Embeddedness and entrepreneurial traditions: Entrepreneurship of Bukharian Jews in diaspora

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Abstract

- Purpose: The study explores how entrepreneurship traditions evolve in diaspora.
- Design/methodology/approach: A qualitative multiple case study examining the role of diaspora embeddedness, extended family, ethno-religious-, cultural- and social ties, and relevant structures shaping diaspora entrepreneurship.
- Findings: We found that social ties and diaspora embeddedness create dynamism fostering entrepreneurial identity as part of the Bukharian culture, and as a preferred career option in the context of Bukharian Jews in diaspora. Diasporic family businesses are products of culture and tradition that migrate to new locations with families and communities, not as disconnected business entities.
- Research limitations/implications: The ways in which families nurture a highly entrepreneurial culture that transfers across generations and contexts are context-specific and not per se generalizable to other diasporas.
- Practical implications: Diasporans often continue their traditions and become entrepreneurs again after their settlement, or generate hybrid circular solutions that allow them to employ their competences in the new contexts or to connect various contexts. This calls for transnational entrepreneurship-policymaking.
- Social implications: Time changes diasporas. A long-term commitment to the business environment evolves and reduces the mobility of the individual diasporan; typically the children of these migrants become more integrated and follow divergent career paths. Hence, their plans do not necessarily involve family entrepreneurship, which poses a challenge for the continuation of the original culture of entrepreneurship.
- Originality/value: Despite a notable tradition in Jewish studies, there is limited research on Jewish entrepreneurial diaspora and its contemporary entrepreneurial identity and tradition. Furthermore, the population of Bukharian Jews is an unknown and under-explored highly entrepreneurial group that may offer instrumental views to larger diasporic audiences being concerned about maintaining notions of ethnic heritage and identity.

Key words: Family business, diaspora, diaspora entrepreneurship, embeddedness, entrepreneurial culture, Bukharian Jews

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Introduction

Diaspora business is a dynamic phenomenon\textsuperscript{2} that is linked to broader migratory waves and globalization (e.g., Elo et al., 2019; Saxenian, 2005). Diasporans are migrants who settle in some places, move on, and regroup; they may also be dispersed, and they are in a continuous state of formation and reformation (Cohen, 2008, 142). Diasporas develop further, as the globalization and the respective institutional frameworks, the interconnectedness and technology, and the affordable transportation connections facilitate the process (Cohen, 2008). The phenomenon of diaspora business and entrepreneurship stretches from locally embedded small ethnic enclave firms to multinational trade around the world. Immigrant entrepreneurs create value in the global economy by developing economic activities in the countries where they settle and in their home country (Teagarden, 2010). The most prominent examples are the highly-skilled Asian immigrants in the Silicon Valley (Saxenian 2002, 2005, Teagarden 2010). Immigrant entrepreneurs are important not only at the forefront of high technology but also in micro-businesses being drivers of value creation in their communities, home and host countries, and global economy (Choi, 2003). As Saxenian (2002, 2005) notes, not all migrants remain in the host country; they follow opportunities abroad; hence, the more localized and settled diasporas offer different entrepreneurial commitment to their location (Elo, 2016).

The importance of diaspora is often approached through the lens of adaptation and assimilation while the interesting entrepreneurial heritage is ignored (Portes & Rivas, 2011; Elo and Hieta, 2017). Mostly, the economic effects of diasporas have been studied from the perspective of remittances sent by diasporas to their families in their country of origin (Cohen, 2005), from a network approach seeing diaspora networks as facilitators of international trade (Saxenian, 2002), and as communities forming foreign direct investments and diaspora businesses enabling information flows across international borders (Javorcik et al., 2011). Additionally, diaspora entrepreneurs as individuals have to address the challenges that arise from the differences between country of origin (COO) and country of residence (COR) in terms of institutional and business environments (Elo & Jokela, 2014). Previous research has focused on topics such as waves of migration, flows, and first-generation integration, addressing less diasporic entrepreneurial life and traditions across time in different contexts. Diasporas have been found to be social formations, presenting economic and entrepreneurial structures that evolve in a context of multiple embeddedness (Basco, 2017; Elo and Riddle, 2016). Diasporas possess forms of social connectedness and act as cultural conduits and sources of resources (e.g., Appadurai 2003, Hall 2003, Muzychenko, 2008). Research also reveals that diaspora business succession and diaspora entrepreneurship are often closely linked to family obligations and strategies, especially in collectivist cultures (e.g. Elo & Jokela, 2014; Vissak and Zhang, 2014). Entrepreneurial family traditions play a significant role in diaspora as families bring particular knowledge and skills with them, and apply these competences, 

\textsuperscript{2} Diaspora business as an overall term includes diaspora entrepreneurs and their firms, but also diaspora-owned corporations and investor-actors; see more in Elo & Riddle (2016). Firms established or/and owned by diasporans are called ‘diaspora businesses’ to distinguish them from ‘diaspora entrepreneurs’, who are individual persons.
orientations and traditions in the new host countries as well (e.g., Baycan Levent, Masurel & Nijkamp, 2003; Basu, & Altinay, 2002).

Although the role of diaspora communities for societal and business development is notable, little is known about how diasporas, being geographically dispersed and embedded in different contexts, are able to foster and maintain their entrepreneurial traditions across generations (e.g., Elo & Minto-Coy, 2018). There is very little explorative or descriptive research on entrepreneurial resources stemming from diasporic embeddedness in the contemporary diaspora business, especially addressing entrepreneurial heritage, continuation and evolution. We know that entrepreneurship disconnects from its context and embeddedness during migration and transforms its nature in the host country, partly due to diverse impediments (Elo & Jokela, 2014; Teixeira & Truelove, 2007) and that entrepreneurial motivations are context-related (Aziz, Friedman, Bopieva & Keles, 2013). Still, there is little literature on the embedded structures in which diaspora traditions and entrepreneurship continue in post-migration life, especially regarding the family business context, despite the fact that many migrants actually engage in some sort of family business (Baycan Levent, Masurel & Nijkamp, 2003; Vissak & Zhang, 2014). Entrepreneurship in such embedded diasporic structures also offers multifaceted meanings to diasporans, their families and relatives, for instance the livelihood, status, integration and transnational linkages (Heinonen, 2011). The bi-directional interplay between entrepreneurship and its socio-cultural embedded context remains under-explored, partly due to biased cultural lenses (Saxenian, 2005; Elo & Jokela, 2014). Furthermore, we need to approach economic adaptation via entrepreneurship as a cultural good that is co-developed within a diaspora community, not just as a means of livelihood (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Portes et al., 2002). Theorizing on the determinants and antecedents of entrepreneurship and transfer of traditions calls for a more contextualized examination (Bamberger, 2008; Basco, 2017, Whetter, 2009).

The multiple embeddedness of diaspora businesses, i.e., firms, and their networks is a key factor to be investigated in terms of entrepreneurial culture, venturing and motivation (Basco, 2017; Elo & Minto-Coy, 2018; Elo et al., 2018). Hence, embeddedness is not limited to an ethnic enclave or family, but family is the core-nurturing context for traditions and culture. The family-related resources, embeddedness, and entrepreneurial heritage may foster entrepreneurial continuation and transfer entrepreneurial mindset. Since diaspora businesses are increasingly global, even born-global, their entrepreneurial linkages and formations are of central theoretical importance (Elo, Täube & Volovelsky, 2019; Tung, 2008). Therefore, our research questions are: (i) What is the role of family’s entrepreneurial culture and tradition in establishing a new diaspora family business (i.e., becoming a diaspora entrepreneur) or continuing a diaspora family business? (ii) What other social and diaspora ties foster diaspora family firms and entrepreneurship? and (iii) How does the diaspora embeddedness maintain entrepreneurial traditions and culture?

In other disciplines, such as history or economy, there are studies examining diaspora business formations in retrospect, e.g., Bergsten & Choi (2003).
To address the aforementioned research questions, we decided to use qualitative methods and multiple case studies of Bukharian Jewish diaspora, and focus on the individual who is the entrepreneur, his/her firm, as well as the surrounding social ties and embeddedness. The Bukharian Jewish diaspora is a theoretically relevant example (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2011) as the majority of Bukharian Jews have migrated and Uzbekistan has become their historical homeland. Due to the ethno-religious aspects, the main flow of migration has followed the call of the Jewish communities in Israel (cf. “Aliyah”) or in the USA (mainly in the New York area). In the Bukharian Jewish community, complete families and clans have migrated and taken their traditions and skills to new areas, hence several generations are now shaping their businesses (Levin, 2013).

Our findings illustrate a multitude of entrepreneurial motivations that link modernity with traditions transferring entrepreneurial culture into practice. Social ties, i.e. family, diaspora community, and close friends play a central role for diaspora entrepreneurs that establish new firms and develop extant family firms as these ties prepare and assist entrepreneurship paths. The results demonstrate the interconnectedness of the entrepreneurs’ life and the firm, both as embedded parts of global diaspora and diasporic heritage. The Jewish diaspora community is the primary layer of embeddedness, but its social ties span different geographic contexts and foster the idea of entrepreneurial heritage. This entrepreneurial identity is nurtured across generations.

Our article contributes to bridge a gap between family business and diaspora entrepreneurship research. Firstly, our article incorporates new dimensions of diaspora business hardly investigated in the field of family firms (e.g., Basco, 2017). It underlines that the diasporic heritage and multiple embeddedness are important for developing family businesses, shaping the entrepreneurial mindset and resource base (cf. Elo, 2016, Elo et al., 2019), and creating multifocal diaspora business (Solano, 2018). Secondly, our article also contributes to the calls for understanding of diaspora entrepreneurship of these global, diasporic families (Elo et al., 2018; Hamilton et al., 2017; Basco, 2017; Etemad, 2018). These families constitute extended entrepreneurial families (cf., Hamilton et al., 2017) in diaspora that span different geographic and cultural contexts with diverse linguistic, cultural, professional, and entrepreneurial resources. Historically, their businesses had developed as long-term family ventures with notable connections socially, e.g. through marriage, and across generations to particular locations and industries (Basco & Bartkeviciute, 2016; Elo, 2016; Ochildiev, Pinkhasov & Kalontarov, 2007; Rybakov, 2017). Despite thousands of years of diasporic history, these families have not assimilated or given up their entrepreneurial heritage; instead, they actively maintain entrepreneurial culture and identity (Ochildiev et al., 2007).

**Literature review**

*Diaspora entrepreneurship- entrepreneurship in dispersion*

Diaspora entrepreneurship and middlemen minorities (e.g., Cohen, 2008; Elo, 2016) are important actors in global business, but rarely addressed from a family angle. According to Cohen (2008, 83), a trade- and business-based diaspora represents a nation of socially interdependent but spatially dispersed communities, in which ‘family and kin, the creation of a
common commercial culture and religion’, among other factors, provide the ties that bind 
(Cohen 2008, p. 83). Literature on immigrants focuses primarily on the first-generation 
migrants and their economic adaptation (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013), while the long-term 
perspective, generation of diasporic entrepreneurial cultures, and multiple embeddedness are 
more central for diaspora entrepreneurs (Elo et al., 2019). The emerging stream of research on 
migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship has taken a closer focus on the actor type and the 
families in the process (Elo et al., 2018, 2019). Drawing on these debates, we argue that the 
family heritage in diaspora is highly relevant for shaping diasporic family business.

The influence of diaspora (Safran, 1991) on people, their entrepreneurship and business 
operations involves particular social structures, ties, and networks (Elo & Minto-Coy, 2018). 
Diasporans are migrants who settle in some places, move on, and regroup; they may also be 
dispersed, and they are in a continuous state of formation and reformation (Cohen, 2008, 142). 
Diasporas and diaspora business emerge capturing host country opportunities enabled by 
migration policies (Saxenian, 2002, 2005) and often pushed by problems related to home 
country (Cohen, 2008; Shane, 2000; Muzychkenko, 2008; Vertovec and Cohen, 1999; Riddle, 
Hvirnak & Nielsen, 2010). There are special immigrant effects that provide competitive 
advantages and innovation capabilities for diasporans (Chung and Tung, 2013; Brubaker, 2005; 
Elo, 2019) and for transnational diaspora entrepreneurs who interconnect national business 
environments (Riddle et al., 2010). On the other hand, diasporans often face employment 
difficulties, such as language barriers and discrimination, more limited employment 
opportunities and glass ceilings, which leads to self-employment and entrepreneurial activity 
(Saxenian, 2002, 2005, see also Berry, 2001). They are often considered to be necessity-driven 
entrepreneurs (Xavier et al., 2012), but over time diaspora ventures change character (Jones et 
al., 2014).

Family relations may be socio-cultural constraints or enablers for entrepreneurship. Diasporic 
families obtain and compare host- and home-country knowledge to their previous knowledge 
and generate unique entrepreneurial resources. Diasporans may differ in their entrepreneurial 
motivations and business models from more local immigrant business, because global diaspora 
is a dynamic social formation that spans numerous business contexts. Diasporans act 
increasingly as economic change agents and build international firms (Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 
2011).

Contemporary research addressing diaspora business and embedded diaspora entrepreneurs 
provides deep insight into the traditions and pathways of these entrepreneurs (Brinkerhoff, 
2009; Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Xavier et al. 2012; Elo & Minto-Coy, 2018). The negative 
effects of host country impediments and resource limitations on diaspora entrepreneurship can 
be counterbalanced by their cultural competences, transnationality and global diaspora 
resources. This unique access to global diaspora resources is not available to others, hence, 
diaspora families possess rather idiographic sources of support. Such ethnic features may be 
resources of competitiveness for diaspora entrepreneurs (Baycan Levent et al., 2003). Diaspora 
entrepreneurs have multifaceted socio-cultural constellations; for example, they might be 
competent in more than two cultures (COO and COR), and due to continuous locational 
reformation they may develop transnational and cosmopolitan entrepreneurial capabilities (e.g.
Vertovec, 2009; Riddle et al., 2010). Transnational features in diaspora entrepreneurship have been described as a social realm of migrants operating in complex cross-national domains with dual cultural, institutional and economic features that facilitate various entrepreneurial strategies (cf., Riddle et al., 2010). This transnational and cosmopolitan dimension of diaspora entrepreneurship is clearly more related to diasporas than to immigrants who are more affected by permanent settlement and assimilation processes (Berry, 2001). This dimension is discussed by Jones et al. (2014), who refer to the newer waves of migrant firms as the new migrant enterprise that is a distinct form deviating from previously dominant immigrant-established ethnic firms.

**Multiple embeddedness of diaspora entrepreneurship**

Diasporans are embedded in multiple layers and contexts (e.g., Etemad, 2018). These are mainly contextualized as geographic country-embeddedness and as structural, socio-cultural opportunity constellations (Jones et al., 2014). The embeddedness in geographic locations and entrepreneurial activity in those typically covers migrants’ countries of origin and countries of residence (Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011). This dyadic lens stems from international business and more historical diaspora entrepreneurship (e.g., Cohen, 2008), while recent research suggests that diaspora entrepreneurs may circulate and/or do business in more than two countries as part of global diaspora that has multiple locations and multifocal businesses (Elo, Täube & Volovelsky, 2019; Basco, 2017; Solano 2018).

The mixed embeddedness perspective often employed for understanding migrant entrepreneurship focuses more on the structural disadvantage of migrants, i.e. barriers, comparing different settings and dynamics in relation to the socio-economic and opportunity contexts (e.g., growing or stagnating). Mixed embeddedness lens combines the individual entrepreneur’s resources, the local opportunity structure and the institutional level (e.g., Kloosterman, 2010). Jones et al. (2014, 501) raise concerns, suggesting that ‘mixed embeddedness’ pays excessive attention to structural imperatives at the expense of the freely chosen strategies of the actors themselves. These types of embeddedness lenses have different ontological origins from international business to sociology (e.g. Basco, 2017). In general, there are several concepts of embeddedness that can be applied to examine diaspora entrepreneurs. Contrary to a particular embeddedness, Etemad (2018) argues that a more multi-layered embeddedness is required for analysing migrant entrepreneurship.

We add to this dyadic discussion ‘global diasporic embeddedness’, which refers to two or more locations and country embeddedness. Diaspora families disperse across countries, even to multiple locations, in which their relational and structural embeddedness manifests itself. Diasporans are embedded in their family, which serves as their primary and micro-level set of close ties (Granovetter, 1985). Family ties are the most close and strong ties that an individual has, thus their role is essential in understanding diaspora behaviour and entrepreneurship (Bram, 2008). These are the person-building ties and structures that shape the education, culture, and other up-bringing of the person (Essers, Doorewaard & Benschop, 2013). In the case of global diaspora and dispersed families, these ties are not located in the same geographical location. Dispersion may affect the notion of family and family cultures even when the ties are strong. Families differ greatly across settings; for example, the idea of a
nuclear family is not a valid construct in a culture that bases its social structures on extended families and clans or strong collective culture (Barnard, Cuervo-Cazurra & Manning, 2017).

Beyond family relations, diasporans are embedded in their own diaspora communities, often also in religious or ethnic groups and specific locations or neighbourhoods in their host countries. In addition, many diasporans are embedded in their global diaspora networks and social-professional contexts and webs of relations in their home country. Their embeddedness both in the home and host country in other mainstream society, professional and industry contexts may also be notable if they have business operations across borders (Rana and Elo, 2017). Such professionally relevant networks provide access to resources that overcome voids and other disadvantages (cf. Jones et al., 2014).

The social embeddedness of a diaspora entrepreneur can be highly explanatory as it may link the individual to the opportunity offering the necessary relational context for business (Kloosterman, 2010). In addition to the structural dimensions of social embeddedness, social context may influence the entrepreneurial motivation and facilitate the establishment of a firm even if the firm is not a social enterprise per se. For example, business establishment driven by social purpose, intertwining economic and social, is motivated by community benefit and employment effects (Middleton & Clarke, 2001; Elo & Jokela, 2014). Family ties can also influence the fundamentals of entrepreneurship; not all family businesses embody the risk affinity and growth motivation (Burns, 2001) of entrepreneurship. Additionally, the more subtle form of lifestyle entrepreneurship is aligned to fit with personal circumstance and lifestyle (Kaplan, 2003), prioritizing personal goals over business goals (Bolton & Thomson, 2003). Lifestyle-based entrepreneurship is matching family issues better, while focusing less on dynamic opportunity development and rapid growth. In this case, the growth impediment is not structural but inherent (e.g. Kloosterman, 2010).

All economic and non-economic actions are socially embedded (Granovetter, 1985). There are diverse ties that connect diasporans to their contexts, from micro-level emotional ties to macro-level institutional ties. Social networks and structures are constructed on strong and weak ties that refer to distance and intensity (Granovetter, 1985). Family ties and close friendships constitute strong ties on the micro-level, whereas other relationships to community members, friends and associates are considered as weaker than the family ties. Social ties, especially co-ethnic ones, are particularly significant in diaspora due to their meaning in identity construction, their more complicated locational aspects, and their multiple contexts (cf., Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Basco, 2017; Solano, 2018). Diaspora ties and communities are the carriers of culture and heritage (Cohen, 2008). They are also a shortcut to trust creation needed in business (Hadjielias & Poutziouris, 2015). Depending on the size of the diaspora, diasporans may be parts of ethnic groups or so-called ethnic enclaves in their host countries, but they may also be individuals without ethnic enclaves and respective co-ethnic social networks in their vicinity. Diasporans are assumed to maintain some relations to their country of origin in general, but that does not necessarily equate to strong family ties; they may also represent more abstract digital follow-up of some traditions or consumer preferences (e.g. Brinkerhoff, 2009). On the community level ties, which are more meso-level, the role of religious ties is also potentially important, as religion is part of tradition, identity, and social life (e.g. Brinkerhoff,
This embeddedness in religious communities may be overarching from family to nation state (Elo et al., 2019). In the case of the Jewish religion, it can produce distinct diaspora communities and social groups (Elo & Vemuri, 2016).

Ethnic businesses and ethnic consumption are examples of diaspora businesses that build on ethnic embeddedness linking home-host country traditions, but they are not exhaustive in representing diaspora traditions and their economic dimensions. Traditions in terms of professional development and entrepreneurship may be highly relevant (Ochildev et al., 2007); for example, many professions run in the family and are transferred from one generation to another. Diasporic entrepreneurial resources, traditions and respective ties may facilitate diasporic ventures (Elo, 2016). So far, there is divertive evidence on whether levels of skill impact the utilization of social ties in diaspora. Previous research has found that both high and lower skilled migrants utilize social ties and networks to develop opportunities (Wong and Salaff, 1998; Harvey, 2008). Gill and Bialski (2009) found that migrants’ social networks are often highly localized, and form and disband rather quickly. Their networks tend to be situational and adaptive with ties that are formed around specific practices (Gill & Bialski, 2009). It has also remained rather implicit to what extent diaspora communities may foster entrepreneurial traditions in the long-term (Ojo, 2013).

Instead of focusing on individual entrepreneurial traits, the diasporic family context and multi-embeddedness offer less understood socio-cultural layers that potentially shape and co-create the dynamics of nascent entrepreneurship and its continuation in dispersion. Hence, we respond to questions on the role of the family’s entrepreneurial culture and tradition in establishing a new diaspora family business or continuing a diaspora family business, on the social and diaspora ties fostering diaspora family firms and entrepreneurship, and on how the diaspora embeddedness maintains entrepreneurial traditions and culture.

**Methodology**

*Bukharian Jewish diaspora as the context of study*

The diaspora of Bukharian Jews serves as the focal diaspora in this study. This Jewish diaspora was dispersed to Central Asia for over 2000 years and has almost completely relocated during the 20th century (Levin, 2013). The cultural orientation of Bukharian Jews has a notable Central Asian influence due to long diasporic history there. Their businesses, following a collective society tradition, emphasize social interplay comprising personal referrals and informal relationships (Ali et al. 1997; Wong & Salaff, 1998; Ellis & Pecotich, 2001). Their migration waves from Central Asia, especially after the collapse of the USSR and the receptive US asylum policies, created a new diaspora hub in the US, but also increased their community in Israel. Their “return” diaspora in Israel represents a different dynamic as most of them migrated to Israel more permanently in search of stable ties, both social and economic (Majidov, 2007; Levin, 2013). In the US, this diaspora has a geographic epicentre in New York and a distinct ethnic-religious identity combined with a strong entrepreneurial-historical character (e.g. Bram, 2008), making it a theoretically interesting example.
Bukharian Jewish diaspora attempt to maintain and cultivate their culture also in dispersion and family is central in this process (Ochildiev et al., 2007). Bukharian Jewish diasporans possess a multitude of strong social ties due to their extended families, which include not only parents, spouses, and children, but also uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents, and other relatives (Elo & Jokela, 2014; 2015, Elo & Vemuri, 2016; Bram, 2008; Levin, 2013). Bukharian Jewish families have large houses and big families, with several generations living together or in the vicinity. The community in New York is concentrated in the broader area of Queens. These Central Asian Jewish family constellations are very different from Western nuclear families and it is difficult to assess the boundaries of intra vs. interfamily relations due to extensive relative networks (cf., Discua Cruz, Howorth & Hamilton, 2013). Furthermore, many have strong social bonds with other Bukharian Jews in their social lives, and their descriptions of friendships in general (with various ethnicities) illustrate characteristics of very strong ties. As there are country-related variations on local traditions and some regional differences in the areas of origin (e.g., Tashkent, Buchara, or even Kazakhstan), the culture is not homogenous despite their embeddedness (Ochildiev et al., 2007). Beyond family, many Bukharians maintain active ties to the Bukharian Jewish community in their private and professional life (Elo, 2016).

The intensity of culture and its forms of application alter over time; the second diaspora generation does not necessarily follow old Bukharian Jewish traditions, such as marrying other Bukharians or pursuing everyday religious traditions in a similar manner. Still, Bukharians have resisted assimilation successfully. The Bukharians are known for their entrepreneurial traditions and they are proud of that, across locations. Some suggest that life on the Silk Road exposed Bukharian Jews to international skills, principles of trade, different cultures and perspectives, which has turned into a tradition of business running in their blood (Liphshiz, 2016).

Research approach

The research design is based on an explorative strategy, which discovers the perceptions and interpretations of the diaspora entrepreneurs regarding their entrepreneurship, the role of their family, migratory dynamics, entrepreneurial traditions, and transfer of cultural capital across generations (Alasuutari, 1995; Cohen, 2008). This is a qualitative study constructed as a multiple case study focusing on individual life cases - individuals in a family context (Yin 1984; Stake, 1995). The case study method is done with analytical interviews (Kreiner & Mouritsen, 2005) and an ethnographic approach that documents culture, family, behaviour, and their interconnectedness in a more holistic manner. It goes beyond a priori data structuring, towards a more emic research approach to data collection, in which the voice and interpretation of the individual are central (Alasuutari, 1995; Silverman, 2001).

Both primary and secondary data were collected. The data collection was done in the diaspora locations. Primary data collection was enriched by three short field trips to Israel in 2011, 2014 and 2018, an 11-day field trip to Uzbekistan in 2012 and several field trips to the USA in 2013-2018, for the purpose of collecting interviews, field notes, and photographic material on

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4 See Bukharian Community in Uzbekistan, published by Bukharian Community.com on the 26th of February 2013, film presented by Letny Sad Film
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjWoEpebbzU viewed 12.5.2013
entrepreneurs, their shops and businesses, and their social ties. This data was complemented with other ethnographic fieldwork through a participant observer, e.g. visiting the Bukharian Jewish community in the US in 2017 and sharing their everyday life.

The first research design and data collection took place in winter 2012-2013. Despite the anonymous nature of the research and its purely academic character, it was difficult to engage participants due to fear or lack of trust. We used a trust-person to facilitate the contact and communication in some cases. The participants were selected by the criteria of: diasporan, entrepreneurial, origin as a Bukharian Jew. A multilingual research team solved the language problems. A native Uzbek interviewer visited the entrepreneurs personally and conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews in 2013 in Uzbekistan. Other team members collected similar data in Israel and the US. The interviews covered a variety of topics to obtain a thorough understanding of the informant’s relation to his/her family, socio-cultural setting and entrepreneurial activities. The interviewees were informed that the researchers were interested in their entrepreneurship. The interviews lasted about 1.5 hours. They were recorded and transcribed. They were carried out in combination of Russian, Uzbek or/and English depending on the interviewee’s language preferences.

In total, over 20 diasporic cases were collected; from these, four entrepreneurial cases were selected providing diversity over diasporic life constellations and entrepreneurial activity. The data analysis focused on the entrepreneurs’ ties and their content. The data was not pre-determined or limited in scope; instead, it was stimulated by open-ended questions and thematic suggestions guiding the narrative (cf. Alasuutari, 1995). The original data were aggregated into categories, codified, and analysed. The data analysis was carried out with the assistance of NVivo software. We applied interpretative analysis building on primary data (Welch et al., 2011). For ethically correct procedures, the analysis took an aggregated form complemented with extracts from the narratives. Then, we reflected these four cases with the qualitative ethnographic material from the US. We payed particular attention in order to hinder traceability and follow high standards of research ethics for the privacy, anonymity, and safety of the informants (cf. Kuula, 2006; Weijer et al., 1999).

Entrepreneurship of Bukharian Jews in Diaspora

The case of Bukharian Jewish diaspora and entrepreneurship

The Bukharian Jewish diaspora has a long entrepreneurial tradition that goes back hundreds of years. It has developed during their extraordinarily extensive diasporic history along the Silk Road. The four cases below show how this tradition has dispersed and shifted from one place to another, and transferred across contexts, countries, and generations.

Case 1. The transnational diaspora entrepreneur

The Uzbek-origin, later Russian, Bukharian Jewish entrepreneur established an import and distribution company for cosmetics with the support of the family, especially the sister and one friend. She became an entrepreneur because of a lack of income and unemployment in the new
host country, Russia. In 1985, they had immigrated to Russia due to the better work opportunities available to her husband. Her parents and siblings had immigrated to Israel in 1992. Her sister worked in cosmetics in Israel and gave her the idea of starting a business. She liked the idea of entrepreneurship with social interaction and “not sitting in the same place” and could rely on the help and support of the family. The sister helped her with the goods and flexible payments, another Uzbek-friend provided her with legal assistance and an office space to start. She discussed and prepared her plans with friends, who supported her. Her parents were happy that she could now visit the cemetery where her grandparents were buried.

There was no influence from any community or religion in her business set-up as a result of dispersion. She involved her husband and both sons in the business since the establishment; her husband is a co-owner and both sons work for the fast-growing company. The rest of her 69 employees are not family. She rapidly expanded the business and worked with various suppliers and target-countries. She considered that given that the sons take over the work with the family company, they will also take care of the parents when they are old. Taking care of the elderly is part of Bukharian culture. In addition to the strong family ties (which are located in diverse countries) she maintained, she occasionally did some charity work for the World Congress of Bukharian Jews.

**Case 2. The repatriated migrant-entrepreneur**

The Uzbek-Bukharan Jewish entrepreneur first “repatriated” with her family to Israel in 1999 as part of the large wave of outmigration, before returning to Uzbekistan with her husband in 2002. They could not adapt to the new host country Israel and wanted to come back home, to the Jewish community where she had grown up. In Israel, although the Hebrew language, fear, and insecurity became problems, the main problem was the hectic lifestyle. They wanted to maintain their social life with more peaceful lifestyle and cultural traditions. She said that due to all these difficulties she could not imagine setting up a company in Israel. Her entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan was triggered by the change and the resulting unemployment, poverty and unfavourable employment conditions for mature people. It was the only lucrative alternative. Upon their return to Uzbekistan, they had to sell their house and establish a source of income. She got the idea for a souvenir shop due to the positive development of tourism and her ability to perceive the emerging potential through her immigrant effect. Their adult children, who became Israelis and remained there, helped her out with the start-up capital and the rent for the shop. She found the business environment easy to deal with and pro-SME in comparison to the corruption and bureaucracy during the Soviet Union-era. The faith and financial support of the children was crucial, as their friends and neighbours were not so convinced about the idea; some even tried to scare them off the idea. She and her husband formed the core team in their two shops, but a daughter of an old friend also worked with them. The relationships with Israeli suppliers and with other regional-suppliers were very helpful, as they cooperated and shared business information with her. For her, the business was a solution to her income problem, and was developed together with her children, business partners and friends, despite the fact that she saw no possibility for their two sons to take over the business.
later. The sons lived and worked in Israel of their own choice, and the grandchildren did not speak the language of the Bukharan Jews, but Hebrew and Russian instead. She was strongly connected to the religious community in city XXX and felt that entrepreneurial activities with Bukharan Jews were easier. She had no problem working with other nationalities, however, in Israel she felt that not all Jews were equal. Even their social contacts with family and the community were less frequent and different in Israel, not as traditionally expected in Uzbekistan.

Case 3. The transnational circular migrant entrepreneur

The Bukharan Jewish entrepreneur, who was born in Uzbekistan, emigrated to the USA in 1995. In the USA, he married a Bukharan Jewish woman and they had three children and later two grandchildren. Their community in Brooklyn was large and active. His education related to construction influenced the entrepreneur in the choice of business, as architecture and construction were his passion. His wife was a designer and she also liked the idea of setting up a company in the construction business, where she was occupied with the sales and production. In the USA, he had gained further product knowledge and ideas and proceeded to start the business together with his wife in Uzbekistan. The construction material business was established in 1996, for which his father-in-law gave them the start-up capital. Although he was connected to the Bukharian Jewish communities, the religious contacts did not influence the business establishment. However, by becoming an entrepreneur, he made his parents - who were still living in Uzbekistan - very happy. This alternative also gave him the opportunity to utilize his education, which was not recognized officially in the USA and was a barrier to entry in the USA professionally. Many friends, both in the USA and in Israel, were happy about the start-up and supported him in various non-monetary ways using their connections and knowledge. He liked to cooperate with “real friends who help you out of trouble”. Friends helped him to establish the sales networks in other countries, and their status also helped him to achieve things that would be impossible alone. With the support of friends and family they managed the procedures and opened up a factory in his hometown in Uzbekistan. The family, friends, and neighbours were happy about the establishment of business and its expansion; they could now rely on his support. Since then, the couple has supported friends and family numerous times. To run the new businesses, he repatriated to Uzbekistan, while his wife and children, who had all grown up in the USA, continued to live there. His father had passed away earlier, but his mother lived in the same house with him now. He and his wife owned the two companies they had; one son ran the US-based company and the daughter would support the family enterprise when she had finished her related studies. Their Uzbek company employed over 15 young people from the neighbourhood. Beyond the social aspect, the business aspect was vital in shaping their business relationships. Some suppliers were also Bukharan Jews from the USA, as there were no such suppliers locally. He considered New York to be the new home of Bukharian Jewry, but his network of friends also extended to Israel, Germany, Austria and Russia. Their children were planned to continue the business, but they were not so connected to the Bukharian Jewry. The son was married to an American with diaspora roots, while the boyfriend of the daughter was not Jewish. The entrepreneur shared information with
various business people and friends with diverse backgrounds and did business with Bukharian and non-Bukharian customers in six countries. In his private life, he supported the Bukharian Jewish community in Uzbekistan and continued its cultural traditions.

**Case 4. The born-diaspora entrepreneur**

A young Uzbek multi-entrepreneur, born to the Bukharian Jewish diaspora, continued the family tradition after his business studies. In 2001, he had inherited the jewellery business from his grandfather, for which he needed to take out a loan from the bank. He had acquired knowledge and experience of the jewellery business from his father and grandfather, who trained him on the trade. His father, a lawyer, helped him with the documents and procedures he needed to get started. The father was also the lawyer of the company. His wife was the bookkeeper and a cousin worked as a specialist for jewellery. Some of his friends came on-board as investors and had a share of the company. Alone, he said, he could not have got started. Also, some friends assisted with certain costs and his relatives acted as supporters and suppliers and sent machinery, spare parts and medicine from the USA for his other business in the health sector. Bukharian Jewish friends of his relatives in Russia were his suppliers for some materials. Other materials were imported from trusted suppliers abroad. Since the first venture, he went on to create a group of companies. The personnel was selected based on the recommendations of friends, family and business contacts.

His whole family, including aunts, uncles and ancestors, had been involved in businesses. Business was a family tradition. Therefore, the family expected him to follow the tradition, and they were happy to see him do it. It was no surprise that he stayed as a part of the original Bukharian Jewish diaspora, although he had considered migration too. However, the family was worried about his business expansion and risks. He had also gained many friends and acquaintances at the university, which was beneficial to the business. His university friends thought that he would emigrate and already had plans for joint ventures abroad. The neighbours took it for granted that he would follow their business tradition. Himself, he saw entrepreneurship to be his element, to be “genetic”. He was proud of the long Bukharian Jewish business tradition in the area that he was now continuing. He saw that the religion and the community of Bukharan Jews influenced his thinking and actions. He actively supported the community and helped the elderly. He participated in the activities of the community. They shared valuable information, but mostly he discussed business decisions with business partners, who were not Jewish but Uzbeks, and reliable friends and partners. He had travelled abroad and visited relatives in Israel, the USA, Middle East, and in Europe, but felt that he would stay working as an entrepreneur in his hometown all his life. His parents and his wife, also born in his home town, lived there creating an epicentre for his life. He would be happy if his children continued the entrepreneurial tradition, but they were not obliged to do so.

**Analysis and Findings**

**Multiple embeddedness**

While bridging and employing family business and diaspora entrepreneurship lenses, we analyse and discuss Bukharian Jewish social ties that transfer entrepreneurial tradition and
heritage across the three main layers of embeddedness influencing their venturing: country (macro)-, community (meso)-, and individual (micro)-level.

Contrary to expectations on institutional difficulties (e.g., Jones et al., 2014; Kloosterman, 2010), the macro-context was surprisingly unimportant for these diasporans in explaining their venturing or entrepreneurial drive. Although the firms operated in a specific entrepreneurial business and country context, embedded in its institutional and market systems, the firm creation was not driven by country-level macro-economic factors. Typical venture stimuli like low labour costs or tax incentives were not even mentioned as factors influencing their entrepreneurial venturing. None of the entrepreneurs mentioned any incubator or entrepreneurial support-program coming from top-down public-policy. However, their global diaspora expansion was identified as an international resource and business potential. Little transfer of local-host entrepreneurial values and culture (cf. assimilation, Berry, 2001) was identifiable in the data. Interestingly, the global diaspora ties abroad and the Bukharian Jewish community ties were drivers and enablers for entrepreneurship. Global families were clearly an asset for family business in diaspora or in another minority position (Berry, 2001).

The meso-context of the Bukharian diaspora community presented novel features explaining the new migrant enterprise and growth orientation (Jones et al., 2014). The role of their diaspora community was twofold; it represented both their local, primary setting of embeddedness, but also formed a part of their global diaspora with extensive ties abroad. These diasporic social ties were significant for their entrepreneurship in all cases (social ties, table 1). The cases illuminate how these collective layers of embeddedness influence diaspora business and entrepreneurship prior to their establishment; they nurture an entrepreneurial microcosmos and traditions. The findings suggest that this ethno-cultural setting produces an entrepreneurial culture contesting the concept of lonely solo-entrepreneurship and highlights aspects such as solidarity in helping others, trust in economic exchange, and religious-cultural values across countries (Liphshiz, 2016). Bukharian entrepreneurial cultural heritage was actively transferred by the community and affecting nascent entrepreneurs to either start a new venture or to continue an extant family business. The Bukharian community has numerous associations and organizations that support entrepreneurial tradition, education, and the progress of diverse groups such as children, teenagers, women, or particular trades. They explicitly cherish entrepreneurship and give awards, for example, for female entrepreneur and -leadership. The community also recognizes the contribution and sponsoring of entrepreneurs in their activities. Thus, the meso-level context in which the individuals are embedded is highly impregnated with entrepreneurial heritage and respective norms and values.

The micro-context of strong family ties had surprisingly noteworthy supportive elements despite the entrepreneurial risks and the potential post-failure implications that could be seen as a liability in close and interdependent relationships. The social ties of family, extended family and friends, were very central in facilitating these businesses (for instance, family ties in Table 1). The cases present concrete influences of family and close social ties on the entrepreneurship, ranging from financial help and expertise to emotional support during difficulties (for instance, the concrete impacts in Table 1). The entrepreneurs appreciated and perceived this help and support as influential on their business creation. In total, each case
illustrates the strong impact of close ties on the pre-establishment and establishment phase of the business. This impact is not limited to helping during a particular “negative” phase of entrepreneurship (e.g., nascent or declining business). Furthermore, these four cases present a significant connection to marriage and settlement, while the actual migration decision seems to be less connected to business establishment than family. Their migratory mobility is more of a family- and life- generated issue (for instance, mobility in Table 1), whereby the entrepreneurial venturing is conceived as a possibility to prosper and fulfil family business traditions or professional dreams. Families embrace entrepreneurship as part of their culture (for instance, entrepreneurship in Table 1). Interestingly, the option of having the children as successors underlines the continuation of tradition, although determined successorship and intermarriage are no longer as rigid as they were historically. As a result of their multiple waves of migration, the role of their global diaspora ties - that are also family ties - became highly relevant for their family business operations too. Bukharian Jewish families have become highly international dispersed networks.

The findings illustrate that the multiple embeddedness and relational structures of Bukharian Jewish diaspora have radically shifted geographic loci, without losing their importance. Table 1 presents an overview of aspects of importance as perceived and explained by the entrepreneurs.

Table 1. Bukharian entrepreneurial cases in four settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Case 1</th>
<th>Case 2</th>
<th>Case 3</th>
<th>Case 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility in life</td>
<td>Born an Uzbek Bukharian Jew, migrated as an adult with her husband to Russia and then due to entrepreneurial activities turned into a circular diasporan who travels between Russia and Central-Asian countries. Her children remained in Russia.</td>
<td>Born an Uzbek Bukharian Jew, migrated as an adult with her husband and children to Israel, after some years she repatriated in Uzbekistan with her husband while her adult children remained in Israel.</td>
<td>Born an Uzbek Bukharian Jew, migrated to the USA after studies, married there, but later became a circular diasporan who travels between the USA and Uzbekistan. His wife and adult children remained in the USA.</td>
<td>Born an Uzbek Bukharian Jew, considered migrating and opening a joint-venture abroad during studies. After the death of his grandfather, he suddenly got the possibility to stay in his home country and go into business. Since then, he only travels for business or tourism, but is not considering migration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>She started her entrepreneurial career from scratch by setting up an import and consumer product business. She saw the opportunity and wanted to develop it as her career and for livelihood. Her business</td>
<td>She started her entrepreneurial career as a form of livelihood, recognising the opportunity provided by tourism development. She did not have any previous experience and was wary of the risks and</td>
<td>He started the business as he could not get employment with his foreign diploma and the opportunity was there. He did not have any previous business experience, but felt he could</td>
<td>Initially thinking about other countries, he happened to inherit his grandfather’s business, which he took over and developed, before establishing other businesses as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of family ties</td>
<td>She migrated because of her husband. Her business was triggered by the livelihood her family needed, and the opportunity provided by her sister. Her sister supported her as a supplier and her husband as a partner. Later, she created employment opportunities for the whole family and many others. That she takes care of the family cemetery is highly appreciated by her family abroad.</td>
<td>Her business was established to help provide a livelihood and completely financed by her children in the establishment phase. The children supported the parents in their repatriation; both parents gained employment through the established company, with one friend employed too.</td>
<td>His business was established to provide a livelihood and make use of professional skills. It was financed by his father-in-law, and his wife co-established the first company. Later, the children of the family also got involved in the growing business. The expansion into Uzbekistan was partially motivated by his elderly mother living there.</td>
<td>He became a serial entrepreneur.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of other social ties</td>
<td>In the beginning, the help of close friends and family was essential to establish the company and to overcome various problems with resources. She employs many people, but not only Bukharian Jews and friends.</td>
<td>Before starting the venture, their friends were sceptical about the entrepreneurship. They did not have any entrepreneurial background previously and the risks were a central reason for their concerns.</td>
<td>The family of his wife and his wife, together with many friends in various countries, supported the establishment of the firm and its early phases and expansion. These diaspora friends supplied him with knowledge and trade-related information, which facilitated him to do business.</td>
<td>Close friends supported him and partnered with him in many businesses (serial entrepreneur), but they are not Bukharian Jews. Some Bukharian Jews abroad supplied him with products and knowledge. Bukharian Jews received special discounts, and he was supporting and donating funds to the local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete impacts of close ties</td>
<td>Financial impact on prices and products, payment terms, information, product and market knowledge, counselling and consulting</td>
<td>Finance, information, supply, support, paperwork and consulting</td>
<td>Finance and investment capital, business, product and market information and knowledge</td>
<td>Finance and investment capital, business, product and market information and knowledge, supply of products and machinery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the next section, the entrepreneur-cases in this study explain their entrepreneurial mind-set, traditions, heritage, transfer and elaborate these from their experiential viewpoint; thus, the entrepreneurs highlight issues that they have considered crucial and impactful. The following sub-sections provide deeper insights through narratives that illustrate the positive and resilient attitudes towards entrepreneurship that prevail in this ancient diaspora.

Within their multi-embedded context, we identified three relevant transformation processes that are inherent in these entrepreneurial narratives. The processes relate to a) becoming an entrepreneur or alternatively continuing a family business and tradition, b) developing entrepreneurship and business embedded in a context of extended family, social ties and diaspora community, and c) transferring tradition in terms of entrepreneurial values and practices following the Bukharian entrepreneurial culture.

**Becoming an entrepreneur or continuing an existing family business**

The process of becoming an entrepreneur was described from different angles according to the circumstances:

Case 1 describes her business start and the family impact:

…At that time, my parents, husband, and I lived in Russia, and my siblings lived already in Israel. My sister offered me the possibility to sell cosmetics from Israel in Russia and Uzbekistan, since she was there dealing closely with a large cosmetics manufacturing company…

…First, I obtained a good support from my older sister from Israel, who supplied me with impeccable cosmetics of very high quality; she also did not hurry me with the payments. Second, as I said, it was an undeveloped business market in the former Soviet Union area…

…my sister helped us most. She sent the first lot of cosmetics on her account and the first three months we did not pay at all; thereafter we started paying everything slowly back…

…I think this business is the dream of every woman, as you always have good cosmetics available. In addition, my relatives had helped me. I was always a social person; I could always discuss and convince people. But, on the spot to sit for a long time, somewhere in an office or organization, I could never do so good …

…the parents were very glad that I worked also in Uzbekistan, as our ancestors are buried there. They always ask me to visit the graves of my grandfather and grandmother in XXX when I go there…

…my husband and my both sons. I and my husband are the founders and co-owners of our companies in Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan. All other employees are employed according to the job application, it is better so. With relatives it is tougher to work…

…naturally, otherwise we should either sell the business or ourselves work until the ends of our lives. And when our children have all [assets] in their possession, they will fully take care of us…
Case 2 describes the beginning of her business and the role of family:

… I am a private entrepreneur. I have two shops in the old city of XXX….I would not say my business is somehow connected with our community; my business is connected more with Israel. My start capital was given by our children, who live already over ten years in Israel and also partially supply me with goods…

…as we came back from Israel, we were not doing well; we had no work. We had sold the house and had to start all over again. Then I got the idea to open up a tourism-related shop. At that time there were not so many as today. And we were supported by our children with the capital, the rent for the facilities, and step-by-step our life has again improved despite the lack of our own house…

…the family, in fact, our children, helped us in our difficult situation. They had no doubt that it would work…

…my husband takes care of logistics, accounting and documents of our two businesses, he takes care of taxation, electricity, heating and such. I work in the shop myself. In the other the daughter of my old friend works …

(Children in Israel)

…and there are for them more perspectives and opportunities (there). And the economy of Israel is more developed than here. There the standard of living and the social security are higher. And my business is rather insignificant in order to continue it as a family tradition…

Case 3 describes the family role:

..We have a family business. I, my wife and our son possess some companies - two in XXX (city in the USA) and one in the vicinity of XXX (city in Uzbekistan)….

…I am the co-founder of two subsidiaries. We sell construction materials, such as XXXXXXX…..We produce construction materials in the USA and in Uzbekistan. I also act as a project manager for house construction…

….since the mid-nineties. After I migrated to the USA, I met my future wife. Her father gave us the necessary resources for the establishment our first company and since then we are business people…

…As my father-in-law offered us the capital for the establishment, I suggested to my wife that we deal with the sales and manufacturing of construction materials. My wife is an XXX (related occupation) and agreed easily with the establishment of this company. In addition, I still work as an XXX (construction-related occupation); for example, our house in XXX (city in Uzbekistan), I have built from nothing, on my own. Architecture and construction material, that is my passion!...

Case 4 describes the family influence:
…there are very few Bukharian Jews; I would say 90% have emigrated since the 70’s, to different countries, to Israel, the USA and Germany…

…I am an entrepreneur. It is typical for our family, almost all our ancestors since the era of Czarist Russia were entrepreneurs- some of them quite wealthy people. And I cannot say that my business is somehow connected with my community (Bukharian Jewish). Yes, naturally, the community members come to me, they want a special discount from me because they are one of “ours”…

…I have a private firm which includes: one jewellery shop, one cosmetic-related service provider, one retail business for consumer goods in clothing-related business, one health-service provider and one manufacturing unit for certain material (types generalized). It all began with the jewellery business, already in my early age this craftsmanship was taught to me by my grandfather and father. I inherited a small jewellery business of my grandfather in the city, now I have expanded it… I inherited the business and continued the family business. At that time, I was still a student and took start capital in the form of a loan from a bank. It was already after the independence of Uzbekistan, and there was nothing to fear. After the independence, business development in our country it the first priority. The government supports entrepreneurs in all aspects, the work conditions improve, there is a concrete legal basis that guards the interests of entrepreneurs, one needs only intelligence and effort. Many procedures regarding documentation are simplified. It is a shame that my ancestors during the Soviet Union did not live this kind of market economy…

…I completed studies at XXX university (related to business), where many of our family studied, that is to say, as I already said, we are almost all business people…

…I believe that entrepreneurship was already in my genes. The whole family, all my aunts and uncles, as I remember from my childhood, have always bought and sold something. I always listened to their discussions. Somehow, I knew nothing else. I am raised in that kind of environment. As I graduated with honours it was clear to all that I would do business, and above all, thanks to university, I had many friends and acquaintances in the business world. Here I feel well. Trade and service is my element.

Case 4 explains the role of family in continuation:

…regarding the work, I hope that he [his son] continues the family tradition, and inherits my business. Only if they like it. I never liked to force someone to do something and I do not like to be forced either. If my children really want to continue our family business that would provide me a great pleasure.

These narratives show how strongly history and family traditions live also in the context of nascent entrepreneurship and in diaspora, not only in succession. This heritage is part of their identity and culture.

*Entrepreneurship development linked to family, social ties and their community*

Case 1 describes the role of family and community ties:
…the family had this business suggested. They were happy to help me as I was unemployed at the time. My husband was working but it was not enough. We lived in Russia…

…The few friends we had in Russia and Uzbekistan supported the idea when I explained them my business plan.…

…a very good friend in Uzbekistan helped us to open the company, he helped us to organize the legal aspects, and rented us his private property as our first office. I believe that without him it would have been much more difficult to manage everything…

Case 2 explains the role of other social ties:

…the friends and neighbours were puzzled that we wanted to start a business. Some of them tried to influence us and with various reasons to convince us to avoid it…

…in any case, I would not have risked to open such a business in Israel …

Case 2 describes the role of Bukharian Jews and tradition in business:

…the Bukharian Jews were mostly traders, retailers of food, hairdressers, jewellers, money changers, etc.…

Case 3 explains the traditions and support:

…The family was very happy. My parents lived at the time in XXX (the city in Uzbekistan where he started the Uzbek company). As an XXX (occupation related to construction) in the USA to work, it was not possible as my diploma was not recognized…

…the financial support I received mainly from the family of my wife. Later, thanks to some of my friends, I learned to know the right people, whereas my other friends helped me to sell my goods in other countries. Sometimes in business the social contacts are more worth than the money itself. With the support of my family, friends.. we quickly managed all documents and formalities and started. Personally, I find it easier to work in Uzbekistan than in the USA. Because of Uzbekistan the family was somewhat doubtful as my wife is raised in the USA and did not know Central Asia. But clearly my convincing talk and enthusiasm functioned well, and she agreed to invest in Uzbekistan. The whole family, friends and neighbours were happy that I started my business in XXX (city in Uzbekistan). After all, it is me, one of them, they know me well and they can rely on my help and support if necessary. In the Orient, everything is based on ties and social contacts, it is a totally different world, there is no deterrent capitalism like in the West. Here everything is much simpler. And above all, the standard of living may be lower here than in the USA, but there is humanity, respect and tolerance…

…we have a family business. My wife and I are the founders and owners of two subsidiaries. Our son is the manager of the company in the USA, whereas I am mainly in possession of our Uzbek subsidiary. Most probably our youngest daughter will work for us too. She studies XXX (related to business and institutional issues) and I consider her as the future expert in our company. Also in the factory of our Uzbek company, there are more than 15 young people
employed from our local neighbourhood. As I searched for personnel, I wanted that– at least to some extent - trustworthy people work for me…

..we are in continuous contact with various companies, among them firms of Bukharian Jews, around the whole world. Firms and friends, the Bukharian Jews are scattered around the world. They live mainly in Israel, the USA, Germany, Austria… but also in Russia we have very good friends in Russia….

… As I said, my oldest son is the manager in our office in the USA. I consider him as the successor-candidate. In any case, our group of companies is equally divided among our children in our testament, so we hope that after we pass away, they will find agreement and continue the business.

Transfer of tradition
Case 1. on traditions:

…Bukharian Jews were and are very good entrepreneurs. Historically seen, we concentrated on Central Asia and Iran and our ancestors were always good salesmen, traders and financiers. Today there are dozens of well-known business people –Bukharian Jews-, in different cities of the world. And I think that in the future Bukharian Jews will increasingly invest in the countries of Central Asia as there are our historical roots. Our culture is intertwined with the culture of Uzbeks, Tajiks and other ethnic populations who live there…

Case 4 explains the family tradition:

…as I already explained, the jewellery business is our family tradition. Earlier, there was simply no better jewellers than the Bukharian Jews and everyone knew it. Today in this sector there is a high demand. The Uzbek tradition was always connected with jewellery. No fiancée would marry someone without receiving a certain amount of gold jewellery as a present. And in comparison to earlier years, the demand for jewellery has only increased, despite the fast gold price increase in the world market…

…there are many famous Bukharian Jews whose names, are till today known as the wealthiest people in Central Asia. For example, in Kokand it was the brothers W, or the clan K in Samarkand, who even enjoyed the trust of Czar Alexander the Second. The Bukharian Jews were traders, weavers, jewellers, fabric manufacturers, bankers…

…Friends from university thought that I would emigrate. And as students we planned to open a joint-venture there…

History plays a role too:

… It is typical for our family. Almost all our ancestors since the Czarist Russia era were entrepreneurs, some of them quite wealthy people.

Case 3.
…regarding the Bukharian Jews, there I would say that we were always successful entrepreneurs. The history knows many very wealthy Bukharian Jewish traders, especially in the era of Central Asian incorporation to Czar’s Russia. At that time, there were some who were in direct contact with the Russian Czar. He appointed them to boards of banks, presidents of chambers of commerce and industry. Today there are even oligarch-Bukharian Jews who are visible in the list of the richest people in the world…

In sum, the narratives indicate that the transformation process to entrepreneurship, its development and entrepreneurship’s further nurturing to the community take place in a multi-embedded diaspora context where family and social ties were central in each development as triggers, enablers and supporters. Families were also architects of the business traditions. Close friends were also central. The diasporans and their communities transferred actively entrepreneurial narratives and heroism from one generation to the other and lived their entrepreneurial tradition.

Discussion and conclusion
Our study contributes by illustrating the rich and manifold influence of the family, various family ties and embeddedness in an entrepreneurial culture as motivation and long-term drivers of entrepreneurship over time and across locations. The entrepreneurial narrative lives on in Bukharian culture and tradition through history. There is a strong entrepreneurial heritage that is experienced and cultivated in families and diaspora communities. Positive perceptions of entrepreneurship are conveyed by friends, relatives, and the global diaspora community as a whole. Hence, the idea of continuing a family business or starting a new venture receives notable support even in their global dispersion (Elo & Vemuri, 2016).

In the collective society of the Bukharian Jews diaspora, the role of family benefit and support is both a resource and a constraint. Still, family incorporates the cradle for the entrepreneurial mind-set: families attempt to maintain knowledge and skills related to that heritage and transfer them to their children, also by addressing famous Bukharian entrepreneurs as role models (e.g. Rybakov, 2017). This fosters entrepreneurship and family business as the preferred option in life. Culturally, becoming a contributor - for example as an entrepreneur - is an inherent target in life. This diaspora is prepared to continue these culturally-driven institutions and traditions with ethnic pride and perceiving the Bukharian institutions as useful and trustworthy. The role of extensive family and social ties also incorporated activities like those of capital investors, consultants, supply and logistics highlighting social capital (Light, & Dana, 2013). The role of close friends, especially from the perspective that many of them were local, not Bukharian Jewish or Jewish at all, was interesting as they shared the ways of doing business and entrepreneurial values. Their close friends invested, helped with various physical resources and supported the entrepreneurs in various stages of their venturing. The data showed no signs of forced entrepreneurship, but active ethnic features that punctuated ethnic enclave concepts (Dana, 2007).

Entrepreneurship provided a way towards a better future and prosperity for unemployed or professionally impeded diasporans (Portes et al., 2002). In overcoming problems, family and
community engagement functioned as a social security and was supportive towards entrepreneurship, regardless of whether it was necessity entrepreneurship or based on individual dreams. The embeddedness in (micro-level) family and Bukharian Jewish community (meso-level) was central in shaping the entrepreneurial context, e.g. opportunity development (Elo & Volovelsky, 2017). Additionally, the collective culture and the plethora of diaspora community ties provide more certainty for support regarding the challenges of entrepreneurial life. The quote by Liphshiz (2016, 1) “When I’m established I’ll lend money to a relative. It’s how we succeed” is a good illustration of the cultural-behavioural and religious mechanism of the Bukharian Jewish diaspora that fosters and perhaps even produces entrepreneurship diachronically in diaspora, as a cultural good (Elo & Jokela, 2014).

The study implies that macro-level embeddedness was significant for business on the global diaspora and market level, but less notable on the institutional frameworks of the countries. Surprisingly, there was no participation in any entrepreneurship policy programs in setting up companies or developing legitimacy and cultural adaptation. Their macro-level contexts were different, illustrating both integration problems and generation of diaspora business epicentres (Dana, 2007). This study contradicts assumptions on assimilation in diaspora (Berry, 2001). This diaspora resisted assimilation, hence the youth continued to be quite entrepreneurial despite divergent career options. Diaspora entrepreneurship (cf. Jones et al., 2014), whether inherited or self-created, formed a diachronic identity for Bukharian Jews as an entrepreneurial and progressive ethnic community, regardless of location, as well as at individual and family level. Their Bukharian identity was cherished in multiple ways, e.g. via media and social interaction supporting its preservation (Brinkerhoff, 2009).

The findings on key influence factors on entrepreneurship are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Dynamics regarding entrepreneurship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive features on entrepreneurship</th>
<th>Global diaspora family networks and resource-base, transnationalism, improvisation and adaptation strategies, multiculturalism and multilingualism, family traditions, business skills and competences, direct and indirect support, shared understanding of international markets, entrepreneurial heroes, religious values, appreciation of entrepreneurship as an occupation and identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impeding features on entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Inadequate linguistic competences, financial resource limitations, institutional regulations and diploma recognition problems, transformation issues related to migration/refuge, pressures of assimilation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contributions and future research avenues**

Our study implies that in a collectivist culture diaspora entrepreneurship takes place in a multi-embedded setting; it is embedded in several layers of family and relatives (micro), ethnic-local/global community (meso) and then in some physical location (macro-context). Context matters; the findings deviate from the Western idea of a solo entrepreneur showing a number of influential ties and cultural heritage shaping diaspora entrepreneurship (Solano, 2018).
Entrepreneurial succession, intention or plans were not just individual matters but part of a way of life, of an ethnic identity that was transferred further over time, place and generation.

We agree with prior literature (Jones et al., 2014; Etemad, 2018; Basco, 2017) that the concept of mixed embeddedness (e.g. Kloosterman, 2010) needs to be broadened to address the multi-layered nature of contemporary diaspora entrepreneurship, their venturing and business development. Future research needs to re-consider the concepts of diaspora and diasporic embeddedness in terms of their analytical power, organization and context, also for family business (cf. Barnard, Cuervo-Cazurra & Manning, 2017; see also Stinchcombe, 1965). The bi-directional interplay of entrepreneurial contexts, transnationalism and multilocality offer valuable insights for future research. The concept of diaspora family needs reconceptualization as a larger social setting, being part of a multi-local global diaspora.

Managerially, the phenomenon of diachronic entrepreneurial identity that overarches generations, business types and countries in diaspora is relevant (e.g. Brinkerhoff, 2016). This heritage and identity can be employed in business creation, recruiting, training, and also in shaping transgenerational family business. Here, heritage-based identity empowered diaspora businesses and enabled them to develop ethno-religious and cultural-driven competitive advantages in sales, service and internationalization. The entrepreneurial drive may offer a higher than average income compared to most other host country populations and a continuation of lived cultural identity (cf. Bergsten & Choi, 2003; Kloosterman, 2010).

Future research is needed on the role of diaspora associations and organizations in fostering entrepreneurial competences, talent and business creation of the young and female diasporans. This US-based Bukharian community could serve as an analytical benchmark on how to develop advanced entrepreneurial mind-sets, start early on collectively and institutionally (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Jones et al., 2014).

Macro-level institutions and policymaking are mostly driven by the host country interests, missing opportunities to capitalize on the entrepreneurial drive of diasporic family businesses and diaspora entrepreneurship (cf. Basco & Bartkeviciute, 2016). An advanced dialogue and research on the inherent entrepreneurial potential and its employment could benefit all stakeholders and entrepreneurial ecosystems (Minto-Coy & Elo, 2017). We also call for broader policymaking on transnational and circular entrepreneurship to host multilocal entrepreneurial activities.

Limitations of research
Limitations of the study relate to the number of cases and their idiographic nature embedded in a particular diaspora. The ways in which families nurture a highly entrepreneurial culture that transfers across generations and contexts are context-specific and not per se generalizable to other diasporas. Different country contexts, the size of the local diaspora, and the location of the family may influence diaspora entrepreneurship. The institutional settings are not comparable for addressing those differences and their impacts. However, the cases were selected on theoretical grounds for analytical generalizability across locations and families.
References


