunities than their country of origin. The phenomenon can also be influenced by diasporas, conflicts, and/or catastrophes. Despite approximately two decades of research efforts, there is still room for advancements (Cruz et al., 2018, Dheer & Lenartowicz, 2018, Indarti et al., 2020, Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021, Vershinina & Rodgers, 2019, Zhou, 2004).

In addition, considering the barriers imposed by prejudice in the diffusion of ethnic diversity in modern society and, consequently, in organizations, many individuals marginalized by society decide to entrepreneur in pursuit of equal opportunities, ethnic group appreciation, engagement, or even survival (Indarti et al., 2020).

Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that the international migration phenomenon can also interfere with the dynamics of ethnic entrepreneurship. For instance, between 2008 and 2012, 25% of businesses initiated in the United States were started by immigrants (Kerr & Kerr, 2020). According to the World Migration Report, approximately 281 million people left their countries in 2020. In the same year, around 540 billion dollars were sent to countries with low or medium income. Clearly, these remittances are expected to influence entrepreneurship in both the countries of origin and the receiving countries (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021).

In this context, understanding the scholarly production on ethnic entrepreneurship and its diverse influences and dynamics becomes crucial. Hence, this study justifies its construction based on the following research questions: (i) What are the characteristics of research in ethnic entrepreneurship worldwide? (ii) How have these studies evolved in the last five years? (iii) What theoretical approaches have been utilized? (iv) What are the addressed themes? (v) What is the future research agenda? The objective, therefore, is to construct a review capable of addressing these inquiries.

To address these questions, the study is organized starting with this introduction, followed by a brief foundation and the methodological procedures. Subsequently, the results discussions are presented, providing the foundation for the concluding remarks.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnic ties are perceived in various ways, serving as means to preserve a cultural heritage to which a particular group identifies, positioning itself in relation to class lines, protecting or obtaining economic and political advantages for disadvantaged groups. They also aim to provide a closer connection in the face of the impersonality of large societies and highlight the shortcomings of the State in defending the rights of certain ethnic enclaves (Yinger, 1985).

Ethnic Entrepreneurship is characterized by ventures initiated, executed, supported, sustained, and developed by an individual, family, or groups of people belonging to a specific ethnic group (Selvarajah & Masli, 2011). Furthermore, ethnic entrepreneurship can be defined as a movement whose participation in the group is linked to a common cultural heritage or origin, with goals that focus on exploring an opportunity, cultural appreciation, and providing some form of engagement with ethnic groups/issues (Drori et al., 2009, Indarti et al., 2020, Ma et al., 2013, Sithas & Surangi, 2021, Yinger, 1985). However, there is still no clear theoretical framework for the phenomenon (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021, Vershinina & Rodgers, 2019, Zhou, 2004).

Theoretical efforts in the theme revolve around three main pillars (Vershinina & Rodgers, 2019): Bourdieu's (1986) social capital studies, Granovetter's (1985) embeddedness theory, and

the concept of mixed embeddedness by Kloosterman (2010), as explored by Kloosterman and Rath (2001) and Kloosterman et al. (1999), as pointed out later in this paper.

Studies in ethnic/migrant entrepreneurship emphasize the construction of networks as fundamental to the success of the business. The entrepreneur's insertion into a specific ethnic network, able to leverage their social capital, appears to have a moderating effect on the entrepreneurial process (Chen & Redding, 2017, Nazareno et al., 2018, Williams & Krasniqi, 2018). Even if the entrepreneur starts a business out of necessity (Machado et al., 2021), the role of family, human and social capital, networks, and the institutional environment are fundamental elements (Cho et al., 2019, Kazlou & Wennberg, 2021, Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2020, Yetkin & Tunçalp, 2023).

Notably, as emphasized by Granovetter (1985), economic factors alone would not be sufficient to determine the success of ethnic entrepreneurs, especially since access to capital is sometimes hindered for this group (Cruz et al., 2018, Howell, 2019, Nazareno et al., 2018, Wang & Warn, 2018a). Thus, there seems to be an immersion in a range of factors on which the ethnic entrepreneur relies to establish a new business (Yetkin & Tunçalp, 2023). It is these concepts that support the findings of Kloosterman (2010), when advancing his studies based on the findings of Granovetter (1985).

To this debate, additional elements emerge from processes related to ethnic entrepreneurship. Among them, the spotlight on female protagonism, which sometimes requires additional support to address cultural, religious, sexist, structural, institutional, and other barriers when they decide to start a new venture (Ratten & Dana, 2017, Senthanaar et al., 2021, Song-Naba, 2020).

In another example, the study by Fesselmeyer and Seah (2017) demonstrates that blacks living in cities with higher levels of racial segregation are more likely to start their own business. The same study shows that the initiative of black entrepreneurship can arise from racism, economic isolation, and some form of deprivation. In this sense, prejudice and discrimination can influence the ethnic entrepreneur in their decision to undertake (Alexandre et al., 2019, Chababi et al., 2017, Cho et al., 2019, Ojo, 2021, Wang & Warn, 2018b).

Furthermore, according to Changanti and Greene (2002), ethnic entrepreneurship may be associated with the entrepreneur's level of personal involvement in the ethnic community and not just with the ethnic group self-identification. The study demonstrates that the entrepreneur's level of personal involvement with the causes of their ethnic group can influence the self-perception of business performance. The authors show that there are indications that entrepreneurs more involved with their respective ethnic groups have a lower perception of performance compared to the perception of ethnic entrepreneurs with less involvement with their respective groups. This may indicate that some entrepreneurs, even perceiving the possibility of improvement in economic performance, maintain a strategy focused on the ethnic enclave. Considering these questions, it is evident that ethnic entrepreneurship represents a complex, interrelated, multifaceted, inter and multidisciplinary organizational phenomenon (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021).

Due to its relevance, some bibliometric studies have already addressed this topic extensively. Notably, Chreim et al. (2018) contributed significantly by focusing on female entrepreneurship. Their work underscores how specific resources possessed by female entrepreneurs influence organizational outcomes through strategies shaped by cultural, institutional, and co-ethnic contexts. Moreover, it delineates a research agenda encompassing various dimensions of immigrant entrepreneurship, thereby enhancing our understanding of gender disparities in this domain. Indarti et al. (2020) also delve into gender differences, while Sinkovics and Reuber (2021) emphasize the significance of ethnic social networks for immigrant entrepreneurs, acknowledging discrimination as a moderating factor. Furthermore, Yetkin and Tunçalp (2023)



highlight the importance of immersion in co-ethnic networks as a tool to combat racism and discrimination, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the phenomenon.

Using classic bibliometric tools, Fernandes et al. (2022) provide a comprehensive panoramic view of ethnic entrepreneurship. Their findings describe the organization of publications on the topic, identify the most cited publications and authors, reveal the main countries and journals involved, and point out future research opportunities. Additionally, Sinkovics and Reuber (2021) challenge misconceptions by demonstrating that immigrant businesses can thrive, even in sectors like high-tech, countering prevailing narratives of marginality. Nazareno et al. (2018) and Malki et al. (2020) further illuminate the evolving landscape of immigrant entrepreneurship, revealing shifts towards diversified and knowledge-intensive professional services. However, barriers persist, as evidenced by racial discrimination and cultural hurdles faced by immigrants, hindering access to financing and high-profile positions.

Considering these studies and the relevance of the topic in light of the rapidly evolving dynamics of the global landscape, our study enters a distinct period of analysis. Specifically, we focus on the profound impact of ethnic entrepreneurship within this ever-changing environment. Understanding how these dynamics influence ethnic entrepreneurs is of paramount importance, and we believe that regular reassessment of this theme is crucial. Moreover, we provide a comprehensive theoretical framework, a gap that our research aims to address. Building upon this foundation, we have made strides in advancing our understanding through the application of innovative methodologies such as network analysis, co-citation analysis encompassing a vast array of references, content analysis, and meta-analysis of bibliometric studies. In the next section we explain it.

METHOD

The research is characterized by a systematic literature review through a bibliometric study. The methodological path of the research is visualized in Figure 1. The chosen database for the research was the Web of Science (WoS) in its main collection. The selected search term was "Ethnic Entrepreneur*" as it encompasses the core of the research theme and has been used in similar studies (Ilhan-Nas et al., 2011, Indarti et al., 2020).

Figure 1

Methodological path of the research

Collection Procedures	Analysis Procedures
<p>Chosen Base: Web of Science (WoS)</p> <p>Period: 2017-2022</p> <p>Search Key: "Ethnic Entrepreneur*"</p> <p>Categories WoS: Business and Management</p> <p>Result: 76 items</p> <p>Post Free-Float Reading Classifieds: 74 items</p>	<p>Phase 1: Bibliometric Analysis</p> <p>Stage 1 - Analysis of bibliometric indicators; Stage 2 - Network analysis with VantagePoint ©.</p> <p>Phase 2: Citation Analysis</p> <p>Stage 1 - Analysis of the 12 most cited articles (228 citations); Stage 2 - Analysis of the most cited articles from the bibliographic references using Vosviewer ©.</p> <p>Phase 3: Content Analysis</p> <p>Stage 1 - Meta Analysis of Bibliometrics published between 2017 - 2022 Previous factors of analysis: clarification, reiteration, adjustment and rebuttal.</p> <p>Stage 2 - Analysis of the 74 articles; Pre-categories: Method, theoretical basis, advances and future research; Post-categories: Emerging factors from the analysis.</p>

Note: Elaborated by the authors.

A total of 76 articles were found for the selected period from 2017-2022. This period was chosen as it encompasses most studies produced during the historical series of scientific production. The research was conducted on April 12, 2022. Two studies were excluded through a floating reading as they did not fall within the scope of the research.

Having defined the data collection procedures, the analysis procedures follow. In the first phase of the research, bibliometric analysis (first stage) was employed to quantify scientific production and present trends and characteristics of the theme. Cluster analysis (stage 2) was also used to understand social and thematic clusters, as a second step (Donthu et al., 2021). Networks were constructed using the VantagePoint® software.

In the second phase of the research, citation analysis was chosen, as this technique identifies researchers' behavior and the relationships established during the scientific communication process (Donthu et al., 2021). The second phase was divided into two stages. The first stage involved the citation analysis presented by Web of Science, providing a global analysis of citations, including citations from other knowledge areas. In the second stage, Vosviewer© software was used. In this case, the database obtained by WoS provided the reference listed the selected studies belong. It allowed a more focused analysis of the academic dialogue in ethnic entrepreneurship.

In the third phase of the research, content analysis was used for categorization and analysis of articles with the help of Excel© software. This phase was analyzed in two stages. The first stage involved a meta-analysis of bibliometrics produced in the field over the last five years, allowing a historical analysis of scientific production. In addition to the historical analysis, an analysis was conducted on how these studies position themselves based on the pre-established analysis categories. For this, an academic dialogue analysis proposed by Huff (2008) was used, which includes elements such as speculation, assertion, clarification, reiteration, adjustment, rebuttal, synthesis, redirection, and refutation.

For this study, considering the advancement of the theme, four elements of the proposed framework were used: (1) Clarification – studies that provide explanations about the composition and causal connections that expand our knowledge on a significant and interesting subject for the academic community; (2) Reiteration – studies that clarify misunderstood ideas or improve them; (3) Adjustment – studies that present a particular topic with misunderstood phenomena or different components or different causal relationships; (4) Rebuttal – studies that reject some widely shared knowledge based on new findings (Huff, 2008). Thus, bibliometrics were analyzed according to the described elements to understand how the studies position themselves in the field and to comprehend the characteristics of research in ethnic entrepreneurship. In this case, pre-established categories were used in the categorical analysis proposed by Bardin (2016).

The second stage of the third phase involved content analysis of the selected articles based on the collection procedures. In this case, both pre-established and emerging categories were used. The pre-established categories cover the characteristics of bibliographic production in the period (theoretical contribution, method, origin of ethnic groups) and data emerging from contributions and gaps.

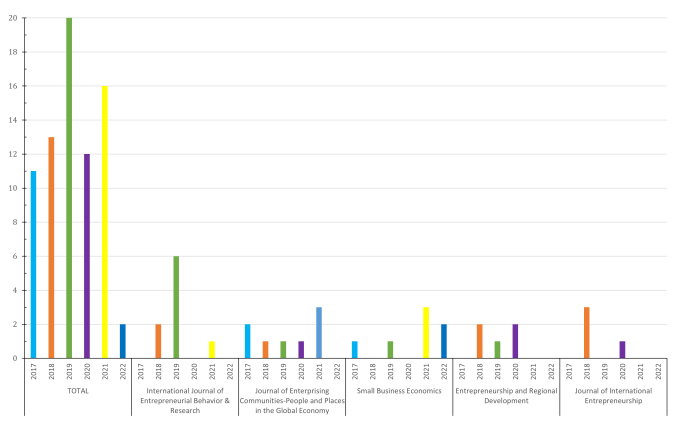
ANALYSIS

Phase I: Bibliometric analysis

Figure 2 illustrates the evolution of scientific production and the key journals in the research theme. Peaks in research occurred in 2019 and 2021, encompassing approximately half of the studies. This indicates that the field is in a growth phase with an average of 14 studies per year (excluding the 2022 data).

Figure 2

Evolution of total bibliographic production and in the main journals



Note: Research data.

The journal with the highest number of publications during this period was the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, based in England. The journal focuses on the behavioral and international perspective of entrepreneurship. This justifies the publication of nine articles that involved the theme of ethnic entrepreneurship in the world in its editions in 2018, 2019 and 2021. In this context, a special issue of this journal titled "Migration, firms, and society" was published in 2019. Out of the 18 articles published in this special issue, five were classified within the parameters of our study.

It is noteworthy that the countries with the most publications are distributed between North America (9 articles from the United States and 3 articles from Canada) and Western Europe (30 articles). Among the Western European countries, the United Kingdom stands out with 11 articles, which is also justified by publications from the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research.

Figure 3 demonstrates the analysis of relationship networks among authors using the software VantagePoint®. Nodes, with two authors or more, constituted the parameters for the construction of the network. The chart reveals the dispersion of publications across 63 relations. Four clusters of researchers stand out, interrelating discreetly, characterizing a growing research theme. It shows that researchers need more integration with each other.

Figure 3

Relationship networks between researchers



Note: Elaborated by the authors with base research data and using VantagePoint®.

Cluster 1 encompasses three articles studying Brazilian migrant entrepreneurs abroad, especially in North America (Cruz et al., 2018, Cruz et al., 2020, Falcão et al., 2021). This is the strongest node of network, showing that Brazilian researchers are a promising knowledge hub in ethnic entrepreneurship. **Cluster 2** includes two articles addressing female migrant entrepreneurship and second-generation entrepreneurship, respectively (Chababi et al., 2017, Chreim et al., 2018). **Cluster 3**, with two articles, focuses on the family's role among ethnic entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hack-Polay et al., 2020, Igwe et al., 2020). **Cluster 4**, containing two studies, highlights the role of culture in ethnic entrepreneurship in Malaysia (Tehseen & Anderson, 2020, Tehseen et al., 2021).

Phase II: Citation analysis

The second phase of the research involves citation analysis, which is a tool in bibliometric studies to understand how scientific communication occurs in a knowledge area (Donthu et al., 2021). In the first stage of this phase, this study utilizes citation analysis from the WoS report, encompassing citations from the articles under study and their occurrence in other academic dialogues. Twelve articles (Table 1) were selected, representing 255 citations. Considering the total of 505 citations presented during the period, this proposed selection constitutes more than 50% of all citations.

Some of the most cited studies focus on the core issue of immigration and its impact on both the home country and the host country (Alrawadieh et al., 2019, Chreim et al., 2018, Lundberg & Rehnfors, 2018, Munkejord, 2017, Nazareno et al., 2018, Williams & Krasniqi, 2018). The analysis of the influences of resources used by ethnic entrepreneurs is also presented in some studies, involving social capital, human capital, and funding resources. There is an observed unequal access to certain resources by ethnic entrepreneurs compared to non-ethnic entrepreneurs (Alrawadieh et al., 2019, Chreim et al., 2018, Lundberg & Rehnfors, 2018, Nazareno et al., 2018, Williams & Krasniqi, 2018), apart from social capital and the use of co-ethnic structures for learning, business development support, and facing threats. These elements are present in the study by Igwe et al. (2020) and the study by Szkudlarek and Wu (2018).

The issue of refugees also emerges, pointing to entrepreneurship as an alternative to unemployment and underemployment (Munkejord, 2017) and for coping with threats from the institutional and sociocultural environment (Alrawadieh et al., 2019, Chreim et al., 2018, Nazareno et al., 2018, Szkudlarek & Wu, 2018, Williams & Krasniqi, 2018). Women-led entrepreneurship is also among the most referenced topics, present in the studies by Ratten and Dana (2017), Chreim et al. (2018), Munkejord (2017), accounting for 25% of the most cited studies. These studies highlight gender differences in the entrepreneurial environment and women's choice of entrepreneurship for access to a satisfactory salary.

As future research topics, beyond those discussed in the core of the most cited articles, the role of marginalization and discrimination as stimuli for ethnic entrepreneurship stands out (Igwe et al., 2020), migration of entrepreneurs from developed to developing countries, public policies to promote ethnic/migrant entrepreneurship (Chreim et al., 2018), and indigenous entrepreneurship (Igwe et al., 2020, Ratten & Dana, 2017).

In contrast, the study by Awaworyi Churchill (2017) questions the negative influence of ethnic heterogeneity on a business. According to the author, the impact on ethnic business corresponds to the institutional environment in which it operates, not just its ethnicity. In additional perspective, the study by Nazareno et al. (2018) also demonstrates a significant shift in migrant entrepreneurship from cheap labor to technology-intensive businesses.

Table 1*Most cited papers in Web of Science*

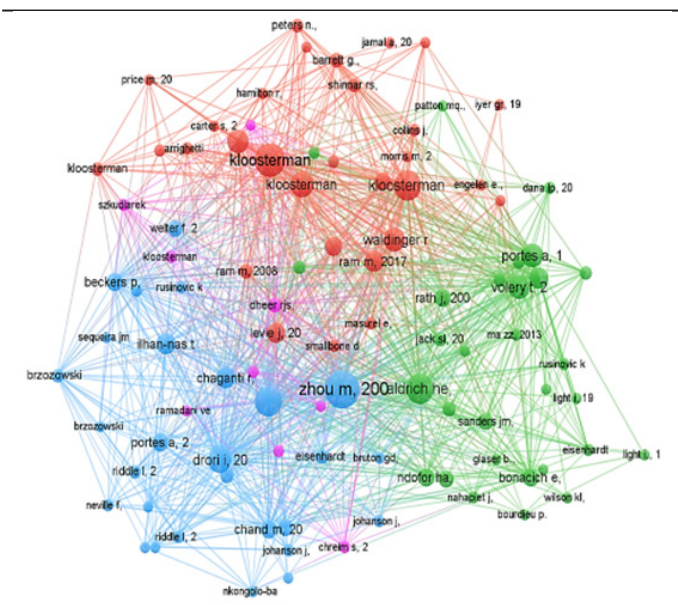
Authors and citations	Focus of paper	Key Findings	Future Research
Awaworyi Churchill (2017)	35 To explain how ethnic heterogeneity and institutional arrangements affect entrepreneurship	It demonstrates that ethnic heterogeneity negatively influences entrepreneurship. The argument suggests potential channels explaining the negative effect of fractionalization on entrepreneurship, including trust, social networks, and innovation, among others.	It is suggested to explore the impact of ethnic diversity on the performance of small businesses.
Alrawadieh et al. (2019)	32 To explore the characteristics and challenges faced by refugee entrepreneurs in the tourism and hospitality sector	The results suggest that refugee entrepreneurs faced four main challenges: legislative and administrative obstacles, financial issues, sociocultural challenges, and market-related challenges. The study also provides insights into the characteristics of refugee tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs and their integration into their host communities.	Quantitative validation of study findings.
Ratten and Dana (2017)	27 To add a gender perspective to studies on indigenous entrepreneurship	A gender perspective on Indigenous entrepreneurship is necessary due to the association of more feminine traits with Indigenous people. Increasingly, feminine behaviors are considered useful and necessary in establishing and maintaining business ventures. This integration of Indigenous cultural beliefs into entrepreneurship reflects a progressive mindset.	More research about Indigenous entrepreneurship needs to consider feminist theory in order to understand the process of entrepreneurship.
Williams and Krasniqi (2018)	23 To examine how human and social capital influence the entrepreneurial activity of migrant entrepreneurs who fled conflicts	The study explores how human and social capital resources shape migrant entrepreneurship, emphasizing forced migrants. Initial capital limitations, with low human and social capital, evolve through education, training, and broader networks, influencing entrepreneurial behavior over time.	Entrepreneurship in the context of refugees.
Chreim et al. (2018)	23 Literature review on female entrepreneurship, ethnic minorities, and immigration.	The confluence of gender and ethnicity underscores the role of distinct resources (human, social, and financial) in molding entrepreneurial strategies, subsequently yielding distinct outcomes across individual, business, and societal dimensions. These dynamics are intricately shaped by the cultural and institutional contexts of both the co-ethnic community and the host country.	Public policies, institutional environments, comparisons across countries, movement patterns, differences between established and new migrant entrepreneurs, outcomes, performance, resource utilization, and adopted strategies.
Igwe et al. (2020)	19 To examine the attributes of the Igbos in Eastern Nigeria and the underlying factors that influence their entrepreneurial behavior.	Results linked to social learning theory demonstrate that Igbo families provide an entrepreneurial leadership platform that influences youth through role models, providing mastery and socialization experiences. It also provides entrepreneurial learning that prepares the younger generation to take on business as a way of life.	Studies compared with other ethnic groups that do not have the same network characteristics that were studied. Research how ethnic groups face marginalization and discrimination.
Lundberg and Rehnfors (2018)	19 Entrepreneurs who migrated from a developed economy to another developed economy.	The intention to become a transnational entrepreneur was driven by opportunity rather than necessity. Furthermore, a business-friendly institutional environment facilitates and encourages entrepreneurship	Studies of transnational entrepreneurs moving from and to developed economies are needed to test the generalizability and make transnational entrepreneurship theory more context sensitive.
Howell (2019)	18 To compare ethnic differences in granting external financing from formal and informal sources to start a new business.	Certain groups of ethnic minority entrepreneurs tend to face more extreme financing constraints compared to majority groups. This negatively impacts business performance.	Distinguish whether ethnic-based differences in the seed funding process are due to discrimination, selection effects, or a combination of both.
Munkejord (2017)	17 To explore the stories of immigrant women currently running a rural business.	Women undertake business in a rural context as an alternative to unemployment or underemployment, as a means of living in an attractive region and for remuneration. It highlights the role of family support and spatial insertion.	Rural development through ethnic-migrant entrepreneurship.
Nazareno et al. (2018)	15 Literature review on immigrant entrepreneurship	Some new forms of immigrant businesses have also shifted from local, labor-intensive, service-oriented businesses to diverse, knowledge-intensive professional services.	Changing migration flow and broader structural circumstances in the country of origin and/or host country and interaction between national/local and transnational/global forces.
Bolzani and Boari (2018)	14 To investigate whether and how migrant status impacts the perceived viability of export opportunities for entrepreneurs	Migrant status positively moderates the relationship between perceived public financial support and perceived viability of exporting	Understand whether immigrant and non-immigrant entrepreneurs differ regarding the perceived desirability of exporting, including measuring elements such as attitudes, social norms, and values
Szkudlarek and Wu (2018)	13 TO investigate the role of embeddedness in business ventures of migrants and ethnic entrepreneurs.	The communities investigated predominantly employ their co-ethnic norms, assumptions, and frames of reference to make sense of and act on business opportunities.	Some of the research questions that could be investigated could address whether a specificity of a given environment imposes higher structural embeddedness? Could it be that some environments might be more accepting to culturally diverse scripts of business venturing, while others might demand cultural assimilation? What culturally-bounded strategies translate well into various contexts and how can we extend our venturing acumen with emic insights?

Note: Elaborated by the authors.

The second stage of the Phase 2 involves citation analysis through the clusters presented in Vosviewer© (Figure 4). Unlike the citation report presented by WoS, Vosviewer©'s citation analysis encompasses citations used by the selected articles in the study. Thus, it allows us to understand, through a grouped analysis, which academic information sources are most cited by the theme.

Figure 4

Co-citation network



Note: Elaborated by the authors using Vosviewer.

Figure 4 demonstrates the classification of references that were cited at least five times in the studies under analysis. Out of a total of 5159 references cited in the studies, the software classified 97 references within the parameters. The references were grouped into four clusters. The classification criterion follows the strength of the connection between citations, meaning citations mentioned simultaneously in a minimum of 2 articles together. In this regard, four clusters were classified.

Cluster 1, in red, contains 30 articles and is the densest. The studies by Kloosterman (2010), Kloosterman and Rath (2001), and Kloosterman et al. (1999) stand out. These articles share the concept of mixed embeddedness, derived from Granovetter's embeddedness concept. The authors argue that, in addition to the structures and resources in which entrepreneurs are embedded, other complex networks are used. Utilizing the same assumptions of mixed embeddedness by Jones et al. (2014) demonstrate how mixed embeddedness occurs with ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurs in the East Midlands of England. In a theoretical essay, Ram et al. (2017) point out the limits and potentialities of the mixed embeddedness concept, indicating paths for future research involving the racialization of society, regulatory factors, market ghettoization, and gender. It is evident that the effort of Cluster 1 is to position the use of the mixed embeddedness concept for understanding ethnic entrepreneurship.

Cluster 2, in blue, contains 28 articles. The majority of highly cited studies consist of bibliometric research or theoretical essays. Zhou (2004) profiles research in ethnic entrepreneurship and concludes that there is still immense room for debate and academic constructions. He argues that studies indicate that ethnic entrepreneurship still represents an outlet for overcoming labor market barriers mediated by prejudice, racism, or underemployment. However, businesses led by ethnic entrepreneurs are no longer just rudimentary and confined to certain circles; they now encompass considerable levels of scale and formalization.

Authors Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013) present a systematic review of the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship. They outline that the main countries that the studies focus on (USA, Europe, and Oceania), and the main theoretical problems of the theme. On the other hand, Drori et al. (2009) address transnational entrepreneurship as an emerging research field and present some theoretical perspectives used to understand the phenomenon. They dedicate effort to ethnic entrepreneurship, providing a brief overview of the topic.

Another bibliometric study is conducted by Ilhan-Nas et al. (2011), which focuses on scientific production on international ethnic entrepreneurship between 1935 and 2009. The findings demonstrate the effects on the phenomenon concerning transnationalism, mixed embeddedness, and interactions between social, human, and financial capital. Finally, authors Chaganti and Greene (2002) develop a study to refine the concept of ethnic entrepreneur and discover that it is necessary to include in the definition the level of involvement in the community where the entrepreneur is embedded. They also demonstrate that this involvement affects business performance. It is noticeable that the effort of Cluster 2 is to understand the field, with theoretical and bibliometric studies to verify the limits and spaces for theoretical advances that relate to ethnic, transnational, international, and migrant entrepreneurship.

Cluster 3, in green, relies on debates largely anchored in Economic Sociology. Some studies cite Granovetter's work (1985), which criticizes the view of economic action by presenting the counterpoint of social embeddedness. In this sense, Cluster 1 studies have a close relationship with Cluster 3 in constructing the mixed embeddedness concept. Although not the most cited, special mention goes to Pierre Bourdieu's text "The Forms of Capital," published in 1986. Cluster 3 indicates the most robust theoretical sources of research in the field and shows how the dialogue between researchers is anchored.

Cluster 4, in pink, presents more recent articles with emerging themes, as the previous citations analysis showed too. The studies cover topics of culture, public policies, and female ethnic entrepreneurship (Chreim et al., 2018, Kloosterman, 2003, Szkludarek & Wu, 2018, Verduijn & Essers, 2013). As Figure 4 shows, Cluster four is scattered between Clusters 1 and 2 (red and blue), indicating a dialogue with the empirical and theoretical fields of research that, consequently, brings out new study themes.

Phase III - Content analysis

Stage 1: Meta-Analysis of Bibliometrics

Following the cluster analysis, we proceeded to examine bibliometrics produced in the field over the last five years. In total, seven studies were conducted, but one study was not found in any free databases and is not in Table 2. Among these studies, the work of Chreim et al. (2018) stands out, focusing on female entrepreneurship. Through literature review, the authors demonstrate that certain resources possessed by female entrepreneurs contribute to shaping strategies that influence individual, business, and social outcomes of the organization.

According to the same authors, these elements are influenced by cultural, institutional, co-ethnic contexts, and the context of the host country itself. They also present a research agenda involving additional studies on public policies for immigrant entrepreneurs, the institutional environment for immigrant female entrepreneurship, comparisons between immigrant entrepreneurial movements in different countries, movement of immigrant female entrepreneurs from developed to developing countries, differences between established and newly arrived migrant entrepreneurs, results and performance, and the use of resources and adopted strategies (Chreim et al., 2018). The work positions itself as a clarification and a reiteration according to the

analysis factors (Huff, 2008), as it provides an explanation that expands existing knowledge and improves the understanding of gender differences in ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurship. As an emerging theme, the analysis of gender differences also appears in the study by Indarti et al. (2020).

Table 2

Synthesis of the meta-analysis of bibliometric studies

Bibliometric studies produced in the last 5 years	Analysis model (Huff, 2008)			
	Clarification	Reiteration	Adjustment	Rebuttal
Sinkovics and Reuber (2021). Beyond disciplinary silos: A systematic analysis of the migrant entrepreneurship literature	■	■	■	■
Yetkin and Tunçalp (2023). Beyond embedded or not embedded: immigrant entrepreneurs' embeddedness levels	■	■	■	
Nazareno et al. (2018). Global dynamics of immigrant entrepreneurship Changing trends, ethnonational variations, and reconceptualizations	■			■
Indarti, et al. (2020). Quo vadis, ethnic entrepreneurship? A bibliometric analysis of ethnic entrepreneurship in growing markets		■		
Chreim et al. (2018). Review of female immigrant entrepreneurship research: Past findings, gaps and ways forward	■	■		
Malki et al. (2020). The entrepreneurial financing of the immigrant entrepreneurs: a literature review	■			

Note: Elaborated by the authors.

The study by Sinkovics and Reuber (2021), through literature analysis, clarifies that one of the success factors for ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurs is the use of ethnic social networks in business. Discrimination appears as a moderating factor. Yetkin and Tunçalp (2023) also emphasize the importance of immersion in the ethnic social network as a tool to confront racism and discrimination. According to the clarification factor in Huff's analysis (2008), these explanations aid in understanding the phenomenon from its roots.

Additionally, according to the analysis proposed by Huff (2008), authors Sinkovics and Reuber (2021) make an adjustment to existing knowledge regarding the host country, where the self-employment rate among migrants is higher than that of native individuals, and their businesses are likely to be more successful. Concerning reiteration (Huff, 2008), the authors (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021) emphasize that negative factors influence the decision to undertake, such as institutional factors (blocked social mobility), gender issues in the country of origin, and precariousness in the labor market in the host country (including exploitation, physical and verbal abuse, discrimination, and exclusion from the job market).

The studies by Sinkovics and Reuber (2021), and Chreim et al. (2018) show points of convergence in addressing aspects of co-ethnic networks in business. The level of social embeddedness also appears in the studies by Yetkin and Tunçalp (2023) and Indarti et al. (2020). These findings are interconnected with the co-citation analysis, as demonstrated by cluster 1 (Figure 4).

Concerning the denial of Huff's analysis model (2008), the authors (Sinkovics & Reuber, 2021) emphasize that, contrary to belief, immigrant businesses are not only small and marginal. In the USA, for example, there are immigrant businesses in the high-tech sector. In the same vein, the study by Nazareno et al. (2018) demonstrates that some new forms of immigrant businesses have also shifted from local businesses, with intensive use of labor and service-oriented, to diversified and knowledge-intensive

professional services. Immigrant entrepreneurs can now be found in more traditional economies and different sectors, including the health and long-term care sector.

However, the analysis by Nazareno et al. (2018) emphasizes that immigrants still faced racial discrimination and cultural barriers in their trajectories. It is noted that a disproportionate number made the transition to high-profile executive positions with decision-making power in some leading high-tech companies. This occurs despite migrants in the technology sector having more access to capital, advanced academic degrees, and the validation of their professional careers in the USA. This demonstrates that prejudice still constitutes a barrier.

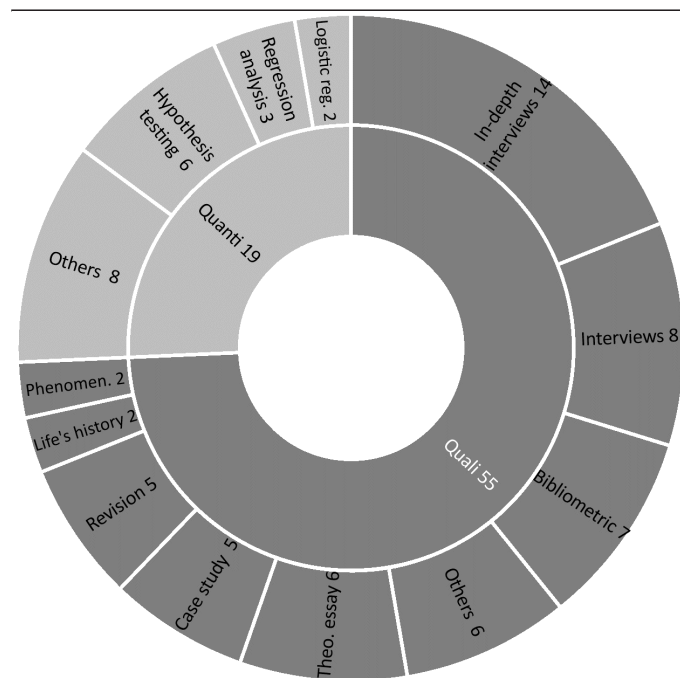
Finally, the study by Malki et al. (2020) clarifies that access to financing for an ethnic entrepreneur also presents barriers mediated by prejudice and education. However, the use of co-ethnic networks itself is a way to overcome barriers to financing. The use of co-ethnic networks also aligns with the studies by Sinkovics and Reuber (2021), Chreim et al. (2018), Indarti et al. (2020). Lastly, Table 2 synthesizes the bibliometric analysis, indicating the contribution points to the theme of ethnic entrepreneurship, according to Huff's (2008) theoretical analysis model.

Stage 2 - Content Analysis of the 74 Articles

As shown in Figure 5, the methodological approach of the studies, the main theories employed, and the countries of origin of ethnic groups are examined. Concerning methodological approaches, 55 studies were classified as qualitative, with interviews being the primary data collection tool in 22 of them.

Figure 5

Methodological approach, main theories used and countries from which ethnic groups originated



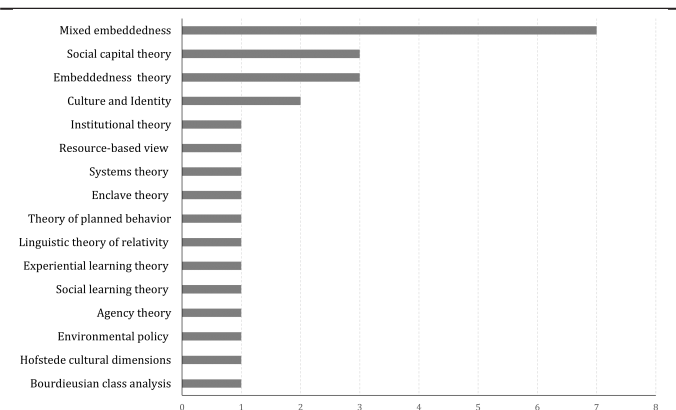
Note: Elaborated by the authors.

Quantitative research appears in a smaller number, with a total of 19 studies, and hypothesis testing emerges as the predominant technique. There are no records of studies utilizing mixed methods. These characteristics may indicate an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon by qualitative research, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of ethnic entrepreneurship within a specific context of reality. It is essential to note that studies incorporating mixed methods could contribute to advancing knowledge on the subject.



Figure 5b

Methodological approach, main theories used and countries from which ethnic groups originated



Note: Elaborated by the authors.

Regarding theoretical approach, the mixed embeddedness, resulting from Kloosterman's studies (2010) (Figure 5b), stands out in explaining the complex network involving the entrepreneur in enhancing their economic condition. In this context, immersion is intricate and not solely focused on ethnic environments. This understanding represents an advancement in comprehending Granovetter's Embeddedness Theory (1985), underpinning three studies. Additionally, with a close relationship to the previous assumptions, Bourdieu's Social Capital Theory serves as a theoretical basis in three studies (Bourdieu, 1986). In total 47 studies lack a clear theoretical foundation. In any case, the remaining theoretical approaches are scattered, adding challenges to the advancement of the theme (Vershina & Rodgers, 2019, Zhou, 2004).

Table 3

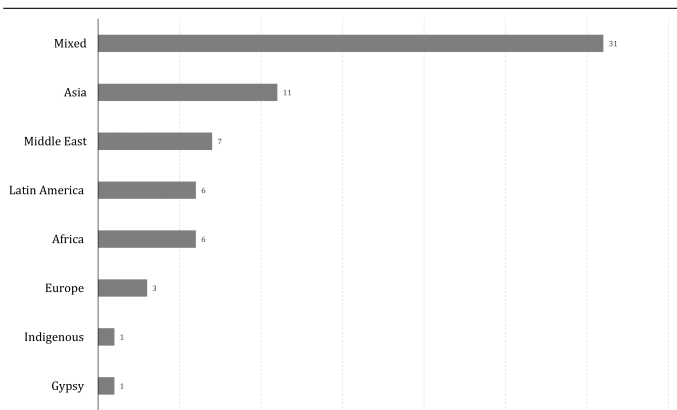
Key findings and future research

Key finding	Total Papers	Future Research	Total Papers
Network	13 Chen and Redding (2017), Falcão et al. (2021), Inouye et al. (2020), Javaid et al. (2020), Kazlou and Wennberg (2021), Nercissians (2019), Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al. (2020), Salamanca and Alcaraz (2019), Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2019), Schött (2018), Szkudlarek and Wu (2018), Tubadji et al. (2020), Yetkin and Tunçalp (2023).	Gender	9 Chreim et al. (2018), Cho et al. (2019), Hu et al. (2023), Indarti et al. (2020), Ratten and Dana (2017), Song-Naba (2020), Vershinina and Rodgers (2020), Villares-Varela and Essers (2021), Yeröz (2019).
Social Capital	10 Chen and Redding (2017), Chreim et al. (2018), Falcão et al. (2021), Gomez et al. (2020), Igwe et al. (2020), Nazareno et al. (2018), Rosique-Blasco et al. (2017), Salamanca and Alcaraz (2019), Szkudlarek and Wu (2018), Williams and Krasniqi (2018).	International business	9 Bolzani and Boari (2018), Cruz et al. (2018), Czinkota et al. (2021), Emontspool and Servais (2017), Glinka (2018), Inouye et al. (2020), Ozasir-Kacar and Essers (2019), Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2019), Sinkovics and Reuber (2021).
Culture	10 Alrawadieh et al. (2019), Evansluong et al. (2019), Javaid et al. (2020), Ojo (2019), Phuong and Harima (2019), Tehseen and Anderson (2020), Song-Naba (2020), Tehseen et al. (2021).	Culture	9 Czinkota et al. (2021), Falcão et al. (2021), Evansluong et al. (2019), Gomez et al. (2020), Phuong and Harima (2019), Szkudlarek and Wu (2018), Tehseen and Anderson (2020), Tehseen et al. (2021), Tubadji et al. (2020).
Ethnicity	10 Awaworyi Churchill (2017), Cruz et al. (2018), Gittins (2020), Gomez et al. (2020), Kone et al. (2021), McPherson (2017), Orozco (2022), Ozasir-Kacar and Essers (2019), Szkudlarek and Wu (2018), Tehseen and Anderson (2020).	Network	8 Chen and Redding (2017), Czinkota et al. (2021), Falavigna et al. (2019), Igwe et al. (2020), Javaid et al. (2020), Kazlou and Wennberg (2021), Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2019).
Gender	10 Chreim et al. (2018), Munkejord (2017), Ozasir-Kacar and Essers (2019), Ratten and Dana (2017), Senthana et al. (2021), Song-Naba (2020), Vershinina and Rodgers (2020), Villares-Varela and Essers (2021), Yeröz (2019).	Comparisons between ethnic groups	8 Chreim et al. (2018), Cruz et al. (2018), Igwe et al. (2020), Malki et al. (2020), Orozco (2022), Phuong and Harima (2019), Price et al. (2017), Senthana et al. (2021).
Financing	9 Chreim et al. (2018), Cruz, et al. (2018), Howell (2019), Malki et al. (2020), Yagüe-Perales et al. (2019), Nazareno et al. (2018), Salamanca and Alcaraz (2019).	Refugee	7 Alexandre et al. (2019), Alrawadieh et al. (2019), Chababi et al. (2017), Nazareno et al. (2018), Schött (2018), Singh and Koiri (2018), Williams and Krasniqi (2018).
Ethnic Market	8 Anwar and Daniel (2017), Cruz et al. (2020), Evansluong et al. (2019), Gomez et al. (2020), Kone et al. (2021), Orozco (2022), Price et al. (2017), Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2019).	Public policy	6 Chreim et al. (2018), Glinka (2018), Nazareno et al. (2018), Ratten and Dana (2017), Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2019), Senthana et al. (2021).
Family context	8 Igwe et al. (2020), Javaid et al. (2020), Hack-Polay et al. (2020), Kazlou and Wennberg (2021), Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al. (2020), Salamanca and Alcaraz (2019).	Decision making	6 Cruz et al. (2020), Kone et al. (2021), Salamanca and Alcaraz (2019), Yagüe-Perales et al. (2019).

Note: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 5c

Methodological approach, main theories used and countries from which ethnic groups originated



Note: Elaborated by the authors.

The ethnic groups studied predominantly consist of mixed ethnicities, with groups originating from Asia, especially China and India. The Middle East is highlighted due to the presence of groups fleeing conflicts (Figure 5c), such as Syrians. These new dynamics involving wars, migration crises, and refugees also have the potential to influence research on ethnic entrepreneurship (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021, Vershinina & Rodgers, 2019).

Table 3 illustrates the main findings and gaps for future studies. The themes of Networks, Gender, and Culture seem to represent ongoing research efforts with the potential to stimulate further studies. The findings demonstrate the role of ethnic networks in enhancing ethnic identity, constructing networks to overcome business barriers, and influencing the decision to undertake entrepreneurial ventures. It is also evident that there is a need to deepen studies on the effects of networks on the performance of



ethnic entrepreneurs and how these networks are constructed within each ethnic group (Chen & Redding, 2017, Inouye et al., 2020, Kazlou & Wennberg, 2021, Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2020, Schøtt, 2018, Yetkin & Tunçalp, 2023).

Studies addressing culture also represent a significant research effort. Cultural identity for ethnic entrepreneurs is a factor influencing their decision to undertake ventures. There may be a crucial cultural exchange for ethnic entrepreneurs in the process of entrepreneurship and in exploring ethnic markets. Future studies could identify the role of culture among different ethnic groups, genders, and generations (Dheer & Lenartowicz, 2018, Evansluong et al., 2019, Song-Naba, 2020, Tehseen et al., 2021, Tehseen & Anderson, 2020).

Gender-related issues are also raised, especially in businesses led by women from ethnic backgrounds, who face barriers related to culture, religion, economics, ethnic enclave, misogyny, among others. Nevertheless, they play a crucial role in supporting their families, addressing underemployment, and achieving better remuneration opportunities. Future studies that explore the relationship between gender and power, as well as how women overcome these barriers, can advance the topic (Chreim et al., 2018, Cho et al., 2019, Munkejord, 2017, Ratten & Dana, 2017, Senthanaar et al., 2021, Song-Naba, 2020, Verduijn & Essers, 2013). Other topics for future studies are identified, with a focus on public policies, comparisons between ethnic groups, and international studies in ethnic entrepreneurship.

The synthesis of results about this research is in the Figure 6. The findings of this study show us the main theoretical debate centered in Economic Sociology, Social Capital Theory, and mixed embeddedness concepts. The methodological strategies of investigation are mainly qualitative, predominantly interviews techniques. In other hand, in quantitative perspective, the predominant techniques are hypothesis testing. All these elements made it possible to support the main findings and the research agenda that are intertwined in three central elements: networks, gender, and culture.

their theoretical anchoring from four clusters. This facilitates the comprehension and theoretical construction of the research theme, indicating social immersion and the construction of co-ethnic networks, as well as Economic Sociology as the main foundations for new theoretical advancements. Content analysis, in turn, demonstrates how bibliometric studies complement each other, indicating future paths for research and aligning with the findings of citation and co-citation analysis. However, the network analysis shows small collaboration networks, suggesting a research agenda that still requires more relations and interactions among researchers. Nevertheless, the Brazilian research cluster on the topic is noteworthy.

Nevertheless, it can be noted that certain aspects of research in ethnic entrepreneurship intersect, such as gender issues, network construction, resources, funding, refugees' international politics, public policies, ethnicity, ethnic markets, marginalization, and prejudice.

Among the findings, the work of Chreim et al. (2018) stands out as the only study present in three analyses (citations, co-citations, and in the meta-analysis of bibliometrics). This indicates that ethnic/migrant entrepreneurship led by women is a field of interest for researchers and is likely to gain more research attention in the coming years. However, other gender perspectives within ethnic entrepreneurship, such as those related to the LGBTQIAP+ community, can also be explored.

Beyond what has been addressed, it is essential to advance into areas not covered in the literature, such as the context of ethnic entrepreneurship in Latin America and Africa. It is noteworthy that these countries experience diasporas and migration movements of refugees from developing countries with lower income to developing countries with higher income (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). The study or exclusion of this theme from the mainstream can be topics for future research. Another crucial factor is that consistent ethnic networks are historically present in Latin America and Africa, and consequently, ethnic markets occur in this context without migration.

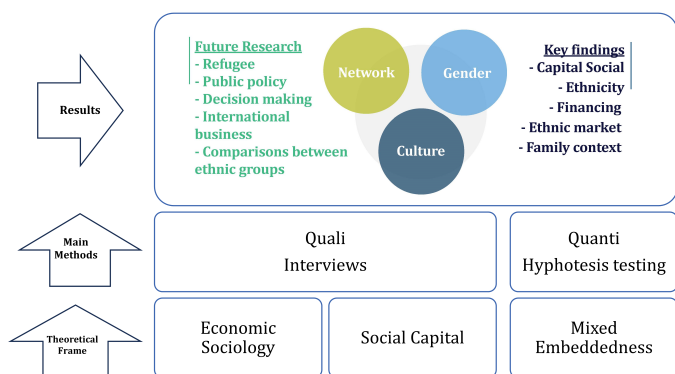
Another timidly addressed theme is the engagement of entrepreneurs in specific ethnic groups (Changanti & Greene, 2002, Indarti et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs may politically engage in causes such as combating prejudice and discrimination and use entrepreneurship as a tool to generate significant change for their ethnic group. This research theme could contribute to understanding entrepreneurship through engagement compared to conventional entrepreneurship driven by necessity or opportunity. Although discrimination, prejudice, and marginalization are discussed in the content analysis, it is essential not to forget the global movement of xenophobia and prejudice that challenges societal common sense. Perhaps, another lens from researchers could shed light on these hard issues, bringing to the forefront another side of ethnic entrepreneurs' motivations.

In a gesture of transparency and academic responsibility, the study acknowledges its limitations, as keywords may have limited the results. However, co-citation analysis involving references used in the articles allowed the inclusion of relevant studies for the field that were not necessarily in the Web of Science. Another limitation lies in the blurred boundaries between immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship, as not all immigrant entrepreneurship is ethnic and vice versa. This lack of clarity in research may indicate the inextricable relationship between the increase in migratory flows and ethnic entrepreneurship. These questions can be targeting entrepreneurship studies to clarify the subject in other research initiatives.

Given the methodological robustness, the study privileged to the triangulation of different analytical methods for a comprehensive understanding of ethnic entrepreneurship, demonstrating a holistic and in-depth research approach. This resulted in a theoretical contribution that highlights different perspectives and relevant foundational theories that had not been presented in the ethnic

Figure 6

Synthesis of research findings



Note: Elaborated by the authors.

FINAL REMARKS

This study advances by employing various analytical tools to present the characteristics of research in ethnic entrepreneurship, its development, theoretical approaches, and themes, as well as its research agenda. The analysis of citations and co-citations allowed an understanding of how researchers in the field draw

entrepreneurship literature. Due to the dispersion of theoretical approaches about ethnic entrepreneurship, Huff (2008) classifies this type of theoretical contribution as synthesis. In other words, through a synthesizing perspective, the study provided a broader theoretical explanatory framework for understanding the ethnic entrepreneurship phenomenon. Additionally, the identification of emerging themes, literature gaps, and suggestions for future research demonstrates a significant contribution to advancing knowledge.

In conclusion, it is expected that this study contributes to the evolution of the ethnic entrepreneurship theme, especially for those researchers seeking to understand it critically and with theoretical robustness, in the pursuit of advancing knowledge about entrepreneurship as an inherently human phenomenon intimately linked to new global dynamics.

Funding

This study was financed in part by the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio de Janeiro - IFRJ - Code 23828.000028/2022-20, Fundação Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - CAPES - Code 88887.907018/2023-00, and Fundação Carlos Chagas Filho de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - FAPERJ - Code E-26/010.100815/2018.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' statement of individual contributions

Roles	Contributions		
	Santos-Souza H. R. dos.	Azevedo-Ferreira M.	Xavier Neto O.
Conceptualization	■		
Methodology	■	■	
Software	■	■	■
Validation	■	■	■
Formal analysis	■	■	■
Investigation	■		
Resources	■	■	
Data Curation	■		
Writing - Original Draft	■		
Writing - Review & Editing	■		
Visualization	■	■	
Supervision	■		
Project administration	■		
Funding acquisition		■	

Note: Acc. CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy): <https://credit.niso.org/>

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