

The Intercultural Competence of Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the Twin Cities:
Immutable and Protean

A thesis

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Abstract

Seeking a more nuanced conceptualization of intercultural competence, this thesis examines the narratives of immigrant entrepreneurs engaged in a culturally diverse business environment. Based on in-depth ethnographic interviews supplemented by a quantitative instrument, the thesis uncovers unique examples of how intercultural competencies are expressed while drawing on the research expressing a need to re-conceptualize intercultural competence from a non-western perspective.

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

A partner in the business will not put an obstacle to it.-Ethiopian Proverb

Small businesses owned by African immigrants in the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood have recently revitalized the area that was formerly designated as blighted by urban developers (Samatar, 2008). Out of the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood came Mohammed Ahmed, who closed the Midwest Halal Supermarket, which catered to religiously consciousness meat consumers, and opened City Market, which carries a wider variety of goods used by both the Hispanic and Somali communities.

A similar phenomenon has been occurring in the section of University Avenue designated as “Frogtown,” after the arrival of Hmong in the early 80s new businesses developed, and the area was revitalized (Kaplan, 1997). Out of “Frogtown” came Mai Nguyen, owner of Mai Village, who was able to take a small noodle shop appealing to the Hmong community, and is now a popular lunch location for a diverse mix of St. Paul business people.

Finally, the arrival of immigrants from Latin America has been invigorating new life into the Lake Street district of South Minneapolis (Carr & Servon, 2009) for over two decades. Alejandro Portez emerged from the Lake Street community and transformed a small corner store selling goods for Hispanic celebrations into the Mercado Central, which sells goods to English, African, and Spanish-speaking neighbors.

Bill Blazar, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Business Development, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce noted, “Immigrants aren’t just an asset because they

numerically increase the workforce. They are also playing a key role as entrepreneurs in Minnesota and have transformed neighborhoods in both Minneapolis and St. Paul while helping revitalize downtowns in several regional centers around our state.” (Jacoby, 2013)

Immigrants to the United States are 10 percent more likely to own a business than are non-immigrants (Fairlie, 2012). In Minnesota, thirty percent of the growth in the number of small businesses in the past 24 years is attributed to immigrant owners. (Corrie & Radosevich, 2013). Immigrant entrepreneurs create significant benefits for the U.S economy (Fairlie, 2008) and for immigrant communities (Abrahamson, 2001; Chrysostome & Lin 2010; Davis, Ouedraogo, & Sweetland, 2005; Light & Gold, 2000; Zhou, 2004).

The existing literature that describes immigrant entrepreneurs who are serving a diverse community, known as break-out entrepreneurs (Baycan-Levent, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2005; Ram & Hillin, 1994) has focused on various business strategies, rather than specific competencies of the individual entrepreneur. The research involved with entrepreneurial competencies (Baum & Locke, 2004; Frese & Gielnik, 2014; Gibb 1996; Mitchelmore & Towley, 2010; Unger, Rauch, Frese & Rosenbusch, 2011) ignores competencies that relate to intercultural abilities. While there are studies that study the effects of national culture on entrepreneurial abilities (Freytag & Thurik 2007, Stephan & Uhlaner, 2010), these studies do not explore intercultural competencies.

Finally, there are studies investigating the intercultural competence of those in business (Moran, Youngdhal & Moran, 2009), sales and service (Chaisrakeo & Speece, 2004) and those who are immigrants (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Sénécal, 1997) and

various other groups. Most studies of immigrant entrepreneurs have been with the fields of sociology and have been relatively neglected in management fields (Chysostome & Lin, 2010). Consequently, there is currently a lack of research which addresses the competencies, abilities or actions of immigrant entrepreneurs.

The context of a thriving entrepreneurial environment within the Twin Cities is rich with intercultural interactions. Moreover, commercial transactions assume a level of equal exchange. For the most part, both parties can refuse to engage in the transaction. Therefore, the equal exchanges that characterize commercial interactions allows for a unique insight into the intercultural interactions. Neither party is being forced to adapt, yet a certain amount of adaptation takes place. Finally, the method of ethnography allows insight into particular and specific behaviors, which would provide a rich account of what effective, appropriate and interculturally competent behavior looks like.

My intention is to disseminate the views, experiences, and stories of immigrant entrepreneurs to integrate their particular solutions into the discourse of intercultural competence.

Research problems

Does intercultural competency play a role in the successful establishment, operation and growth of immigrant owned enterprises? What elements of intercultural competence are germane to immigrant entrepreneurs? Can the frequent and dynamic interactions of immigrant entrepreneurs reveal insights into effective and appropriate behaviors that characterize interculturally competent behavior?

Purpose of study

The purpose of this research is to identify intercultural competencies that are relevant in the establishment, operation and growth of immigrant owned enterprises. The intention is to provide economic development agencies with a robust concept of intercultural competence as it relates to immigrant entrepreneurs, so that they can develop training programs that develop and enhance intercultural competence.

Context of study

To explore the significance of this study, an understanding of the context is helpful. The context of this study will be explored through a discussion of the history of the concept of immigrant entrepreneurship, intercultural competence, and entrepreneurial competence. Theoretical and operational definitions will also help provide context for this study.

Significance of the study

This study adds to three fields of research, ethnic entrepreneurship, and intercultural competencies. The ethnic entrepreneurship field benefits by bringing a focus on certain competencies that develop in individual entrepreneurs. There are several entrepreneurial development agencies in the Twin Cities, such as the African Development Center, Metropolitan Economic Development Association, Neighborhood Development Association, and Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio. All of these agencies have training programs that focus on particular skills and competencies, and could implement training programs that incorporate intercultural competence if deemed necessary.

Deardorff notes, “One key area for further research includes what appropriate behaviors ‘look like’ in different cultures and different contexts, such as professional fields.” (2009a, p. 268) With an ethnographic methodology to determine what intercultural competence ‘looks like’ and a professional field of entrepreneurship, this study seeks to address Deardorff’s invitation and add nuance to the conceptualization of intercultural competence.

Immigrant entrepreneurs who frequently engage in commercial interactions with those of different cultures are a particularly data rich population. The quantity of interactions from which the entrepreneur interviewee can draw when recalling intercultural interaction allows for a higher likelihood of prescient examples of intercultural interaction. Furthermore, the qualities of the interactions are also unique in that commercial interactions have discreet and measurable effects. Successful commercial interactions can result in business deals, increased customers and limited regulatory mistakes. Because of the discreet and measurable nature of the interactions, the presence of competence in the entrepreneur is more apparent. With a greater instance of intercultural interactions and a clear measure of competence, the field of intercultural competence will benefit from this ethnographic research.

This study could also have broader policy implications. Significant cross-cultural interaction occurs within the context of immigrant owned and operated business. The cultural norms and expectations for behavior within the context of a commercial transaction are fairly simple, and this allows for low risk exchanges despite a slightly different cultural context. Therefore, immigrant owned and operated businesses are well suited as places of cross-cultural interaction and dialogue. By exploring how intercultural

competencies develop within and are sustained through entrepreneurship, policymakers can explore how their support for immigrant entrepreneurship can increase greater integration of immigrants. Integration would occur by decreasing the aversion to cultural difference by host nationals. It would also occur by providing a venue for immigrants to interact with host nationals in a straightforward, familiar and low risk way. This study would, therefore, provide policymakers additional data that suggest support for ethnic entrepreneurship, and particularly break-out entrepreneurship, would lead to benefits beyond the most obvious ones associated with entrepreneurship, such as jobs and economic growth, it would lead to greater integration of new immigrant populations. This would have implications for both the urban development and refugee resettlement areas of policy.

This study adds to the research on immigrant communities. Within the immigrant and diaspora literature, there is a discourse regarding policies of assimilation and integration (Berry, 2003; Boski, 2008; Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Tambiah, 2000). Assimilationist policies seek to eliminate the immigrants' original cultural identity with the host countries identity. Integrationist policies seek to blend both identities through a process of acculturation on the individual level or multicultural on the policy level. In this literature, acculturation is characterized as the blending of cultural differences and assimilation is characterized as the abandonment of the immigrant's cultural identity and the assumption of the host culture's cultural identity. Within the discourses in the sociological, immigration and policy fields, integration is a concept that more accurately reflects the realities of immigrants and host society members interacting. Furthermore, notions of integration are more influential within the fields of immigration

policy and urban development. While the discourse within the sociological and policy fields have richly explored the macro effects of integration, this study adds to the literature by exploring the manner by which individuals integrate within the context of intercultural competence.

Entrepreneurial endeavors contribute to this integration discourse because the very nature of trade assumes a relatively equal exchange between the immigrant entrepreneur providing the good or service and the customer accepting the good or service. At the moment of these interactions, both parties engage voluntarily. Voluntary interaction does not negate the larger economic and political factors that influence the power dynamic between the interactants, but it does allow insight into interactions that are, at the moment of exchange, relatively equal. Consequently, entrepreneurial interactions are unlike other interactions where the host culture may hold the majority of power in the interaction.

Interactions between immigrants and members of the host society, such as political, educational and the majority of economic interactions are heavily intermediated by institutions that are both founded in the traditions of, and most likely dominated by, members of the dominant society. The interactions between the employer and employee, civil service employee and benefit recipient, citizen and elected official, are in most cases, characterized by a dramatic power differential. Instances where immigrants and members of the host society interact within the boundaries of an institution create an institutionalized exchange.

The power differential and institutionalized exchanges dilute the cultural intensity of two interactants of differing cultures interacting on equal levels. Consequently, it is

easier to explore the phenomenon of acculturation within an interaction that occurs within an entrepreneurial context.

Furthermore, many of the intercultural interactions that occur between immigrants and members of the host society occur within the context of a business relationship. Far more members of the dominant society can afford to have an intercultural experience at an “ethnic restaurant” or a culturally themed gift store, than engage in intercultural activities on a college campus or travel to another country. Part of the significance of these enterprises is due to the sheer quantity of the intercultural interactions they produce within the urbanized environment. Arguments can be made about the quality of the interactions, however. There has been a growing amount of literature around the cultural commodification of culturally themed restaurants and retail stores. While certain enterprises commodify cultural products or services (e.g. Amish culture, Chhabra, 2010), it is not the case that all culturally themed enterprises commodify culture. The difference will be determined by the involvement and intentions of the owners of the enterprise.

Culturally themed enterprises that are owned and operated by immigrants could enrich interactions that are needed in order for integration to occur, which would be due to the quantity of the interaction even if the quality of interaction lacks the full authenticity that would be expected from a less commoditized cultural expression.

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Iron is worked when it's still hot.-Bosnian Proverb

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature surrounding ethnic entrepreneurship, intercultural competence, and entrepreneurial attributes. Because there is a dearth of literature addressing the intersection of the three elements, a review of the individual sections is included. Because of the syncretic intent of this study, it will be important to review the historical development of these three core elements. This will provide the essential historical context to see how these three areas intersect in the study of immigrant entrepreneurs and their intercultural competence.

This chapter is divided into three sections, which address ethnic entrepreneurship, intercultural competence, and entrepreneurial attributes. Each section will clarify specific terms that are found within the literature, and these terms will act as the operational definitions to be used in this study. Sections will also provide a brief history of the development of the field. This history will shape the context of the study. With the review of each section of literature, specific elements will be highlighted. This will act to create a synthesis that fully incorporates elements of the broader literature and themes germane to this particular study.

Intercultural competence

Deardorff (2006) used the Delphi method amongst a group of intercultural experts to identify key elements of intercultural competence. The ability to provide a detailed explanation of intercultural competence has been elusive. Numerous workshops have been organized through the Society for Intercultural, Education, Training, and Research (SIETAR) to define intercultural competence (Fantini, 2009). While no single definition was derived through these workshops, Deardorff's work did identify a consensus that intercultural competence is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (2006, p. 247). Because of the ability for knowledge, skills and attitudes to be clearly communicated through the narratives of entrepreneurs, Deardorff's definition will be the operational one for this study. Spitzberg (1989) drew an important distinction between the effective and appropriate, where effectiveness is the achievement of valued objectives and appropriateness is the avoidance of violating valued rules. The inclusion of both effectiveness and appropriateness highlights the importance of the intercultural competent behavior to achieve a goal (effective) and to appeal to a larger sense of mores within a culture (appropriate). The consensus highlights the importance on the behavior of communication versus attitudes and knowledge. Deardorff does acknowledge the importance of attitudes and knowledge as being fundamental components from which intercultural competence is developed.

The term intercultural sensitivity is also used in this study. This applies to the affective component that underlines intercultural competence. Intercultural sensitivity is

understood as accepting other cultures as different from one's own and making accommodations according to this acceptance (M. Bennett, 1986). Intercultural sensitivity forms the basic affective condition from which intercultural competence can be developed. cleb

History of intercultural competence

In his presentation to the Massachusetts Council for International Education, Dr. Hayes-Bohanan posits the provocative question in the title of his speech, 'Is War the Only Way that Americans Learn Geography?' (2003). In the case of intercultural competence, war triggered the beginning of the intercultural field (Pusch, 2004). After World War II, the United States significantly increased its presence on the international stage. Through the implementation of The Marshall Plan, hundreds of policy, economic, business, and scientific leaders were sent internationally to help rebuild “developing” countries (Hart, 1996). As a result of the lack of language and cultural knowledge, a scathing novel on American involvement in these activities was published under the title, *The Ugly American* (Lederer & Burdick, 1958). While the book was a fictional account, its impact galvanized a field of study that focused on how to train Americans to be competent in specific and general cultural situations. Edward T. Hall satisfied the interest in developing competencies in other cultures with the publication of his book, *The Silent Language* (1959). In this book, Hall introduces the term “intercultural communication,” and he is, therefore, called the father of the intercultural field (Pusch, 2004; M. Bennett, 2013).

In the 1980s, interest in developing cultural sensitivities was emerging. This sensitivity differed from communication because it involved an affective element versus

only the behavioral element that was the focus of intercultural communication. The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) was created by Dr. Milton Bennett (1986; 1993) as a framework to explain the reactions of people to cultural difference. The model is developmental, which means that people develop along a continuum depending on the amount of interaction, training, and facilitation they receive. The model is grounded in concepts from cognitive psychology and constructivism. It is the primary theoretical model for understanding development of intercultural sensitivity today (M. Bennett 2013; Fantini, 2009). Bennett's model is suitable for understanding the intercultural competence of immigrant entrepreneurs for several reasons.

First, it defines intercultural sensitivity from the perspective of development. This involves a "progressive capacity to negotiate different worldviews" (M. Bennett, 1993, p. 24). Progressive capacity-building fits with the progressive venture building of entrepreneurs who are interacting within a culturally diverse entrepreneurial environment (Ram & Hillin, 1994). This developmental focus also aligns with a "restoried" narrative, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Second, the model uses a social construction of identity. In this construct, individuals negotiate and interpret their identity in relation to others. This identity is dynamic and developmental because interactants learn through interaction with others. The constructive philosophy draws attention to how cultural difference is not a static concept. This fits with the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship that shows that the identity perspective versus the assimilationist perspective (Alba & Nee, 1997) is growing in popularity (Nagel, 2002) in the explanation of how ethnic entrepreneurs interact within society. The identity perspective posits "belonging to a migrant culture may have an

indigenous meaning, as it creates a support system based on group identity” (Sahin, Nijkamp, Baycan-Levent, 2007, p. 105).

Third, M. Bennett’s (1998) definition of culture better fits the type of intercultural actions being studied in this study. He emphasizes the importance of *subjective culture* which is “the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviors, and values of groups of interacting people” (p. 3). This definition is contrasted with *objective culture*, “behavior that has become routinized into a particular form,” such as art, and music, or “social, economic, political, and linguistic systems” (p. 3).

There are six developmental stages that describe the level of engagement with which interactants engage with cultural difference. The developmental model assumes that with experience and training, one’s *experience of cultural difference will become* more complex and sophisticated, and one’s competence increases.

The first three DMIS stages are *ethnocentric*, meaning that one’s own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way.

Denial of cultural difference is the stage in which culture itself is not recognized. Those violating cultural norms are viewed as violating rules of civilization and not of a specific culture. Other cultures are avoided by maintaining mental or physical isolation from differences. Denial of cultural difference could be seen within particular closed ethnic enclaves. However, it would take considerable effort from those within the ethnic enclave to allow specific immigrant entrepreneurs to maintain a denial of cultural difference.

Defense is the stage in which difference is polarized. Difference is seen in diametric opposition to one's own culture. Those who understand cultural difference from

the defense stage see cultural difference as a source of conflict that needs resolution. Those who experience the defense stage judge other cultures as inferior. Immigrant entrepreneurs within this stage would conduct business in a way that highlighted a negative judgment towards the host culture. This could either be expressed as not paying taxes, not abiding by equal opportunity policies, or not inviting host nationals as consumers. From the defense stage, an enterprise may be understood as a bulwark against the onslaught of the foreign culture of the host national.

Minimization of cultural difference is when one views their cultural worldview as universal. If difference exists, an individual in the minimization stage will trivialize the difference in comparison to a more important value. An immigrant entrepreneur operating from the minimization stage would seek to minimize cultural difference by reducing aspects of cultural difference apparent within the business.

The second three DMIS stages are *ethnorelative*, meaning that one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures.

Acceptance of cultural difference is the stage in which one's own culture is experienced as one of a number of deeply relevant worldviews. Entrepreneurs in this stage may seek to highlight the culturally diverse perspectives their role as an immigrant may bring to the business.

Adaptation to cultural difference is the stage in which the experience of difference yields perception and behavior appropriate to that difference in culture. Understanding of cultural difference from this stage would allow an entrepreneur to clearly recognize cultural standpoints of customers and of particular policies and regulations that influence the operation of the business.

Integration of cultural difference is the stage in which one's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. In the integration stage, one can experience encapsulated marginality, which is defined (J. Bennett, 1993) as an internal cultural shock and is characterized by "loneliness, alienation, self-segregation, and internal distress." The integration stage could also lead to the experience of constructive marginality, where one is secure in a fundamental sense of identity and is able to construct identities suitable for intercultural situations.

Although there are defined stages, and the DMIS is a developmental model, it is unique from other developmental stage theories because development can happen in different stages simultaneously (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). One does not need to completely resolve understanding cultural difference from one stage before starting to understand difference in another stage.

In the 1990s, demands from the intercultural field included those that focused on building competencies. This shifted the focus once again to behavioral elements. A measure of intercultural sensitivity is the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer & M. Bennett, 2001). The inventory has high reliability and construct validity. The IDI has no significant correlation with a social-desirability scale and has undergone extensive psychometric testing and is a reliable and valid measure (Hammer, M. Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003).

Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) note that qualitative research is "sorely missing" (p. 868) and is needed to augment quantitative methods to add an important "flavor"(p.868) in understanding and assessing notions of intercultural competence. This study attempts to satisfy this need for nuanced "flavor."

Ethnic entrepreneurship

Core terminology

Break-out phenomenon: “The pressing need to escape from the constricted range of over-populated markets in which much ethnic minority enterprise is imprisoned” (Ram & Hillin, 1994, p.15).

Break-out strategies: “A strategy to get away from the situation in which individual ethnic groups dominate such factors as capital, clients, and employees” (Baycan-Devent, Masurel, Nijkamp, 2005, p.144).

Enclave economy: A subset of the ethnic economy that is distinguished by its co-ethnic social relations and observable institutions that actively create and preserve social capital (Zhou, 2007).

Entrepreneur: The concept itself is varied and multidimensional. The definition shifts largely based on the focus of the research (Verheul, Wennekers, Audretsch, & Thurik, 2002). In the classical use of the term, entrepreneurship refers to the combining of resources in novel ways to create something of value (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990). This is the definition that will be used for this study.

Ethnic entrepreneurship: Described by Zhou (2004) as entrepreneurs who are “bounded by coethnicity, coethnic social structures, and location” (p. 1042).

Immigrant entrepreneur: Those who have arrived in a new country and started a business (Butler & Greene, 1997).

History of ethnic entrepreneurship

Before ethnic entrepreneurship became a field of research, it was a phenomenon that invited suspicion and persecution. Max Weber, in his seminal *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, second edition, called what would be described as ethnic entrepreneurship today as “pariah capitalism”(1930). The context for pariah capitalism was anti-Semitic Europe trying to distance the Protestant economic activity from that of the Jewish economic activity.

An aspect of the relationship between pariah capitalism and the protestant ethic could be understood using the DMIS. Polarization is a stage of intercultural development that is characterized by an overly critical judgment of one culture as compared to another culture. According to the theoretical model of the DMIS, polarizing differences is a developmental stage beyond denying differences. Consequently, polarizing cultural differences highlights cultural differences and raises the significance of cultural difference. As the term suggests, polarization juxtaposes two differing cultures. So by Weber identifying certain entrepreneurs as pariahs, he is highlighting the non-pariah nature of the Protestant Capitalists.

After World War II, the concept of pariah capitalism was completely ignored, along with the concept of economic activity that occurred within ethnic groups. Bonacich revisited the topic and created the term “middleman minority” (1973). Bonacich focused her work on the role of diasporas that formed international trading networks. The sociological context of the middleman minority was studying how the traits of certain cultures affected the group’s economic impact on the greater society. When the focus on

cultural traits faded, so did the concept of the middleman minority. Interest in immigrant entrepreneurship re-emerged in the 90s. The context surrounding its re-emergence was that of entrepreneurial innovation and the power of the entrepreneur to create new wealth in society combined with an exploration of why some groups of people seemed to have higher rates of business ownership than others. The focus was on immigrant communities that were unlike the middleman minority, because their economic activity was not involved in international trade or being middlemen and middlewomen. The term associated with this new focus was “ethnic entrepreneurship” (Waldinger, Aldrich, Ward & Stanfield, 1990).

Ethnic enclave entrepreneurship

Ethnic enclave entrepreneurship is described by Zhou (2004) as those who are “bounded by co-ethnicity, co-ethnic social structures, and location” (p. 1042). Ethnic enclave entrepreneurs move to a new country as part of a larger co-ethnic migration and provide goods and services desired by co-ethnic groups. Ethnic enclave entrepreneurship can be seen in Chinatowns worldwide, Little Mexicos in the United States, and Turkish Towns in Germany. There are a host of benefits that come with ethnic enclaves. They are responsible for revitalizing blighted neighborhoods (Masurel, Nijkamp, & Vindigni, 2004), providing a solid economic base for immigrants to enter the host country (Light & Gold, 2000), creating an identity for a community (Abrahamson, 2001) and providing diverse flare to cities (David, Ouedraogo, & Sweetland, 2005). Enclaves also provide a protected markets and captive prices (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990) that allow small businesses to flourish. The protected market is where immigrant entrepreneurs can develop businesses without the competing against the larger and more established

companies with greater resources. Captive prices are higher than prices in the non-ethnic economy due to better access co-ethnic customers. The majority of businesses started by immigrant entrepreneurs are done within ethnic enclaves (Light & Gold, 2000).

Break-out entrepreneurship

While there are benefits to ethnic enclave entrepreneurship, there are also factors that would encourage immigrant entrepreneurs to either expand beyond the confines of the ethnic enclave or avoid the enclave altogether. Within enclaves there is a higher amount of businesses competing for a limited pool of customers (Samatar, 2008). This leads to the condition Light and Gold (2000) called *cannibalistic competition* (p. 127). As a result of this competitive environment, additional layers of complexity are added.

Political, tribal, and clan relationships can influence the ability of a business to attract employees and customers. Entrepreneurs within the ethnic economy may also experience pressure to make business decisions for political or relational reasons rather than purely business reasons. It is important to note that relational and political reasons are business factors within a different legal context. In states that lack developed legal systems, relational and political alliances are the most effective way to build a business. However, break-out entrepreneurs find these relationships cumbersome within the context of a state that has the ability to enforce contracts and uphold standards of law.

While the notion of break-out strategies have been critiqued as having the research biased due to an assimilationist premise (Alba & Nee, 1997; Engelen, 2001). Others have noted that the desire to expand the customer base and financing sources beyond those found within the ethnic enclave is from the immigrant entrepreneur (Light & Gold, 2000; Samatar, 2008) and not forced by assimilationist policies or social

pressure (Masurel, Nijkamp, & Vindigni, 2004). As with any intercultural interaction, there will be ways in which the immigrant entrepreneur adopts the entrepreneurial practices of the host nation. Due to the control the immigrant entrepreneur has regarding the operation and expansion of the business, the break-out experience is more related to acculturation and integration premises than assimilationist premises. Drori & Learner draw attention to the tension between assimilation and integration by drawing attention to the agency of the immigrant entrepreneur, “portraying breaking out as a clash of two ‘cultures’ (ethnic-local and non-ethnic, non-local) reflects an underestimation of the ethnic enterprise’s agility and flexibility” (2002, p. 140). Both agility and flexibility (Matsumoto, LeRoux, Bernhard, and Gray, 2004) are factors that contribute to intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009a).

While the notion of break-out entrepreneurship is established (Light & Gold, 2000; Ram & Hillin, 1994), and the sociological and contextual factors regarding break-out strategies are also studied (Baycan-Levent, Masurel, Nijkamp, 2005; Masurel, Nijkamp, & Vindigni, 2004) there are few accounts of the break-out in process (Basu, 2010) or the particular competencies that drive break-out.

The ability makes the transition from networking within a particular ethnic enclave, to networking within a diverse pool of potential business partners in particular is an important factor to business growth (Martinez & Aldrich, 2011). Intercultural competency will help individual entrepreneurs expand their networks to a more diverse pool.

Historical context of entrepreneurial attribute research

Researchers hoping to create valid and reliable tests of various traits and competencies triggered the beginning of the entrepreneurial trait research field (McClelland, 1965). The early research of individual entrepreneurs focused on finding general traits and personal motives of successful entrepreneurs (Brockhaus, 1980). In his extensive review of the literature including 32 studies done on the personality of entrepreneurs from 1816-1988, Gartner (1989) concluded, “‘Who is an Entrepreneur?’ is the wrong question.” This study shifted the direction from the study of personality traits to specific competencies. Studies began to focus on particular traits, including achievement, locus of control, and willingness to take risks (Aldrich & Wiedenmayer, 1993). However, research about most of these traits produced less than convincing results. Baum and Locke (2004) were able to reverse the trend of entrepreneurial inscrutability with their study concluding, “that specific component variables of entrepreneurs’ traits, skill, and motivation categories are significant direct or indirect predictors of venture growth...” (p. 595). This development opens the possibility for other variables such as intercultural competence as being predictors of venture growth in the terms of break-out.

Sandberg develops a more nuanced understanding of the traditional qualities associated with competence, suggesting that the “meaning work takes on for workers in their experience of it, rather than a specific set of attributes, constitutes competence” (Sandberg, 2000). So while traits and skills are an important and measurable elements of

competence, motivational factors derived from the meaning the entrepreneur derives from work may be a more important factor related to competence.

The literature review gives a broad perspective on the two fields of intercultural competence and ethnic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial attributes. The literature reviewed shows where the fields intersect as in the case with cross-cultural communication during service encounters at ethnically owned businesses. The review has also shown a gap in the research between intercultural competence and ethnic enclave entrepreneurs. This study will explore the space between these two fields by studying a selected group of ethnic entrepreneurs who broke-out of their ethnic enclave primarily by using their intercultural competence skills.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

A hoe digs, a broom sweeps.-Tibetan Proverb

This chapter describes the research methodology and particular methods used in exploring immigrant entrepreneurs' intercultural competence in their business activities. As Deardorff notes in her 2006 study, a multi-method and multi-perspective assessment approach is needed for accurate measurement. Deardorff (2009b) also discusses which methods should be used. 18 out of 20 top intercultural experts, accept that interviews are an appropriate method to assess intercultural competence. Furthermore, 17 of the 20 experts indicate that a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures is appropriate. Several scholars (Deardorff, 2004; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013; Nam & Fry, 2010) agree that a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative measures is ideal for measuring intercultural competence. Therefore, the study of the intercultural competence of immigrant entrepreneurs will be done using a mixed method ethnography and quantitative instrument that measures intercultural sensitivity.

This study is also intended to identify intercultural competencies demonstrated by entrepreneurs while operating and interacting within their small businesses. To explore these areas, ethnographic methods informed by narrative methodology were used to understand the experiences of starting a small business as an immigrant. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe this qualitative method as one in which the lived experience of the subject is studied, is combined with the experience of the researcher, and is “restoried” into a collaborative narrative. In this study, the activities of entrepreneurs

initiating, operating, and developing a business will be analyzed using the lens of the DMIS using the IDI as a quantitative measure. The “restoried” result will be a narrative, which explores cultural development of immigrant entrepreneurs in the language of the DMIS.

Combining the qualitative and quantitative in mixed methods

Two broad perspectives from which intercultural competence can be studied are the emic and the etic (M. Bennett, 2013; Triandis, 1992). Emic are cultural-specific descriptions of culture. These emic perspectives are captured within this study by transmitting the immigrant entrepreneurs’ construction of culture in praxis. Emic constructions of culture can only be understood in terms its own culture. With only an emic perspective, all culturally construed phenomena are particular and can not be compared to the constructed cultural perspectives of others. Therefore etic, or culture-general perspectives are needed to bridge the gap between various constructions of culture. To bridge this gap, the ethnographic narrative methodology is used thereby creating an etic restory of the immigrant entrepreneur.

The emic and etic distinction is important considering the constructivist approach to intercultural competence. This approach highlights the distinction between interpenetration and the voice of the immigrant entrepreneur. This has consequences for both clarity and ethics.

Ethical reasons influence the use of qualitative research. Ponterotto (2010) notes in his review of the philosophical underpinnings of multicultural psychological research that ethnographic methods including narrative are specific tools necessary to unlock perspectives on the phenomenon from the perspective of the subject. This ethical

consideration of the perspective of the research participant is crucial considering this study' exploration of power dynamics and its relationship with intercultural competence.

Furthermore, given that the theoretical models that underpin the quantitative measures of intercultural competence are Western in origin (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), qualitative measures are more able to balance the potential bias or “shifting of emphasis” (p.43) the Western derived models could project. Not only do qualitative methods reduce potential for bias, they can increase the overall contribution to the literature by opening up the possibility of a new construal of intercultural competence.

Quantitate methods allow an etic understanding of the worldviews of the interviewees. Through the use of a valid and reliable instrument, the findings will not only allow unique and specific insight into the ten immigrant entrepreneurs expression of intercultural competence, but they can also be understood as compared to other research participants. While the sample size of ten certainly does not allow for any generalizability of results, the instrument results can be understood within the existing literature. Therefore, the quantitative results would be able to inspire further research.

The ethnographic interviews and the quantitative IDI results will not be analyzed separately, but in tandem. The ethnographic interview data will provide specific examples of worldviews that either correspond to the orientations measured by the IDI or are beyond the scope of what the IDI measures. The quantitative data will connect the particular (i.e. emic) instances of immigrant entrepreneurs interacting interculturally, with general (i.e. etic) understandings of interculturally competent interactions. The overall strength of the analysis will provide more insight than either qualitative or quantitative methods used in isolation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Ethnographic research with narrative methods

The reason ethnographic research works for this study is because it emphasizes discovery. The open-ended methods of ethnographic research allow for the identification of the source of intercultural behavior and have this described in the subject's own words. This source-identifying aspect is an advantage for this study, because there is a lack of research regarding the source of cultural adaptation behavior in immigrant entrepreneurs. Ethnographic research is also useful for understanding the various worldviews that are important to acknowledge in order to identify particular components for further research (Wolcott, 2008).

Narrative research is grounded in the idea that human beings understand and give meaning to our lives through story (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). Narrative research is the best methodology for investigating the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship through the lens of the DMIS. Because longitudinal studies of entrepreneurs' intercultural development have been lacking, narrative research can access data from the past by asking for the subjects reflections on intercultural development. In collecting stories, the research is gathering "knowledge *from* the past and not necessarily knowledge *about* the past" (Bochner, 2007, p. 203, original emphases). This distinction fits with the constructive nature of intercultural sensitivity.

Narrative research also allows careful analysis. Analysis allows for the connection of individual, disparate, and unique experiences to a model that has been substantiated by research. The analyses of the stories form a bridge between the unique experiences of the individual and similar experiences of other research subjects.

This research method gives voice to those who are participating. Those who are interviewed are an active part of creating understanding of their story. This co-creation allows for greater equanimity in the power relationship between the researcher and the researched (Parker, 2003). This co-creative process has positive ethical considerations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) within the context of those who, as immigrants have limited voice in society.

Finally, storytelling is a more intuitive form of exchange. Mark Turner states “most of our experience, our knowledge, or thinking is organized as stories” (1996, p.4). While those from industrialized countries may be familiar with questions or structured questioning, this method may be unfamiliar to those from different cultures. Storytelling is a method that is familiar to various cultures around the world and allows for data from the entrepreneur to be faithfully transmitted regardless of their familiarity with the research method.

The use of narratives have been used in such disciplines as psychology, psychotherapy, education, sociology, and history (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). Contemporary narrative social research had its origin in the post-war interest in humanist approaches in sociology and the humanities (Andrews et al. 2004; Rustin, 2000). Narrative research is used to access qualitative data (Krueger, 2004), and it is better suited to capture nuances to particular situations that involve pluralism, relativism, and subjectivity.

How narrative research shapes the questions

Narrative research is by its very nature reflective and progressive. This reflection allows for a longer-term view of the process of intercultural development. The questions require answers that take into account past experiences, as well as current operations. The progressive nature of narrative inquiry fits well with the progressive or developmental nature of the DMIS. During the analysis, narrative arcs through the story of the immigrant entrepreneur will be connected to various stages on the DMIS.

Existing models of intercultural competence

This research captures both the emic and etic perspectives of immigrant entrepreneurs. The combination of both emic and etic approaches provides a rich account of the intercultural interactions of immigrant entrepreneurs, and how these accounts are similar and different to the intercultural interactions others encounter. The research captures the emic perspective by doing qualitative interviews. A model helps to provide an etic perspective to the experiences of entrepreneurs. This etic perspective puts the particular experiences and actions of immigrant entrepreneurs into a frame that can be compared and contrasted to others who are understood using the model. While it is possible that models force specific phenomena into a rigid category, this research uses the model to add one of several ways in which to understand interculturally competent behavior.

There are several models used understand competence (Spizberg & Changnon, 2009). While compositional models effectively list the components of intercultural competence, they tend isolate attributes in relation to time and the learning process.

These models, while able to present attributes in either a hierarchal or a factored way, are unable to capture how intercultural competence is being acquired and used to understand cultural difference.

Relational models can more clearly show how competence is used within the context of various interactants; it is less useful using an ethnographic interviews method. This is because relational models emphasize the perspectives of both interactants

To do an in-depth study of a particular interaction or series of similar interactions, a process model is helpful to better understand how competence expresses itself within the process of communication. However, this study is less focused on particular interactions, but more on the constructed worldview of the principal interactant, which is the immigrant entrepreneur.

There are various models that capture particular skills, attitudes, knowledge, contexts and outcomes of intercultural interactions, the developmental model best captures the immigrant entrepreneur's constructed worldview regarding cultural difference at a distinct time.

However, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) do note that developmental models fail to identify particular personality traits and specific behaviors that are associated with intercultural competence. However, this study will use the developmental model to identify the general worldview of the participants. Qualitative methods will be used to identify more specific behaviors.

Context: The Twin Cities

Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN, have a high number of immigrants from various countries and cultures, which allowed for the performance of maximum variation sampling. Minnesota is the 21st in size of the foreign-born population in the United States; however, the past twenty years has seen 235% growth (Fennelly, 2011). Minneapolis and St. Paul are now home to the largest 2nd largest Hmong and the largest Somali community in the United States, (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2013). Oromo concentrations in the U.S., as well as the second largest populations for Liberians (Corrie, 2008) and Tibetans (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2009). Over 671,000 Hispanic and Latino people call the Twin Cities their home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The research for this study occurred in the Twin Cities due to, familiarity and financial constraints. These constraints limit the scope of this research.

Instrumentation: The IDI

Over 90 instruments exist to measure elements related to intercultural communicative competence (Fantini, 2006). Two studies suggest criteria for selecting an appropriate instrument. Paige (2004) identified six elements that were important criteria,

1. They have strong potential as intercultural training tools.
2. They touch on topics that are salient to intercultural trainers.
3. They are designed to assess factors associated with culture and intercultural relations.
4. There is evidence that they are being used by intercultural trainers
5. There is psychometric evidence regarding their reliability and validity

6. They have been published, or there is information about how they can be obtained. (p. 93)

Matsumoto & Hwang's 2013 study narrowed down the criteria to four.

1. Attempted to reliably predict successful adjustment or adaptation to new cultural environments
2. Designed for multiple uses and demonstrated efforts at demonstrating psychometric properties
3. Intended to measure culture general rather than a culture specific approach
4. Sources documenting the psychometric properties "were published in empirical articles in peer-reviewed journals in English." (p. 853).

While the IDI satisfied all the criteria set forth by both authors, Matsumoto & Hwang noted mixed results regarding its construct and ecological validity. The study from Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, and Yershova (2003) found that exploratory factor analysis did not reveal a construct for the integration stage of the DMIS. The IDI does not measure the 6th and final stage of the theoretical model from which the instrument derived. This raises questions regarding the suitability between the instrument and its theoretical underpinnings. With the use of ethnographic methods, elements of the integration stage of the DMIS, which could not be identified using a quantitative instrument, may be revealed in this research. Furthermore, Matsumoto reviewed mixed literature regarding the ecological validity of the IDI, which drew questions as whether the IDI can be used as a predictive measure of intercultural competent outcomes. Predicting outcomes is beyond the scope of this study.

Due to use of mixed methods and the limited scope of this study, the IDI is a suitable instrument to reveal the intercultural sensitivity of immigrant entrepreneurs in the Twin Cities. Ethnographic methods will be used to uncover particular intercultural competencies used by immigrant entrepreneurs.

Research questions

Central Question: How do intercultural competencies play a role in the establishment, operation and growth of immigrant owned enterprises.

The central research question examines the experience of what researchers such as Masurel, Nijkampy and Vindigini (2004) and Ram, Smallbone, Deakins and Jones, (2003) are calling break-outs. Stories will be collected, restoried, and verified with each of the entrepreneurs interviewed.

Sub-Question: How is the understanding of the intercultural competence of immigrant entrepreneurs enhanced by using the DMIS?

This sub-question provides a lens of analysis for understanding the stories and connecting with existing research that is being done on intercultural competencies.

Sub-Question: Will an ethnographic study of immigrant entrepreneurs reveal insights into the behavioral elements of intercultural competence?

Research sample selection

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sampling until a point of saturation or redundancy is reached. A group of ten cases was used initially other cases were found based on the saturation levels of the data. Break-out immigrant entrepreneurs who both own and operate the businesses were selected. Except for the case of Fadumo who is

currently trying to become a break-out entrepreneur. To clarify the selection criteria, the component parts will be included below.

Selection of entrepreneurs

The selection of entrepreneurs for this study focuses on those who discover and make use of new products, processes, and ways of organizing. All entrepreneurs selected were those who are owner operators. Absentee owners are not included in this research. This approach is consistent with the research of entrepreneurial attributes (Baum & Locke, 2004; Davidson, Low, & Wright, 2001; Gibb 1996, Mitchelmore & Towley, 2010; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Unger, Rauch, Frese & Rosenbusch, 2011). Research by Timmons (2000) suggests that selecting entrepreneurs who are more homogeneous in their entrepreneurial status will produce more reliable results.

The difference between the enclave and external orientations has been the subject of a few empirical studies (Ram & Hillin, 1994; Ram, Smallbone, Deakins, & Jones, 2003). Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp describe break-out strategy as one which has an external orientation (2007). A break-out strategy in ethnic entrepreneurship is defined as moving away from a situation in which individual ethnic groups dominate such factors as capital, clients, and employees (Baycan-Levent, Masurel, Nijkamp, 2005). Media, as well as informants inside various entrepreneurial development organizations such as the African Development Center, Metropolitan Economic Development Association, and Neighborhood Development Center were be consulted to help identify entrepreneurs who have employed a break-out strategy.

Purposeful sampling

This style of sampling is useful because it can select specific cases that will reveal the particular elements needed to understand how intercultural competence could relate to entrepreneurship. Through a review of the local literature surrounding immigrant entrepreneurship as well as interviews from informants within economic development agencies, samples of entrepreneurs who are likely to have data rich stories of intercultural interactions were selected. Entrepreneurs who own enterprises that have many cross-cultural interactions were selected. The cross-cultural interactions selected were between entrepreneur and the employee/contractor and entrepreneur and the customer/client. These customer interactions provided additional opportunities to explore events related to intercultural exchanges.

Purposeful sampling added to the data rich environment needed for ethnographic research. At the business locations, interactions with customers were observed first hand while spending time with research subjects. On-site business environments also allowed for situations where intercultural competence was demonstrated visually through signs or other markers posted around the business location. Also, the layout of the business location lent clues to the non-verbal intercultural communication abilities of the entrepreneur.

Maximum variation sampling

Maximum variation sampling seeks to capture unique and representative experiences by sampling from the extremes (Merriam, 1998). For this study, ethnic diversity of the entrepreneurs was diversified, which helped to capture unique samples.

Varying the ethnicity of selected samples made it easier to identify themes common to the immigrant entrepreneur. Without variation, themes may only relate to a specific ethnic community.

By focusing on competencies, it may seem that situational and contextual factors would be ignored in this study. This could be looked as the fundamental attribution error. However, these competencies are not from an essential aspect of ethnic identity, but it is learned behavior. This is why maximum variation sampling was used to draw the essential experience of the immigrant entrepreneur into focus.

Data collection procedures

Ten interviews were chosen as samples for this research. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 181) this is an appropriate number for qualitative interviewing. If the research does not find particular themes related to intercultural competence that seem to repeat, further subjects were sought to interview. This satisfies the saturation component of the research selection. Maximum variation sampling was used to purposefully select research subjects. They were selected according to the four elements that Miles and Huberman (1994) used to structure data collection. The elements include setting, actors, events, and process.

The setting in which data was collected was on site in the business location. In cases where the interviewee worked from home, a coffee shop was selected for the interview. Interviews were interrupted when the narrator had to attend to a customer or a business matter. All settings were active and visually confirmed what was being described regarding the dynamic nature of the small business. Variation of the settings included areas of the Twin Cities and type of businesses.

The actors from which the data was collected were individuals who were raised in a culture outside the United States and who owned and operated a business in the Twin Cities. Variation of the actors included cultures of origin, gender, level of education, and size of business.

The events that are focused on were ones in which the entrepreneur interacted with customers, regulators, partners, financiers or facilitators from other cultures. Variation of the events depended on the experience of the subjects being interviewed.

The process includes restorying existing narratives into a pattern that aligns similar themes found within entrepreneurial interviews. It then connects these themes to ideas with the intercultural competence literature.

Data collected

Qualitative observation: As a small business owner who has provided consulting to retail business, I have a unique advantage as a participant observer. This role helped to build trust as well as apply an experienced frame in which to apply observations. Due to the dynamic nature of business ownership, many interviews were interrupted by the frequent need of the entrepreneur to operate the business. When these interruptions occurred, roles were switched from interviewer to observer. Observations were focused on the entrepreneur's interaction with various customers, regulators, partners, or facilitators.

Qualitative interviews

This method of data collection comprises nearly all of the data collection. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in the setting of the small business of a coffee shop if the entrepreneur worked from home. Social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976)

was used to direct qualitative interview techniques. Through the lens of this theory, data collection is a form of social exchange where the subject of the interview expected returns on their time, reflection, and focus. According to the theory, the return does not have to be material, it can be social. The narrative method allows for this social return by giving auto-ethnographic accounts that relate to the narrative. Researchers may “look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p.739). By using auto-ethnographic accounts, the ethnographic interviews are more like conversations, which are less intimidating, and are better able to maximize the social benefit according to the social exchange theory. Furthermore, this approach applies the venerable ethnographic perspective Behar advocated (Behar, 1996). This perspective is in line with the constructivist philosophy underlining the DMIS, that is shaping this study, but it also fully acknowledges the biases and perspectives influencing the construction of this study.

One of the risks of exchanging auto-ethnographic accounts is that the researcher could make his own account central to the narrative instead of the narrator (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). To mitigate this risk, auto-ethnographic “voice, stance, assumptions, and analytic lens” are documented clearly in the transcripts “so that the reader is abundantly clear on whose story is whose,” (Connolly, 2007, p.453).

To build trust, I described a bit of my history including work with refugees, entrepreneurs, personal patronage of ethnically owned businesses, and my role as an outsider in Japan. The interviews were mindfully scheduled as to avoid costs of both time and money of the interviewee. Focus was shared with other pressing events that may interrupt the interview so as to respect the busy nature of the business owner and to

observe the natural interactions of the entrepreneur. The benefit for the narrator was that they could tell their story, which gives them a voice.

Face-to-face informal interviews

The face-to-face informal interview is useful when trying to learn about the entrepreneur's story. Also, in-person face-to-face interviews allow for the reading of facial expressions. This is useful in determining how the interviewee is responding, non-verbally, to the questioning. This sensitivity let me know when to probe and collect more data, or back off to let the narrator relax. Participants are also able to provide their own context to the answers they are giving during a face-to-face interview. Finally, this procedure allows for the control of questioning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011 p. 179), which allows a greater amount of data to be gathered in topics germane to this study.

Interview questions

Tell me about your first experiences with entrepreneurial activity.

Tell me of your transition to the United States.

What was the adjustment like?

Why did you decide to own your own business?

What were your experiences starting your business?

When did you start to notice other groups of customers visiting your location?

Values and biases of the researcher

Because of the interactional, vulnerable (Behar, 1996) and co-creative nature of the interview, researcher bias affected the collection of data. Within ethnographic research the “researcher [acts] as the key instrument” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011 p. 175). Consequently, values and biases significantly affect the data revealed. Myrdal

(1969) suggests disclosure of values, with specific criteria. Values must be “explicitly stated and not concealed as implied assumptions. They must be as specific and concrete as the valuation of reality requires. They must be purposefully selected as they are not, a priori, self-evident or generally valid on the grounds of being founded only on facts or on the ‘nature of things’ ” (1969, p. 63)

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, it is important to give a brief background of my experiences and values that could bias the findings. In my twelve years of primary education, I attended ten different schools and spent the majority of my childhood constantly moving and adapting to people and cultures. While living, working, volunteering and traveling to over 30 different countries, I have developed experience as a traveler, student and expatriate, but never as an immigrant. Consequently, the value of adapting to new cultures may be present within this study.

I have also started two businesses: One business provides development and consulting to small retail businesses. My father and I started the business over ten years ago. We increased the revenue generated from our clients from around \$100,000 to over \$2,000,000. I have seen clients go bankrupt, and others grow a large amount of wealth. Three of my clients are immigrant entrepreneurs who are primarily serving non-immigrant communities.

Starting this consulting business was one of my earliest professional experiences, and it has strongly influenced my values around the importance of hard work, risk taking, flexibility and remaining positive. Building a small business can afford individuals a great sense of accomplishment and a certain amount of individual freedom.

Consequently, my value of the contributions of immigrants to the entrepreneurial landscape may be present within this study.

The most influential experiences regarding my own intercultural competence involved my teaching work in Japan and my career counselor work with immigrants and refugees in Minneapolis. These two experiences profoundly shaped how I understand myself and how I empathize with the experience of interacting with cultural difference.

I lived and worked as a conversational English teacher in Japan for 14 months. Before I moved to Japan, I did not know anyone who had lived there, nor did I know anyone living there. Although this experience happened nearly 15 years ago, I can still vividly recall the feelings of helplessness while being lost, and sense of accomplishment as I became able to read. I can still remember feeling a rush of agency when I was able to recognize my first Japanese word while walking home after a long day at work, *ramen*. Before this time, I was never interested in solving puzzles, but by being a foreigner in a relatively homogeneous country, I was able to solve cultural puzzles constantly and it was enthralling. From this experience, I developed an appreciation for adapting to a new culture, while also recognizing and deepening a sense of my own culture. In a way, I became an American in Japan. I had never before recognized the impact of my cultural upbringing before experiencing it as a foreigner in a relatively homogeneous country. The experience of both adapting to a new culture and drawing strength from my original cultural identity had shaped my research questions. While interviewing entrepreneurs, I made sure to not only focus on the aspect of intercultural competence that dealt with adapting to the new culture. I also made sure to ask questions regarding

how they drew strength from their cultural identity, and how this strength supported their ability to be resilient during the difficult work of establishing an enterprise.

My work with immigrants and refugees was the second most influential intercultural experience of my life. Soon after helping develop the program, the stakes were made clear by director of the organization, if I did not help 20% of my clients secure a new career-level job each month, I would get fired. This sort of pressure focused my mind completely on my clients. When I noticed my clients were not following the process I developed to help them secure employment, I reformed my technique. This increased the level of trust my clients had in me and thereby increased their level of compliance and subsequent success. When I realized my approach to job searching relied too much on the American value of individualism, I reformed my process so that clients could use a more communitarian approach. From learning how to say words of encouragement in Somali, to packing chairs in my office to increase the quality of relationships I had with my clients, I was willing to change everything about the way I worked to help my clients. This experience shaped my interviewing approach because I learned the importance of trust building and mutual disclosure has in generating productive relationships. Essentially, the more I could build trust, the more I could ask and the more I could learn from my interviewees.

After consulting Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, while tracing the origins of ethnic entrepreneurship for the literature review, I learned that my value for vocation and the elevation of the self-made entrepreneur is deeply rooted in my cultural background. This value for work and as a form of authentic expression may have

biased my purposefully sampled selection of entrepreneurs who also share this value of work.

Drawing on the work of Behar (1996), the vulnerable ethnographic perspective not only acknowledges the biases present, but suggests they are also part of the results and provide key insight into the research. There is a possibility that immigrant entrepreneurs would have shared different stories with a researcher that shared their ethnicity, age, gender or any number of identifiers. There is also a possibility that my focus on intercultural competence would provoke the entrepreneurs to reveal narrative accounts that are not central or important to their narrative as an entrepreneur. There is even a possibility that entrepreneurs could make up narrative accounts that are untrue so as to satisfy questions that emerge within the interview. However, these possibilities are limited by the maximum diversity sample, connecting common themes amongst the entrepreneurs and the vulnerable ethnographer approach. There is also a possibility, as Behar suggests, that my biases and values give me the energy and focus needed to reveal unique data.

Member checking and descriptions of research

This research uses methods advocated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) including member checking and rich and thick descriptions. Creating a restory is part of the narrative research that orders the interviewee's data and is part of member checking. The research takes restoried narratives back to the original interviewees. The interviewees then look at the restory and approve or modify it.

Description of the setting, actors, and events are all explicitly evident in the restory. Not only is restoried data included, but observational data will also provide

additional robustness to the setting, actors, and events described in the narrative. Furthermore, “Rich, thick description allows the reader to make decisions about transferability” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988).

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

“The worst man is he who never sows, never consults and never economises” -Somali Proverb

Chart 1: Entrepreneur snapshot

Entrepreneur Alias	Age category	Time outside country of origin	Education level	Country Raised	Nationality
Abbas	41-50	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Kuwait	Palestinian
Barentu	41-50	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Ethiopia	Oromo
Claudia	51-60	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Colombia	Colombian
Dohna	51-60	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Nepal	Tibetan
Fadumo	31-40	6-10 years	Secondary (high) school graduate	Djibouti	USA and Somali
Ivan	41-50	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Croat
Nyiaj	51-60	Over 10 years	Post Secondary (university) graduate	Laos	Hmong
Omar	51-60	6-10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Somalia	Somali
Saachi	41-50	Over 10 years	Post Secondary (university) graduate	India	Indian
Sung	51-60	Over 10 years	Ph.D. degree	South Korea	Korean

Individual entrepreneur profiles

Abbas

For much of his life, Abbas has been an outsider. He has taken this outside perspective and used it to provide new and different dining options for his customers. Abbas grew up in Kuwait as a refugee from Palestine. Although he spoke Arabic, his accent signaled his Palestinian origin. As a result of this accent, he was always made aware that he was not in his home, but rather a guest in a foreign land. Certain jobs were reserved for Kuwaiti citizens, and Palestinians could not apply for the best positions regardless of their skills or education. His family wanted him to have better opportunities, so they sent him to the United States to attend college.

However, his experience as an outsider in the Middle East did not prepare Abbas for the shock of moving to a small town in rural North Dakota. He moved to Wahpeton in the early 1980s and was one of only a few immigrants in town. He experienced everything from benign curiosity to harmful racism while attending college in Wahpeton, and his experience of being treated as an outsider created “this urge not to work for anybody.” After gaining experience working at fast food restaurants, Abbas started a restaurant with the help of his family.

The restaurant grew for three years until Abbas decided to start his own restaurant, which he grew for another four years. But he realized that he liked starting businesses better than running them, so he sold the restaurant and used the proceeds to purchase a grocery store in St. Paul. This was both the largest business he owned and the first one where he owned 100% of the business. Most of his customers were from outside the dominant culture; they were neither Arab nor Muslim. As a result of his diverse mix

of clients, Abbas built skills working with different cultural groups, and his clients appreciated Abbas' personal approach to business. The way in which Abbas conducted customer operations was from a relational approach versus the more American transactional approach. By using a relational approach, Abbas would occasionally give regular clients special discounts and complementary items. While free and discounted items negatively impacted the revenue in the short term, customer loyalty and long-term revenues were positively affected. This relational approach distinguished Abbas from his larger and more powerful competitors who were using a transactional approach. Using the relational approach demonstrated intercultural competence, because it was the style most of the immigrants and refugees who lived in the neighborhood preferred and had previous experience within their home countries.

As Abbas' business grew he needed to hire more employees, and he was conscious of the effect that diverse employees had on his clients. He wanted the composition of his workforce to match the ideal composition of his customers, so he hired one white employee. It turned out that this employee was an informant from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). Although the FBI agent was trying to determine if Abbas was funneling money to terrorist groups, he instead uncovered evidence that revealed Abbas was not properly accounting for his sales or paying the proper amount of taxes. This situation caused Abbas to be imprisoned for ten months. This drastic situation is one example of how Abbas' outsider thinking was not always acceptable and revealed the stark contrast between the rules of a culture that must be obeyed strictly and the rules of a culture that were open to being influenced by an outside perspective.

When Abbas was released from prison, he was able to go back to his family after parting ways 20 years earlier. He was assigned the role of branch manager of a restaurant and grocery business. These were two industries that Abbas had experience running as an owner/operator, so he was well-suited to effectively manage the business. Again, the branch that Abbas managed was the most culturally diverse branch of the operation. However, this branch was frequented by members of the non-immigrant community, so he was particularly well-suited to building a multi-cultural employee and customer base. He took all the entrepreneurial abilities he had developed at his own businesses and helped the family business grow into a multi-million dollar business.

Currently, Abbas has employees from Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mexico, Algeria, Jordan, and Pakistan, and he personally hires all the employees at his location. His customers are primarily from the dominant culture. Abbas' ability to reach out and connect with people from different cultures is visible in both the composition of the employees working at his branch and the composition of his customer base.

Barentu

Positivity in the face of adversity is a trait that marked Barentu's journey into business ownership. He worked jobs that had few opportunities for advancement, and were difficult both physically and culturally, before he was able to start a business where he could create his own opportunities and establish the office culture. In a few of his jobs, he was unable to adapt his sense of morality to particular situations and was fired from his position. Through all of these difficulties, his ability to stay true to the principles that had led to earlier success while also adjusting to new cultures and business situations allowed Barentu to withstand a series of professional failures and rejections.

His first job in the United States was as a dishwasher at the Hilton hotel. While washing dishes, his colleague asked him “Why do you work so hard for the white man?” Barentu responded, “I am working for myself.” This response demonstrated Barentu’s unflinching focus on his goal of making something of himself in the United States. However, his response did not earn him the esteem of his colleagues. When Barentu questioned whether a supervisor from another division should be asking him to clean offices despite his role as a dishwasher, he was fired. He found another job driving a taxi, which he enjoyed, and it supported him through school. Once he graduated with a degree in political science; he took a job at the Minneapolis Housing Authority. There he developed skills in addressing officials and writing proposals. Barentu recalls the importance of learning these important skills. After he told his boss that he would not sign an untruthful statement implicating the incompetence of a co-worker, Barentu was fired. Despite having a graduate degree, Barentu suffered the same fate as when he was a dishwasher. His reluctance to compromise his values for the sake of giving in to the demands of an authority figure once again led to his termination. This lack of willingness to compromise his values could be considered a lack of intercultural competence; however, Barentu considered his values to be in accordance with the host culture. In this way, Barentu was clearly able to discern between adapting to individual demands and adapting to cultural norms.

Barentu went back to driving a taxi, a job he held while he was in school. This gave him time to think. If he found another job, he might find himself in the same situation with the difficulties of navigating unspoken rules of authority, so he instead decided to start his own business. Barentu spent much of his remaining money to

purchase a bus driving license. This significant purchase forced him to commit to the vision of owning bus driving business. He then pursued a very aggressive marketing campaign and hand delivered seven proposals a day, which depleted his savings even further as he was spending it on gas to deliver the messages. Not only was this logistically and financially difficult for Barentu, but it caused him psychological stress as well. This stress was a result of the dismissive attitude that transportation managers paid to Barentu by laughing at him when he delivered his proposals.

These managers were laughing at Barentu for daring to break into an industry that had been dominated by a few powerful companies for over a decade. However, Barentu had spent his entire life in the United States fighting from an outside position while having an outside perspective. While this experience would have deterred some people without Barentu's experience, it did not deter Barentu. This illustrated a special aspect of intercultural competence, which is characterized by a willingness to take an outside perspective and take a risk by trying things in an unorthodox way.

Eventually, Barentu found a school in Osseo, which just happened to have a very small contract available for service. Barentu was able to rely on his brothers, sisters, and extended family to quickly jump in and provide the financial and labor support needed to fulfill the contract. He used his wife's minivan to fulfill his first contract, and he will never forget his first invoice for \$11,000. He continued his aggressive marketing campaign and was able to secure several other contracts. During the expansion of his business, he realized the need for continuing investment, so he reinvested all the profits from the business. After seeing the difficulty that other immigrant entrepreneurs faced

navigating the American system of taxation, Barentu made the decision to hire a certified public accountant to decrease the risk of making a mistake with the IRS.

Barentu's focus on preserving values from his own culture gave him the confidence to make risky bets on an industry that was dominated by established competitors. His decisions to continually reinvest profits into his business and grow his business through referrals, as well as his conservative approach to financing, allowed Barentu to build a school transit company employing over 200 people, with 300 busses and twelve million dollars in annual revenue.

Claudia

Many entrepreneurs either come to the United States to start a business, or decide to open a business in their adoptive country after realizing that their skills are mismatched with the U.S. labor market. Claudia, however, had started a company in Colombia, then moved to the United States, and started a new company.

In Colombia, Claudia had a successful job as a chemist; she enjoyed the work and was paid well. But she realized the constraints that employment brought.

“I always told my friends at work that, you know, when you're employed there's this threshold. If before that point you don't go out into the world and do your entrepreneurship thing, it's very hard afterward because either you have many financial responsibilities or you're just afraid of losing those things that you already have as part of the system or part of the company.”

Like several female entrepreneurs, having a child forced Claudia to make a decision to either commit to her desire for more independence or to settle for the more predictable life as “part of the system.” After she had her first baby, her need for independence intensified, “even breastfeeding, something as simple as that, was so

complex when you work as an employee in the company. And I didn't want those limitations." She drew strength from her family identity. Entrepreneurship was in the blood of Claudia's family. She recalled that her grandmother "always had businesses" and both of her parents were independent farm owners.

She had the desire for more independence and the strength that a familial identity provided. She was familiar with the chemical business and decided to apply her acquired knowledge. She partnered with a "brilliant chemist" and was able to formulate an *adjuvant* chemical agent. This agent would allow farmers to use 30% less fertilizer and pesticide product while achieving the same effect. She decided that she could build a reasonably sized business specializing only in adjuvant compounds, but it would take time. The testing required approval from the national environmental department of Colombia. Claudia started freelancing as a translator of chemical textbooks to generate income during the transition. After regulatory approval,

"...we began selling our product from zero ... we competed with very large companies, very large multinational companies and so it was very interesting. We went into three or four very large businesses in Colombia and started little by little, selling, whatever \$100 and then \$1000 and then [much more]."

Business grew until she had 12 agricultural engineer employees and was the third best selling adjuvant provider in the country. She was able to abandon the steady but relatively poorly paid translation freelancing and concentrate on her chemical company.

As the business became more successful, Claudia faced an increasing amount of risk. At this period in Colombia, targeted kidnappings of those deemed to be wealthy were increasing. Claudia's office was robbed and her partner was kidnapped. Although

her partner was released from the kidnappers, the situation forced Claudia to consider moving to a new, safer place.

While attending school in the United States over 10 years earlier, she had applied for residence. When she was told that her residence had been accepted, she had three months to decide. If she were to leave Colombia for the safety of the United States, she would have to give up ownership of her business. Her concern for safety influenced the decision, “I had the feeling that if we did very well there [Colombia], the punishment was going to be that we were going to be eventually kidnapped, us and our children, and I could not live with that possibility.”

After balancing the pros and cons, Claudia decided to sell her chemical business to her business partner and move to the United States. Claudia tried to start the same chemical business in the United States, but she was not prepared for the regulatory culture. She reflects on her experience:

“In that sense I was very naïve of the US environment, agricultural environment, which is a really interesting experience for an entrepreneur because you see the cultural framework working right there. Although I went to school here, the university is not really a place where you learn about a culture I think in terms of a business perspective. And I am just very... you can tell that I am not risk-averse.”

After a few years of difficult work trying to establish the regulatory credentials necessary to formulate and distribute chemical agents in the United States, Claudia abandoned the task. She decided to go back to freelance translating, as she had done before in Colombia. She worked a few projects for various companies, but the work was sporadic and the payment was varied. After a few companies failed to pay her on time,

she recalls saying, “This is ridiculous. I can’t live like that.” These experiences encouraged her to start her own translation company. She applied the same skills she had developed finding distributors of her chemical product to finding publishers who needed translation. After the culture shock she faced trying to make her chemical company work in the United States, she experienced relative ease selling translation services. “I should tell you that here, a translation business is different from a regular business, because obviously I don’t have to deal with my accent or the fact that I’m a foreigner, because people might say ‘Well if you have a translation business it might be a good thing to be a foreigner.’ ”

Although she can run her business from her home, she has a significant amount of intercultural interaction. “I have all kinds of cultural interactions throughout the U.S. My clients mostly are American, but the people I work with are obviously foreign, so all of us are continuously trying to, in a way, transfer some of the cultural context in the written word into the cultural context of the other language, so we do all that time.” She must be interculturally competent in the ways she interacts with both the text she is translating and with her contractors who are doing the translating.

She is able to reduce intercultural translating errors by focusing on seeing the text through multiple perspectives. She then presents the multiple perspectives to the authors, and is able to clarify their original intention with the text. Through her method, she is able to reduce translating errors and increase the quality of her translating work.

She primarily uses email for communication between her clients and contractors. By using email, she is able to engage in more precise communication and reduce

communication errors. This is one aspect of intercultural competence Claudia is most focused on, the reduction of communication errors through clarity and specificity.

Claudia has started two businesses. One was explicitly related to her degree, the other related to her intercultural skills and communication discipline. She has used her business to provide options for her family and to achieve her desire for independence, accomplishment and safety.

“I had a much larger business in Colombia, I know the responsibilities of the larger business and I didn’t want that, really. I love to read, I love to learn, ... it’s not the money for me. It’s really... and success, it’s a hard world in terms of entrepreneurship I would say.”

Dohna

She carries on the tradition of entrepreneurship her father started in Nepal. Like many Tibetan refugees in Nepal, Dohna’s father arrived from over the mountains with few possessions and the only specialized skill he had was herding sheep. Herding was of little value in the more urban environment he found himself in, so he began looking for a way into the industry that held the most professional and financial promise: the rug making industry. Because he did not have the right connections, he could not start as a rug weaver at a factory in Nepal, so he instead started as a toilet cleaner at one of the larger factories in town. After demonstrating his commitment to the company, he was allowed to weave. After saving what he earned, he was able to start weaving in his own house and start his own business. His story as retold by his daughter is the classic story of success of the Tibetan refugees in Nepal: “If there were a Nepali dream, like there is an American dream, this is it.” This family history provided the encouragement Dohna needed to begin her own business venture.

As her father's business grew, Dohna sought education to help carry on what had become the family tradition of running the business. However, a year after graduating from college, her plans were cut short by an arranged marriage. Dohna went to Minnesota to support her new husband, who was studying in Mankato. She had read books about Australia and London, but had never learned much about the United States.

While this transition was sudden, it was not unusual. Moving and adjusting to different cultures was a common theme in Dohna's life. She was sent to a Tibetan refugee school in India when she was eight years old. All of her peers were Tibetan refugees who were adjusting to Indian culture. When Dohna completed Tibetan school, she joined an Indian community program, where all of her friends were Indian. Then, when she went to work with her father, most of her colleagues were Nepalese. By the time Dohna came to the United States, she had plenty of experience moving and adapting to new cultures. This moving and adapting formed the core of the skills that would create the intercultural competence Dohna used to operate and adapt a business that was on the forefront of a cultural shift within the U.S. marketplace.

Dohna did not intend to become an entrepreneur after moving to America. Although she admits being "not so business oriented," despite having both an undergraduate and master's degree in the subject, Dohna's in-laws invited her to run their Tibetan-themed gift store. The store sold Tibetan furniture, rugs, jewelry, traditional musical objects, and Tibetan Buddhist religious items. Her primary customers were white Americans who were seeking an intercultural or spiritual experience through these items. This puts Dohna in a unique position, as her business is directly related to sharing her cultural identity with others. The intercultural competencies she had developed by

moving and forming new relationships in differing cultural contexts allowed Dohna to better relate to customers who were seeking a new cultural experience. Her life experience uniquely prepared her for this role, because, with all of her moving, Dohna encountered a vast amount of ethnic, national, and religious diversity. She described how she participated in Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Hindu prayers with her roommates, while also maintaining a clear identity as a Tibetan Buddhist.

Dohna helps others explore Tibetan Buddhist beliefs through texts or religious objects, and she can speak with the authority of someone who has experienced other traditions.

A unique aspect of Dohna's store is how it functions more as a way to achieve a balance between work and family than as a way to make money. The store had an annual revenue of \$68,000 and employs two people. The practical function of this business was that it acted as a way to tie Dohna's family back home in Nepal to her family here in the United States. She relies on her father-in-law as well as her sisters in Nepal as a source of authentic handmade Tibetan goods. In her role running the store in the United States, Dohna is able to more easily achieve a flexible work schedule that allows her to take care of her children. There is a more significant effect of this business that is beyond the obvious practical benefits: Its existence as a marketplace for cultural goods acts as a market-based expression of her support of the Tibetan cultural identity.

Fadumo

After taking care of her own kids, one of whom was very sick, as well as a few sick relatives, Fadumo had experience taking care of people. Using this skill she had developed in her personal life, she was able to build a company and a non-profit

organization. Many of the entrepreneurs interviewed started their business from cultural practices that were familiar to them. Other entrepreneurs found opportunities using the distinct skills they had developed due to their particular life situations as immigrants. As a refugee, Fadumo had experience caring for the needs of the sick and elderly within her community. She took this expertise, formalized it with training, and created a company where she provided this service professionally. She later decided to shift her focus from the service itself, and instead focused on developing the skills needed to train others to provide these services. At each step during her professional journey, Fadumo applied skills related to intercultural competence to help her clarify her business goals and identify opportunities.

After moving to the Twin Cities after a divorce, Fadumo was unable to support her three children on the wage she was receiving doing assembly work. She started investigating various non-profit organizations, and enrolled in training programs that gave her the skills that were necessary for her to advance into a higher paying career. Because of her medical care experience, she chose training programs that focused on the medical field, and she realized that there was an unmet need for health care workers in the homes of elderly Somalis.

Fadumo worked with the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) to learn the basics of forming a business. There were significant cultural differences between professional expectations within a Somali context and the expectations in an American context. The NDC training programs specializes in teaching business and professional skills to immigrants, and they had a special program that focused on the most significant challenges faced by immigrants when starting and operating new businesses. Through

classes at NDC, Fadumo was able to learn about financial management, office organization, and time organization. In Djibouti, the community communicated so frequently that formal records and organization were unnecessary, because “everybody knew what everybody else was doing” so the idea of keeping records and formal schedules seemed rigid to Fadumo. However, Fadumo was a keen student and was excited to apply what she had learned. Her initial resistance to the rigidity of recordkeeping and timing worked to her benefit. Because these notions were novel, she was better able to relate these American best practices to her employees, who also found the practices too rigid.

Like many in the Somali community, Fadumo thought about returning to her homeland once the political situation stabilized, and this had always stopped her from making a significant investment in skills or projects that were tied to the United States. She was resistant to the notion of investing in a business or skillset that would be useless after returning to Somalia. However, as she saw her children grow up and build relationships within the Twin Cities, she realized that she had to make this place her home. Fadumo believes this to be a special insight that she had as a Somali mother. Her role as a mother raising children in the United States compelled her to make investments in her skills and in enterprises that deepened her connection to the United States.

“So they grow up in this culture and knowing in this culture. So the reason that we have to make country [this] our home and that our kids can have a better life for us to be good with the education, with the kids that they are hanging around with, who they are associating with has a lot to do with their bringing up as kids. So educating myself would benefit my kids.”

Because of this point of view, Fadumo decided to take a risk and invest the money she had saved to form a home health care company. In a few years, she was able to grow the company to over a dozen home health care clients. She built her list of clients by networking and being active within her neighborhood and Somali clan community. While all of her clients and employees were Somali, she needed significant intercultural competence skills to balance the regulatory and financial aspects of the business with the needs of her clients. While her employees and clients were less concerned with the aspects of timing and record keeping, Fadumo needed to enforce more precise standards due to requirements from both the development agencies investing in her business and the state regulators. This required Fadumo to balance the flexibility needed to suit the needs of her clients and employees, and the preciseness needed for administrative aspects of the business that was dictated by the dominant culture of Minnesota.

While Fadumo was happy with the progress she made starting her business, the home health care industry was very competitive. Several of her competitors were using aggressive marketing techniques, including bribery. Some of her competitors were paying their clients a collusion fee. This is money paid to the client in exchange for them filling out the paperwork necessary to receive state funds for a home health aide worker. While Fadumo was willing to compete on service and price, she felt that she could not use bribery. She learned from her investors that this practice would threaten the long-term viability of the enterprise, so she decided to gradually exit the home health care industry.

As Fadumo started to exit her home health care business, she began a non-profit agency that focused on helping Somalis who held low-clan status within the larger Somali community to develop their skills. After seeing how the NDC and other

development agencies in the United States focused on improving the skills and opportunities of oppressed peoples within the U.S. context, she placed this same focus on low-clan status groups within the Somali American context. Members of low social status clans within the Somali American community suffer disadvantages in both Somalia and in the Twin Cities. The interconnected nature of the Somali community exacerbates the negative effects of discrimination against those holding low-clan status.

Fadumo had already developed a competency in training through the instruction that she provided for her home health care employees, and she is currently building the non-profit agency that provides special education to Somalis holding low-clan status in their own community. Many of the students she educates come from a Somali clan culture that has culturally reinforced castes with restrictions on education and the extent of entrepreneurial engagement. Fadumo is trying to change this system by educating women in the same skills of financial and time management and organizational control that allowed Fadumo to found a small business of her own.

Fadumo is graduating the first group from her training program, and is excited about the future. Although Fadumo would not be considered a break-out entrepreneur, because she is primarily serving members of her own community, she still embodies the interculturally competent entrepreneur by drawing strength from her ethnic community, learning lessons from her new host community, and by using her interculturally competent skills to change the cultural dynamic within the broader community.

After becoming successful in his home country, Ivan decided to do it all again in a new country. By leaving his home country after fleeing his war-torn city, he not only left behind his professional success but he also left behind his ethnic and national identity. This loss of identity allowed him to create a new identity and what he calls a “second life” in the United States.

As an advertising executive in Sarajevo, Ivan established several important international business contacts. He grew up in a diverse city with several strong ethnic and religious differences. Learning how to properly respect others was a skill Ivan could regularly practice in a diverse and city like Sarajevo. He took this ability and his appreciation and respect for others and used it to build a large network of international clients and partners. Ivan relied on this network to participate in international marketing and advertising projects, but he never expected to rely on them to help him start a new life. After fleeing the violence that followed the balkanization of Yugoslavia, Ivan had few places to go.

When he decided to leave the country, he had quickly to plan where he would immigrate to. He called those in his international network and learned of a family owned broadcasting business in Fargo, North Dakota. Although the name Fargo was not as famous as New York or Los Angeles, Ivan figured it was a good center of business activity because his business contact had seven TV stations and 60 radio stations in the Upper Midwest. This was the best possible opportunity that Ivan could find at the moment, and he decided to act on it. Ivan recalls, “It was important for me to decide that

I'm going to be successful before even coming here otherwise why would I come?" He fled the war-torn region that later became known as Bosnia-Herzegovina, and as others were killing each other over ethnic and religious differences, Ivan shed these aspects of his identity to create his "second life" in the United States.

After immigrating to the United States, Ivan went to Fargo to apply for a position at one of his contact's broadcasting stations. Ivan had become successful in his home country by always being prepared for any situation, so he arrived in Fargo a week early to investigate the company and those who would be interviewing him. In the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural city of Sarajevo, he was keenly aware of cultural differences and the implications for cultural mistakes. He recalls how he learned to interact respectfully in a culturally diverse environment: "I feel lucky and feel very fortunate that I was exposed to all these different cultures early enough, because I have seen it, and I worked and I spend most of my adult life doing it [demonstrating intercultural competence]." When dealing inter-culturally, Ivan made sure always to prepare ahead of time so as to avoid mistakes. This sensitivity to the possibility of making cultural *faux pas* is one of the most classic of the intercultural competencies. The significance of cultural similarity and difference was not lost on Ivan. He realized that a cultural gaffe could have important repercussions, especially considering that the advertising industry dealt entirely with nuances of language and culture.

While many of the business essentials in the United States were similar to those that Ivan learned back home, he also noticed the cultural differences. When deciding how to adjust, he took the approach that he would decide to be successful and adjust his behavior to achieve that goal. If he had tried to make cultural adjustments before he

decided to be successful, he would have lost his drive. He used his skill with making cultural adjustments to prepare for the intercultural uncertainty of his first American interview. He spent the week in Fargo speaking to people who had connections in the broadcasting enterprise, and by the time of his interview, he impressed the owners of the broadcasting company so thoroughly with his preparation that he was offered a position on the spot.

For the next thirteen years, Ivan developed skills in both sales and film production. He started a local news-based internet company in the early 2000s, and was able to further expand his network of movie and radio programmers. After the “dot com crash,” Ivan closed his internet company and started working more in the movie production and distribution side of the broadcasting industry. He eventually had to decide if he was going to focus on the production of movies or the distribution aspect. His father was a moviemaker, and Ivan liked the ideas of making films, but production was “all over the place,” and Ivan liked the consistency of the distribution side of the business.

In 2006, tension between Ivan and his boss were at a breaking point. His boss was a very religious person, and had been putting pressure on Ivan to accept doctrines of faith. Ivan had always been very respectful of his boss’s religious views and even visited his family during Christmas celebrations. As the pressure continued, Ivan at one point made it very clear that his religious views were “very, very private and [he] would not allow it to be the subject of any conversation or business.” This started a rift in the relationship, and Ivan began to see his boss’s spirituality takeover reason. In much the same way that religious differences started to tear apart the former Yugoslavia, this theme was reemerging within Ivan’s professional life in the United States. He knew he had to

leave the company and create a situation where he had more control over his professional environment.

In 2006, Ivan used the experience he had gained when he started his own Internet business in the early 2000s, and applied his knowledge to start his own distribution company. By this time, Ivan's network was significant, and he was able to rely on the relationships he had developed over the years to build his own distribution and international film sales company. He built a distribution network by being both strategic and by being very careful about relationships because he had learned in Sarajevo that being very protective of his relationships in addition to presenting himself professionally allowed him to build an effective and productive network of business contacts. With his new company, he was able to make use of this large and international network. Ivan continues to abide by the principles that led to his success in his "first life" in Europe. But in his new life in the United States, he was able to take on a new identity, a new network of business associates, and build his own company. His current operations generate about \$80,000 in annual revenue, and since Ivan has no employees and little production costs, the operation is suitably profitable for the lifestyle Ivan has come to expect. More importantly, Ivan can connect his family history with his current American identity through his business.

Nyiaj

When Nyiaj went to the grocery store to buy meat, all he saw were packages of processed meat products. Was the animal that provided the meat healthy? What kind of animal provided this meat? How could he be sure that this meat was fresh? These were questions he and other Hmong immigrants asked when purchasing meat at the grocery

store. Nyiaj was not satisfied with the initial answers to his questions, he set about creating his own answers to these questions by starting a business of his own that blended the post-industrial realities of urban St. Paul with the needs of a growing population of immigrants and refugees.

In the mountainous lands of Laos and the refugee camps of Thailand, Hmong immigrants were accustomed to picking out the animal that would later become a meal. The ability to select an animal based on specific criteria such as clarity of eyes, physicality, and condition and color of fur all played a role in the selection process. Furthermore, animal slaughtering had a purpose in Hmong religious shamanistic practice as well. The growing population of Hmong refugees immigrating to the Twin Cities led Nyiaj to see an opportunity to open his own slaughtering house in the city of St. Paul. This was an unconventional idea, because animal processing operations had been moving from metropolitan to rural areas for the past 50 years.

Nyiaj approached his community at the Methodist church for financing and was rejected. He later approached banks, family members, and members of the community, but everyone turned him down. Many people could not see the benefit of opening a slaughterhouse, nor did they trust Nyiaj with a sizeable loan on an unproven business.

The middle brother in Nyiaj's family made a ten year plan to open the business. As part of this plan, Nyiaj would provide the accounting and management expertise for the business and his brother would provide the capital investment. The plan was for Nyiaj to go to school and get a CPA degree while his brother would work as a carpenter while saving money for the business. The plan was working out well until Nyiaj's brother died in his sleep. After this, Nyiaj realized he would have to provide both the expertise and the

capital. Nyiaj realized that instead of going to college, he needed to build his skills while making and saving money all by himself. Nyiaj worked at Lutheran Social Services and sold term life insurance during the weekends. After six years, he was able to save \$30,000. Nyiaj invested all of his savings into the business, and with this financial commitment and the connections he developed over six years, he was able to convince his other family members and the church to loan him money.

Nyiaj was finally able to lease a building and start slaughtering animals. His eldest brother had the most experience slaughtering animals, and he led the animal processing operation. With the eldest brother at the head of operations, the family members and employees were slaughtering a maximum of 40 pigs per day. This was a key measure of productivity for the business. Nyiaj had ideas about how to improve the process and slaughter even more pigs.

At this time, only Nyiaj's family members and a few Hmong employees were working at the plant, and Nyiaj wanted to hire someone from outside of the Hmong community to help improve the process. The eldest brother resisted because it was his role to preserve the Hmong culture and tradition within the business. The eldest brother insisted that the pigs would be slaughtered just as they were at home in Laos. When the eldest brother left for Thailand, Nyiaj made the operational improvements that he had been planning, and he hired a white person who had worked for the large and established Armor animal processing company. Within a few weeks and after several operational changes, they were able to slaughter 104 pigs per day.

Nyiaj's role as the younger brother allowed him to take more risks and try business methods that were not in line with Hmong tradition. This is one contextual

factor that resulted in interculturally competent behavior. Since he had lower status in the group, he had less incentive to maintain the cultural practices of the cultural system that afforded him a lower status.

As his business was growing, it started attracting a culturally diverse clientele. Beyond his initial Hmong clientele, Nyiaj started attracting Cambodians and Vietnamese. In later years Nyiaj recalls how impressive it was when he was able to attract Korean and Japanese clients. He considered their patronage a vote of confidence in his business, because they came from rich countries. Being able to draw clients from rich countries made Nyiaj confident that he was doing things well. After a few years he started attracting an even more diverse clientele of Hispanic, Eastern European, and African people.

As Somali refugees started to resettle in the Twin Cities in the late 90s, they recognized the value of an accessible slaughterhouse in which they could choose the methods by which the animals were slaughtered. Since observant Muslims required animals to be slaughtered according to strict customs, they appreciated this aspect of Nyiaj's slaughterhouse because they were able to control how the animal was slaughtered and butchered. They were also allowed on the "kill floor," which allowed their religious leaders to say the appropriate prayers while the animal was being killed. However, as the Muslim clients started to increase, their demands also increased, and Nyiaj was unable to accommodate their needs. Some of the Muslim clients requested separate slaughtering tools that had not come into contact with pigs. This was a logistical problem that Nyiaj was unwilling to solve. This logistical barrier is perhaps an instance where the intercultural competence of Nyiaj reached its limit.

In ten years, Nyiaj was able to build a business that satisfied both the tastes and the religious needs of the Hmong community. The answer to the question, “What is this meat?” also turned out to be the answer for recent immigrant communities that would like to choose the animal to be slaughtered. In addition, the assessable and customizable nature of the slaughterhouse was perfectly positioned for the emerging trend with a certain subsection of members of the dominant culture who were interested in local food and the particularities of food production. He has already proven his ability to accommodate the needs of customers beyond his own immediate cultural community. In this way Nyiaj is poised for to satisfy a niche demand within the dominant culture, thereby giving him the ability to become a breakout entrepreneur. Nyiaj created a business that not only creates jobs and adds to the economy, but also strengthens the community by fulfilling a niche demand for cultural and religious expression.

Omar

Omar is someone who can sense an opportunity and put himself in the middle of it. His ability to place himself in environments and situations that were growing and changing put him in a position where he could identify several unmet needs within a changing community. Although situations and communities were shifting around Omar, he was still able to notice cultural similarities and draw on his former experiences to achieve business success.

Omar moved from Somalia at an early age to work in the growing economy of the United Arab Emirates. He arrived in Dubai without the personal, familial, or business connections that are so crucial for entrepreneurship in the Arab Gulf region. Furthermore, while his Muslim identity opened some opportunities, his non-Arab identity closed other

possibilities. Omar was able to see the city as it was transforming from a small fishing and pearling town to a global business and financial center, and although he did not have the connections or family prestige that was necessary to take advantage of certain business opportunities, he was in the right place at the right time.

Omar learned Arabic in order to work with local Emiratis, and he also learned Urdu, which was the language of the working class. Because of his status as a non-Emirati outsider, Omar could more easily connect with the population of Urdu-speaking workers arriving from Pakistan. As his connections grew, and his Urdu language and intercultural competence grew, Omar was able to form and manage efficient teams of workers who helped construct the quickly growing metropolis.

As the influx of immigrants changed from manual workers who built office buildings to white collar workers who worked in the office buildings, Omar sensed an opportunity with the new and changing population. As office workers were leaving, he would buy their personal furniture at extremely cheap prices. He could then sell it to fully furnish the apartment of a newly arriving office worker. With the connections he had built during his time managing construction projects, he knew all the people he needed to know who could move and lift heavy furniture, and with the connections he had built with the construction managers, he was able to find expatriates moving to Dubai.

As the war and political instability consumed Somalia, the diaspora of emigrating Somalis spread across the globe. Omar left Dubai and reconnected with his family in Minneapolis. In this new city, he was again left without many professional connections beyond his family connections. However, Omar had already developed the competency of being able to find business opportunities within rapidly shifting cultural demographics.

He took the lessons he learned in Dubai and realized that the growing immigrant population had an unmet need. This need was not for furniture, but for religiously suitable food. The increasing Muslim population in the Twin Cities required food that was *Halal*, or proper, for Muslim consumption. Omar set about creating a catering service that delivered Halal meals to Muslim students at local Minneapolis schools. Omar's ability to see similar opportunities within different cultural contexts represents an aspect of intercultural competence, which is the ability to find similarities despite obvious cultural differences.

As Omar's business grew, he expanded to include a restaurant. He also realized that his neighborhood had a large Hispanic population, so he started to branch out into the Spanish-speaking community. Omar noticed class similarities between the Spanish-speaking population in his neighborhood and that of the Urdu-speaking people in Dubai. He recalls, "Here in America. The Spanish is like the Urdu, very important." Noticing this similarity gave him the insight and confidence to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the cultural diversity in his neighborhood. Omar hired Spanish-speaking employees, and his restaurant is now connected to a grocery store that sells specialty items that are sought after by both Somali and Hispanic clients. While others could have seen the Spanish-speaking community as just another element of cultural difference within an already diverse and complex system of neighborhoods in Minneapolis, Omar minimized the apparent difference. He was able to relate to his Spanish neighbors as he did to his Urdu employees in the United Arab Emirates. Perhaps this approach helped him to secure Spanish speaking employees and clientele.

Omar's keen understanding of ethnic culture, class culture, and the cultural factors that influence both groups in the diaspora and migrant populations has allowed him to sense opportunities and reduce the difficulties associated with cultural difference. His intercultural competence allowed him to create a diverse and well-performing team, and he was thereby able to turn opportunities into a successful catering and restaurant business.

Saachi

Saachi was born into the hospitality business. Her immediate family and her extended family were all heavily invested in the business of hotels, restaurants, and transportation. This familial connection with the hospitality industry gave Saachi the confidence to take risks within a new culture and become one of the first women within her community to take an ownership position within a large enterprise.

Saachi's parents moved to the United States to find better economic opportunities. After meeting an aunt in San Francisco, the path forward for the family seemed clear. They stayed at the aunt's hotel for two weeks and at another aunt's hotel for six months. After the experience in the aunts' hotels, the family was determined to become hoteliers themselves. Hotels were a solid investment that was proven to work not only for those in the immediate family, but also Saachi's extended familial community.

Saachi sees it this way:

“We come from a village, there you don't need to call before your child visits the neighbors. They just go, if they are hungry then they eat. We don't feel like we must make a plan. Here, you must call, ‘hello can my son stay over,’ ‘hello can she stay for dinner,’ ‘I will pick them up at this time.’ They say a whole village raises a child. It is true. So naturally, a hotel was a natural option.

Hospitality is in my blood. We know how to take care of people because that is what we do in the village.”

The village Saachi refers to is in the Anand district of Gujarat state. It is a small town of about 5,000 residents and is home to three Hindu Temples, a Mosque, and a Jain Temple, with a Protestant and Catholic Church just up the road from the temples. The religious diversity that characterizes Saachi’s hometown had also infused her with a sense of religious tolerance. “I am Hindu, I don’t eat meat. I believe in reincarnation and it [the meat] could be my ancestor! However, I am careful to accommodate to everybody’s beliefs here.”

Six-and-a-half months after immigrating to the United States, Saachi’s family purchased a hotel because “that’s what my Aunt had.” However, the family chose to own and operate a hotel for greater reasons than just following what the aunts had done. Running a hotel allowed the family to “keep family values, because we could stay together at home and at work.” Saachi explains, “In our culture, it is important to keep everybody under one roof. This way, we can get benefits from the elderly. If you think you are doing something new, they will have done it before. It takes so long here because you have to relearn everything. The elderly can give advice and help raise the children. Plus, children could learn from different personalities, not just the mother and father, like here.”

The environment that Saachi’s parents created in Arizona was conducive to raising a family, and Saachi flourished. After becoming an adult, the hospitality industry was the furthest thing from her mind. “I said I will never get into the hotel business, because it is twenty-four seven, three hundred and sixty-five. But, guess what....?” She

eventually decided to do what she had known growing up. “Hospitality it is what I know, it is in my blood, imbedded in me.” This strong sense of identity is significant to Saachi’s intercultural competence. Because she knew who she was at her core, she was better able to take risks. This risk taking is significant from an intercultural competence standpoint because it allows Saachi to more easily adapt to culturally different behaviors without that adaptation threatening her identity.

Until this point, no woman from her extended family had ever purchased a hotel. “It was up to the men to take the financial risks and make business. The women had more traditional roles.” Furthermore, she stated, “Because of my cultural background, I was hesitant, or I just wasn’t prepared to speak with men on a professional level. But this also was a fear that I had to overcome.” Saachi purchased a 27-room motel in a rural Minnesota town in 1993. She ran it for a few years, grew the business, and then sold it. Then, on the recommendation of a friend, she purchased another hotel on the outskirts of the Twin Cities.

Saachi had applied the same hard work and dedication into her new hotel as she did in her first one. Her new hotel was a nationally-franchised brand. The franchised brand imposed some constraints; for example, she could no longer reside in the hotel. However, it also provided massive benefits. “When I was growing up, one paid \$12.95 for a room and you got a bed and a room, that was it. Now you get everything, breakfast, internet, and a kitchen sink.” The franchised brand helped Saachi keep up with the changing expectations of her customers. One thing the franchise did not change was Saachi’s sense of values and the culture she wanted to create within her business. The values that shaped Saachi’s vision for her business were influenced by her experience in

her village back in India. “You must respect the guests, this is their home away from home.” The value of hospitality and its importance within Indian culture had driven Saachi to focus on customers as individuals. This value has also inspired Saachi to create processes and systems within her business that would allow her and her staff to use a more relational approach to meet the needs of her customers. This relational approach has allowed her to position the hotel as a community fixture. Her unique approach is most apparent in the partnerships Saachi formed with local businesses, such as the country club and the local upscale restaurant. This allowed her to provide a seamless experience for guests of weddings and other large events.

Her ability to integrate the values of her home with the needs of the community and her customers has allowed Saachi successfully to build her business. She received the Outstanding Woman Hotelier of the Year Award, which recognizes individuals who demonstrated strong leadership qualities, a commitment to lodging excellence, and made significant contributions to the industry and regional community.

Sung

As Sung was growing up, his professional path was clear to his inner circle of friends and family. Everybody knew that Sung would achieve the pinnacle of professional development, which was becoming a college professor. He remembers how his friends used to tease him by saying “when my kids will enter college [and you are their professor] please help my kids.” A college professor was the highest professional achievement within the Confucian culture of Korea. Sung’s inner circle of friends and family expected him to rise through the ranks of an established institution and reach

professional success. However, they were neither expecting nor encouraging Sung to establish what would later become an institution in its own right.

Encouraged by his friends and family, Sung went to the University of Minnesota for an advanced degree in aeronautical engineering. When the NASA funding that had supported his assistantship during his graduate work was abruptly cut, Sung switched his Ph.D. to Civil Engineering in order to keep the assistantship that allowed him to afford school. This switch caused him to lose the aeronautical connections he had made in both Korea and in the United States, and professional connections were vital to securing a professorship in Korea. Furthermore, the junior professorship he was expecting in the United States was out of reach. With these professional setbacks, the life of a college professor was becoming more and more unlikely for Sung.

After graduating, Sung needed a job to support his tenure in the United States, and he took one in a civil engineering company. He was one of only four employees. After a few years, the owner needed to quit due to health reasons, so Sung borrowed as much money he could from friends and banks and acquired the company. He recalls the abrupt professional change: “All of a sudden, I became business owner without knowing what to do. I was interested in teaching until that time. It just happened by accident.”

Without any formal training in running a business, Sung relied on the values he learned in Korea. Creating and cultivating relationships formed the basis of his client acquisition strategy. The degree to which Sung focused on interpersonal relationships to secure business was unique. Within a civil engineering environment that tended to be more focused on transacting deals or technical aspects of the civil engineering projects, an owner who treated interpersonal relationships as a factor in business growth and

longevity was unique. While relationship development was important to securing new clients, quality and on-time delivery were essential components of maintaining long-term customer relationships: "...having a relationship is very important, but you have to deliver. If you don't deliver, that relationship really doesn't help a whole lot."

In the Korea that Sung left in the 1970s, relationships were also an important part of the business culture. Sung recalls an example from the Korea he moved away from in the 1970s where quality and on-time delivery were not the main influence on preserving positive relationships with clients, and how bribes were also a key component in securing contracts. When describing the system of business ownership in the United States he states, "it's very easy to start your own business or run your business because it is a fair system. You don't have to bribe somebody to start your own company. You don't have to bribe somebody to get a contract."

Most of Sung's clients and employees are from the non-immigrant, non-minority culture. Some of his clients were from cultures that placed a strong emphasis on organization, such as the United States military. In these cases, the price of intercultural incompetence would have been high. Engineering contracts have been lost due to a lack of intercultural competence regarding the value the military places on due procedures and process. Nevertheless, Sung has been successful in building a business that caters to the needs of various clients by relying on networks he established with organizations within the dominant culture, such as the Rotary Organization, as well as organizations within the immigrant and minority cultures, such as the Metropolitan Economic Development Association. Sung is able to access resources available exclusively to business owners

who are characterized as minorities, but he is also able to make use of networks such as Rotary International, that were at one time exclusively white male organizations.

Sung's company has grown from four employees to 22, with nearly three million dollars in annual revenue. He has expanded the reach of his company from one that could only bid on small regional contracts to one that seeks opportunities in the global market. Sung's practice with intercultural competence that he developed in the United States has helped him within the global context as well; he has considered projects with a South Korean wind energy project, and he also was able to gain access to the possibility of providing services in Bolivia through extended family ties.

Chapter 5: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

“Beads are not considered jewelry unless they are woven together.” –Korean Proverb

Chart 2: IDI Results

Entrepreneur Alias	IDI Orientation	Perceived Orientation	Developmental Orientation	Denial	Defense	Reversal	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	Cultural Disengagement
Abbas	Low Minimization	123.82	97.446	4.43	3.33	4.22	2.56	4.6	3.44	5
Barentu	Low Minimization	118.592	87.75	4.43	3.17	4.33	1.44	5	3	4.2
Claudia	High Minimization	126.109	106.219	5	4.67	4.78	1.11	4.6	4.22	4.4
Dohna	High Minimization	125.597	103.252	4.57	4.67	4.56	1.44	4.8	4.11	5
Fadumo	Low Minimization	119.788	90.044	4.29	4.33	3.78	1.89	4	3.44	4
Ivan	Acceptance	129.558	121.463	5	5	5	3.11	2.8	2.78	4.2
Nyiaj	Low Minimization	125.667	96.729	3.14	4.67	3.56	3.44	4.4	4	4.4
Omar	Low Minimization	119.621	86.141	3.43	3.67	4	2.11	4.6	3.56	5
Saachi	Minimization Cusp of Acceptance	129.861	114.55	4.57	5	4.33	3.22	4.2	3.33	5
Sung	Low Minimization	122.815	98.786	4.43	4.17	4.33	2.11	3.6	3.56	4.8

Entrepreneurial concepts of identity

Identity is a fundamental aspect of intercultural competence (M. Bennett, 1993; Kim, 2005; Magala, 2005). Furthermore; can be constructed through entrepreneurial activity (Goldwyn & Stoddard, 2011). A clear understanding of identity provides a foundation from which one can demonstrate interculturally competent behaviors. This foundation also provides the confidence necessary to risk intercultural adaptations.

Furthermore, a clearly constructed identity allows for the outlining of factors that are crucial for the construction of cultural and ethnic identities. While describing their entrepreneurial journeys, entrepreneurs attached significance to their identities in several ways. Some anchored their core values to experiences they had while being raised in their home countries. Others formed their values from the recalled circumstances of their ancestral hometown. Others seemed to derive their identity more from experiences they had while growing up in a particular culture. However, the majority of the entrepreneurs identified as immigrants to the United States. So entrepreneurs had both a sense of identity rooted in the past, and a sense of identity that was constructed in the present. A dual-balanced theme that emerged from the interviews was solidarity and adaptability, immutable values and adaptive behaviors, identity grounded in the past, and identity that is being constructed in the present.

Identity as resistance to oppression

Several entrepreneurs said that they were able to gain strength from a strong sense of identity. Although entrepreneurs were discussing their journey from immigrant to immigrant entrepreneur, descriptions of identity were an integral part of their discussions of these journeys. Several of the entrepreneurs emphasized pride in their national or ethnic identities. Some of this pride was a form of resistance against the oppression that resulted in their being forced to flee their home country. For others who were not oppressed in their home countries, the strength of their identity was less about active resistance and more about a source of stability. For others, identity was strong, but more immediately rooted in a constructed identity as a true American because they were members of the United States community by choice versus circumstance.

Several of the immigrant entrepreneurs were refugees fleeing ethnic persecution. The entrepreneurs from Laos, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Israel all have ethnic identities that were not represented in the governments of the aforementioned countries. The Hmong in Laos (Human Rights Watch, 2008), the Oromo in Ethiopia (Human Rights Watch, 2005), Tibetans in China who have fled to Nepal, (Human Rights Watch, 2008), and Arabs in Israel (Andersson & Djeflat, 2013) are all ethnicities that experience oppression. Furthermore, these ethnic identities are closely allied with aspiring national identities, which compete with the sovereign nation for legitimacy. All of the entrepreneurs from these cultures who were interviewed expressed a strong attachment to their ethnic identity. The strength of this attachment was demonstrated by amount of time they spent during the interview describing their ethnic identity or by the amount of time they spent trying to convince the interviewer that their ethnic identity is distinct from national identity of the dominant culture of the country they were fleeing. This strength in ethnic identity may be tied to existing political struggles to turn ethnic identity into a national identity. In fact, according to Hastings (1997), oppression is one force that refines ethnic identity expression into a national expression. In each of the oppressed groups, their ethnic identity was strongly related to their notions of being an immigrant entrepreneur in this country. These dual elements of strong ethnic identity and its connection to the professional identity as an American entrepreneur results in elements of identity that are mutually dependent. These immigrants became entrepreneurs as an authentic expression of their identity.

Familial identity

In the case of Dohna, the Tibetan entrepreneur, she describes her business as successful because it allows her to help family back home. “This is a success for me.....Because the business is running, I can do whatever little thing I can do to family [back home] to my in-laws and then to the people who need.” Furthermore, her business is an extension of her identity as a Tibetan. The very existence of her store acts as an affirmation of her own identity and that of her community. Not only is the store an expression of her identity, but it also allows her to invite non-Tibetan people to participate in her culture. By selling books that invite their readers to learn about and appreciate the Tibetan culture, and selling cultural artifacts such as prayer wheels and singing bowls, Dohna is inviting others to join in the expression of her cultural identity by asking them to participate in the traditional and ritualistic customs of Tibetan life.

For Abbas, his continued role as an entrepreneur is an expression of family identity. “I see where my family is now and want to help to fulfill the mission that my family started.” Back in the 1980s, he was convincing his customers in St. Paul to try lamb meat in the form of a Gyro. His company is now participating in a trend to make hummus a healthy alternative to mayonnaise. By convincing his customers one at a time, Abbas can make the flavors he grew up with more common in his new home.

Both Dohna’s and Abbas’ businesses sell items that are expressions of their cultural heritage. Dohna sells cultural items from Tibet including items that introduced Tibetan, culture, philosophy, and history to an English-speaking clientele. Abbas can help American clients appreciate food from the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Barentu also expressed how his business created shared solidarity with his family, and by extension, his culture. When describing how he responded to getting his first contract for transportation service, Barentu shares, “I jump in. Jump in with my wife. Jump in with members of my extended family, my brothers, sisters, we jumped in.” So, although Barentu is not selling a product or providing a service that is directly related to his culture, the running of his business connects him to his family, thereby maintaining his culture in the office.

Communal identity

Nyiaj was able to solve a cultural problem by opening his slaughterhouse. Ritualistic slaughter is part of the Hmong shamanistic tradition, however, it violates local ordinances, and Nyiaj noticed that Hmong families were getting violations from the city for slaughtering animals in their houses. By starting his slaughterhouse business, he created a space where Shamans could slaughter an animal in a place that was approved by the local authorities “...let them practice Shamanism, but bigger animals like pigs especially pigs or goat have to be slaughtered here.”

The connection between the business and communal identity is highlighted in Butler’s (2005) research, he draws attention to how entrepreneurs within an ethnic economy integrate both social and business objectives within their operation of the business:

“The collectivistic approach, with an emphasis on self-help institutions, stresses the cultural side in explaining the economic stability of ethnic groups, and also brings to bear the idea that these institutions have more of an influence on the development of economic stability through business activity than through the process of assimilation. Unlike middleman [minority] theory, where hostility

plays a major role in the interpretation of business success, collectivism concentrates on [culture].” (p. 23)

In summary, in cases of entrepreneurs who came to the Twin Cities as a result of organized ethnic oppression, they seemed to create enterprises that authentically represented their ethnic identity. This could be through providing materials needed in rituals, expressing the ethnic food of a country, or by solidifying the family around the enterprise and thereby creating a more tightly-knit group in which to preserve ethnic identity.

Diaspora identity preservation

Both of the ethnic Somali entrepreneurs grew up as refugees in countries outside of Somalia, and both were strongly aware of their Somali identity. However, their Somali identity was slightly different from the identity of those whose ethnic and national expression was being actively oppressed by a different ethnic group. Somalis fled from Somalia not due to ethnic oppression, but due to internal stability. So, the ethnic Somali's interviewed express their identity as a form of preservation against disintegration. This difference can be seen in the two different ways that Omar and Fadumo, both Somali entrepreneurs, express their ethnic and national identity. One collected over 700 Somali artifacts from Somalia and around the world and founded the first Somali museum outside of Somalia. The other Somali entrepreneur helped to create a local chapter of an aid and development non-profit which is dedicated to protecting marginal clans within the Somali community. Both of the Somali entrepreneurs created non-profit organizations that act to strengthen and preserve their ethnic identity. The museum and non-profit

organization go beyond mere expression of ethnic identity; these two organizations shape the way the ethnic identity is understood within the community.

Cultural disengagement

The IDI measures cultural disengagement, which is “a sense of disconnection or detachment from one’s cultural group” (Hammer, 2007, p. 5). While “empirical results suggest that cultural disengagement as assessed by the IDI is not significantly more related to an adaptation orientation than any other orientation.” (Hammer, 2009), identity security (Kim, 2009), which is a sense of engagement in one’s cultural identity is related to intercultural competence (Goff, Steele & Davis, 2008; Kim, 2009; Klegg, 1993). In Thijs and Verkuyten study of first and second generation immigrants in the Netherlands those who strongly identified with their home nationalities, at the expense of their adopted nation’s, put themselves in a position where they would be experiencing greater discrimination from the non-immigrant host nationals (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2002). This opens the possibility that a dual sense of identity would be an interculturally competent response for immigrants who wish to avoid discrimination. While a sense of identity security is not related to stages as measured by the IDI, it is related to elements that influence intercultural competence (J. Bennett, 1993; Kim, 2009).

All the entrepreneurs interviewed, were resolved in the IDI’s measure of cultural disengagement, which means that they all felt a sense of connection with their cultural group. But this measure does not rule out that they could have constructed a cultural group which they felt a sense of connection too. Indeed the ethnographic interviews seem to suggest this.

American identity

In stark contrast to the previous interviews, the entrepreneur from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ivan, identifies as an American. He mentions, “This is the only country where you can really be an immigrant and nobody gives a shit.” After seeing ethnic and national differences tear the former Yugoslavia apart, he had no interest in identifying with anything besides his adopted American home.

“And that’s probably why I don’t want to socialize with people that are coming from that environment [Sarajevo],” he continues, “because I know who they are. The war brings the best and the worse out of people, and once when you see who they really are then you really, easily decide—for me the decision was very easy, why I don’t want to be there. I left my office building, my cars, my condos, my everything and I just moved and I have no intention of ever going there again. I really just don’t care. A lot of those people I know quite well but I also know who they really are.”

However, this does not mean his identity is any less strong. It is just more immediately constructed and strongly committed to his new American identity. Despite deciding to participate in an interview about immigrant entrepreneurs and starting the interview by stating, “Most of my life, I have spend in Sarajevo...” when asked, “What is your background (e.g., nationality, ethnicity) around cultural differences?” in the IDI (Hammer, 2007), his answer was “American.” It is significant to understand that Ivan was the only entrepreneur to identify as American when answering the IDI question (Hammer, 2007) “What is your background (e.g. nationally, ethnicity) around cultural difference.”

According to Weinreich, ethnic identity is a combination of two factors: one’s

construal of past ancestry and one's future aspirations (1986; 2003). Ivan's identity is based more on future aspiration versus past ancestry. This is most clearly demonstrated when he stated, "I think I decided to be successful first, then I made the cultural adjustment because it's how you achieve the goal." His commitment to the construction of a new identity can be understood in his opinion on ethnic enclaves: "...people tend to gather in their own community. From the people—the people of similar backgrounds, of similar ethnic background or similar religious backgrounds or something like that which I think is wrong."

Constructive marginality

Although Ivan identifies as an American and the IDI measured that he is culturally engaged; there is complexity beyond what the IDI measures. During his interview, when describing how Americans differ from Europeans in terms of business, he uses the pronoun *they* when referring to Americans. "It's what I found in America they have a significant less talent in socializing than the rest of the world, because they're very much in a hurry, they're very much – trying to achieve what they need to achieve and they're going to move on."

It could be argued that if Ivan fully identified as an American, he would use the pronoun *us* instead of *them* when describing Americans. The distance he puts between his expressed identity as an American and the identity that is communicated indirectly during his interview indicates that Ivan has constructed an identity that is between two socially constructed identities. This self construction aligns with the notion of constructive marginality.

Ivan's case is the most apparent through the interview, but each of the entrepreneurs interviewed were measured by the IDI to be culturally engaged, also each had a sense of themselves as Americans, and also each had a sense of being an outsider in America with varying levels of bonds with their ethnic, national or religious pre-American cultural identity. Each of the entrepreneur's strength came from a sense of constructed identity. In each of their cases, their identity is not assigned or assumed, but considered and maintained. From this strength, they were able to practice other cultural behaviors in order to achieve their goals. This is similar to an aspect of intercultural competence J. Bennett describes as "constructive marginality," which is an ability "to construct context intentionally and consciously for the purpose of creating his or her own identity" (J. Bennett, 1993, p.113). It is evident that several entrepreneurs are engaging multiple ways of being and acting. An example of multiple ways of being is how Abbas describes himself. "People tell me, 'where are you from?' I said, 'I am from Minnesota with an accent.'" He then clarifies how he constructs his identity. He states his national origin first, and then explains his experience in his adopted state. "I am really Palestinian and born there but actually I am a Minnesotan, so I relate a lot to Minnesota because this is where I grow up, this is where I was a teenager and, you know, the 20s." Later in the interview, he further explains his constructed identity, but this time he starts with his American and Minnesotan identity then strongly concludes with his Palestinian identity.

"Even if I am an American citizen, even though in my heart I am a Minnesotan, my mind is Minnesotan, even though I think I belong to America and even I think I always was thankful for the opportunity this country gave me, but I always wanted [everybody] to really know that I am Palestinian and that's my nationality."

Others identify with the country through a sense of necessity. One necessity is related to parental responsibility. Fadumo shares how "...our kids are American. So we need to have a stable life for them. They don't know Africa, they don't know Somalia." She later adds, "So the reason that we have to make [this] country our home." This statement in the absence of context would seem to indicate a distancing of identity from her original Somali identity. However, this statement is followed by Fadumo's lengthy description about how she is working to strengthen the integrity of the Somali community by strengthening the voice and rights of marginalized Somali clan groups within the community. So, taken in context, Fadumo's statement can be seen as an expression of constructive marginality, because she is both working to increase the integrity of the Somali community and deciding to call a place other than Somalia her home.

Still other immigrant entrepreneurs ascribe a sense of agency in the shaping of their identity. For example Nyiaj states, "I believe that we chose America, so we love America, so even the first generation cannot adopt it, the culture, the third and fourth generation are going to like the American culture they're going to come American anyway." This sense of agency, or construction, is crucial to the notion of constructive marginality. Those described by J. Bennett as "constructive marginals" construct their identity actively. Since identity is not assumed or assigned, constructive marginals must take action to put them in the liminal identity space. When discussing cultural adjustments, Dohna shared an example of taking action, which helped to construct her identity.

"When I was in college in my dorm I had like four girls sleeping in one room. I'm a Buddhist, she's a Hindu, she's a Bangladeshi Muslim, and she's a Punjabi Sikh. So we have four different religions here. But when exams come,

Nadia who is from Bangladesh she would say, ‘Oh man we need to pray, tomorrow is the exam. Oh yes we need to pray.’ We all go to bathroom we wash our hands like people do. You know that doesn’t make me—that doesn’t take me away from the Dalai Lama but it give me very peace also because I like to pray you know to whoever it may be. You know it can be Dalai Lama or Allah or anything you know.”

While the purpose behind her actions was framed as a way to connect with her friends or adjust to cultural difference, it is particularly relevant when understood through the lens of constructive marginality.

Furthermore, her story is relevant within the context of her entrepreneurial endeavor, because her retail store has several traditional Tibetan Buddhist items. Furthermore, several of her clients purchase items from her retail store to explore their spiritual or philosophical practices. Therefore, while this story may seem to relate to an interculturally competent adjustment and notions of marginality when understood through the perspective of the intercultural literature, it is also practically related to the day to day practice of her duties as an entrepreneur selling items with religious, spiritual and philosophical significance.

Barentu expressed the adaptability of his identity more through the policies they set in their workplace:

“My business language is English. I am proud of it. I can’t say good morning in Oromo at work, because five people in my employment, but I want to be fair to other people who are working for the company. I want them to understand that I am not talking behind them.”

Also, evident within the interviews was a continuous construal of identity that was not rooted in the past, but was constructed in the present moment. The notion that best captures this observation is Janet Bennett's idea of constructive marginality (1993). M. Bennett & Hammer note that "constructive marginality refers to the experience of incorporating cultural difference into identity, thus enabling people to move among cultural frames while maintaining an integrate sense of self" (1998, p. 16). This helps to illustrate how entrepreneurs were both proud and secure in their immigrant and ethnic identity, while also being able to see themselves as Americans. The notion of constructive marginality emerged from the literature on marginality (Dyal & Dyal 1981; Smith 1991; Taft, 1977), which associated marginality with "powerlessness, isolation, anxiety, insecurity, ambivalence, self-consciousness, malaise, and self-doubt" (J. Bennett, 1993, p. 112). While this negative aspect of marginality is termed "encapsulated marginality" by J. Bennett (1993, p. 114), constructive marginality upsets the existing notion of marginality by suggesting that it is authentic, self-differentiated, and a judiciously-bounded aspect of intercultural competence. All of the entrepreneurs who were interviewed took the IDI, and all indicated that they did not experience encapsulated marginality.

Out of all the aspects that represent intercultural competence, aspects of identity were clear in each interview. All interviewees possessed identity security, a clear sense of who they were and how that was constructed through the values and lessons of their home culture. Even Ivan, who does not want to associate with members of his home culture and now identifies as American, has a strong sense of identity security as demonstrated by his ability to draw on lessons and values formed in his home culture and

through his family, in order to inform the decisions he has made in the development of his entrepreneurial endeavors in the United States.

Protean identity

All of these entrepreneurs could be thought of having constructed an identity akin to a Protean self. This concept, initially proposed by Robert Lifton in 1971 and later clarified in his major book *The Protean Self* suggested an ability to have a “fluid and many-sided” identity (1999, p. 1). This identity is constructed through an “interminable series of experiments and explorations” (Lifton, 1970, p. 44) where individuals try out new behaviors and worldviews. This Protean identity is a result of proper adaptation to a rapidly changing world in which barriers to travel are reduced, information flows more freely, and broad cultural changes happen rapidly either due to the introduction of technology or due to the massive cultural transformations of the 20th century that have resulted from revolution and war. The Protean ideal is one who thrives on diversity and can readily assume different roles. The assuming of different roles requires a sufficiently emic understanding of culture (Nam & Fry, 2010), which is a deeper understanding and appreciation of a culture and suggests an ability to not only understand, but to adopt different worldviews. This ability to thrive on diversity can be seen in the entrepreneurs’ ability to shift behaviors and their willingness to get involved in culturally diverse practices.

However, even while they change their behavior and their concepts of self, they lack the amorphous identity that Lifton attributes to the Protean individual. The inspiration behind the term “Protean” was a god from Greek mythology called Proteus. While Proteus was able to easily change his form, and was comfortable in different

forms, he was unable to commit himself to a single form, a form representing his own identity.

This discomfort with a true identity is where the Protean self-concept ceases to describe the entrepreneurs studied. While they expressed several elements of the Protean self, such as experimenting with different practices and adopting different worldviews and exploring new business opportunities and a new country, they did not express a restlessness inside of their own identity the way the Protean concept suggests. In fact, they seemed to draw strength from a secure identity, and this strength allowed them to change their behavior.

Soon after Nyiaj described how he broke with his cultural tradition by disobeying his brother publicly, he mentioned how the Hmong had invented gunpowder and silver-making. After he described his desire to “hire a white man” to get a new perspective, he mentions how Hmong words permeate languages all over the world, and suggests Hmong as the original human language. After he describes his willingness to invent blended prayers to gods he did not formerly worship, he commented that the coming messiah as predicted by Nostradamus would be Hmong. It was almost as though each Protean experimentation and exploration were balanced with an affirmation of ethnic identity. The shifting between the adapting to and embracing of a new culture, while at the same time affirming and promoting one’s own original culture, is a characteristic of cultural marginality.

This was a common theme in several interviews: while Abbas describes himself as a “Minnesotan with an accent,” he admits later in the interview, “I am really

Palestinian” and “You can never forget where you come from. You have to be proud who you are.”

Another interviewee, Dohna, describes how the practice of participating in other religious rituals, “doesn’t take me away from the Dalai Lama.” These examples illustrate how a clear sense of identity provides a safe foundation from which to adapt to new cultural behaviors and construct new identities in a new cultural context.

Identity as crystallizing entrepreneurial values

Despite having spent his entire adult life in the United States, first as a student, then as an entrepreneur, Sung still uses the analogy of the family to highlight the importance of personal relationships in business transactions. “You know he is consultant but I want to treat him more like our family. You know let’s say somebody coming to visit us, I’m not just going to let him take taxi, I want to be there.” This statement came shortly after Sung mentioned the benefits of the United States including a lack of corruption and less reliance on exclusive personal networks. Understanding members of the team as members of a family is more common in South Korea (Ting-Toomey, 2009) and not a common management approach in the United States. Again, this is an example of balancing between an appreciation of his American identity, while at the same time maintaining an important approach to his business that is derived from his Korean identity.

There seems to be a connection between abandoning particular cultural practices and affirming perhaps more fundamental elements of cultural and ethnic identity. This dual aspect of these research observations is connected to two concepts: Identity security (Kim, 2009) and constructive marginality (J. Bennett, 1993).

Identity security as proposed by Kim is “an inner resource that allows for qualities of flexibility and relaxedness in ones’ behavior, that is, the ability to ‘bend’ ... ” (2009, p. 57). This “bending,” or adaptability, is clearly apparent in the entrepreneurs’ examples of adjusting to working with American regulators, co-workers, and clients. The adaptability does not come from a Protean discomfort with the pre-immigration identity, but is rather an expression of general self-efficacy (Harrison, Chadwick, & Scales, 1996) to achieve particular entrepreneurial and intercultural goals.

Minimization that convinces, reduces risks, and reduces complexity

The IDI can measure various orientations and values related to cultural difference. Each orientation places emphasis on a particular aspect of cultural similarity and difference. Certain orientations can bring particular aspects of culture into focus, while obscuring other aspects that could be important depending on the level and intensity of the interaction.

All of the entrepreneurs who were interviewed understood cultural difference from a minimization perspective. This means that all of these entrepreneurs make use of the minimization perspective to make sense of cultural differences at particular times, around certain topics, or in specific situations. The minimization orientation is fairly normal: A sample of 4,763 IDI scores from an international, cross-cultural sample reveals that 67% have a minimization orientation, and a sample of 4,663 IDI scores from the United States reveals that 63.5% of those included in the sample have a minimization orientation (Hammer, 2011). This indicates that the number of entrepreneurs sampled who are in the minimization stages of intercultural competence is higher than the number of people in the general population who are at this stage. M. Bennett (2009) does,

however, note that the IDI tends to overestimate minimization and invites researchers to employ qualitative measures to provide more nuance to understand the extent that minimization plays in creating a worldview.

Although one major drawback to the minimization orientation is that it can mask important cultural differences, this orientation has the advantage of providing a worldview that is helpful in forming positive relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds, which indicates that this orientation actually can be beneficial to entrepreneurs. The following findings show how the minimization orientation is used by immigrant entrepreneurs to improve their relationships with both their customers and their employees, which has a positive effect on their businesses.

Minimization strategy used to convince

Abbas provided an example of minimization when he introduced the Gyro to unfamiliar customers in St. Paul in the late eighties. “We used to tell people, just try it, just taste it. Roast beef, just like roast beef, ‘Do you like roast beef?’ ‘Yeah we like,’ ‘Okay this is roast beef;’ once they have their first bite, we got ‘em.” In this case, Abbas was able to reduce the reluctance of customers to try an unfamiliar food by minimizing the difference between the new type of food and food with which the customers were familiar. The process of identifying and drawing in customers is the biggest challenge for small firm owners irrespective of ethnic identity (Curran & Blackburn, 1993). If a minimization strategy is the most effective for the most challenging aspect of small firm ownership, then this orientation towards cultural difference would be preferred. While this example is related to a superficial cultural difference, it is the clearest example from these interviews of how entrepreneurs use minimization strategies to influence potential

clients, there are a number of additional examples of entrepreneurs reducing the potentially negative impact of cultural differences by minimizing these differences in order to influence customers, business partners, and investors.

Several entrepreneurs were able to convince investors to support their business by minimizing the culturally specific aspects of their particular endeavor. For example, when approaching an economic development association for investment in the establishment of a slaughterhouse, Nyiaj emphasized the need for fresh meat in the Hmong community. When presenting this investment opportunity he emphasized the unmet need of Hmong who wanted to select live livestock to be slaughtered, as well as the need for clients to be sure the meat was fresh by seeing the animals being slaughtered. What he did not highlight was the role of religion in the needs of the Hmong community to have a nearby slaughterhouse. The inspiration to start a slaughterhouse in St. Paul came from a desire to accommodate the religious needs of the Hmong community by providing live animals that could be slaughtered in accordance with Hmong shamanistic practices. Not only was he helping to strengthen the cultural identity of the Hmong by providing a space where Shamanistic practices could be carried out, he also reduced the number of Hmong being arrested.

...when we first came [to America] they did it [slaughter] at the houses by bringing animals from farms, but they got in all kind of troubles. Refer back to the eighties to the early nineties. Police caught many people killing animals at their home and then were brought to court,... to jails.

Nyiaj demonstrated his ability to minimize the cultural differences between the Hmong community and the dominant culture. By emphasizing the taste aspect of the

fresh meat and minimizing the religious aspect, he believed he increased his chances of getting the investment needed.

Minimization strategy used to reduce risk of prejudicial behavior

Minimizing cultural differences is one way to reduce anxiety about cultural differences. If one generally minimizes cultural difference, they will avoid upsetting or alienating those that understand cultural difference from a defense perspective and are developing a minimization orientation towards difference. Furthermore, minimizing cultural difference as a strategy will align with the perspective of those who minimize cultural difference. Considering that most people minimize cultural difference (Hammer, 2011), and there is still prejudice feeding the defense perspective of cultural difference, a minimization strategy is the safest approach for those who are not in the dominant culture and who seek to influence those within the dominant culture. This approach will not provide the rich depth that those who understand cultural difference from an acceptance or adaptation perspective seek. Considering that few understand difference in these ways (Hammer, 2011) and that those who hold these perspectives already have experience of the minimization perspective, the minimization approach is the approach that appeals to the most amount of people and is the least risky.

Barentu noticed that certain members of the community were complaining to local officials about his school busing service. He suspected that it was because, when people called his office directly with complaints, they were greeted by Barentu or his family members who had noticeable accents. He described how he minimized the perceived cultural differences between the community members and his office staff as a solution to this problem: “Maybe instead of me handling it or you handling it, let somebody that has

the same accent handle that business, that customer service part of it, and then we hired people locally here and those complaints disappeared.” Because Barentu hypothesized that there was a possibility of prejudicial behavior from his customers, and he changed an aspect of the culture in the office, it could be argued that this is an example of a behavior consistent with someone in the adaptation orientation. However, the overall strategy required the minimization of cultural differences. So, while adapting to meet customer demands succeeded in reducing the amount of complaints, it did so by minimizing difference, not accepting and adaptation to difference.

Barentu was also very conscious of how language and accents can shape employee expectations. As mentioned earlier, Barentu establishes English as the office language. Despite the fact that several people in the office speak Oromo.

Speaking English to his Oromo-speaking colleagues at work for the sake of making his English-speaking employees feel comfortable is an example of minimizing the cultural diversity in the office. By only speaking English and thereby minimizing the real cultural differences within Barentu’s office, important cultural differences could be overlooked, and an office culture could arise where similarities are assumed to exist that do not in fact exist. This could result in an inauthentic office environment. However, Barentu did not describe this result during either this interview or during follow-up conversations. In this case the minimization orientation is working to create a harmonious office environment.

Analogous contextualization

Minimizing cultural differences allows the entrepreneurs to create find analogous situations from their own life and provide a familiar context within which they could operate with confidence. It was evident in entrepreneur's explanations of situations that were culturally dissimilar. For example, Omar described the social stratification and the importance of language differences in Dubai. He explained how Urdu-speaking people did most of the manual labor in the United Arab Emirates, and he compared this condition to that of Spanish-speaking people in the United States. "Here in America, the Spanish is like the Urdu, very important." He continued to stress the importance of project managers, or anyone else working with a manual labor workforce, speaking the language of those who are doing the manual labor. As a result of this belief, Omar made a special effort to learn some Spanish and create a bilingual workplace. So in this case, making analogies to explain similar situations in different countries is a helpful way to minimize cultural differences in order to improve the relationship between an employer and his employees. In addition to making analogies for the purpose of explaining certain situations, minimizing the difference between the Spanish-speaking and Urdu-speaking communities also uncovered new opportunities. Because he worked extensively in the Urdu-speaking community both as a project manager and as an interpreter, Omar understood the economic and social conditions that resulted in the immigration of Urdu-speaking people to the United Arab Emirates. Because of the positive experience that Omar had with Urdu-speaking people and his subsequent discovery that the social and economic conditions are similar to that of Spanish-speaking people in the United States,

he decided to hire more Spanish-speakers, who now make up nearly 20% of his workforce.

Theoretically, this minimization strategy could fail Omar if the similarities between of Urdu and Spanish-speaking people mask real and important differences that could affect Omar's ability to manage the portion of his workforce that speaks Spanish. However, Omar did not report any such difficulties during either his initial interview or his follow-up interviews.

Omar's ability to compare the situation of Spanish-speaking people in the United States and Urdu-speaking people in his previous home in Dubai allowed him to more quickly determine a course of action that would improve the working conditions in his business. His experience working with the largest immigrant workforce in Dubai allowed him to understand, or perhaps presume, similarities between that workforce and the immigrant workforce in Minnesota.

Minimization orientation to connect values

Another aspect of the minimization orientation is that it highlights universal values and principles known as transcendent universalism (M. Bennett, 1993). This aspect emphasizes the similarity of values across cultures. This emphasis can sometimes mask how the values express themselves differently in particular cultures. The aspect can also lead individuals to consider certain principles as applying to all cultures, which can lead to a distraction from the particularities of how principles are implemented in different cultures.

Another example of the minimization orientation can be seen in Dohna's description of hard work. "So if you work hard you can make it just that. If you have

made it in India you'll make it here, as long as you work hard, that's it." Minimizing cultural differences by pointing out the value of hard work is helpful because it gave Dohna the confidence to apply values that are important in her native culture to the culture of her new home in the United States. However, this example also demonstrates how the minimization orientation is limited because of the potential to mask important differences in the meaning and application of particular values. Dohna mentions this distinction in her statement about the importance of technology. "In the olden times, it's work hard, work hard, work hard. Now it's like, work hard but then even if somebody works hard but if you're not tech-savvy, there's so much you're losing in opportunity."

Another example of how certain values can be used to minimize cultural differences is seen in Claudia's statement.

"People like to be treated fairly, you know, the golden rule applies for everyone everywhere, and so I would say that there are humanistic principles that if you follow them in any culture they will apply."

Minimizing cultural differences by emphasizing similar values is an important development from the previous orientations along the DMIS, most notably the defense orientation. With the defense orientation, the amount of judgment directed at cultural differences eliminates the possibility of the values that are relied upon to become successful in one cultural context being applied in a new cultural context. So in this case, the minimization of differences between the values of two different cultures benefits the entrepreneur by providing confidence that the values that shaped him or her growing up could be relied upon to provide success in their new culture. However, the use of similar values to minimize cultural differences limits the discovery of new values that could

influence entrepreneurial success. Bennett states this notion cleverly: “I have yet to hear anyone at this stage say, ‘There is a single truth in the universe, and it is not what I believe’” (M. Bennett, 1993, p. 44). In other words, this minimization orientation would prevent Claudia from discovering what Bennett calls the platinum rule of “Treat others as they would like to be treated” (1993, p. 44).

This indicates that the entrepreneurs have not all agreed on a worldview that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles. While the minimization orientation is currently considered to be a transitional stage between an ethnorelative worldview and an ethnocentric worldview (Hammer, 2011), these interviews show both the benefits and the limitations of the minimization orientation.

Minimization worldview, maximization practice

While a minimization orientation towards difference tends to minimize cultural difference, a few entrepreneurs tended to emphasize aspects of cultural uniqueness with their enterprises. Dohna’s whole business is devoted to emphasizing cultural difference as an alternative to more common Western philosophies and religions. Abbas’ answering machine encourages customers to try the unique tastes of his restaurant. Furthermore, the restaurant is laid out in a way that emphasizes cultural difference. While one can have a worldview that minimizes cultural difference when answering an inventory and maximizes cultural difference in vocational practice, this is an example of a disconnect between the IDI results and vocational practice.

Power differential

All of the immigrants who were interviewed were in a vulnerable position, they were members of a non-dominant culture. While entrepreneurs are the bosses of their own business, they are still subject to rules and regulations enforced by members of the dominant culture and rely on parties outside their cultural group as sources of customers, employees and investment. As members of a non-dominant culture, these immigrants can maintain this orientation in order to reduce the amount of ambiguity that members of the dominant culture feel towards the cultural differences that exist between the two groups.

This power differential is important to the study of how interculturally competent behavior is expressed during interactions. Indeed, Moosmüller and Schönhuth assert “there is a widespread conviction that it is impossible to discuss intercultural competence without reference to equality of power” (2009, p.210). If members of the dominant culture were to have a defense orientation, an orientation that negatively judges cultural difference, an immigrant entrepreneur expressing a minimization orientation would invite less negative judgment than an orientation that would highlight cultural difference such as acceptance or adaptation. However, if an immigrant was to draw attention to cultural differences, and a member of the dominant culture was to have a defense orientation, which views differences negatively, then the entrepreneur could experience something as minor as customer dissatisfaction or as major as regulatory sanctions. In this way, the minimization orientation is beneficial in that it reduces the risk of negative judgments of others in the dominant cultures.

As demonstrated in the examples given earlier, this orientation can also have the effect of masking important differences that could lead to a deeper recognition and appreciation of various cultures. Perhaps the deeper recognition of cultural differences is less beneficial for entrepreneurial endeavors than risking the rebuke from members of the dominant society who may hold a defense orientation. With this perspective, holding an orientation that acknowledges cultural difference could be considered a privilege.

These acknowledgements of power differential do not negate the previously stated position that immigrants who are entrepreneurs have relatively more power when engaging in trade.

Minimization and intercultural competence

The IDI is a good instrument for measuring intercultural sensitivity and it has been shown to correlate with interculturally competent behavior in the human resources and study abroad fields (Hammer, 2011); however it is not an unfailing predictor of competence (Pusch, 2009). Entrepreneurs are succeeding in accomplishing their goals across cultures, despite not having more ethnorelative orientations such as acceptance or adaptation. This is not to suggest that other opportunities would not present themselves if a more ethnorelative approach to cultural difference was practiced.

Relational influence

Each entrepreneur recognized the importance of generating, cultivating, and being mindful of the types of relationships they were building in order to find partners, generate finances and solve problems. When asked how Sung drew on his Korean culture to understand intercultural relationships, he emphasized the importance of cultivating relationships and treating team members, consultants and employees as family members.

Sung made it clear that if he put in the time and effort to cultivate and nourish practical relationships, small cultural mistakes could be overlooked.

Ivan's approach was different, but did not emphasize relationships any less. He was careful to manage impressions through appearance and the careful study of the individual with whom he intended to enter into a relationship. Unlike Sung's use of the family as an analogy for forming relationships, Ivan protected the professionalism of his business relationships by drawing strict boundaries about business relationships.

Omar gave an example of how his careful analysis of a network of relationships allowed him to keep an important retail location. Omar faced a difficult situation. His landlord in Minneapolis was putting pressure on him both financially and operationally. The landlord had raised the rent and put various onerous restrictions on how Omar could use the retail space. Omar understood the context of this pressure his landlord was applying. He realized the landlord wanted him to vacate the rental space, and rent the space to another client within his in-group.

Omar could solve the problem by addressing the individual elements of the rental situation either legally or contractually. But Omar decided to resolve the issue by investigating the web of relationships that connected Omar to the retail space and the landlord. His investigations revealed that the landlord had a co-owner of the property. Furthermore, this co-owner was also having difficulties with the landlord and they were not sharing the revenue generated by their various properties. After realizing this, Omar was able to direct payment of rent to the co-owner. Contractually he was current on the rent, but he was able to deny his landlord the revenue. Since the co-owner and the landlord were not dividing the rental revenue, Omar denied his landlord a sizable amount

of revenue thereby enabling him to apply significant financial pressure to reduce the onerous demands.

By paying attention to the web of relationships that were involved with the rental space and its owners, Omar was able to reduce onerous demands of his landlord and was better able to focus on business operations. The ability to focus on the relationship instead of the individual as the unit of analysis is a non-western approach as shown by Nisbett (2003).

All of the entrepreneurs discussed the importance of interpersonal relationships and this focus allowed them to infuse their businesses with interactions that were less transactional and more authentic and relational.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

To slice meat, you need a good knife-Hmong Proverb

As discussed in the methods chapter, several scholars account for the need to use a mixed methods approach to measuring intercultural competence. While particular instruments allow for the uncovering of etic perspectives, they do not provide the whole picture as to activities that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural situations. Ultimately, competence is determined by action one takes. By researching the individual accounts of entrepreneurs and asking them to recall their actions, more nuanced understandings of intercultural competent behavior were revealed in this study.

Contributions to theory

Definitions of intercultural competence and what accounts for intercultural competent behavior are still being determined. By studying a group whose economic success depends on intercultural competent behavior, new insight into how intercultural competent behavior expresses itself in praxis is revealed. When the narratives of immigrant entrepreneurs are restored into a text that connects elements of intercultural competence, different elements of intercultural competence reveal aspects that are important to this particular group. Also, new ways of constructing intercultural competence in light of existing literature are revealed.

Non-Western perspectives

Within the existing intercultural literature three common themes are found within models of intercultural competence, empathy, perspective taking and adaptability (Deardorff, 2009a). However, Deardorff notes that these models are mostly from a Western perspective. She invited researchers to explore three themes that have emerged from non-Western notions of intercultural competence including the roles of relationships, identity and context. This study shows how these themes reveal themselves within the narratives of immigrant entrepreneurs. This study draws attention to the importance of these themes. It also gives concrete examples of how identity plays out in the performance of achieving goals within business contexts and across cultural difference. There are also examples of how relationship focus and relational cultivation creates an interpersonal context in which interculturally competent behavior is more likely to occur. This interpersonal context also allows for the reduction of consequences of culturally incompetent behavior.

Integration

The final stage of intercultural sensitivity in the DMIS is the integration stage. However, the instrument that is based on the DMIS and measures intercultural sensitivity does not have integration as a construct. Although Paige et al. (2003) were unable to form a construct for the integration stage of the DMIS to incorporate into the IDI, stories from immigrant entrepreneurs indicate that the integration worldview remains an important factor in understanding notions of intercultural competence. The descriptions of constructive marginality were long, context heavy and convoluted. It is clear why an

inventory item, which tends to be concise, was unable to be created. This aspect of the study reminds us of Cameron's (1963) observation that "not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." The notion of integration and constructive marginality counted in understanding the experiences of identity security in immigrant entrepreneurs. Consequently this strengthens the argument that mixed methods are necessary to measure intercultural competence.

Minimization

Being in the minimization stage was originally characterized by M. Bennett (1993) as having an ethnocentric worldview. Hammer's work with the IDI indicates that the minimization stage is more of a transitional (2011) stage than an ethnocentric stage. With a clear example of how minimization works to convince and connect given the context of unequal power dynamics, notions of minimization can be better understood. A deeper understanding of how a minimization worldview works to achieve goals during intercultural interactions further problematizes the notion of minimization as ethnocentric.

Ethnographic study of how entrepreneurs hold a worldview of minimization according to the IDI, while building an authentic businesses that relies on the sale of culturally different items and experiences, further problematizes the notion of how a minimization worldview as measured by the IDI effects real world decisions.

Examples of how entrepreneurs used minimization strategies to achieve business aims were numerous. They were able to create an effective intercultural office environment, influence customers, connect different geographies, and interweave business and personal meanings with the business. All of these examples supported the

notion that minimization of difference could be the most interculturally competent approach when operating a business as an entrepreneur at these particular situations.

More research is needed to determine the relationship between one's developmental stage on the DMIS and the action they take to resolve an intercultural situation in an acceptable and effective way.

IDI Feedback sessions

Currently, when individuals take the IDI, they have the option of receiving feedback on their results from an IDI qualified administrators. These feedback sessions allow for the individual to thoughtfully and socially engage with the data. With the deeper understanding that this study provides regarding intercultural competence, qualified administrators can provide a richer account of the minimization orientation to those providing IDI feedback. Those seeking to develop their minimization orientation can understand from this study that minimizing difference is useful in situations regarding a power differential, in situations where convincing is required of those holding a defense orientation. Those who have acceptance as their leading orientation can understand from this study the benefits that a minimization orientation provided and are better able to understand why they are understanding cultural difference from this particular stage. Participants receiving feedback would be more able to change their orientation if they know how their existing orientation is working to achieve particular objectives.

Contributions to practice

Charlan Nemeth argues that culturally diverse views are:

“important, not because they tend to prevail but because they stimulate divergent attention and thought. As a result, even when they are wrong they contribute to the detection of novel solutions and decisions that, on balance, are qualitatively better. The implications of this are considerable for creativity, problem solving, and decision making, both at the individual and group levels.” (Nemeth, 1986, p.23)

The insights provided by the immigrant entrepreneurs in this study can provide real solutions to entrepreneurs who need novel ways to resolve problems. Furthermore, the insights provided by the entrepreneurs in this study can help both immigrant and non-immigrant entrepreneurs uncover opportunities. Considering that divergent thinking and its consequent innovation is a rich source of literature and focus within the entrepreneurial discourse, the experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs are of particular value.

Intercultural competence development training

Providing interventions to increase intercultural competence within a group has produced mixed results. A deeper understanding how interculturally competent behavior is expressed in praxis is needed to provide a deeper understanding of how existing theories work and how individuals can use the existing theories to inspire a richer understanding of and ultimately better practice of interculturally competent behavior. Accounts and revelations of how interculturally competent behavior is expressed within

the context of the intense, interactional, and quantifiable experiences which surround entrepreneurship will help to provide rich examples of intercultural competence in praxis.

Immigrant entrepreneurship training

Immigrant entrepreneurship training mostly deals with the financing and regulatory aspects business ownership and ignores the identity factor. As a result of this blind spot, they could lose the passion of several potential entrepreneurs. Identity plays a significant role in how the immigrant entrepreneur adapted to the cross-cultural interactions between interactants. A clear sense of identity helped to inform decisions to be made within the context of office policy decisions. But it also provided a sense of direction to the individual entrepreneur. In each of the interviews, entrepreneurs described the business as authentic expressions of themselves. This focus on identity and authentic expression could help the field of entrepreneurial research break-out from the notion that entrepreneurship and small business ownership can only be studied within the context of venture growth and job creation and breakthrough into the notion that immigrant entrepreneurship contributes to the overall acculturation of both the host nationals and the immigrant population.

Immigrant entrepreneurship training could also include trainings how to emphasize different aspects of intercultural sensitivity to appeal to customers, financiers, or business partners. From this study, it is clear that immigrant entrepreneurs use minimization strategies. However, there are possibilities for more acceptance strategies. As host nationals follow the trend Tambiah (2000) predicts of an increasing comfort with a “hybrid, eclectic, deterritorialized and creolized identities” (p.177), they will desire entrepreneurs who do not minimize cultural differences but rather approach cultural

difference from an acceptance orientation thereby seeking to leverage these differences into authentic experiences, new innovations and new solutions to problems that could not be solved from the existing cultural paradigm.

Vision

The past twenty years has seen a great increase in the ethnic and cultural diversity in the Twin Cities. Just as Allport (1954) had hypothesized 60 years ago, an increase in contact between diverse peoples will not necessarily lead to a reduction in conflict. The context and the way in which people interact is important. International travel and study is a privilege afforded to a few, internationalized campuses are a recent phenomenon, arts and entertainment programming that genuinely reflects cultural difference is still emerging. However, individuals in society can still easily eat at a Somali restaurant, shop at a Tibetan gift store and frequent business that are owned and operated by immigrant entrepreneurs. In this way, immigrant entrepreneurship affords intercultural experiences to the majority of the population. It is my hope that this research will open new research opportunities into how immigrant entrepreneurship increases the overall acculturation and intercultural competence of societies at large. Beyond notions of integration, intercultural competent entrepreneurs who are creating businesses that engage the diverse societies that surround them can generate robust answers to the question “what is it to live as a global citizen in the Twin Cities?”

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Appendix A: Instrument Samples from IDI

Samples for Denial

It is appropriate that people do not care what happens outside their country.

People should avoid individuals from other cultures who behave differently.

Samples for Defense

Our culture's way of life should be a model for the rest of the world.

Samples for Reversal

People from our culture are less tolerant compared to people from other cultures.

Family values are stronger in other cultures than in our culture.

Samples for Minimization

Our common humanity deserves more attention than culture difference.

Human behavior worldwide should be governed by natural and universal ideas of right and wrong.

Samples for Acceptance

I have observed many instances of misunderstanding due to cultural differences in gesturing or eye contact.

I evaluate situations in my own culture based on my experiences and knowledge of other cultures.

Samples for Adaptation

When I come in contact with people from a different culture, I find I change my behavior to adapt to theirs.

Downloaded from <https://idiinventory.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/sample-items-02-06-2014.pdf>

Appendix B: Consent Information Sheet

Intercultural Study of Immigrant Entrepreneurs

You are invited to share your views as part of a research study about the intercultural aspects of being immigrant entrepreneurs. You were selected as a possible participant because you were recommended by a member of an organization that helps develop small businesses.

This study is being conducted by Alex Cleberg, a Master's student at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development, as part of his graduate work, under the advisement of Dr. Gerald Fry. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to better understand cultural dimensions of being an immigrant entrepreneur and the kinds of competencies developed and needed.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be visited by Alex Cleberg three times. The meeting would include an interview. The interview would be approximately one hour, at your place of business or a location of your choosing, to tell the story of your experience as an immigrant entrepreneur. The interview will be recorded, with your permission, and the audio file will be transcribed. The second meeting would involve you taking an online or paper and pencil inventory designed to measure your intercultural attitudes and views. The third meeting is optional if you would like to receive feedback from the inventory or review the transcript.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

Your responses and the identity of your business are confidential. The information from this interview will only be available to Alex Cleberg and Dr. Fry. The information from all interviews will be analyzed to determine what intercultural factors play a role within small business entrepreneurship. At the end of the study, the findings will be included in a formal report. The only potential for risk involves the possibility that some people reading the final report may suspect your participation in the study and might attribute some findings to your business, even though that information will never be shared and will always remain confidential.

A benefit to participation is an opportunity to share your story with an interested researcher and offer advice regarding the immigrant experience in entrepreneurship. You will contribute to research knowledge about entrepreneurship, intercultural understanding, and entrepreneurial competence and abilities that create a strong business. Also, if you desire, you may receive a copy of the findings and Alex Cleberg will be available to discuss the implications.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study, both written and recorded, will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is totally voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota, your business or your relationship with the referring organization. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The primary researcher conducting this study is Alex Cleberg, a graduate student at the

University of Minnesota. *He will be contacting you by phone to confirm your willingness to participate in this study and either set up an interview appointment, or confirm the appointment already made.* You may ask any questions you have at that time. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 719-660-0448 or clebe005@umn.edu. You may also contact Dr. Gerald Fry (612-624-0294, gwf@umn.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

Please retain this sheet of information for your records.

Appendix C: Synthesis of IDI Results (Hammer, 2003) and D&B MDDB (2013) Sales and Establishment information

Entrepreneur Alias	IDI Orientation	Age category	Time outside country of origin	Education level	Country Raised	Nationality	Specific occupational sector of the organization	Percentage of customers or clients who are international and from underrepresented populations	Number of full-time managers and employees	Percentage of managers and employees in your organization who are from minority or underrepresented populations	Percentage of managers and employees in your organization who are from other countries	Estimated Sales in thousands	Established
Abbas	Low Minimization	41-50	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Kuwait	Palestinian	Restaurant	11-25	21-50	76-100	76-100	\$2,800	1998
Barentu	Low Minimization	41-50	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Ethiopia	Oromo	Transportation	11-25	101-1000	26-50	0-10	\$12,100	2000
Claudia	High Minimization	51-60	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Colombia	Colombian	Translation	11-25	Less than 10	26-50	51-75	\$150	1997
Dohna	High Minimization	51-60	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Nepal	Tibetan	Retail	0-10	Less than 10	76-100	0-10	\$68	2004
Fadumo	Low Minimization	31-40	6-10 years	Secondary (high) school graduate	Djibouti	USA and Somali	Healthcare	76-100	Less than 10	76-100	76-100	N/A	2006

Entrepreneur Alias	IDI Orientation	Age category	Time outside country of origin	Education level	Country Raised	Nationality	Specific occupational sector of the organization	Percentage of customers or clients who are international and from underrepresented populations	Number of full-time managers and employees	Percentage of managers and employees in your organization who are from minority or underrepresented populations	Percentage of managers and employees in your organization who are from other countries	Estimated Sales in thousands	Established
Ivan	Acceptance	41-50	Over 10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Bosnia Herzegovina	Croat	Entertainment	26-50	Less than 10	N/A	N/A	\$89	2010
Nyiaj	Low Minimization	51-60	Over 10 years	Post Secondary (university) graduate	Laos	Hmong	Animal Processing	76-100	21-50	76-100	76-100	\$1,400	1989
Omar	Low Minimization	51-60	6-10 years	M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	Somalia	Somali	Restaurant	76-100	21-50	76-100	76-100	\$120	2009
Saachi	Minimization Cusp of Acceptance	41-50	Over 10 years	Post Secondary (university) graduate	India	Indian	Hotel Hospitality	11-25%	21-50	76-100%	11-25%	\$800	1993
Sung	Low Minimization	51-60	Over 10 years	Ph.D. degree	South Korea	Korean	Engineering	26-50%	21-50	11-25%	0-10%	\$2,934	1979