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## A Qualitative Study of the Nascent Entrepreneurial Process of an Immigrant within an Irish Context of a Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Lucia Walsh

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**A Qualitative Study of the Nascent Entrepreneurial  
Process of an Immigrant within an Irish Context of a  
Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

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**Prof. Pauric McGowan**

**Dublin Institute of Technology**

**School of Marketing**

**2010**

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis intersects the theoretical fields of nascent entrepreneurship and cross-cultural adaptation. The key research question that guides this research is: What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross cultural adaptation? The study explores the notion that the nascent entrepreneurial and cross-cultural adaptation journeys of immigrants in this study are intertwined and dynamically interact with each other.

Despite much academic interest in nascent entrepreneurship, there is a lack of qualitative studies that focus on understanding the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants on a longitudinal basis. Additionally, the immigrant/ethnic specific entrepreneurship theories frequently overlook the nascent entrepreneurial experiences of an individual and instead focus on group level analysis with a limited application of cross-cultural adaptation variables. It is within this theoretical space that this research seeks to make its contribution. Understanding this under-researched phenomenon within an Irish context adds an additional research opportunity.

Methodologically based on a qualitative, longitudinal quasi-ethnographic research approach, the study focused on a close and in-depth investigation of six immigrants over a period of 18 months. The researcher, who is also an immigrant, used the methods of participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and informal communication to create new insights and enlighten the nature of this elusive process.

The findings of the research enhanced the understanding of the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant situated within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation. The study design gave voices to the individual immigrants which has been missing from previous studies. Capturing the arrival of an economic recession during the time of the study, the research showed how the individuals negotiated their positions and resources, and how they dynamically moved either closer or further away from achieving their aims. These aims, which were simple in theory, yet complicated in practice, were centred around the continuous efforts of moving from surviving towards living.

## DECLARATION

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I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any Institute.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

The Institute has permission to keep, lend or copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

---

*The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same. Yet our lessons come from the journey, not the destination.*

*Don Williams Jr.*

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide a brief overview of this thesis. The thesis aims to explore and understand the nascent entrepreneurial process<sup>1</sup> from the point of view of a small number of immigrants<sup>2</sup>. This journey is seen as being intertwined with another journey – cross-cultural adaptation<sup>3</sup> within the new host environment of Ireland. The research phenomenon is sought to be understood by another immigrant – the researcher.

This chapter provides a brief overview of this thesis whereby the rationale of the thesis is initially provided. The research interest is then located within the theoretical and empirical domains, identifying an unharnessed potential for research. The key research question and methodological approach to the primary research investigation is then discussed. Lastly, the organisation of the thesis is explained, familiarising the reader with the purpose of each of the subsequent chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> Nascent entrepreneurial process - pre-emergence phase of the entrepreneurial cycle, involving the recognition, evaluation and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane and Ventekaraman, 2000). Studying the nascent entrepreneurial process seeks to understand those attempts that result in a new venture birth but also those which fail or are abandoned (Davidsson, 2005). Entrepreneurship and self-employment are seen as synonymous. (cf. Chapter 3.2).

<sup>2</sup> Immigrant - someone who moves to Ireland from other countries (both EU and non-EU) and undergo their main socialisation process in a home country (Kim, 2001) and thus are of the first generation (cf. Chapter 2.2.1).

<sup>3</sup> Cross-cultural adaptation - dynamic and complex process of interaction within a new host country environment by an immigrant. During this process, individuals adopt various strategies to deal with the new circumstances (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2005) (cf. Chapter 2.2.2).

## **1.2. RATIONALE OF THE THESIS**

The research interest in this topic emerged through a combination of personal interest by the researcher and the ongoing review of the relevant literature both prior and during the study duration. The researcher, who herself is also an immigrant, was interested in a research topic which involved others who shared a similar immigration journey in Ireland. The researcher also had an interest in entrepreneurship. This interest was both of an academic nature and also of a personal one as the researcher had an interest in starting her own business.

The iterative process of literature review showed that there was widespread academic interest in the field of entrepreneurship since Gartner's (1989) call for the research focus to shift to what entrepreneurs did, rather than on the characteristics of entrepreneurs. This interest and changing focus was further enhanced by Shane and Ventakaraman's (2000) definitional unification of entrepreneurship. The research in the area of the nascent phase of the entrepreneurial process has largely focused on a retrospective examination of this process, often suffering from biases (Chandler and Lyon, 2001). While there have been real time longitudinal studies (Gartner et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2004) shedding more light on the actual events, with some exceptions (Pio, 2006), the majority of these were of a quantitative nature. Even though quantitative studies are undeniably helpful, they have restricted the extent to which individuals' voices of their nascent entrepreneurial process 'as-it-happens' have been heard. Thus examining the nascent entrepreneurial process in a qualitative, real-time approach was recognised as a research gap.



The field of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship also presented research potential. Within the field of immigrant/ethnic entrepreneurship, the theoretical developments were previously largely placed on a group level analysis, examining the immigrant cohort from a disadvantaged point of view (Light, 1972; Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Rath and Kloosterman, 2000). This lack of studies focusing on nascent immigrant entrepreneurs on an individual level in a qualitative, real time, longitudinal manner thus presented another fruitful research gap. Theories applied in entrepreneurship field such as an individual-opportunity nexus (Shane and Ventekaraman, 2000; Shane, 2003), entrepreneurial capital (Firkin, 2001, 2003; Nee and Sanders, 2001), and the gestation activities view of the nascent entrepreneurial process (Reynolds et al., 2004; Gartner et al., 2004) provided a useful lens for the empirical investigation and the potential for a theoretical contribution by this research study. The focus was therefore put on advancing the theoretical knowledge within the less researched domain of 'becoming' (Steyaert, 2007). This approach thus includes studying the nascent entrepreneurial process of those who complete their nascent entrepreneurial efforts but also those who abandon them (Davidsson, 2005). Thus this research study sought to gain insights and understanding of the process of the nascent entrepreneurial activities.

The emergent nature of the research design resulted in the identification of the second relevant stream of theoretical and empirical writings from the field of cross-cultural adaptation. The early immersion in the field pointed out the importance of the cross-cultural adaptation process which was dynamically and continuously intertwined with the nascent entrepreneurial journey of the study participants. Singh and DeNoble (2004) called for such studies which would look at the process of cross-cultural adaptation trajectories of

immigrants and their entrepreneurial directions in an integrative way. This thesis took their call further by putting it into an explorative empirical investigation.

The study context of Ireland also presented an interesting research opportunity. Unlike other countries with centuries-long experiences of an inward migration (such as the UK or the US), Ireland's immigration history is a relatively new phenomenon (CSO, 2008a). Academic interest in immigrant entrepreneurship in Ireland has emerged in recent years (First Step, 2006; Cooney and Flynn, 2008; Mottiar and Laurinčíková, 2008; Pinkowski, 2009) but investigations of the nascent entrepreneurial process pursued by immigrants have been absent within an Irish context. As immigrant entrepreneurs were estimated to represent approximately 12.6 percent of the immigrant community (Cooney and Flynn, 2008), understanding the nascent entrepreneurial process either leading to establishing new ventures or abandoning the nascent efforts would not only contribute to the academic domain but would also benefit the policy and practice realms. Indeed the Small Business Forum (2006) identified immigrant-led enterprises as being a vital part of an indigenous and sustainable economic development of the country and so much can be learnt from developing an understanding of this entrepreneurial cohort. The primary research period took place during the time period when Ireland officially entered economic recession. This also presented a scope for further understanding of how such external changes impacted on immigrants who attempted to establish their ventures in the host country of Ireland. Thus the Irish context presented additional research opportunities for this research study.

This thesis was theoretically informed by two key streams of literature. Firstly, it drew from the entrepreneurship domain, with nascent entrepreneurship theories specifically providing

a base for understanding the immigrant experiences. Secondly, the cross-cultural adaptation theoretical domain enriched the theoretical framework in a novel way. The marriage of these two theoretical realms presented a unique viewing lens into understanding the research phenomenon, while addressing the identified research gaps.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH APPROACH**

As a result of the iterative process of identifying research opportunities and an attempt to bridge the identified theoretical gaps, a research question emerged. The key research question which was posited in this thesis was: ‘What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation?’

The overarching research question sought to understand the experiences, perceptions, actions and interactions of the study participants from their point of view. The emphasis was placed on an explorative and inductive approach, focusing on the process – the journey (Patton, 2002). More specifically, the research sought to identify, explore and understand the key cross-cultural adaptation variables that interacted with the nascent entrepreneurial journey of the participants. The nascent entrepreneurial journey was seen as a part of economic adaptation of the study participants and the primary investigation focused on identifying, exploring and understanding this process.

The choice of an interpretive research methodology located within a qualitative research paradigm was deemed as the most suitable vehicle for exploring the research question. Adopting a quasi-ethnographic research approach enabled the researcher to explore and

understand the participants' journeys as they happened over an extended time period. Such a research design was also seen as suitable for giving the missing voice to nascent immigrant entrepreneurs, which was largely absent from previous empirical investigations. The quasi-ethnographic research approach enabled the researcher to have a close and regular contact with the study participants, 'living' with them through their experiences. Regular and prolonged contact was maintained over a period of 18 months through participant observation during an Emerge Programme<sup>4</sup>, qualitative interviewing, and different methods of informal communication<sup>5</sup>. Applying different methods of enquiry ensured data triangulation and data crystallisation (Richardson, 1994). The six study participants came from very diverse countries and backgrounds resulting in a rich tapestry of their encounters.

#### **1.4. ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS**

The remainder of this thesis is naturally divided into chapters. Chapter Two and Chapter Three are two literature review chapters, with Chapter Four focusing on detailing the Irish context in which this research study was located. Chapter Five outlines the study's methodological considerations, while Chapter Six and Chapter Seven analyse and discuss research findings. The final chapter, Chapter Eight, draws important theoretical, practical and policy conclusions to the thesis.

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<sup>4</sup> Emerge Programme – immigrant-focused 'Start Your Own Business' enterprise programme. The programme was delivered at a slower pace and with a more in-depth overview of the Irish entrepreneurial environment, conditions and cultural differences in doing business (cf. Chapter 4.3.3 and Chapter 5.5).

<sup>5</sup> Informal communication - informal conversations during the Emerge programme duration, individual and group meetings during the study duration, telephone contact (text messages and phone calls), and electronic communication (email, Skype and social networking website Facebook) (cf. Chapter 5.9.3).

The aim of Chapter Two is to critically review and become familiar with the key theoretical themes within the cross-cultural adaptation literature. The chapter sets out definitional boundaries of the key terms of an 'immigrant' and 'cross-cultural adaptation' in order to avoid ambiguity while increasing clarity. The subsequent review includes the theoretical and empirical considerations of emigration, return migration and group level cultural differences, before investigating the key themes which are concerned with cross-cultural adaptation on an individual level. These themes include personal predispositions, inter-group relations, and the nature of changing cultural identity positions as a result of cross-cultural adaptation. Other relevant theories from the fields of social psychology are further discussed as they are seen as adding additional exploratory power to the process of cross-cultural adaptation. The key purpose of this chapter thus lies in becoming familiar with the cross-cultural adaptation literature which presents a prelude to the second literature review chapter.

Chapter Three debates the theoretical developments within the field of entrepreneurship. The focus of this chapter lies in delineating the theoretical writings within the pre-venture emergence phase - nascent entrepreneurship. The key concepts of 'entrepreneurship' and 'nascent immigrant entrepreneurship' are defined with a view to ensuring clarity and consistency of the terms and their interpretation by the reader. While the nascent entrepreneurial attempts of immigrants are at the centre of this thesis, the recognition of other ways of economic adaptation in a host country are also required. This is because immigrants frequently fluctuate between the two modes of economic adaptation, and so critical theoretical and empirical literature in the area of immigrant employment is debated. Contributing factors leading to nascent immigrant entrepreneurship as a way of economic adaptation in a host country are considered, and these include viewing entrepreneurship as a

career choice, individual specific predispositions, and external environment factors. Immigrant/ethnic entrepreneurship theories are critically reviewed and their relevance and potential for elucidating the nature of the nascent entrepreneurial process are assessed. The review of general theories from the entrepreneurship domain that focus on understanding of the nascent entrepreneurial process are comprehensively reviewed and critiqued. More specifically, the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane and Ventekaraman, 2001), entrepreneurial capital view of the nascent entrepreneurial process (Bourdieu, 1986; Firkin, 2001, 2003, Nee and Sanders, 2001), and the nascent entrepreneurial process as gestation activities (Carter et al., 1996; Reynolds et al., 2004; Lichtenstein et al., 2008) theories are reviewed in relation to the current study. Thus the key learning from this chapter lies in the familiarisation with the key themes relevant to the nascent entrepreneurial process pursued by immigrants, and identification of the lack of theoretical and empirical investigations incorporating cross-cultural adaptation variables on an individual level.

Chapter Four sets out the context for the present empirical investigation. As the study is located within an Irish context, familiarity with this context is seen as essential. Immigration in Ireland is first examined from a historical perspective, then the changes in immigrant labour participation rates are assessed and finally Ireland's policy and social responses to the immigration trends are debated. The second part of this chapter focuses on the context-specific entrepreneurial developments. Starting with a general entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial climate overview, it is followed by a more detailed discussion on the available information on immigrant entrepreneurs and nascent immigrant entrepreneurs in Ireland. In addition, the relevant enterprise support organisations are reviewed because part of this research study is situated during the Emerge enterprise programme initiative. By the

end of Chapter Four, the reader will be familiar with the key theoretical and empirical developments within the fields of cross-cultural adaptation and nascent entrepreneurship, understanding the research gaps and research opportunities for the present study. Chapter Four finishes with summarising the key contributions of this research study to the extant knowledge as a result of identifying research gaps in the reviewed literature.

Chapter Five sets out the methodological considerations for the thesis. It starts out by outlining the key research question which emerged as a result of an ongoing process of emergent data generation and literature review. Supported by the relevant methodological theories, the chapter details the practical considerations of the adopted quasi-ethnographic method of enquiry. This includes a discussion on sampling decisions, negotiating access, researcher's role, ethical considerations, and considerations of data generation methods. The process of data analysis was undertaken by adopting the methods of grounded theory process of analysis. A detailed description of the adopted methodological procedures was seen as necessary in order to assure the validity of the research findings' trustworthiness and future study replication.

Chapter Six and Chapter Seven include the analysis, interpretation and theorisation of the research findings. The findings are presented in two key parts – the cross-cultural adaptation dimension (Chapter Six) and the economic adaptation dimension in which the nascent entrepreneurial process rests (Chapter Seven). Even though presented separately, the dynamic relationship between the two dimensions is visible. These chapters contain a rich description of the participants' encounters, while also reflecting the findings across data within light of previous literature.

Finally, Chapter Eight draws the research process to its conclusion. It culminates the research findings into a conceptual model depicting the intertwined nature of the nascent entrepreneurial journey of the participants within a cross-cultural adaptation process. The final chapter also reflects on the key theoretical contributions within the relevant fields. Even though this thesis is academically oriented, the results also have practical and policy resonance. The chapter concludes with recognising the research limitations and outlining future research recommendations.

## **1.5. CONCLUSION**

This introductory chapter outlined how the key research question will be approached and then answered in this research study. The chapter showed how the research topic was identified and how it subsequently developed and evolved as a result of an iterative process of literature review and data generation. This research design was of an emergent nature in an effort to listen to what the data 'said'. The importance of the cross-cultural adaptation dimension within a nascent entrepreneurial process transpired as a result of this emergent approach. The research bridges the gap between these two theoretical fields as it investigates two intertwined journeys. Adopting qualitative, quasi-ethnographic research approach enabled the researcher to elucidate the nature of these journeys as they unfolded. The following chapter is the first literature review chapter which reviews the theoretically relevant cross-cultural adaptation themes.



**CHAPTER TWO**  
**BEING AN IMMIGRANT- UNDERSTANDING CROSS-CULTURAL**  
**ADAPTATION**

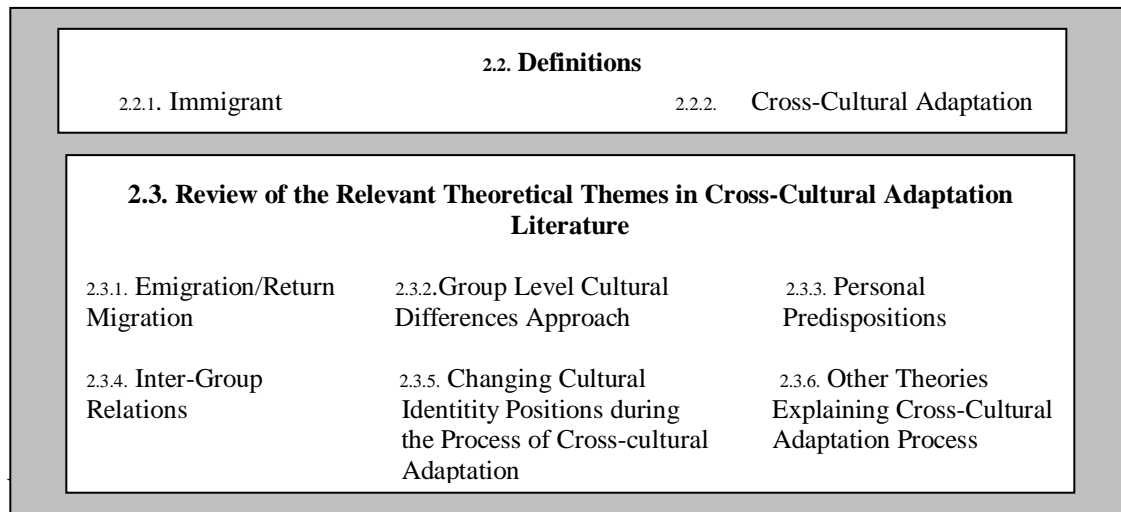
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**2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the interconnectedness of the participants' nascent entrepreneurial journey in relation to their cross-cultural adaptation process in Ireland. In light of this, two major areas of literature were critically reviewed – literature on cross-cultural adaptation and literature on nascent entrepreneurship as a form of economic adaptation. This chapter solely reviews the key theoretical themes within the cross-cultural adaptation literature and sets the scene for the next literature review chapter. While this field is well developed, it does provide a novel theoretical background to studying the nascent immigrant entrepreneurial process. The next literature review chapter focuses on nascent entrepreneurship and in particular on theoretical approaches which are considered as useful to studying nascent immigrant entrepreneurship. Throughout this latter literature review, theoretical gaps with respect to the lack of application of these two fields combined in studying nascent immigrant entrepreneurship will be clearly identified. The third literature review chapter identifies the specifics of the Irish context. As the present study is situated in the Irish context, it is pertinent to understand the environment in which immigrants undergo their cross-cultural and economic adaptation journeys. The last literature review chapter finishes with the identification of a research gap.

The aim of this chapter is to become familiar with the key theoretical themes within the cross-cultural adaptation literature which informs this study. Figure 2.1 shows the discussion outline of this chapter.

**Figure 2.1 – Discussion Outline of Chapter Two**



Source: Author

In this chapter, the key terms of ‘immigrant’ and ‘cross-cultural adaptation’ are defined in order to set theoretical boundaries of this research. Secondly, the key theoretical themes within the cross-cultural adaptation literature are debated. By the end of this chapter, the reader will be familiar with the relevant themes and issues within the cross-cultural adaptation literature. Its relevance to the present study will become evident in the subsequent literature review chapter.

## **2.2. DEFINITIONS**

This study is primarily concerned with researching a group of immigrants. Substantial definitional disparities exist within the literature on what is meant by ‘immigrant’ and ‘cross-

cultural adaptation'. Prior to proceeding further with the literature review, it is pertinent to set out the definitional boundaries of what is meant by these terms within this study and what they do not include.

### **2.2.1. Immigrant**

Definitional discrepancies exist within the literature about the term used to describe those who move from one country to another. For example, in Canada, the term 'visible minorities' is regularly used to refer to those of Asian and African origin (Hiebert 2003) while the term 'guest worker' has been used in Germany to reflect the temporary view of immigrants (Wilpert, 2003). The terms 'migrant', 'immigrant' and 'ethnic minority' are often misinterpreted and misused. 'Ethnic minority' is very often interchangeably used as a nationality (such as in the UK - Barrett et al., 2003). However, as Pieterse (2003, p. 34) noted, *'within the host country, the nationality may be viewed as an ethnic group or minority, but this does not necessarily match relations within the country of origin'*. What is important to appreciate is that ethnic groups are not confined to nationalities, rather encompass people who have a common religion, language, or culture. Ethnic minorities can differ within one nationality (such as the Chinese) or can span across a number of different nationalities (such as the Sikhs) (Pieterse, 2003). These different issues thus have to be considered when speaking about individuals coming to Ireland from abroad. It is for these reasons that in this thesis, ethnicity is considered as one dimension of an individual make-up, rather than a defining characteristic in its own right. The previously developed theories in this area using the term 'ethnic' will be kept in its original format (such as ethnic enclaves or ethnic economies) during the literature review.

Another important distinction needs to be made between the nature of ‘migrant’ and ‘immigrant’ as these terms have been often ascribed different meanings. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2009), the word ‘migrant’ is traditionally related to animals which temporarily move from one place to another (such as birds for winter). The nomadic or wandering nature of this word is emphasised. When speaking of a ‘migrant person’, the Oxford English Dictionary (2009) refers to migrant people as those who move temporarily between places. For example, the Mexican harvest workers would migrate to the US for a short-term work. However, the aim of immigrants is to settle in more permanently in a host country with a view to better their circumstances, such as through economic advancement. The length of planned stay is thus considered as the main distinguisher between a migrant and immigrant. Furthermore, immigrants, who leave their home country and move into a host country, typically undertake their main socialisation in their home country. Thus immigrants are of the first generation, as the second generation undergo their socialisation process in the host country, experiencing a different set of socialisation circumstances (Kim, 2001).

Strictly speaking, those moving to Ireland from other European Union (EU) countries may be considered as migrants as they move within the one jurisdiction which the EU presents. On the other hand, those coming from outside of the EU can be seen as moving from one jurisdiction into another for an unspecified length of time, therefore they should be considered as immigrants. However, in this study, even though those coming from other EU member states are moving within the same wider territory, national differences do exist both on the macroeconomic level and within the cultural and social domains. Despite the fact that the socio-cultural distance is not as great as for those coming from non-EU countries,

nevertheless these individuals need to make adjustments as they enter a somewhat dissimilar environment. The fact that individuals are extracted from their familiar environment (including their economic, social and cultural positions) requires adjustment in itself even though the economic circumstances may be similar. Thus those coming from other EU member states are also referred to as immigrants in this study. Even though refugees and asylum seekers belong to the immigrant category, it is beyond the scope of this literature review to consider theoretical and practical implications of these sub-categories.

When looking closer at Ireland, a number of different terms have been used in the academic, media, and public discourses. Apart from the use of ‘immigrant’ (Pinkowski, 2009), some of the other terms include ‘non-nationals’ (Coulter, 2004), ‘non-Irish’ (Kelly, 2007), ‘non-Irish nationals’ (O’Regan, 2008), ‘foreign nationals’ (Shatter, 2005), ‘new Irish’ (McNally, 2007), and ‘ethnic minorities’ (Cooney and Flynn, 2008). These terms are often used interchangeably. In addition, a term ‘migrant worker’ is more frequently used in connection with those coming from the new EU accession states (Ruhs, 2006; MacCormac, 2008), with the temporary nature connected to their migration being emphasised. The use of the ‘ethnic minorities’ term includes those coming from abroad (usually of non-European and non-Caucasian origins) but also the Irish indigenous ethnic minority (the Travelling Community), and other ethnic minorities such as the Jewish community. A review of the Irish media and policy reports indicate that there is no cohesive term used in connection with those who move to Ireland. It is apparent that there are large definitional inconsistencies both internationally and in Ireland. A summary of what is meant by the term ‘immigrant’ in this study is summarised in Figure 2.2.

### **2.2.2. Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

The cross-cultural adaptation writings span across disciplines, focusing on both the individual and group level investigations. Although efforts towards more integrative approaches were made (Anderson, 1994; Bourhis et al., 1997; Kim, 2001; Berry et al., 2002), definitional discrepancies continue to exist. Many different terms have been used to define essentially the same adaptive process undertaken by immigrants within an unfamiliar host environment. Firstly, an important distinction exists between ‘assimilation’ and ‘adaptation’. The former refers to the process which replaces one’s original culture, while the latter refers to expanding one’s worldview (Bennett, 1998). ‘Acculturation’ is also used to refer to the process in which a person becomes culturally competent in an environment which is different to where one was raised (Hall, 2005). In addition, ‘coping’ and ‘adjustment’ terms have also been used in the previous literature to refer to more psychological responses to the host culture (Kim, 2001). Finally, the term ‘integration’ has been used in discussions about social participation in the host culture (Berry, 1986).

In the context of the present study, cross-cultural adaptation is concerned with a process rather than the outcome alone. Anderson (1994, p. 299) noted that cross-cultural adaptation is a *‘commonplace process of learning to live with change and differences – in this instance, a changed environment and different people, different norms, different standards, and different customs’*. Cross-cultural adaptation is hence seen as a process in which an individual adapts to changed socio-cultural circumstances. Kim’s (2001) definition of cross-cultural adaptation is based on the open-systems perspective in which an individual strives to achieve a fit between the person and the environment, meaning that some compromises have to be

made. Thus according to Kim (2001, p. 31), cross-cultural adaptation is defined as '*the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or reestablish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal and functional relationships with those environments*'. Kim (2001) believed that communication with the host environment was needed for a successful cross-cultural adaptation. However, some authors disagreed with this as communication with the host population can affirm social isolation of an immigrant (Chirkov et al., 2005). Anderson (1994) also emphasised the willingness to engage with the host environment rather than to run away. Thus these definitions agree that the cross-cultural adaptation is a dynamic process, in which immigrants engage and respond to different socio-cultural circumstances that they face.

Cross-cultural adaptation is also increasingly studied within a globalised and constantly changing world (Berry, 2008; Kim, 2008; Bhatia and Ram, 2009). Within such a context, cross-cultural adaptation is seen as a constantly mixing and moving phenomenon (Hermans and Kempen, 1998). Such a changing and complex nature of cross-cultural adaptation has been also characterised by its transnational linkages between the host and home countries, which are now possible due to technological advancements, and reduced costs of communication and travel (Vertovec, 2007; Light, 2007). Thus cross-cultural adaptation is not solely embedded within the host country, rather it is seen as transcending places and spaces.

The definitions of an immigrant and cross-cultural adaptation set boundaries to the present research (cf. Chapter 3.2 for additional definitions of nascent entrepreneurship). Figure 2.2 summarises the key premises of these two terms.

**Figure 2.2 - Summary of Immigrant and Cross-Cultural Adaptation Definitions in the Present Study**

IMMIGRANT	CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Someone who moves to Ireland from other countries (both EU and non-EU).</li><li>▪ Ethnicity is part of an individual make-up rather than a sole defining characteristic.</li><li>▪ The main socialisation was undertaken in the home country thus immigrants are those of the first generation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Dynamic and complex process of interaction within a new host country environment.</li><li>▪ Cross-cultural adaptation transcends places and spaces as it involves transnational linkages.</li><li>▪ The individual adopts strategies to deal with the new circumstances of cross-cultural adaptation.</li></ul>

Source: Adapted from Literature Review

Setting of the definitional boundaries minimises any ambiguities which may arise in the reader's mind.

### **2.3. REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT THEORETICAL THEMES IN CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION LITERATURE**

The field of cross-cultural adaptation has attracted researchers from many disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, social psychology, and cultural psychology among others. Even though writings in this area are varied, offering a great potential for collaboration and mutual theoretical exchange, this has not been the case. Researchers tend to focus on research within their own disciplines, without much cross-disciplinary interaction, thus ignoring findings from other areas. Despite more attempts for integrative approaches, which would better deal with understanding the process of cross-cultural adaptation experience, fragmentation still persists.



In spite of variances, common themes in the previous cross-cultural adaptation studies exist. These themes have been approached from different theoretical angles. In the proceeding sections, the commonly reoccurring themes within the field of cross-cultural adaptation studies are critically reviewed. Firstly, theoretical conceptualisation of motivations for emigration and return migration are discussed as cross-cultural adaptation does not necessarily start and end while physically in a host country. Secondly, the discussion focuses on the key reoccurring theoretical themes within the cross-cultural adaptation process in a host country. These themes include group level differences, personal predisposition factors, roles of intra- and inter-group relations, and changing cultural identity dynamics as a result of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2005). These theoretical constructs are not seen as operating in isolation, rather they impact on the cross-cultural adaptation of individuals collectively and concurrently. The significance of understanding these theoretical developments is that within the study, the dynamic cross-cultural adaptation process is seen as interacting with the participants' nascent entrepreneurial journey within an Irish context.

### **2.3.1. Emigration and Return Migration**

Many academic studies have focused on determining the factors which spur individuals to emigrate from their country of birth to another country (Eisenstadt, 1954; Berry et al., 1987; Winter-Ebmer, 1994; Williams, 2009). Inevitably, one's cross-cultural journey begins in their home country as individuals reach a decision to emigrate to a different country. Other studies have considered what happens when an immigrant moves back to their home country (Linehan and Sculion, 2003; Chamove and Soeterik, 2006). Thus the key focus for many of

these academic studies was on the examination of the emigration/return migration motivations and the process of cross-border transitions.

With regards to emigration, the deficiency model of emigration was prevalent in older writings (Littlewood and Lipsedge, 1989). The basic premise of this model is that potential emigrants are driven to leave their home country due to being socially misplaced, lacking resources, and suffering social failure and adversity. However, even though this model may have been plausible in certain cases in the past (for example in the case of post-war immigrants), it is no longer considered as entirely valid by present scholars. Another academic debate has considered the role of dynamics of a personality and the motivation to emigrate. For example, Winter-Ebmer (1994) divided immigrants by economic motivation into those with optimistic motivations (search for success) and those with more pessimistic motivation (fear of failure). Tarkatovsky and Schwartz (2001) extended this view by adding that emigration motivations are best seen in the context of more basic human motivations based on the theory of values (Schwartz, 1994). This theory holds that if people cannot accomplish their basic values and goals in their home country, they emigrate into another country in an attempt to fulfill their basic motivations (such as care for family, individual growth, and security). Based on these basic values, Tarkatovsky and Schwartz (2001) proposed a typology of motivations to emigrate as: (1) preservation which means ensuring physical, social and psychological security through emigration; (2) self-development centred around personal growth such as developing abilities and acquiring new skills; and (3) materialistic which promotes a desire to improve one's economic, social and employment position. One individual may experience a mixture of all of these motivations in a different proportion. For example, while those emigrating from poorer countries to richer countries

may be more materialistically motivated, elderly immigrants would be less concerned with the self-development motivation. This empirically tested typology based on an individual's basic motivations provides a more complex approach to studying motivations than some of the earlier approaches such as the deficiency model.

The economic or materialistic motivations are often debated in the literature, with the focus frequently being on its push and pull elements. The push and pull economic motivations view holds that individuals emigrate because they can achieve higher wages (pull) than continue to earn lower wages in home country (push) (Yeoh, 2009). Immigrants are often seen as being attracted by a higher earnings potential in a host country. However, even though some immigrants may perform less desirable jobs in a host country which may be even below their level of qualifications, they are still able to earn more than in their home country. It is this instrumental motive with strong future orientation that is seen adopted by some immigrants (Epstein and Gang, 2006; Jewell and Molina, 2009). Thus studies in this area have addressed the issues of how immigrants, who predominantly consider the economic benefits of higher wages, forego the shorter term costs in favour of future benefits.

Other motivational factors which have been the subject of academic investigations relate to the personal characteristics of individuals. Human capital was found to have a positive motivational effect on the emigration decision (Quinn and Rubb, 2005). Jewell and Molina (2009) also contributed to the discussion by adding that human capital is further enhanced with immigration. Implications of gender, gender cultural roles and marital status characteristics have been also investigated in relation to emigration decisions. Smith and Thomas (1998) found that men and women may be differently motivated when it comes to

emigration. Stark (1995) found that while emigration is usually a family decision, a husband may emigrate first to explore the job and living conditions before being followed by his wife. Thus personal characteristics such as human capital, gender and family status were investigated by previous studies.

Another group of academic studies focused their attention on the theoretical understanding of the role of different social networks in reaching and executing an emigration decision. Firstly, Hiller and McCaig (2007) saw the importance of reaching a mutual partner decision to emigrate in the subsequent satisfactory experiences of both partners. Secondly, consultation of close family and other networks with previous emigration experience were also seen as facilitators of an information flow about possible opportunities and destinations (Epstein, 2002). Thirdly, research in the area of the role of social networks and emigration also focused on those who are currently present in a particular host country (De Jong, 2000). These transnational social networks (Tsuda, 1999) or network externalities (Epstein, 2000) have been found to provide useful information and assistance to those who emigrate (Carrington et al., 1996; Nee and Sanders, 2001). Consequently, these beneficial network externalities have been seen as fostering ‘chain migrants’ who aid others wishing to emigrate from home to a host country (Tsuda, 1999, p. 21). Previous studies also debated the negative effects of network externalities (Epstein and Gang, 2006). For example, it was found that an adverse selection may occur which means that those of high productivity in a host country do not wish others with lower productivity to immigrate (Bauer et al., 2000). Thus social networks have been found to play a varied role in reaching one’s decision to emigrate.

Epstein and Hillman (1998) offered an alternative view of the role of transnational social networks and destination selection. They introduced the theoretical notion of the herd effect. In this view, the potential emigrants' destination selection decision is influenced by imperfect information as a result of reliance on observation of previous emigration decisions of others. It means that even though individuals may possess other information about potential destinations, this information is disregarded, resulting in repeating previous emigration patterns. Subsequently, the results of the herd effect could lead to immigrant clustering in certain destinations (Bauer et al., 2002). Thus both network externalities and the herd effect show the importance of social networks in emigration decision-making process and destination selection.

Apart from the motivations and destination selection process discussed so far, past research has also examined the effects of host language competency (Chiswick and Miller, 2003), physical distance (Boyle, 2009), monetary cost of actual emigration move (De Jong, 2000; Huffman and Feridhanusetyawan, 2007), and perceived intercultural similarities/differences (Coates and Carr, 2005) on emigration motivation and destination choice. Finally, the literature has also addressed the role of macro-environmental conditions such as immigration policies (Iredale, 2005) and the particular country's economic and social conditions (Geis et al., 2008). Thus the previous studies on emigration motivations and destination selections have been concerned with identifying variables which either increase or decrease the likelihood of moving to a particular country. It is evident, that the previous research did not identify a set of reliable variables which contribute to a successful cross-border transition. Different theoretical viewpoints each partially contributed to the understanding of such dynamic and multifaceted phenomena.

Previous research also addressed the issues of return migration. Upon returning to one's home country, a reverse culture shock may also occur. However, the adjustment process may not always be curvilinear (Onwumechilli et al., 2003). Some literature shows that returning to one's home country may sometimes be even more challenging than previously entering into the host country (Linehan and Sculion, 2003; Chamove and Soeterik, 2006). A number of studies (such as Sussman, 2000; Sussman, 2001; Cox, 2004) were concerned with cultural identity alterations during migration experience and their subsequent impact on home country adaptation. Brabant et al. (1990) highlighted the fact that those who successfully adapted in the host country have the abilities to successfully re-adapt in their home country upon return. Other studies within this area focused on assessing the impact of the length of time being away from their home country (Suutari and Valimaa, 2002), cultural distance (Kidder, 1992), contact with the host country individuals during migration (Kim, 2001), contact with home country individuals during migration (Cox, 2004), and prior intercultural experience (Sussman, 2002).

While the focus of this study is on the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants within a cross-cultural adaptation process in Ireland, understanding of the theoretical notions of emigration and return migration add additional insights into this process. The individuals' underlying motives to leave their home country interrelate to their subsequent cross-cultural adaptation and economic adaptation trajectories within a host country. On the other hand, return migration decision may take some time to reach. Such decision may be also related to the cross-cultural adaptation journey and may be interacting with the nascent entrepreneurial activities. As highlighted in the preceding discussion, there is a plethora of academic research

examining immigrants' motivations to cross physical and cultural borders. This thesis thus strives to explore the nature of the interactions between these constructs and the nascent entrepreneurial experiences of the study participants.

### **2.3.2. Group Level Cultural Differences Approach**

Cultural variability studies represent a group level approach to understanding cultural differences. It presents a wider cultural context within which the individuals' cross-cultural adaptation process takes place. Cultural variability studies are concerned with identifying the core values underlying different cultural behaviours and norms. It is within these group level core values that the individual's attitudes, values, expectations, and perceptions are rooted. Even though studies in this area predominantly focus on cultural groups rather than an individual's cross-cultural adaptation process, they can be useful in increasing the understanding of the causes of an individual's cross-cultural adaptation adjustment difficulties and successes.

Some early social anthropologists such as Mead (1935) advocated studies on cultural differences. The notion of different cultural values holds that each culture possesses a divergent set of dominant value orientations which differentiates one culture from another. Hofstede (1991, p. 5) saw culture as 'a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another'. Hall (2005) held that the three main manifestations of a culture are its: (1) worldviews (abstract notions about the way the world is); (2) values (beliefs about the way the world should be); and (3) norms (social rules for which certain types of people should and should not do). Hofstede

(1991; 2009) identified five dimensions along which individual cultures differ. These are illustrated in Table 2.1. Available scores for the countries which feature in the present study are included.

**Table 2.1 - Hofstede's Five Cultural Dimensions**

<b>Cultural Dimension</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Available Scores for Relevant Countries</b>
<b>Power Distance</b>	Shows how inequalities are dealt with within different cultures. <i>Large power distance</i> ranking indicates the inequalities of power and wealth, while <i>small power distance</i> means that a society strives to provide equal opportunities for everyone.	France (68) India (77) Ireland (28) West Africa (77)
<b>Individualism Versus Collectivism</b>	This refers to the role of individuals and groups within a culture. <i>Individualism</i> refers to those societies where family and other relationship structures are loose and the focus is on the individual. <i>Collectivism</i> means that people are part of strong and extended groups such as extended families, in which mutual protection and loyalty are paramount.	France (71) India (48) Ireland (70) West Africa (20)
<b>Masculinity Versus Femininity</b>	This indicates the distribution of social, culturally determined gender roles within a society which differ from the traditional biological distinction. <i>Masculinity</i> is demonstrated through assertiveness and competition, while <i>femininity</i> reinforces feminine nurturance, a concern for relationship, and for the living environment.	France (43) India (56) Ireland (68) West Africa (43)
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance</b>	This shows how societies deal with uncertainty and ambiguity. Societies with <i>strong uncertainty avoidance</i> perceive uncertainty as a continuous threat which must be fought, while societies with <i>weak uncertainty avoidance</i> perceive uncertainty as a normal feature of lives.	France (86) India (40) Ireland (35) West Africa (54)
<b>Long Term Versus Short Term Orientation</b>	<i>Long term orientation</i> values are thrift and perseverance while values associated with <i>the short term orientation</i> are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's 'face'. Countries with long-term orientation adapt their traditions to a modern context, have respect for social and status obligations within limits. Societies with short-term orientation have respect for traditions, respect for social and status obligations regardless of the cost, and concerns with 'face'.	Great Britain (25) as Ireland score is unavailable India (61)

Source: Adapted from Hofstede (1991; 2009)

When different nations are compared along these dimensions, their similarities and differences are highlighted. These can potentially lead to cross-cultural adaptation difficulties if the differences are large. The theoretical concept of cultural distance (Hofstede, 1991)



encompasses the level of differences and similarities within cultural elements of language, social structure, religion, standard of living, values, and government systems among other factors (Triandis, 2001; 2006, Berry et al., 2002). Greater cultural distance between home and host countries was found to be associated with greater difficulties in cross-cultural adaptation process (Ward et al., 2001). For example, from the available data along Hofstede's cultural dimension, the large differences between the low power distance of Ireland are in contrast with large power distance of West Africa, India and France. This position would suggest that larger cross-cultural adjustment would be necessary. So even though Hofstede's cultural dimensions focus on cultural differences on a group level, these constructs can be also helpful in understanding of an individual level cross-cultural adaptation (Ward et al., 2001; Sharma et al., 2009).

Even though Hofstede's research is widely regarded for its contributions, other researchers' developed alternative cultural variability dimensions. Trompenaars' (1994) seven dimensions show how different cultures understand and express relationships with other people, time and nature. Schwartz (1992) identified ten motivationally distinct basic values that are recognised across societies. In spite of their continuous applicability, cultural variability constructs have been subjected to criticism. For example, McSweeney (2002) questioned the reliability of the survey-based research, and that the nations are not the best units for studying cultures as many sub-cultures typically exist. Hofstede (2002) responded to some of the criticism, calling for complimentary research methodologies and defending the robustness of cultural constructs. Gooderham and Nordhaug (2001) carried out cross-cultural research in European business schools, using Hofstede's dimensions. They argued that a significant convergence of national values existed, whereas gender differences were more evident and significant. In spite of some criticism, Hofstede's cultural dimensions

continue to be used in cross-cultural studies. Within the context of this research, cultural differences at a group level contribute to the understanding of an individual's cross-cultural and economic adaptation in host country environment whereby such embedded values and norms may be challenged during these processes.

### **2.3.3. Personal Predispositions**

Within the cross-cultural adaptation literature, attention has been also placed on understanding individuals' background characteristics which contribute to their likely trajectory of cross-cultural adaptation process in a host country. The most pertinent issues which have been a subject to theoretical and empirical scrutiny include the relevance of intra-personal factors, individual cultural and demographic background characteristics, and the level of similarities and difference with the host culture.

Much focus of the previous studies has been on determining personal characteristics which can determine the cultural fit within the new environment (Kets de Vries and Mead, 1991; Arthur and Bennett, 1995). The belief that a certain type of personality is more likely to be successful in cross-cultural adaptation process has led to many studies attempting to identify a universal set of personality characteristics. Early theoretical and empirical studies produced mixed results (Eysenck, 1986). One of the more prevalent personality approaches which has been also applied in the cross-cultural adaptation research is the Big Five Factor Model (Digman, 1990; Costa and McCrea, 1992). The model contains five key construct (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) each consisting of a number of facets. Since the Big Five personality test was developed, researchers tested it within different cultural settings (McCrea and Costa, 2003). Searle and

Ward (1990) found a positive correlation between extraversion and enhancement of psychological well-being but another study (Armes and Wards, 1989) found that extraversion was connected to feelings of boredom, frustration, depression, and poor health. Thus these contradictions in findings show that it is not a personality make-up alone, rather it interacts with changes in environment.

Ward and Chang (1997) proposed a cultural fit hypothesis to overcome previous research inconsistencies. It explicates that personality alone does not interact with the cross-cultural adaptation process, rather it is the fit between the individual and the norms of the host environment. Even though Ward et al.'s (2005) study did not support the relationship between the Big Five personality and the norms of the host environment, Hofstede and McCrea's (2004) study combining the Big Five with the overall cultural dimensions found correlation between the two levels. Although studies using the Big Five constructs have produced mixed and sometimes inconsistent results, this theoretical advancement is still at the forefront of personality studies within the cross-cultural adaptation field. However, these studies are predominantly based on group level comparisons using quantitative measurements.

Other studies focused on the examination of other personality traits which interact with the cross-cultural adaptation on an individual level. Kim (2001) discussed different personal characteristics as important in cross-cultural adaptation process grouped under two broad concepts of openness and strength. Openness implies willingness to embrace a new culture without ethnocentric judgements, having an optimistic outlook on life and self-trust in own abilities in adverse circumstances. Open-mindedness, intercultural sensitivity, empathy, and tolerance for ambiguity were highlighted as the key characteristics of openness. On the other

hand, strength was seen by Kim (2001) as the ability to incur and overcome shocks coming from the external environment and included characteristics such as resilience, hardiness, persistence, risk-taking, patience, and resourcefulness. Echoing Kim's (2001) adaptive personality traits, Anderson' (1994, p. 313) highlighted the 'engines' which encourage forward movement resulting in a positive cross-cultural adaptation. These were: (1) willingness to open oneself up to new cultural influences; (2) a willingness to face obstacles head on; and (3) resolve and not run away. These three engines were seen as being fuelled by time and peer support. Different individual-level personal characteristics were thus found to interact with one's cross-cultural adaptation process.

Another personality trait which received substantial attention in cross-cultural adaptation studies included the construct of self-efficacy. Originally developed in the field of social-cognitive theory by Bandura (1977), it refers to a person's belief that he/she can perform a certain activity. An individual's sense of self-efficacy can be derived from personal experiences of mastery, vicarious experiences from observing others, verbal persuasion by knowledgeable others, or from physiological feedback. Even though self-efficacy relates to a personality trait, it is through the social specific arrangements that a person acquires it. Previous studies in cross-cultural adaptation literature found empirical support for higher self-efficacy relationship with an easier cross-cultural adaptation (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). Females were found to be less likely to take on challenging tasks (De Pater et al., 2009), while Schuck (1998) identified that age had a negative impact on self-efficacy in the cross-cultural adaptation process. Kosic et al. (2006) and De Saissy (2009) also found that low self-efficacy was related to the feelings of marginalisation by immigrants. Thus

understanding the role of personality traits in one's process of cross-cultural adaptation can offer some interesting insights.

Apart from the personal characteristics, cross-cultural adaptation process research has also examined the role of demographic and other background factors of an individual. Among these were age (De Saissy, 2009), gender roles (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992), and family status (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Cummings et al., 2004; Ryan, 2007). Espin (2006) ascertained that men and women may undergo a different cross-cultural adaptation process. This was attributed to the culturally embedded gender division roles within a family, especially when there are children. Fostering family traditions in a host country may become difficult for immigrants during their cross-cultural adaptation process, especially if such practices are not supported by the host culture (Roopnarine and Krishnakumar, 2006). Immigrant parents were also found to want their children to adhere to their views of culture-related values and behaviours which may become problematic as children adapt to the new cultural values, while their parents see them as a threat (Dion, 2006). Finally, studies in cross-cultural adaptation literature also focused on the impact of race and religion. For example the theoretical construct of cultural distance (Hofstede, 2001) was used to explain the difficulties which may stem from being from a different racial and religious background (Lewis, 2002). Different racial and religious backgrounds have been found as becoming pronounced within the inter-group relations of immigrants and host country population (cf. Section 2.3.4).

Endowment with human capital was also researched in relation to the process of cross-cultural adaptation. According to the human capital theory and its related developments (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1993; Firkin, 2003) individual's human capital encompasses formal

and non-formal education, work experience, industry experience, and entrepreneurial experience. Studies within the literature on cross-cultural adaptation found that the level and the relevance of one's human capital can either positively or negatively contribute to an individual's experience of cross-cultural and economic adaptation. Kim (2001) saw higher level of human capital positively associated with one's openness about new cultures. Nee and Sanders (2001) found that those with lower or less relevant human capital in a host country experienced more difficulties in their economic adaptation, while those who attained some education in a host country were seen as less disadvantaged. Thus the previous studies found the relevance of one's human capital level to the cross-cultural adaptation process.

Related to the notion of human capital are one's communication competencies (Mora and Davilla, 2005). Kim (2001) argued that language is not only the (1) knowledge of verbal and written words but also encompasses other (2) paralinguistic features (such as voice tone, non-verbal behaviour), and (3) the underlying tacit communication rules (timing, when is the right time to speak, which relate to the former two parts of communication). Agar (1994) applied the term 'languaculture' to emphasise the interrelatedness of language and culture. Communication styles were also highlighted as differing along the Hofstede's (1991) individualism-collectivism dimension. This means that while individuals learn the hidden cultural meanings during their socialisation process, different communication rules generally apply in a host country (Hall, 1976). These under the surface communication rules can be learnt over time through communication with the host members. Previous studies also found that confidence in communicating, rather than language competency alone (Chiswick and Miller, 2003; Martinovic et al., 2009), made the cross-cultural adaptation process easier (Yang et al., 2006; Oguri and Gudykunst, 2002). Berry et al. (2002) found that those

immigrants who perceived themselves as more integrated, applied both languages in interaction with their home and host social networks. Thus it is not only a language competency that interacts with the cross-cultural adaptation experience, but also one's confidence, use of a particular communication style, and learning of more hidden meanings.

Previous theoretical and empirical studies focused on determining those personal predispositions which impact on the cross-cultural adaptation process in a host country. Personal predispositions are also relevant in one's economic adaptation through entrepreneurship (cf. Chapter 3.4.2). Even though the evidence is sometimes inconsistent, certain patterns with regards to personal predispositions may be seen. However, personal predispositions alone do not interact with the course of the cross-cultural adaptation, rather they present only one part of this process.

#### **2.3.4. Inter-Group Relations**

The attention of another group of academic studies has been directed to studying interpersonal factors such as social network supports that immigrants utilise while in a host country. These studies have mostly focused on the role and nature of interactions with those of common nationality, other immigrants, host culture members but also those who are located in their home countries.

Studies on the nature and role of social relationships often draw from the theoretical construct of social capital. Social capital was defined as *'the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships*

*possessed by an individual or social unit'* (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; p. 243). Granovetter's (1973, 1983) network theory and related developments in the field saw strong ties as those with one's close family, while weak ties were defined as those with a wider set of acquaintances. In this context, bonding social capital is seen as strengthening strong ties, while bridging social capital builds connections between different groups (Narayan, 1999; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000). While strong family bonding ties were found as offering emotional support, it was the strength of weak ties that was identified as beneficial for its bridging benefits between different groups.

Studies within cross-cultural adaptation literature saw communication with the host culture members as beneficial even though it may be problematic for some, especially due to language competency difficulties and cultural differences. However, Kim (2001) advocated the benefits of such communication as individuals learn and internalise the verbal and non-verbal meanings of the host culture which then facilitate their cross-cultural adaptation. Social communication with the host culture thus occurs on a macro level through media and on an inter-personal level through face to face communication (Adelman, 1988; Omeri and Atkins, 2002). However, empirical studies also found that the relationships with local networks take a more superficial form. Ong and Ward (2005) found that local networks were predominantly used for the facilitation of work and leisure related tasks rather than for more closer and emotional assistance. Thus the social interaction with the host population was found to provide mixed outcomes.

Related to the issue of perceived cultural differences between the members of the host society and immigrants are studies which document negative views of the immigrant groups. Racism, discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice forms of negative outgroup views have



been investigated extensively (Sheepers et al., 2002; Dustmann and Preston, 2004; Cuddy et al., 2007). Tajfel and Turner's (1979) In-group/Out-group attribution theory also explains the dichotomy between the positive/negative feelings toward in-group/outgroup. Montreuil and Bourhis (2001) further found that the host culture's attitudes can vary depending whether a certain immigrant group is considered as 'valued' or 'devalued'. Whether a certain immigrant group is seen as valued or devalued depends on the nature of their contact with the members of the host culture, and the perceived similarities, and differences. One explanation for such negative attitudes derives from the group conflict theory (Blalock, 1967). Pettigrew (2006) summarised some of the reasons for the perceived threat of certain immigrant groups such as prior experience with immigration, multiple distinguishing characteristics (such as language, religion and common appearance), the speed of entry, cultural similarities or dissimilarities, and economic and political situation of both countries. Meuleman et al. (2009) found that within Europe, attitude changes were related to ethnic group size and unemployment levels in host countries. Such attitudes between host population and immigrants have been also characterised by their temporary nature. For example, Bhatia (2007) examined how the attitudes towards Indian Sikhs in the US dramatically changed in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Thus the nature of social interaction between the host population and different immigrant groups have been shown to be mixed, influenced by the dynamics of the historical and temporal factors.

The role of co-immigrant social networks in the process of cross-cultural adaptation has also been investigated in the previous studies. These social networks are often seen as providing informational, emotional, material, and practical support (Nee and Sanders, 2001) as similar experiences of cross-cultural adaptation, and common home background are shared. The

presence of strong family ties has been found as beneficial for individuals. Granoveter (1983) discussed a strong social network as one having multiple links, a high level of intensity and a high degree of frequency over a longer time period. Such networks were thus seen as enabling immigrants to maintain their cultural values and traditions as well as their sense of belonging, self-esteem and security (Kim, 2001). The importance and role of the close nuclear family over time has been examined in the previous literature, mostly for its role to sustain home cultural values and a sense of security over time (Birman and Taylor-Ritzler, 2007). Berry et al. (2006) pointed out that within cross-cultural adaptation, family members may adapt different strategies. While Georgras et al. (2006) studied families in 30 different countries which illuminated the differences within family dynamics across countries, studies seeking to understand the dynamics of family relationships during a cross-cultural adaptation process are less common.

While the value of other co-immigrant networks was found to be similarly supportive, selection criteria for interaction with certain types of immigrants than others was also found, such as similar social class or educational level (Kim, 2001). However, other studies show that exclusive co-immigrant social interaction may act in a counter-productive way. Holding on to one's own home identity without adapting to the host culture was found to result in an inadequate cross-cultural adaptation, and experiencing of psychological instability when dealing with the host population, thus producing an 'insulating effect' (Kim, 2001; Sabar, 2002). Thus while co-immigrant networks were found to provide initial support, over reliance on these networks was found to possibly hinder cross-cultural adaptation process.

Transnational social networks studies have become more prominent in recent years in areas of international business, economic geography, and cross-cultural adaptation (Portes et al., 2002; Olofsson and Ohman, 2007; Ley, 2009) as a result of globalisation. Even though maintaining communication between two countries is not new and was characteristic of middleman minorities in prior research (Bonacich, 1973), the advancement in technology and globalisation have changed its nature (Vertovec, 2006). Basch et al. (1994) first defined the term as the processes in which immigrants seek to sustain social relationships between the host and home country. Transnational social contact and the exchange of information is seen as much easier and more common in a globalised, technologically advanced world. Such social ties do not only provide emotional support and information exchange but also foster further migration and business links between different spaces and places (Tsuda, 1999; Portes, 2007).

The discussion of the relevant theoretical and empirical evidence pointed out that inter-group social relations within the context of cross-cultural adaptation have been widely debated. However, this area has not been sufficiently addressed within the context of nascent entrepreneurial process pursued by immigrants within their economic adaptation (cf. Chapter 3.5). Interactions within co-immigrant and host population networks have been attributed with different properties and characteristics, which frequently may be contradictory in nature (Kim, 2001). While co-immigrant networks were found to provide emotional support for individual immigrants, at the same time they may hinder the process of cross-cultural adaptation. The nature of the interaction with the host population was also found to be somewhat conflicting as such interaction was found to facilitate cross-cultural adaptation but was also found to contain negative characteristics of prejudice, stereotyping and

discrimination. The wider context in which these relationships take place inter-relate with the nature of such relationships. Thus inter-group social relations dynamics would differ between countries with long-standing immigration (such as the U.S. or the UK) to other countries where immigration is still a relatively new phenomenon (such as Ireland) (cf. Chapter 4 for specific dynamics of the Irish context). As research on intra-group dynamics of immigrants and host population in Ireland is limited (Moriarty, 2005; Bobek et al., 2008), this research will be able to uncover some of this context specific interactions.

### **2.3.5. CHANGING OF THE CULTURAL IDENTITY POSITIONS DURING THE PROCESS OF CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION**

The issue of cultural identities has received substantial research attention (Berry, 1986; 2005; Bennett, 1993; Anderson, 1994; Kim, 2001; 2008). Influenced by other fields such as social psychology (Tajfel et al., 1971), the research in the area of cultural identity changes encompasses both individual level and group level influences. Inevitably, cultural identity forms a part of an individual identity which is embedded and influenced by social surroundings in which one exists. The nature of adopted cultural identities interacts with the process of cross-cultural adaptation (Cislo, 2008).

Cross-cultural adaptation studies have largely focused on examining the changes that result in one's cultural identity position as a result of migration. Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory proposed that both the subjective and social identity of an individual are formed from the influences of the groups where one belongs. Cultural identities, which are also referred to as ethnic identities, are studied from different angles. Some examine the cultural identity from the host country's perspective and measure it as the level of commitment to the values

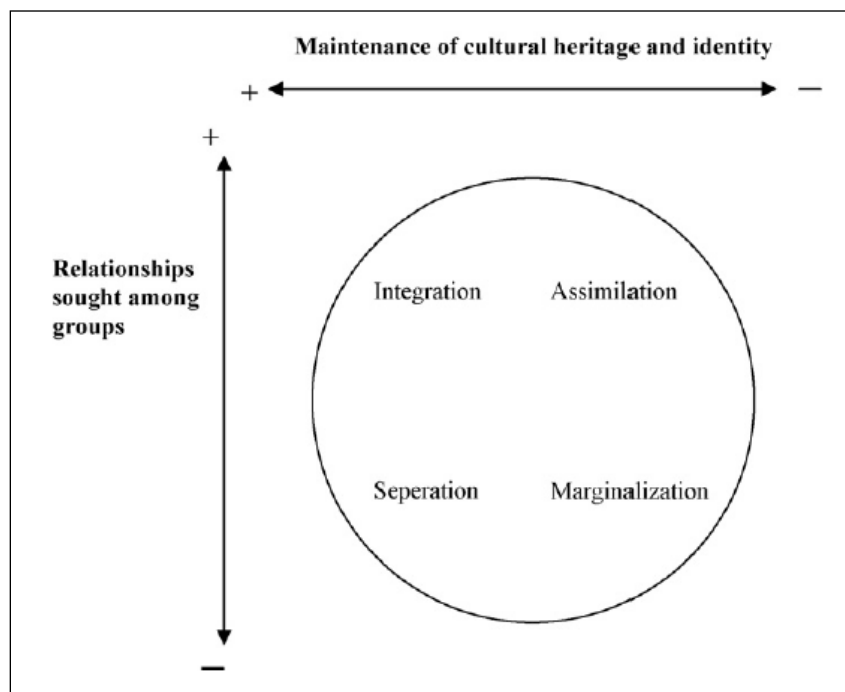
of the host culture (Ullah, 1985). Another stream of research approaches cultural identity changes in terms of an immigrant's origin (Laroche et al., 2005), while the third group views cultural identity changes as a combination of both approaches (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2008). Constant et al. (2009) constructed a term of 'ethnosizer' which relates to the changing identities of immigrants based on their perception of commitment level to their home culture and the host country culture. Personal motivation to certain cultural identity, self-esteem changes in relation to adopting a certain identity, and identity switching issues were also subjected to theorising and empirical investigations (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Berry, et al., 2002; Lopez, 2008). Kim (2001) used the term intercultural personhood as a more inclusive and broader meaning which does not imply any specific cultural attributes. Instead, it encompasses different cultural elements, resulting in a broader and evolving identity of an immigrant. Thus changing cultural identity positions of immigrants were addressed from different standpoints.

The phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation is considered as a dynamic process rather than a static examination of a number of variables. Therefore integrative theories put the individual variables into process-based conceptual models and theories which enable a better understanding of their mutual relationships and dynamics of changing cultural identity positions. The early theories examining individuals' perceptions and cultural identity changes such as the culture shock theory (Oberg, 1960), or the U-curve hypothesis (Lysgaard, 1955), were criticised for lacking empirical support (Hottola, 2004). For example, in Ward et al.'s (1998) study of cross-cultural adaptation of Japanese students in New Zealand, the sample experienced the most problems at an entry stage. Even though the U-curve hypothesis has been disproved and amended to a multi-wave diagram (Harrell, 1994),

changes in one's cultural identities were found to be subjective, rather than following a common trajectory.

One of the theories attracting substantial attention within the cross-cultural adaptation literature is Berry's (1986) acculturation theory. Coming from a social psychological perspective, Berry (1986; 1997; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2009) proposed and subsequently amended a heuristic model of immigrant acculturation strategies which is illustrated in Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3 – Four Acculturation Strategies of Immigrants**



Source: Berry, 2008

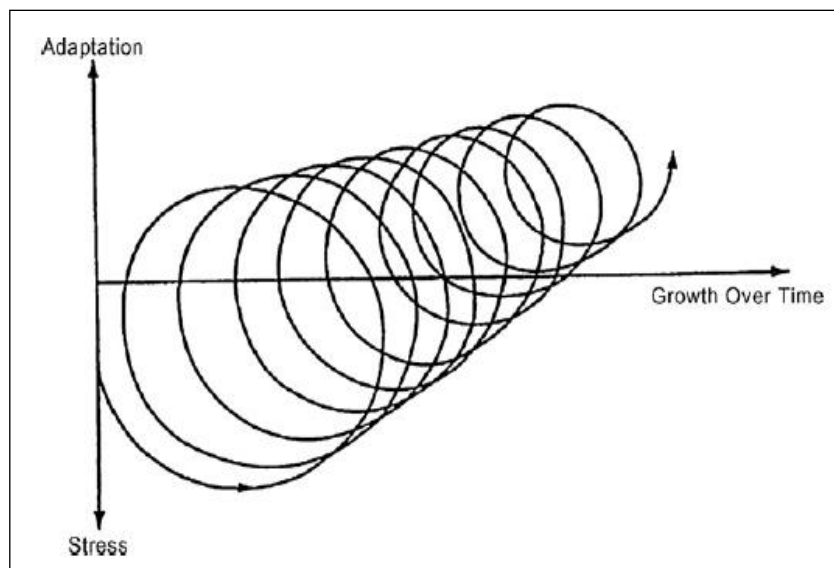
This model incorporates the cross-cultural adaptation strategies of culturally related positions (or acculturation as Berry refers to it) of immigrants. According to this theory, immigrants must confront two important issues – the extent to which they wish to maintain their own

cultural identity and secondly the degree of contact they wish to have with the members of the host culture. Consistent with the previous discussion, Berry's (2008) model takes into consideration variables such as: (1) acculturation attitudes (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation); (2) cultural identity (ethnic identity affirmation versus host culture identity affirmation); (3) language proficiency and language use; (4) ethnic and national peer contact; (5) perceived discrimination; and (6) adaptation (psychological and socio-cultural).

As a result of the interaction of these variables, cross-cultural adaptation strategies resulting in changing cultural identity positions emerge. Those who adopt the cultural identity position of *integration*, reflect the wish to maintain their original cultural values while adopting the key elements of the host majority culture. The *assimilation* cultural identity position relinquishes most aspects of the home culture while adopting the majority cultural values. The *separation* cultural identity is characterised by maintaining one's own cultural position and rejecting the cultural values of the majority society. Finally, the *marginalisation* cultural identity position means that individuals are ambivalent and somewhat excluded from their home culture and the host culture. The 'ideal' type of a cultural identity position is considered by Berry (2005) as integration but the reality may be very different. Some studies using this model produced inconsistent results. Schwartz and Zamboanga's (2008) study results did not fit the four Berry categories well. Lara et al. (2005) criticised the limited scope of methodologies and measurement scales validity, while Rudmin (2006; 2009) proposed an alternative model of acculturation. The model was also criticised for its lack of dynamic nature as immigrants often engage in different cultural identity positions depending on the situational context (Bhatia and Ram, 2009).

Kim (1998; 2001; 2008) proposed the notion of intercultural personhood which encompasses the complex and evolving nature of one's cultural identity within the cross-cultural adaptation process. It is based on an open-systems theory which sees each individual 'not as a rather static package of more or less stable internal structure, but as a dynamic and self-reflexive system that observes itself and renews itself as it continuously interacts with the environment (Kim, 2001, p. 35). In this view, (1) humans have an innate self-organising drive and a capacity to adapt to environmental changes, (2) this adaptation occurs through communication, and (3) adaptation is a complex and dynamic process that brings about a qualitative transformation of the individual. Figure 2.4 illustrates the Stress-Adaptation Growth Dynamic Model developed by Kim (2001).

**Figure 2.4 - The Stress-Adaptation Growth Dynamic**



Source:

Kim, 2001

Kim (2001; 2008) saw that during the process of adaptive change, individuals encounter a certain level of stress. This stress or conflict relates to the perceived need for cross-cultural adaptation (push of the new culture) and the resistance to deculturation (pull of the home culture). The resulting disequilibrium and stress result in cross-cultural adaptation and growth over time. Rather than being



linear, it is cyclical in nature so with every stressful experience a step backward is taken, while every positive encounter within the host culture means a step forward.

Kim's (2001) theory of acculturation-deculturation process and the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic view of changing cultural identity positions during the cross-cultural adaptation process was applied in subsequent empirical studies. For example, Milstein (2005) related the increased level of self-efficacy to the positive perception of the cross-cultural adaptation process of the U.S. students in Japan. Other studies in this area (Bennett, 1993; Konig, 2009; Bhatia and Ram, 2009) advocated the shift from the end-state focus theoretical models (Berry, 2005) to a more process-based dynamic and changing notion of cross-cultural adaptation. Individuals who emigrate from one culture into another were seen as constantly negotiating and alternating between two or more cultural identity positions (La Fromboise et al., 1993). Bennett (1993) responded to the dynamic nature of the ongoing process of living on cultural margins by emphasising it as encapsulated and constructive marginality (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2 – Responses to Living on Cultural Margins**

<b>Encapsulated Marginal</b>	<b>Constructive Marginal</b>
Disintegration in shifting cultures Loose boundary control Difficulty in decision-making Alienation Self-absorption No recognised reference group Multiplistic Conscious of self Troubled by ambiguity Never 'at home'	Self-differentiation Well-developed boundary control Self as choice maker Dynamic in-betweenness Authenticity Marginal reference group Commitment within relativism Conscious of choice Intrigued by complexity Never not 'at home'

Source: Adapted from Bennett (1993)

These two cultural identity positions indicate that an encapsulated marginal does not respond positively to their existence in a bicultural environment. This stance can lead to unhappiness, lack of integration and feelings of otherness, and the lack of belongingness. On the other hand, a constructive marginal responds in a transcultural way, encompassing both cultures. Konig (2009) expanded this view by putting forward the preference of the term 'in-between' as the term 'marginal' implies negative connotations. Thus moving between encapsulated in-betweenness to constructive in-betweenness is seen as a dynamic and complex issue which is shaped by one's own cultural identity, host culture's responses, cultural distance between the two cultures, the length and number of migration experiences, but is also affected by psychological states (such as stress, self confidence), and demographical characteristics (such as age, race, religion, gender or marital status). Bhatia and Ram (2009) emphasised that cross-cultural adaptation in a globalised world is characterised by its complex, dynamic, and ever-changing nature, rather than progressing in a linear manner from A to B. So while an individual may feel as integrated at one moment, based on their experiences with the socio-cultural and political environment of both host and home countries, they may temporarily feel marginalised or separated.

Thus in this view, the cross-cultural adaptation process and one's own cultural identity positions are seen as a fluid and changing concept of identities, rather than as some end state which immigrants may achieve either consciously or sub-consciously. While Berry's (2005) 'acculturation strategies' are seen as helpful in elucidating the nature of cross-cultural adaptation, they should not be taken as the end of the process, rather as constantly evolving and dynamic ways one may be feeling in a particular situation within the specific context. Similarly, Kim's (2001) view of intercultural personhood and Bennett's (1993) concept of

the encapsulated and constructive marginal are also useful in explaining the different push and pull variables which shape one's cultural identity positions within a cross-cultural adaptation process. Rather than viewing a certain individual as adopting one or another cross-cultural adaptation form, the cross-cultural adaptation process should be viewed as an ongoing and complex interaction between the individual's predispositions, inter-group relations, and the transcultural place and space of home and host countries. Such a dynamic nature of the cross-cultural adaptation process would then inevitably interact with the economic adaptation process of immigrants, particularly their nascent entrepreneurial journey. However, the interactive connection between these two processes has not been significantly addressed in previous nascent immigrant entrepreneurship studies (cf. Chapter 3.5), which is the primary focus of this research. Both processes are characterised by their dynamic, complex and multi-layered nature, with intertwined relationships and processes.

### **2.3.6. Other Theories Explaining Cross-Cultural Adaptation Process**

Other theories from related fields have also been used to explain the process of cross-cultural adaptation. If the cross-cultural adaptation is constructed in terms of overcoming the anxiety from losing familiar signs and symbols of one's culture (such as the concept of the culture shock), the psychology of loss and grief could be also used to explain this process (Averill, 1968; Bonanno and Kaltman, 2001). However, while the analogy between grief and cross-cultural adaptation may be true in some cases, Furnham and Bochner (1982) pointed out the possible limitation of this approach as it assumes that all immigrants experience negative, grief-like emotions, which is not always the case. Even though this approach recognises individual and cultural differences in the expression of grief, it generally cannot predict what

types of people suffer more or less grief, over what time period and what form the grief may take.

It could be argued that immigrants' cross-cultural adaptation trajectories also interrelate to how they assess and compare their temporal selves (current selves and future selves). Theoretical and empirical investigations within the literature on cross-cultural adaptation have addressed the issues of in-group and out-group comparisons and identification but they did not address temporary comparisons of self/future self. Theories, particularly from social psychology field can be thus helpful in understanding these processes better, such as self-regulation theory (Kanfer, 1990; Vancouver, 2005), personal strivings theory (Emmons, 1986) and temporal self- and temporal group- comparisons (Wilson and Ross, 2000; 2003). Self-regulation theory explains the process of how desired self is achieved. This involves processes such as informational input, self-evaluation, instigation of change, planning, implementation, and plan evaluation (Miller and Brown, 1991). This theory has been used in areas such as organisational settings (Vancouver, 2000) and addictive behaviour (Neal and Carey, 2004). Personal strivings (Emmons, 1986) are seen as general goals that define what a person wants to do in their life and these are accomplished through certain behaviour. Neal and Carey (2004) gave an example of a personal striving of wanting to do well in school which would be subsequently achieved through subordinate behaviour such as changed study habits and class attendance.

Wilson and Ross' (2000) temporal-self appraisal theory and other related developments may add further insights into how individuals appraise their temporal selves. Radersdoff and Guimond (2006) distinguished between two ways of comparison as (1) the temporal-self

comparisons on an intrapersonal level when individuals compare their selves over time, and (2) the temporal group comparisons when a target of a comparison is a social group. Wilson and Ross (2001) found that motivation to maintain and/or enhance a positive self-regard can lead to derogation of past in some ways as individuals distance themselves from their failures. Newby-Clark and Ross (2003) further found that even though people in their study recalled both highs and lows of their past, they primarily associated their future selves in positive terms. These additional theories from social psychology could add additional explanatory power to what happens during the course of the cross-cultural adaptation and the nascent entrepreneurial journey of the study participants.

#### **2.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined the key theoretical themes and debates within the literature on the cross-cultural adaptation. The definitional boundaries of what constitutes the term of immigrant and cross-cultural adaptation were pointed out, clarifying how these terms are applied in the context of the present study. Secondly, the key themes within the cross-cultural adaptation literature were addressed, concerning emigration and return migration, group level cultural differences, personal predispositions, inter-group relationships interactions, and dynamics of changing cultural identities. While debated separately, all of these theoretical constructs are seen as vital parts of the ongoing cross-cultural adaptation process.

The research in the cross-cultural adaptation literature points out that the cross-cultural adaptation process is an ongoing, dynamic, cyclical, and constantly changing experience. It is also context and situation specific where the process (rather than a destination in a form of

a specific cross-cultural adaptation strategy) is the point. While the literature examined the cross-cultural adaptation process on both the group and individual levels, it is the latter that concerns this study. Kim (2001) pointed out the need for more research on the process of the cross-cultural adaptation, and the changing intercultural identities on a qualitative, longitudinal base. As an immigrant strives to live and cope with the changes transpiring from existing in dual contexts of the old and new, past and present and imagined futures, capturing such a process can aid one's understanding of this phenomena and its interaction with other aspects of one's lives. Within the context of the present study, the importance of the ongoing and dynamic cross-cultural adaptation process is recognised. Cross-cultural adaptation process dynamics are seen as acting together with the economic adaptation and nascent entrepreneurial pursuit of immigrants. An understanding of the process of the cross-cultural adaptation trajectories of the participants and the process of their nascent entrepreneurial activities within the context of their economic adaptation are seen as two interrelated, rather than two separate processes. Together, they are seen as being capable of adding a theoretical, explanatory power to the process of nascent entrepreneurship pursued by individual immigrants. Thus the participants' nascent entrepreneurial journey cannot be fully understood without comprehending their cross-cultural adaptation dynamics (Singh and DeNoble, 2004).

The next chapter addresses the key theoretical and thematic developments within the literature on nascent entrepreneurship and nascent immigrant entrepreneurship in particular. It also identifies the missing link between the cross-cultural adaptation and the nascent immigrant entrepreneurship studies. It is within this less understood domain that this research seeks to make its contribution.

## CHAPTER THREE

### UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC ADAPTATION OF IMMIGRANTS THROUGH THEIR NASCENT ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

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#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

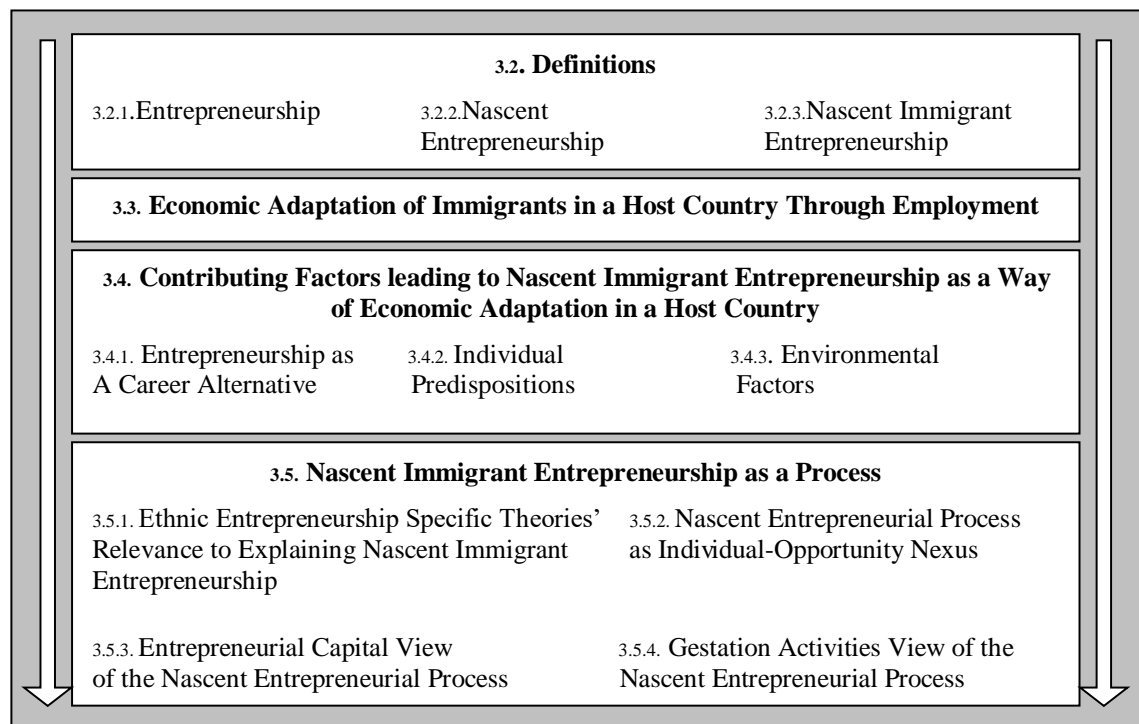
The preceding chapter set out the theoretical and empirical considerations of the cross-cultural adaptation process which is seen as intrinsic to understanding the nascent entrepreneurial process that is undertaken by immigrants in this study. This chapter discusses the relevant theoretical themes within nascent entrepreneurship, drawing theories from both immigrant specific and general entrepreneurship fields. It also points out the theoretical gaps between the writings on nascent immigrant entrepreneurship and cross-cultural adaptation literature.

There is a lack of studies which combine the cross-cultural adaptation process with the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants (Singh and DeNoble, 2004). Studies in the general domain of immigrant entrepreneurship have previously incorporated cultural variables but these have often been applied in a more static form and largely on a group level comparison bases (Basu and Attinay, 2002). The traditional immigrant specific theories seem to unravel the issues of nascent entrepreneurial activities of immigrants only partially as they approach this cohort mostly from a disadvantage point of view (Light and Gold, 2000). In this view, immigrant entrepreneurs are seen as primarily operating within their own co-immigrant domain of ethnic enclaves and ethnic economies, rarely considering the possibility of broader orientation of these entrepreneurs. Transnational entrepreneurship is one

exception as it takes into consideration the transnational co-ethnic linkages which are then applied in entrepreneurial activities (Drori et al., 2005). The specific literature on nascent immigrant entrepreneurship seems to be even more disjointed in this regard. Even when constituents to the emergence of a new venture are considered, the cultural variables are often limited, predominantly applied in a post-hoc manner.

Theories coming from a general entrepreneurship domain may be seen as more useful in uncovering the specific nascent entrepreneurial activities of immigrants in this study. In particular, the individual-opportunity nexus and its related developments (Shane and Venterkarman, 2001), the entrepreneurial capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Firkin, 2001, 2003), and the process studies examining the gestation activities that individuals engage in during the process of their nascent entrepreneurial journey, are seen as a useful viewing lens for this research. The outline of the discussion of this chapter is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1 – Discussion Outline of Chapter Three**



Source: Author



This chapter first sets out the definitional boundaries of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship. Secondly, theoretical and empirical views of immigrants' economic adaptation in terms of employment are presented, before reviewing the contributing factors leading to entering the nascent entrepreneurial process. Current immigrant specific entrepreneurial theories are then critically discussed. Finally, theoretical views of the nascent entrepreneurial process coming from the general entrepreneurship domain are addressed.

## **3.2. DEFINITIONS**

Prior to discussing the relevant theories within the field of nascent entrepreneurship and its related advances in the immigrant domain, it is firstly essential to specify the key terms. It is not the definitions alone that are important, but also the boundaries of these definitions. In other words, while it is vital to outline what is included in these definitions which frame the research, it is equally important to say what is excluded from them. By doing this, the clarity will be achieved while avoiding any possible ambiguity.

### **3.2.1. Entrepreneurship**

'Throughout intellectual history as we know it, the entrepreneur has worn many faces, and played many roles' (Hebert and Link, 1988, p. 152). In spite of entrepreneurship writings spreading for over 200 years, the concept remains fragmented. Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted phenomenon (Low and Macmillan, 1988) that spreads across many disciplines such as the economics, sociology, finance, history, psychology, organisational behaviour, strategic management, population ecology, relational science, and anthropology (for example

Low and Macmillan, 1988; Bygrave and Hofer, 1991; Gartner et al., 1992; Virtanen, 1997; Shane, 2003; Drori et al., 2009). The interdisciplinary approach to explaining entrepreneurship can be helpful but borrowing methods and theories from other fields could run a danger that entrepreneurship would be driven by these disciplines (Low and MacMillan, 1988; Bygrave, 1989). There has been a calling for a more focused development of the entrepreneurship field in order to avoid the ‘catchall’ treatment of the discipline (Davidson et al., 2001).

As the field of entrepreneurship evolves and moves forward, there is an ever increasing need to establish definitional boundaries. Gartner (1989) proposed that asking who is an entrepreneur is the wrong question. Rather, entrepreneurship is about creating new organisations. This viewpoint took the focus away from the characteristic based studies to a more process oriented way of studying what entrepreneurs do. While there have been ongoing intellectual debates about defining entrepreneurship (Gartner, 1985; Timmons, 1994; Gartner, 2001; Low, 2001; Davidsson, 2005), it is beyond the scope of this review to consider them in detail. This study adopts a definition which focuses on areas which are distinctive about entrepreneurship as put forward by Shane and Venkataraman (2000) and summarised by Shane (2003, p. 4):

...the academic field of entrepreneurship incorporates, in its domain, explanations for why, when and how entrepreneurial opportunities exist; the sources of those opportunities and the forms that they take; the processes of opportunity discovery and evaluation; the acquisition of resources for the exploitation of these opportunities; the act of opportunity exploitation; why, when and how some individuals and not others discover, evaluate, gather resources for and exploit opportunities; the strategies used to pursue opportunities; and the organising efforts to exploit them.

This definition incorporates the complex interplay between the individual and the external influences which impact on the entrepreneurial behaviour (Dyer, 1994). It recognises that there is a variation in the nature of opportunities and across the individuals who recognise

them. Furthermore, the willingness and the ability of individuals to act upon the opportunities plays its role in the entrepreneurial process. Consistent with other definitions of entrepreneurship, risk-bearing is a necessary part of the entrepreneurial process (Shane, 2003).

Davidsson (2005) further contributed to defining entrepreneurship by adding that failed and induced processes of a new venture creation should be also studied. This is an important improvement in the definition, as understanding unsuccessful nascent entrepreneurial processes is not only important in the academic sense but also in practice. The practical understanding of both successful and unsuccessful nascent processes can result in the design of government assistance, entrepreneurship programmes or policies aiding potential entrepreneurs to overcome certain impediments on successful firm birth.

Even though entrepreneurship may take different forms, this study focuses on the individual level processes of creating a new venture. Entrepreneurship is also seen as synonymous with self-employment as both activities involve creating new ventures as opposed to employment (Lazear, 2002; Wagner, 2004). The key focus lies on the nascent entrepreneurial activities within the entrepreneurial process with a purpose of one's future economic and social advancement. These definitional boundaries fit well with the present study's longitudinal focus on the individuals' processes, actions and interactions involved in their nascent entrepreneurial activities.

### **3.2.2. Nascent Entrepreneurship**

Consistent with the definitional boundaries of entrepreneurship, one of the key areas of investigation within this field is concerned with the emergence of new ventures and studying of what entrepreneurs do during this pre-venture process (Gartner, 1989). This pre-venture birth stage is often characterised by its somehow chaotic and disorderly nature (Acs and Audretsch, 2005; Lichtenstein et al., 2007). Reynolds and White (1992) first conceptualised a nascent entrepreneur as someone who undergoes a series of activities which are intended to result in a viable start-up. Thus a nascent entrepreneur is someone whose attempts may or may not result in a new venture birth (Davidsson, 2005).

Before examining the engagement of individuals in the process of creating a new venture in detail, it is necessary to define and understand the different stages of an entire entrepreneurial process. This dynamic process can be divided into two major phases which are: (1) the pre-venture latent phase, and (2) the actual venture phase after the venture is born. Within the pre-venture phase, a distinction exists between those individuals who would like to become self-employed within the next three years (aspiring entrepreneurs) and those who have actually taken some actions towards becoming self-employed (nascent entrepreneurs) (Reynolds, 1991; Reynolds et al., 2004; Davidsson, 2006; Henley, 2007). Reynolds et al. (2004) considered this move from the conception to the nascent activities as the first major transition in the entrepreneurial process. These steps or gestation activities (Reynolds, 2000) within the entrepreneurial opportunity exploitation process may include an inception of a business idea, saving financial resources to invest into a business venture, attending a business class or workshop, securing funding, or closing the first sale (Block and MacMillan,

1985; Reynolds and Miller, 1992; Gatewood et al., 1995; Carter et al., 1996; Reynolds et al., 2004). (cf. Section 3.5.4 for more detailed discussion of gestation activities). The characteristics specific to the Irish entrepreneurial context are detailed in Chapter 4 (cf. Section 4.3.1) and the characteristics specific to immigrant entrepreneurs in Ireland in Section 4.3.2.

Previous research on the nascent entrepreneurial process explored a number of possible outcomes. Carter et al. (1996) proposed three main outcomes of the nascent entrepreneurial process as: (1) started a business, (2) gave up the efforts, and (3) still trying to establish a new venture. Similarly, according to Reynolds et al. (2004) and Lichtenstein et al. (2007) there are four possible outcomes which are: (1) the creation of an infant firm, (2) the nascent entrepreneur can be still trying to start the business, (3) the start up effort can be put on hold with expectations of continuing to pursue the start up process later, and (4) the nascent entrepreneur can give up and abandon the start-up effort completely. Those who are unsuccessful at their nascent entrepreneurial efforts are typically re-absorbed back into paid employment (Davidsson, 2006). However, if a nascent entrepreneur becomes successful at exploiting their nascent activities, the second major transition, the firm birth, occurs. During the initial stages of a venture existence (the infancy stage), a new business establishes itself in the marketplace, puts together a team, strategy, organisational culture, and offers its products and/or services for sale (Bygrave, 1989). In spite of substantial academic attention given to established ventures, their strategies and growth, the context of the current study does not require to discuss this part of the entrepreneurial process further as it is not directly relevant to the presently studied phenomenon of the entrepreneurial efforts which occur prior to the firm birth.

Nascent entrepreneurship is seen as a process towards business emergence. Studying of this process is predominantly concerned with the examination of the nascent entrepreneurs' behaviours as they move either closer or further away from establishing a business venture. Nascent entrepreneurship is placed within a wider entrepreneurial process in its pre-venture birth phase. It is a dynamic part of the entrepreneurial process which involves individuals' engagement in recognising and exploiting of entrepreneurial opportunities. It is within these dynamic theoretical boundaries that the present research is set as it examines the particular nascent entrepreneurial trajectories of the participants.

### **3.2.3. Nascent Immigrant Entrepreneurship**

This research focuses on the nascent entrepreneurial activities of immigrants (cf. Chapter 2.2.1 for a definition of an immigrant). Within the entrepreneurship domain, wide definitional inconsistencies exist across studies which are concerned with this entrepreneurial cohort. While in some studies different terms are used interchangeably to refer the same group, in others, diverse criteria for identification are used.

In some countries, such as the UK, the term 'ethnic entrepreneurship' is used and as previously mentioned in the more general discussions about immigrants, ethnic entrepreneurs are also mostly defined from the Caucasian perspective (cf. Chapter 2.2.1). In some countries, such as the Netherlands, 'immigrant entrepreneurship' is used more prevalently (Kloosterman, 2003), while referring to the same cohort. This lack of one common term and the mixed application of definitions can be practically illustrated when

looking at a 'Handbook of Research on Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (Dana, 2007). In spite of the title containing words 'ethnic minority entrepreneurship', only one more contribution within the handbook contains this term (Smallbone et al., 2007). Apart from that, different terms are used by various contributors, such as ethnic entrepreneurship (Volery, 2007; Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2007; Zhou, 2007), minority entrepreneurship (Sahin et al., 2007; Kruse, 2007; Willis and Lee, 2007), migrant entrepreneurship (Sahin et al., 2007), and immigrant entrepreneurship (Brettell, 2007; Fertala, 2007; Kontos, 2007; Watts et al., 2007). This clearly shows definitional inconsistencies which exist within the field's domain.

However, in other studies, the terms 'ethnic' and 'immigrant' are used to refer to different groups of entrepreneurs. Typically, ethnic entrepreneurs are defined as operating within co-ethnic boundaries, satisfying the needs of their co-ethnic counterparts or they take advantage of their ethnic resources to trade between their host and home countries (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Light and Gold, 2000; Portes et al., 2002; Drori et al., 2005). More recently, a term transnational entrepreneurs has been applied in the literature, replacing the middleman minorities concept (Light, 1972; Drori et al., 2005; Light, 2007; Drori et al., 2009). Transnational entrepreneurs are seen as those, who started as immigrants and subsequently engaged in cross-border transactions, beyond their co-ethnic environment of a host country (Portes et al., 2002). Butler and Green (1997) used the term immigrant entrepreneurs to refer to those who recently arrived into the country and engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

In Ireland, the definitional confusion is similar, even though the pervasive use of 'ethnic entrepreneurship' is influenced by the UK writings in this area. For example, Emerge (2005)

defined ethnic minority entrepreneurs as those who come from the new accession member states (excluding the older EU 15 states), and those coming from third countries (non-EU) with a permission to remain in Ireland. This definition places additional legal restrictions on the term by excluding those who come from older EU member states, those who are in the process of obtaining residency, asylum seekers, or spouses of those with a permission to remain. Cooney and Flynn (2008) also applied similar restrictive definitional boundaries when they used the term 'ethnic entrepreneurs' in reference to disadvantaged groups of entrepreneurs in comparison with the host population. These definitions also exclude those who begin the process of a venture creation without a legal permission to remain in Ireland. It could be argued that these predetermined exclusionist definitions offer an incomplete view of the entrepreneurial activities undertaken by immigrants. The latest available study in the Irish context (Pinkowski, 2009) was broader as it defined immigrant entrepreneurs as those not born in Ireland.

Consistent with the previously reviewed literature on the cross-cultural adaptation (cf. Chapter 2), the latter terminology of the immigrant entrepreneur is applied in this study. In this definition, nascent immigrant entrepreneurs may or may not anticipate serving the needs of their co-ethnic communities in Ireland or their home countries. Instead, they may anticipate serving the needs of the majority or mixed population. Thus the definition adopted in this study does not approach nascent immigrant entrepreneurs from a disadvantaged point of view, rather it is more flexible and open. Whether they are disadvantaged or advantaged compared to the host entrepreneurial cohort is not defined from the study outset as the study does not attempt to compare immigrant nascent entrepreneurs with the host country nascent entrepreneurs. This is because the future entrepreneurial activities scope of the nascent



immigrant entrepreneurs cannot be predetermined or simply assumed. Instead, nascent immigrant entrepreneurs are defined by their foreign-born status and their subsequent cross-cultural adaptation process that they undergo in Ireland.

It is not an easy task to define what entrepreneurship is, as differences continue to exist across many disciplines. However, finding such a commonly accepted definition is not the purpose of this thesis. Rather, this research focuses on one area of entrepreneurship which has been generally agreed as one of the key topics in the area (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Acs and Audretsch, 2005; Davidsson, 2005) – nascent entrepreneurship. This involves an investigation of the dynamic process which is intended to result in a new firm birth. It focuses on what individuals do but it also takes into consideration the external environmental forces. As this research focuses on immigrants, their nascent entrepreneurial efforts are initiated in a host environment which further exerts both mundane and more significant disparities in this process. The qualitative methodology will be able to uncover these underlying dynamics between the nascent immigrant entrepreneurial and cross-cultural adaptation processes. Figure 3.2 summarises the term ‘nascent immigrant entrepreneur’ as applied in this study.

**Figure 3.2 – Summary of the Nascent Immigrant Entrepreneur Definition in the Present Study**

<b>NASCENT IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The distinguishing characteristic is that the individual was born and underwent his/her main socialisation process outside Ireland.</li><li>▪ The individual becomes involved in nascent entrepreneurial process which is geared towards becoming self-employed in Ireland.</li><li>▪ Anticipated business activities may or may not serve the needs of co-immigrant communities.</li></ul>

Source: Adapted from Literature Review

The following literature review focuses on identification of the core theoretical themes which are relevant in explaining the process of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship. This literature review also identifies those studies which join the nascent entrepreneurial field with the cross-cultural adaptation literature.

### **3.3. ECONOMIC ADAPTATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN A HOST COUNTRY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT**

Economic adaptation of immigrants in a host country may take different forms. Most notably, employment or self-employment forms are relevant to this study. Previous theoretical and empirical research in the area focused on the investigation of the complex factors which influence the career trajectories of immigrants. Human capital level and development, institutional forces, gender role differences, and intrapersonal social relations are some of the most discussed themes within the relevant literature. The interplay between these varied career and economic advancement influences may lead to a consideration of self-employment as an alternative path. As the participants in this study pursued both forms of economic adaptation, the relevant literature on immigrant employment is critically reviewed first, before discussing entrepreneurship as another way of an economic adaptation.

The research on immigrant career mobility has shed light on the career prospects of highly educated professionals from developing countries (Robinson and Carey, 2003), labour market prospects of immigrant women (Dale et al., 2002), and the career prospects of tied migrants such as spouses of those who are granted work permits (Cooke, 2001). Traditionally, the majority of the research in the UK has been focusing on the African and Asian immigrant groups but more recently, research on the migration patterns of the newly

accessed EU member states also emerged (Stenning and Dawley, 2009). Research in the Irish context also focuses on new accession EU member states' workers (Krings et al., 2009) and on workers from outside of the EU (MRCI, 2008).

The human capital theory (Becker, 1993) has been applied to explaining the different career trajectories of immigrants in a host country. The primary focus has been placed on examining the relationship between how an individual's human capital (in terms of formal education and relevant experience) is applied in career directions in a host country (Williams, 2009). It has been emphasised that the value of human capital (such as previous work experience and professional qualifications) is expressed through social and economic relationships in a particular social context (Williams et al., 2004). Others viewed human capital in a broader way in which other skills and capabilities (such as language skills and interpersonal communication) become valuable or may be developed during migration, thus enhancing career prospects (Dustmann, 1999). In this context, immigrants have been seen to forego the appropriate level career opportunities in favour of acquiring a potentially useful global language like English which would then enhance their future career prospects either in a host or home country. Related to this theme is a construct of compromised careers (Suto, 2009) and underemployment (Stenning and Dawley, 2009), concepts which partially explain the downward occupational mobility of educated immigrants despite the prior expectations that education, credentials, and other work experience gained in a home country could be transferred to a similar desirable employment opportunity in a host country.

Alternative views exist in relation to the role and application of human capital in a host country. In this view, it is the financial capital acquisition rather than human capital

development and application that drives immigrants along their employment paths in a host country (Williams et al., 2004). As Piore (1979) put forward, at least in the early stages of immigration, immigrants' employment trajectories may be viewed as closer to the neoclassical economics of *homo economicus* conception of human behaviour. The financial capital accumulation is then seen as being the primary concern as the immigrants' cultural identities and their future lives are seen by them as rooted in their home countries. So the 'work first' attitude of immigrant workers has been seen as another explanation of the possible downward career mobility in a host country (Green, 2007, p. 357).

Other theoretical and empirical studies show that the workforce reality for immigrants is far more complex than assumed by the 'supply side' human capital view of immigrants. Institutional forces such as government policies have been found to play a critical role in channelling immigrant employment trajectories (Ho and Alcorso, 2004; Hagan 2004; Hardy, 2009). In the recent European research, labour market flow changes as a result of the 2004 EU enlargement have been scrutinised. Within this complex institutional landscape, segmentation of labour markets, and over representation of certain immigrant groups in certain sectors and occupations have been noted (Wills et al., 2009). Central and Eastern European workers and in particular the Polish workers, have been increasingly researched in the UK (Anderson, et al., 2006; Burrell, 2008; Stenning and Dawley, 2009) and to a lesser extent in Ireland (Krings et al., 2009). Most notably, the changes as a result of the economic recession have been investigated in these latter studies. The career trajectories of immigrants are a complex process in which individual level differences and institutional forces are intertwined (cf. Chapter 4.2.4 for the Irish immigration policy overview).

When considering work-life balance and career trajectories of immigrant women, their family role and spousal relationships have been also considered in the theoretical developments in the literature on labour participation of immigrants. Again the human capital theory has been used to explain how family migration is often influenced by the career prospects of the breadwinner, who is predominantly male (Mincer, 1978; Boyle et al., 2001). The gender role theory (Shihadeh, 1991) has also been used to explain career differences of immigrant couples. Due to the traditionally perceived family roles of women, career trajectories in a host country are thus predominantly based on the career needs of a husband, while career aspirations of a woman are rarely taken into account (Cooke, 2001). The pressures of the childcare commitments, immigrant women's careers, need for family income, and the socialisation needs with others have been also considered in previous studies (Doorewaard et al., 2004). The degree of societal pressure and assertion of traditional female roles have also been found to be varied from one society to another (Blossfeld and Drobnic, 2001). In Ireland, Russell et al. (2009) found evidence of a high work-family conflict among women with young children. Women are generally underrepresented in the workforce but immigrant women have been found to be facing other challenges as a result of culturally-related gender roles division and the lack of social support with childcare responsibilities in a host country (Ho and Alcorso, 2004).

Intrapersonal interactions within immigrant groups and host population with regards to career experiences of immigrants have also been addressed by previous studies in this area. Substantial academic attention has been placed on the examination of the roles of social ties in locating an occupation in different industries (Portes, 1998; Waldinger and Lichter, 2003), and in particular the role of those of close kinship ties (Sanders and Nee, 1996). It was also

found that the lack of social connections to the more senior employees and local population may lead to reaching a glass ceiling which local workers can break through (Watson, 1996). Attitudes of employers and the majority population towards certain group of immigrant workers have been also investigated in relation to creating stereotypes and labeling of certain immigrant groups (Bhagat and London, 1999). Another related concept of ‘model minorities’ (Cheng and Thatchenkery, 1997) holds that certain immigrant groups such as the Chinese are seen as hardworking and loyal and therefore do not require special attention. However, in other studies, even though Polish workers were often perceived as a model minority in that they were seen as hard working and enthusiastic, exploitation of immigrant workers and driving down pay and conditions have been also noted (Stenning and Dawley, 2009; Krings et al., 2009). The literature examining the role of social networks in employment trajectories of immigrants have shown the mixed effect of the different types of networks.

Different theoretical approaches have been applied to explaining the employment trajectories of immigrants. Even though immigrants are found in highly qualified positions (Robinson and Carey, 2003), the more recent theories seem to highlight the economic advancement purpose of immigrant employment. In other words, empirical evidence explicates that immigrants may see their employment position in a host country in terms of earnings rather than necessarily in career advancement terms. The above discussion pointed out that social networks and institutional forces are also relevant when considering immigrant employment. Consistent with the cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants, these diverse forces may either facilitate or impede the course of employment of immigrants. Why do some immigrants decide to pursue the path of self-employment in a host country then? The following section discusses the key theoretical and empirical explanations addressing these issues.

### **3.4. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS LEADING TO NASCENT IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A WAY OF ECONOMIC ADAPTATION IN A HOST COUNTRY**

While the majority of immigrants participate in a labour market, a certain proportion may pursue their economic adaptation through entrepreneurship. Those immigrants, who consider self-employment, are at the centre of this study's investigation. The literature in this area offers different explanations as to why and how some immigrants enter the nascent entrepreneurial process. The key theoretical explanations come from the view of self-employment as an alternative to paid employment, while other theories point to the interaction of personal predispositions and environmental forces.

#### **3.4.1. Entrepreneurship as a Career Alternative**

Academic debates within the career and entrepreneurship literature have focused on explaining why immigrants pursue an entrepreneurial path. In this view, entrepreneurship is often seen as an alternative to paid employment. The decisions to leave paid employment have been mostly attributed to recognising an entrepreneurial opportunity or by the lack of adequate employment alternatives - a blocked upward mobility (Nohl et al., 2006). Both career and entrepreneurship theorists have been concerned with the career choices of immigrants (Dyer, 1994).

A number of studies focusing on the general population examined the choice between entrepreneurship and paid employment as a dynamic utility maximising response (Douglas and Shepherd, 2000; Levesque et al., 2002). These studies held that each preference is characterised by the level of income, work effort, risk, independence and other working

conditions, and the ultimate choice depends on the preference or aversion for each of these factors. Related to the career choice between employment and self-employment is the issue of opportunity cost that individuals consider over time when deliberating alternatives of their future economic adaptation (Cassar, 2006). In this view, the decision to remain in employment or pursue self-employment is not seen as static but involving ongoing considerations. Andersson and Wadensjö (2007) showed that unemployment decreases an opportunity cost of self-employment. If suitable employment arises during the course of unemployment, entrepreneurial activities may be abandoned as the opportunity cost increases. On the contrary, Burke et al. (2008) found that the early experience of unemployment does not affect the probability of self-employment, thus rejecting the popular unemployment push effect in their sample. The issue of income level was also considered in relation to opportunity cost. The hypothesis on income holds that those with higher income would be less likely to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities (Taylor, 1996) but Delmar and Davidsson's (2000) study did not support this finding. Thus the theoretical debate on the opportunity cost is relevant in that it shows that career decision making is complex, ongoing and dynamic.

Literature focusing on immigrants' choice of self-employment over paid employment offers additional theoretical and empirical insights. The disadvantage theory of immigrant self-employment suggests that pursuing entrepreneurship activities is a common response to blocked mobility in the mainstream labour market (Light, 1979). The level of resources that individuals hold has also been seen as being influential on the likelihood of self-employment. For example, Light and Gold (2000) argued that even those who are under-employed possess more resources than unemployed. Thus this resource-constraint variant of disadvantage



theory ascertains that even those who are disadvantaged require some resources to become self-employed. Immigrants were found to lack the same career opportunities as the host population as a result of the lack of skills and qualifications recognition (Nielsen et. al., 2004), communication problems (Baldock and Smallbone, 2003), and the discrimination in the labour market (Oc and Tiesdell, 1999) which led them towards self-employment path. Thus the disadvantage view of self-employment alternative to paid employment or unemployment holds that immigrants resort to self-employment as a way of economic and social mobility which they are denied in the primary labour market.

There are alternative views to the disadvantage hypothesis as to why immigrants decide to pursue entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment. Gatewood et al. (1995) and Carter et al. (2004) identified a number of positive reasons in favour of self-employment which included recognising of a market need, autonomy and independence, a desire to make more money, and a desire to use knowledge and experience. When examining immigrants' career choice, Sverko and Super (1995) found that independence and financial success reasons were universal regardless of the person's origin. However, Carter et al. (2002) found that while some career reasons for selecting entrepreneurship were similar across different groups of nascent entrepreneurs, the African group sought recognition, self-actualisation and innovation to a higher degree than those of a Caucasian origin, while those of Hispanic origin were more motivated by recognition and by role models. Carter et al.'s (2002) study also showed that high independence and great financial rewards were not as important as previous studies based on the samples of already established entrepreneurs with hindsight bias showed. Thus pursuing entrepreneurship with a view of exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities highlights another alternative view to self-employment choices of immigrants.

The theoretical approaches to explaining why immigrants choose the entrepreneurial route as a career alternative are helpful but they only deal with these issues partially. The self-employment decision of immigrants cannot be simply reduced to the push factors of the labour market versus pull factors of entrepreneurship (Clark and Drinkwater, 2002). Individual predisposition and institutional forces have been also examined in efforts to gain theoretical insights into such complex issues.

### **3.4.2. Individual Predispositions**

Some people become entrepreneurs, and others do not. Personality and psychological traits, and the demographic characteristics of individuals are also seen to exert an influence over those who recognise and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities and those who do not. In these studies, the general focus is to evaluate who the entrepreneurs are in terms of their characteristics and what distinguishes them from non-entrepreneurs (Brockhaus, 1980) as there is a belief that those who engage in entrepreneurship are not randomly determined (Shane, 2003). The majority of these predominantly quantitative studies have included samples of those who have either established a new venture or those who are close to doing so. Yet, other studies in this area have included those who are at an aspiring stage with intentions to start-up (Bird, 1988; Krueger and Carsrud, 1993), and also those at a nascent stage of the entrepreneurial process (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Carter et al., 2004). The academic attention of previous research has focused on understanding psychological traits and demographic characteristics which would explain the attributes of those more likely to become self-employed.

Some of the most debated and researched psychological factors which are seen to impact on the self-employment decision are outlined in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 - Summary of Individual Psychological Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Decision**

Psychological Factor	Characteristics
Need for Achievement ( <i>n</i> Ach)	Those with a higher <i>n</i> Ach should be more likely to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities than others (McClelland, 1962). In spite of criticism (Chell et al., 1991; Hansemark, 2003), and the lack of empirical support for <i>n</i> Ach, this motivational characteristic (in combination with other factors) is often attributed to entrepreneurs.
Risk-Taking Propensity	Entrepreneurs are more likely to have a higher risk-bearing propensity than non-entrepreneurs (McClelland, 1961; Palmer, 1971; Brockhaus, 1980; Miner and Raju, 2004). The calculated risk-taking of entrepreneurs is considered as one of the key traits in spite of the lack of agreement on the exact moderators and drivers.
Internal Locus of Control	It is a person's belief of influencing own environment rather than focusing on the external forces such as luck or fate (Rotter, 1966; Perry, 1989; Mueller and Thomas, 2001).
Self-Efficacy	It is an individual's belief in an ability to perform in a certain manner rather than actual skill or competency (Bandura, 1977; Boyd and Vozikis, 1994; Chandler and Jansen, 1997; Markman et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2007).
Over-confidence	It is a bias which leads individuals to a false belief in their judgments given the actual circumstances. While optimism promotes action and commitment, overconfidence leads people to follow their own judgement rather than taking into consideration information and advice of others (Bernardo and Welsh, 2001) and to misjudge the riskiness of actions (Busenitz, 1999). It was found to be high in case of black entrepreneurs (Koellinger and Minniti, 2006).
Other Psychological Factors	Desire for independence/autonomy, resistance of conformity, creativity, egoistic passion, tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, low need for support, intuition, and extraversion (for example Hornaday and Aboud, 1971; Sexton and Bowman, 1985; Timmons, 1994; Baron, 2000; Shane, 2003, Shane et al., 2003).

Source: Adapted from Literature Review

These psychological characteristics of individuals have been developed, tested, and criticised by various academics in the past research. While some of these studies focused on examining such traits on native entrepreneurs (Chandler and Jansen, 1997; Bernardo and Welsh, 2001; Miner et al., 2004), other studies also focused their efforts on those of immigrant status

(Koellinger and Minniti, 2006; Rajjman, 2001; Mueller and Thomas, 2001). Several contradictory findings exist in the literature on the predictive power of some of these traits (such as the need for achievement), while others are more supported by empirical findings (such as the risk-taking propensity and the internal locus of control). However, in general, these characteristics alone cannot predicate who becomes an entrepreneur and who does not and the research in this area has recognised these shortcomings (Thornton, 1999). Additionally, as most traits are not always stable over time, they may be difficult to grasp in studies with a retrospective design. It has been long accepted (Low and MacMillan, 1988) that it is not possible to produce a standard psychological profile of an entrepreneur. Pure psychological studies of those likely to become entrepreneurs are no longer considered enough in understanding the entrepreneurial process but in a combination with other non-psychological and environmental influences, they can form a more accurate picture of some of the traits common to those who become involved in the pursuit of the nascent entrepreneurial activities.

Other research in determining the characteristics of those more prone to become entrepreneurs directed their attention to studying the influence of non-psychological factors. The most debated non-psychological and demographic factors in the previous theoretical and empirical investigations are outlined in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 - Summary of Individual Non-Psychological Factors Influencing Self-Employment Decision**

<b>Non-Psychological Factor</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Gender	Men have been found more likely to enter self-employment than women because of a traditional view of women in the society, lower workforce participation, the lack of female role models, and having childcare responsibilities (Brush, 1992; Dumas, 2001; Bird and Brush, 2002; Reynolds et al., 2004; Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009). Female immigrant entrepreneurs were found to be more similar to host population female entrepreneurs rather than their male immigrant counterparts (Kwong et al., 2009).
Age	The effect of age on self-employment engagement has been found to be of a curvilinear nature (Shane, 2003). While the experience increases with age, at the same time the negative effects of opportunity cost and uncertainty also increases. The same U-shaped relationship was found to apply across different ethnic groups (Nee and Sanders, 1996).
Education	Entrepreneurs are typically more educated than those working as employees (Bates, 1985; Reynolds, 1997; Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Positive effect of education on entrepreneurial activities of immigrants is also supported by the literature (Borjas, 1986; Cooney and Flynn, 2008).
Career Experience	Previous work experience was found to affect the propensity to become self-employed, mainly the general business experience, functional experience, and industry experience (Shane, 2003).
Family Life and Entrepreneurial Background	Because much of the knowledge necessary for entrepreneurial activity is learned by doing and is transmitted by social networks, apprenticeship and observation of others, and the presence of role models was found to play an important role in this process (Aldrich et al., 1998; Athayde, 2009).
Previous Entrepreneurial Experience	Previous entrepreneurial experience was found to increase the probability of success (Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Lazear (2002) and Wagner (2006) confirmed that having a background in a larger number of varied roles increases the likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur. There are inconsistent results in literature about the affect of previous business failure (Shepherd, 2003; Ucbasaran et al., 2009).
Social Position	Individual’s social position can either support or hinder entrepreneurial tendencies. Being on the boundaries of a social system or between two social systems may also encourage entrepreneurship such is the case of immigrants (Kets De Vries, 1977; Casson, 2003). Social ties can enable access to information, relationship building with stakeholders, and transfer of knowledge (Granovetter, 1973; Davidsson and Honig, 2003).

Source: Adapted from Literature Review

These non-psychological characteristics which were subject to academic investigation are seen as having an impact on whether an individual becomes motivated to become self-employed. More evidence was found supporting the influence of non-psychological factors on the likelihood to become involved in nascent entrepreneurship than pure psychological

characteristics of individuals. Research on immigrant entrepreneurship showed that immigrants share similar characteristics to the host country entrepreneurs in a broad way (for example, men are overrepresented among immigrant entrepreneurs) but that there might be additional factors in play (such as culturally embedded traditions of women not working) (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009). In addition, immigrants operate in an unfamiliar environment so some of these non-psychological influences may become either more pronounced (such as ethnicity) or weaker (such as their social standing or previous educational attainment recognition), and these variables are also related to the cross-cultural adaptation variables (cf. Chapter 2). The importance of human, social, cultural, and financial capital in assembling resources during the nascent entrepreneurial process are discussed further in Section 3.5.3.

Undeniably, the personal predispositions which were studied previously were examined within a specific context. There is an overlap between the personal predispositions identified as significant to becoming self-employed and those identified in the cross-cultural adaptation process of immigrants (cf. Chapter 2.3.3). Some of these interrelated personal predispositions may become more prevalent than others in the context of this study.

### **3.4.3. Environmental Factors**

It is generally agreed that individuals do not recognise and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities in isolation to the external environment (Shane, 2003). The environment of a certain locality and its institutions influences the start-up conditions and creates either supportive or restricting circumstances for potential immigrant entrepreneurs (Davidsson,

2005). Shane (2003) summarised the effects of the institutional environment which were seen as being influential during the decision-making time to become self-employed and during the subsequent nascent entrepreneurial activities as those coming from the economic, political, and socio-economic environments.

It is well documented (Acs, 2006; Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009) that a supportive economic environment encourages entrepreneurial activities which drives a country’s economic growth. On the other hand, unstable recessionary economic times are characterised by higher unemployment rates which in turn encourage necessity entrepreneurial activities (Minniti, 2006). Koellinger and Minniti (2009) found that generous unemployment benefits reduce the overall nascent entrepreneurial propensity in a country for both opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs. The political system of a democracy with property rights in the form of intellectual property and contractual agreement have been found to encourage entrepreneurial activities as opposed to communist, centrally planned economies where privately owned ventures are not permitted (Morrisson, 2000). Culture and cultural influences can also vary within different groups, and societal attitudes towards entrepreneurship can have an impact on the spread of entrepreneurial activities. Some societies hold the norms and beliefs that encourage entrepreneurial activity to a greater extent than others (Morris and Schindebutte, 2005). Thus different environmental factors have been identified as impacting on the nascent entrepreneurial activities of individuals.

Two key theoretical approaches have been usefully applied to explaining the effects of the external environment on entrepreneurship. The institutional theory was used to show how different institutions provide the ‘rules of the game’ which indicate desirable and undesirable

behaviour in a given society. The formal institutions such as the government and public bodies may encourage or restrict entrepreneurship among certain groups, while the more informal institutional forces coming from the social environment may also impact on how entrepreneurship is perceived by the wider society (North, 2005; Baughn et al., 2006; Kwong et al., 2009). The second similar emerging concept of mixed embeddedness was developed specifically within the field of immigrant entrepreneurship (Kloosterman et al., 1999). This theory considers the role that obstacles, rules and regulations stemming from the public or semi-public institutions may play in developing entrepreneurial activities of immigrants (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001). While both of these theoretical approaches are useful for viewing the role of institutions, they fail to fully incorporate the role of other influences. For example, nascent immigrant entrepreneurs may not be fully aware of the potential institutional resources or constraints or they may instead follow what others from within their social network did before (Oliveira, 2007). Also, immigrants are often embedded and influenced by the environmental forces of both host and home countries (Drori et al., 2005).

This review of contributing factors leading to nascent immigrant entrepreneurship considered different theoretical views in this regard. Extensive debates in the literature have centred around identifying the push versus pull factors of entrepreneurship as a way of economic and social advancement in a host country (Clark and Drinkwater, 2002). While interesting insights into this phenomenon emerged from these debates, they do not incorporate the full picture. Personal predispositions in terms of individual psychological and non-psychological characteristics add another dimension to the debate (Shane et al, 2003). Furthermore, individuals do not operate in isolation from the external economic, political and socio-cultural environment, so the institutional theory and the mixed embeddedness explanations



of the role of these forces are also helpful. The connection between the contributing factors leading to self-employment and the cross-cultural adaptation literature emerges, as both debates are intertwined around the importance of personal predispositions (cf. Chapter 2.3.3) and social relationships (cf. Chapter 2.3.4) within a particular context of the Irish environment (cf. Chapter 4).

### **3.5. NASCENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A PROCESS**

The definitional boundaries of what is meant by entrepreneurship and nascent entrepreneurship were set in Section 3.2 of this chapter. The following discussion provides a brief review of selected literature related to studying the nascent entrepreneurial process on an individual level, rather than on a regional or national level. The selected theories have been chosen as the present research is located within these conjectures. Discussing the major theoretical vantage points from which the nascent entrepreneurial process is examined will also highlight the research gaps and explicitly demonstrate the originality and contribution of this study.

The theoretical and empirical debates within entrepreneurship research on the emergence of new ventures changed after Gartner's (1985; 1989) argument that the focus of entrepreneurship studies should be placed on studying what entrepreneurs do. This landmark contribution resulted in a new era of entrepreneurship research which centres around studying the different behaviours entrepreneurs perform over time during the various stages of the entrepreneurship cycle. This is essentially a process view of entrepreneurship and the studies of nascent entrepreneurship therefore focus on the process of 'becoming' (Steyaert,

2007). This approach is suitable for studying and understanding of the phenomenon of the nascent entrepreneurship process of the participants as their efforts are not a matter of a static choice, rather it is an ongoing, dynamic and changing affair.

### **3.5.1. Ethnic Entrepreneurship Specific Theories' Relevance to Explaining Nascent Immigrant Entrepreneurship**

Theories which come from the ethnic entrepreneurship stream have predominantly focused on explaining the entrepreneurial trajectories of immigrants/ethnic minorities in the past. These theories predominantly saw these groups as operating on the margins and mostly engaging in entrepreneurial activities within their own communities as a way of upward economic and social mobility (Light and Gold, 2000). Apart from some long-standing theories within this field (such as the disadvantage theory, middleman minorities, ethnic enclaves and ethnic economies), there are also some more recent theoretical developments (such as transnational entrepreneurship). Even though these theories may explain co-ethnically focused entrepreneurial activities, they are also narrow in their theoretical scope.

The disadvantage theory is primary concerned with viewing entrepreneurship as a common response by immigrant/ethnic minorities to blocked mobility in the mainstream labour market (Light, 1979). However, this theory does not properly account for an opportunity driven entrepreneurship. The focus of other theoretical writings in this area has been on different types of ethnic entrepreneurs. The middleman minority entrepreneurs who came from immigrant groups with a history of traditional capitalism and trading (such as the Jewish community, Chinese, India's Marwaris, and Armenians), were seen as intermediaries that facilitated trading between two opposite social classes (Blalock, 1967; (Light and Gold,

2000). The second type of entrepreneur was seen as operating in ethnic enclaves. Within this context, the ethnic enclave provides the advantages of clusters of immigrant firms, which can take advantage of co-ethnic links and group solidarity (Borjas, 1986). These geographically concentrated areas were seen as primarily serving the needs of co-ethnic customers such is the case of Balti restaurant quarter in the UK (Ram et al., 2000) or the emerging Chinese quarter in Dublin (Mottiar and Laurinčíková, 2008). On the other hand, the theory of ethnic economies explains how certain ethnic groups may hold control of a certain private economic sector (Zhou, 2007). Finally, the interactionism theory (Waldinger et al., 1990) incorporated both the supply and demand side of ethnic group characteristics and opportunity structures. Thus these theories focused on entrepreneurial strategies of immigrants within the closed co-ethnic sphere.

Even though these ethnic-specific theoretical approaches have been successful at explaining entrepreneurship within the immigrant/co-ethnic realm, they do not accommodate other types of entrepreneurial activities. Within these theories it is held that if immigrants/ethnic minorities pursue entrepreneurial activities in the mainstream market, these would be mostly in abandoned niche areas, industries with low economies of scale, the segmentation market, or the market for exotic foods (Waldinger et al., 1990). When putting these theories into the context of the cross-cultural adaptation, it seems that in this view, the majority of immigrant entrepreneurs follow the separation way of cross-cultural adaptation (Berry, 2008) as they focus inwardly on their co-ethnic groups' needs, while rejecting the host culture. Thus it seems that the ethnic entrepreneurship theories offer a good explanation for those immigrants who are seen as not interacting with the host population.

The recently developed theory of transnational entrepreneurship accommodates those immigrants who pursue the integration cross-cultural adaptation strategy (Berry, 2008) in which they maintain their cultural values while they selectively adopt certain elements of the host culture. Transnational entrepreneurship focuses on explaining immigrant entrepreneurial activities within the host country and home country contexts. Transnational entrepreneurs maintain trade links with social networks and institutions in dual spaces over time (Drory et al., 2009). In this context, transnational entrepreneurship may be seen as a way of cross-cultural adaptation for immigrants. As Portes et al. (2002) ascertained, through transnational entrepreneurial activities, immigrants are able to escape low paid jobs and advance economically, thus satisfying their aim of better life for themselves and their children.

Transnational entrepreneurship and the increased academic awareness of the impact of globalisation (Drori et al., 2005; Vertovec, 2007; Ram et al., 2008) have diverted the theoretical focus from the traditionally narrow view of ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurship. Consistent with the different dynamic cross-cultural adaptation trajectories that immigrants undertake, their entrepreneurial pursuits may also take different forms. For example, those individuals who assimilate to the host country's cultural and social norms (Berry, 2008) may choose not to draw on the co-ethnic resources as they would master and accept much of the host country's cultural norms, including language and local educational attainment (Singh and DeNoble, 2004). Thus it is not clear which path of economic adaptation immigrants undertakes, as it can be regular employment, an entrepreneurial path in a general market or indeed a co-ethnic oriented business venture locally or transnationally.

Singh and DeNoble (2004) called for future research which would take into consideration such diversity when it comes to individual cross-cultural adaptation and entrepreneurial activities. Jones and Ram (2008, p. 443) also recognised the shortcomings of the ‘self-imposed isolation’ of the ethnic entrepreneurship field. Thus such narrow categorisation of immigrant entrepreneurs dismisses the possibility that they may draw on mixed resources and attempt to pursue entrepreneurial activities similar to the host country entrepreneurs. It seems like a reasonable argument that theoretical attention is needed to examine how nascent immigrant entrepreneurs go about creating their businesses within the cross-cultural adaptation process. The nascent entrepreneurial process may take different shapes and forms and may also vary over time and situation so it cannot be assumed from the outset. This study addresses these theoretical gaps.

However, there have been some studies within the immigrant entrepreneurship literature that incorporated some of the cross-cultural adaptation literature. Within the immigrant entrepreneurship field, there has been a prevalent focus on comparisons of cultural influences on a group level. International entrepreneurship studies examined the issues of cross-cultural differences on cross-national business venturing activities (Freytag and Thurik, 2007; Muzychenko, 2008). Some of these studies applied Hofstede’s (1991) cultural variability framework. Mitchell et al. (2000) studied the cross-national differences of new venture creation, while Basu and Attinay (2002) also applied the cultural variability theoretical framework in their retrospective comparative analysis of different immigrant groups of entrepreneurs in the UK. In a Swedish longitudinal study, Brundin et al. (2001) sought to determine entrepreneurial motivations, challenges experienced during the course of business involvement, and future plans for different immigrant groups. The study found that there

were some significant inter-group differences within the immigrant entrepreneurship in Sweden. More recently, Kwong et al. (2009) used the data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey to quantitatively study four different groups of immigrant women in the UK and their probability of being involved in nascent entrepreneurial activities. Finally, Pio (2006) used the concept of cultural identities in her qualitative retrospective study of a group of Indian female entrepreneurs in New Zealand.

It is obvious, that the majority of studies which incorporate any cultural related facets when seeking to understand emerging or established immigrant entrepreneurial paths have mostly applied retrospective study design in largely quantitative and group level comparative empirical investigations. This shows that a theoretical and empirical gap exists as there is a lack of longitudinal qualitative studies which would uncover the nuance and experiences of nascent immigrant entrepreneurs. This study also addresses these issues. Even though immigrant entrepreneurship specific theories explain some of the entrepreneurial trajectories of immigrants, they do not deal well with the possibilities of entrepreneurial activities beyond the co-ethnic realm. Thus more general theories explaining the process of nascent entrepreneurship are seen as more appropriate for the purpose of the present study. The individual-opportunity nexus theory and the related theoretical constructs of entrepreneurial capital and gestation activities will act as a viewing lens in understanding the nascent entrepreneurial activities of the study participants within the context of their cross-cultural adaptation in this qualitative, longitudinal study.

### **3.5.2. Nascent Entrepreneurial Process as Individual-Opportunity Nexus**

Following the theoretical developments within the entrepreneurship field, the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition (which is synonymous with entrepreneurial opportunity discovery) and its exploitation have been put into the centre of entrepreneurship research and in particular the process of emergence. This theoretical view emerged in an attempt to construct an overarching framework of the entrepreneurial process (Venkataraman, 1997; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Eckhardt and Shane, 2003; Shane, 2003). The theoretical contributions of the individual-opportunity nexus have been widely recognised within the entrepreneurship domain and further enhanced and developed by others in the entrepreneurship field (Davidsson, 2006).

The process of emergence is at the heart of this theoretical approach. Recognition and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities are necessary to happen in the process of nascent entrepreneurship which leads towards a new venture emergence. Thus both recognition and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities is a process, during which individuals recognise entrepreneurial opportunities, develop them over time, re-define, complete and sometimes abandon them (Bhave, 1994). The prominent individual-opportunity nexus theory thus incorporates the study of the nascent entrepreneurial process and its dynamics.

The existence of opportunities must be present for any entrepreneurial activity to take place. Shane (2003, p. 18) defined an entrepreneurial opportunity as ‘a situation, in which a person can create a new means-ends framework for recombining resources that entrepreneur

believes will yield a profit'. Shane (2003) saw entrepreneurial opportunities as coming from the technological, political and regulatory, and social and demographic changes. Others added other possible sources of opportunities as coming from interaction with other people within individual's social networks (Singh, 2000), but also from employment, past experiences, interaction with mentors, and participation in business fora (Ozgen and Baron, 2007). Therefore entrepreneurial opportunities were found to originate from different sources.

It is equally important to study whether potential entrepreneurs actively search for opportunities or there are conditions where opportunities are recognised without active search (Shook et al., 2003). Bhave (1994) divided the process of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition into (1) externally stimulated opportunities whereby the decision to become self-employed comes before an opportunity is recognised, while (2) internally stimulated opportunities recognition occurs when an individual recognises an entrepreneurial opportunity before taking a decision to exploit it further. Researchers such as Sarasvarthy et al. (1998) noted that potential entrepreneurs recognise opportunities because they gather and process available information more effectively than others. Shane (2000) proposed that entrepreneurs recognise entrepreneurial opportunities because prior knowledge triggers recognition of the value of new information. In this view, only those opportunities related to the individual's knowledge could be recognised. Deliberate search rather than random chance means that individuals are more likely to locate information which may lead towards the recognition of an entrepreneurial opportunity (Shane, 2000; Casson, 2003; Hills and Singh, 2004; Fiet, 2007). Baron (2006) further suggested that cognitive structures may be developed by some people as a result of life experiences (such as previous work and



entrepreneurial experience) and used in organising and interpreting information. Such cognitive frameworks allow people to ‘connect the dots’ between different information and identify business opportunities. Learned (1992) further theorised that individuals’ decide to enter the nascent entrepreneurial process based on accumulation of confirming or disconfirming evidence. These studies thus identified the process of entrepreneurial opportunities recognition by individuals.

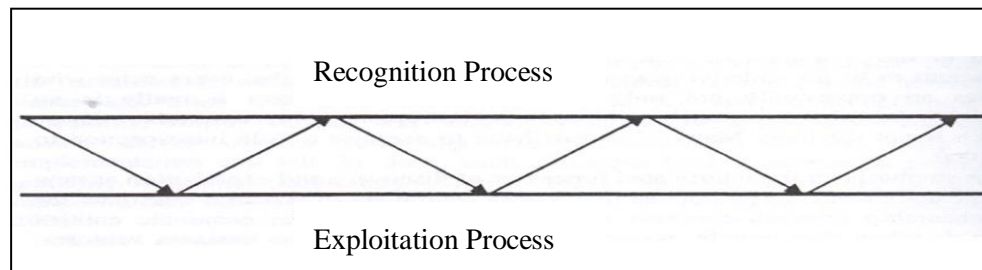
A decision to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities or not is not reached by everyone who recognises such opportunity. Individuals vary greatly and their psychological and non-psychological properties impact on their ability to recognise and decide on exploiting of entrepreneurial opportunities (cf. Section 3.4 for a discussion on these). Furthermore, recognition of opportunities was found to be context bound by the environment in which individual acts (cf. Section 3.4 and Chapter 4 for a debate on the Irish context), and the process of cross-cultural adaptation.

The exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities refers to the ‘decision to act upon a perceived opportunity, and the behaviours that are undertaken to achieve its realisation’ (Davidsson, 2005, p. 24). Shane and Eckhardt (2003) saw exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities as actions aimed at gathering and recombining the resources which are necessary to pursue the opportunity. The successful or unsuccessful opportunity exploitation depends on an individual’s capacity and the volatile environment in which they operate. During this process, the acquisition of financial capital through different avenues, and pursuing the opportunity further through the existing or developing social ties are seen as the main activities. The resource negotiation view of entrepreneurial capital development during

the nascent entrepreneurship process (cf. Section 3.5.3.) adds insights into how individuals' negotiate and use their resources during the process of nascent entrepreneurial activities of recognition and exploitation.

This theoretical concept usefully points to the dynamic relationship between entrepreneurial opportunities and the individual. The key relevance of this theory lies in its interlinked and dynamic view of the recognition and exploitation process (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3 - The Interrelation Between Recognition and Exploitation of Entrepreneurial Opportunities**



Source: Adapted from Davidsson, 2005

The entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and exploitation is thus an ongoing and overlapping process during which entrepreneurial opportunities are revised based on the feedback and subsequently exploited again. If resources are acquired and assembled correctly, new venture emerges but if not, the exploitation process of entrepreneurial opportunities is abandoned.

In spite of the usefulness of Shane and Venkataraman (2000) proposal of the mutual interaction between the nature of opportunities and individuals, much of the empirical work

has focused on either exploring the nature of the entrepreneur or the nature of the opportunity separately (Fletcher, 2006; Ozgen and Baron, 2007; Casson and Wadeson, 2007). In order to overcome this separation and incorporate the intended dynamic interaction of the individual and opportunity, more recent theorising occurred. These theoretical developments agree that the nexus of entrepreneur and opportunity should be understood within the social system of wider societal, economic and cultural structures (Fletcher, 2006), and the individual agency. Applying a structuration theory of Giddens (1991), Sarason et al. (2005) proposed the duality of an entrepreneur and opportunity nexus. In this view, the entrepreneur purposefully co-evolves with social structures to create opportunities and initiate ventures. Drori et al. (2009) applied Bourdieu's theory of practice to emphasise the intertwined nature of the entrepreneurial opportunities, individuals and external structures. Individuals rely on strategies related to social practice rather than formal rules, and they struggle in their resources accumulation within a dynamic environment. The cross-cultural adaptation theories which emphasise an interactive process thus hold potential for explaining such dynamic process of entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and exploitation undertaken by immigrants.

The theoretical and empirical application of the individual-opportunity nexus view of the nascent entrepreneurial process is limited within the immigrant nascent entrepreneurship cohort. An exception is Volery's (2007) enhancement of the individual-opportunity nexus view of the nascent entrepreneurial process with an interactive model of ethnic entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990). While potentially useful, this conceptual model was not empirically tested, and even though individual level variables were taken into consideration, the framework was designed for comparisons on a group level. Further

limitation of the individual-opportunity nexus view of the nascent entrepreneurial process was pointed out by Sarason et al. (2008) who called for the use of qualitative, longitudinal methodologies which would better explain what happens during the process of entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and exploitation. Such focus on the process would illuminate the nature of different interactions, rather than focusing on predicting outcomes.

The theoretical view of the nascent entrepreneurial process as an individual-opportunity nexus is seen as a useful construct within the context of the present study. It allows the incorporation between the individual and contextual variables which interact between the nascent entrepreneurial process of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and exploitation, and the cross-cultural adaptation process of the study participants. The theoretical constructs of entrepreneurial capital (cf. Section 3.5.3) and gestation activities (cf. Section 3.5.4) add additional explanations of the nascent entrepreneurial process undertaken by individuals within a cross-cultural adaptation process.

### **3.5.3. Entrepreneurial Capital View of the Nascent Entrepreneurial Process**

The notion of capital has been used in various studies in different fields such as sociology, economics, organisational studies, and entrepreneurship. The application of the concept of entrepreneurial capital to studying the nascent entrepreneurial process of opportunity recognition and exploitation is a relatively novel approach using previously developed constructs. This approach relates to a resource-based view of the entrepreneurial process (Greene et al., 1997; Brush et al., 2001). The concept of capital was originally used in the economic sense in the works of Marx and Weber. Bourdieu (1986) made a significant

contribution to the debate on capital when he defined financial, social and cultural capital, and their convertibility properties. In addition, Becker's (1993) foundational discussion of human capital contributes to the debate on the composition of the individual capital. However, the application of capital in longitudinal studies of nascent entrepreneurship and in particular within the immigrant realm has been limited to date. Nevertheless, this approach is seen as useful in understanding how individuals assemble their resources during the nascent entrepreneurial process.

Entrepreneurship, which is essentially seen as an exercise of capital (Firkin, 2001, 2003), is carried out applying, negotiating and leveraging different forms of capital. Although previous studies defined the entrepreneurial capital and its individual facets in a different depth and scope (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998; Nee and Sanders, 2001), certain commonalities exist. Firkin's (2001; 2003) theoretical definition and conceptualisation of the functions of various forms of entrepreneurial capital offer a particularly comprehensive theoretical base. Even though Firkin's (2001) study was empirically limited to a small number of existing businesses, its potential theoretical explanatory power is most notable. Firkin (2001, 2003) saw entrepreneurial capital as a total sum of individually held capital with an entrepreneurial value. The use of capital is seen as a mechanism for conceptualising the entrepreneurial process which is made up of a mix of various forms of capital. The particular mix varies across individuals and time, thus it is a dynamic, rather than a static concept. Different forms of capital are convertible if needed and if an individual lacks a certain form of capital, other forms of capital can be utilised to acquire the particular lacking form of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). For example, if a nascent immigrant entrepreneur does not possess financial resources, leveraging of social capital can enable access to financial resources (such

as through a strong family network). Finally, the changing external conditions can affect the development and practical application of the entrepreneurial capital in either positive or negative way.

Four forms of individual capital were defined in literature (Bourdieu, 1986; Becker, 1993; Firkin, 2001). Table 3.3 summarises the key characteristics of each form of capital.

**Table 3.3 – Four Forms of Individual Capital**

Form of capital	Characteristics
Financial capital	All financial resources utilised in the new venture formation and its subsequent activities. In addition receiving capital earnings from home country, or possessing non-liquid assets in a home country (which can be sold and transferred into new country), or access to family or kinship financial capital, can represent other sources of financial capital.
Social capital	Comprises of (1) structural (strong and weak ties), (2) relational (trust, trustworthiness, friendship) and (3) cognitive (shared norms) forms. It can take a form of bonding, bridging or linking social capital.
Human capital	Human capital can be (1) general (formal and non-formal education, work experience, practical learning), (2) industry specific (functional and industry specific experience, specific education and training), (3) entrepreneurial (previous entrepreneurial experience, family background in entrepreneurship), and (4) person's attributes (willingness to work hard, commitment, motivation, attitudes towards independence, risk, work efforts, income, and achievement)
Cultural capital	Individually possessed with a class nature (embodied, objectified and institutionalised) and as a group resource (based on common cultural characteristics, norms and values)

Source: Adapted from Literature Review

Discussions in the literature on financial capital often highlight the fact that nascent immigrant entrepreneurs are financially constrained (Light and Gold, 2000). Certain immigrant groups have been found to engage in informal lending practices such as the Chinese community (Light, 1972; Mottiar and Laurinčíková, 2008). However, other groups such as the African community do not practise such activities which can result in

disadvantaged, low capital start-ups (Koellinger and Minniti, 2006). Vershinina and Meyer (2008) studied Polish entrepreneurs in the UK and found that in relation to the financial capital, the commonly associated problems were having no credit history, limited savings, lack of knowledge about the UK financial system, and a need to take money out of the business to send to their home country. Thus the empirical evidence points to the fact that immigrants are particularly financially constrained during their nascent entrepreneurial journey.

Social capital constructs have been applied in studies of nascent entrepreneurship. Davidsson and Honig (2003) pointed out that while strong ties (relationships within a family or kinship occurring frequently) are often the most utilised forms of relationships during the nascent entrepreneurial process, weak ties (looser relationships) are very useful in obtaining information which would otherwise be unavailable or costly to obtain. Discussions within immigrant entrepreneurship literature frequently centre around the role of familial and co-ethnic resources in business creation and functioning, while pointing to the lack of bridging ties with the host population (Ram, 1994; Ram et al., 1999; Light and Gold, 2000; Ram et al., 2000; Smallbone et al., 2001; Baldock and Smallbone, 2003; Deakins et al., 2007; Ram et al., 2008; Vershinina and Meyer, 2008). However, there is a lack of in-depth focus on immigrant entrepreneurs' networks and their roles during the nascent entrepreneurial process. This study also focuses on this unresolved issue of examining the role, development and leveraging of social capital of individual immigrants in the nascent entrepreneurial process.

Schultz (1961) saw human capital as investment in people. The role of human capital in the nascent entrepreneurial process of recognising and exploiting opportunities has been highlighted in previous studies (Casson, 1995; Shane, 2003; Davidsson and Honing, 2003). Studies consistently show that entrepreneurs are typically more educated than those working as employees (Bates, 1985; Reynolds, 1997; Bygrave and Minniti, 1999). Previous related career experience (Dyer, 1994; Shane, 2003), previous entrepreneurial experience (Brüderl et al., 1992; Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Lazear, 2002; Wagner, 2006), and parental self-employment (Lentz and Laband, 1990; Aldrich et al., 1998; Hundley, 2006) were generally found as having a positive effect on nascent entrepreneurship. Immigrants, whose human capital may become redundant in a new host environment, may be more prone to consider self-employment as opposed to those who attain most education and experience in a host country over time (Nee and Sanders, 2001). However, there are inconsistent results in literature about the affect of a previous business failure (McGrath, 1999; Shepherd, 2003; Ucbasaran et al., 2009). Being actively engaged in family businesses also provides a way of gaining relevant skills and experience which was often found to be the case of immigrant entrepreneurs (Light and Gold, 2000, Ram et al., 2000; Baldock and Smallbone, 2003; Ram et al., 2008). The extended view of human capital also includes those personal characteristics necessary for self-employment such as individual traits and abilities including the willingness to work hard, self-motivation, and commitment. The role of these innate or acquired personal characteristics in the entrepreneurial process is broadly documented and supported (for example Bird, 1988; Carter et al., 1996; Shane, 2003).

Cultural capital can be defined from two different viewpoints. Firstly it can be seen as an individually possessed form of capital acquired and developed through the socialisation



process and schooling whereby class position is emphasised (Bourdieu, 1986). Secondly, cultural capital can be seen as a group resource which derives from individual membership of a certain ethnic group (Aldrich et al., 1990; Hofstede, 1991, Firkin, 2003). While Bourdieu (1986) related the concept of cultural capital to a wider class system in which everyone belongs to a certain social class, others considered changing social status as a result of immigration (Fernandez-Kelly, 2008). The effects of the group cultural resources have been mostly studied in relation to ethnic enclaves and ethnic economies on a group level or in comparison with other immigrant groups (Ram, 1999; Whitehead et al., 2006; Watts et al., 2007).

There is a dearth of studies within the area of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship which would observe the impact of the dynamically changing home and host cultural influences on this process on an individual level rather than on a group level which was the predominant focus of previous studies. As pointed out by Vershinina and Meyer (2008, p. 3), immigrants are ‘fundamentally living in two cultures’ hence these dual cultural influences need to be acknowledged and included in the discussion on the role of cultural capital in the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants. This study follows this recommendation in that it focuses on the cross-cultural adaptation process of the individual participants (cf. Chapter 2). It is in this area that the present research contributes, both theoretically and empirically.

Immigrant specific theoretical and empirical studies adopting the entrepreneurial capital view have been a centre of attention of more recent studies offering fresh insights into the more traditionally positioned debates in this area such as cultural predispositions and limited structural opportunities of immigrant groups (Waldinger et al., 1990). Nee and Sanders

(2001) appraised how the level of familial capital (financial, social, and human-cultural) influenced immigrants' labour market trajectories in a new dominant country. They developed a 'forms of capital model' for this purpose which was used to understand the immigrants' transition to entrepreneurship. Ram et al. (2008) incorporated the Nee and Sanders' (2001) approach in a qualitatively based study of established Somali enterprises, while Versinina and Meyer (2008) applied the forms of capital model to the qualitative study of Polish entrepreneurs in the UK. Similar to the more generally focused studies in this area, immigrant specific studies using the entrepreneurial capital theory also examine the development and the use of different forms of capital retrospectively, with a focus on existing business owners (Ram et al., 2008, Versinina and Mayer, 2008) or immigrants in general (Nee and Sanders, 2001). Evidently, the importance of studying different forms of capital together has been recently recognised by scholars within the immigrant entrepreneurship field. Even though such studies are still rare, their future potential have been acknowledged by academics in this field.

The current research study addresses the research gaps by applying a real time longitudinal research design. The dynamic nature of entrepreneurial capital, its development, negotiation and mobilisation can be thus examined as it happens, capturing the individuals' actions, interactions, responses, and emotions, gaining significant depth while avoiding a post event reporting bias. In addition, entrepreneurial capital development of both successful and unsuccessful nascent entrepreneurial outcomes is applied in this research. The small number of study participants allows such an in-depth collection of their accounts over time. Furthermore, previous studies failed to focus solely on the nascent entrepreneurial process which presents another research opportunity that is addressed in this study.

Studying the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants from the entrepreneurial capital point of view can add interesting insights. The notion that not every aspect of a person's total capital is useful in an entrepreneurial sense nor does every person have access to the same sorts and levels of capital (Firkin, 2001) is relevant to immigrants. Immigrants come from different cultural and social backgrounds, and bring different levels and types of capital with them. Within a host environment cross-cultural adaptation, some of the previously held capital may become redundant (such as previous education) or limited (such as social capital). During the nascent entrepreneurial process, immigrants combine their previously possessed capital with additional capital which is accumulated during this process. If individuals do not possess particular forms of capital necessary for starting a business, they may have to acquire or access these in various ways, for example by expanding networks beyond their kinship ones, or learning necessary skills for business during enterprise programmes. Thus this theoretical perspective is seen as aiding explanatory power to the present study while being further developed at the same time.

#### **3.5.4. Gestation Activities View of the Nascent Entrepreneurial Process**

While the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane and Ventekaraman, 2000; Shane, 2003; Davidsson, 2005) provides an overview of the nascent entrepreneurial process of dynamic relationship between an individual and opportunities, the entrepreneurial capital theoretical concept (Firkin, 2001; 2003) adds another dimension to what types of resources are accumulated and negotiated during the nascent entrepreneurial process. The conceptual framework of gestation activities which is reviewed next adds further dimension and explanatory power to this debate.

A number of scholars defined and discussed gestation activities which are seen as those nascent entrepreneurial activities that lead towards a creation of a new venture (Block and MacMillan, 1985; Katz and Gartner, 1988; Reynolds and Miller, 1992; Gatewood et al., 1995; Carter et al., 1996; Reynolds, 2000; Gartner et al., 2003). Much of the discussion about the current state of understanding and knowledge about the process of creating a new venture is informed by the Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics (PSED) and other related studies (such as in Sweden). The PSED study which was a quantitative, longitudinal survey-based research project regularly sampled nascent entrepreneurs, thus providing generalisable data on the process of starting a business. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) study surveys 43 countries offering additional insights into different countries' entrepreneurial activities (cf. Chapter 4.3 for the Irish overview) The contributions of these authors (Gartner et al., 2004; Reynolds et al., 2004; Carter et al., 2004; Davidsson, 2006) add to the present knowledge on the process of business emergence, while also impacting on the future course of the theoretical development in this field.

The main focus of previous studies examining gestation activities undertaken by individuals has been on identifying their number, frequency, and timing. Carter et al. (1996) and Reynolds (1996) identified 20 key gestation activities, while subsequent research (Alsos and Kolvereid, 1998; Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Newbert, 2005) used either the same or similar categories of gestation activities in an attempt to map out the nascent entrepreneurial process in terms of practical activities. Lichtenstein et al. (2007) summarised the key gestation activities which were discussed in the previous literature. These gestation activities are presented in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 - Gestation Activities During the Nascent Entrepreneurial Process**

<b>Reynolds and Miller (1992)</b>	<b>Gatewood et al. (1995)</b>	<b>Carter et al. (1996)</b>	<b>Reynolds (2000)</b>
<b>(1) Organising Behaviours</b>			
<i>Personal commitment</i>		Devoted 35+ h/week on business	Devoted 35+ h/week on business
			Arranged childcare
<i>Financial support</i>	Saved money to invest	Saved money to invest	Saved money to invest
	Asked for funding	Asked for funding	Asked for funding
	Established credit with suppliers	Got financial support	Established credit with suppliers
		Invested own money	Invested own money
<i>Hiring</i>	Hired employees or managers	Hired employees	Hired employees/managers
	Organised team	Organised team	Organised team
	Prepared business plan	Prepared business plan	Prepared business plan
	Developed prototype	Developed prototype	Developed model or procedures of product/service
	Applied for copyright, patent, trademark	Applied for license, patent or permits	Applied for copyright, patent, trademark
	Purchased, rented or leased major equipment	Purchased facilities, equipment or property	Purchased, rented or leased major equipment
		Rented or leased facilities/equipment/property	
	Defined market opportunity		Defined market opportunity
	Developed financials		Developed financials
	Started marketing and promotion		Started marketing and promotion
	Purchased raw materials, supplies		Purchased raw materials, supplies
	Took a class or workshop on starting business		Took a class on starting a business
		Formed legal entity	
			Opened business bank account
<b>(2) Indicators of start-up</b>			
<i>Sales</i>	Received money, income or fees	Received money, income or fees	Received money, income or fees
		Positive cash flow	Positive cash flow
			Paid managers who are owners a salary
		Filed federal taxes	Filed federal taxes
		Paid Federal Insurance Contribution Act Tax	Paid Federal Insurance Contribution Act Tax
		Unemployment Insurance	Unemployment Insurance
		Dun and Bradstreet listing	Dun and Bradstreet listing
			Business phone listing
		Business phone line	

Source: Adapted from Lichtenstein et al., 2007

While some studies group these gestation activities by their type (such as business planning, financing and interaction with an external environment), Lichtenstein et al. (2007) divided

them into organising behaviours and indicators of start-up activities. As these gestation activities are based on the PSED research carried out in the US, some activities differ from the Irish context. The Federal Insurance Contribution Act Tax is a social contribution similar to the Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) in Ireland. The unemployment insurance is a separate tax in the US it is part of the PRSI contribution in Ireland. The Dun and Bradstreet are recognised international business credit information providers. Even though some of these gestation activities vary as a result of national differences, the majority are largely consistent and applicable in the Irish context.

Much attention in the literature has been dedicated to establishing the sequence and frequency of gestation activities which would enable one to map out the process of the new venture birth. Carter et al. (1996) found that approximately 40 percent of individuals began the nascent entrepreneurial process with the first sale, an activity which is usually associated with the end of the gestation process. Alsos and Kolvereid (1998) found that novice entrepreneurs start their gestation activities at the same way as the more experienced serial or parallel entrepreneurs. Gartner et al. (2004) examined the frequency of gestation activities and found what activities that nascent entrepreneurs spent the most and the least time doing. This is illustrated in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5 – Frequency of Gestation Activities**

Five Most Frequent Gestation Activities	Five Least Frequent Gestation Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thinking about starting a business</li> <li>▪ Taking classes or workshops on starting business</li> <li>▪ Saving money to invest in business</li> <li>▪ Investing own money into business</li> <li>▪ Developing a model or procedures for product/service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly revenues exceeding monthly expenses</li> <li>▪ Business having own phone listing</li> <li>▪ Business having own phone line</li> <li>▪ Paying state unemployment insurance</li> <li>▪ Business listing with Dun and Bradstreet</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Gartner et al. (2004)

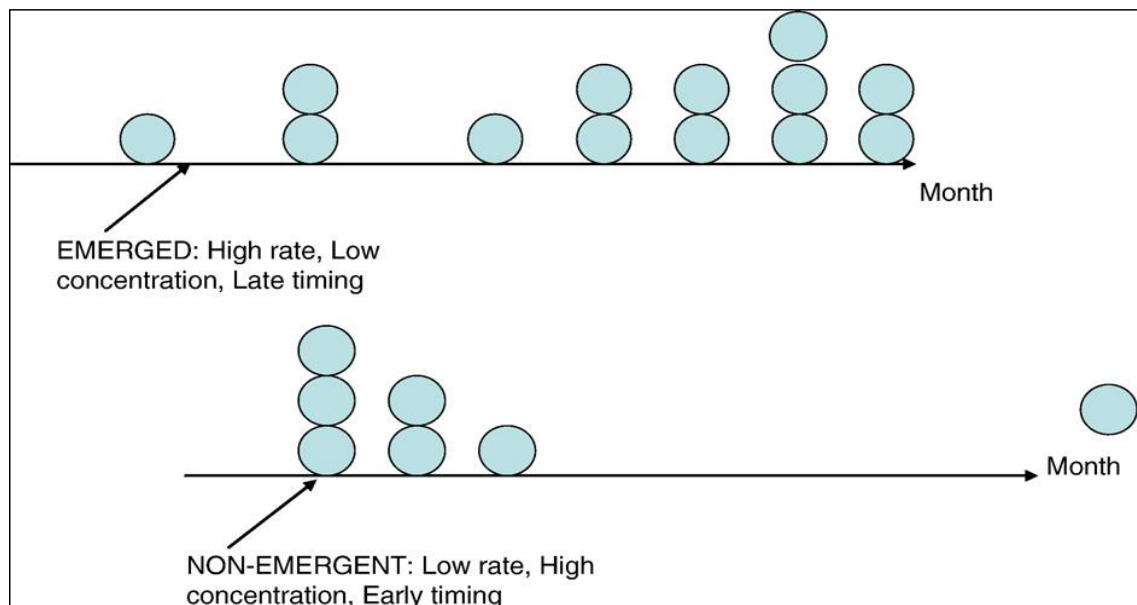
Even though these gestation activities provide an indication about what gestation activities individuals engage in during their nascent entrepreneurial process, such engagement has not been found to predict either a successful or unsuccessful outcome. Liao and Welsch (2002) and Newbert (2005) concluded that gestation activities can follow any sequence and frequency as it is impossible to determine it. Delmar and Shane (2003) argued that even though agreement cannot be reached on the general sequence of gestation activities, based on their Swedish sample of successful entrepreneurs, they devised the best sequence for a successful outcome. Planning activities (such as writing a business plan, gathering information about customers and making financial statements) dominate in the first number of activities, while the latter activities were of a more practical nature (such as obtaining permits, seeking finance, and initiating marketing). However, other studies provided inconsistent support for positive effects of some gestation activities such as business plan writing (Honig and Karlsson, 2004; Karlsson and Honig, 2009) which was seen as a more symbolic activity and rarely used after writing it. Despite attempts being made to establish the sequence of the nascent entrepreneurial activities, the previously developed linear models of sequences have not stood up to the empirical scrutiny and as Gartner et al. (2004, p. 297)

concluded, ‘there is no particular way organisations emerge because there is no one particular kind of organisation that results as an outcome of the pre start-up process’.

In an attempt to theorise the dynamic process of gestation activities, a new theoretical approach was adopted by Lichtenstein et al. (2004; 2007). Drawing on complexity science theory, it was argued that the process of nascent entrepreneurship can be seen as a complex system. This theoretical approach is not concerned with whether some gestation activities occur or their levels of frequency. Instead, the key focus is placed on their temporal dynamics as specific activities are seen as nodes in a network with mutual causality and iterative loops. In other words, it examines the pace of the process, the temporal concentration of activities, and the timing of these activities during the process, as the momentum increases or decreases.

Figure 3.4 illustrates this approach.

**Figure 3.4 – Emergent Versus Non-Emergent Ventures**



Source: Lichtenstein et al., 2007



The results of Lichtenstein et al.'s (2007) study suggested that successful new ventures were established if an entrepreneur pursued activities at a faster rate, with a lower concentration and with an average timing presented later in the process. Thus during the process of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and exploitation, the process is seen as culminating into a so-called punctuation point when the different pieces of puzzle start fitting together. This non-linear and indefinable way of nascent entrepreneurial process directions was also supported by Liao et al. (2005), while Brush et al. (2008) found that those who took more time to complete their gestation activities were more likely to continue and complete them.

Even though this novel theorising displays some limitations due to the application of a new theoretical concept in entrepreneurship and some measurement issues (using a cash flow indicator as a sign of a new venture start-up as opposed to first sale), it also has positive implications. The application and further theoretical development of this concept encompasses the dynamic nature of the nascent entrepreneurial process and better uncovers the why and how a new venture comes into existence. The notion of the adaptive tension which drives an individual to move from a current to a desired state is also seen as relevant to studying nascent immigrant entrepreneurs who may be motivated to change their economic status to a desired state through engaging in nascent entrepreneurial activities. Similar adaptive tension was also found to be part of the cross-cultural adaptation process (Kim, 2001) so these processes are reflected in this study.

The process-based research examining gestation activities has been criticised on a number of points. With the exception of some newer approaches (Lichtenstein et al., 2007), most of the studies are still preoccupied with determining the stages which lead to a successful venture

birth rather than building new theories and testing them empirically. It cannot be assumed that an additive combination of gestation activities will lead to the first sale. Liao and Welsch (2008) also added that some methodological inconsistencies exist as during the PSED surveys, responses are put into pre-determined boxes rather than allowing for new concepts to emerge. Liao and Welsch (2008) further ascertained that these studies do not take into consideration the contextual influences and the nature of a business start-up, thus presuming the 'one size fits all' hypothesis. Empirically grounded process studies of the emergence of new ventures have been also noted as largely absent (Liao et al., 2005). Furthermore, within this domain, there is also a lack of studies focusing on minority groups such as immigrants. While there are limitations, these limitations also present research opportunities. The current research addresses some of them by being largely emergent, context-bound, and focusing on the specific experiences of nascent immigrant entrepreneurs.

The above discussion has debated the relevant theoretical developments within the field of nascent entrepreneurship and immigrant entrepreneurship. The key assumptions, relationships and empirical evidence of each of the theories were discussed, pointing out their potential as well as discussing their limitations. There is an opportunity to apply these theoretical approaches in a novel and creative way in the present study. As Zahra (2007) argued, by relaxing some assumptions of existing theories, and re-applying them in new contexts, there is a scope for theorising.

### **3.6. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter has been to present a comprehensive overview of the variety of

perspectives and approaches relevant to the study of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship. The review of the relevant literature pointed out the definitional inconsistencies within the entrepreneurship domain. In order to contextualise and set boundaries for the current research, the term of a nascent immigrant entrepreneur was clarified. Even though this research focuses on the nascent entrepreneurial process, it is only one form of economic adaptation pursued by immigrants. The chapter thus also examined the relevance of employment trajectories of immigrants and debated how an entrepreneurial pursuit fits with a career choice.

Moving to the nascent entrepreneurial specific research domain, the key relevant theories and approaches to studying this process were then discussed. The review of the specific theories within the field of immigrant entrepreneurship showed the somewhat limited scope of some of these approaches. As pointed out by Singh and DeNoble (2004), the immigrant specific theories are sometimes limited in their scope and research focus. Thus the more general theoretical concepts from the nascent entrepreneurship domain were also reviewed. Even though these have not been largely applied within an immigrant cohort, they were seen as offering an explanatory power to the current research. In particular, the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane and Ventakaraman, 2001; Shane, 2003) is seen as providing a useful framework for studying the nascent entrepreneurial process as individuals dynamically engage within the process of entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and their exploitation. The concept of entrepreneurial capital (Firkin, 2001; 2003) is seen as adding further explanatory power to this process, as it focuses on resources negotiation. This is seen as particularly useful in the context of an immigrant cohort, as their resources are seen as often limited within the context of their cross-cultural adaptation. Finally, the gestation

activities (Gartner et al., 2004) approach was also seen as relevant for its practical and process-based view of what actually happens during the nascent entrepreneurial process of opportunities recognitions and exploitation. These relevant theoretical and empirical developments inform the current study without restricting it. Due to the methodological design of the study, the generated data are approached in an exploratory and inductive way.

The field of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship process within a process of cross-cultural adaptation was presented as a colourful mosaic of different disciplines and approaches. While these approaches are sometimes overlapping and sometimes at odds with each other, they all essentially aim at understanding the same process but approaching it from different angles. A potential for research in this area was identified. As the literature review pointed out, there is a lack of qualitative longitudinal studies within this area. Retrospective studies in the area are useful but they suffer from hindsight bias and they generally do not allow for new variables to emerge, especially among those who do not complete the nascent entrepreneurial process. As Steyaert (2007) argued, nascent entrepreneurial studies should be focusing on the process of becoming. Davidsson (2005) also called for more qualitative studies which would elucidate the nature of nascent entrepreneurial process better. This study addresses these issues by combining the theoretical views from the cross-cultural adaptation field and the nascent immigrant entrepreneurship field to explore and to understand the processes and variables involved in this process. Chapter Four addresses the specifics of the Irish context in which the study is situated. At the end of Chapter Four, the need for this research will be summarised, cumulating into a research question.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**IRELAND – SETTING THE CONTEXT**

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**4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous two literature review chapters were concerned with the discussion of the key theoretical issues connected with an understanding of nascent entrepreneurial trajectories of immigrants within a cross-cultural adaptation process. Both theoretical and empirical deficiencies in this area were identified. This chapter addresses the context-specific issues of this study. It is important to explicate the nature of the Irish environment in more detail as it provides an important backdrop to the research inquiry. The participants' experiences of cross-cultural adaptation and nascent entrepreneurial efforts in Ireland would inevitably differ from other contexts. For example, even though Ireland and the UK are similar in many ways (both being Western economies where English language is spoken), they also differ greatly (immigration tradition in Ireland is still relatively new compared to the UK's long standing history of immigration). Thus it is necessary to gain appreciation of the Irish external environment in relation to this study.

This chapter addresses some of the key issues which frame the cross-cultural and nascent entrepreneurial paths of the study participants. Irish context specific variables which are considered in this chapter are outlined in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 – Discussion Outline of Chapter Four**

<b>4.2. The Socio-Economic and Political Setting for Immigration in Ireland</b>			
4.2.1. Historical Overview of Immigration	4.2.2. Immigrants' Labour Force Participation & Experiences in Ireland	4.2.3. Ireland's Social Responses to Immigration	4.2.4. Ireland's Policy Responses to Immigration
<b>4.3. Who are Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland?</b>			
4.3.1. Entrepreneurial Climate in Ireland	4.3.2. Immigrant Entrepreneurial Activity in Ireland	4.3.3. Enterprise Supports Available to Nascent Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland	

Source: Author

Firstly, a historical overview of immigration trends in Ireland is provided with the aim of placing the current contextual conditions in a historical perspective. Secondly, the immigrant participation in the Irish labour market is debated as the majority of the study participants were part of the labour market in some form. The Irish societal and policy responses are considered showing the changing Irish public attitudes towards immigrants and the relevant immigration related policies. The second part of this chapter deals with entrepreneurship specific contextual issues. Entrepreneurial climate in Ireland in general is outlined. The issues surrounding immigrant participation in entrepreneurial activities in Ireland are also addressed. In addition, specific government enterprise supports available to immigrants are also debated. The chapter finishes with a summary outline of the study's theoretical and empirical contribution as a result of the literature review.

## **4.2. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SETTING FOR IMMIGRATION IN IRELAND**

The Irish economic and social milieu has changed dramatically over the last three decades, as Ireland has undergone an unprecedented economic and social transformation. This

environment, which provides a context to this study, is not static, rather it has been dynamically changing since this research commenced in 2006. The country went from ‘boom to bust’, presenting a sharp fall from its widely praised economic position of the Celtic Tiger period. With the negative economic changes, some socio-cultural changes have also followed. It seems that Ireland, a country which has traditionally prided itself as the land of ‘Céad Mile Fáilte’<sup>6</sup> has been changing its welcoming nature towards the newcomers to some extent. The discussion in this section centres around the historical background to immigration in Ireland, and the current economic and socio-cultural trends of the Irish environment in which immigrants undergo their cross-cultural and economic adaptation journeys.

#### **4.2.1. Historical Overview of Immigration**

Ireland’s immigration and emigration patterns have been changing significantly over the last two decades. Prior to 1996, Ireland was historically a country of emigration. From 1996, Ireland experienced a long period of immigration until 2009 when emigration outnumbered immigration again (CSO, 2009a). Emigration trends have been part of Irish history since the famine in the 1840s, only temporary reverting in the 1970s when employment opportunities improved for some time. During the mid 1990s, many Irish people returned due to the positively changing economic conditions in their home country but it was not until 1996 when immigration outweighed emigration. Apart from the returning Irish, a dramatic increase in asylum applications contributed to the positive migration figures (Quinn, 2009). The make-up of immigrants changed from 2004, after the 10 new countries (EU 10<sup>7</sup>) became

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<sup>6</sup> Céad Mile Fáilte means a hundred thousand welcomes in Irish

<sup>7</sup> EU 10 – Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Malta, Slovenia and Cyprus. In 2006, Romania and Bulgaria were not part of the EU, now called EU12.

part of the EU in addition to its former 15 members (EU 15<sup>8</sup>). Ireland welcomed unrestricted labour movement from the new member countries. After the peak of 2007, immigration from the EU 10 states continued in smaller numbers. Due to the global recession impacting Ireland, in 2009 the immigration trends reversed once again, resulting in a net emigration for the first time in 13 years. The net outward migration of 7,800 in a year to April 2009 is in stark contrast to an inward net migration figure of 71,800 in 2006 (CSO, 2008). In spite of the reversed migration patterns, it is important to note that immigration is not just something that happens; rather it is a result of global changes (Parkinson, 2003) and it is clear that immigration is here to stay, to some extent at least. Additionally, in spite of the original temporary view of the immigration trends, many immigrants have settled down permanently in Ireland.

Who are immigrants in Ireland? For the first time, the 2006 Census introduced a question on the place of birth, nationality and religion, and encouraged members of immigrant communities to participate in it. These statistics provide more information about the background of immigrants living in Ireland. According to the CSO (2008), in 2006, approximately 11 percent of the Irish population were foreign-born, while those coming from the outside of the EU represented 4.5 percent of the total population. However, the overall composition of the immigrants in Ireland could be up to 15 percent (Mac Cormaic, 2007) as many individuals did not declare their presence on the census form for various reasons. The key officially collected characteristics of immigrants in Ireland are summarised in Table 4.1.

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<sup>8</sup> EU 15 – Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Greece and Luxembourg.



**Table 4.1 - Demographic Characteristics of Immigrants in Ireland (2006)**

<b>Origin</b>	<b>Percentage of total population</b>	<b>Age</b> Most Prevalent Age Group 25-44 years	<b>Gender</b> Male (M) Female (F)	<b>Education</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Degree or Higher
Ireland	88.85 %	29.39%	49.55 % M; 50.54 % F	17.2%
United Kingdom	2.7 %	39.33%	49.94 % M; 50.06% F	25%
EU 15 <sup>9</sup>	1.02%	59.50%	48.63 % M; 51.37% F	52.1%
EU 10	2.89%	56.52%	60.6 % M; 39.4 % F	21.5%
Rest of Europe	0.58%	63.24%	53.82 % M; 46.18 % F	34.3%
Africa	0.85%	59.27%	49.71 % M; 50.29 % F	38.2%
Asia	1.12 %	59.76%	52.32% M; 47.68 % F	53%
Americas	0.51 %	43.47%	47.72 % M; 52.28 % M	50.4 %
Australia/NZ	0.14	6.40%	50 % M; 50 % F	45%

Source: CSO, 2008

The UK was the largest immigrant group in 2006, while Nigeria, USA and China were the largest third countries in terms of immigrant numbers. The EU 10 represented 2.89 percent of the overall population in comparison to the EU 15 states of just over 1 percent. Quite significantly, immigrants showed a young profile within the most prevalent age group of 25-44 years old in comparison with the Irish population. With regards to gender differences, there were only small differences between the male and female ratio within immigrant groups. A higher proportion of immigrants held a third level or higher degree than the Irish. The analysis of the immigrants' demographics thus shows that they were mostly in the younger age group and well educated.

Additional Census statistics (CSO, 2008) also revealed that almost 42 percent of immigrants were married compared to 46 percent of the Irish population. In spite of this, the living arrangements of the immigrant groups did not always reflect such family status. This was

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<sup>9</sup> Excludes Ireland and the UK

especially pronounced within the EU 10 immigrant group where almost one in five (18.6 percent) did not live with their spouses. This suggests that many of them left their spouses in their home country while they moved to Ireland on temporary basis. However, other immigrant groups had a higher percentage of spouses and children living with them in Ireland. Even though this census information is somewhat outdated due to the changing economic circumstances, and considerable intra group differences could also exist, it does provide a useful overview of the key characteristics of the different groups of immigrants in Ireland.

The participants of this study originated from different countries, such as EU 15 (France), EU 10 (Hungary and Lithuania), Rest of Europe (Albania), Asia (India), and Africa (Nigeria). An overview of the general immigration patterns provided a general understanding of the key characteristics of immigrant groups within an Irish context. Discussion of the labour market participation of immigrants adds another dimension to the discussion of the study context.

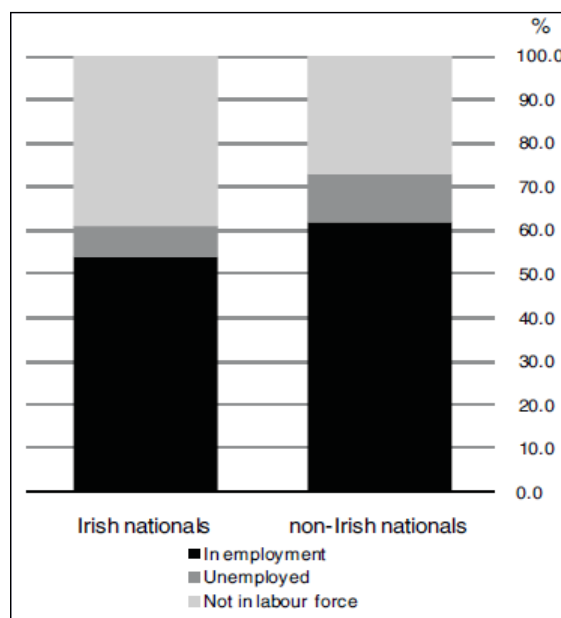
#### **4.2.2. Immigrants' Labour Force Participation and Experiences in Ireland**

After a period of an unprecedented growth during the Celtic Tiger period, Ireland has been experiencing an economic decline since 2007. This has been due to the worsening global financial crisis coupled with a dramatic decline in the property market, followed by increasing unemployment, negative economic growth, and financial institutions' insolvency. Ireland's unemployment, once among the lowest in the EU (3.6 percent in 2001) is predicted to reach 13.5 percent in 2010 (Central Bank, 2010). Gross Domestic Product fell from a

positive six percent in 2007 to an expected minus 7.9 percent in 2009, and the government debt is also increasing significantly (Barrett et al., 2009). The worsening economic climate has impacted heavily on both the native and the immigrant population. It is beyond the scope of this review to go into much detail about the economic crisis.

Immigrant workers are represented in all sectors of the economy. All immigrant groups along with the Irish workers have been predominantly employed in clerical, professional and sales occupations (CSO, 2008). However, the newer members of the EU (EU10) are mostly engaged in manufacturing, construction, and services occupations. These sectoral differences suggest that perhaps, these young and well-educated immigrant groups did not achieve their full potential in the job market (Bobek et al., 2008). Figure 4.2 shows the economic status classification according to International Labour Office (ILO) criteria.

**Figure 4.2 - Economic Status of Irish and Immigrant Population in Ireland (Quarter 2 2009)**



Source: CSO, 2009b

According to the ILO, 274,600 of immigrants participated in the Irish labour force in the

second quarter of 2009, representing 14.2 percent of all people in employment aged 15 and over. This was a decrease of 17.8 percent in the year overall, while the EU 10 states showed a decline of 25.3 percent over the same period. Evidently, the negatively growing economy has been impacting on the employment levels and labour requirements. In addition, the Quarterly National Household Survey (CSO, 2009a) also revealed the overall unemployment rate of 11.6 percent, which is at the highest level since 1996. The immigrant workers presented 14.6 percent of all unemployed in the second quarter of 2009. The immigrant workers have been mostly affected in the construction, wholesale and retail trade, and industry sectors.

While the official statistics are useful indicators of the changes in the economy, their quantitative nature does not reflect the daily experiences of immigrant workers. Public bodies and academic institutions conducted studies which elucidate some negative employment experiences of immigrants in Ireland. Linehan and Hogan (2008) explored the issues of the over-qualification of immigrants and found that many immigrants felt that their years of study and working in their country of origin were meaningless in Ireland. The study also found that language issues prevented some immigrants from entering appropriate levels of employment and education. The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI, 2006), an organisation concerned with the rights of immigrants and their families, has found that the majority of exploited immigrant employees were tied to their work permit which made it more difficult to leave their employment. Another report (MRCI, 2009) in the area of workers' exploitation in the restaurant industry supported earlier findings and found that 53 percent of immigrant restaurant workers were paid below the minimum hourly wage. Finally, an ongoing longitudinal study of Polish workers in Ireland (Bobek et al., 2008; Krings et al.,

2009) has uncovered some of their experiences of the economic recession, such as worsening working conditions, job loss, and complexity of decisions about staying in Ireland or going home. It appears that even though many immigrant workers have had a positive employment experience in Ireland, problems have been found in relation to the recognition of qualifications, language difficulties, worsening working conditions, and even exploitation.

However, in spite of worsening economic climate and temporary unemployment, many immigrants continue to stay in Ireland. As found by Krings et al. (2009), Polish immigrants in their study indicated that in spite of temporary employment difficulties, their preference was to stay in Ireland. Apart from the economic benefits of staying in Ireland, the study participants often built their social networks in Ireland. At the same time, they did not want to go back to Poland to face even worse economic and employment conditions. Thus it can be seen that in spite of the economic recession, the immigrants do not share the characteristics of the guest workers (Wilpert, 2003) who leave the country once their labour is no longer required.

The changing labour market trends show that the unemployment affects the immigrants in a more significant way than the Irish population. The official statistics (CSO, 2008; 2009a,b) show that the unemployment rate of the immigrants has been growing faster than the overall unemployment rate. The immigrant workers are often more vulnerable due to their sectoral concentration in areas sensitive to worsening economic conditions such as construction and services. Other studies, which focused on uncovering the real experiences of the immigrant workers show an additional picture of their often negative experiences. In spite of such

difficulties, many immigrants put down their roots in Ireland and continue to experience a positive Irish welcome.

#### **4.2.3. Ireland's Social Responses to Immigration**

The attitude of the Irish society towards immigration has been mixed. While the Irish have been largely welcoming towards immigrants, public apprehension also occurred to some extent. Kuhling and Keohane (2007) pointed out that mixed attitudes can be attributed to the rapid pace of social change in which Ireland changed from mono-cultural to multicultural society in a short space of time. In addition, Kuhling and Keohane (2007, p. 51) argued that some 'historical forgetting' occurred which denies Ireland's own migration history, coupled with a short-term guest worker view of immigrants. Mac Éinrí (2001) further commented that the immigration phenomenon has been largely viewed as a problem rather than opportunity by the Irish public and policy makers from the beginning, unlike in Canada where immigration is seen as an integral part of life and economic progress.

On the interpersonal and mass communication level of Ireland, some negative attitudes towards immigrants have been highlighted. In a qualitative study of the host population responses to immigration in an area of Dublin with high immigrant concentration, Ni Chonail (2007) found evidence of 'crisis racism'. This meant that when there was a perceived competition for scarce resources (such as employment, schooling or housing), immigrants were pinpointed as the root cause of such problems. An interesting experimentally designed research project in the area of discrimination in recruitment in Ireland by McGinnity et al. (2009) found that job applicants with Irish names were over twice as likely to be invited to

attend an interview as non-Irish applicants with the same qualifications. The study further found that applicants with African, Asian and German names faced similar rates of high discrimination in comparison to similar international studies. Immigrants were also found to experience difficulties in the areas of housing, schooling and health due to language difficulties and the lack of considerations of their needs (Dublin City Council, 2008). The fact that immigration issues are not a priority of the government agenda presents a future risk of growing public anti-immigration sentiment and a possibility of a deepening segregation of the immigrants in the future.

However, various organisations have been at the forefront of promoting multiculturalism, immigration acceptance and co-operation between the Irish population and immigrant groups. These efforts have been put in place to minimise negative effects of immigration and to prevent marginalisation and segregation. Mac Cormaic (2008) reported that there were 190 immigrant organisations in Ireland, while the second edition of a Directory of Migrant Led Organisations in Ireland (Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2009) listed 61 key organisations. Umbrella organisations such as the Immigrant Council of Ireland, the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and the New Communities Partnership promote integration, lobby with the government, publish research, and support smaller organisations. There are many locally run organisations and initiatives which contribute to the positive advocacy of integration. The Women's Integrated Network presents one such locally based initiative in County Kildare. It was set up with a belief that women can come together and mutually benefit, regardless of their country of origin. Currently, the organisation has over 200 members comprising of immigrant, Irish and Travelling communities. The Ireland India Council is another organisation that supports the mutual exchange of cultural ideas, provides a platform

for business co-operation and organises different cultural events. Dublin City Council also actively contributes to the integration efforts by organising cultural activities and regularly engaging with different immigrant groups living in the city. Their policy report (Dublin City Council, 2008) outlined actions towards integration within Dublin, guided by best practice from other countries. Thus there are a significant number of Irish and immigrant organisations which attempt to promote integration and multiculturalism on a local level, despite encountering funding difficulties.

The response of the Irish society to immigration has not been always positive and unproblematic. As a result of the worsening economic situation, there is the potential for tension between the Irish and the immigrants. The Irish population seems to feel threatened by the immigrants, especially during the economic downturn. Additionally, as a result of the often negative media and public mood, immigrants may feel unwelcome. Even though organisations promoting integration and multiculturalism exist and make some local difference, their activities do not reach all places in Ireland and due to funding difficulties, their efforts are often fragmented and constrained.

#### **4.2.4. Ireland's Policy Responses to Immigration**

Even though the migration trends have been reversed since 1996 (CSO, 2009a), changes in the government policies have followed slowly. The EU immigration legislation has had a limited impact due to the fact that Ireland chose the opt-out facility (Quinn, 2009). Until recently, many government policies were dating back to the 1930s, and were incapable of dealing with the dramatically changing situation of large inward migration. According to



Mac Éinrí (2001), after the publication of the 'Integration: a two-way process' by the Department of Justice and Law Reform in 1999, there was still a lack of appreciation and understanding of the real meaning and future implications of immigration in an Irish context.

On the national policy level, from 2001 preparations began for the drafting of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill. The main policy developments in this area have included the passing a number of policy Acts but these were largely reacting to the existing problems rather than adopting proactive and sustainable immigration measures. The development of comprehensive, yet accommodating, legislation protecting both the state and the immigrants living in it is required for the future sustainable management of the immigration and integration issues. The Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, which was seen as controversial yet comprehensive immigration legislation (O'Halloran, 2008), attracted a number of objections for its vagueness and restrictions in areas such as family reunification and marriage restrictions. The Bill debates have been put on hold as government efforts were diverted towards the issues of the country's economic recovery. Thus Irish immigration policies remain largely fragmented, outdated, and inefficient in dealing effectively with current immigration issues.

The immigration policy adopted by the Irish government aspired to be based on a mid-way approach between assimilation and a multicultural model (Mac Cormaic, 2007), and the importance of this two-way process is often stressed. However, with the recently changing economic circumstances, the policy focus on immigration issues has been negatively affected. While in previous years, government efforts have been made towards integration and the inclusion of immigrants, the government budget for 2009 included significant

spending cuts in this area, leading towards more protectionist policies. For example, there was a 25 percent decrease of the budget for the Minister for Integration, with additional requirements to withdraw funding and abandoning the establishment of the proposed specialist Integration Taskforce. Further cuts included the closure of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism which was a prominent organisation in the area of government advisory feedback, while also being responsible for reporting racist incidents and conducting immigration research. The Equality Authority's and Human Rights Commission's budgets were also cut dramatically, questioning the political commitment to social inclusion even further (Department of Finance, 2009). While it is necessary to decrease government spending during the times of economic recession, these changing policies offer less protection to the immigrant community.

Tougher measures regarding work permits, residency and study visas for non-EU immigrants have been also implemented in government's efforts to protect the Irish economy. There are four key immigration status categories for non-EU immigrant groups: work permit holders (Stamp One), students (Stamp Two), spouses of those on Stamp One and visitors (Stamp Three), and those with a leave to remain in Ireland (Stamp 4) (Joyce, 2009). There are numerous restrictions tied to all forms of immigration stamps, making it increasingly harder to obtain a renewal visa. For example, those who receive a work permit cannot change their employer and they are not entitled to any social or medical benefits even though they contribute with tax payments.

As seen from the above discussion, Ireland presents a very interesting context for this study.

The country has experienced remarkable economic growth followed by a very sharp decline thereafter, coupled with large scale immigration flows over the last decade. It is obvious that apart from the economic circumstances, the socio-cultural environment in Ireland has also been changing correspondingly. It appears that Ireland has not become a pluralist society, neither on a social nor policy level. While at present, the growing anti-immigration sentiment is a result of the economic recession, appropriate policies should be put in place to prevent longer-term marginalisation and discrimination of immigrants as it has been the case in other countries (such as in France), instead of the current government approach of no action.

#### **4.3. WHO ARE IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURUS IN IRELAND?**

While the majority of immigrants participate in the Irish labour force, up to 12.6 percent (Cooney and Flynn, 2008) are pursuing the entrepreneurial path. Chapter Three focused on a theoretical debate of entrepreneurship activities of immigrants. Discussion in this chapter focuses its attention on an analysis of the Irish environmental context in terms of entrepreneurship. It is within this context that the participants of this study actively attempted to establish their enterprises. Thus overview of the Irish entrepreneurial climate, support entrepreneurship policies and initiatives designed specifically to aid prospective immigrant entrepreneurs is seen as useful.

### **4.3.1. Entrepreneurial Climate in Ireland**

In general, the entrepreneurial climate in Ireland is very positive. The latest 2008 GEM survey (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009) was conducted in June 2008 when the economy started to decline but the real consequences were not yet fully appreciated. According to Fitzsimons and O’Gorman (2009), in 2008, 7.6 percent of the adult population were engaged in entrepreneurial activities, a decline from 8.2 percent in 2007, while established entrepreneurs remained at nine percent. In spite of this decline, Ireland still ranked above the average among other EU and OECD countries in terms of entrepreneurial rates. However, a significant decrease in a number of nascent entrepreneurs meant that while in 2007, 4.2 percent of people took active steps towards establishing a business, in 2008 this percentage dropped to 3.3 percent. The declining economic conditions were also reflected in a perception of good entrepreneurial opportunities – a sharp decline from 46 percent in 2007 to 27 percent in 2008. The number of necessity or pushed entrepreneurs also rose from six percent in 2007 to 19 percent in 2008. However, Ireland is still perceived as a good place for business and entrepreneurs are still highly valued in the society which in turn encourages new entrepreneurs (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009). The full impact of the economic recession on entrepreneurial activities of people living in Ireland will possibly become more visible in the next GEM report which is due to be published in June 2010.

GEM study (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009) defined early stage entrepreneurs as comprising of nascent and newly established entrepreneurs. Thus information available about this cohort is the most relevant to this study. Table 4.2 summarises the main characteristics of early stage entrepreneurs in Ireland (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009).

**Table 4.2 – Characteristics of Early Stage Entrepreneurs in Ireland in 2008**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Description</b>
Gender	Male – 11.2 percent of men were early entrepreneurs (10.6 percent in 2007) Female – 4 percent of female were early entrepreneurs (5.6 percent in 2007)
Age	Highest propensity to start-up: (1) 35-44 years old (9.8 percent); (2) 25-34 years old (8.5 percent); (3) 44-54 years old (8.2 percent) Lowest propensity to start-up: over 55 year olds (3.5 percent)
Education	Both high and low education in contrast to some other countries where the propensity to start-up increases with educational attainment
Background	Households with above average income
Personal context	69 percent knew another entrepreneur, 86 percent had a confidence in own abilities to run a business, and are less inhibited by failure (27 percent)
Pushed/Pulled	81 percent are pulled by an opportunity 19 percent (increase from 6 percent in 2007) are pushed as a result of a necessity
Sectoral Concentration	(1) consumer sector (37 percent); (2) business services (30 percent), and (3) transformative services (25 percent)
Export Orientation	64 percent expect to have export orientation
Employment Creation	82 percent expect to become employers; 23 percent expect to have over 25 employees within 5 years

Source: Fitzsimons and O’Gorman (2009)

Table 4.2 shows that the entrepreneurial field is dominated by men. This is consistent with most other international early stage entrepreneurs. The female participation in self-employment decreased and this was attributed to the women being more risk adverse, having lower growth expectations and planning to start with lower financial requirements. The age of entrepreneurs is similar to other countries, while it is interesting to see that the early stage entrepreneurs are spread more evenly across different educational attainment levels. Knowing another entrepreneur seems to encourage a person to consider self-employment and subsequently increase their self-confidence and belief in their abilities. Furthermore, entrepreneurs in Ireland are largely opportunity driven in spite of some recent increase in necessity entrepreneurship. They are mostly concentrated in services with expectations to export. Finally, most of these entrepreneurs expect to provide employment to others, thus

potentially creating additional employment positions. These characteristics show that entrepreneurial activity in Ireland remains mostly positive.

Over the last number of years, the Irish government is increasingly realising the value of indigenous entrepreneurs. Until more recently, the reasons were centred around the fact that large multinational companies have been continuing to relocate to countries with lower cost bases. The importance of fostering indigenous entrepreneurship has been also seen as a vehicle out of the economic recession and as the means towards long-term economic sustainability. The need for the creation of a knowledge-based economy has been also advocated in various policy reports (Enterprise Strategy Group, 2004; Small Business Forum, 2006; Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009). The Small Business Forum (2006) recognised the importance of entrepreneurship and recommended that the government should adopt a comprehensive national entrepreneurship policy. Subsequently, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment appointed Forfas (national policy advisory body for enterprise and science) to draw up an entrepreneurship policy statement. This statement was published in September 2007 providing the background and supporting information to the national entrepreneurship policy statement. The government is due to publish the new policy statement in the near future as the current policy attention has been diverted to deal with the impact of the economic recession. However, there is generally a positive government attitude and policies towards supporting entrepreneurship.

#### **4.3.2. Immigrant Entrepreneurial Activity in Ireland**

It is generally agreed that immigrants tend to be more entrepreneurial than natives because

by taking a decision to leave their home country in pursuit of better opportunities, entrepreneurial characteristics such as risk-taking, self-determination, and ambiguity of uncertainty are displayed (Emerge, 2007). In addition, 50 percent of immigrants fall into the 25 – 44 age category as compared to 28 percent of the natives (CSO, 2008). This category is very active in terms of entrepreneurship in general (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009), therefore it presents a large pool of entrepreneurial talent.

A significant number of immigrants choose the entrepreneurial path as opposed to regular employment. Bank of Ireland (2007) estimated that between 6 – 10 percent of all new businesses set up in the first half of 2007 were by immigrants. Cooney and Flynn’s (2008) research found that 12.6 percent of immigrants resident in Ireland were involved in self-employment. The recent GEM report (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009) found that the early stage entrepreneurial activities were higher among immigrants (9.1 percent) than native entrepreneurs (7.3 percent). Fitzsimons and O’Gorman (2009) further found that nascent entrepreneurial rates were similar between the immigrant (3.6 percent) and the native (3.3. percent) cohort. These more recent surveys provide some indication about the numbers of immigrant entrepreneurs but due to the unavailability of past statistics, a historical trend analysis is not possible. Even though other government agencies (such as the Revenue Commissioner and the Companies Registration Office) collect information about the nationality of business owners, this information is not comprehensively analysed and published. The recent inclusion of immigrants in the GEM study is a significant step forward into gaining access to more regular insights about this important entrepreneurial group.

Two recent studies offer insights into immigrant entrepreneurship in Ireland (Cooney and

Flynn, 2008) and in the Dublin area (Pinkowski, 2009). Cooney and Flynn’s (2008) study defined immigrant entrepreneurs from a disadvantaged point of view, excluding nationalities with English language and economic and social backgrounds similar to Ireland, while using the term ‘ethnicity’ interchangeably with ‘nationality’ (cf. Chapter 3.2 for definitional boundaries adopted in this study). Over 1,000 respondents were surveyed. The main characteristics of these immigrant entrepreneurs are summarised in Table 4.3. These are the characteristics of established immigrant entrepreneurs as the study did not distinguish between nascent, early stage and established entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, it provides previously unavailable indications about immigrant entrepreneurs in Ireland, even though it excludes some nationalities.

**Table 4.3 – Characteristics of Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland in 2008**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Description</b>
Gender	Male: 78 percent; Female: 22 percent
Age	(1) 25-44 years old (94 percent); 44 – 65 years old (6 percent)
Education	(1) third level degree (82.5 percent); non third level qualification (17.5 percent)
Economic Status	78 percent were previously employed prior to starting their own business
Pushed/Pulled	61 percent were opportunity driven; 39 percent were pushed towards self-employment due to the lack of other choices
Sectoral Concentration	(1) information, communications and technology sectors (17.5 percent), (2) wholesale/retail sector (16 percent); (3) restaurant/food sector (15 percent)
Export/Import Orientation	Export: 27.6 percent export products to their country of origin; 34.2 percent provide services to their country of origin Import: 46.8 percent source products from their country of origin
Employment Creation	57.5 percent of these businesses had no employees while 36.5 percent had between 1 – 5 full time employees; 6 and more – 6 percent
Perceived Discrimination	50 percent of business owners experienced discrimination from their clients, 40 percent from financial institutions and 36 percent from other competitors
Experienced Difficulties in Business	(1) gaining the trust of Irish business actors; (2) securing finance; (3) a general lack of familiarity with the Irish business environment

Source: Adapted from Cooney and Flynn, 2008



The above summary shows that similar to the general entrepreneurship trends in Ireland (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009), male immigrant entrepreneurs significantly outnumber their female counterparts. The majority of these immigrant entrepreneurs are highly educated but in spite of their high education, they are necessity, rather than opportunity driven. They mostly come to self-employment from paid employment. These immigrant entrepreneurs operate in low capital intensive sectors. The majority of these businesses are very small in size, whereas the individuals work on their own or employ less than five employees. Around 50 percent of all surveyed immigrant entrepreneurs experienced discrimination from their clients or other stakeholders. Gaining trust from the local business stakeholders was seen as the highest difficulty for immigrant business owners. This is followed by discrimination from financial institutions and the lack of knowledge of the culturally sensitive business rules in the new host environment. This is the first in-depth study of the immigrant entrepreneurs operating their businesses within the Irish milieu and it provides a starting point for future research. However, as it does not include all foreign-born entrepreneurs, the picture is perhaps somewhat skewed.

The second recent study of immigrant entrepreneurship in Dublin area was undertaken by Pinkowski (2009). Pinkowski (2009) defined immigrant entrepreneurs as those with a birth place other than Ireland which is a broader definition than the one adopted by Cooney and Flynn (2008). In addition to policy recommendations for Dublin City Council in the area of entrepreneurship, the study also reported on experiences of existing immigrant entrepreneurs operating in Dublin. Pinkowski (2009) distinguished that 34 percent of respondents were in business, while 46 percent were thinking about starting a business at some point in the future. However, there was no specification of a time frame for those thinking about starting-up,

thus the group of 46 percent would contain both aspiring and nascent immigrant entrepreneurs. There is no additional information about either of the subgroups in Pinkowski's (2009) study. It is in this area that the present study can make its contribution by offering qualitative insights into the experiences of the nascent immigrant entrepreneurs, as no other studies in the Irish context have previously addressed these issues.

While the importance of immigrant entrepreneurs has been highlighted by both the Small Business Forum (2006) and Forfas (2007), there are numerous legislative constraints impacting on the successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities by nascent immigrant entrepreneurs. This is especially the case for those originating from non-EU countries as EU members are able to establish their businesses relatively easily. Non-EU individuals are required to obtain permission from the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to start a business. According to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2005), the most popular sectors for which business permission applications were received were ethnic restaurants, information technology, artists/writers, chiropractors, and translators.

However, there are a number of criteria which have to be complied with in order to obtain a business permit: (1) the proposed business must have a minimum of €300,000 financial capital; (2) employment for at least two EU nationals must be created or employment maintained in an existing business; (3) the proposed business must add to the commercial activity and competitiveness of the State, (4) the proposed business must be viable to provide the applicant with sufficient income to support him/herself and any dependants without seeking public funds or paid employment for which a work permit would be required, and

(5) the applicant must hold a valid passport or national identity document and must be of good character. To conform to these criteria and additional requirements is very difficult, and even Irish entrepreneurs would find it challenging to fulfil them. The criteria relating to start-up capital or numbers of employees would be particularly hard to comply with as in general, entrepreneurs start with a small amount of personal or bank capital and do not tend to employ other people at the beginning (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2007; Cooney and Flynn, 2008). Even though some exceptions exist in obtaining business permits by non-EU applicants, the conditions are increasingly restrictive (Pinkowski, 2009). Although it is relatively easy to set up a company in Ireland in terms of the legal and bureaucratic requirements, this process is much more complicated for immigrant entrepreneurs coming from non-EU countries.

Evidently, it is not easy for non-EU immigrants to become self-employed in Ireland due to the restrictive legislation. However, not all government agencies are consistent in advocating these restrictions. Both the Companies Registration Office and the Revenue Commissioners do not request a proof of a business permit from non-EU individuals at a business registration stage. Due to this inconsistency, it is possible for those without an appropriate business permit to register their business and tax in Ireland. Anecdotal evidence shows that there are numerous small businesses in operation without a correct business permit. For example, many Asians, who are in Ireland on a student visa and are allowed to work 20 hours per week, ignore these rules and become self-employed. Even though tertiary non-EU graduates are able to become employed in Ireland for a limited time period, self-employment option is not offered. Thus the Irish economy may be missing out on potential benefits gained from enabling highly educated individuals to become self-employed (Pinkowski, 2009). Perhaps, in efforts to encourage indigenous entrepreneurship in Ireland, the Irish government should

be more consistent in their cross-organisational records, in addition to allowing highly educated immigrants from non-EU countries to establish businesses in Ireland. This would not only provide additional employment but also increased revenue and innovation. Instead, many such businesses operate under the official government radar.

The entrepreneurial climate in Ireland is largely positive, providing supportive conditions for those immigrants who would like to become self-employed. Those who come from other EU member states are able to benefit from the relatively simple business start-up procedures. However, those coming from non-EU countries who do not have the Irish citizenship have to follow much more difficult business start-up criteria or instead start their business activities in an illegal fashion. Specific enterprise supports have been created in order to aid immigrants wishing to start their own business which are discussed next.

#### **4.3.3. Enterprise Supports Available to Nascent Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Ireland**

Enterprise supports in the form of skills training and business guidance is often seen to have a positive impact on the nascent entrepreneurial efforts (cf. Chapter 3). GEM report (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009) provided evidence that about one third of early stage and established entrepreneurs in Ireland participated at entrepreneurship training. Those who undertook such training felt more positively that they had the appropriate skills and knowledge to start a business and they were more likely to start a business in the future. While in the past, support from state agencies came primarily in a financial form, their role has now changed. Presently, their responsibility is focused on the provision of soft supports such as information provision, guidance, and aiding potential entrepreneurs in overcoming

initial bureaucratic obstacles. The key purpose is to direct potential entrepreneurs towards the creation of sustainable and profitable businesses.

There are a number of different government agencies which provide information and support while establishing a new business. The Companies Registration Office and the Revenue Commissioners often require registration by those who wish to start business trading. The Department for Trade and Enterprise is a government department which provides legal guidance about establishing a business in Ireland. Local town and city councils may be also consulted by nascent entrepreneurs with regards to planning issues and charges. The Patents Office, Bord Bia and Health and Safety Authority provide information, registration and compliance with their procedures in specific sectors. Enterprise Ireland provides grants and assistance to high growth technology businesses with international potential. These are just some of the government organisations and public bodies which require registration of businesses and provide useful sources of information. However, Pinkowski (2009) found that there was a very low awareness of these organisations by prospective and established immigrant entrepreneurs in Dublin area.

Apart from the government organisations which provide information on the legal compliance of running a business, there are also other organisations which provide soft supports to nascent entrepreneurs. These soft supports usually take the form of enterprise training programmes, mentoring, and organising networking events. There are a number of such organisations in Ireland which include Enterprise Ireland, the Small Firms Association (SFA) and the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME), the County and City Enterprise Boards, Chambers of Commerce, and the Irish Industrial Development Agency.

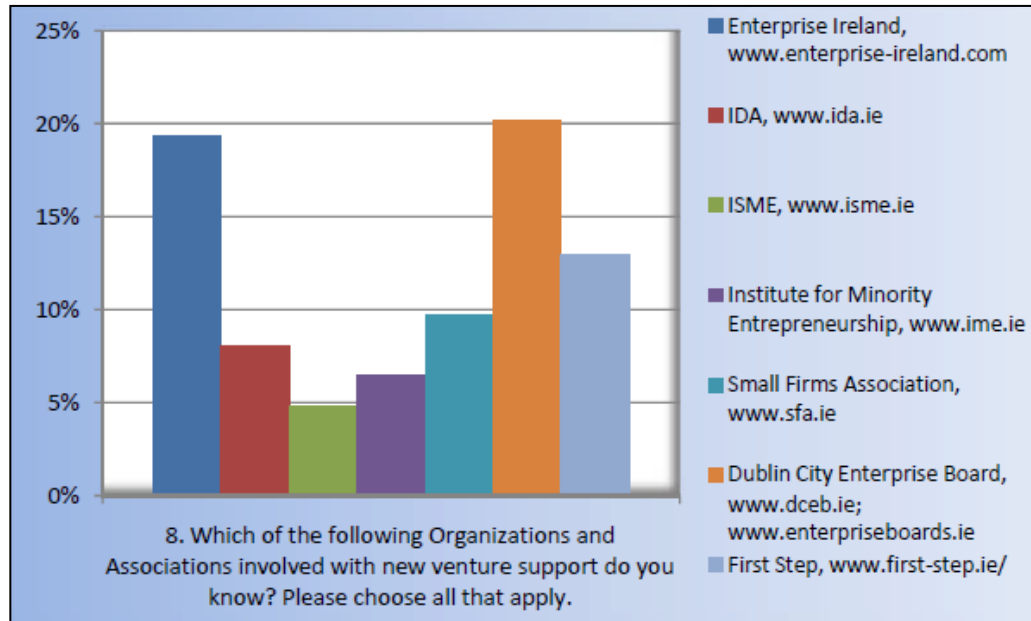
These enterprise supports are aimed at all entrepreneurs living in Ireland.

The second group of enterprise support organisations focus specifically on the needs of nascent and established immigrant entrepreneurs. Both the GEM report (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2007) and the Small Business Forum report (2006) highlighted that immigrants should be encouraged and supported in their efforts of micro-enterprises development. Thus initiatives focusing on the nascent and existing immigrant entrepreneurs have been created, aiming to assist the potential entrepreneurs coming from diverse backgrounds. The Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship (DIT) provides enterprise training, mentoring support and other specific events with an aim to aid immigrants in starting a new enterprise. The First Step organisation specifically focuses on the provision of micro finance and mentoring to both immigrant and Irish led businesses. In addition to these organisations, The Ethnic Entrepreneur of the Year Award recognises the entrepreneurial efforts and contributions of immigrant businesses. The awards highlight business champions from immigrant communities, providing role models to other immigrants aspiring to become self-employed. Finally, the EU funded Emerge project run from 2005 until 2007 and provided specific training to over 200 immigrants over its duration. After the project finished, some of the former partners continued to provide tailored enterprise training. The research for this thesis recruited the participants from one such programme and observed the participants during its duration (cf. Chapter 5.5).

In spite of the availability of tailored enterprise support for immigrant groups, these initiatives do not seem to be reaching their targets effectively. When the nascent and existing immigrant entrepreneurs that are located in Dublin (Pinkowski, 2009) were asked about their

awareness of enterprise support agencies providing soft supports, their awareness was low (see Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3 - Awareness of Business Start-up Support Organisations by Immigrants**



Source: Pinkowski, 2009

Pinkowski's (2009) study found very little awareness of soft business start-up support organisations available to nascent and established immigrant entrepreneurs among his sample of established entrepreneurs in Dublin. Enterprise Ireland and Dublin City Enterprise Board were two organisation with higher familiarity. However, the awareness of the services of the Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship (DIT) and First Step was very low. Cooney and Flynn (2008) also found the highest awareness of County and City Enterprise Board among their participants. However, only 26 percent of the sample asked for support from an Enterprise Board and only eight percent received any support from the Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship (DIT). In spite of much government effort to provide both general and targeted enterprise supports for potential immigrant entrepreneurs, it seems that there is little

awareness of these supports among their targeted audience.

The problem of not knowing where to go for enterprise support by immigrants who are not familiar with such institutions in Dublin area was previously highlighted and addressed by compiling an Enterprise Handbook for immigrants (Pinkowski, 2009). However, this useful handbook and other general and targeted enterprise resources need to be marketed to the potential immigrants in a suitable manner. Personal communication and reliance on information received through co-immigrant networks was identified as an important source of information (Mottiar and Laurinčíková, 2008; Cooney and Flynn, 2008). Pinkowski (2009) found that while the free morning newspaper Metro AM was identified as regularly read by immigrants, Metro Eireann, a multicultural newspaper aimed at immigrant community, was regularly read by less than 5 percent of the respondents. Thus these enterprise organisations need to be aware of where the immigrant community source their information.

The overview of enterprise support system in Ireland shows that there are many organisations which provide information about business requirements in Ireland. In addition, there are enterprise bodies which focus on the provision of soft supports to prospective entrepreneurs. While some of these support agencies target both the Irish and immigrant groups alike, other support organisations have been designed to target the specific needs of nascent and existing immigrant entrepreneurs. While such targeted enterprise supports are available, the majority of the immigrants surveyed in Cooney and Flynn's (2008) and Pinkowski's (2009) studies were not aware of their existence. As the immigrants in Ireland often rely on the informal help that they receive from their social networks (Mottiar and Laurinčíková, 2008), utilising



existing immigrant social networks for promotion of enterprise supports may be more effective.

This contextual review showed that the entrepreneurial climate in Ireland is still perceived in a positive light in spite of declining economic conditions. Establishing a business from a legal and bureaucratic point of view is seen as relatively easy and straight forward for those coming from Ireland and other EU member states. However, the requirements and the procedures are much more complicated for non-EU immigrant entrepreneurs. While a comprehensive enterprise support system is put in place, there is a little awareness of these initiatives among the immigrant target groups. The overview of the entrepreneurial climate and immigrant-specific enterprise developments and support in Ireland thus provided an important contextual background to this study.

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the specifics of the Irish context. It is within this economic, political, and socio-cultural context that the participants pursued their cross-cultural adaptation journey. The participants underwent their cross-cultural adaptation and their nascent entrepreneurial activities within the context of worsening economic conditions, rising unemployment, and mixed attitudes of the Irish population towards immigrants. While simultaneously existing in the Irish and home cultures, it is within the Irish environment that the participants focused their efforts for better lives.

Based on the review of the key theoretical developments and themes within the literature on

cross-cultural adaptation, nascent immigrant entrepreneurship process, and the specifics of the Irish context, this research seeks to contribute to the extant knowledge in a number of ways:

- (1) It answers the call of Singh and DeNoble (2004) for incorporating cross-cultural adaptation variables in studies of entrepreneurship. Thus this research seeks to explore the key variables, experiences, and dynamics of the cross-cultural adaptation process and the nascent entrepreneurial process in which immigrants engage over time simultaneously.
- (2) Previous studies focusing on nascent immigrant entrepreneurs which incorporated some aspects of the cross-cultural adaptation or cultural variables, often focused on comparisons of different ethnic groups on a group level (such as cultural predisposing factors), using a quantitative research design (cf. Chapter 3.5.1). Some of the previous qualitative studies in this area applied several variables of the cross-cultural adaptation but in a retrospective way (Pio, 2006). Thus this study seeks to address these issues by combining the process of the cross-cultural adaptation with the process of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship on an individual level, in a longitudinal qualitative study design.
- (3) The literature review also pointed out the need for qualitative, longitudinal studies of nascent entrepreneurship process which would explore the process of ‘becoming’ (Davidsson, 2005, 2006; Steyaert, 2007). Thus this study seeks to understand this process as it happens, focusing on a small number of individuals. It will incorporate the dynamics of the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and exploitation, the negotiation of resources for entrepreneurial use, and it will also shed light into the concept of the dynamics of the gestation activities. The research focus on immigrants may find out that

different or additional variables and dynamics may be of importance to this cohort in comparison to the traditional focus on the general population of nascent entrepreneurs.

- (4) Studying the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants in real time will enable one to understand the activities, actions, interactions and perceptions of both those who complete their nascent entrepreneurial activities but also those who do not. Davidsson (2005) and Sarason et al. (2008) called for such real time studies. The immigrant cohort will provide additional dimensions to studying the nascent entrepreneurial process of those who complete it but also those who abandon their entrepreneurial efforts.
- (5) The study is situated in the Irish context. From a theoretical point of view, Ireland provides a context where immigrant entrepreneurship is still a relatively new phenomenon without the widespread existence of ethnic enclaves or ethnic economies, typical of countries such as the UK and the US. Thus this study will show how immigrants engage in the nascent entrepreneurial process, both practically and theoretically.

Based on the literature review, theoretical gaps in knowledge were identified. A clear research question guiding this research emerged as: ‘What is the nascent entrepreneurial process of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation?’ The next chapter details the methodological considerations and the practical steps taken to answer this key question.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**METHODOLOGY**

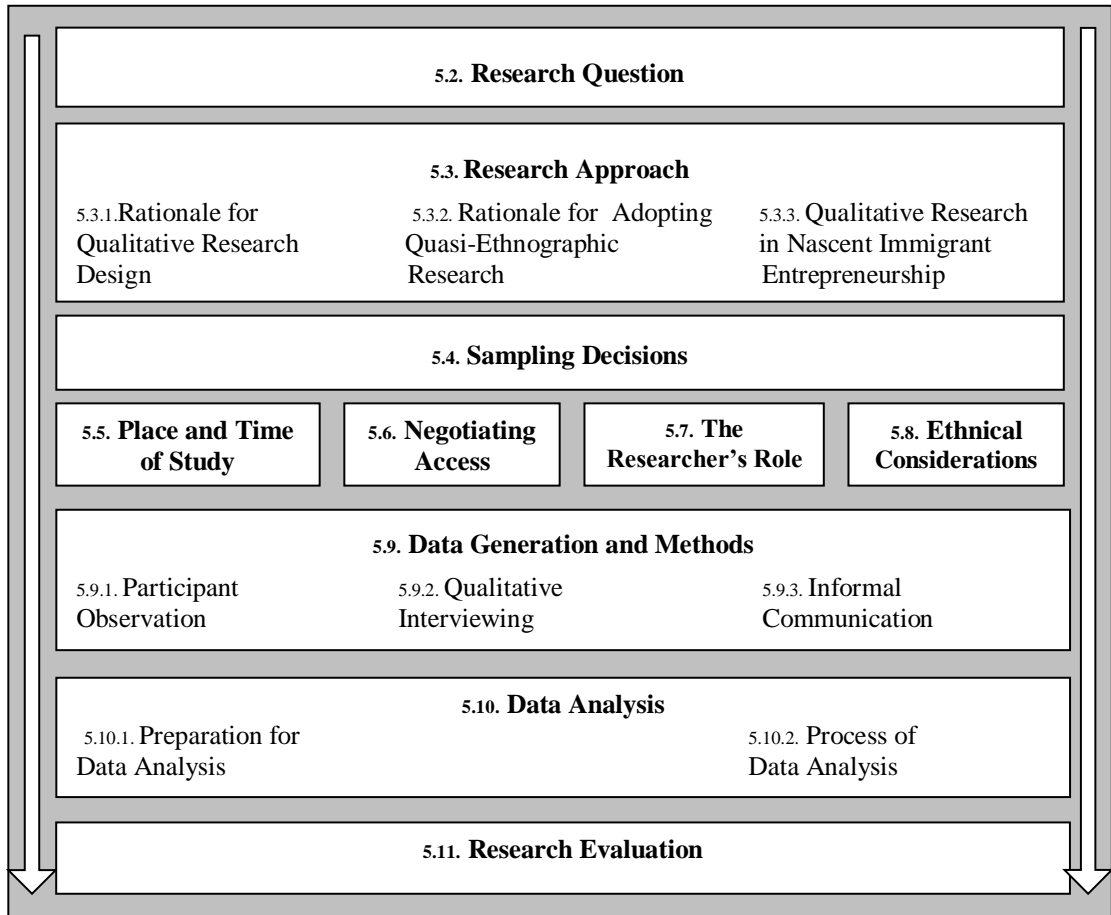
*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.*

Marcel Proust

**5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter sets out the methodological considerations used to answer the key research question of this study: ‘What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation?’ Figure 5.1 shows an outline of how this chapter is organised.

**Figure 5.1 – Discussion Outline of Chapter Five**



Source: Author

The research question is set out and discussed first. The qualitative interpretive research approach and its axioms were adopted in this study for their suitability in answering the research question. The rationale behind the selection of a quasi-ethnographic research method adopted in this study is also discussed. Sampling decisions and other practical decisions (such as the time and place of the study, access, researcher's role, and ethical considerations) are outlined. Three key research methods were used in this study – participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and informal communication. These methods are debated from the theoretical point of view in addition to a practical discussion on how they were applied and justified in this particular study. The grounded theory approach to data analysis was adopted to scrutinise the generated data. This method of data analysis was used as it provided rigour and flexibility at the same time, ensuring that all generated categories and themes were traceable back to data. The NVivo data management software provided a coherent structure to the task of data analysis. Finally, throughout the study's duration, vigilant steps were taken to warrant the trust in the research by adopting of Guba and Lincoln's (1985) techniques to ensure the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

## **5.2. RESEARCH QUESTION**

The interest in the topic of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship emerged as a result of the researcher's ongoing engagement in the field of immigrant entrepreneurship. In addition, the researcher not only had first hand experience of being an immigrant in Ireland herself but also had an interest in starting her own business in Ireland. This combination of curiosity, personal experience, and academic interest resulted in the pursuit of the research task of

exploring further the issues of immigrants who attempt to become self-employed in Ireland. The ongoing process of the literature review together with a personal immersion into the field, helped the researcher to identify a gap in prior research studies. Extant research in the field of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship has not previously addressed sufficiently the interactive role of cross-cultural adaptation on the process from a qualitative, longitudinal point of view (Singh and DeNoble, 2004). Indeed, previous theoretical and empirical studies in this area have predominantly focused on the role of co-ethnic cultural traditions of immigrant groups (Light and Gold, 2000), and used intra-group comparisons, rather than studied this phenomenon on an individual level. The preponderance of largely quantitative studies in this area (Reynolds et al., 2004) have not accounted sufficiently for the individual experiences of the nascent entrepreneur in a longitudinal context. To date some qualitative studies have offered some interesting insights (Pio, 2006; Ram et al., 2008) but were based on the analysis of historical data rather than catching the individuals' experiences on contemporaneous basis.

As a result of the identification of a research gap, a key research question emerged:

***What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation?***

This research question emerged out of an effort to fill the research gaps which were identified in the literature, personal experiences, and ongoing immersion in the field by the researcher. The research question is characterised by its explorative nature as the research sought to gain greater insights, to understand and to examine the research phenomenon. Specifically, it sought to bridge the gap between the nascent entrepreneurial process and the cross-cultural adaptation process that immigrants engaged in. It also sought to give them a 'voice', missing

until now in other related studies. In order to answer the overarching research question, the researcher sought to identify, explore and understand the key cross-cultural adaptation variables that played a role in the nascent entrepreneurial journey of the participants within an Irish context. At the same time, the researcher sought to illuminate the nature of the participants' economic adaptation trajectories which brought them to consider and to take actions towards becoming self-employed in Ireland. Finally, the nascent entrepreneurial journey of these participants in the research was explored and greater insights sought to their experiences of nascent entrepreneurship within a dynamic cross-cultural adaptation process.

A qualitative research design was deemed to be the most appropriate and most likely to elucidate the nature and depth of these dynamic processes of cross-cultural adaptation and nascent entrepreneurship. The study focused on seeking greater insights into how these processes were perceived and experienced by the individuals in this research. Their interpretations of the events, actions, interactions, perceptions, and emotions constituted important elements of the study's findings (cf. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Cognisant of the research problem, selected qualitative methods (cf. Section 5.9) were applied in a quasi-ethnographic manner (cf. Section 5.3.2) over a prolonged time period of 18 months (cf. Section 5.5).

### **5.3. RESEARCH APPROACH**

The research approach to this study is qualitative, adopting an interpretive research methodology. In this section, the reasons for selecting this research approach are debated first. A quasi-ethnographic approach was seen as best suited for capturing the essence of this

research. The rationale for adopting quasi-ethnographic approach and overview its application in the previous studies in the area of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship is also debated.

### **5.3.1. Rationale for Qualitative Research Design**

Prior to commencing the study, the researcher had to adopt a particular research paradigm. Research paradigms are essentially about how the complexities of the world are viewed and the way in which intellectual puzzles or research problems are solved. Each research paradigm that is available to researchers is based on different assumptions and employs diverse methods in their inquiries.

Quantitative research is essentially designed to describe conditions, investigate the nature of relationships, and study the causation effect of a research phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). A qualitative research position seeks to gain a deeper understanding of a research problem from a participant's point of view within a particular social setting. It emphasises discovery, exploration and description of participants' actions, interactions, and the meanings that they attach to particular situations. Table 5.1 contrasts the basic assumptions between the quantitative and qualitative research positions.



**Table 5.1 – Contrasting Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

<b>Axioms About</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
The nature of reality (ontology)	Reality is single, tangible, and fragmentable.	Realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic.
The relationship of knower to the known (epistemology)	Knower and known are independent, a dualism.	Knower and known are interactive, inseparable.
The possibility of generalisation	Time- and context-free generalisations (nomothetic statements) are possible.	Only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements) are possible.
The possibility of causal linkages	There are real causes, temporally precedent to or simultaneous with their effects.	All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.
The role of values	Inquiry is value-free.	Inquiry is value-bound.

Source: Adapted from Lincoln and Guba, 1985

The assumptions and philosophical underpinnings vary greatly between the qualitative and quantitative research positions. It is these diverse assumptions that shape the way that researchers approach social inquiry. Moses and Knutsen (2007) emphasised that these paradigms do not have to be seen as exclusive or opposite. Rather, they should be viewed on an imaginary continuum where individual researchers can locate themselves whilst engaging in a particular study. Qualitative studies can capture some of the finer details, dynamics and relationships which are not possible with larger scale quantitative studies. Thus quantitative and qualitative studies can inform each other, representing the same phenomenon, but from the perspective of the distant observer and the microscopic lens respectively. To answer the key research question, the qualitative interpretive paradigm was adopted.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2) defined qualitative research as:

‘...multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals’ lives’.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) further clarified that qualitative research focuses on discovering concepts and their relationships which are subsequently organised into a theoretical scheme with explanatory power. Qualitative research is seen as essentially grounded in the interpretive philosophical position which acknowledges that reality is socially, culturally, and historically constructed (Neuman, 2000). It is primarily concerned with how complexities of the social world are experienced, understood, and interpreted by the participants who are located within a particular context and time (Maxwell, 2005). Thus human behaviour cannot be fully understood in isolation from the context which influences it. It is the researcher’s role to become immersed in the social context of the participants, interact with them in meaningful ways and to understand their multiple realities from the perspective of the participants (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). Even though knowledge, experiences, and their interpretations constantly evolve and change, the produced concepts or body of knowledge provide an invaluable foundation for a discussion and act as guidance for practice. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 11) reflectively concluded that ‘knowledge may not mirror the world but it does help to understand it’.

Consistent with these philosophical underpinnings, the key focus of this study was to uncover the individual experiences of the participants which a quantitative approach would have failed to uncover. The close interaction and prolonged engagement between the researcher

and the participants as seen by Lincoln and Guba (1985) was another important way of gaining a deeper appreciation of the social phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, the interpretive methodology was concerned with uncovering and analysing the participants' experiences as they happened. In other words, as Patton (2002, p. 159) emphasised, 'the process **is** the point rather than simply the means of arriving at some other point. The journey, not the destination, is what matters'. Observing the participants' attempts, initiatives, and actions over a prolonged period of time provided an in-depth insight into the dynamic and complex phenomenon. The researcher's concern was to find out and to understand how the participants engaged in this process rather than to test whether they measured up to some predetermined criteria. Thus the nature of the research was exploratory and emergent (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

The aim of this research was not to make broad generalised statements because it was context-specific. However, by providing a rich description of the context, researcher's role, participants and the process, the transferability judgement lies with a person seeking to make that transfer. In agreement with Strauss and Corbin (1998), while generalisation in a quantitative sense of view is not possible or desirable, a more theoretically and abstractly based generalisation at some level is possible. Through the analytical process in which data is raised to a more conceptual and abstract level, the researcher is able to arrive at theoretically relevant research findings, bringing new insights into a certain phenomenon.

Finally, the shortcomings of the qualitative approach must be acknowledged. Silverman (2006) outlined some of the key criticisms of the qualitative research such as its contextual sensitivity (in which contexts to which their subject refers can be missed), reliability (how a

researcher goes about categorising the events or activities described), anecdotalism (how sound are the explanations offered), and validity (true picture of the phenomena). Strauss and Corbin (1998) also cautioned against the potential subjectivity problems associated with being human as a research instrument in qualitative studies. However, as Berg (2007) pointed out, there can equally be badly conducted qualitative or quantitative research if the researcher adopts the paradigm and its methods inadequately. Various techniques and tools have been developed to establish the trustworthiness and value of the qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The researcher ensured that the potential pitfalls were well understood and measures were taken to prevent or minimise them (cf. Section 5.11).

### **5.3.2. Rationale for Adapting Quasi-Ethnographic Research Approach**

This research adopted a quasi-ethnographic research method position. This approach was chosen because the research had several key characteristics of an ethnographic method but it did not meet all of the necessary criteria of a full ethnographic research project.

Brewer (2000, p. 6) provided a comprehensive definition of what comprises an ethnography:

Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also in the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally.

Definitions of what comprises ethnographic research are often quite broad and Hammersley (1992) saw these blurred definitional boundaries as necessary. However, Hammersley (1990) suggested five key features which can help to identify a particular research project as being ethnographic: (1) behaviours are studied in everyday context, without experimental

circumstances exposed by the researcher, (2) observation and informal conversations are the primary means of data collection, (3) data collection is flexible and unstructured to avoid imposing pre-existing categories, (4) the focus is normally on a single setting or a group, and (5) the data is analysed by attributing meanings to the human actions described and explained. Thus ethnographic research is seen as involving a prolonged engagement within a certain group or settings, utilising mainly observational and unstructured interviews to reveal the meanings.

This research was concerned with studying a group of immigrants for an extensive period of 18 months; which is common for ethnographic research (Jeffrey and Troman, 2000). Even though the researcher was extensively engaged with the group during the study duration (cf. Table 5.3 for a frequency of contact with the participants), the researcher did not ‘live’ with the participants. In other words, the researcher did not enter into the participants’ private spheres of their homes and daily activities in which a more holistic picture would have emerged. This is the main point in explaining why this research is positioned as quasi-ethnographic, as the researcher did not become completely immersed in the participants’ daily lives even though ethnographic methods of observation, qualitative interviewing, and informal communication were applied. However, at the same time, the researcher could ‘live’ with the participants through their shared experiences of being immigrants in Ireland. The same status of being an immigrant in Ireland provided a shared meaning of this experience between the researcher and the researched. At the same time, the researcher recognised that she could not precisely understand what it was like to be an immigrant man from Africa or an Albanian immigrant mother. However, it was the ‘insider’ status that enabled the researcher to gain the trust of the participants, who shared their stories and feelings more

willingly and openly. For example, the division between ‘them’ (the Irish) and ‘us’ (the participants and the researcher) was often implied during conversations by the participants.

While this research could not be positioned as purely ethnographic, due to certain shared characteristics, it could be considered as quasi-ethnographic in character. The research methods included observation (participant as observer), semi-structured qualitative interviewing, and unstructured informal communication in a cyclical rather than a linear manner (Spradley, 1980). Six individuals were studied which enabled the researcher to access their in-depth and rich accounts over time.

### **5.3.3. Qualitative Research in Nascent Immigrant Entrepreneurship**

Even though entrepreneurship can be considered as applied science rather than a ‘pure’ science (Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007), it lacks methodological diversity in its research. Quantitative, survey-based studies are much more common than qualitative, real time studies (Davidsson, 2005; Bygrave, 2007). Chandler and Lyon (2001) ascertained that studying complex and dynamic entrepreneurial events in real time is much more beneficial, as post hoc studies often suffer from biases due to memory loss, selective events recollection, and time lapse. Gartner and Carter (2005) and Davidsson (2005) saw the relevancy of qualitative methodology in studying the nascent entrepreneurial process. Arguably, studying such emerging activities should be captured early as they happen. Davidsson (2005) further highlighted the high relevance of studying both successful and unsuccessful attempts of nascent entrepreneurial activities as it uncovers uncertainties and other activities which would not be subjected to post-hoc distorted bias. Gartner and Carter (2004) also advocated

the benefits of real time qualitative research studying the nascent entrepreneurial process as evidence needs to be accumulated to better understand this process and the multitude of interactions during this process.

Qualitative studies within immigrant entrepreneurship do exist. The work of Ram (for example Ram, 2000; Ram et al., 2008) used an ethnographic methodology in their studies of existing family owned immigrant businesses in the UK. Perren and Ram (2004) called for the greater use of ethnographic methods in immigrant entrepreneurship research. However, there is a lack of studies within the literature on the nascent entrepreneurial processes of immigrants and the related processes of cross-cultural adaptation. Even when qualitative studies addressed the issues of nascent entrepreneurship and nascent immigrant entrepreneurship with some cross-cultural adaptation features, they were not usually carried out longitudinally. For example, Pio (2006) studied the nascent entrepreneurial activities of Indian women in New Zealand using theories of cross-cultural adaptation such as cultural boundaries and identities. Grounded in feminist epistemology, the study produced meaningful insights into the participants' entrepreneurial journey but it was studied from a historical perspective. Nee and Sanders (2001) also studied the self-employment trajectories of immigrants through job history analysis. Thus there is a clearly identifiable methodological gap which this study's methodological design seeks to address.

While the previous studies in the area of nascent entrepreneurship are invaluable in understanding the patterns and the dynamics of this important stage of the entrepreneurial process, there is a need for more in-depth, empirically based longitudinal studies which would illuminate the processes and underlying accounts of those involved in this process.

This study's methodological design enabled the researcher to gain greater insights of the experiences, processes, accounts, actions, and emotions of a small number of individuals as they engaged in nascent entrepreneurial activities within a cross-cultural adaptation process. In this way, the underlying individual processes of nascent activities can be uncovered and meaningfully reconstructed.

#### **5.4. SAMPLING DECISIONS**

A sampling strategy is concerned with the selection of those who are going to be studied. Mason (1996) defined that sampling is concerned with the procedures of identifying, choosing, and gaining access to useful units. In the interpretive research enquiry, in which an understanding of social processes in specific contexts is sought, purposive or theoretical sampling is mostly applied. This type of sampling involves selecting groups or categories for study on the basis of their relevance to research questions. As Taylor and Bogdan (1984) explained, the actual number of studied cases is not as important as their potential to generate theoretical insights into the studied social phenomena. Throughout the analysis, the process of constant comparison and focus on negative cases lead to a gaining of the theoretical significance.

The purpose of this research was not to construct an exhaustive account of nascent entrepreneurial activities within the process of cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants but to gain significant insights into the experiences and processes of a small number of individuals involved in this process. Hence the selected sample had to aid in understanding of the processes and experiences of these individuals rather than to statistically represent the



population as a whole or to establish causal relationships. This significant and in-depth exploration of the experiences, meanings and processes could only be possible with a small number of individuals. Thus such a significant level of continuous engagement and interaction, if it was to be meaningful, would not be possible with a larger sample.

As previous research shows (Davidsson, 2006), the transition from the nascent stage (to either the latent stage of self-employment or the ceasing of the entrepreneurial efforts) occurs over a prolonged period. Hence it was deemed as vital to study these processes over a longer period of 18 months. The individual immigrants who were engaged in the process of undertaking nascent entrepreneurial activities were identified through a pre-enterprise Emerge programme provided by a local enterprise board which the study participants attended. Cooney and Flynn (2008) found that 26 percent of their sample of immigrant entrepreneurs in Ireland attended business training programmes provided by County and City Enterprise Boards with further 10 percent participating specifically at an Emerge programme. Thus finding a research sample this way proved invaluable as the Emerge programme provided a pool of nascent immigrant entrepreneurs. Furthermore, those who enrolled to attend the programme already had a business idea which indicated that they had started the process of nascent entrepreneurial activities (Gartner et al., 2004). As the researcher participated in this programme as a participant-observer, 60 hours of observation of the participants was possible in addition to informal time before and after each seminar. This also enabled the building of trust and a positive relationship between the researcher and the participants which facilitated sustained interaction for the rest of the study's duration.

In total, there were five individuals who participated and completed the full Emerge Programme. These individuals were the core sample of this study. One additional participant (Lietus), who exited the Emerge programme agreed to be interviewed, which provided additional valuable insights. The majority of the participants lived near to the enterprise centre where the programme was delivered (cf. Section 5.5 for the study place description).

The selection of a sampling frame of six individuals was based on the following reasons. Richness and diversity was sought in an effort to understand the process of nascent entrepreneurial pursuit undertaken by the research participants within an Irish context of their cross-cultural adaptation. As Table 5.2 shows, all of the study participants originated from different economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. These ranged from a developed Western country (France), post-communist countries (Albania and Hungary), a caste-system country (India), and a developing country (Nigeria). The participants' religious beliefs (such as Christian and Hindu) and racial differences (Caucasian, Asian and African) further added to the richness and diversity of the sample. In addition, there was an equal division between males and females which allowed the researcher to uncover gender specific experiences. Other gender-related issues of family status were also a part of the selection criteria. The research sample consisted of those who were single with no children, divorced with a child living in a different country and those who were married with children (both mothers and fathers). Thus a sample frame of six individuals allowed the researcher to gain significant insights into the diverse experiences of the study participants over a prolonged time period.

**Table 5.2 - Sample Description**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Study Participants</b>					
<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Pamela (PI)</b>	<b>Obusi (ON)</b>	<b>Monika (MH)</b>	<b>Sebastien (SF)</b>	<b>Lisa (LA)</b>	<b>Lietus (LL)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Age</b>	30s	30s	30s	30s	30s	30s
<b>Racial background</b>	Asian	African	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
<b>Home Country</b>	India	Nigeria	Hungary	France	Albania	Lithuania
<b>Family Status</b>	Married, 2 children	Married, 3 children	No spouse or children	Divorced, 1 son in France	Married, 2 children	Married, 2 children
<b>Years in Ireland</b>	7	2	1	2.5	4	1
<b>Highest Education</b>	Masters Degree	Diploma	Masters Degree	Masters Degree	Diploma	Masters Degree
<b>Previous Entrepreneurial Experience</b>	No	No	No	Yes 4 years Third country	Yes 3 years Home country	Yes 5 years Home country
<b>Current Economic Status</b>	Advertising freelancer, Full time mum	Unemployed	Full-time Architect	Full-time Online Marketing	Part-time Admin	Part-time Construction
<b>Economic Status prior to Emigration</b>	Full-time Advertising	Full-time Air Conditioning Technician	Full Time Architect	Unemployed	Self-employed Pizzeria	Unemployed Business Failure
<b>Original Business Idea(s)</b>	Communications agency, sponsorship bags	Healthcare recruitment agency	'breeze blocks', construction supervision	Design agency	Hairdressing salon	Jewellery import

Source: Derived by Author from Research Analysis

In accordance with the ethical guidelines, names and some other identifying information were changed in order to protect the individuals' anonymity and privacy. Within data analysis and interpretation, the participants are either referred to by their names (such as Pamela) or by acronyms which consist of two letters. The first letter refers to their pseudonym and the second letter to their country of origin (such as PI – Pamela India). This is a sample description valid at the beginning of the primary research in February 2008. The business ideas which are presented in Table 5.2. were changed during the time of the study by some participants (cf. Chapter 7.3).

## **5.5. PLACE AND TIME OF STUDY**

The study evolved around those individuals who participated at an Emerge programme (cf. Chapter 4.3.3 for more discussion on Emerge Programme). As part of the Emerge project mainstreaming, after the EU funding expired, a number of former members continued to provide these programmes in their own organisations. In the first half of 2008, only two of these Emerge programmes were run – one in Dublin and one in County Cork. Even though training materials are available to interested organisations, due to the negative economic conditions and perceived lack of interest from the potential immigrant entrepreneurs, currently all of these programmes have been put on hold. The Dublin based enterprise centre which operated the Emerge programme at the beginning of 2008 was chosen for this study. The enterprise centre's manager was aware of the specific needs of the immigrants who wanted to become self-employed, as he was also involved as a trainer in the previous Emerge programmes.

The enterprise centre was located in the Dublin 15 area of Blanchardstown and its surrounding areas. This part of Dublin is located in the north-west part of Dublin County and is characterised by dynamic changes in its population make-up in terms of its demographics and labour participation. According to statistical analysis by Ryan (2008), the area experienced a high increase of population (23.7 percent compared to the national average of 8.2 percent), the area has a high level of a younger population, a large part of the area is classified as marginal or disadvantaged with high levels of unemployment, and it had a high proportion of immigrants living in the area (22 percent in comparison with the national average of 10 percent). In fact, 65 percent of the population increase in the area over a four

year period was attributed to the immigrants moving to the area. This was due to the large scale development of housing in the area in combination with the greater availability of employment opportunities and lower cost of living than in some other parts of Dublin. As a result of such a rapid demographic change, some anti-immigrant sentiment was also evident in the area (Ni Chonail, 2007).

The Emerge programme which was part of this study was run between 5<sup>th</sup> February and 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at the local enterprise centre in Blanchardstown. The researcher fully participated in this programme. A well furnished meeting room was used to facilitate learning due to the small size of the group. The Emerge programme was run in the evening time twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays between 6.30 pm and 9.30 pm (See Appendix A for Emerge programme schedule). In addition, other methods were used after the Emerge programme finished. The study duration and the methods used are illustrated in Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2 – Study Duration and Methods Used**

Participant Observation																	
						Interviews					Interviews						
Informal Communication																	
02-08	03-08	04-08	05-08	06-08	07-08	08-08	09-08	10-08	11-08	12-08	01-09	02-09	03-09	04-09	05-09	06-09	07-09

Source: Author

After the Emerge programme ended, the research continued employing qualitative interviewing and informal communication methods (cf. Section 5.9 for discussion on applied research methods). As the majority of the participants resided in the Dublin 15 area, these interviews were carried out in various locations (such as hotels) convenient to the participants.

## **5.6. NEGOTIATING ACCESS**

An essential part to any successful study is gaining access to targeted participants. It involves establishing a positive and mutually understanding relationship with the main gatekeepers who decide whether or not a researcher can access other key informants. In the case of the present study, it involved negotiating access to the Emerge programme with the manager of the enterprise centre where the Emerge programme was operating. Fortunately, the manager was known to the researcher from previous professional encounters so the relationship was already established for a longer time. When the manager was approached about this study, he was very willing and cooperative to accommodate any reasonable research requests. The relationship with the main trainer on the Emerge programme was also established prior to the programme commencement. The initial meeting which occurred through work was approximately 18 months before the Emerge programme started. The ongoing willingness to help and the encouragement of the main gatekeepers was crucial and invaluable to the success of the study.

## **5.7. THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE**

This qualitative research project based on the quasi-ethnographic design involved the active participation of the researcher. The researcher's role did not only include being a 'translator of other person's words and actions' (Corbin and Strauss, 1998, p. 49) but also played a critical issue in determining value in the research. Indeed, the researcher's background, values, biases, judgments, professional background and familiarity with the topic all shape the interpretation of the research (Creswell, 1994; Walsham, 2006; Corbin and Strauss,

2008). The researcher becomes a research instrument as it is not possible to generate, analyse and interpret qualitative data without the personal involvement of the researcher. Creswell (1994) ascertained that a researcher's background, views and experiences need to be stated clearly and explicitly. For this purpose, the third person style of writing is now temporarily exchanged for a more personal first person introduction of the researcher.

*I was born and raised in north Slovakia. My relationship with my parents and my younger sister has always been very close. My childhood was a happy one without any significant disruptions in my personal life. One event which shaped my life and to a greater extent the lives of those older than me was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent fall of communism in Czechoslovakia triggered by the so-called Velvet Revolution. Even though I was only 9 years old at the time I vividly recall images of these events from a television. After that life changed and it was noticeable. We no longer had to smuggle jeans from Poland or buy western products in special shops. Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Tesco and other corporations replaced the local brands. The economy also changed dramatically from a position where everything was owned by the state, everyone had a job (but no freedom of expression) and where competition did not exist (the prices were pre-printed on goods) to a market economy where self-employment became possible, people could say what they liked (and did not go to prison for it), and where free market competition began. The early days were marked with confusion but gradually things levelled out and following the amicable break up of Czechoslovakia in 1993, both the Czech Republic and Slovakia went their separate ways. A member of the European Union since 2004, Slovakia enjoys a positive economic growth, the infrastructure has hugely improved as well as its service industry and tourism.*

*Growing up during these changes affected me as a person and my way of thinking. For example, entrepreneurs were initially seen as 'chancers' and 'robbers' as during the early days many tried to get rich by deceiving others as many gaps in the legislation existed. I did well in school and chose to study business and economics during my secondary education. After that, I travelled to Ireland in the summer 1998 with a view of improving my English*

*before starting university at home. I did not get my place at a Slovakian university that year but, I applied for a course in Ireland and to my surprise the entry exam consisted of an informal chat and I got offered a place a week later!*

*I gradually moved from a certificate to a diploma level, to a degree and masters. In spite of pursuing my education in a foreign language, I excelled in my studies achieving first class honours in every course I completed. Being awarded a gold medal for academic achievement in my master's degree course was a great honour and a proud moment for my family. My hunger for success was perhaps caused by my background and the fact that I wanted to prove myself in a foreign country and I knew that things did not come easily to 'blow ins'. I worked hard in college and I worked hard outside of college as I had to earn my own living and support myself through college. It was not always easy but it paid off. Hence I understand that it is hard for immigrants to establish themselves in Ireland and to become successful.*

*Since I left home, I always wanted to have my own business in the area of tour operations. That is why I studied tourism and worked in tourism to gain practical experience. However, when I wrote a business plan as part of my master's thesis I realised that the market in Slovakia was not ready for the type of clients I had in mind. After a number of conversations with my former lecturer, I decided to take a route of academic research and started my PhD. I was fortunate to become a part of the Institute of Minority Entrepreneurship where I was exposed to other immigrants who wanted to start their own business and to people who worked in the area. Furthermore, I made a conscious effort to get to know other cultures first hand and one of the most interesting ways is through lecturing foreign students. Regular contact with those coming from different countries exposed me to their values and the everyday challenges that they face.*

*From my life story presented so far, it can be seen how my values and experiences shaped my views and the person that I am. This in turn inevitably impacted on how I related and understood other participants in this research. At the beginning I was perceived as quite 'exotic' by the Irish people as the Celtic Tiger was only in its infancy and immigration just began to increase then. Luckily, apart from a few minor and quite subtle incidents, I did not have many negative experiences due to my background. Many of my friends whom I first met*



*while studying are Irish and I am married to an Irishman so I feel a sense of belonging now, even though I still miss my family and friends from home. Due to my cross-cultural experiences of the past 11 years and my encounters with many other foreign people in Ireland, I am much more aware and empathetic of the experiences of the participants in this research. However, I do not claim that I can fully understand the experiences of those in my study, particularly those who have racial differences and whose experiences were different than mine. Also, some of the study participants have children and again, I cannot understand what it is really like to be a mother or a man. Nevertheless, we share many common experiences such as those of leaving our families behind, starting from nothing, and constantly proving ourselves in economic and social spheres where resources are becoming increasingly sparse.*

The researcher's own background characteristics thus inevitably interacted with the research project. The researcher took measures and precautions to minimise subjectivity and research bias stemming from being a research instrument. Different measures were employed during the process of data generation and data analysis such as applying different research methods to achieve data triangulation and crystallisation (Richardson, 1994. Mason, 1996), maintaining researcher's reflections, looking at negative cases, always questioning one's assumptions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), member checking, peer debriefing, and ensuring transparency and traceability of data coding process using NVivo software tools (cf. Section 5.10 and 5.11).

Even though the ethnographic research originally involved studying foreign and exotic cultures (Hammersley, 1992), researchers studying people with a common ethnic background or national origin is no longer considered as particularly new. Many researchers feel that by studying similar groups, they are able to gain their trust and respondents become more relaxed and open about the issues under investigation. For example, Ram (1994)

commented that in his interviews one respondent said that he was only talking to him because he knew his family and he was not white so having some type of a connection or a tie makes the information exchange process more fruitful. So being 'the other' can be seen as advantageous. However, Mason (1996, p. 151) pointed out that a common standpoint position does not automatically give an 'epistemological privilege to such an extent that the researcher has no need to demonstrate the validity of their interpretations in any other way'. Thus great care was taken not to assume that by virtue of being part of the immigrant community, experiences, views and stories would be assumed to be perceived similarly in any way. The researcher always questioned her assumptions, looked for alternative explanations, and sought comments from peers. This important matter of minimising research bias, establishing trust and value in the research is demonstrated further in Section 5.11.

## **5.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Good qualitative research is guided by sound ethical principles. It is not only about the 'greater good' of the research findings, as those who are involved in the process must be respected and protected. Ethical guidelines are not something that are considered only on paper but the whole research process is guided by these important principles. There are a number of ways in which research subjects can and should be protected (Mason, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2006; Israel and Hay, 2006). The following are some of the key ethical considerations of this research.

### **(1) Informed Consent**

It was considered as an ethical duty of the researcher to fully inform research participants when obtaining their consent. At the beginning of the study, during the first Emerge

programme session, the study aim and purpose was explained in addition to how the researcher intended to generate data, and what would happen with the data after it was generated. Great care was taken to convey the study information in a non-academic language so all participants who were not native English speakers could understand it (Birman, 2006). The participants were given an opportunity to ask further questions about the research at any time. Apart from the verbal presentation, a written Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) Study Information and Consent Form was presented to each individual for review and signing. A confidentiality statement was also provided, assuring the protection of the anonymity of the individual and their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reasons.

## **(2) Confidentiality**

Even though some respondents were willing to share their identity, the majority of the participants wanted their identity to be protected. A confidentiality statement was included in the Study Information and Consent Form presented to study participants. The CEO of the Enterprise Centre felt indifferent about his identity anonymity. Verbal reassurances were also given when some individuals sought them. Before any data was published in any form, it was ensured by the researcher that all of the participants' personal and other names, employment details, place names, and any other identifying facts were changed. Protection of the raw data and access to them was also ensured. Data was stored on a password protected computer and any printed materials were kept strictly confidential by the researcher.

### **(3) Harm and Risk**

Harm and risk can be caused to participants but also to the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Israel and Hay, 2006). Fortunately, the issues of actual harm and risk never became a reality during the process of data generation in this research project. The researcher always treated others equally and with respect. Even though places of the interviewing were largely selected by the participants, they were never unsafe for the female researcher and she never felt exposed or threatened by any of the male or female participants.

### **(4) Honesty and Trust**

Researchers should be always honest and open about their study purpose. Due to the longitudinal nature of this study and the frequency of contact between the researcher and the study participants, relationships based on trust were gradually established. In agreement with Mason (1996), the researcher felt that the participants became more open with their answers as the relationship became more established. The interviews were more like a conversation between trusted peers with reassurances about protection of personal information given when needed. Another positively contributing factor which was already discussed earlier was the fact that the researcher also belonged to the immigrant community so the participants seemed to feel more at ease while talking about their experiences of cross-cultural adaptation.

These key ethical research considerations were an ongoing part of the research process. Research institutions such as DIT have their own ethical guidelines and every research study has to be approved by the research ethics committee. This was the case for this research which had to pass the ethical committee and had to adhere to the institution's ethical guidelines. Even though these ethical guidelines were a matter of the institutions'

requirements, the researcher felt a personal moral obligation towards study participants to protect their identities as their contributions were significant and completely voluntary over the lifetime of the project.

## **5.9. DATA GENERATION STRATEGY AND METHODS**

Cognisant of the methodological issues, the researcher immersed herself into the social realities of the research phenomena. Through employing suitable methods of enquiry, which are considered in this section, a wide array of data was generated. Mason (1996) pointed out that data is not neutrally collected, rather it is generated as the researcher actively constructs knowledge about the social world. In agreement with Mason (1996) and Hammersley (1992) on the issue of data generation, different methods of enquiry were carefully considered.

Qualitative methodologies available to a researcher are very diverse, each holding their own merits and drawbacks. Their choice depends on the fit with the phenomenon under research and sample characteristics but is also influenced by the researcher's experience, time, and other resources availability. The selected methods must be able to capture the rich complexities and depth of the social phenomenon under investigation. Within the ethnographic methodology, observation and unstructured conversations are the most common tools used for data generation and the use of more than one method has been encouraged (Berg, 2007). This quasi-ethnographic research focused on capturing a process of participants, its actions, reactions, responses, and activities over a prolonged time period. Thus the immersion of the researcher herself in the social world of the study participants was seen as advantageous. Therefore, participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and

ongoing informal communication were selected as the most valuable methods for generating insightful and in-depth data in this study.

The issue of using multiple methods is closely linked to the issue of methodological triangulation. Triangulation is a maritime term used to confirm a position from three different points. The usefulness of triangulation has been seen in the fact that the same phenomenon is studied from different angles to ensure that the resulting findings are consistent and accurate. However, Mason (1996) argued that because there are multiple realities, using more than one method does not necessarily result in getting only one comprehensive result, rather it sheds light onto different aspects of the phenomena or different layers of it. In an attempt to enhance the understanding of the purpose of a method triangulation in interpretive research, Richardson (1994) suggested the idea of crystallisation as a useful addition to a fixed, two dimensional triangle. The metaphor of using a crystal to look at data considers the different shapes and colours that a crystal casts, depending on an angle and available light. Thus the crystallisation approach increases the understanding of the topic under investigation – its depth, complexity, and thoroughness. The use of multiple methods of observation, qualitative interviewing and informal communication over time was seen as very useful in getting closer to the participants' experiences and perceptions. This meant that by using different methods, the research resulted in common themes, which were enriched by understanding of the participants' realities by looking through a crystal.

### **5.9.1. Participant Observation**

The observation of study participants enables a researcher to better understand what people do – the practices of everyday life, the performance of social selves, or the execution of social encounters (Atkinson et al., 2003). It involves the researcher's immersion in a study setting with the purpose of a systematic observation of the settings, interactions, relationships, events, and other encounters. From an ontological standpoint, actions, interactions, behaviours and their interpretations are seen as important, while the epistemological viewpoint of the social reality suggests that knowledge and understanding of the social world can be obtained through participating, experiencing the 'real life' settings or observing (Hammersley, 1992).

There are different forms of observation available to a researcher. Bollingtoft (2007) divided the different forms of observer roles as: a (1) complete insider either as a 'complete participant' or a 'participant as observer', or as a (2) complete outsider either as an 'observer as participant' or a 'complete observer'. Each of these forms have their advantages and disadvantages which are needed to be carefully weighted. The 'participant as observer' method was deemed as the most valuable option for this work. Adopting this method (Saunders et al., 2003; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2006) means that the researcher reveals the purpose as a researcher, as the main interest lies in gaining trust of other participants. Revealing the purpose also enables the researcher to ask further questions and gain a much richer understanding of the participants' actions, behaviours, and interpretations. Even though this method was identified as insightful for this study, it is underutilised in

entrepreneurship (Chandler and Lyon, 2001) and therefore provides scope for making a contribution in this area.

While participant observation can aid in gaining significant insights to a particular phenomena, the researcher must also be aware of the method's limitations. While carrying out an observation, it is not possible to observe and subsequently capture everything that goes on when the observation takes place, thus potentially valuable data can be lost. Furthermore, people who are being observed may develop feelings of intrusiveness. Bryman and Bell (2007) argued that significant time needs to be invested in observation in order to become sensitive to the settings and actions within it. The researchers must be aware of their own role as a researcher and be cautious of situations where their researcher position may be compromised. Too much time spent in the field can result in the danger of 'going native' where the researcher identifies him/herself with the values of the group and their judgment becomes impaired (Atkinson et al., 2003). Prior to conducting participant observation, the researcher became familiar with the method and its limitation and as far as possible took precautions to limit the shortcomings of the method, such as questioning of one's own assumptions, keeping reflection notes and looking for alternative explanations, and seeking for externally determined critical commentary from peers, and conference presentations (cf. Section 5.11).

At the beginning of the Emerge programme, all participants were told about the researcher's PhD study, what was involved in the study, and what their participation would involve. However, in order to fit better within the group and to share their 'journey', the researcher also became a participant. In real life, the researcher had an interest in starting a business and completed a business plan for her proposed venture in the past. The business idea of



setting up a tour operator business was therefore used. It provided a common ground for conversations and any group or individual tasks during the Emerge programme.

There were a total of 20 Emerge sessions (cf. Appendix A), resulting in 60 hours of observation. In addition to the actual learning sessions, informal conversations before each session and during breaks provided many valuable insights. The researcher took written notes during each session. After each session, short reminders of what was being discussed during breaks were also noted. Due to the sessions finishing very late, it was not feasible to type up all notes immediately afterwards. However, all handwritten notes and other recollections of the events from the previous night were typed the following day in order to reduce loss of valuable insights and observations due to memory decay. In addition, a reflective diary was kept to keep track of researcher's own feelings, ideas, and perceptions. It resulted in over 120 typed observational notes in addition to the reflective diary notes. These notes were then uploaded to the NVivo programme and the relevant parts were coded during the process of data analysis (cf. Section 5.10).

There were no major problems encountered during the course of observation. Even though the participants knew of the researcher's purpose, they seemed to act naturally during the Emerge programme, and the trust between the participants and the researcher was gradually established. During breaks and other informal interactions they answered questions openly and they also received honest answers from the researcher. The immigrant background of the researcher was advantageous as there was a common understanding shared of certain problems and experiences.

Overall, the participant observation method generated useful insights into how the participants exploited their entrepreneurial opportunities in a structured way during the Emerge programme. Even more significantly, positive relationships and trust were built with the participants. This resulted in their great willingness to continue to be a part of the research in the next phase which represented two subsequent rounds of qualitative interviews and ongoing informal communication.

### **5.9.2. Qualitative Interviewing**

Many social researchers engage in the process of interviewing as it generates useful and valid information about people's experiences and their meanings (Silverman, 1993; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). However, it is important to establish why and how interviewing can uncover the experiences and help to understand the individual participants. Atkinson et al. (2003) emphasised that through words, individuals construct their lives, justify their actions, give explanations, and locate their own actions within a wider shared social reference system.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 633) defined interviews as:

‘a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening. It is not a neutral tool, for at least two people create the reality of the interview situation. In this situation answers are given. Thus the interview produces situated understanding grounded in specific interactional episodes.’

Interviews are treated as a topic rather than a research resource as such. As Hammersley and Atkinson (cited in Silverman, 2006, p. 129) added, ‘accounts are not simply representations of the world, they are part of the world they describe’. What is important therefore is how interviewees actively create meanings. Thus this type of interviewing goes beyond the ‘what’ questions by asking the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions.

While the qualitative interview technique can undoubtedly provide very insightful accounts of the participants' experiences, the method's limitations must also be recognised. Due to the fact that interviews involve human interaction, most limitations relate to this fact. Mason (1996) argued that the interviewees will only allow the interviewer access to limited interpretations and understanding. However, people construct meanings through words and as Atkinson et al. (2003) concluded, interviews represent a form of social action and it is through talking that people construct and reconstruct their experiences. Marshall and Rossman (2006) argued that interviewees may be unwilling or uncomfortable to share information, or they may not be aware of the reoccurring patterns in their lives which were discovered by the researcher. Misrepresentation of the answers due to the cultural or language differences may also occur. Atkinson et al. (2003) debated the issues of telling the truth by the interviewees and they concluded that it is a complex issue as there is no universally accepted truth, rather the individuals are involved in the construction and reconstruction of social events. The researcher's background, gender, interviewing abilities, time and resource commitment can present another potential limitation. The researcher must be aware of these limitations at all stages of the data generation and analysis and even though some of the limitations cannot be overcome, others can be minimised to some extent.

Informed by the literature on conducting interviews (Mason, 1996; Arksey and Knight, 1999; Hammersley, 1992; Silverman, 2006; Berg, 2007), semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant on two separate occasions following the end of the Emerge programme. The use of broad thematic sheets, rather than a set of questions allowed coverage of the important issues while giving enough flexibility to tailor the interview to the individual

needs. The themes were initially generated from the extant literature but later were largely guided by the emergent issues raised by the participants and from the process of the initial data analysis. In this way, the qualitative interview was seen as a mutual social interaction process.

There were two rounds of interviews. The first round of interviews was arranged three months after the Emerge programme completion (28<sup>th</sup> August – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008). The purpose was to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants' background in addition to what was already learned through observations and informal communication, and understanding of their cross-cultural adaptation trajectories. Secondly, the nature of the participants' economic adaptation including entrepreneurial opportunities and the course of their exploitation were also explored. The themes were centred around the key issues identified in the literature review (such as the nature of entrepreneurial opportunities sources and their exploitation) but interview themes also emerged from the previously conducted participant observation and informal communication with the participants (such as the nature and difficulties in the cross-cultural adaptation, the nature of interactions with the Irish people, and the role of one's family responsibilities in pursuing economic adaptation in Ireland).

The second round of individual interviews took place after a subsequent five months from the time of the first interviews (14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> February 2009). The purpose of these interviews was to elicit the nature of the participants' nascent entrepreneurial activities, and other cross-cultural adaptation experiences and strategies which they have employed since the first interview. Emerging themes and codes from the analysis of the first interviews and observations allowed the researcher to explore these concepts further in the second interview.

These included further exploration of emergent topics such as business confidence, the pursuit of entrepreneurial path as a plan B, and the impact of the worsening economic conditions on the participants' lives.

Each interview lasted between 50 minutes and 2 hours and 45 minutes in length. A time gap of a number of months was purposely placed between the individual interviews. This was due to the fact that the participant's nascent entrepreneurial activities and their cross-cultural adaptation evolved over time. However, the researcher remained in touch with the participants through the methods of informal communication (cf. Section 5.9.3). All interviews were transcribed before they were analysed (cf. Section 5.10.1).

The interviews took place at various locations convenient to the participants. The majority of the interviews were conducted in proximity to where the individuals lived. The interviews themselves always started with an informal chat as the researcher and the interviewee knew each other and a higher level of trust and rapport was already established beforehand which enabled a friendly update on each other's affairs. After that, the study purpose was explained once again and other ethical issues such as the protection of individual privacy, confidentiality and the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. All interviews were recorded and the researcher used a discrete digital recorder so the participants could feel more at ease. While the theme sheets provided guidance during each interview, their sequence or exact content was not strictly adhered to as it was important to tailor each interview in reflection to the direction the conversation was taking. At the same time, the researcher had to keep in mind the purpose of the interview, listen and respond actively, observe and act on cues, body language and tone of the voice, reflect on what was already said and prepare the next questions (Arksey and Knight, 1999). So even though

qualitative interviewing was labelled as a 'conversation with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984, p. 102), in reality it was a much more complex and demanding task. A great amount of preparation was necessary. In addition, as suggested by Legard et al. (2003), great care was taken to ensure that questions covering both breadth and depth were asked.

The experience of doing the interviews was mostly positive. The researcher had some previous experience of doing interviews so the logistics of it were known. However, each interview had different dynamics which made the experience even more interesting. As there was a closer relationship based on trust established previously, it was felt that emotions and feelings were expressed more freely. For example, during one interview in the second round, one participant got very emotional when talking about her employment related problems. It showed that she felt comfortable sharing her emotions with the researcher. Similar to the participant observation, a reflective diary after each interview was written up noting researcher's own feelings, impressions about the interviewees, what happened before and after each interview, and any other ideas which emerged as a result of the interaction. These reflections were uploaded to the NVivo programme and the relevant sections were coded. The data became very useful during the data analysis stage as they reminded the researcher of the context and other specific issues such as the participant's body language, their mood or the nature of an informal communication before and after each interview.

### **5.9.3. Informal Communication**

The last method of data generation was informal communication with the participants. Informal conversations are often featured in ethnographical research (Hammersley, 1992). The use of an electronic communication method in data generation has been a feature of more

recent qualitative studies (Suzuki et al., 2007; Wakkee et al., 2007). This third method of data generation was unstructured and ongoing between the researcher and the participants. Through the use of this method, the researcher got insights into the participants' experiences over the time period of 18 months.

There were different ways in which informal communication occurred:

- (1) **Break times and conversations before and after Emerge programme sessions** – the nature of these conversations and any ideas stemming from them were recorded in observational notes and the reflective diary.
- (2) **Shared bus journeys** – toward the end of the Emerge programme it was discovered that Monika was also taking a bus from the city centre to Dublin 15 where the Emerge programme took place. After realising this, many bus journeys (lasting a minimum of 45 minutes each) to and from the Emerge programme were shared. During these, numerous informal conversations took place. During the qualitative interview, the researcher felt that this informal background information provided her with a better understanding of Monika's accounts and experiences which proved very helpful as she was a naturally quiet person.
- (3) **Informal group meetings** – During the second last session of the Emerge programme, the participants agreed that the group should maintain contact and meet regularly in order to support each other. Subsequently, two months later an informal meeting at an evening time took place, and another one in July 2009. Both of them were held in a restaurant in Dublin 15 close to where most of the participants lived. Everyone apart from Pamela (who had to stay at home with her children as her husband was working late) came to the

gatherings. After this, a reflective diary entry noting the conversations, and details of each individuals' stories and developments were noted.

- (4) Individual meetings** – informal meetings with some participants took place twice with Monika (25<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009) and once with Sebastien (4<sup>th</sup> July 2009). The researcher asked for a permission to use information from these meetings and noted the nature of the conversation in her reflective diary afterwards.
- (5) Telephone calls and text messaging** – this form of informal communication involved keeping in touch by mobile phone. On a number of occasions during the study life, such communication took place. For example, when Obusi received his residency status, he called the researcher to share his excitement and what this meant for his future in Ireland.
- (6) Electronic communication** – this form of informal communication took the form of emails between the researcher and the participants, Skype conversations, and social media (Facebook) contact. They were either initiated by the participants or by the researcher during the study duration. The relevant parts of this communication were coded such as certain parts of emails or Skype conversations. However, the nature of Facebook contact was more informal and it involved access to participants' photo updates but it could not be quantified into how many times there was a direct engagement. This form of informal communication continued until the end of the study.

The researcher remained in regular contact with all of the participants throughout the data generation period. The data generated from the above sources of informal communication method was used in the data analysis stage. The electronic conversations through email and Skype, and the researcher's reflective diary entries after personal communication encounters (such as informal group and individual meetings, phone calls, and text messages) were typed and uploaded to the NVivo programme. The relevant parts of the data were coded and used



in the data analysis and interpretation stages. The greatest advantage of this method was that the researcher could stay immersed in the participants lives for a long time and was able to gain insights into what was happening over time. However, it is important to note that none of the informal communication data was used in the research process directly unless verbal permission was obtained.

As seen from the preceding discussion of research methods used, there was a regular interaction with these individuals over a period of 18 months. This regular interaction provided significant insights into these individuals' economic adaptation of which the nascent entrepreneurial process was a part, and their cross-cultural adaptation experiences. Such frequent and close interaction with the participants would not have been possible with a larger sample. Table 5.3 below shows the numbers of interactions with each individual during the course of the study.

**Table 5.3 - Frequency of Contact with Study Participants**

<b>Nature of Contact</b>	<b>Pamela</b>	<b>Obusi</b>	<b>Sebastien</b>	<b>Lisa</b>	<b>Monika</b>	<b>Lietus</b>
Emerge Programme (ONE)	20	18	18	20	18	2
Interviews (INT1 and INT2)	2	2	2	2	2	1
Emails (ICE)	21	52	22	19	81	5
Phone – texts (ICS) and calls (ICT)	28	36	19	31	34	6
Skype (ICS)	-	8	17	-	11	-
Bus journeys (RNB)	-	-	-	-	9	-
Individual informal meeting (RNI)	-	-	1	-	2	-
Group informal meetings (RNG)	-	2	2	2	2	-
Facebook contact (FB)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Total no of contacts</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The above methods of inquiry all contributed to gaining in-depth insights into the participants' experiences. This contributed to achieving data triangulation, while such diverse and varied data sources enabled the researcher to examine the participants' experiences from different angles thus achieve added crystallisation. Within the data analysis and interpretation, acronyms are used with respect to the nature of sources. For example, ICE refers to 'informal communication email'. The full list is included in Appendix B.

## **5.10. DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis essentially involves mining beneath the surface and raising data to a conceptual level (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Data analysis is not the next step after the data is generated, rather the two processes are more parallel and simultaneous. In other words, data generation and its analysis happen almost together and they influence each other's direction. This process has to be strategic and internally consistent (Mason, 1996) and is largely inductive.

It is recognised that researchers inevitably interact with their data and are part of the analytical process (Mason, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This is in contrast to quantitative research in which statistical analysis is applied to test the data and is claimed to be free from the researcher's personal bias or influences. A qualitative researcher uses a set of strategic analytical tools which stimulate thinking and aid with digesting data. There are different analytical tools and strategies to data analysis available to researchers. Miles and Huberman (1994) saw data analysis as consisting of three simultaneous activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Mason (1996) discussed categorical indexing methods in data coding and

analysis, while Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) showed how concepts and typologies were developed in ethnographic research. Glasser and Strauss (1967) developed the constant comparison method. These are just some examples of the varied analytical strategies available to qualitative researchers.

This study predominantly adopted the data analysis tools from the grounded theory research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). It should be pointed out that grounded theory was not used as an overall approach to this study, rather the grounded theory process of data analysis was employed. This was because the strategies for data analysis developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) were seen as rigorous, yet offering a scope for flexibility and creative thinking. They occur on different levels ensuring that the analysis raises the data to a theoretical level by adopting various techniques to analysis (cf. 5.10.2).

This study employed data analysis tools available from grounded theory which are summarised in Table 5. 4.

**Table 5.4 - Grounded Theory Data Analysis Tools**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The use of questioning;</li> <li>▪ Making comparisons;</li> <li>▪ Thinking about the various meanings of a word;</li> <li>▪ Using the flip-flop technique;</li> <li>▪ Drawing upon personal experience;</li> <li>▪ Waving the red flag;</li> <li>▪ Looking at emotions that are expressed and the situations that aroused them;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Looking at language;</li> <li>▪ Looking for words that indicate time;</li> <li>▪ Thinking in terms of metaphors and similes;</li> <li>▪ Looking for the negative cases;</li> <li>▪ “So what?” and “What if?”;</li> <li>▪ Looking at the structure of the narrative and how it is organised in terms of time or some other variable.</li> </ul>
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Source: Adapted from Corbin and Strauss, 2008

The researcher made herself very familiar with all of these techniques for data analysis. For example, the use of the ‘flip-flop’ technique means that the data is examined in terms of opposites or extremes to bring out new characteristics, while ‘waving the red flag’ means that biases and assumptions of a researcher and research participants (words such as always, never) are questioned. These tools could not be applied mechanically but their variations proved very helpful, especially during the times when no new ideas seemed to emerge or the researcher felt ‘lost’ in the data.

### **5.10.1. Preparation for Data Analysis**

After the data was generated through the use of multiple methods, it had to be put into an appropriate form suitable for data analysis. In addition, technical considerations regarding qualitative data analysis software had to be understood and resolved. Both of these issues preceding the process of data analysis are discussed next.

Observational notes from the Emerge programme sessions and any other observations and reflective notes were typed up in a word document noting subject, date and location in each document’s header. These documents were then stored in appropriate folders on a personal computer and transferred to NVivo programme. However, interview data in audio format had to be transformed into text format. This involved transcribing individual interviews as they were completed. Due to time constraints, some transcription work was outsourced to a third party. In the interest of preserving the anonymity of the study participants, the person transcribing the data was not familiar with the study area or study participants (Arksey and Knight, 1999). There is an emphasis in the literature (for example Tilley, 2003; Bird, 2005)

that transcribing one's own data involves its interpretation at the same time and the process itself is very valuable. This fact was recognised by the researcher, but as one's own data transcription was not always viable, a number of techniques were employed to ensure that the transcripts were as accurate as possible and that the researcher was very familiar with them. This involved filling in gaps and comparing the transcripts with audio files in accordance with transcribing conventions (Easton et al., 2000; Tilley, 2003; Bird, 2005, DuBois, 2006), listening to the interviews on an MP3 player a number of times, and frequently re-reading the transcripts. Gaining such familiarity meant that the process of data analysis and interpretation of meanings started at an early stage.

The second part of the preparation for data analysis involved researching, selecting and becoming familiar with a qualitative software to aid with data analysis. In order to ensure analytical efficiency, clarity and traceability, a qualitative software programme NVivo was used for this purpose. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 44) mentioned some previous writers who criticised the use of software as it could move qualitative studies beyond 'the handicraft production'. However, much of the criticism comes from the times when computers were at the early stages of their development so this opposition can be linked to technological advancement issues and understanding rather than an epistemological position. What is important to note is that qualitative software helps to manage and support the process of data analysis by making it faster, clearer and transparent, but it does not do the analysis for the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It is a tool which makes the work of analysis and data retrieval easier, but as Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. xi) noted, 'findings are only as good as the researcher is willing to put into the analysis'.

Different options were explored in relation to qualitative analysis software packages. NVivo software was chosen after considering its merits and drawbacks. Subsequently, a one-to-one full day training was obtained. Ongoing technical support lasting the lifetime of the project was part of post-training support and was used on a several occasions. Participating in such focused training allowed the researcher to understand this qualitative data management software and to use it to its full potential during various stages of data analysis.

The researcher alternated between data generation, data preparation, and data analysis. This approach provided a substantial learning curve in addition to being able to address some rising issues with the participants and to engage in theoretical sampling. The process of data analysis is discussed next.

### **5.10.2. Process of Data Analysis**

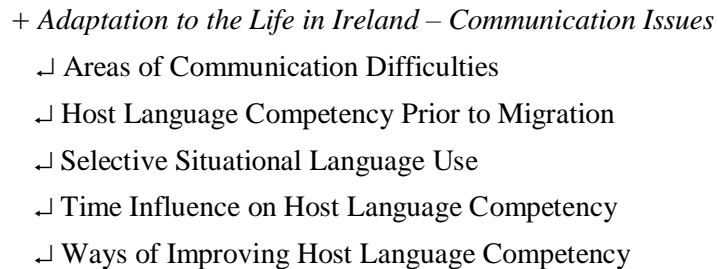
There are three key steps within grounded theory process of data analysis. The first is called open coding as prior to developing concepts, ideas, meanings and thoughts which are contained within them must be exposed first (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Concepts, which are generated through open coding, are then related to each other in the second stage of axial coding. During axial coding, as categories are linked, they are also developed at the same time, building up and expanding their properties and dimensions further. Open coding and axial coding are often interlinked. Finally, selective coding involves systematic coding for those core categories that hold other categories as a comprehensive framework. Essentially, this is the skeleton that sums up what goes on in the data and holds it together (Mäkela and

Turcan, 2007). Theoretical sampling, which involves further data generation based on emerging theoretical concepts, can be used to saturate underdeveloped categories further. As outlined in Section 5.11.1, the process of data analysis started with gaining familiarity with the data. After all of the relevant data files were transferred to NVivo, coding began. This included interview transcripts, Emerge programme observational notes, informal communication files (such as emails, or observational notes from meetings with the participants), in addition to the researcher's reflections. All of these different sources of data contributed to a greater understanding of the participants' experiences over time and specific situations. The pieces of text were analysed in manageable blocks ranging from a few words to a page in some instances. Each piece was then labelled and further opened through writing memos. These memos analysed the text by asking questions (such as who, what, where, why, how and so on), making comparisons, relating to personal experiences and by using other techniques of grounded theory (cf. Table 5.4). Writing memos focused on teasing out data and figuring out what was going on. For example, one of the early memos (Memo 9) explored the concept of self-confidence and a fear of rejection which later became important within a category of the 'dynamic cultural identities'. Even though the process of open coding was very time consuming and categories changed as the analysis developed, many useful concepts and their meanings emerged during this stage. The categories were coded as 'free nodes' within the NVivo application.

Axial coding often happened simultaneously with open coding. As the analysis progressed, memos became more analytical and comparative in their content. The conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences also became more evident and related. Earlier 'free nodes' were later transferred into 'tree notes' within which dimensions, characteristics, and

relationships became related in a form of ‘child nodes’. Figure 5.3 illustrates such emerging category of ‘Adaptation to the Life in Ireland – Communication Issues’.

**Figure 5.3 – Emerging Category of ‘Adaptation to the Life in Ireland – Communication Issues’**

- 
- + *Adaptation to the Life in Ireland – Communication Issues*
    - ↳ Areas of Communication Difficulties
    - ↳ Host Language Competency Prior to Migration
    - ↳ Selective Situational Language Use
    - ↳ Time Influence on Host Language Competency
    - ↳ Ways of Improving Host Language Competency

Derived by Author from Data Analysis

Each of the sub-nodes contained more detailed characteristics and properties. For example, ‘Areas of Communication Difficulties’ contained both verbal and non-verbal, culturally related communication difficulties. At a later stage of the coding process, this category was integrated into ‘Personal Predispositions’ theme.

After the coding scheme was developed and revised and individual categories were saturated, summary memos or relational statements (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) were written. These memos described the dimensions and properties of each category and outlined the relationships of the categories and subcategories as well as between categories. While the data was dissected and expanded during open coding, at the later stages of axial and selective coding, the data was put back together at a more conceptual and abstract level. Theoretical sampling, negative cases and trimming of excess data were also part of this process. The final stages of data analysis involved writing an overall story incorporating the major themes and their categories and how they related. Through a conversation between the data and the literature, the final coding framework emerged. It was subsequently revised a number of



times as categories were amended to fit with what was happening in the data and the overall ‘story’.

The use of grounded theory techniques for data analysis made the process both rigorous and flexible at the same time. When the researcher felt lost or stuck with the data analysis, certain techniques were used to overcome such temporary difficulties. The use of NVivo was also seen as invaluable as the software made the process of coding very transparent and easily traceable back to data and within different categories. When certain categories were changed, the original memos stayed attached to the data and the software’s search tools made it easier to locate certain codes or pieces of data. In this way, it was possible to see the individual trees as well as the forest as it was possible to move easily between going back to individual transcripts to seeing the overall coding framework.

Data analysis in terms of data generation, data preparation and coding took a number of months and many unexpected turns along the way. It was a cyclical rather than a linear process, during which categories emerged and were changed to reflect the emerging concepts. It was during the process of the initial data analysis that the importance of the cross-cultural adaptation within the nascent entrepreneurial process emerged from data. A subsequent review of the literature and a revision of the research question followed. The emergent approach to data analysis thus allowed for new themes and processes to be recognised and incorporated into the study. This meant that the new dimensions and relationships extended the existing theories of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship process.

## **5.11. RESEARCH EVALUATION**

‘Qualitative analyses can be evocative, illuminating, masterful – and wrong’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 262). Research evaluation in qualitative studies should explain why the

particular explanation, rather than possible alternatives, is the most appropriate (Mason, 1996). More importantly, the procedures for establishing trust and confidence in research outcome must be demonstrated. The literature suggests a number of ways on how to ensure the qualitative research quality. Lincoln and Guba (1985) detailed four key trustworthiness criteria appropriate to qualitative inquiry as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria were applied to the current study employing relevant techniques as highlighted by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and further echoed by others (such as Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Berg, 2007; Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

### **(1) Credibility**

The criterion of credibility means establishing whether the findings are accurate and credible from the viewpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. However, at the same time, the explanation is only one of possibly many plausible interpretations. To achieve credibility, the research design should be concerned with both methodological and interpretative validity (Mason, 1996). From the onset of this study, the researcher was aware of the importance of the fit between the study's purpose, research question and the methods used. In an attempt to enhance methodological validity, the researcher used a number of different research methods to achieve data triangulation and crystallisation. Interpretative validity involves ensuring how valid the data analysis is and the interpretations on which it is based. This was achieved by ensuring that the participants' accounts were understood and interpreted as they meant them within a specific context. The researcher also engaged in the field for a prolonged time period whereby patterns were observed over time and trust between the participants and the researcher was built.

## **(2) Validity**

To achieve interpretive validity, the researcher engaged in peer debriefing, members checks and negative case analysis. The research was formally presented to colleagues at DIT and at conferences at a number of occasions as the research analysis progressed, receiving valuable feedback from academic peers. Invaluable feedback was also received from some leading academics within the fields of the cross-cultural adaptation (Professor John Berry<sup>10</sup> and Professor Young Yun Kim<sup>11</sup>), and entrepreneurship (Professor Per Davidsson<sup>12</sup> and Professor Benson Honig<sup>13</sup>) whom the researcher contacted by email. Following Professor Honig's suggestion, a Skype telephone discussion took place during which the researcher's results and the latest theoretical developments within the entrepreneurship field were discussed. Secondly, member checking involved validating the accuracy of the researcher's constructions and interpretations. This was ensured by sending participants interview transcripts for validation and probing emerging categories with the participants during interviews and informal communication. In this way, participants' validation and feedback facilitated further development of analytical ideas and provided corroboration. Thirdly, any negative cases that arose during data analysis were carefully checked and compared to other data and similar incidents.

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<sup>10</sup> Professor John W Berry (Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada) – his research interests include cross-cultural adaptation and cross-cultural psychology. He has published over 100 books and book chapters and is widely recognised for his contributions within his field.

<sup>11</sup> Professor Young Yun Kim (University of Oklahoma, US) – her research interests include intercultural communication and cross-cultural adaptation. She has published over 80 internationally recognised books and book chapters.

<sup>12</sup> Professor Per Davidsson (Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia) – his research interests include entrepreneurship and nascent entrepreneurship. He has theorised and published widely on the subjects.

<sup>13</sup> Professor Benson Honig (McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada) – his research interests include entrepreneurship, social and human capital, nascent entrepreneurship and transnational entrepreneurship. He has contributed significantly to the emerging theory of the transnational entrepreneurship.

### **(3) Dependability**

Dependability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be replicated in other studies. It is also important to establish whether the results are consistent and dependable with the collected data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The use of various data collection methods also contributed to achieving dependability through a methodological triangulation and crystallisation. Thus it is important that the researcher documents the procedures which have been applied to the study. In the present study, raw data, observational notes, research reflections, memos, and the relationship statements of developed themes provided the evidence of the transparency of the methods used in the research analysis and coding. In addition, data analysis steps can be traced within the NVivo application producing a full audit trail so research steps could be replicated.

### **(4) Confirmability**

Confirmability corresponds to the notion of objectivity in quantitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). By the nature of qualitative research, objectivity cannot be assured. However, the researcher should provide enough evidence that the findings are the result of the research rather than an outcome of possible biases and subjectivity. Within the context of the present study, the procedures to demonstrate dependability may also be used for confirmability purposes. The audit trail in NVivo software ensures that all findings are grounded in the data. It also enables auditors to assess whether inferences based on the data are logical, what analytical techniques were used, what each category contains, appropriateness of labelling and possibility of alternative explanations, researcher's biases, dealing with negative cases, and triangulation efforts and evidence.

## **(5) Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent that the research results may be generalised or transferred to other settings. As generalisability is not a purpose of qualitative research, the researcher's task is to provide a thick and rich description which can enable someone else to make the transferability judgement. The methodology chapter provided a very detailed description of the methodological approach, sampling strategy, time and place of the study, research approach and techniques used to generate and to analyse the data. In addition, memos, research reflections, observational notes, and NVivo audit trail provided additional insights into the research process.

The outcome of a qualitative enquiry is evaluated by a reader based on the application of criteria ensuring the research quality. The methodological literature in this area provided a useful guidance and procedures for this purpose. These principles were diligently applied by the researcher throughout the process of data generation (cf. Section 5.9), analysis (cf. Section 5.10), interpretation, and presentation of findings (cf. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). It is imperative that the results can be traced back to data and that the analytical process is made as transparent and clear as possible. This enables others to assess the trustworthiness and value of the research and ascertain that the research analysis results provide plausible interpretation.

## **5.12. CONCLUSION**

This chapter detailed the methodological approach which was implemented in the present study which sought to answer the question of 'What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of

an immigrant within a context of the cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland?'. The discussion was based on the theoretical writings in this area, highlighting both the merits and drawbacks of the particular methods which were adopted in this research. Furthermore, the practical application of these methods was outlined in much detail. The discussion of the specifics of how the research methodology was applied was seen as essential from the point of view of achieving quality of the research. Evaluators and others researchers wishing to replicate this study can clearly see the precise steps which were taken in the course of the study (cf. Figure 5.1, p. 147).

The longitudinal nature of this quasi-ethnographical study using the multi-method approach proved to be a fruitful means to answering the research question. The research question in this study needed to be addressed with qualitative methods as they were capable of uncovering the underlying experiences of the participants over time. Having a research sample of six participants enabled the researcher to undertake an in-depth exploration of their experiences which would not be possible with a larger sample or using quantitative methods. Enhancing the data generation and interpretation through a metaphor of crystallisation in addition to triangulation also added more depth and different shades to this process. Even though the researcher could not engage in the daily 'living' with the participants, they shared 'living' through their experiences of being an immigrant in Ireland. The insider status was thus seen as advantageous but without a presumption that the researcher could understand all of the participants' experiences. The research methodology in the current study was developed using ontologically and epistemologically sound and comprehensive tools, while also allowing for creativity which is necessary in such inductive enquiry.

While this Chapter discussed the theoretical and practical application of the research methodology, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven discuss the key findings. Both chapters examine the findings in relation to data and in a conversation with the relevant literature. Chapter Six discusses the findings related to the cross-cultural adaptation dimension, while Chapter Seven debates the findings of the economic adaptation in which the nascent entrepreneurial process plays a central role. Chapter Eight draws theoretical and practical conclusions to this research.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS I – CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION DIMENSION

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#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to answer a key research question: What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation? This researcher employed a qualitative, longitudinal, quasi-ethnographic research design which acted as a useful lens in the process of answering this question. Throughout the study duration of 18 months, different research methods were applied with a view of understanding the interrelated and dynamic processes that the participants engaged in over time and to achieve data triangulation and data crystallisation (cf. Chapter 5.9). The generated data was prepared, analysed, coded, and organised into meaningful analytical themes (cf. Chapter 5.10.2). The discussion of research findings is presented in two chapters. This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the cross-cultural adaptation dimension. Chapter Seven focuses on the discussion of findings in relation to the nascent entrepreneurial process which was part of the economic adaptation process of the participants. Chapter Eight ties the research findings together and discusses the research implications in terms of theory, policy and practice.

The research findings in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven are discussed in relation to different themes and categories which emerged from the data. The discussion is multileveled as the findings are related both to the data and its categories as well as to the relevant theories and previous research. By way of thick description (Denzin, 2001) in consistence with the quasi-ethnographic research design, a broad range of experiences are set out, thereby providing an



opportunity for the reader to enter into this study and to better understand the world of the research participants. Thus while the participants are allowed to speak for themselves, giving them the previously missing voices, the discussion also takes into consideration the literature on cross-cultural adaptation (such as Bennett, 1998; Kim, 2001; Berry, 2005; 2006; Bhatia and Ram, 2009) and nascent entrepreneurship (such as Ventekaraman and Shane, 2001; Shane, 2003; Firkin, 2001, 2003; Gartner et al., 2004; Reynolds et al., 2004, Lichtenstein et al., 2007) (cf. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). This interwoven discussion of findings within the data itself and in relation to the literature cumulates into an integrative conceptual understanding of the research phenomenon in Chapter 8.2.

This chapter discusses the key findings in relation to the cross-cultural adaptation journey of the participants. These findings were largely emergent, thus making a novel contribution. The analytical themes which relate to the (1) personal predispositions, (2) imagined and real journeys transcending spaces, (3) paradoxical social networks' roles, and (4) dynamic cultural identities, emerged as key constructs framing the nascent entrepreneurial process over time and specific situations. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with discussing each of these themes, providing a balance between their thick description using the participants' voices, and a conversation with the relevant literature.

## **6.2. PERSONAL PREDISPOSITIONS**

The analysis of the data showed that personal predispositions of the participants continuously interacted and changed with their cross-cultural adaptation and economic adaptation (both employment and nascent entrepreneurial) journeys in Ireland. Personal predispositions are related to the participants' demographic and personal characteristics. The participants were endowed with varying characteristics prior to their immigration to Ireland which presented a

prologue (Kim, 2001) to the subsequent cross-cultural and economic adaptation in Ireland. The data analysis revealed the relevance of the participants' demographic and personal characteristics to their process of cross-cultural adaptation over time. While certain demographic variables such as gender, race, religion, and family status became relevant to the participants' constructions of their dynamic cultural identities (cf. Section 6.5), personal predispositions related to human capital variables and personal characteristics of the participants are discussed within this theme.

### *Human Capital Variables*

With respect to the participants' human capital, the basic characteristics of the participants outlined in Table 5.2 (cf. Chapter 5.4.1) showed that most of the participants were well-educated prior to their transition to Ireland. Table 6.1 summarises the participants' formal education, other training, and career experience prior to moving to Ireland.

**Table 6.1 - Participants' Prior Formal Education and Career Experience**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Formal Home Country Education</b>	<b>Career Experience Prior to Emigration</b>
Lietus	Masters Degree in Vehicle Engineering	Employee and contractor in racking systems, worker in construction in the UK.
Lisa	Diploma in Primary Teaching	Unable to locate a teaching job after finishing education, self-employed with husband running a pizzeria.
Monika	Masters Degree in Civil Engineering	City council traffic department for first 3 years, followed by different position as an engineer in a construction industry.
Obusi	Diploma in Air Conditioning Repair	Air conditioning technician for domestic and business customers.
Pamela	Masters Degree in Communication	Three positions in advertising industry.
Sebastien	Masters Degree in E-Marketing	Unable to locate job after finishing education, head office position in a supermarket chain in Portugal, self-employed in Portugal for three years, after returning to France, employed for an event management company, followed by unemployment.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

This summary shows that while some participants previously worked in areas of their formal education, the career paths of others were unrelated, punctuated, and without emphasis on vertical employment mobility. As **Monika** pointed out, *'I changed a job 3 times in 18 months'* (MK/INT1). Such disjointed application of human capital prior to the participants' emigration provided a more negative prologue to their subsequent cross-cultural and economic adaptation in Ireland. Three of the participants (**Lietus**, **Lisa** and **Sebastien**) were previously self-employed. **Sebastien's** parents were also self-employed during their working lives and provided assistance to **Sebastien's** previous business. While **Sebastien** sold his previous business in Portugal, **Lietus** and **Lisa** closed down their businesses as a result of negative conditions, followed by immediate emigration. While **Lietus'** company became insolvent owing a large amount of money to the tax office, **Lisa's** restaurant was abused by non-paying gang members. Thus the participants' prior economic positions were characterised by their punctuated and unstructured nature in relation to both employment and self-employment. The specifics of the participants' employment trajectories, which followed similar patterns also in Ireland are explored in Chapter 7.2.

As Kim (2001) argued, a higher level of education could better facilitate openness to new learning during the cross-cultural adaptation process. Entrepreneurs were also previously seen as open to new learning (Shane, 2003; Davidsson and Honig, 2003; Cooney and Flynn, 2008). However, this was not always the case for these participants. In spite of their relatively high level of education (cf. Table 6.1), they experienced varying levels of difficulties both within the area of communication with the Irish and their application of human capital for economic advancement purposes. From the ongoing observation and interaction with the participants it seems that a higher level of human capital did not necessarily translate to an

easier cross-cultural adaptation. However, certain human capital constructs (such as previous relevant skills, work experience and previous entrepreneurial experience) seemed to play a more critical role during the pursuit of nascent entrepreneurial opportunities (cf. Chapter 7).

The participants' linguistic predispositions also interacted with the course of their cross-cultural adaptation over time and specific situations. Cross-cultural adaptation literature consistently highlighted the relationship of communication between immigrants and the host population on the cross-cultural adaptation experience (Kim, 2001; Yang et al., 2006) as language is at the centre of human communication. The participants' home linguistic competencies varied. Table 6.2 summarises the different home languages in addition to English language competencies prior to emigration.

**Table 6.2 – Participants' Language Skills prior to Emigration**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Main Home Language</b>	<b>Other Languages</b>	<b>English (prior to arrival to Ireland)</b>
Lietus	Lithuanian	Russian, Polish (learnt while working in the UK on a construction site).	Basic English, learnt in school.
Lisa	Albanian	-	Basic spoken English.
Monika	Hungarian	-	English learnt in school in addition to private classes.
Obusi	English, Yoruba, Ondo	-	One of native languages.
Pamela	English/Hindu	-	One of native languages.
Sebastien	French	Portuguese (learnt when living in Portugal for 5 years).	Learnt in school in addition to private classes.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The participants' language capabilities varied. While for some, English was one of their native languages, for others their English language level varied. The participants also spoke

additional languages which were either native or acquired over time. The initial period of the cross-cultural adaptation for the participants whose home language was not English was difficult for some participants but they employed strategies to overcome these difficulties to some extent. As informal conversations with the participants showed, **Sebastien** took advanced English classes in Ireland, while **Monika** took private English classes prior to her emigration, and **Lisa** took a number of different free English classes in Ireland. This lack of communication competencies also interacted with the participants' cultural identity positions (cf. Section 6.5), interaction with the Irish (cf. Section 6.4), the initial and subsequent employment paths (cf. Chapter 7.2), but also with their nascent entrepreneurial process (cf. Chapter 7.5).

The lack of the interaction with the Irish and the over-reliance on communication with their own community social networks resulted in communication difficulties. Even though some participants improved their English to some extent during their stay in Ireland (such as **Monika** and **Sebastien**), for others difficulties in communicating in English persisted over time. **Lisa** recalled her English level at the beginning of her cross-cultural adaptation experience as '*...it was only a few words but nothing else when I came here.*' (LA/INT1). Seven years on, she was still finding communication in English difficult.

Lisa: ...I don't know, I feel like I have like I am not in my own, maybe that's because of the language ... because I feel like if I had like an English the same like you know, that would be easier. But I don't know, sometimes I find it very difficult to understand as well when they speak very fast you know [...] I don't feel like I can be a very good English speaker ... (LA/INT1)

Apart from expressing her frustration with speaking and understanding English, **Lisa** also believed that she could not master the English language in the future. This led her to concentrate on speaking Albanian within her social networks consisting of other Albanians,

with English only being used in her work place. A similar coping strategy was employed by **Lietus** who also seemed to feel much more comfortable speaking his home language in social situations in Ireland. It seems that partially due to the perceived lack of English language competencies and confidence in speaking, the majority of the participants purposefully sought to socialise with other members of their own communities or other immigrant communities where they felt at ease. This contributed to difficulties in cross-cultural adaptation by these participants, leading to a feeling of separation as **Lisa** indicated in the above excerpt (‘...when *they* speak...’ LA/INT1). In Berry’s (2005) model of cross-cultural adaptation, host language proficiency and language use measurements are applied to assess the person’s cross-cultural adaptation trajectories. Adopting strategies leading to not speaking the host language meant less social interaction with the Irish and partially contributed to experiencing cross-cultural adaptation difficulties (cf. Section 6.3 and Chapter 7.4).

Even though spoken English language represented an important part of communicating with others, there was more to it than the exchange of words alone. Communication with others also carried across culture specific nuances and meanings (Hofstede, 1991; Kim, 2001). These more hidden facets of communication were of a tacit nature and could be uncovered only through social interactions with the Irish. These cultural rules of communication and hidden meanings behind spoken words affected all participants, not only those whose native language was not English. **Pamela** talked about how she learnt some of the hidden meanings of communication.

She said for example, that it took her a while to realise that when an Irish person said that they would get back to her, she took their word for it and was surprised when they didn’t. She said that an American or other nationality would tell you ‘no’ straight

away, but the Irish tell you ‘yes, I’ll get back to you’, even though they never intend to. (PI/ONE6)

It took **Pamela** some time to realise some of the hidden cultural nuances between the way that Irish people acted and the ways she was used to from her home country even though English language was her home language. **Monika** also spoke about how she could not have the same jokes with her Irish colleagues as humour was different. From the researcher’s observation over time, **Obusi**’s communication style differed from the host communication style in that his tone of the voice often appeared as aggravated. However, this was a communication style of his Nigerian group. The hidden cultural specific rules of communication presented another area of newness and adjustment for the participants.

The lack of understanding of the paralinguistic features and the underlying communication rules (Kim, 2001) hidden beyond the spoken or written words, seemed to push the participants away from communicating with the Irish and diminished the possible opportunities to learn these hidden cultural meanings. Even though the spoken English presented difficulties for the participants (Berry, 2005) it was the cultural meanings that the participants found challenging, regardless of their cultural distance or ability to speak English prior to their arrival. The languaculture view (Agar, 1994) of the communication exchange is thus more appropriate to understanding the participants’ communication with the Irish in their cross-cultural adaptation process than examining the verbal and written English competencies alone which was the focus of Berry’s investigation (2005). The participants’ recollection of events and experiences demonstrated that it was not only the verbal but also the non-verbal communication that presented a challenge for them during their cross-cultural and economic adaptation process.

### *Individual Personalities*

As a result of regular encounters with the participants, the researcher was able to get to know them on an individual basis. The interpretation of the observed personal characteristics and their changes over time also contributed to explaining the participants' cross-cultural and economic adaptation. Apart from the culturally embedded norms (cf. Section 6.5), the personal characteristics of individuals also interacted with the process of their adaptation in Ireland. However, the discussion is limited to what was observed during personal interactions. The intention is to discuss some of the observed personal characteristics rather than to provide a comprehensive personality make-up of the study participants. Self-confidence and belief in their own abilities, locus of control, drive to do something, and risk-taking were the four main observed personal characteristics.

Firstly, while some individuals were naturally more or less confident, shy or louder, some patterns over time were observed. Even though **Obusi** experienced difficult times during his cross-cultural adaptation journey, he appeared to be self-confident and positive, and to believe in his abilities as he perceived his stay in Ireland as more permanent - '*...you may decide that you are not going to be poor your parent's way. And how do you do that, through your hard work, determination to succeed*'. **Lietus** and **Sebastien** also seemed to view their skills and abilities in a positive light which contributed to their display of self-confidence and a more positive outlook into the future. These positively articulated views of these participants' abilities seemed to create less tension with regards to their cross-cultural adaptation process, on the surface at least. On the other hand, all female participants seemed to be less self-confident and questioned their own abilities more than the male participants.



**Lisa** openly declared that *'I'm not very confident. It's my personality'* (LA/INT2), while **Monika** also similarly said that *'I should be more confident'* (MH/INT2). **Pamela** often spoke about her increasing frustration of not being heard which impacted on her self-confidence and how she saw herself. While at the beginning of her cross-cultural adaptation journey she felt more confident, towards the end of the study as she was proceeding in her nascent entrepreneurial activities, she was increasingly doubting herself and her confidence in approaching Irish people for business related purposes (cf. Section 7.5). The researcher also observed the lower self-confidence of the female participants during the Emerge programme, whereby **Pamela** often sat with her arms crossed and **Monika** spoke very rarely and quietly.

These gender differences in relation to the participants' display of self-confidence and belief in their abilities is interesting. One explanation is that the female participants were usually more vocal about their perceived difficulties than men. The personality concepts of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-belief were previously addressed in the literature on cross-cultural adaptation and were found to dynamically interact with this process (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2005; De Saissy, 2009) either positively or in a more negative, anxiety creating way. Even though these characteristics were predisposed by individual personalities and cultural background, they evolved and interacted during the participants' journeys in Ireland.

Another personal characteristic which was observed was related to the participants' locus of control. Rotter (1966) held that a person has either an external locus control (belief in fate or influence of God) or internal locus of control (belief in influencing their own fate). Through

their actions and interactions, some participants appeared to display a degree of external or internal locus of control. **Obusi**'s case illustrates his external locus of control:

Obusi: Whatever goes, I don't know if you believe in God, but whatever God says I will have, I will have it, but I don't have to manipulate my way to get it. That's what some people do, but that's not my style.(ON/INT1)

**Obusi**, a strong believer in God, allowed God to guide his actions. He mentioned this belief on a number of occasions in reference to both his employment and self-employment directions. Thus it would appear that whatever **Obusi** encountered, he believed that there was a bigger God given reason behind it which made him feel more content about both the positive and negative events in his cross-cultural and economic adaptation process. **Monika** regularly visited an astrologist who predicted her future (MH/ONE20, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 08) which also suggested a degree of external locus of control. On the other hand, some participants displayed a higher degree of internal locus of control whereby they believed in making their own destiny. **Sebastien** displayed his internal locus of control through his actions as he mainly relied on his skills, knowledge, and hard work when he was pursuing his nascent entrepreneurial activities. Thus locus of control seemed to interact with the way the participants approached and viewed their lives in a new context of Ireland and whether they applied their own knowledge, skills and determination in achieving their aims or they put their future into God's hands.

Thirdly, the participants appeared to have a constant need to do something. It was a drive which directed them forward but also sometimes sideward. The participants initiated different activities in time to overcome periods of inactivity and boredom, when they were feeling unchallenged. **Sebastien** started working on different business ideas as he felt bored and unchallenged in his work:

Sebastien: I have great ideas but it's very, but it's a new challenge, it's a new challenge. I like it. I am very enjoying this ... because I was getting bored at work as well at [Company Name] (SF/ INT1)

Thus his boredom in work and the inability to progress further resulted in attempting to come up with various business ideas. All of the participants engaged in different projects as they felt a need to do something - **Pamela** wrote a book, **Lisa** and **Obusi** completed numerous courses (some related, while others not), **Monika** dedicated her spare time to her hobby of beadwork (which later turned into a more business-like venture), and **Lietus** was actively involved in the Lithuanian community. The constant need to do something occupied the participants and while for some, these activities were related to doing something in their leisure time (writing a book), for others they were related to their future accomplishments of achieving better lives. **Obusi** pointed out when he started his full time study: *'I will study late at night because, good thing doesn't come easily. So, if I want to make a good go out of this place I need to put in... Action. (ON/INT2)*. He undertook that course with a future vision of bettering himself and his family.

All of the participants displayed an active and 'get up and go' attitude. Perhaps, they all possessed it in order to execute their emigration decision, and it drove them further to pursue better lives in Ireland. Even though during certain activities (such as taking courses), the participants came into contact with the Irish, these social relationships remained at a superficial level (cf. Section 6.4). These findings relate to the concept of the need for achievement (McClelland, 1962), and openness with regards to adaptive cross-cultural personality as proposed by Kim (2001). However, Kim's (2001) openness attitudes involves ongoing and positive interaction with the host social networks which in case of these participants was not achieved.

Finally, it could be ascertained that the participants possessed a risk-taking propensity characteristic (Palmer, 1971) by the virtue of leaving their familiar home countries and moving to Ireland. From observing and interacting with the participants over a prolonged period of time, it appeared that they did not take any excessive risks. Their steps towards achieving their aims of better lives were calculated and constrained by the lack of resources. In addition, most of the participants seemed to be cautious about their decisions as they were not only responsible for themselves but also for their families' welfare. Even though the participants had to take certain risks during their cross-cultural adaptation, these risks were carefully calculated due to their resource constraints and responsibilities.

The participants' personal characteristics played different roles in their cross-cultural adaptation. While self-confidence seemed to be more volatile and changing under the pressures of the cross-cultural adaptation, the locus of control, the need to do something, and the risk-taking propensity seemed to remain more constant over time. These personal predispositions and their changes not only contributed to the course of the cross-cultural adaptation but also interacted with the participants' nascent entrepreneurial opportunities journey.

Figure 6.1 summarises the key novel findings in relation to the participants' predispositions.

### **Figure 6.1 – Summary of Findings - Personal Predispositions**

- Previously acquired human capital in terms of education, work experience and previous entrepreneurial experience acted as either a positive or negative prologue to the participants' subsequent cross-cultural and economic adaptation journeys.
- It was not only the difficulties in verbal communication in English but also the hidden cultural meanings of communication that presented some challenges in the cross-cultural adaptation for the participants.
- Certain personal characteristics such as personal confidence, locus of control, need to do something, and risk perception, were observed over time. These personal characteristics evolved and interacted with the participants' cross-cultural adaptation.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The findings of this study showed how the participants' predisposed human capital and personality characteristics mutually interacted during the course of their cross-cultural and economic adaptation. The findings relate to the previous theoretical and empirical developments in this area. However, due to such close and prolonged interaction, these findings add depth and voices to these constructs. As seen in the discussion of findings in Chapter 7, the personal predispositions of the participants dynamically interacted with their economic adaptation trajectories, either in an enabling or a more disabling way.

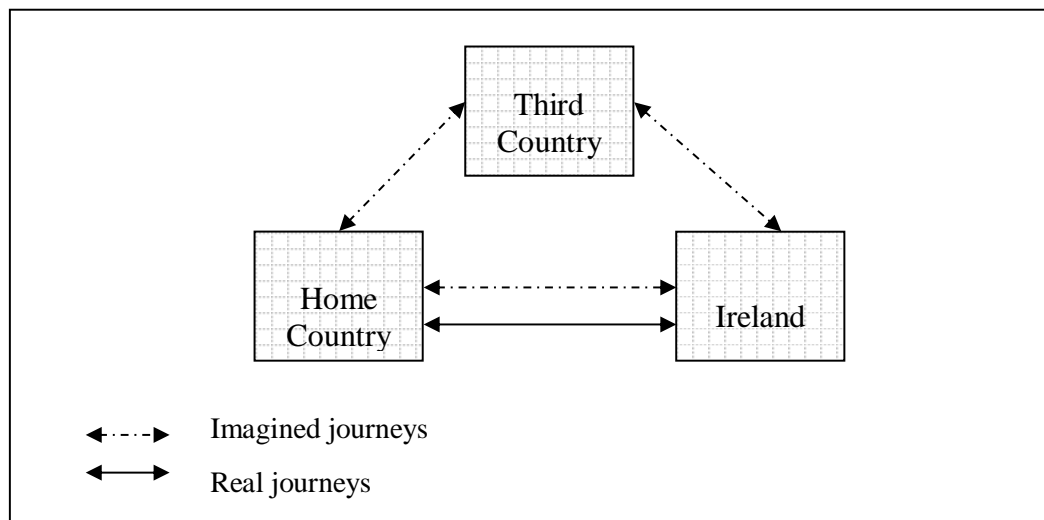
### **6.3. IMAGINED AND REAL JOURNEYS TRANSCENDING SPACES**

This theme encompasses the recurrent, multidirectional and dynamic movements between both imaginary and physical spaces. While the physical movements between the spaces were characteristics to the participants' movements between their home countries and Ireland, it was the imaginary journeys that involved the underlying motives, future aspirations, sacrifices, and ongoing negotiations. These imaginary journeys acted as accelerators and

brakes at the same time as the participants constantly re-evaluated and justified their position in relation to other spaces and positions. The question of staying versus going, the justifications of the decision and the actual physical movements are present at the core of this dynamic theme. There was a dynamic interplay between these boundaries' crossings and the cross-cultural and the economic adaptation trajectories of the participants. These boundaries crossings also attached either a more temporal or more permanent dimension to the participants' stay in Ireland. Even though the underlying dynamics were complex, the movements between the current and future spaces were pursued with a simple aim of achieving a better life.

The key movements incorporated within this theme of imagined and real journeys is illustrated in Figure 6.2. It graphically represents the journeys which were taken between by the participants between spaces.

**Figure 6.2 –Imagined and Real Journeys Transcending Spaces**



Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The journeys, as represented in Figure 6.2. were multiple, dynamic and often cyclical. The real journeys took place between the participants' home countries and Ireland. Everyone

engaged in an outward journey to Ireland but only one participant (**Monika**) engaged in a return journey back to home country from Ireland during the study duration.

Preceding these real journeys were multiple and multidirectional imagined journeys. These journeys involved the participants going back and forward in their minds, imagining what it would be like to be in the alternative space. These comparisons were made on multiple levels as illustrated in Figure 6.3. The data revealed that the participants engaged in multiple imagined journeys before the real outward journey to Ireland took place. Similarly, while in Ireland, such imagined journeys, ongoing comparisons and justifications also occurred in a continuous and dynamic way.

**Figure 6.3 – Constant Comparisons between Current Self/Reference Group and Future Self/Reference Groups**

<b>Proposed Location</b> <b>Reference</b>	<b>Current Location</b>	<b>Alternative Location</b>
<b>Future Self</b>	Comparison with future self in current location	Comparison with future self in alternative location
<b>Reference Group</b>	Comparison with reference group in current location	Comparison with reference group in alternative location

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

What the imagined journeys had in common was that continuous comparisons were made between current and alternative locations in terms of temporary-self and temporary-group comparisons. Wilson and Ross' (2000) conceptualisation of this process is useful in explaining the nature of these ongoing comparisons. These comparisons were like a constantly ongoing cost-benefit analysis undertaken by the participants in which comparisons and justifications to stay or to go were made on different levels, as the

participants were aspiring to a certain future state. These comparisons at different levels occurred concurrently. Emmon's (1986) personal striving theory and self monitoring theory (Kanfer, 1990; Vancouver, 2005) are also useful in understanding the participants' actions towards accomplishing their future goals. As the discussion of the findings shows, the participants' personal strivings were directed towards accomplishing better lives and through recognising a discrepancy in their current state such as prior to emigration, action in a form of emigration were taken. Also, during the process of their cross-cultural adaptation, corrective actions were attempted to be taken as individuals continued to strive towards their future aims by engaging in nascent entrepreneurial activities. The discussion of these journeys is organised into conceptually related journeys. Thus the imagined outward and homebound journeys are discussed first before the real outward and homebound journeys.

### *Imagined Journeys*

Imagined journeys, or ongoing comparisons of temporal-self and social group comparison, took place in the participants' home countries (outward imagined journeys) and then again during their cross-cultural adaptation (homebound imagined journeys). These ongoing comparisons interacted with both the cross-cultural adaptation and the nascent entrepreneurial activities as a way of economic adaptation.

#### *Imagined Outward Journey*

As seen from the background demographics description (cf. Chapter 5.4.1), all of the participants underwent their socialisation in their home countries. Some of them also met their spouses in their home countries. What therefore led them towards their considerations of imagined outward journeys? In other words, how and what discrepancies between their



present and desired future state were recognised? How did the participants instigate the change through emigration in order to correct those discrepancies to achieve desirable future selves (Kanfer, 1990; Miller and Brown, 1991)? These retrospectively retold stories were gained through interviews, sometimes after a significant period of time after the actual emigration journeys took place. From the participants' narratives of their past lives in home countries, it can be gathered that there were certain events in their lives that first pushed them towards imagined outward journeys and later resulted in a real emigration journey.

The participants' stories about their lives at home and the events leading to emigration included the recollection of their careers paths and personal life events. Their home career paths directions (cf. Section 6.2) could tell part of the story which perhaps contributed to the recognition of a temporal-self and reference social group discrepancy, leading to emigration aspirations. This was the case for **Monika** whose punctuated employment contributed to her consideration of emigration: *'The reason was that I changed the company in the last 1 ½ years three times and I said I don't want to be an employee in Hungary any more (laughs)'* (MH/INT1). This points to the fact that **Monika**'s employment as an architect did not progress according to her expectations and in a combination with a personal break-up led to the recognition of a discrepancy between her current and future self. **Sebastien**'s six months of unemployment and his bad relationship with his ex-wife also contributed to his search for better opportunities elsewhere. **Lietus**' self-employment resulted in failure due to the loss of key clients, followed by facing a huge tax bill as a result of not filing taxes properly:

Lietus: I just want to close my company and find out that I must to pay huge taxes and huge money which I don't have. But I hadn't like that kind of money so I lost everything. I lost all my property and everything I lost what I had [...] I had few – I had house and I had let apartments. The house I keep because there was kids and nobody cannot take that house from me because of kids. So only kids save that house. So I moved to London, work, and from London I came here, work, so... (LL/INT1)

In order to achieve a future state of being debt free, **Lietus** decided to leave his country. Others also engaged in imagined outward journeys as they recognised discrepancies between their present and future desired selves.

The participants' verbal discourses showed that they all recognised discrepancies between their selves at the time and their desired selves. These varying reasons or discrepancies relate to the extended theory of values by Tarkatovsky and Schwartz (2001). The findings of this study agree with the materialistic motivations evident among all participants. However, support was not found for the preservation and self-development motives alone. These findings thus add more depth to the understanding of the economic motives through which the participants envisaged to achieve better lives (Yeoh, 2009). Comparisons of themselves with those abroad also added to the engagement of imagined journeys as the participants themselves previously lived abroad (**Sebastien**) or knew other people who emigrated. The decision to take corrective action in a form of emigration then followed. Thus the majority of the participants were motivated by wanting to achieve better lives through economic activities and this motivation was evident within their subsequent employment entrepreneurial paths in Ireland.

#### *Imagined Homebound Journeys*

Even though some participants' initial cross-cultural experiences reflected or exceeded their expectations, over time and specific situations, the discrepancies between their aims and the actual course of their cross-cultural and economic adaptation emerged. After **Monika's** initial positive experience of Ireland, a series of negative experiences in her cross-cultural adaptation was observed – depression, lack of adequate social networks, dissatisfaction in work place, and redundancy. This finding supports Kim's (2001) notion that cross-cultural

adaptation is often filled with adaptive tension and is of a cyclical rather than a linear nature. The discussion of the participants' imagined homebound journeys shows that they constantly engaged in ongoing comparisons of their temporal-selves and temporal-group comparisons located over time and space. Such comparisons produced different results in that the participants either felt that they were accomplishing their journey of personal strivings for a better life or new discrepancies emerged.

Why then did the participants stay in Ireland despite achieving only a few of their aims?

**Pamela** often engaged in imagined homebound journeys as she felt that she could not bear being in Ireland any longer: *'I think I'm sick and tired of living away from home. Trying to defend yourself, trying to explain yourself all the time. It's getting worse now. (PI/INT2)*. In spite of the emotional cost of being away, she remained in Ireland as she felt that such life could not be achieved in her home country in an economic sense. On the contrary, **Sebastien** favourably compared himself to his peers in his home country:

Sebastien: ... I know some friends there [France] and I know their position and they are struggling for a living. For trying to find a job and when they find a job it's very low salaries. (SF/INT2)

**Interviewer: when you talk to your friends you see that their lives are different?**

Sebastien: Yeah, especially now in this crisis. No, France is not, I wouldn't go there. I wouldn't go back. (SF/INT2)

Similarly to others, **Sebastien** engaged in ongoing comparison of himself with his reference group in home country, which reaffirmed his current and future position. The participants were also comparing their negative past-selves with more positive current and future selves (Newby-Clark and Ross, 2003). Even though not always in a progressive manner, the course of actions in Ireland was bringing them towards achieving their personal goals of better lives as opposed to *'struggling for a living'* (SF/INT2) in their home countries.

The imagined journeys were characterised by their dynamic nature, and ongoing comparisons at multiple levels. The comparisons were often complex, not only involving the comparisons of their current selves with future selves in different spaces but also bringing back their past selves, and reference groups. The participants went back and forward in their minds about where they saw themselves to be in the future as they engaged in their ongoing cost-benefit analysis. Such comparative analysis eventually resulted into a real outward journey to Ireland when the participants emigrated. Even though there seemed to be perceived drawbacks to staying in Ireland (such as missing their families in their home country), the participants perceived their lives mostly as better from an economic point of view. Motivated by better economic lives, the participants attempted to secure their employment and they also engaged in an entrepreneurial journey. As seen from the analysis of their nascent entrepreneurial journey (cf. Chapter 7), such ongoing comparisons also interacted with their process of exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities. Thus these constant comparisons acted as accelerators and brakes at the same time, and were characterised by their complex nature. Over time and situations, the participants sometimes struggled to justify their existence in Ireland, resulting in an adaptive tension (Kim, 2001), and further discrepancies between their present and future anticipated positions.

### ***Real Journeys***

The imagined journeys based on the dynamic and ongoing temporal-self and group comparisons constituted to a decision to embark on real journeys. The participants' experiences during their real journeys interacted with how they engaged in their imagined journeys over time and particular situations. All of the participants engaged in an outbound

journey which led them to Ireland and the subsequent cross-cultural adaptation experiences.

**Monika** was the only participant who engaged in a real outwards journey from Ireland.

### *Real Outbound Journey*

After a decision to make the physical transition from home country to another as a result of recognising negative discrepancies in one's present state and desired future state, the real outward journey took place. Before the physical move happened, the destination of emigration had to be located first. There were a number of different destination location strategies that the participants engaged in when choosing the most appropriate destination. Additionally, the physical transition of crossing the borders followed in different ways.

The importance of the social networks in reaching a decision to emigrate to a particular country and the subsequent assistance with the transition was previously recognised in literature (DeJong, 2000; Nee and Sanders, 2001; Epstein and Gang, 2006). The findings of this study are largely supportive of the previous literature. The findings showed that having someone close living in a destination country seemed to be of perceived importance and a trusted source of destination information. These social networks subsequently become a chain connection (Tsuda, 1999) for the participants just as the participants themselves become a chain connection for others wishing to emigrate to Ireland from their home countries. These transnational social connections provided information about the destination country in terms of general conditions, lifestyle, and employment possibilities, as **Lisa** pointed out: '*... my husband's brother was here [Ireland] and he found some work permits for us and we came here.*' (LA/INT1.) Thus the role of transnational social networks consisting of family or acquaintances assisted with the participants' relocation, but also initial

accommodation as pointed out by **Lietus** - *'I had one friend so that friend helped me with accommodation'* (LL/INT1). The importance of transnational connections consisting of bonding nature and common background (Portes et al., 2002), aided with both the location selection and the actual transition process.

The generated data also uncovered that more general issues such as employment opportunities, earning potential, language of a destination, tax system, physical distance, visa requirements and immigration policies were considered and evaluated by the participants prior to reaching a decision on a destination location (Yeoh, 2009). While those from other EU countries could move freely, access was more restricted for those from non-EU countries. **Obusi's** wife came to Ireland simply *'to have her baby here'* (ON/INT1) as having a baby in Ireland at the time provided an entrance ticket and a guarantee for future economic and social advancement in comparison to Nigeria. Thus while transnational social networks played an important role in destination selection, other environmental circumstances interacted with this process. Thus the findings of this study do not entirely support the notion of the herd effect (Epstein and Hillmain, 1998) as all of the participants' destination choice selection involved the consideration of different types of information.

The actual physical transition then followed with the participants either moving together with their spouses (**Lisa**), alone (**Monika** and **Sebastien**), or following the strategy of the 'first mover and a follower' (**Lietus**, **Obusi** and **Pamela**). This latter strategy meant that one spouse emigrated first and was followed by the second spouse later. **Obusi** and **Pamela** followed their spouses after some time due to legal restrictions. **Lietus** could not take his wife and children with him initially due to many uncertainties:

Lietus: I didn't know what will I do there so I can't take my wife and my kids nowhere, you know. So I just send them money. I was working two years. I spend without family, it was hard. So here we are together.[laughs] (LL/INT1)

**Lietus'** purpose was to make enough money to repay his debt to the tax office, hence having his family with him was risky. It was a sacrifice that he had to make and this was similar to the others, who were not able to move together with their spouses. The way that the participants immigrated into Ireland interacted with their early stages of their cross-cultural adaptation (cf. Section 6.2. and 6.4).

#### *Real Homebound Journey*

Even though most of the participants engaged in imagined homebound journeys to a different extent depending on their varying situational circumstances, only **Monika** actually undertook a real homebound journey, presenting an atypical case in this study. The real homebound journey took place towards the end of the study (July 2009), and provided interesting insights into this transition. It transpired that making a homebound journey was not as easy as packing a suitcase when things became difficult. They endured struggles for regaining balance, and the ongoing temporal-self and group-comparisons took place first before the final tipping point was finally reached and the physical transition followed.

**Monika's** cross-cultural adaptation journey was bumpy as she often experienced tension and stress (Kim, 2001). Due to being homesick, experiencing difficulties in her employment, loneliness, and redundancy, her initial aim of achieving a better life progressed in an unwanted direction as she pointed out in an interview in February 2009:

Monika: ...if I lose my job or they make my circumstances unbearable I will have to leave. I can try something, to find something here. Not to waste my time. But I wouldn't really see my time here waiting for a new job so I don't know. So it's hard. I don't know the future ... So everything is moving at the moment. (MH/INT2).

At that point, she could not see her future self in Ireland. When she finished her employment in June 2009, it was at that point that she engaged in more frequent imagined homebound journeys and imagined journeys to other destinations, while at the same time she attempted to regain her balance in Ireland. Based on the temporal-self and group comparisons and constrained resources (financial but also social support), she eventually accepted that she could not achieve her personal striving of a better life in Ireland or in another country, which left her with the only option of returning home.

With a view of actual homebound journey, another interesting change happened. In the months prior to the physical transition, **Monika** experienced difficulties in her cross-cultural adaptation and felt negatively about her position in Ireland and in relation to the Irish. These researchers' reflective notes after a group meeting in July 2009 illustrate the nature of this change:

She left her bank account open in Ireland so there is always an option to come back. It's interesting to see how she felt about Ireland a few days before leaving the country in comparison to a few months previously. Now she said that she would miss the Irish people and the way of life while before, that was one of the areas of the highest difficulties. Perhaps, it is the knowledge that she is leaving and the certainty of the physical removal that makes Ireland to appear much more positive than before when she had to struggle with the bad work conditions, unemployment, and loneliness. (MH/RNG2)

The temporary view of moving to her home country facilitated **Monika's** emotional transition. Such a temporary view of moving home also seemed to mask her feelings from a sense of failure from the implementation of a plan in achieving a better life in Ireland. This shows the last stage of Miller and Brown's (1991) self-regulation theory but also the beginning of the next temporarily cycle in which she engaged to achieve her desired self.



After the physical transition took place, she lived with her mother until a tenant who lived in her apartment moved out. Afterwards she reclaimed her physical space where she felt at home once again.

**Interviewer: How does it feel to be living back in Hungary? Did it feel strange for the first few weeks or was it as if you never left?**

Monika: it is not strange rather I am getting forgotten things from Ireland, as if I have never lived there which is not good because I am forgetting the english as well. At the moment I am enjoying my apartment, I am as happy as I was when i bought it (MH/ICS/27<sup>th</sup> August 09)

On an emotional level, after a month being away from Ireland, it seemed to her like she had never been there. She felt guilty about feeling that way but perhaps she was temporarily happy as she was reconnecting with her former and familiar comforts and habits. She was experiencing a honeymoon period (Lysgaard, 1954). Her employment search continued with mixed results but she felt that she wanted to wait for the right opportunity:

Monika: ...to be honest I shouldn't sell my soul and get employed again but I don't have idea how to start as a freelancer, i mean where to go for projects (MH/ICS 27<sup>th</sup> August 09)

Her economic integration within her home country involved self-employment considerations. Perhaps this was to regain a higher career position and to finish her period of unemployment.

Interestingly, from what was observed, **Monika** was experiencing the same patterns of cross-cultural adaptation in her home country as when she came to Ireland – the honeymoon-like care free period of newly found freedom where employment location was not a necessity. From private communication with **Monika** after the end of data generation, she was still unemployed and feeling frustrated in November 2009, showing that the discrepancies between her current and desired self existed, as she was unable to regain her balance after four months of returning to her home country. It would be interesting to see whether **Monika**

engaged in subsequent emigration in time. Even though it was only one participant who pursued a real homebound journey from Ireland, it offered interesting insights into both the emotional and physical process of this transition after it was identified that personal goals could not be achieved in Ireland. This was despite the ongoing attempts of searching for employment and pursuing the self-employment path. Thus the framework of personal strivings (Emmons, 1986) and temporal-self and group comparisons (Radersdoff and Guimond, 2006) are useful in explaining the transitions from Ireland to home country.

Based on the temporal-self and group comparisons (Wilson and Ross, 2000), and personal strivings of what the individuals wanted to achieve (Emmons, 1986), discrepancies in the present state were recognised by the participants. The ongoing comparisons led them towards a decision to emigrate and to achieve their personal strivings of better lives. The self-regulation theory (Kanfer, 1990; Miller and Brown, 1991) is useful for understanding how these discrepancies are acted upon through the different stages. During the initial stage of informational output, self-evaluation and instigation of change, the participants recognised discrepancies between their present selves at the time and the desired future selves. This was achieved through the temporal-self (past, present and future) and group comparisons. Planning and implementation of the corrective actions followed, which involved reaching an emigration decision followed by a physical transition to Ireland. Through ongoing temporal-self and group comparisons during the cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland, plan evaluation occurred. However, as the participants strove towards achieving a better life in Ireland, difficulties in their cross-cultural and economic adaptation often prevented them from a successful achievement of their personal striving goal of a better life. This led towards further

discrepancies and moving back and forward as they attempted to regain their balance and stay on course to achieving their goals.

While the application of these theories from social psychology are helpful, they are used in very explorative terms in this study. Further research would be needed to determine how exactly these theories can be applied to understanding the dynamic processes that drive immigrants towards emigration and subsequently interact with their cross-cultural and economic adaptation. The ongoing temporary-self comparisons is particularly something that has not been adequately addressed in the previous cross-cultural adaptation studies, yet this variable emerged as important. Theories of the cross-cultural adaptation were helpful in understanding the real journeys of the participants, in particular the importance of social networks in this process and other destination selection and relocation strategies (DeJong, 2000; Nee and Sanders, 2001; Epstein and Gang, 2006). Through its qualitative research design, this study added more detailed accounts of immigrants who engaged in these imagined and real journeys.

Figure 6.4 summarises the key findings. The findings of this theme uncovered some of the complexities of ongoing comparisons that the participants continuously engaged in during their cross-cultural adaptation journeys but also interacted with their nascent entrepreneurial journeys.

## **Figure 6.4 – Summary of Findings - Imagined and Real Journeys Transcending Spaces**

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

- The participants engaged in multiple, dynamic and cyclical imagined journeys transcending spaces.
- These journeys involved the ongoing comparison of the self with future self and reference groups and led towards decisions with regards to real journeys in pursuit of accomplishing one's aims.
- Real outward journeys to Ireland were taken with an aim of achieving better lives by the participants.
- Even though the personal strivings of achieving better lives were not always and easily achieved in Ireland, the continuous comparisons of temporal selves and reference groups meant that the participants remained in Ireland.
- One participant engaged in a homebound journey after reaching a point of realisation that despite efforts, her desired state could not be achieved within an Irish context.

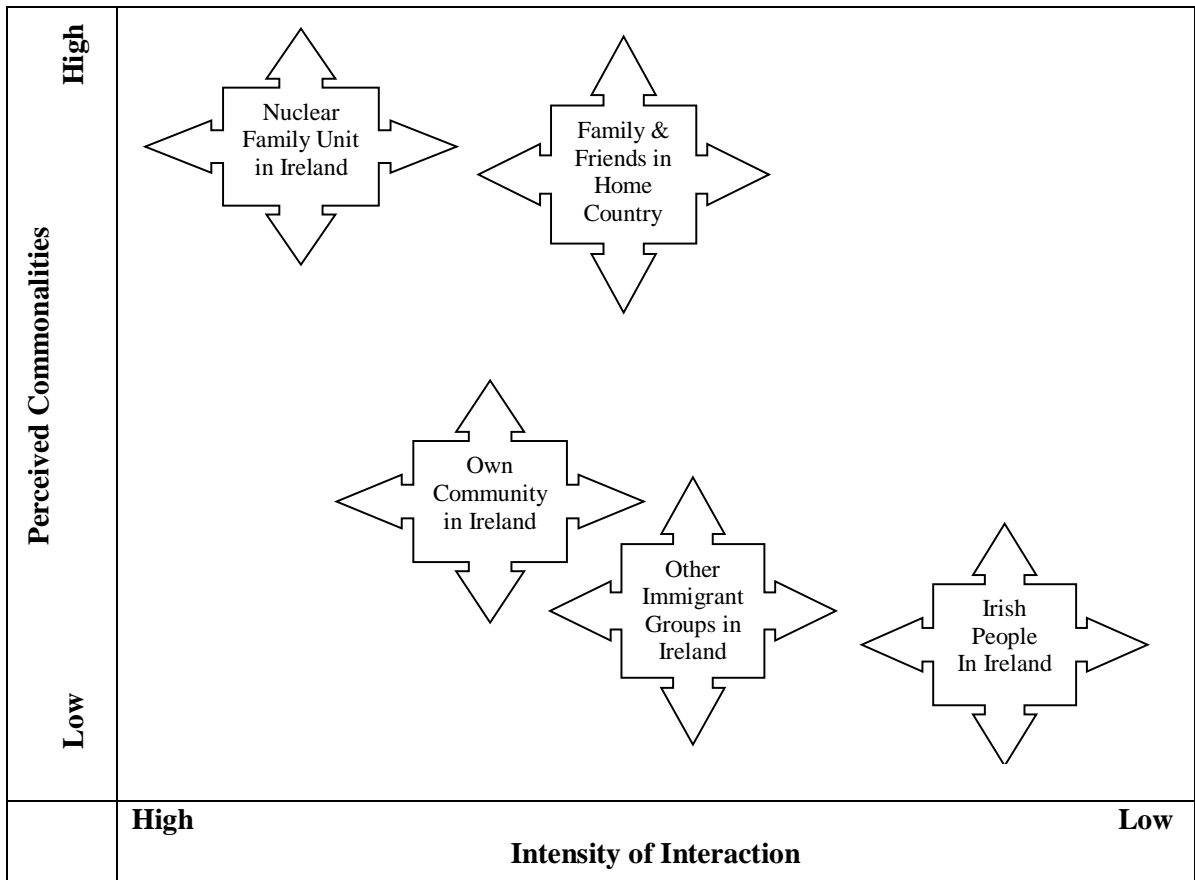
This theme was largely emergent and even though the theories of cross-cultural adaptation addressed the relationships and roles of different social networks in terms of in-group-out-group comparisons (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Kim, 2001), they did not completely explain what was going on in the data. Additional theories from social psychology were helpful in enhancing the understanding of the more complex comparisons in which the participants engaged in on ongoing basis.

### **6.4. PARADOXICAL SOCIAL NETWORKS' ROLES**

The analysis of the data revealed that social networks were pertinent to the participants' cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland. The nature of the engagement in different social networks also interacted with the participants' economic adaptation – their employment and nascent entrepreneurial process. It was identified through ongoing interactions with the participants that they engaged within five types of social networks. The relationships within

these social networks were not static, rather they were dynamically changing during the course of the participants' cross-cultural adaptation process. The five social networks and their positioning are shown in Figure 6.5.

**Figure 6.5 - Social Networks of Study Participants**



Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The most intense interactions based on the highest perceived similarities were those with one's nuclear family. This was followed by the close familial ties located in home countries but this type of relationship changed its dynamics over time. The perceived similarities with those from the same country of origin and other immigrant groups were not always high but the level of interaction was higher. Lastly, the perceived commonalities with the Irish social networks were low and the level of social interaction was generally also low over time. The intensity of the relationships and the level of interaction were dynamic and changing, hence

the arrow-like shapes in Figure 6.5. As every participant came from a different background, own community refers to someone who originated from similar socio-cultural background of a home country. As the discussion of findings shows, a higher interaction with certain social networks did not necessarily translate into easier cross-cultural and economic adaptation (Kim, 2001; Granovetter, 1973; 1983). Each of these social networks, their meanings to the participants and the level of interaction and perceived similarities are discussed across data and in relation to the literature.

***(1) Nuclear Family Unit in Ireland***

Some of the participants had a nuclear family present in Ireland, while others did not (cf. Chapter 5.4.1). The nuclear family unit in Ireland consisted of a spouse and children as no participants had their extended family residing with them on a full time basis. Table 6.3 summarises the composition of the participants’ nuclear family unit in Ireland at the beginning of the study in February 2008.

**Table 6.3 – Nuclear Family Unit of Study Participants in Ireland**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Spouse</b>	<b>Children</b>
Lisa	From home country, married before emigrating to Ireland.	2 sons (8 and 12 years old), one born in Albania and the second one in Ireland.
Liutas	From home country, married before emigrating to Ireland.	2 boys (7 and 12 years old), both born in Lithuania.
Monika	Currently not in a relationship.	None
Obasi	From home country, married before emigrating to Ireland.	2 girls (3 and 7 years old) and 1 boy (7 months), all born in Ireland.
Pamela	From home country, married before emigrating to Ireland.	2 boys (2 and 6 years old), both born in Ireland.
Sebastien	Currently not in a relationship.	None in Ireland but 1 son (12 years old) living in France with his mother.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

For those participants with spouses and children, social interaction with their family unit was of the primary importance and consistency over time. As all of the participants' spouses originated from the same home country, shared history, meanings, understanding, family roles, and memories were present between the partners. A considerable amount of time was spent with one's spouse and children, such was the case of **Pamela**:

Pamela: We're so engrossed in raising our own family, both my children are very young you know, so they take up most of our time so once he [husband] is done with work we just have time to sit and relax on the weekend for a few hours and then it's time to start again. (PI/INT1)

**Pamela's** expression of the time dedicated to spending with her nuclear family showed that the majority of her spare time was dedicated to them. Spending much time with one's nuclear family meant less time availability for social interactions with other social networks. This was possibly partially by choice and partially by the lack of time as the support of the extended family with childcare responsibilities was not usually available.

Social interaction with one's nuclear family also provided a sense of ongoing physical and emotional security, as **Pamela** also expressed:

**Interviewer: You have been here for 8, 9 years now and do you feel at home?**

Pamela: Outside of home, outside my house, no, inside my house, yes. (PI/INT2)

Thus social interaction with one's family unit behind closed doors not only provided a safe, familiar and supportive social environment but was also defined by its protective physical boundaries where a house became equal with a home. It was within this space, that the cultural traditions such as food, language, and cultural norms were fostered. However, the findings also showed how the safety haven of a feeling of a home was disturbed. **Obusi** was threatened by local youths outside of his house, which left him worrying about his family's safety - *my car was smashed, and they also came trying to attack me and a family friend right*

*in my front garden* (ON/ICE 9/7/09). Thus it seemed that those with spouses from home countries and children attempted to reconstruct and maintain their home culture within the physical and emotional boundaries of their homes in Ireland. On the other hand, the physical space of 'home' did not have the same meaning for **Monika** and **Sebastien**, who shared accommodation with others and engaged in more frequent moves as a result of not identifying with their fellow housemates.

The conversations with the participants also revealed that even though spending time with one's nuclear family was valued, it was also restrictive for the female participants. Childcare responsibilities primarily rested with mothers (either female participants themselves or the wives of the male participants) due to the culturally embedded division of family roles and responsibilities (Shihadeh, 1991). All of the participants with children (either male or female) accepted and fostered their specific roles of mothers as childbearers and fathers as breadwinners (Boyle et al., 2001). As **Obusi** put it, *'I'm the man in the home. I'm the one that needs to go out and bring in food on the table'* (ON/INT2), while **Pamela** accepted her position as a child-bearer by saying that *'I don't see myself free for the next at least three years since my second child starts school'*(PI/INT1). Such family role division interacted with one's economic adaptation through employment and self-employment (cf. Chapter 7.3 and 7.5). Thus the cross-cultural adaptation and the economic adaptation experience were different for mothers and fathers. How about those who did not have spouses or children? While **Sebastien** had a son in his home country of France, he was not part of the nuclear family unit in the host country. **Monika** was single without a spouse or children. Due to the lack of the presence of a nuclear family in Ireland, their need for socialisation and gaining anticipated benefits from a group membership was drawn through the engagement in other



social networks.

The literature on cross-cultural adaptation usually incorporates family status variables as part of demographic predispositions (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2008) but it engages in less frequent discussions about how nuclear family interaction and roles interrelate with the course of a cross-cultural adaptation (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). These findings show that family roles of mothers and fathers transcended boundaries and remained more static over time. Responsibilities stemming from such gender division interacted with the nature of cross-cultural adaptation of fathers and mothers in a different way. Mothers (**Pamela, Lisa** and wives of **Obusi** and **Lietus**) primarily interacted with their children and husbands, which in spite of providing emotional support and a sense of familiarity, isolated them from wider social interactions with other social networks. It also altered the course of their economic adaptation choices (cf. Chapter 7). Fathers (**Lietus** and **Obusi**) fostered their home cultural traditions in their interaction with their nuclear family members but they also engaged more in wider social networks than their wives which provided them with more opportunities for cross-cultural adaptation. Thus these findings add more depth to the previous mostly survey based studies (Persky and Birman, 2005).

## *(2) Family and Friends in Home Country*

This physically distant network included family and friends in one's home country with whom contact was maintained regularly. While frequent face-to-face interactions were characteristic to the nuclear family unit, such regular connections were not possible with those who were located a significant geographical distance away. Representing shared

cultural background and a sense of stability, home country social networks helped to fill the emotional void that the participants felt during their cross-cultural adaptation.

There were two main types of connections with family and friends in one's home country as a result of shared cultural and emotional commonalities – physical and virtual. Maintaining a physical connection meant a face-to-face social interaction with family and friends who were in one's home country. The different methods of data generation showed that the regularity of interactions with this social network seemed to interact with variables such as the strength of those social connections, the nature of the participants' cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland (creating either higher or lower need for social interaction), the nature of relationship with those at home over time, the physical distance, and the financial and legal constraints. A summary of an informal conversation with **Obusi** illustrates the presence of some of these variables:

He doesn't go home very often, maybe once every two years as it's very expensive, a flight can cost about €1000 per person, and when he gets home he has to bring a lot of money with him as family and friends ask him for money as they think that he's rich working in Ireland. (ONE11)

With a wife and three children, such a journey cost a significant amount of money. The level of expectations of gifts was also present and possibly accentuated by the fact that **Obusi** emigrated to a Western country. The family and friends in his home country possibly did not realise that by the virtue of being in Ireland a person would not become rich. However, what is perceived as being rich is context-bound. It seems that **Obusi** would have to keep this expected image by showing to his relatives and friends how well he did in Ireland through gift giving, while in reality he was dependent on state welfare benefits. Prior to gaining his residency, legalities in relation to leaving and coming into Ireland would also have been problematic. These issues would be less pronounced in cases of others which shows that

there is a variation along each of the above points. For example, **Sebastien** regularly visited his family in France. The physical distance and the cost of travel were very manageable for him. In spite of the fact that the participants were generally emotionally attached to their family and friends in their home country, other factors either made it easier or more difficult for them to engage in face-to-face interaction.

All participants also maintained virtual connections with their family and friends at home. The means of such connection were mostly telephone and Internet based (Email and Skype). Such contact also facilitated a continuous maintenance of existing social connections which provided emotional support and a sense of familiarity over time (Vertovec, 2007). The frequency of virtual connections varied across participants and time. From the observations over time it seems that when one just arrived into the new environment of Ireland and they felt lonely and homesick, regular contact with close family and friends in one's home country provided a source of emotional support. However, at different times, when the participants felt more embedded in the Irish environment, they felt more out of context with what was happening at home. This led to more selective conversations and feelings of a lesser connection with those at home. **Lisa** illustrated this point very well:

**Interviewer: And do you talk to your family a lot on the phone?**

Lisa: Yeah I talk to them but still it's not the same because I can't, you don't have the same problems and you know it's not the same country, you can't say like what has happened to me because they wouldn't understand. It's not the same situation ... There as well they can't tell me everything because I am not there seeing the... (LA/INT1)

After being away for about seven years, **Lisa** felt more emotionally distant from her home country context and felt that the differences between the two worlds were increasing, causing communication difficulties for both parties. However, for others such as **Sebastien**, his family seemed to be a more important part of his daily life, showing that the advances of communication technology minimised the effect of geographical distances (Light, 2007) and

enabled him to effectively lead a parallel life – ‘...with my parents, we talk a lot’ (SF/INT2). Apart from close family and friends, acquaintances who wished to come to Ireland also made contact because as **Monika** said, ‘they are interested in how I’m living here’ (MH/INT1), possibly creating another formation of a chain migration connection (Tsuda, 1999).

These findings can be related to the notion of transnationalism, whereby maintenance of relationships across borders is increasingly easier in a globalised world due to the advancement of technology (Portes et al., 2002; Vertovec, 2007; Light, 2007). The findings also reflect the changing nature and role of different social networks as a result of cross-cultural adaptation over time as those at home provided only limited emotional support at certain situations (Kim, 2001). As some of the participants became more adapted to the new context, the connections with those at home became less satisfying and became more disjointed. For others who felt either less a part of the new Irish environment or were at earlier stages of their cross-cultural adaptation, these social networks remained more important over time, providing emotional support but not facilitating easier cross-cultural adaptation.

### ***(3) Own Community in Ireland***

Creating social connections based on common cultural background and language represented another type of social network in the participants’ lives in Ireland. All participants engaged in developing social connections with their own communities in Ireland to either a lesser or greater extent. These social connections were predominantly established due to a shared cultural background, language, and shared experiences of being immigrants in Ireland. Interesting variations in the nature of such social connections existed over time and situations.

How did the participants connect with other members of their own community in Ireland? The generated data revealed a number of different connecting strategies over time and situations for establishing connections with others with the same cultural background: (1) random approaching of fellow countrymen/women in public places, (2) inheriting friends of a common friend followed by either fostering these relationships or abandoning them, (3) joining community organisations and attending events (such as religious events), and (4) locating those of a common background through joining online discussion fora where the cross-cultural adaptation journey could be shared. These were the most paramount connecting strategies that the participants engaged in as they attempted to locate others of the shared background.

However, these strategies and selection criteria changed over time. While at the beginning of the cross-cultural adaptation process connections with one’s own community were primarily based on a common nationality and a shared cultural background, at a later stage, different selection criteria applied. When a perceived saturation point of either having an adequate level of own community social networks or not perceiving the benefits of having such networks, different selection criteria applied. This is illustrated in Figure 6.6.

**Figure 6.6 – Summary of Own Community Social Network Selection Criteria During the Cross-Cultural Adaptation Journey**

<b>Selection Factor</b>	<b>Beginning Period – Less Selective</b>		<b>Later Stages – More Selective</b>
<b>Number of contacts</b>	Newly arrived thus had fewer contacts locally.	<b>Saturation Point</b>	Social network was more developed, even saturated & completion for time or mutual benefits occurred.
<b>Common language</b>	Language difficulties which were overcome by interacting with those who spoke home language.		Host language skills and confidence may have improved thus connections with other social groups may have been initiated.
<b>Shared educational and social background</b>	Not important, common ethnicity or nationality usually sufficed.		Becomes more important and those with similar education, social position or interest were sought.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The perceived saturation point was reached due to various reasons which subsequently led the participants to either maintain their existing social connections with their own community or become more selective. **Monika's** example shows how one could attempt to become more selective in who they befriended from within their own community.

Monika: ... I definitely became more selective. Still, there are still not enough people. I have to make many compromise so I make friends or relationships with people who I wouldn't do at home normally, I think. Because I am here and I don't know many people here. We are friends. I don't say it's a pain or something, it's just different. I was more selective at home than here. (MH/INT2)

After connecting with other people from Hungary solely based on their nationality, many of the initial connections did not survive. Even though she tried to be more selective in whom she socialised with, this task proved to be difficult. The Hungarian community was quite small so it was not easy to locate those of desirable educational or social background and compromises had to be made. Throughout the study it was evident that **Monika** struggled to meet the 'right' people. She seemed to represent an atypical case in this regard as her need to meet other people from her own community was higher. This was because she did not have a nuclear family unit in Ireland while at the same time, she found it difficult to connect with the Irish social networks.

However, some of the participants extensively and continuously engaged in their own community social networks over time as these social networks seemed to provide the shared understanding and ease that could not be achieved within the Irish social networks. These social networks also seemed to compensate for the physically distant home social networks. **Lisa's** Albanian social network in Ireland consisted of other women with children which presented an advantage to her:

Lisa: it's easier. Because it's the same language and we have the same ... culture and we can ... I don't know we have the same things, similar things you know it's and the

kids would be... [...] We'd be nearly the same, like in all conversation we'd have the same you know. (LA/INT1)

Similarly, **Lietus'** social network was mainly concentrated around other parents in a Lithuanian school. **Pamela** mainly socialised with other members of the Indian community who were either related to her or those with common interests she met through religious involvements. On the other hand, **Obusi's** and **Sebastien's** social networks were more mixed.

While the social interactions with people from their own communities were supportive, providing a common background in terms of the origin, cross-cultural adaptation experiences, and ease at communication, they were also restrictive at the same time. Those participants who primarily socialised with the members of their own community did not generally feel the need to expand their social networks to include other immigrant and Irish groups. However, this was not despite some attempts as discussed later on. Kim (2001) referred to it as an insulating effect, preventing individuals from engaging in wider social networks, negatively interacting with their cross-cultural adaptation over time. Thus while their own community social networks may act as 'temporary holding stations' (Kim, 2001, p. 139) during the initial stages of the cross-cultural adaptation, their overuse may lead to difficulties in cross-cultural adaptation and feelings of separation from the host culture (Berry, 2005). Even though the process of the cross-cultural adaptation was found to be very subjective and the participants felt adapted to their new environment even without high interaction with the Irish social networks, such interactions shaped the participants' experiences nevertheless.

#### *(4) Other Immigrant Groups in Ireland*

This social group comprised of other immigrants rather than members of the participants' own communities. Establishing social connections with other immigrant communities was usually undertaken by the participants as a complimentary strategy to enlarging their mono-cultural social networks.

Even though the members of different immigrant communities came from different socio-cultural backgrounds and perhaps spoke different languages, they shared some commonalities in their cross-cultural adaptation journey by the virtue of being immigrants. The connecting strategies with other immigrant groups differed from the more focused connecting strategies with own communities. Those participants who were involved with the members of other immigrant groups in Ireland (mainly **Sebastien**, **Obusi**, **Monika** and **Lietus**) connected with them mainly through some common interest or through the place of work, rather than through a deliberate search which was characteristic of locating their own communities. **Sebastien** described his social group in Ireland:

*Interviewer: You were saying that you don't have any Irish friends?*

*Sebastien: Not really, no, not really. It's more foreigners from work. I know French people, I know Italian, I know Brazilians, there are a lot of Brazilians here. (SF/INT1)*

These connections were primarily established due to the lack of 'availability' of the members of their own community in general or the 'right' people in particular. For example, on a number of occasions **Obusi** ascertained that he wanted to be different from other Nigerians who were perceived negatively by most people in Ireland. (cf. Section 6.5). Thus while **Sebastien's** connecting strategy was based on availability and shared experience of being an immigrant, **Obusi** pursued a deliberate strategy of searching for non-Nigerian social networks.



The interaction with other immigrant groups seemed to satisfy the need for social interaction with people of similar background and share their immigrant experience (Light, 1972; Kim, 2001). In addition, communication in English was usually employed which increased the language competency and communication confidence of the participants. Establishing social interaction with other immigrant communities was usually a secondary strategy if suitable members of one's own community could not be located for various reasons or the interaction with one's own community was not seen as socially beneficial. Emotional support, sharing of somewhat similar experiences and values were the benefits of this type of social interaction.

#### *(5) Irish People in Ireland*

The social group of Irish people in Ireland consisted of the members of the host population – the Irish. All of the participants experienced some level of social interaction with this group with varying responses and feelings. However, the participants engaged in this type of interaction the least out of all the different types of social networks.

While the participants perceived many cultural and social similarities and the feelings of emotional support with their mono-cultural and other immigrant social networks, it was the opposite with this social group. Differences, rather than similarities were often pointed out by the participants during conversations. **Pamela**, who had been living in Ireland since 2000, perceived the Irish people differently over time. She felt that the warmth from the Irish people was gone due to the changing economic circumstances and increased immigration. She felt that due to this change, *'you're in kind of a cold place. Like they don't want you but you're a necessary evil'* (PI/INT2). The nature of the Irish people was thus seen as changing for the

worse by **Pamela** and she felt no longer welcomed within an Irish context. Previous negative encounters and feelings of not being welcome contributed to **Pamela's** lack of active and positive building of social relationships with the Irish. **Monika** often felt excluded in her workplace due to her foreign status and in spite of her early attempts to develop relationships with the Irish, over time she increasingly lacked confidence in approaching the Irish.

While such negative perceptions of the Irish people prevented the participants from seeking out social engagements with this social group, others felt indifferent. **Sebastian**, who was surrounded by other immigrants did not mind whether his social network included some Irish people or not. However, in most cases, negative perceived perceptions of self (cf. Section 6.5) resulted in the loss of confidence in establishing connections with the Irish which also transcended into the area of their employment and nascent entrepreneurial pursuit (cf. Chapter 7). Thus while interactions with one's own community were characterised by a sense of familiarity, the social encounters with the Irish people were seen as a somewhat daunting experience. In spite of some negative perceptions of the host community, the participants expressed the view that the Irish people were friendly and approachable. However, this friendliness was characterised by its surface nature and getting to know Irish people as friends was seen as very difficult as **Sebastien** recalled:

Sebastien: I know some, a few Irish people but the Irish people you know, they're just like very superficial relationships.

**Interviewer: On the surface, yeah.**

Sebastien: Yeah. Just we talk and they are very, very friendly people ...very. But we just talk with them and the next day you don't speak to them. (SF/INT2)

Even though the Irish people were seen as friendly and polite, no lasting relationships were established or maintained with this social group. Thus the Irish were seen as friendly on the surface, or affable, yet distant at the same time.

Unlike with other social groups, the participants did not actively seek out to establish social contacts with the Irish. The most common place for encountering the Irish were public places such as shops or government agencies where the relationships were functional rather than of a social nature. In addition, the participants encountered the Irish at their places of work (Ong and Ward, 2005). This was the case for **Lisa, Monika, Lietus** and **Sebastien**, whose superiors and co-workers included Irish social networks. The conversation with the participants revealed that their Irish work colleagues remained just that – colleagues in work. Even though the participants communicated with their work colleagues about work matters, they did not socialise outside of work as **Lietus** pointed out.

**Interviewer: And do you have any Irish friends?**

Lietus: Not so much. I, my boss is Irish. And it's I can tell that my boss is my friend.

...

**Interviewer: Okay, and would you socialise with him outside of work?**

Lietus: Not so much. Not so much. Actually, one time only but...(LL/INT1)

Such experiences were also highlighted by the others. **Monika** found her interaction with her colleagues increasingly difficult over time, as she felt '*disabled*' (MH/RNIM2) by the fact that she was the only non-Irish person in the work place. It seemed that the participants perceived that their Irish colleagues already had their own social networks saturated. Also, the participants often perceived the Irish people as different from them which relates to the concept of perceived cultural distance, often debated within the cross-cultural adaptation literature (Berry, 2002), while the notion of perceived perceptions of self (cf. Section 6.5) also played its role in how the participants felt and approached the Irish social networks. So instead of trying to socialise with their Irish work colleagues, the participants often withdrew and concentrated on socialisation within their own community networks where they felt more comfortable, accepted and at ease.

The participants also encountered the Irish through common interests which led to more positive experiences in comparison with work place relationships. For example, **Obusi** made some positive connections with the Irish through a religious organisation and regarded the Irish members as *'nice people like this, like a family'* (ON/INT1), while **Pamela** made another Irish friend through their children's school. **Monika** had a temporal friendship with an Irish man who offered English classes in exchange for cookery classes:

Monika: He started to teach me with trips to Wicklow and he is, he is ... he gets bored I think. He didn't have a job, he was on sick leave for a long sick leave and he wanted to make relationships.(MH/INT1)

However, these social connections did not always sustain and they were more based on a temporary and emergent basis rather than deliberate and lasting strategies for social interaction with the Irish people.

In general, over time and specific situations, the participants found interacting with the Irish difficult. While the literature on cross-cultural adaptation often highlights the positive benefits of social interaction with the members of a host country (Kim, 2008; Berry, 2008), such interactions were found to have mostly a negative impact on the participants' self-perceptions and their cultural identities. As a result, the participants interacted with the members of their own networks or other immigrant communities in Ireland. Such lack of interactions with the Irish had further implications on the participants' economic adaptation through employment and entrepreneurial process as discussed in Chapter 7.

The findings about social networks uncovered the roles that different social networks played in the participants' cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland over time and specific situations. Each of the identified social networks played a different function during this process. Although

the findings are naturally limited by the scope and the design of the study, its longitudinal nature and the regular encounters with the participants allowed a much more detailed and closer examination of the social networks effects than is normally available through larger scale surveys. The findings regarding the social networks generally support the result of the previous studies in this area but they also show a more complex picture of how different social networks interacted with other variables, producing different individuals' patterns of adjustment over time. While the previous literature on cross-cultural adaptation addressed these networks on an interpersonal level (Kim, 2001), the findings of this study show the characteristics of each of them separately on an individual level, while also relating them to each other over time and situations. Also, in spite of different roles, the literature on cross-cultural adaptation does not always separate one's nuclear family and own community networks roles. The finding of this study show in detail how family roles within a nuclear family interacted with the cross-cultural adaptation process of both spouses. Figure 6.7 summarises the key findings of this theme.

### **Figure 6.7 –Summary of Findings - Personal Predispositions**

- Five types of social networks were identified in the study, each defined by its changing dynamics, perceived similarities and varying level of interaction.
- The nuclear family unit in Ireland presented the strongest social network over time. While supportive, it was also restrictive for mothers.
- While social interactions with social networks of mono-cultural and other immigrant groups provided the participants with an emotional support and a sense of belonging, these networks did not ease the cross-cultural adaptation process. In fact, it could be said they hindered the process.
- The Irish were perceived as affable yet distant and of a superficial nature. These potentially useful relationships were not actively sought out and established by the participants, negatively interacting with their cross-cultural adaptation journey.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The findings on the role of the different social networks can be also viewed through the theoretical lenses of Granovetter's (1973; 1983) notion of social networks which explains the paradoxical nature of social networks which are employed by the participants over time and situations. The mono-cultural social networks could be viewed as strong social networks of a bonding nature. The emotional support and the maintenance of cultural values gained through such networks were mostly valued by its members over time. In spite of their perceived benefits, these social networks were characterised by their insulating effect (Kim, 2001) of restraining cross-cultural adaptation. On the other hand, the Irish social networks could be characterised by its weak ties and bridging nature. Interaction with host networks was found as yielding benefits of facilitating easier cross-cultural experience and the sense of belonging and integration (Kim and Aldrich, 2005; Berry, 2008). However, the participants did not utilise these potentially useful bridging social networks which could have been additionally valuable for entrepreneurial purposes. On the contrary, interaction with the Irish led to stressful experiences for the participants rather than a positive cross-cultural adaptation. Thus even though these networks were capable of enhancing the cross-cultural experience of the participants, they did not feel comfortable, confident, and strong enough to pursue such relationships. Rather, they perceived these relationships as superficial and their confidence deteriorating (cf. Section 6.5). Such a paradoxical nature of the social networks mix and roles was not only reflected in the participants' cross-cultural adaptation but also very strongly in their economic adaptation through employment and most notably in their nascent entrepreneurial process (cf. Chapter 7).

## **6.5. DYNAMIC CULTURAL IDENTITY POSITIONS**

The theme of dynamic cultural identities positions reflects the participants' changing perceptions of their cultural identities. Inevitably, crossing boundaries and moving to Ireland meant that the participants' embedded identities were somewhat challenged by the newly faced cultural values and norms of Ireland and their own status as immigrants. The participants thus operated within two main cultural traditions - holding on to some elements of their 'old' identities, adapting their cultural identities to the new environment, while incorporating some elements of the new culture over time. The participants' cultural identities were dynamically changing during the course of the cross-cultural adaptation as they continuously engaged in an adaptive tension between the old and new as articulated by Kim (2001; 2008). Thus as the data showed, the extent of the cultural identities shifts was a dynamic, multidirectional process, interacting with the broader cultural commonalities or differences between the two cultures, particular social interaction situations and their outcomes, and the predisposing factors of individuals.

The different elements of the participants' cultural identities were demonstrated through actions and interactions over time. Contributing to the overall cultural identities positions were: the (1) broader and inherent societal cultural beliefs of home countries which were transcended and demonstrated within an Irish context over time, (2) individuals' cultural identities changes through social encounters with the Irish community, and (3) one's overall dynamic cultural identities. All of these facets presented a dynamic interaction, often resulting in a degree of a situational specific fusion or conflict between the dynamic cultural identities and self perceptions. How individual's perceived themselves in terms of their identities, influenced their engagement in employment and entrepreneurial paths.

### *(1) Broader and Inherent Societal Cultural Beliefs of Home Countries*

The participants came from different countries with diverse cultural norms, beliefs and traditions. When looking at the societal and cultural histories of the participants' backgrounds from their verbal discourses, these included systems which were both close and distant to the culture of Ireland. Inter-cultural differences on a societal level were also noted by Hofstede's (1991; 2009) cultural dimensions (cf. Chapter 2.3.2). In a comparison with the Irish culture, the participants' home cultures included some closer socio-cultural and political systems of democracy and capitalism (France), then countries with post-communism histories (Hungary, Albania and Lithuania), and the distant social system (India), and a developing country economy (Nigeria). Their cultural systems, religions, and perceptions of differences between other cultural related factors such as work ethics also varied. **Monika** and **Pamela** both recognised that in their home countries, people worked much longer hours than in Ireland, while **Sebastien** also pointed out some work ethics differences in favour of Ireland – *'I think English people, they know how to work. They're more organised and more efficient at work'* (SF/INT1).

Adopting work related values of Ireland was perhaps easier than other, more inherent cultural values of home countries. **Pamela** spoke of the Indian inherent inferiority complex which was something that was harder to adapt during her cross-cultural adaptation process in Ireland:

Pamela: ...the thing with Indian's is I told you, we have an inherent inferiority complex [...] We need that pat on the back. I think it comes from being colonised for so long, you know [...] I think it seeps down from your forefathers and you're always told that. See the Indian education system it is believed was so designed by the British that it taught you to be a good clerk. Not a good manager or not a good ... it's changing



now but still we have the same syllabus here today. So programmed you know so it's inherent. (PI/INT1)

Thus **Pamela** explained part of the Indian's 'programmed' mindset of a need for a non-Indian approval. In a conversation with **Pamela** she also pointed out that the Indian culture differed with its caste social system where everyone's role was predetermined from their birth, Indian people were very conscious of their hierarchy and they are tuned into long-term achievement similarly to the Chinese culture (PI/INT1). Thus the Indian culture was positioned by **Pamela** as very distant from the European or Irish culture (Hofstede, 1991). Even though she came from the highest position within the Indian caste system (the Bhramins), it was evident from her actions that she constantly sought approval from the Irish. During the Emerge programme, she often spoke to the trainers about her business ideas and sought their approval for her business related actions. She also aimed at creating a business venture which would be morally sound and made social difference which related to her Brahmin role of sharing knowledge. This shows how embedded cultural values persisted within a person in spite of living in a different culture for a number of years.

Others of a closer European cultural origin, also experienced ongoing differences of the two cultures on a societal level, such as **Monika**:

Monika: ...maybe it was too much for me for being abroad from a different culture, always everyday the same differences, you know what I mean. Oh again, again, yeah they are like that....(MH/INT2)

For **Monika**, the societal cultural differences led to her frustration which reinforced her feelings of the division between 'us' (the immigrants including the interviewer) and 'them', the Irish. She was able to relate her temporary frustration with the Irish culture and her inability to comprehend it and to adapt to it with the researcher, who was also an immigrant in Ireland. Thus the embedded cultural beliefs of one's home culture and the perceived

differences between the participants' and the Irish cultures were present in their daily lives to a different extent in Ireland, as they dynamically interacted with their cross-cultural adaptation paths across specific situations.

The data analysis showed that the home cultural embedded values of the participants did not diminish in time during their cross-cultural adaptations. Instead, their embedded cultural values stayed with all of them to some extent. These primarily related to religious practices, food, and other cultural traditions. For example, **Obusi** had his son circumcised in Ireland when he was a few months old (RDICT/15<sup>th</sup> March, 09), while **Pamela** regularly participated at Indian religious ceremonies. Such culturally symbolic practices enabled the participants to feel more comfortable and connected with their home cultures within an unfamiliar environment but perhaps distanced them from adopting other practices. The participants' home cultural identities were thus continuously challenged and even changing. Such tension was noticed by Kim (2008) and Bhatia and Ram (2009). Even though Berry (2005) advocated that all immigrants essentially go through the same processes of the cross-cultural adaptation, it seems that this process was very subjective to the participants. Also, some writings on the cross-cultural adaptation (Berry, 2005; Constant et al., 2009) implied that immigrants chose or commit to their home or host cultural identity. From the findings of this study it seems that the participants did not choose their particular cultural affiliation consciously per se, rather they continuously evolved as a result of dynamic and cyclical processes rather than in a linear manner. These processes not only involved the perceived differences and similarities between the two cultures, but were also shaped through socialisation processes in Ireland (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) which further challenged or affirmed their dynamic cultural identities.

## *(2) Individuals' Cultural Identities Changes Through Social Encounters with the Irish*

It was found that the participants' cultural identities were dynamically affirmed or challenged through social encounters with others. Two constructs were found of importance in the data - perceived perceptions of self by the Irish and the construct of mistaken identity. The latter construct was largely related to the participants of different race – **Pamela** and **Obusi** while some of the other participants also voiced the perceived perceptions of the self by the Irish in their discourses.

The perceived perceptions of self referred to the way that the participants felt that they were perceived by others, mostly the Irish community. In turn, these perceived perceptions interacted with the participants' self-perceptions and the changes in their cultural identities. These perceived perceptions of self were not only formed through the personal encounters with the Irish but perceptions of the general public discourses about immigrant communities to which one belonged also interacted with one's dynamic cultural identity. **Obusi** explained how he perceived that the Irish perceived the Nigerian cultural group:

Obusi: ...everybody says oh Nigerians are this, Nigerians are that, but take one man to begin a change, if you, if you live your life differently you don't have to talk people will know you are different. They probably have met several other people from Nigeria? [...] we Nigerians know that some of us are terrible. Some don't like to work but they want to live good, well then it depends on your family, family background, your upbringing ...(ON/INT1)

As **Obusi** felt that the majority social group – the Irish (*'everybody'*), perceived his social group – the Nigerians in a negative way, he tried to disassociate himself with his cultural group. He did so by highlighting his individual characteristics which were a result of one's upbringing rather than a result of one's belonging to a certain cultural group. This was explained by Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory which held that the generally held positive

in-group bias may not always be found by certain members who may then leave the group. **Obusi** disassociated himself with his cultural group as he did not feel that he would benefit from such membership anymore. Even though from informal communication it became evident that he held social relationships with other Nigerians, perhaps they were more individually screened by him. Another possible explanation is that **Obusi** expressed such views to be favourably viewed by the researcher as he was aware of the negative view of the Nigerians in Ireland.

Other participants also expressed their perceived perceptions of themselves by the Irish in a more temporal way. **Lietus** felt that his former employer positively discriminated against him as an immigrant as he realised that immigrant workers worked harder (LL/INT1). **Pamela** also often spoke of the perceived perceptions of herself by the Irish as an immigrant in a more negative way. **Sebastien** also had a perceived perception of himself as a '*stranger*' or '*foreigner*' (SF/INT2), perceiving himself as an outsider. Thus the perceived perceptions were not only directly related to an individual person and their cultural group but also to a social status as an immigrant. Such perceived perceptions of the participants by the Irish then interacted with the way that their cultural identities were reconstructed over time and specific situations (Kim, 2008; Bhatia and Ram, 2009). These perceived perceptions of self were constructed and reconstructed by the participants based on their social encounters or media discourses during their cross-cultural adaptation journey.

One contributing construct to the more negatively perceived perceptions of self were instances of 'mistaken identity'. While those of the Caucasian origin did not experience such instances, those of other races such as **Pamela** and **Obusi** encountered such episodes. This

involved a number of encounters with Irish people in which the participants were mistreated due to the fact that they were perceived as someone else due to their appearance. **Pamela** had a negative experience of being seen as someone ‘*living off the state*’ (PI/INT1). These episodes of mistaken identity were followed by a justification of one’s true identity whenever possible, but altering the participants’ perceived perceptions. **Pamela** reconstructed one such episode of a mistaken identity:

Pamela: ...What happened was I was in a park in [PLACE NAME] and I was with my child you know with a camera and someone comes up to me and says see you're living off our money as an asylum seeker. You can afford a camera and I can't even afford a meal and she started hurling abuse at us.

**Interviewer: No way?**

Pamela: ... We were perfectly within our rights to have a camera, it's only a camera (laughs) what is a big ... I take a picture of my son to send it back home you know. No most people think that ... if you're here, you're a foreign national, you're an asylum seeker. (PI/INT1)

At the time, **Pamela** was very upset about what happened and she tried to reveal her true identity to the attacker but without any success. In her recollection of the event, she also tried to reveal her true identity and to disassociate herself from being an asylum seeker. Such incidents led **Pamela** to believe that she could be perceived as an asylum seeker because of her appearance. As seen elsewhere, her personal confidence was low and she felt almost intimidated to approach Irish people for business purposes. Thus instances of a mistaken identity further contributed to her overall sense of a certain cultural identity position. In **Pamela**’s case, it was often a withdrawal from trying which would further confirm her home cultural identity which felt familiar to her.

**Obusi** also experienced negative encounters with Irish people as he revealed in his informal communication:

I'm not in good mood at all, we have been experiencing constant racial attacks where we live, so I'm too scared to leave my wife and children alone in the house.

However, we have since been going out to view houses. As soon as everything is sorted I will let you guys know... (ON/ICE/8<sup>th</sup> July 09)

This encounter left him and his family scared and forced to look for alternative accommodation. They lived in the house for over four years so they were sad to leave. After viewing over 20 houses, they finally got a positive response and moved to a new area. In spite of such negative experiences, **Obusi** appeared not to want to alter his perceived perceptions of his self by the Irish in a negative way. He continuously strived to reconstruct his identity based on his own personality rather than his race or nationality. **Pamela's** and **Obusi's** responses to the episodes of mistaken identity resulted in different approaches to their re-constructions of the perceived perceptions of themselves and their cultural identities. While **Obusi** progressed in his efforts to reconstruct his cultural identity which would yield acceptance of a wider social group, **Pamela** seemed to withdraw herself more after such incidents.

Such changes in the participant's cultural identities can be also explained by using Kim's (2005; 2008) notion of a cross-cultural adaptation as a stress-adaptation-growth dynamic. After experiencing an identity conflict, the participants encountered a certain degree of a cultural identify conflict. In an attempt to regain a balance and a fit with the external environment, the participants pursued different strategies at different times. While some (such as **Obusi**) saw highlighting his individual personality over his group membership as a way forward towards achieving a fit within an Irish context, others (such as **Pamela**) responded differently. In order to regain her balance, **Pamela** often withdrew from social interactions with the Irish in order to avoid acculturative stress, re-applying her home cultural identity. This coping strategy was also employed at times by other participants such as **Monika** and **Lisa**. However, such negative perceived perceptions of self and a withdrawal

was not always the case, as cultural identities were flexible and varied. At a different point in time, **Pamela** performed an Indian dance at a mixed cultural event which contributed to temporarily positive feelings of belonging to the Irish context. Thus the constructs of the perceived perception of self and the mistaken identity both interacted with the participants' cultural identities' changes over time and specific situations.

### *(3) Dynamic Cultural Identities Positions*

The discussion of the findings so far unfolded some of the facets of the participants' cultural identity trajectories over time and specific situations. How the participants viewed themselves with respect to their cultural identities and belonging to different spheres (culturally, socially and economically), continuously interacted with their cross-cultural and economic adaptation paths (both employment and self-employment). While sometimes, a participant could feel more at ease within the Irish socio-cultural context, at other times, the same participant could feel that they did not belong there. The participants were seeking to achieve a sense of balance in an unpredictable environment, in which they experienced conflicting pulls of the familiar and the unfamiliar. The participants endured these battles as they strove towards their aim of better lives. Belonging or not belonging to the Irish socio-cultural context did not mean that the participants assimilated to the Irish cultural values. The meaning of cross-cultural adaptation was subjective as it meant different things to different people at different times. The participants' cultural identities dynamically floated between different cultural spaces and times (Bhatia and Ram, 2009; Konig, 2009) rather than representing the end state (Berry, 2005). Four key cultural responses were identified in data which are discussed next.

(1) *'I am the minority'*

This type of cultural identity construction was characterised by the feelings of not belonging and the feelings of exclusion. Perceiving oneself in this light meant that the participants did not feel that their cross-cultural adaptation was accomplished and they seemed to withdraw themselves. **Pamela** often felt like a minority in Ireland as she questioned her position:

Pamela: Who am I? I am the minority, you know. The minority voice will never get heard. That's the way the world goes. We can't change it over night. (PI/INT1)

Even though one could feel like the minority within the Irish cross-cultural adaptation context like **Pamela**, at the same time, she felt part of her Indian culture and its values. While for **Pamela**, feeling like a minority was increasingly a more constant state, for others it was more temporary. When **Monika's** cross-cultural adaptation process worsen as a result of the prospects of unemployment and emotional challenges of depression, in an informal conversation she mentioned that she felt '*disabled*' by her foreign status (MH/RNIM2). Thus this feeling of not belonging in a new socio-cultural context was more situation specific and temporal in nature. Such cultural identity constructs also appeared to act as a self-erected barrier or a wall to the cross-cultural adaptation of the participants. In Berry's (2005) terms, this cultural identity state would refer to a state of separation. However, rather than choosing such cultural identity as a preservation of one's home cultural identity, the participants seemed to be more pushed towards such a cultural identity position as a way of self-preservation and cross-cultural adaptation stress minimisation (Kim, 2008).

(2) *Parallel cultural existence*

This cultural identity state meant that the participants operated in dual cultures simultaneously. Within this cultural identity position, the participants encompassed some elements from both cultures (the Irish and their home culture), perhaps taking the most suitable elements from both. **Sebastien** engaged in such a cultural identity existence most of



the time as he worked and lived with people both from Ireland and from other different nationalities, while at the same time, remaining connected with his French culture through regular physical and virtual interactions with his family and friends in France.

However, such a parallel cultural existence did not necessarily mean that the participants actively sought social connections with the Irish so Berry's (2005) integration approach to viewing one's cultural identity does not explain this finding. Perhaps, a notion of transcultural identity or a dynamic in-betweenness (Bennett, 1993; Konig, 2009) are more appropriate terms to refer to such a content state of existing in both cultural environments.

*(3) 'We don't belong here or there'*

Cultural identity of belonging nowhere encompassed feelings of no longer being part of home culture while at the same time not feeling a part of the Irish socio-cultural environment. Again, these temporal states of not belonging to either cultural sphere led to being torn between two cultural identities and feelings of being lost. **Lisa** explained her cultural identity perception of not belonging to either place:

Lisa: But I feel like we don't belong here or there...So it's ... I hate this kind of you're not part of here or you're not part of there. It's like two places ... I don't know.  
(LA/INT1)

Temporarily, **Lisa** struggled to fit into the new environment while having feelings of being displaced from her home culture as she could not associate with the old cultural ways.

This cultural identity represented a personal struggle for the participants to belong, rather than feeling stuck in-between, not fully belonging to either of them. This cultural identity was also temporal in nature, as at other times, **Lisa** felt more adapted to the Irish context, being content with her position. Bennett's (1993) 'encapsulated marginal' fits this cultural

identity of feeling of belonging nowhere. Berry's (2005) notion of marginalisation also explains this state but again, not seeking out interaction with the Irish was not a purposeful strategy for **Lisa**. Kim's (2008) notion of cross-cultural adaptation stress and temporal withdrawal also explains the feelings of being lost (*'I hate this kind...'*).

*(4) This is home'*

Feeling of belonging to the Irish socio-cultural environment rather than associating oneself with one's own cultural background also occurred at some instances. It did not necessarily mean that the participants felt as being Irish. It meant that the participants felt content with their cultural identity position and their direction of the cross-cultural adaptation. This state of cultural identity of belonging was expressed by **Obusi**:

Obusi: This is my home. I have been home most part of my life. Now I'm in a new home. And for now this is home. There is no other home anywhere.

**Interviewer: Do you feel you fully belong here?**

Obusi: It depends because I can not say; I cannot say that because I wasn't born here... If I don't consider this to be home then I shall go to wherever I think is home. But because I'm here now, this is home. And that's just the fact. (ON/INT2).

**Obusi** expressed that he felt at home in Ireland, belonging to the new environment and attempting to make the most out of it. However, while not expressing it directly, he also partially remained in his own home culture through carrying out cultural practices such as food habits, religious celebrations and other customs (such as circumcision of his son).

Berry's (2005) notion of integration only partially explains this cultural identity as the participants did not necessarily engage with the Irish in a more significant way. Rather, it was a feeling of content and balance within an Irish context in which personal aims could be achieved. In Kim's (2008) terminology, such a cultural identity response would mean that an individual overcame the stress and adapted to the new environment. However, like other

dynamic cultural identity positions, this one was also of a temporary nature, as over time and situations **Obusi** did not always feel at home.

These were the main temporal states of cultural identities adapted by the participants during the course of this study. These temporal states of cultural identities interacted with their daily activities. For example, while **Pamela** often felt like a minority, feeling that her voice would not get heard, this carried across to her nascent entrepreneurial attempts as she expected to be rejected even without trying. On the other hand, **Obusi** who tried to fit into the Irish environment, attempted to make contact with the Irish even though he was in fact rejected on a number of occasions. The particular cultural identity state that the individual participants experienced thus mutually and dynamically interacted with their cross-cultural and economic adaptation trajectories, acting either as a barrier or as a facilitator for further actions and interactions within the Irish socio-cultural environment.

The discussion of findings relating to the individual's cultural identities revealed that it was their old cultural identities, predispositions, and the level and nature of social interactions that contributed to the ongoing construction and reconstruction of their cultural identity positions. The different states of cultural identities were partially explained by the theoretical constructs from the cross-cultural adaptation writings. However, as the process of the cross-cultural adaptation was dynamic, situation specific, and subjective, none of the theories fit completely. Echoing Bhatia and Ram's (2009) argument, the notion of cross-cultural adaptation and cultural identities is complex and dynamic in the globalised world and it is a mixing and moving process rather than a linear or a static state. Furthermore, the participants' feeling of fit did not necessarily mean that they adopted 'the Irish ways' rather that they felt

at ease and at balance in the Irish environment. Thus achieving a temporary fit between a person and the environment can be seen as highly subjective as no two participants were the same.

This theme encompassed the dynamically changing and context valid cultural identities that the participants adopted during their cross-cultural adaptation journey in Ireland. Figure 6.8 summarises the key findings of this theme.

### **Figure 6.8 – Summary of Findings - Dynamic Cultural Identity Positions**

- The participants' societal level differences and embedded values transcended into their cross-cultural adaptation process and challenged the differences between the 'old' and the 'new'.
- The individuals' cultural identities positions also adapted through the social interactions with the Irish. The perceived perceptions of self and a mistaken identity constructs explained the impact of these interactions.
- Belonging or not belonging to the Irish socio-cultural context did not mean that the participants assimilated to the Irish cultural values. The subjective and changing feeling of belonging to the Irish context was more about feelings of content and a sense of balance.
- Four different dynamic cultural identities positions were adopted at different times and specific situations – (1) 'I am the minority, (2) parallel cultural existence, (3) 'we don't belong here or there', and (4) 'this is home'.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

These cultural identities were constructed and reconstructed by the participants together with other constructs based on home cultural beliefs and values, family roles but also on the perceived perceptions of self by others, predisposing factors, and interactions with different social networks. The facets involved in the cross-cultural adaptation process were often multilayered, complex, and dynamically changing, and this comes across in the themes of this analysis. The participants strove towards gaining a better life in Ireland, thus they

forewent temporal cultural identity states of feeling like a minority and belonging nowhere. The dynamic cultural identities positions which came out of findings are seen as some of the many variations of how immigrants may feel during a cross-cultural adaptation journey. This expands the widely applied Berry's (2005) four states of cultural identities of immigrants in that it adds more variations and emphasis on their temporary nature. Even though significant insights into the participants' experiences were gained throughout this study, at the same time it is recognised that other possible explanations and variations exist.

## **6.6. CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the findings in relation to the cross-cultural adaptation process of the study participants. Emerging from the data analysis, the participants' perceptions, actions and interactions involved in their cross-cultural adaptation process were recognised as significant in relation to their nascent entrepreneurial pursuit. The use of the participants' own words and experiences throughout this chapter gave these individuals voices but also reassured the reader of the data validity and reliability. The interpretation of the generated data in this chapter was based on the use of varied methods during the data generation period to ensure both data triangulation and data crystallisation. At the same time, it is recognised that other possible explanations and interpretations of the findings exist, as there is no one single and objective reality (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). While generally supporting the findings of related studies within the cross-cultural adaptation literature, this study revealed a more complex picture. Moreover, the cross-cultural adaptation dimension does not stand alone as it frames the economic adaptation in which nascent entrepreneurial process is situated.

Four key themes within the participants' cross-cultural adaptation in an Irish context were recognised as: (1) personal predispositions, (2) imagined and real journeys transcending spaces, (3) paradoxical social networks' roles, and (4) dynamic cultural identities. The discussion of these findings drew on a number of different theories from the cross-cultural adaptation field, as no one particular theory appeared to explain the participants' experiences fully. The discussion of these findings pointed out, that the cross-cultural adaptation process was a subjective experience for the participants. The predisposed characteristics of an individual dynamically interacted with the new and unfamiliar context as the participants tried to regain their balance and achieve a fit within the new context. As pointed out by Kim (2001), this process was of a cyclical and changing nature in which the participants' sense of cultural identities and belonging varied over time and specific circumstances. The function of different social networks was mixed. While the mono-cultural social networks provided emotional support and a sense of familiarity, they did not facilitate ease of the cross-cultural adaptation experience. On the other hand, host social networks interactions were often highlighted as facilitating the cross-cultural adaptation process (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2005). However, such experiences of interactions often resulted in a negative sense of one's own cultural identity position. Thus the discussion of this chapter uncovered the nuances of the dynamic process of the cross-cultural adaptation on an individual level.

While the participants experienced difficulties in their cross-cultural adaptation, they remained in Ireland as through the ongoing temporal-self and reference group comparisons, they perceived the Irish context as more suitable for achieving their goal of better lives. This goal was mainly pursued through different paths of economic adaptation, such as employment, but efforts to become self-employed were also made (cf. Chapter 7). Intertwined with the cross-cultural adaptation, the economic adaptation process was also characterised by its dynamic and cyclical nature as both of these dimensions interacted. The

second chapter of the discussion of findings uncovers the economic adaptation dimension, particularly focusing on the nascent entrepreneurial journeys of the participants. It discusses the dynamics of this path also in relation to the cross-cultural adaptation constructs, and uncovers the details of how the participants strove and sometimes struggled in their pursuits of better lives.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS II - NASCENT ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS WITHIN AN ECONOMIC ADAPTATION DIMENSION

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#### 7.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research findings in relation to the cross-cultural adaptation process which the participants engaged in over time and the specific situations. The participants' economic adaptation through employment and nascent entrepreneurial efforts dynamically interacted with their cross-cultural adaptation paths. The nascent entrepreneurial pursuit is seen as part of the participants' economic adaptation and as a means of achieving their aim of better lives in Ireland. The discussion of this chapter thus adds further insights into the research question: What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation?

Even though this research was informed by the relevant theoretical and empirical studies, it was largely emergent in nature. Rather than applying existing theories from the area of immigrant specific or general nascent entrepreneurship literature, the researcher let the data speak for itself. This allowed for the individuals' experiences of the nascent entrepreneurial process within their cross-cultural adaptation experiences to come through rather than predetermining the outcomes (Singh and DeNoble, 2004). Thus the key research focus was on the process of becoming (Davidsson, 2006; Steyeart, 2007). This involved following those efforts which turned into existing ventures but also those that were abandoned for various reasons. Studying this process as it unfolded 'live' in front of the researcher's eyes allowed



for the uncovering of a rich tapestry portraying the experiences of the participants' entrepreneurial efforts.

Adapting this open and emergent approach illuminated the process of the participants' journeys of economic adaptation which was intertwined with their journey of cross-cultural adaptation. While the focus is on the participants' nascent entrepreneurial journey, they seemed to move between employment and self-employment realms in their endeavor to establish themselves and achieve better lives within an Irish context. These dynamic and continuous attempts were both enabled and disabled by different cross-cultural adaptation and external environment constructs as the participants moved closer or further away from achieving their aims. The five key themes in relation to this dynamic process were recognised through the data analysis as: (1) employment paths; (2) the process of recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities; (3) the process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities; (4) the impediments to the successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities; and (5) the outcomes of the entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation process. While these themes are presented separately, they overlapped and continuously interacted in a cyclical manner. The participants moved between their nascent entrepreneurial process, employment paths, and the cross-cultural adaptation process in a dynamic way, characterised by its subjective nature.

These key findings are discussed and enhanced through the theoretical lenses of constructs such as the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane and Venterkaraman, 2001; Shane, 2003), entrepreneurial capital (Firkin, 2001; 2003), the gestation activities view of the nascent entrepreneurial process (Reynolds et al., 2004; Gartner et al., 2004), along with the cross-

cultural adaptation literature (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2005, 2008; Bhatia and Ram, 2009). In the following sections, the particularities of each of these themes are discussed in a conversation between data findings, and in relation to the literature. The selected excerpts from the data provide rich examples of the key findings.

## **7.2. EMPLOYMENT PATHS**

The participants' goals of achieving better lives were attempted both through employment and self-employment in Ireland. This theme encompasses the variations in employment trajectories of the participants in Ireland over time. The employment paths of the participants were filled with diverse challenges and opportunities as they strove to establish themselves in an economic sense, and provide financial resources for themselves and their families. The employment directions of the participants were characterised by diversions and variations, as each individual participant experienced their own subjective employment journey. The impact of the worsening economic conditions during the time of the study became evident as the employment paths and economic mobility of the participants were challenged in many ways. The participants continuously moved back and forth between employment and their entrepreneurial pursuit as they attempted to pursue the most feasible option. While some of the employment paths were retrospectively recalled by the participants, the researcher was able to follow another part of this journey which unfolded during the duration of this study. The combination of these two views allowed a more comprehensive and complete picture of the underlying motives, actions, and interactions of their economic adaptation in Ireland to be gained.

The primary function of employment in Ireland was seen as a vehicle providing financial means to facilitate better lives for the participants, rather than being concerned with building a career path or the building of skills in a direct way. Even though **Monika** ascertained that acquiring English language competencies would enable her to secure upward mobility in her home country - *'my English is improving. In the future I will have more choice'* (MH/INT1), this was not a deliberate strategy during her employment. This relates to the *homo economicus* conceptualisation of behaviour previously addressed in studies on immigrant employment (Piore, 1979; Williams et al., 2004) as the participants focused their efforts on accumulating financial resources rather than on upward employment mobility.

The initial employment of the participants was often characterised by its temporary nature. This was because most of the participants first attempted to make sense of the new socio-cultural environment during their initial cross-cultural adaptation journey. For example, **Sebastien** first worked in a Bed and Breakfast because as he said: *'...at the beginning I couldn't find any other job. It was a provisory job.'* (SF/INT2). During informal communication with the researcher **Sebastien** recognised that not being able to find employment initially was related to the lack of awareness of the system of recruitment in Ireland, unfamiliarity with wider norms of how things were done, and a lack general socio-cultural awareness of the new environment. Secondly, the locating of initial employment by the majority of the participants was also achieved with the help of bonding social networks (Nee and Sanders, 2001) (cf. Chapter 6.3). For example, **Lisa** and her husband located their first temporary employment on a farm through a family member chain connection who was already in Ireland – *'my husband's brother was here and he found some work permits for us and we came here'* (LA/INT1). Thirdly, legal restrictions also played a role in locating the initial employment for **Lisa**, **Obusi** and **Pamela** (cf. Chapter 4.2.4). **Pamela** secured her

initial temporary employment based on what work permits were available rather than what she would have liked to do:

Pamela: I was a technical assistant ... That's the only job I could get. They wouldn't give visas for working in advertising here so if you wanted a work visa you had to be either an architect or a medical practitioner either a doctor or a nurse or...hmm someone with IT skills. So technical assistance in IT so that's the only profile I could take up. (PI/INT1)

While **Pamela**'s husband secured a position in his related field, she was more restricted in her choices. **Obusi** was also legally restricted from working as he waited for his residency status to be granted.

The subsequent employment trajectories of the participants in Ireland took different directions over time. These included: (1) securing employment positions related to home country employment position, (2) securing employment position not primarily related to the previous home country employment position, and (3) not being able to secure an appropriate employment position. These different employment strategies were not only specific to certain individuals but the same individuals pursued more than one of these employment strategies over time. As the discussion of each of these three key forms of employment as a way of economic adaptation shows, the anticipated benefits were not always achieved. As a result of such ongoing tensions in striving towards certain goals, the participants' nascent entrepreneurial journey was pursued within this process.

### *(1) Employment position in Ireland related to home country employment position*

Pursuing this strategy, the participants (**Monika** and **Sebastien**) were able to apply their previously acquired human capital in terms of their skills, knowledge and work experience. At the same time, certain adjustments had to be made in terms of localisation of a previous

knowledge and skills. Both **Sebastien** and **Monika** who were educated to a master's degree level (e-commerce and architecture respectively) with work experience in their home countries and no work permit restrictions in Ireland, they secured employment positions which were similar to their home ones. Nevertheless, their employment path directions differed. For **Sebastien**, this position was higher than in his home country of France:

**Interviewer: Do you think that if you were in France would you be working in a similar position?**

Sebastien: No.

**Interviewer: Worse or better?**

Sebastien: No, no, worse.

**Interviewer: Really?**

Sebastien: Yeah. I am sure about this. (SF/INT2)

**Sebastien**, who worked in the area of e-commerce both in France and in Ireland was able to compare what those two posts entailed. Such favourable comparison in addition to comparisons with his reference group in France (cf. Chapter 6.3), led to his satisfaction with his employment position. Even though later in his employment in Ireland he struggled with an upward mobility, after some time, he secured a slightly higher position within the same company. On the other hand, while **Monika** also applied her professional skills in the area of architecture, her position in Ireland was lower than in her home country:

**Interviewer: Do you think if you were living in Hungary would you be working in a similar position than you are here or was it the same?**

Monika: My position here is less, lower than I ever had ...(laughs nervously)

**Interviewer: Really, why is that?**

Monika: Because of the language.

**Interviewer: Because of the language? But isn't the architecture stuff what you do the same? Isn't the work you do the same?**

Monika: I have never assisted anybody in my life. I was always independent. So I have to assist somebody else, I have my own projects. Not for long. So I have to give them to somebody else so it's very low. (MH/INT2)

Unlike in **Sebastien's** case, **Monika** found herself in a lower employment position than in her home country in spite of having enough work experience in the area. Even though she secured employment for the same multinational organisation in Ireland that she previously

worked for in Hungary, she attributed her lower position to her lack of the English language skills which were needed to carry out her work. **Monika** also encountered some personal problems with her manager, and she also felt out of place and lacked self-confidence due to being the only foreign person in her organisation. She also temporarily suffered from depression which she felt also affected her work enthusiasm for some time (MH/INT2).

Even though both **Sebastien** and **Monika** secured similar positions in which they could apply their previous skills and knowledge, their subsequent employment paths differed and also interacted with the cross-cultural adaptation variables. **Monika's** English language communication difficulties, her cultural identity of feeling like a minority as a result of negative social interactions with her work colleagues, and her personal predispositions seemed to contribute to her downward employment course. On the other hand, **Sebastien** worked in a mixed environment where he did not feel like a minority and his colleagues included French and other immigrants. Also, his level of English competency was higher than **Monika's**, and he also communicated in French in his employment. Thus in spite the fact that both **Monika** and **Sebastien** came from EU countries with transferable work related human capital, their individual cross-cultural adaptation journeys interacted with their employment directions. The other participants pursued different employment paths.

*(2) Securing employment positions in Ireland not primarily related to home country employment position*

Another employment strategy which was adopted by all of the participants (apart from **Sebastien**) in Ireland was characterised by its discontinuity from their previously held human capital and home employment positions. There were different reasons which could explain such divergent employment paths. As previously discussed, legal restrictions prevented some

of the participants from entering certain positions. This was the case for **Pamela** who recalled her employment experience: *'I was technical documentation developer...That's the only job I could get. They wouldn't give visas for working in advertising'* (PI/INT1). Another reason was that some of the participants' previous qualifications and work experience were not recognised in Ireland (Nielsen et al., 2004) such as for **Lisa** who was qualified as a primary school teacher (LA/ONE11, 14<sup>th</sup> April 08). This led her to search for alternative forms of employment and she subsequently held a number of different, sometimes unrelated and disjointed positions such as a shop assistant, crèche assistant, and an administration assistant. In addition, **Lisa's** and **Pamela's** childcare responsibilities also meant that their employment had to fit around those needs.

Apart from the legal restrictions, non-recognition of qualifications from home country and childcare responsibilities, there were other reasons for working in unrelated areas. At times, when desirable employment was not available, the participants engaged in alternative types of employment for the financial benefits (Green, 2007). **Lietus** worked in construction both in the UK and in Ireland despite being qualified as an engineer and also being self-employed in his home country. **Monika** also temporarily worked as a waitress due to the lack of other employment alternatives and a need to secure financial resources. Lastly, human capital redundancy was another reason for not applying previously developed human capital. **Obusi** experienced a human capital redundancy whereas his previous qualifications and work experience were not applicable in Ireland:

Obusi: When people hear somebody saying that he's working as a ... a technician, technician is not as it is here, it's a place whereby when you know what you're doing - so even if the machines are not available where you can still make the knowledge you have and repair what you have, so I don't have the experience or wisdom that I can repair any ... any system based on the knowledge I have acquired in school and the practical experience ... (ON/INT2)

**Obusi** recognised that the process of being a technician and the knowledge and skills needed in that profession largely differed from what he learnt and applied in his home country. An opportunity to pursue such a profession in Ireland was blocked and he had to locate alternative forms of employment.

Thus, it appears that those who did not continue in their previously developed professions, did so for reasons which included legal restrictions, their home qualifications not being recognised, lack of related employment opportunities, and redundancy of their previously acquired and practiced professional skills. These findings are supported by the literature in the area of immigrant labour and relate to such concepts as underemployment (Stenning and Dawley, 2009) and compromised careers (Suto, 2009). The findings also show that the participants pursued different employment opportunities with a primary aim of accumulating financial resources which would provide a better life for themselves and their families (Green, 2007). Thus employment was perceived as a means of accomplishing the longer term goal of better lives by the participants rather than concentrating on career advancement per se (Epstein and Gang, 2006).

### *(3) Not being able to secure an appropriate employment position*

The findings showed that this employment strategy involved those who were not able to secure employment in Ireland, thus they were not working. The recurring reasons for this were legal restrictions stemming from the government policies on immigration (cf. Chapter 4.2.4) (**Lisa, Pamela** and **Obusi**), childcare responsibilities (**Lisa** and **Pamela**) and unemployment as a result of a redundancy (**Monika**).



**Lisa, Pamela** and **Obusi** were initially restricted by their visa status in Ireland as they came from non-EU countries. While **Lisa** and **Pamela** were granted their visa prior to the research commencement, **Obusi** was not legally allowed to work until his legal status was granted in February 2009. **Obusi** seemed to be often feeling frustrated about his inability to work and he did not want to disclose this fact to other people. Being from Nigeria, he felt that he would have been negatively stereotyped if he revealed his legal status (Montreuil and Bourhis, 2001) which relates to the construct of perceived perceptions of self (cf. Chapter 6.5):

**Interviewer: Is the process of waiting [for residency] long? A few years is it?**

Obusi: It's been going on for a year now so ... that's why all the courses I'm doing [...] and at the same time I don't want people to see me as somebody, but everybody knows that Nigerians are this or that but I'm always trying to be different. (ON/INT1)

Even though he was unable to secure employment, he was able to complete his work experience which was part of his course. He also filled his waiting time by studying on subsidised courses in order to become better equipped for entering employment or self-employment once legally allowed to do so. In addition, as explained earlier, his previous professional skills were redundant in Ireland.

The second reason which prevented some participants from entering employment or entering at a similar level to their home country employment were childcare responsibilities. Due to the lack of social support of extended family with raising children and culturally implied gender roles, looking after children was seen as the primary responsibility of mothers (cf. Chapter 6.5). When speaking with **Lisa** about her career direction and childcare responsibilities, the interviewer probed her about how she felt about putting her children into a crèche so that she would have more opportunities for her employment advancement:

**Interviewer: You wouldn't put them into a crèche or ...**

Lisa: No, no, no, no, no. Because they need me, you know. They need me to help with their lessons and things so it's not point leaving them til 5 o'clock in a crèche and then when I go home I won't be able to take care of them. You know, it's just making food and it's not the same, so I need to be there for them. I want actually (laughs). (LA/INT2)

This extract points to the fact that childcare responsibilities came before **Lisa's** employment. Even though it seemed like a matter of choice for her (*'I want actually'*), this choice was also constrained as a result of the lack of social support with child minding. Similar points were raised on a number of occasions by **Pamela**, who also had two children and stayed at home with them. Thus the employment and entrepreneurial paths of the female participants who were mothers were restricted by their childcare responsibilities. This gender effect has been debated in previous literature not only with regard to female workers in general (Russell et al., 2009) but also in relation to immigrant women in particular (Wong et al., 2009), interrelating with both their economic and cross-cultural adaptation paths.

In agreement with the previous research studies (Cooke, 2001; Wong et al., 2009), these findings offered an in-depth view of how these women, who primarily cared for their children and who partially entered employment, did so for secondary reasons. They were supported by working husbands who became the main earners and financial supporters for their families. The ongoing informal communication revealed that their husbands also experienced employment problems and faced prospects of unemployment as a result of the economic downturn. Such uncertainties about possible unemployment of the main family earner worried both **Lisa** and **Pamela**. When asked about the future, **Pamela** expressed her concerns:

Pamela: It's so difficult to say Lucia because you know my husband now; we're living from month to month. We don't know what's going to be happening in the job market. He's in construction you see and we have a mortgage to pay on the house. We're fine now but we don't know about tomorrow. (PI/INT2)

This illustrates how important the husband's earnings were to the family budget. It also shows a real threat to the family's life and uncertainties that they were experiencing due to such negative changes in the employment market. **Lisa's** husband and **Lietus** also faced a reduction in their work hours. In spite of these temporary difficulties in their husbands' employment positions, the female participants' employment paths did not change as their childcare responsibilities remained the same, reinforcing their role as mothers even in difficult times when a sense of better lives was threatened.

The last reason for not being able to work was due to experiencing unemployment as a result of a redundancy. **Monika** experienced becoming unemployed during the duration of the study. After a number of months working in an architecture company and increasingly feeling '*disabled*' by virtue of being the only foreign person in the company (MH/RNIM2), and in combination with an economic downturn, her employment position became more fragile. Her superior asked her to go to their Belfast office as there was not enough work in Dublin, and this was followed by a request to commute to the Belfast office from Dublin. She was willing to undergo these negative employment conditions temporarily, and as she put it, '*I think I have to survive this time*' (MH/INT2). Such temporary survival was endurable as she considered it to be the only alternative at that moment. Eventually she was made redundant by her employer and a period of unemployment followed. It was during the period of unemployment that she devoted time to the exploitation of her entrepreneurial opportunity of beading work (cf. Section 7.4). However, as a result of financial restrictions and the lack of economic adaptation possibilities, she eventually returned to her home country (cf. Chapter 6.3). The negative impact of the economic recession and her difficulties in cross-cultural adaptation were very much present in **Monika's** employment path directions.

The discussion of the participants' employment trajectories showed that even though some of them were able to apply their home country acquired human capital (**Sebastien** and **Monika**) to accumulate financial resources, others were not able to do so for various reasons such as the unavailability of appropriate employment position (**Monika** and **Lietus**), legal restrictions (**Obusi**), childcare responsibilities (**Lisa** and **Pamela**), and unemployment (**Monika**). Thus the participants' employment paths were often disjointed rather than progressing in an upward mobile manner. It seemed that the primary aim of securing financial rewards to achieve better lives for the participants and their families was the main objective of their economic adaptation. At the same time, it appeared that these positions' rewards were compared more favourably to those at their home country:

**Interviewer: ...you said that people come here, you came here for a better life, have you found a better life?**

Lisa: Economic yeah but not social.

**Interviewer:Not social?**

Lisa: No. Economic would be better but not the social. (LA/INT2)

Thus in spite of the participants' employment paths appearing to be disjointed and constrained in most cases, the participants were aware of the fact that they were achieving better economic lives in Ireland than in their home countries. These findings support the notion of 'work first' put forward by Green (2007, p. 357) as these participants endured downward employment mobility in Ireland and a challenging cross-cultural adaptation journey in exchange for financial rewards and future benefits. The longer term orientation of immigrants highlighted previously (Epstein and Gang, 2006; Jewell and Molina, 2009) also explains the longer term orientation whereby temporary negative conditions of economic adaptation are endured. Figure 7.1 summarises the key findings of this theme:

### Figure 7.1 – Summary of Findings - Employment Directions

- Initial employment paths were characterised by their temporary nature due to sense-making and familiarisation with a new environment.
- Employment paths took three different forms: (1) related to home employment position, (2) unrelated to home employment position, and (3) not being able to secure employment.
- The main aim of employment as a way of economic adaptation was related to securing financial resources for future benefits of better lives rather than upward employment mobility.
- As the participants' employment paths were often disjointed, compromised and punctuated, and dynamically interactive with the cross-cultural adaptation variables, a nascent entrepreneurial process was pursued with a view of achieving anticipated benefits of economic adaptation.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The directions of the employment paths of the participants were characterised by their disjointed and punctuated nature, as these individuals tried to find the most viable way of economic adaptation. The employment directions were also continuously interacting with the cross-cultural adaptation journeys and external environment conditions. The search for the most viable rather than the most appropriate employment position became evident from the data analysis. Most of the participants often moved forwards, backwards, and sideways in their economic adaptation through employment. It seemed that the 'work first' attitude of accumulating financial resources prevailed among the participants as they compromised their employment mobility (Suto, 2009). As the aim of achieving desirable financial rewards from economic adaptation through employment was not always achieved, the participants tried to become engaged in the nascent entrepreneurial process over time. Thus pursuing an entrepreneurial path was not usually conceived as a result of recognising a business opportunity, rather it was primarily undertaken as an employment alternative. The participants viewed entrepreneurship as being capable of delivering benefits which were not achieved during their employment. However, as seen in the subsequent themes, the

entrepreneurial path was not always smooth either, and the participants continuously moved between different economic adaptation positions in their attempts to pursue the most viable path.

### **7.3. THE PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

This theme discusses the key findings surrounding the interaction between the participants' decision to become entrepreneurs and the process of the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities. The framework for the recognition and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane and Venterkaraman, 2000; Shane, 2003; Davidsson, 2005) is applied in the discussion of findings on an individual interactive level. These findings are based on observations and conversations with the participants, offering a detailed view of these interrelated and dynamically changing processes. The participants reached their decisions to become self-employed as a result of interplay of diverse factors over time which related to the prevailing motives of achieving better lives. During the process of exploitation of these entrepreneurial opportunities (cf. Section 7.4), the participants often went back and forth as they redefined, changed, and even abandoned their entrepreneurial ideas.

It was found that the motivation for becoming self-employed and the recognition of an entrepreneurial opportunity were not two separate processes occurring in a linear manner. The participants' accounts pointed out that the processes involved in the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and a motivation to become self-employed were interrelated and co-evolved together over time (Bhave, 1994; Fletcher, 2006). Firstly, the nature of the participants' motivations to become self-employed is explored answering the 'why' question. Secondly, the nature of entrepreneurial opportunities sources and how they were recognised

by the participants are discussed, answering the ‘what’ question. The process of exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities which is discussed in the next section answers the ‘how’ question.

***Why did the participants decide to become entrepreneurs?***

The participants’ were pursuing different paths of employment in Ireland in their attempts to establish better lives. As seen from the ‘employment paths’ theme (cf. Section 7.2), the participants employment was often interrupted and punctuated. The ‘work first’ attitude (Green, 2007) seemed to prevail as the financial resources accumulation was the purpose of the employment. However, as seen from the previous discussion, the participants were not always achieving what they set out to accomplish. It seemed that entrepreneurship came to be at least temporarily perceived as a more suitable vehicle for economic adaptation of the participants and a way to regain their balance within their cross-cultural adaptation in an Irish context.

At the initial encounter with the participants, it appeared that they wanted to become entrepreneurs as a result of being attracted by an opportunity. During the first Emerge programme class, the programme trainer asked the participants what were their motivations for wanting to start a business and the following reasons were given by some of the participants:

**Sebastien** – challenge, something new to learn

**Obusi** – be own boss, to give myself anticipated lifestyle

**Lietus**– to make money for myself, not for my boss and be proud of something I have done

**Pamela** – all above and I have 2 children so working from home would be idea, I spotted the opportunity and I have the right skills (ONE1, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 09)

The participants mostly gave positive reasons for wanting to start their own business such as independence, challenge, and financial freedom which would facilitate their lifestyle. These are common reasons of entrepreneurs pursuing entrepreneurship as a result of pull motivations, widely discussed in the previous literature (Sverko and Super, 1995; Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009). **Pamela** gave an indication that in addition to other positive reasons of self-employment, she also wanted to fit her entrepreneurial activities around her childcare responsibilities, also common for female entrepreneurs (Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009; Wong et al., 2009). Thus from the first encounter with the participants it seemed that they chose entrepreneurship for positive, pull reasons.

The adopted research design allowed ongoing and frequent interactions with the participants. As a result of employing such methodology, other types of motivations for wanting to pursue an entrepreneurial path emerged over time. Even though the reasons given initially for self-employment were all valid and anticipated as future benefits of their entrepreneurial pursuits, there were other underlying salient reasons as to why the participants wanted to become self-employed. As it transpired in the cross-cultural adaptation dimension, the participants engaged in constant comparisons of their temporal-selves and reference groups (cf. Chapter 6.3) which led them towards pursuing their goals of better lives in Ireland. As the participants struggled to realise their aims through employment, they looked for other means of economic adaptation. Thus entrepreneurship was seen by most of the participants as an alternative to employment or as a ‘Plan B’. While **Obusi** was undertaking a business course at a time when he was not legally allowed to work, he considered self-employment as a second choice: ‘...before I have finished my course, obviously I have two options. If I can't get a job then I should get myself self-employed, you know.’ (ON/INT2). It seemed that for some of the other



participants, the entrepreneurial path was additionally considered as offering more positive experience of economic adaptation in Ireland. **Monika** was looking to start her own business as a way of escaping from undesirable working conditions in her employment. Due to the lack of progression in his employment at the time, **Sebastien** felt a need to do something else: *'I wanted to do something different. Because I was really bored with my work, maybe...To get more money. To get more challenge. That's the reason. (SF/INT1)*. Self-employment was also seen by **Sebastien** as an alternative to employment in that he would accumulate more financial resources and he would satisfy his need for a challenge. Thus even though the participants were enticed by positive benefits of entrepreneurship, they primarily wanted to pursue the self-employment path as a more viable and intrinsically satisfying means of economic adaptation in Ireland.

While it seemed that some participants considered that entrepreneurship was an option, albeit a constrained one, **Pamela** felt that self-employment was the only option of economic adaptation for her:

Pamela: ...for me it is [entrepreneurship] definitely first option if I ever go back to work.

**Interviewer: It is the first option?**

Pamela: Yeah. If I go back to work, if I get a break in advertising fine, but I wouldn't join a junior position. So, that might force me to go self-employed because nobody is going to, I have been out of the job market for so long now nobody is going to give me the job at a senior level. Whereas if I had been working I might have been that. So...

**Interviewer: ... but at the same time you were saying that if you got your job, if you were offered a senior position, would you choose that rather than being self-employed?**

Pamela: Definitely, no doubt. Because that is my first love. I enjoy that job more than anything else. These things are just to keep money coming in ...

**Interviewer: So, you agree then it is plan B?**

Pamela: It's not a plan B; it's the only plan that is available to me at the moment. (PI/INT2)

After being out of workforce for a number of years due to childbearing, **Pamela** was not willing to take a junior position in her professional field. Additionally, both **Pamela** and **Lisa's** choice of self-employment path was related to their childcare responsibilities. Both of them wanted to run their businesses from home which would allow for a better work life balance. Interestingly, even though **Monika** did not have children, she also anticipated how she could fit her self-employment around her future family responsibilities by hiring enough employees (ONE20/22<sup>nd</sup> May 08). These findings are consistent with other writings in the area (Carter et al., 2004), while also adding insights into how future family responsibilities are also considered by immigrant women who plan to have families.

These findings indicated that entrepreneurship was perceived as an alternative and constrained way of economic adaptation by the participants. It was not the first choice, rather a 'Plan B', even though positive anticipated future benefits were recognised (Carter et al., 2004; Fitzsimons and O'Gorman, 2009). In agreement with the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship (Light, 1972; Light and Gold, 2000), these participants felt somehow disadvantaged in the labour market and this pushed them towards entrepreneurship. However, over time and in specific situations, the participants' commitment to becoming entrepreneurs' fluctuated. They moved between employment and self-employment options as they considered and reconsidered these positions. The considerations of an opportunity cost (Cassar, 2006) add further explanatory power to the ongoing evaluations between employment and self-employment options. As seen from the discussion of findings related to the process of exploitation and the consequences of entrepreneurial opportunities, cross-cultural adaptation related variables (such as personal predispositions, social networks, and cultural identities) often interacted with the economic adaptation directions. Furthermore, the

impact of the worsening economic recession during the time of the study also played a crucial part in the participants' self-employment versus employment considerations. Thus even though the entrepreneurial path was seen as a better alternative by way of economic adaptation at difficult times, this option could not be explored further due to the individuals' constrained and limited resources.

***What was the process of entrepreneurial opportunities recognition?***

The participants recognised business opportunities in a number of different ways. It is difficult to ascertain exactly whether business ideas were recognised prior to or after a decision to become self-employed. However, it appears that due to the disjointed and punctuated nature of employment paths and difficulties stemming from the cross-cultural adaptation, the participants might have considered self-employment as an alternative way of economic adaptation first. Thus the entrepreneurial opportunities recognition was more externally rather than internally stimulated as articulated by Bhawe (1994). Table 7.1 summarises the entrepreneurial opportunities and their sources.

**Table 7.1 – Participants’ Recognised Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Their Sources**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial Opportunity</b>	<b>Source of Business Idea</b>
Lisa	Hairdressing	Based on previously developed skills in home country
	Pizzeria	Previously ran a similar business in home country with spouse, wanted to apply existing skills in Ireland
	Book-keeping	Based on developing and future anticipated developing skills in Ireland
Sebastien	Furniture/Web design	Based on a proposed partnership with a designer into which Sebastien would bring his previously developed entrepreneurial skills.
	Internet based business ideas	These ideas (computer technology products and lingerie) came about as a result of his educational and practical experience in present employment and other proposed business partners recognised through social network.
Obusi	Recruitment agency in healthcare industry	Idea came from home country’s social contact who was a doctor. After some market research, the idea was deemed as suitable for the Irish market even without former social contact who remained in home country.
Pamela	Communication platform for immigrant businesses	A need was recognised from social interactions with members of the immigrant community in combination with her advertising industry skills and experience, and social connections with information technology designers in India.
	Sponsorship message on reusable bags	Entrepreneurial opportunity was recognised through market research, availability of professional networks for printing in India, and the need to help to contribute to solve social issues.
Monika	Breeze blocks and technical advice	This opportunity was recognised as a result of her professional skills and experience in home country as an architect and identifying a product gap in Ireland.
	Beading work	Ongoing hobby with previous considerations to launch it as a commercial business.
Lietus	Jewellery shop	The opportunity was discovered as a result of a social connection with a friend who sourced jewellery from Mongolia but it transpired that the supplier had ceased their business.
	Restaurant	The business idea was a result of practical observation and experience of eating out in Ireland in a combination with previous entrepreneurial experience in home country.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

Entrepreneurial opportunities and their sources of recognition varied greatly. As the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition was an ongoing process of recognition, evaluation, re-evaluation and possible abandonment (Hills and Singh, 2004), some participants considered more than one entrepreneurial opportunity before either proceeding further with

it or not. Entrepreneurial opportunities were identified as a result of (1) some aspects of one's human capital (2) and/or the interaction with social networks. Very often, it was a combination of both.

Firstly, the participants were able to recognise entrepreneurial opportunities as a result of a possession of human capital. Some individuals applied their previously developed skills and work experience from their home country. This included **Lisa** who wanted to apply her hairdressing skills in Ireland:

Lisa: So my business idea was to open a hairdresser shop ... I had this idea since I was a young girl. I love cutting hairs, styling hairs. So I did that for all my family and then in my country I did a course as well for hairdressing. (LA/INT1)

The entrepreneurial idea of being a hairdresser and skills required for pursuing this idea were developed in her home country of Albania. After her externally stimulated (Bhave, 1994) need to pursue an entrepreneurial path in Ireland, she deemed her previously developed skills and experience as applicable in an Irish context. Entrepreneurial opportunities were also recognised as a result of previous work experience in a home country by **Monika** with regards to breeze blocks technology, and **Pamela** also recognised an entrepreneurial opportunity of a communications agency based on her previous industry experience in advertising in India. Others, such as **Sebastien** used both his past and present work experience and access to information to recognise entrepreneurial opportunities. **Sebastien** was able to recognise entrepreneurial opportunities as a result of access to information in his work environment in a combination with his previously developed e-commerce skills and conscious alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities (Galio and Katz, 2001; Baron, 2006). The participants applied their skills and knowledge acquired in their home countries in a

combination with skills developed in Ireland in the process of externally stimulated (Bhave, 1994) entrepreneurial opportunity recognition process.

Furthermore, previous entrepreneurial experience was also applied in the process of entrepreneurial opportunities recognition. **Sebastien**, who was previously self-employed in Portugal, wanted to apply his entrepreneurial experience in a combination with creative skills of his proposed business partner in a furniture/web design business. **Lisa's** second idea of running a pizzeria was also familiar to her as, together with her husband, she ran a pizzeria in her home country. It appeared that those with previous entrepreneurial experience were also more realistic about their expectations about what running a business would involve as **Lisa** ascertained: '*... you have to have everything ready and ... it's more accountability if you have your own business. It's more difficult.*' (LA/INT1). The participants' accounts of how they recognised entrepreneurial opportunities applying different aspects of their human capital thus adds novel understandings and adds more detail to the previous general studies in the area (Shane, 2003; Hills and Singh, 2004; Baron, 2006). In particular the findings highlighted that human capital developed in the home country was more relevant in the process of recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities. It was only in the case of **Sebastien**, who continued working in the same industry in Ireland and purposefully searched for entrepreneurial opportunities, that the additionally developed human capital in Ireland became relevant in this process. These findings also contribute to the notion of entrepreneurial capital (Firkin, 2001; 2003) as these findings showed how individuals converted their previously acquired skills and experience into entrepreneurial use in a different environment.

Secondly, in addition to human capital, entrepreneurial opportunities were often recognised as a result of interaction with different types of social networks. As discussed in the theme concerning social networks (cf. Chapter 6.3), the participants did not develop social relationships with the Irish, thus these weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983) could not act as bridges to entrepreneurial opportunity recognition (Ozgen and Baron, 2007). Instead, it was the networks of the participants' own communities' both in Ireland and transnationally located in their home countries (Drori et al., 2009) that were part of this process. **Obusi** recalled how he had recognised an entrepreneurial opportunity as a result of a discussion with his friend in his home country in the past:

Obusi: I had a friend, we were talking about back home medical school, when they were in medical school I visit them and we talked about, see how they worked and they get people to come and train, to pick this, pick that, what these people are doing, they just assist the nurse [...] they come down and train you on ... so when I came here as well through research I discovered I call them nurse help back home and they call them care assistants here. (ON/INT1)

Thus **Obusi's** entrepreneurial opportunity was recognised by recollecting his conversations with his friend from home prior to his emigration to Ireland. **Lietus'** jewellery business idea was also recognised through his home social network but later abandoned as the supplier in Mongolia went out of business. **Sebastien**, who recognised a number of different online entrepreneurial opportunities, often did so through connecting with his social networks:

**Interviewer: And how did you find this idea?**

Sebastien: It's a Friend from Belgium [...] A friend from Belgium who is very, very good at computing and all these kind of things. So, I partner with him on this business. (SF/INT2)

Unlike **Obusi** and **Lietus** who only recognised their entrepreneurial opportunities through their social networks, **Sebastien** took it further. On a number of different occasions, he also partnered with these social networks for the exploitation of these entrepreneurial ideas (cf. Section 7.4).

The use of social networks in the process of recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities in this study shows that relationships based on bonding ties rather than on those of a bridging nature were mostly applied (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). None of the participants recognised entrepreneurial opportunities as a result of social interactions with the Irish. Interestingly, some of the entrepreneurial opportunities were recognised as a result of interaction with social networks in the past and subsequently re-discovered when the right time came (such as **Obusi**). Other entrepreneurial opportunities were recognised as a result of social interactions while in Ireland (such as **Pamela** and **Sebastien**). These findings contribute to the developing of a theoretical concept of transnational entrepreneurship (Drori et al., 2009) as they showed the role of transnationally located social networks in the entrepreneurial opportunities recognition process of immigrant.

Interestingly, the entrepreneurial opportunities recognised by the participants (cf. Table 7.1) were not primarily located within the co-immigrant stakeholders' structures as previously highlighted by immigrant/ethnic specific entrepreneurial theories of ethnic enclaves and ethnic economies (Light and Gold, 2000). Even though the participants utilised their transnational social networks, the use of locally present co-immigrant networks was not evident. **Pamela's** initial business idea of a communications agency for immigrant entrepreneurs was the only entrepreneurial opportunity which was solely aimed at other immigrants. The other entrepreneurial ideas were aimed at either mixed markets (such as a pizzeria), predominantly Irish markets (bags with sponsorship) or transnational markets (**Sebastien's** internet based businesses). Thus the more general nascent entrepreneurial theories of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and exploitation and transnational



entrepreneurship offer a better explanatory power in comparison with immigrant/ethnic specific theories. These findings therefore add an immigrant dimension to the nascent entrepreneurship process theories (Shane, 2003; Greene and Owen, 2004). At the same time, these findings contribute to the transnational entrepreneurship field (Drori et al., 2005, 2009) through capturing the recognition of a transnational entrepreneurial idea. Figure 7.2 summarises the key findings of this theme.

**Figure 7.2 – Summary of Findings - The Process of Entrepreneurial Opportunity**

**Recognition**

- Motivation to become self-employed and the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities co-evolved together.
- Recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities was an ongoing process, as the participants re-evaluated and changed their entrepreneurial ideas, while also moving back and forward between employment and entrepreneurial pursuit.
- Entrepreneurship was often seen as a constrained option or as a ‘Plan B’.
- Entrepreneurial opportunities were recognised as a result of the participants’ human capital and through interactions with social networks.
- The recognised entrepreneurial opportunities were mostly located within general, rather than co-immigrant markets, in spite of little interaction with the Irish.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

In summary, the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition was found to be an ongoing deliberation process rather than a sudden business idea emergence. The process of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition was continuously engaging with the participants’ motivations to pursue the entrepreneurial path or stay in employment. This was a result of opportunity cost evaluation (Cassar, 2006). The findings showed that the participants’ motivations for self-employment were often mixed, beneath the surface, and their

commitment was continuously changing as a result of their economic and cross-cultural adaptation process but also due to the negatively progressing state of the economy. The interactive and ongoing roles of individuals' human capital constructs and mostly transnational social connections were paramount in the entrepreneurial opportunities recognition process. These findings add more depth, detail and immigrant dimension to the developing theories of nascent entrepreneurial opportunities recognition which was identified in literature (Hills and Singh, 2004; Davidsson, 2006). The findings also showed that contrary to immigrant specific theories, these participants did not entirely focus on recognising opportunities solely within their co-immigrant cohort.

#### **7.4. THE PROCESS OF EXPLOITATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities involved actions aimed at gathering resources which would lead to a new venture birth (Shane and Eckhardt, 2003). The framework of the gestation activities of the nascent entrepreneurial process is also useful for explaining and understanding the process of exploitation (Gartner et al., 2004; Reynolds et al., 2004, Lichtenstein et al., 2007). These gestation activities were pursued through two different avenues. Participation at an Emerge programme provided the individuals with a structured way of carrying out these activities, such as writing a business plan and developing localised business knowledge. Secondly, the participants engaged in gestation activities on their own, in a less structured manner. The intensity of carrying out the particular gestation activities also changed for most of the participants over time. During the process of the entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation, the individuals' cross-cultural adaptation events mutually interacted with this process. In addition, changes in the external environment also

impacted on the exploitation process over time. Table 7.2 summarises the key gestation activities which were observed during the course of the study.

**Table 7.2 – Key Gestation Activities Undertaken by the Participants**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Entrepreneurship programme participation</li> <li>▪ Business plan preparation</li> <li>▪ Financial capital considerations</li> <li>▪ Validation of entrepreneurial opportunities through research</li> <li>▪ Development of business relationships (business partnerships, suppliers and customers)</li> <li>▪ Development of a business name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Operations development</li> <li>▪ Developing marketing and distribution</li> <li>▪ Business formalities</li> <li>▪ First sales</li> </ul>
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Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

Based on the process of observation and conversations with the participants over time, these constructs were derived from the data analysis. The majority of the participants engaged in the gestation activities are on the left side, while only those who completed their exploitation process pursued those on the right hand side (**Monika** and **Sebastien**). The concepts that emerged, were then compared to those within the existing literature which is incorporated into the discussion of findings.

***Entrepreneurship programme participation and business plan preparation***

These two gestation activities are considered together, as the purpose of the Emerge programme was to complete a business plan. All of the participants of the study apart from **Lietus**, completed the Emerge programme. The one aspect that their motivation for participation had in common was that they wanted to develop their business related skills and to validate their business ideas before progressing further in the nascent entrepreneurial

exploitation process. The participants' level of skills and knowledge related to running a business varied. While those with the previous entrepreneurial knowledge and business skills sought to localise them in Ireland (**Sebastien** and **Lisa**), those without any previous entrepreneurial experience or business skills (**Monika, Pamela** and **Obusi**) needed to acquire more skills and knowledge. Even though the Emerge programme providers emphasised the networking benefits of the programme (TE1/INT1), none of the participants actually explicitly enrolled for that reason.

Acquiring and developing local knowledge which would be applicable to the exploitation process of entrepreneurial opportunities, including the transmission of culturally specific knowledge, was facilitated by the Emerge programme providers. One of the main areas of emphasis was on the importance of networking in business in Ireland: '*... networking is so important in Ireland, it's all about who you know, not what you know.*' (ONE19/19<sup>th</sup> May 08). This was highlighted on numerous occasions. However, instead of having a positive reinforcing impact on the participants' perceptions of networking, it had a more negative impact. Due to such reinforcements and the participants' negative experiences in encountering Irish people during their cross-cultural adaptation process, the participants felt more intimidated rather than positively encouraged by the prospect of networking. Interestingly, the Emerge programme trainers who were Irish were perceived as trusted sources for the validation of entrepreneurial ideas during the course of the Emerge programme. For example, **Pamela** often sought approval for her business idea development, which perhaps also stemmed from her 'inherent Indian inferiority complex' (cf. Chapter 6.2). Thus the participants learnt about the importance of networking in Ireland from the Irish trainers but instead of feeling more at ease as a result of this knowledge, it had the opposite effect on them (cf. Section 7.5).

Another key focus of the Emerge programme was on writing a business plan. The materials presented in individual seminars guided the participants towards completing the document, and a business plan presentation at the end of the course. The participants had an incentive of receiving €100 from their course fee back upon submission of a business plan. Even though this led the participants to engage in market research, financial, marketing and operational considerations in a structured way, the actual writing of the document was perceived as a struggle. While some were worried about meeting the deadline and perceived the process of writing as ‘*mechanical*’ (PI/INT1), others such as **Sebastien** did not attempt to finish his document as he did not perceive it to be that important in his nascent entrepreneurial exploitation process. In spite of not writing a business plan, he was the first one to complete his gestation activities and to launch his business. In fact, even though the business plan was emphasised as important by the course trainers (*‘treat it like a little passport you use to do business in this country’* (ONE3/10<sup>th</sup> March 08), its completion failed to bring the participants towards the actual existence of a business.

The findings of this study showed that the participants engaged in business plan writing as it was part of the course rather than because they perceived it as important. They did not use the document for locating external finance either, as they did not seek external finance. These findings therefore do not support some of the previous studies highlighting the importance of business plan preparation (Gatewood et al., 1995; Reynolds et al., 2000; Delmar and Shane, 2003). However, in agreement with Honig and Karlsson (2004) and Karlsson and Honig (2009), business plan writing was more of a symbolic gestation activity or part of a course requirement for these participants.

### *Financial capital considerations*

Financial capital has been often highlighted as a prerequisite to a successful business start-up (Shane, 2003). Financial capital considerations in terms of saving money to invest into one's business were frequently found to be included in gestation activities of nascent entrepreneurs (Gartner et al., 2004). The participants engaged in developing their financial resources for business functioning both during the Emerge programme but also outside of the programme. All of the participants were financially constrained. The financial resources which came from savings from employment or other sources (such as social welfare payments in **Obusi's** case) were allocated on the basis of need. Thus the financial resources which the participants possessed competed with different aspects of their lives.

None of the participants considered obtaining external finance (cf. Section 7.4). It was observed over time that all of the participants attempted to overcome their lack of financial resources in a number of different creative ways – seeking ways to reduce costs, using their own skills instead of outsourcing some business functions or hiring employees, and using social networks to compensate for their lack of skills and to avoid paying for them. When **Lisa** faced financial impediments in relation to opening a pizzeria in Ireland she decided to exploit her hairdressing business idea instead, as by working from home, she would save money – *'I like hairdresser and start working from home not renting'*(LA/INT1). **Pamela** wanted to use her Indian supplier for her website development which was very cost effective. The participants also used their own skills to reduce hiring other employees or outsourcing their business. **Obusi** planned to carry out the majority of work himself with his wife to reduce costs and **Monika** self-learnt how to design a website for her beading business. Finally, **Sebastien** partnered with other people for different online businesses ideas. In this

way, complimentary skills were shared rather than outsourced.

The participants' accumulation of financial resources was an ongoing process. These financial considerations did not evolve in a linear path, rather the participants constantly revisited them and redefined them during the process of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and exploitation (Liao et al., 2005). These findings also show how nascent immigrant entrepreneurs went through the process of financial capital acquisition over time. The findings point out that the participants partially relied on their co-immigrant social networks of a spouse for financial resources to some extent (**Pamela**) but there was no evidence of the wider co-immigrant community provision of financial assistance, which is often emphasised in literature (Light and Gold, 2000). However, other strategies of reducing costs and bootstrapping future business operations were also in place. The entrepreneurial capital model (Firkin, 2001; 2003) explains such leveraging of other forms of capital (human and social capital) in efforts to overcome difficulties in relation to financial capital. These findings show how such leveraging happens at a nascent stage of the entrepreneurial process.

### ***Validation of entrepreneurial opportunities through research***

The participants engaged in different forms of research in order to further validate and develop their entrepreneurial opportunities. The key ways of conducting such validation research involved the Internet and social networks. All participants embraced both forms of such research, while also giving different weight to the reliability and trustworthiness of these methods.

The Internet was used to find out more about the products, services, competitors, suppliers, and market trends in order to develop and establish one's own business position. **Sebastien**, who had skills in online marketing, used Google tools extensively for his market research.

Sebastien: ...I went to check you know the adverts tool which it's called? Keywords, searchwords, something like this. Keywords seeker. And you put in a word and you have a statistic of the search ... of the research that keyword and you know where it's searched and when it's searched.

**Interviewer: And you pay for this tool**

Sebastien: No, no it's all for free. This tool is free. And you see the produced product, you see the [product name] at Christmas is at top. It's a very good, interesting tool. (SF/INT1)

**Sebastien** was involved in what was perhaps a more sophisticated use of the Internet for his market research than some of the other participants who did not possess similar knowledge of Google tools and e-commerce. Other participants also used the Internet in their entrepreneurial idea exploitation and validation process. **Obusi** engaged in extensive research and on a number of occasions he spoke to the UK franchisor and some Irish business associations. **Pamela** and **Monika** also used the Internet to develop and validate their ideas further in terms of legal requirements and competitor analysis.

Even though some factual information was received from the Internet, aiding in the exploitation process of the entrepreneurial opportunities, research through social networks seemed to be more prevalent and trusted among all participants. These social networks included members of the participants' own communities but also the Irish. Even though **Pamela's** cross-cultural adaptation process diverted her away from interaction with the Irish, during the Emerge programme, she often spoke to the programme trainers and spoke to one other person that they recommended. She seemed to place emphasis on the feedback from these sources and perceived them as trusted sources of market research, above other available information:



Pamela: Yeah I just felt there was this need but then you know sometimes you don't realise. You look at it from your perspective, you don't see any other perspective because you only have information which is available to you and what's only on Internet or on print is not the truth, the truth is somewhere hidden you know. So when you talk to people you realise that most of them don't want to be out in the open because most of them don't want any help. Most...Like you know, he [the trainer] put me on to...

**Interviewer: Jennifer.**

**Pamela:** Yeah, Jennifer. And she was telling me with all that money she is not able to get anybody on her database (short laugh)

**Interviewer: That put you off?**

Jenifer: Yeah. (PI/INT1)

In this extract, she was referring to Jennifer, who worked on an immigrant entrepreneurship initiative for an Irish government agency. **Pamela** believed that objective research could not be carried out through the Internet or printed sources as the truth was '*hidden*'. Based on her conversation with certain social networks and especially the trusted sources (the Irish), **Pamela** changed her business idea from a communications agency to bags with sponsorship message on them. **Obusi** also engaged in validating his entrepreneurial idea through talking with his acquaintances working in healthcare industry. Such research outcomes interacted with their exploitation process either positively or negatively. Thus the use of the internet and social networks were the most prevalent sources of validation of entrepreneurial opportunities. Due to the participants' lack of culture-specific knowledge (Kim, 2001), the advice and opinions of the Irish and those involved in their proposed business areas were taken as more valid and trusted. This emphasises the ongoing interaction between the nascent entrepreneurial pursuit and the journey of cross-cultural adaptation.

### *Developing business relationships*

Developing business relationships involved organising a business team, and establishing connections with potential suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders (Reynolds, 2000).

With regards to organising a business team, all participants thought about who would be involved in their business with them. For the majority of the participants, the other person was anticipated to be either a close family member or a business partner of non-Irish origin. The nature of relationship of those co-involved in the proposed businesses and their function is summarised in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3 – Anticipated Business Partners for the Participants’ Ventures**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Team Member(s)</b>	<b>Proposed Role(s)</b>
Lietus	Wife	Co-running a restaurant together
Lisa	Husband	Co-running a pizzeria together like in their previous business in home country
Monika	-	-
Obusi	Wife	Co-running a healthcare employment agency
Pamela	Husband	Invisible role, providing finance and some accountancy support
Sebastien	Various business partners, parents	Mostly equal partnership where they would work together based on their complimentary skills, he developed about four such relationships

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The majority of the participants planned to have their spouses involved in either an active role of running a business together or a more invisible support role (in the case of **Pamela**), previously found common to immigrant-led businesses (Ram et al., 2008). However, even though some participants were planning to set up a business with their spouses, their business relationship was not anticipated as equal. **Obusi** and **Lietus** were going to be the main decision-makers in business, and while **Pamela’s** husband’s role was invisible, without his support (finance and skills), she would have been very restricted. Perhaps, the family roles divisions stemming from cultural norms also transcended into the entrepreneurial domain (Shihadeh, 1991). **Monika** was a negative case in this instance as she did not plan to have

any business partners in her proposed businesses. Even though hiring employees was previously considered as one of gestation activities (Gartner et al., 2004), the micro nature of the participants' businesses and their limited resources meant that none of them engaged in this activity.

Interestingly, **Sebastien** was one participant who developed a number of business partnerships within different social networks during the exploitation process of entrepreneurial opportunities. These equal business partnerships in which the partners shared complimentary skills originated either from a pool of transnational social networks (Portes et al., 2002) or from his present-work own community work colleagues. During one of the interviews, **Sebastien** spoke about one such complimentary business relationship:

Sebastien: ...he was interested by me because he knew that I have experience as well. He is younger, younger than me. I have experience in business. So, he's very good at Internet thing, he can build sites and ... marketing aspect...(SF/INT1).

This team building strategy did not always work and some such attempts were abandoned, while new partnerships were being explored at the same time. **Sebastien's** parents were also involved in his business, helping with receiving and sending out products. It seemed that **Sebastien** was flexible in his team building, looking to find others with complimentary skills rather than some of the other participants who concentrated more on providing work for themselves and their spouses. As there was a minimal financial cost involved in the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities with different business partners, the opportunity cost and risk was also lower for him. During the study period, **Sebastien** exploited different online business ideas with about five different business partners, with three successful outcomes. Perhaps, it was this leveraging of his human and social capital (Firkin, 2001, 2003; Drori et al., 2005) that enabled him to bring his exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities

to fruition.

With regards to dealing with prospective suppliers, customers and other stakeholders, these relationships were either anticipated or actively established. Relationships with suppliers from other countries were proposed. **Pamela** made contact with Indian companies which were to supply products (bags) and services (website design) for her at a discounted rate. **Sebastien** mostly dealt with suppliers from China, again for cost benefit purposes. **Sebastien's** customers whom he identified during the process of entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation were located in France. This was a deliberate strategy as he was familiar with that market and the market size was much bigger than the less familiar Irish market. Others anticipated selling their products or services to a mostly mixed customer base in Ireland. **Obusi** was expecting some level of rejection from Irish customers but he felt prepared to face it:

Obusi: I believe if you want to, if you believe in yourself you are confident and you know what you're talking about. Don't allow anybody to put you down. You know what you're talking about; you know what you're going for, if they say no, they can't kill you. And not everyone will say no. The world will see you know that, you know what you're talking about. You will get rewards if you try hard. (ON/INT2)

**Obusi** displayed self-belief in his abilities and future rewards despite the expected problems dealing with the Irish. Even though he did not deal with the Irish customers in reality, he based his expectations on his past social encounters with the Irish during his cross-cultural adaptation process. Difficulties in establishing business related relationships presented a major impediment to the successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities by some of the participants (cf. Section 7.5).

Utilising and leveraging different social networks during the exploitation process of nascent entrepreneurship was pursued by all participants and presented an important part of their ongoing activities. However, how they leveraged their social networks differed. While some participants relied on their familial social networks (such as spouses), others leveraged weaker ties (work colleagues and acquaintances in the home country). In Granovetter's (1973) terms, it was possibly these weaker social connections that enabled **Sebastien** to successfully exploit his entrepreneurial opportunities. On the other hand, proposed business partnerships with the participants' own spouses meant that their common resources would be stretched too far, overexposing them and their families to a higher risk. The participants also developed relationships with suppliers in lower cost bases and these transnational relationships (Portes et al., 2002; Drori et al., 2009) enabled them to gain cost advantage. Finally, while the Irish Emerge programme trainers facilitated the validation of business ideas for some participants, establishing business related relationships with the Irish were problematic for the participants and presenting a source of an impediment on a successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities (cf. Section 7. 5).

### *Development of a business name*

The participants considered their business names as part of their gestation activities. Possibly, having a business name made their proposed businesses more tangible. The researcher observed how **Pamela**, **Sebastien** and **Obusi** checked the availability of their proposed business names on the Companies Registration Office website. **Obusi** used his wife's name in his company name but later changed it to another name which reflected the nature of his business better. This gestation activity was undertaken at a relatively early stage

of the exploitation process. Some of the participants even started developing their company logos to reflect their activities before undertaking other gestation activities.

All of the participants engaged in the above discussed gestation activities over the study duration to either a lesser or greater extent. Their course was non-linear and cyclical, complicated by the participants' reconsiderations of their employment versus self-employment positions as the means of achieving the aim of a better life. Such a cyclical, dynamic and inconsistent nature of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities was also a result of the externally changing conditions of the economic recession globally. The negative changes in the external environment in Ireland meant that the participants' increasingly saw their employment positions as safer options. At the same time, the negative changes in their home countries' environments reassured them that staying in Ireland was at least temporarily a better option than returning home. Various impediments stemming from both economic and cross-cultural adaptation acted as 'brakes' to the process of nascent entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation (cf. Section 7.5). Two participants – **Monika** and **Sebastien** completed the process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities and established their operations. Even though their paths differed, the gestation activities that they engaged in are discussed next.

### *Operations development*

**Monika** was attempting to turn her hobby of doing beading work into a business and she tried to put a system into place.

**Interviewer: So on this website do you have your contact details there? People can purchase from it?**

Monika: Yes, at the time. But I should develop it. I can't, I have to learn it first how to order easily. You know, because now at this time they have to write me, send me an email and we will discuss it. But you know I can't do those classic order shop sites. (MH/INT2)

Due to the constrained financial resources, **Monika** was attempting to develop her operations system by self-learning. She managed to do her own website but she did not have enough knowledge or finance to develop an online shopping system straight away. On the other hand, **Sebastien**, who had experience and knowledge in online selling, put a more comprehensive system into place:

**Interviewer: So how long does the whole process start from supplying the customer orders?**

Sebastien: They just order on the website. My parents they get access to the back office but I know exactly what the commands are there and from the command they prepare the command and they ship. That's it so. And when we have some contacts I have the access to the back office as well. So, everybody has access to it. (SF/INT2)

In his case, developing operations involved purchases being made on a website developed by **Sebastien** in Ireland but the products were shipped to France from China where his parents sent them on to the customers. Although both **Sebastien** and **Monika** developed their operations, their approach differed. While **Sebastien** applied his skills and experience in the area of e-commerce and together with his transnationally located social networks developed professional operations, **Monika's** operations development was more bootstrapped and simple. The notion of entrepreneurial capital development (Firkin, 2001) can be applied to explaining this process as both of these participants used and leveraged their individual capital for an entrepreneurial use but in different ways. Also, the importance of transnational social networks (Drori et al., 2005, 2009) in the business opportunities exploitation process is highlighted here.

### ***Developing marketing and distribution***

Even though the other participants thought about their marketing and promotional activities, **Monika** and **Sebastien** actively pursued them. **Monika** promoted her beading work through word of mouth initially. Even though she had a website, it was not promoted online through

the use of online marketing tools due to her financial capital and skills limitation. In addition, she established a Facebook page showcasing her work and providing a link to her website, and a Hungarian food shop agreed to display and sell her work. Later on, she also started offering beading lessons and participated in craft fairs: *'Imagine, I will have 2 beading students at the weekend! Moreover I can take part on 2 Craft Fairs! Why didn't this come to my mind earlier!'* (MH/ICE, 12<sup>th</sup> May 09). **Monika** was restricted by her financial resources but after she became unemployed she was more time rich and dedicated more time to developing promotional activities for her business. **Sebatien's** efforts were solely focused on the promotion of his products online as online selling was his business model. His marketing and promotional efforts were very focused and based on his knowledge, skills and previous experience. He also attended different online discussions (such as gaming websites) where he tried to promote his computer parts business, and he put much emphasis into providing great customer service to ensure repeat business and favourable word of mouth online. Thus similar to developing operations, **Sebastien's** expert skills and experience were applied in a more professional way than in **Monika's** case.

### ***Business formalities***

Gestation activities with regards to business formalities included actions such as registering a business name with the Companies Registration Office, the Revenue Office, opening a business bank account, and putting into place formal legal partnership agreement (Gartner et al., 2004). **Sebastien** was involved in all of these activities with regards to the different online ventures that he pursued with different partners. However, all of the other business formalities were put in place at a later stage when his online businesses were already launched and trading. Even though **Monika** was developing other areas of her business, she



did not formally register her business in Ireland. Due to her low sales and uncertainty about her future in Ireland, she put the business formalities on hold.

### ***First sales***

Even though it was on a different scale, both **Monika** and **Sebastien** achieved sales. **Monika** sold a few pieces of her work in addition to getting some beading work students: *'tomorrow I will have a student in beadworking :-)* So it is evolving. I may give up architecture ... At least for a while until the economy gets better.' (MH/ICE, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 09). Such perception of progress in her business even made her consider dedicating more time to its development and giving up her architecture career due to the negative economic circumstances and difficulties in securing such a position during her unemployment. However, **Sebastien** was selling different products online since before Christmas 2008 when he started selling some computer technology for gamers. He recognised the importance of selling those products before the busy Christmas period. Since then, he was also engaged in selling other computer related products and towards the end of the study he also launched his latest online product range in the lingerie area. However, even though he was earning a lot of income from his online products sales, he was not prepared to give up his employment yet (cf. Section 7.6).

Table 7.4 shows what nascent activities the participants did and did not engage in, in comparison with the activities often used in the literature such as in the PSED studies (Gartner et al., 2004; Lichtenstein et al., 2007).

**Table 7.4 – Gestation Activities of the Participants Undertaken During the Study**

Nascent Activity	Obusi	Monika	Seb.	Pamela	Lisa	Lietus
Devoted 35+ h/week on business	N	N	N	N	N	N
Arranged childcare	N	N	N	N	N	N
Saved money to invest	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Asked for funding	N	N	N	N	N	N
Established credit with suppliers	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Invested own money	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Hired employees/managers	N	N	N	N	N	N
Organised team	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Prepared business plan	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Developed model or procedures of product/service	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Applied for copyright, patent, trademark	N	N	N	N	N	N
Purchased, rented or leased major equipment	N	N	N	N	N	N
Defined market opportunity	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Developed financials	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Started marketing and promotion	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Purchased raw materials, supplies	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Took a class on starting a business	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Opened business bank account	N	N	Y	N	N	N
<b>(2) Indicators of start-up</b>						
Received money, income or fees	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Positive cash flow	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Paid managers who are owners a salary	N	N	N	N	N	N
Filed taxes	N	N	N	N	N	N
Business phone listing	N	N	N	N	N	N
Business phone line	N	N	N	N	N	N

Source: Derived from Data Analysis and Lichtenstein et al., 2007

Some of the practical nascent activities that were used in the previous studies, particularly indicators of start-up were either not applicable within the Irish context (such as unemployment insurance or D&B listing) or had not been achieved by any participants (such as filing taxes or receiving/paying salaries). None of the participants were dedicated full-time to their businesses in spite of **Sebastien** launching three different online businesses. Even though **Monika** was unemployed, she dedicated only some time to her beading work as she also concentrated on gaining employment. Interestingly, none of the participants sought external finance even though they completed their business plans during the Emerge

programme. Most of the participants engaged in more soft, non-commitment related gestation activities such as defining their market opportunity, organising a team and developing financials. This was due to their uncertain positions within their cross-cultural and economic adaptation spheres during the study duration. **Monika** and **Sebastien** engaged in more activities and in those activities that required some financial commitment which enabled them to bring their businesses to a launch stage. The summary of the main findings are outlined in Figure 7.3.

**Figure 7.3 – Summary of Findings - The Process of Entrepreneurial Opportunity  
Exploitation**

- All participants engaged in the process of exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities in a subjective and dynamic way.
- All participants engaged in certain gestation activities: Emerge programme participation, business plan writing, financial capital considerations, establishing of business related relationships, researching and validating of entrepreneurial ideas.
- Two participants (Monika and Sebastien), who launched their businesses, also engaged in additional gestation activities: operations and distribution, marketing and promotion, business formalities, and first sales.
- Most of the participants engaged in gestation activities which did not require financial commitment. This was due to the financial constraints that they experienced as they attempted to pursue the most viable way of economic adaptation.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

While the previously developed gestation activities (Gartner et al., 2004) are useful from an explanatory point of view, they did not show how important some of them were or were not to the individual participants' nascent entrepreneurial pursuit over time. Thus these findings add a more dynamic nature to the previously developed gestation activities applied in largely quantitative studies. In addition the findings add an immigrant dimension to the previous studies in this area. The entrepreneurial capital framework (Firkin, 2001; 2003) is also useful

in explaining the development of the participants' gestation activities. Some participants (such as **Sebastien**) were more successful at applying their relevant skills and experience, while also utilising and leveraging their existing social networks. Other participants were more constrained and were not able to assemble and readjust their entrepreneurial capital successfully (such as **Pamela**). The findings also contribute to transnational entrepreneurship writings (Drori et al., 2009) as they demonstrated how transnational social connections were utilised during the nascent entrepreneurial process of exploitation in a longitudinal way which was not previously addressed within this field in-depth. The participants' entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation process was often hindered by various impediments. Discussion of the findings related to these impediments are outlined in the next theme.

## **7.5. IMPEDIMENTS TO THE SUCCESSFUL EXPLOITATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

This theme reflects the key difficulties that the participants perceived in the process of exploiting their entrepreneurial opportunities. The sources of these various impediments, which hindered the process of their gestation activities, stemmed from the participants' economic adaptation but also from the cross-cultural adaptation domain and external environmental conditions changes. More specifically, constructs relating to the participants' personal predispositions, their cultural identity perceptions, the imagined journeys, and social networks interactions deterred the course of their gestation activities. Table 7.5 summarises the key impediments that the participants perceived along their nascent entrepreneurial journey.

**Table 7.5 - Key Impediments to the Successful Exploitation of Entrepreneurial Opportunities Perceived by the Study Participants**

Financial considerations	Family responsibilities
Business confidence	Perceived lack of skills
Perception of local business knowledge	External environment
Social support	

Source: Derived from Data Analysis

Even though the impediments were largely subjective to the individual participants, certain patterns were identified from the data analysis. Furthermore, the participants experienced different impediments at different times, while some of the impediments were more recurring and constant in nature. In addition, while some impediments were more minor and were overcome successfully, others were more intensive, preventing the participants from a successful exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities (Kouriloff, 2000). Patterns related to the each impediment are discussed in turn. The methodological design of the study allowed the researcher to observe the perceptions of these impediments mostly as they happened through observations and conversations, minimising the difficulties of post-hoc studies' hindsight bias (Davidsson and Honig, 2003).

***Financial capital difficulties***

In previous studies, financially related difficulties were found to be a significant impediment not only for native nascent entrepreneurs (Aldrich and Martinez, 2001), but even more so for nascent immigrant entrepreneurs (Whitehead et al., 2006). While financial difficulties are often highlighted in the literature, the discussion of findings of this study shows why and how the financial resources presented an impediment during the participants' nascent entrepreneurial process over time. All participants' financial capital availability was

characterised by a constrained nature. The participants had to satisfy the financial requirements of their own and nuclear families' needs first before considering any financial resources commitment for business purposes. So even though the participants were attempting to accomplish a better life through entrepreneurship, their basic needs and motivations had to be satisfied first (Schwartz, 1994).

Different methods of data generation revealed that there were various unanticipated events in the participants' lives that put further strains on the availability of their financial resources over time. Encountering such events meant that financial resources were diverted and the participants had to endure some temporary periods of 'surviving'. Due to an emergency situation at home, **Obusi** had to send money to his home country - '*... my Mum was in need of money at home, 200 euro I just had to send it*' (ON/INT2). It was a significant amount of money for him as he was in receipt of social welfare payment, slowly saving money for his business. After about eight months in Ireland, **Monika** found out that she owed over €2,500 to the Hungarian tax office (MH/ONE8). **Lietus** also owed a significant amount of money to the Lithuanian tax office as his business taxes were not paid for a number of years:

Lietus: I had bookkeeper which don't have so much experience. When I run business, everything is fine, and when I must have closed my company...And my taxes was not paid. Nearly for a whole of five years not paid correctly and I didn't know that. [...] But I hadn't like that kind of money so I lost everything. I lost all my property and everything I lost what I had. (LL/INT1)

Thus **Lietus** spent his initial earnings abroad on repaying his debt. Both **Pamela's** and **Lisa's** husbands' employment positions were uncertain in 2009 which meant that they felt that they could not risk any family financial resources for business purposes. Thus these findings show that the participants had to carefully allocate and preserve their fragile financial resources during difficult financial times as best as they could, which presented either a temporary or a more prevalent impediment on their nascent entrepreneurial process.

During the exploitation process of business opportunities, the participants also perceived their business opportunities to be financially risky. Apart from the fact that their financial resources were constrained, previous business failure and the lack of a perceived safety net in case things went wrong also contributed to the increased financial risk perception. **Lietus** carefully considered every business related step due to his past business failure (Shepherd, 2003; Ucbasaran, 2009). **Monika**, who was in Ireland alone, perceived her proposed business as financially risky due to the lack of social support: '*...things change very fast. I don't have that kind of relationships that from the time I would feel I am not alone, anything happens. So ... I'm not stable financially ...*' (MH/INT2). While **Monika**, who was single perceived business as financially risky due to no support, those with families also saw it as risky as their business related decisions would impact on their immediate families. Thus the participants, who were undergoing their cross-cultural adaptation in the unfamiliar environment of Ireland considered financial resource stretching in business as risky. These findings do not show much support for the previously highlighted financial assistance provision from familial and informal networks (Light and Gold, 2000; Koellinger and Minniti, 2006). Even though **Pamela** had the option of receiving financial assistance from her husband, she did not take it as she perceived it to be a further financial risk. Thus rather than seeking financial resources from familial social networks, the participants acted in the opposite way as they did not want to expose themselves or their familial social networks to financial risk.

Another impediment related to finance was that the participants perceived Ireland as expensive for running a business. Contrary to previous writings in the area of immigrant

entrepreneurship (Light and Gold, 2000), the participants did not resort to choosing to set-up their businesses in low capital intensive and low cost areas, seen as typical for immigrant entrepreneurs. Higher than anticipated costs presented at least a temporary impediment for some participants. **Lisa** and her husband considered opening a pizzeria:

Lisa: So me and my husband would like to open again a pizzeria, it's very expensive to lease.

**Interviewer: Here in Ireland?**

Lisa: Yeah. And you have to have a contract for 20 years or something like that. You can't have a contract for one year just to try you know, how the business will go so we can't do it. (LA/INT1)

From the available information that **Lisa** and her husband gathered, they put opening a pizzeria in Ireland on hold and instead, **Lisa** went back to her hairdressing business idea for which she began the process of exploitation. Similarly, **Obusi** also found the costs of running a business to be expensive:

Obusi: Initially I thought we could run it from home but when we now find out that I couldn't so he [Emerge trainer] said I should go and find out how much it costs and put it to my calculation, but I've not done that obviously because where is the money (ON/INT1)

The lack of financial resources meant that **Obusi** put a temporary hold on his exploitation process. The participants were not always aware of the cost related issues from the outset, rather awareness of some of the costs became evident through the process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. The lack of local business related regulatory knowledge (Cooney and Flynn, 2008) also contributed to this impediment.

Lack of access to external finance, and perceived or experienced discrimination by financial institutions were issues often highlighted in previous studies on immigrant entrepreneurship impediments (Koellinger and Minniti, 2006; First Step, 2006). The longitudinal investigation applied to this study found that these participants did not attempt to apply for external finance even though the Emerge programme provided external finance information and an



introduction to local financial institutions. As **Pamela** put it: *'I am not going to any bank; nobody is going to give me any money anyway.'* (PI/INT2). There was a feeling that the participants felt financially exposed as it was, thus they did not approach financial institutions to raise finance. This is an interesting finding as it shows that rather than applying for bank finance and being rejected, these participants put their entrepreneurial opportunity exploitation process on hold.

As seen in Section 7.6, the participants who successfully completed their gestation activities overcame their financial constraints by leveraging their human and social capital for entrepreneurial use, and developing their businesses in small steps. The theoretical construct of entrepreneurial capital (Firkin, 2001; 2003) is also useful in explaining the financial capital impediments that the participants experienced. Even though some participants were able to leverage their social networks and their human capital skills to overcome financial difficulties (such as **Sebastien** and **Monika**), financial capital difficulties presented much higher and more permanent obstacles for others.

### ***Lack of confidence in developing business related relationships with the Irish***

The lack of confidence was reflected in the participants' nascent entrepreneurial process and was found to present an impediment for some of them. Even though some participants seemed naturally quieter and less confident (such as **Lisa** and **Monika**), the participants' cross-cultural adaptation course also interacted with their confidence and perceptions during the nascent entrepreneurial pursuit. More specifically, the individuals' cultural identity dynamics and the nature of their social interactions with the different social groups had an

effect on their business related confidence. Even though these impediments were perceptual rather than real, they presented an impediment for the participants nevertheless.

As already noted, some of the participants maintained a relative distance from the Irish during their cross-cultural adaptation either by choice or by the lack of it (cf. Chapter 6.5). However, in business, some contacts with the Irish could not be avoided as the participants' proposed businesses were to serve Irish customers, such as **Lisa's** pizzeria. Even though some participants did not actually approach prospective Irish suppliers or clients, they already anticipated rejection which put them off taking a real step in this regard. **Lisa** anticipated such rejection due to her foreign status:

Lisa: ...you would trust more somebody from your country than, it's because if you're in your country and somebody from outside will come, it's more difficult to trust on them.

**Interviewer: Why?**

Lisa: Because they are not in your country. They could go or it's something like ... they can leave the country and go in their country and it's harder to trust them than somebody within your country. I think that. [...] I'll try but not too confident, you know (laughs) (LA/INT1)

Even before making real social connections, **Lisa** did not feel confident and anticipated rejection. **Monika** and **Pamela** voiced similar concerns which prevented them from approaching the Irish stakeholders in relation to their business. However, although **Lietus** and **Obusi** recognised that it could be more difficult for them to approach Irish customers and suppliers, they were more confident. **Obusi** felt that due to his previous encounters with the Irish, he did not lack confidence:

Obusi: I have had one work experience done before and that's here in Ireland and back home I have worked. I have had dealings with customers I have dealt with before so it's not going to be any struggle. And even here in my college, we had an open day so it was part of our assignment that you talk to potential students and sell the course to them. You are on the course so I did that and it was fantastic.

**Interviewer: Okay, so you have the confidence?**

Obusi: Exactly. (ON/INT2)

In spite of encountering negative experiences during his cross-cultural adaptation, **Obusi**

remained positive and confident. Perhaps, the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Koellinger and Minniti, 2006) could explain his confidence in spite of lacking actual skills and experience in healthcare or recruitment industries. The paradoxical nature of social network roles within the participants' cross-cultural adaptation process (cf. Chapter 6.4) also presented an impediment to their nascent entrepreneurial process. Such weak social networks were previously emphasised as having a beneficial impact on nascent entrepreneurs (Granovetter, 1973; Davidsson and Honig, 2003). However, as a result of their cross-cultural adaptation, these participants were not able to reap the possible benefits of establishing contact with the Irish and move their exploitation process further.

The importance of networking in Ireland, which was often emphasised by the trainers on the Emerge programme, acted in a counterproductive way. This meant that the participants were feeling even more at a disadvantage as regards the prospect of dealing with Irish networks for business purposes. **Lisa**, **Monika** and **Pamela** highlighted these issues during different conversations. **Pamela** believed that it would be beneficial to get a '*first break*' (PI/INT1) to overcome her problem of newness and the lack of social connections:

Pamela: So everybody needs a break unless you have that one plan which is going to change the world. We all need a first break. I think for immigrants that's what Emerge should do more, you know you could give them booklets and say okay read this. But more importantly you should be if they were introduced... (PI/INT1)

**Pamela** believed that by being introduced by someone from 'within the circle', she could gain access and prove herself which would then increase her business confidence. She saw this as a role for the Emerge programme providers. **Pamela** and some of the other participants seemed to be fearful of possible rejection and almost felt intimidated by the prospect of having to call or talk to someone (ONE18/15<sup>th</sup> May 08). It was as if they expecting to be rejected straight away. This prevented them from trying and from attempting to develop their

nascent businesses further.

Therefore it was mostly women for whom business confidence presented a stumbling block to the successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. As already discussed in the cross-cultural adaptation dimension (cf. Chapter 6), perhaps women voiced their confidence issues more and interacted with the Irish people less (especially those who spent a lot of time with their children). However, men saw their main role as providing for their families and even though they lacked confidence, they seemed to appear more confident publicly than women. These findings show that contrary to the previous findings in the area of existing immigrant entrepreneurs where gaining trust of the host stakeholders was perceived as an impediment (Cooney and Flynn, 2008), within the nascent entrepreneurial process, anticipated perceptions of rejection deterred these individuals from establishing such contacts.

### *Lack of confidence in the perceptions of own abilities and skills*

Lacking confidence in their own skills and abilities seemed to present another obstacle for some of the participants during the process of exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities. In spite of the fact that the participants were educated and possessed at least some relevant experience for their business, at times they lacked confidence in their own skills. It seemed that such lack of perceived abilities stemmed from the lack of previous entrepreneurial and business experience, local knowledge, and also as a result of feeling like an outsider during the process of cross-cultural adaptation.

While those with previous entrepreneurial experience such as **Sebastien** seemed to be more

confident as they followed the pattern of their previous entrepreneurial pursuit, for others such lack of experience presented an obstacle. **Pamela** was unsure about her progress as she worried about developing her product: *'I don't have the eyes to see it. That's where experience comes in. I have never done any kind of business in my life.'* (PI/INT1). In addition to not perceiving as having adequate knowledge and experience, confidence in such skills also presented an impediment. The Emerge programme trainer recommended to **Monika** that she should approach a professional architecture organisation in order to deliver training on passive houses technology and to build her profile. The trainer ascertained that through building such professional expertise in her industry, others would contact **Monika** for business. In a subsequent informal conversation, the researcher probed **Monika** in an informal conversation about this idea.

I [researcher] said that it was a good idea to approach the [professional organisation] and she [Monika] said that she wouldn't have the confidence to do it at all. I asked her why not, as she could be the expert but she said again that she wouldn't feel she is even though she knows the stuff. (ONE20)

Even though **Monika** was experienced in the technology, due to her perceived minority status in her cross-cultural adaptation, she did not feel confident in demonstrating her skills within the Irish environment. This illustrates the point about how one's personal confidence and how they felt in their new environment could reflect in their business related confidence about their skills in Ireland. While previous studies found a positive relationship between education, previous entrepreneurial experience and the nascent entrepreneurial process (Davidsson and Honig, 2003), the findings of this study show how the lack of such experience and skills presented an impediment to the nascent entrepreneurial process of the participants. Moreover, one's own belief in their abilities also contribute to this impediment (Koellinger and Minniti, 2006).

The lack of perceived confidence in one's own skills and abilities presented an obstacle to the further development of the nascent entrepreneurial process for some participants. While previous studies in the area examined the relationship between one's human capital and entrepreneurial pursuit (such as Whitehead et al., 2006), due to the survey based design, these studies were not able to uncover the deeper relationship between the individuals' perceptions of their skills and abilities. The findings of this study contribute to the academic debate in a novel way by uncovering the dynamics between individuals' perceptions of their skills as a result of their cross-cultural adaptation which also transcended their entrepreneurial pursuit.

### ***Family responsibilities***

The issue of family responsibilities dynamically interacted with both the cross-cultural adaptation process and the nascent entrepreneurial pursuit of the participants who had children. The female participants with children (**Lisa** and **Pamela**) attempted to start their own businesses around their children, but at the same time, childcare responsibilities presented an obstacle to the successful exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities. In other words, childcare responsibilities presented a double edged sword for the female participants with children. As was seen in the previous discussion on motivations for a business start-up, **Pamela** was not prepared to sacrifice time away from her children and **Lisa** seemed to echo such feelings. It appeared that even though these women attempted to become self-employed, they were not prepared to alter their responsibilities as mothers in any way. When **Pamela** was probed by the interviewer, she highlighted the issue of necessity rather than choice when it came to her family responsibilities and business pursuits:

**Interviewer: So family is your priority obviously?**

Pamela: It's not. I wouldn't say it's my priority. If I had a choice, I don't have a choice. (PI/INT2)

It appears that perhaps, if these women had adequate social support around them, maybe they would have felt that they could share their childcare responsibilities and devote some more time to exploiting their business opportunities.

Achieving a desirable balance between childcare responsibilities and self-realisation through self-employment seemed to be an ongoing impediment to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities for these women. This finding relates to other literature on female gender roles (Shihadeh, 1991) but they also show support for the previously highlighted similarities between immigrant and host country women (Kwong et al., 2009) in their entrepreneurial motivations. The question that these women were repeatedly asking was: '*what does it cost for my child not to have me around?*'(LA/INT2). In spite of ongoing attempts to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities in a way that would suit childcare responsibilities, it seemed to be difficult, if not impossible, at times. As a result of being primarily child bearers, the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities was difficult to achieve.

### ***External environment***

The impact of the external environment also related to the participants' impediments' experiences in their entrepreneurial pursuit. Such a negative impact became evident during the study duration and is discussed within various themes. The economic recession acted as a possible impediment to the participants' nascent entrepreneurial process and their daily lives within the cross-cultural adaptation domain. At the same time, as the participants compared themselves with their desired selves and their reference groups, they endured some temporary struggle within the Irish context.

The findings relating to the impediments to the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities contribute to the debate on nascent entrepreneurship process of immigrants. Figure 7.4 summarises the key findings of this theme.

**Figure 7.4 – Summary of Findings - Impediments to the Successful Exploitation of Entrepreneurial Opportunities**

- All participants experienced impediments in the process of entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation.
- Impediments stemmed from areas of economic and cross-cultural adaptation domains such as financial capital constraints, business related confidence (in developing business partnerships and confidence in own skills and knowledge), family responsibilities, and external environment.
- Some impediments were temporary in nature and some participants were able to overcome them and continue with their exploitation process. Other participants perceived certain impediments as more prevalent and constant which deterred their nascent entrepreneurial pursuit.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

Due to the methodological design, this study was able to uncover some of the underlying issues which presented obstacles within the nascent entrepreneurial process. These findings also elucidated the nature of the nascent entrepreneurial process and perceived difficulties of the participants in more depth (Davidsson, 2005). The construct of entrepreneurial capital development (Firkin, 2001; 2003) helped to explain some of the difficulties that the participants experienced as they could not successfully leverage different types of capital. Most notably, these individuals were not able to leverage their social networks to overcome financial difficulties, share childcare responsibilities, and develop relationships with the Irish stakeholders. In spite of possessing human capital in the form of education and experience, the participants' lacked confidence in demonstrating their skills in the Irish context. These



issues are also related to their cross-cultural adaptation process within an Irish context, such as their cultural identities, social networks relationships, and personal predispositions. Thus it is apparent that the cross-cultural adaptation dimension and the nascent entrepreneurial process interact dynamically with each other over time.

## **7.6. OUTCOMES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES EXPLOITATION PROCESS**

During the nascent entrepreneurial process, the participants moved between the recognition and exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities in a dynamic and cyclical manner. This process was further complicated by an array of impediments which varied over particular participants, time, and situations. The nascent entrepreneurial process was also either enhanced or aggravated by the cross-cultural adaptation directions of the participants. Such interrelated yet complex issues resulted in a number of outcomes of the nascent entrepreneurial efforts during the study duration. While Carter et al.'s (1996) and Reynolds et al.'s (2004) typologies capturing outcomes of nascent entrepreneurial process are helpful in explaining various consequences, these typologies are further enhanced and expanded based on the particularities of this study.

Table 7.6 summarises the main entrepreneurial opportunities which were recognised by the participants with consequences that were observed.

**Table 7.6 – Summary of the Participants’ Recognised Entrepreneurial Opportunities and the Outcome of their Exploitation Process**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial Opportunity</b>	<b>Outcome of Exploitation Process</b>
Lisa	Hairdressing	Nascent entrepreneurial process put on hold
	Pizzeria	Nascent entrepreneurial process in Ireland put on hold
	Book-keeping	Still engaged in the nascent entrepreneurial process
Sebastien	Furniture/Web design	Abandonment of the nascent entrepreneurial process
	Internet based business ideas (three technology based and one lingerie websites)	New venture birth
Obusi	Recruitment agency in healthcare industry	Nascent entrepreneurial process put on hold
Pamela	Communication platform for immigrant businesses	Abandonment of the nascent entrepreneurial process
	Sponsorship message on reusable bags	Nascent entrepreneurial process put on hold
Monika	Breeze blocks and technical advice	Nascent entrepreneurial process in Ireland put on hold
	Beading work	New venture birth
Lietus	Jewellery shop	Abandonment of the nascent entrepreneurial process
	Restaurant	Nascent entrepreneurial process put on hold

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

Consistent with the notion that the nascent entrepreneurial process is about ‘becoming’ (Stayart, 2007), different outcomes towards actual ‘being’ or not were accomplished by the participants over time. There were a number of different decisions reached by the participants about the different entrepreneurial opportunities that they recognised:

- (1) New venture birth - nascent entrepreneurial efforts were brought to fruition and a new business was created;
- (2) Still engaged in the nascent entrepreneurial process – nascent entrepreneurial exploitation process was still continuing;
- (3) Nascent entrepreneurial process put on hold – nascent entrepreneurial process was

temporarily discontinued;

(4) Nascent entrepreneurial process in Ireland put on hold – nascent entrepreneurial process was temporarily abandoned as the individuals realised that they did not want to pursue their businesses within an Irish context;

(5) Abandonment of the nascent entrepreneurial process – nascent entrepreneurial exploitation process was abandoned for a particular business opportunity or completely.

All of the participants attempted to exploit more than one entrepreneurial opportunity during the study duration. These outcomes were reached as a result of ongoing negotiations, leveraging, and balancing of resources between the proposed venture, and other aspects of individuals' lives in their cross-cultural adaptation. These outcomes were not always final as those who abandoned one business opportunity went back to exploit another business opportunity. Also, those who put their nascent entrepreneurial process on hold were anticipating coming back to their exploitation in the future when temporarily impediments were overcome. Each of these outcomes of the nascent entrepreneurial process are explored in more detail.

### *(1) New venture birth*

This outcome of the nascent entrepreneurial efforts indicated that individuals successfully completed their nascent stage and established a new venture (Carter et al., 1996). **Monika** and **Sebastien** completed their nascent entrepreneurial process and launched their businesses. **Monika** developed her hobby idea when she was facing a prospect of unemployment. **Sebastien** also completed his nascent entrepreneurial process relatively fast. Within about four months he was able to partner with different people, develop online business platform and subsequently launch three different websites selling different products.

What these two participants had in common was that they both launched their businesses without preparing a formal business plan. They also successfully assembled and leveraged different forms of their limited resources for the entrepreneurial use (Firkin, 2001; 2003). Even though they recognised their entrepreneurial opportunities, their practical nascent activities (such as preparing a website, targeting customers) took place in a higher concentration at later stages of the process or even as products were being sold. They also successfully leveraged their limited resources, applying much of their own and their social networks' skills in the process (Firkin, 2001; 2003). There was the trigger point of becoming unemployed for **Monika** which sped up the launch of her business. Even though **Sebastien** kept some momentum, the gestation activities of both of them were highly concentrated towards the end of the exploitation process (Liao and Welsh, 2002; Newbert, 2005; Lichtenstein et al., 2007). It seems that it was due to the triggering point or an adaptive tension in their lives (Kim, 2001) that sparked completion of the nascent entrepreneurial process.

Interestingly, both of these participants did not tend to mix with the Irish during their cross-cultural adaptation process and their cultural identities were often centred around living parallel lives rather than feeling a part of the Irish context. They both often compared their lives with those of their peers in their home countries which drove them forward in their attempts to achieve better lives. Even though **Monika** was made redundant which punctuated her employment, **Sebastien** was also temporarily unhappy in his employment as he felt unchallenged. Despite some similarities, **Monika's** experiences were more negative than **Sebastien's**. Both of them came from EU countries and were of white origin, yet their cross-cultural and economic adaptation differed and was subjective. This shows that previous

exclusions of such cohorts in definitions of immigrants and immigrant entrepreneurs (Emerge, 2007) may be somewhat inadequate in their presumptions that those of similar European background did not experience difficulties in their nascent entrepreneurial journeys.

These findings also contribute to the discussions within the field of transnational entrepreneurship (Drori et al., 2005, 2009). Even though physically present in the Irish environment, both of their businesses utilised transnational linkages for business purposes. **Sebastien's** business partners, assistants (his parents), suppliers, and customers were all transnationally scattered in different countries, such as Ireland, France, Belgium, and China. **Monika's** beads were Czech and Japanese, bought in Hungary and her customers were of mixed origins. Such widely reaching geographically distant ties were brought close together through digital communication and presented a business advantage rather than a barrier. This is consistent with the notions of superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) and transnational network ties in the globalised world (Portes et al., 2002; Light, 2007).

Did these two participants achieve what they wanted from their entrepreneurial activities? Neither of them was dedicated full time to their newly established ventures. **Monika** commented on her business development:

Monika: I also bought a lot of beads again and will display it in the Hungarian shop and will send everybody there, and my new webpage is under construction, but my belief is not strong enough to start it in full time.

**Interviewer: Why not?**

Monika: I think it would start slowly, and I don't want to live up all of my money...The real business would be then to open a bead shop (MH/ICS 3<sup>rd</sup> July 09).

Due to her financial constraints as a result of her unemployment she was cautious about her future business development. Her business development was interrupted due to her return

migration. Similarly, even though **Sebastien** was making money from his online businesses, he wanted to ensure that he had enough different revenue streams before giving up his full time employment: *'I would like to set up the basis and set up all this first, to make sure that I can ... I can survive with this.'* (SF/INT2). Both of the participants progressed cautiously in their business developments as they were not prepared to risk their limited resources. Even though it appeared that they were both striving towards a better life, this process was slow and restricted by their own resource availability within the context of their cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland.

## ***(2) Still engaged in the nascent entrepreneurial process***

This second outcome of the exploitation of the nascent entrepreneurial opportunities meant that the participants were still engaged in this process. It relates to Carter et al.'s (1996) and Reynolds et al.'s (2004) 'still trying' category. During the study duration, the participants were actively trying to exploit their entrepreneurial opportunities. This meant that the participants were either more or less regularly engaged in some gestation activities, while overcoming some impediments to this process at the same time. However, at the end of the study, apart from those who made a transition to the 'new venture birth' category (**Monika** and **Sebastien**), there were no participants who were still actively engaged in exploiting their entrepreneurial opportunities at that time. The remaining participants put their nascent entrepreneurial efforts temporarily on hold, decided not to pursue their businesses in Ireland, or abandoned their entrepreneurial opportunities altogether.

### *(3) Nascent entrepreneurial process put on hold*

Another outcome of nascent entrepreneurial efforts was that some participants decided to interrupt the process on a temporary basis. Even though it relates to Gartner et al.'s (2004) categorisation of putting entrepreneurial process exploitation on hold, these findings explored the reasons behind this decision in more depth and in relation to immigrants. This outcome decision was reached by the participants as a result of not being able to overcome certain impediments in the process of exploitation, which also related to their cross-cultural adaptation. Such decisions about putting the nascent entrepreneurial process on hold were made over some time, rather than instantaneously.

The participants experienced different levels and intensity of impediments during their nascent entrepreneurial process (cf. Section 7.5). These impediments were also intertwined with the individuals' process of cross-cultural adaptation. As some of them could not be resolved at least temporarily, the nascent entrepreneurial efforts were temporarily discontinued. However, the negative impact of the economic recession was the most pronounced in this outcome decision. The worsening economic recession during the study duration put a strain on the participants' resources. Even though the participants did not perceive their employment or indeed unemployment as the most viable means of economic adaptation (hence the decision to pursue the entrepreneurial path), they temporarily remained in those positions. It was perceived as a safer option on the short term rather than being the best option for economic adaptation (Cassar, 2006). **Pamela** explained that she put her entrepreneurial efforts on hold due to external uncertainties: *'We'll see, we'll just wait and see what will happen ... just the market you know, it's so scary now. I don't know, I don't*

*even know where I am going to be.*' (PI/INT2). Similar to some of the other participants, she adopted the 'wait and see' approach to her business opportunity exploitation.

Interesting insights emerged with regards to the impact of a worsening economic recession on the outcome of the participants' nascent entrepreneurial opportunities. Consequently, while the focus of the study was on an individual level, the impact of wider environmental forces on the participants' availability and leveraging of resources also had to be considered (Shane, 2003). Due to the participants' inability to overcome temporary impediments to the successful exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities, they had to endure a 'survival mode' and try to weather the storm. This outcome was only temporary, showing its dynamic nature. It could be anticipated that in the subsequent time period, the participants would either go back to the active exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities or abandon their ideas completely. Thus this discussion shows the difficulties that immigrants experience during their nascent entrepreneurial process in times of economic recession, which result in the temporal cessation of their nascent entrepreneurial efforts (Gartner et al., 2004).

#### ***(4) Nascent entrepreneurial process in Ireland put on hold***

The fourth outcome of nascent entrepreneurial process which was observed in this study related to the realisation that entrepreneurial efforts could not be carried out within an Irish context. As there is a lack of studies in nascent immigrant entrepreneurship (Davidsson, 2006), this alternative outcome has not been explored previously.



Some of the participants reached a decision about not wanting to pursue their entrepreneurial activities in Ireland further after they engaged in some exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities. **Lisa's** reasoning for not opening a pizzeria in Ireland illustrates this point:

**Interviewer: So, what has been happening to your business ideas?**

Lisa: ... I am not thinking actually at the moment for a business. Only if I go back in my country, that would be then an idea.

**Interviewer: So, you completely gave up all of your...**

Lisa: Here, yeah. At the moment. It's very difficult here actually. I find it very difficult because you have to pay the lease as I said before and it's too many, it's too much money so I don't have... (LA/INT2)

After realising that she had to pay a lease for a number of years in advance, **Lisa** and her husband decided not to exploit their business idea of a pizzeria further. Even though they had the knowledge and experience as they had run a very similar business in their home country, they did not feel that they possessed enough resources to open a similar business in Ireland. This resulted in abandoning their entrepreneurial efforts in Ireland but not suspending the idea completely as it could be realised upon their return to their home country. **Monika** also decided not to continue with her breeze blocks business in Ireland:

Monika: I would like to work in full time in my own business in this area but I am not sure will I do it here.

**Interviewer: What is the biggest problem?**

Monika: I don't want to stay here. And I think I should convince Irish people about it. They are not convinced about it.

**Interviewer: Really, why not?**

Monika: I don't know. I saw it in other things that they think about something and then you can't convince them with the common sense. They always say that they're caught by their traditions and they can't really really explain why. So that guy also told me who were importing this block from Germany that they expected a better business here but it's very hard to convince them.

The underlying issues of her cross-cultural adaptation were connected to her entrepreneurial decision. She was experiencing adaptation difficulties in Ireland, combined with her perceived cultural differences of the Irish (*'they'*) and the anticipated rejection of her product. She nonetheless felt that her business idea was valid but not within the Irish context. Both of these participants encountered difficulties which they felt that could not overcome in Ireland.

This outcome of nascent entrepreneurial process showed how it mutually interacted with the constructs stemming from cross-cultural adaptation of the participants. It was not only the constrained resources in terms of financial capital but also those of social support in case things would not work out. Neither **Lisa** nor **Monika** was prepared to continue with the exploitation of their entrepreneurial opportunities in an environment which they perceived as risky, unfamiliar, and perhaps temporary. The cultural difference perceptions in doing business (long term lease agreements) and between cultures placed further constraints on their entrepreneurial opportunities perceptions. Interestingly, entrepreneurial opportunities which were regarded as not suitable within one context (Ireland) were still perceived as viable in another context (home country).

#### ***(5) Abandonment of the nascent entrepreneurial process***

This outcome of nascent entrepreneurial process culminated into a decision to discontinue exploitation efforts. It relates to Gartner et al.'s (2004) 'give up' category. This outcome involved the participants' realisation that the entrepreneurial opportunity which was recognised and exploited to some extent was no longer viable. **Pamela**, **Sebastien**, and **Lietus** came to this realisation and abandoned their specific entrepreneurial opportunities. However, this outcome related to the particular entrepreneurial opportunity as all of these participants engaged in further exploitation of other entrepreneurial opportunities. It seemed that the abandoning one entrepreneurial opportunity and subsequently re-entering an exploitation process with another business opportunity did not happen in a strictly linear

manner. Rather, some overlapping occurred as the participants often searched and considered different entrepreneurial opportunities as they tried to become self-employed

The generated data revealed that the reasons for abandoning the entrepreneurial exploitation process varied but often related to different social networks. **Lietus** found out that his proposed supplier in Mongolia was no longer in business. **Sebastien** abandoned his entrepreneurial opportunity in the area of furniture/web design as his relationship with his business partner, who was a talented designer, did not work out due to a personality clash and different goals. **Pamela** abandoned her co-immigrant business idea after talking to an Irish person who was involved in a similar government project. Thus the role of social networks within the nascent entrepreneurial process seemed to be complex and contradictory.

Interestingly, these participants did not give up on their entrepreneurial efforts completely as they engaged in the exploitation of other business opportunities. Even though other entrepreneurial opportunities were temporarily put on hold due to the different impediments that these individuals experienced, their aim of becoming self-employed prevailed. As previous studies showed, those who abandoned their nascent entrepreneurial efforts were typically re-absorbed back into the employment market (Davidsson, 2006). In the case of those participants who did not change their economic status during the exploitation process, they remained in these positions. Perhaps, it presented a temporary setback for them as they had to endure their unsatisfactory modes of economic adaptation further. However, it seemed to be the only viable option as they had to consider their own and their families' survival.

The findings about the outcomes or consequences of the nascent entrepreneurial process uncovered different forms that participants took over time. There were five different outcomes of the nascent entrepreneurial process which transpired during the study investigation over 18 months. Even though there were only six participants involved in the study, there was diversity over individual participants and over time. As seen from the preceding discussion of findings, the majority of participants recognised and exploited more than one entrepreneurial opportunity. The different outcomes were not static and final. Instead, they were characterised by their dynamic and cyclical nature as the individuals moved between different entrepreneurial opportunities on a trial and error like basis. Thus while one entrepreneurial opportunity was abandoned, another one was subsequently recognised and exploited. Figure 7.5 summarises the main findings of this theme.

**Figure 7.5 – Summary of Findings - Outcomes of the Exploitation Process of the Entrepreneurial Opportunities**

- The process of entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation was dynamic in nature.
- The outcomes of the exploitation process was not always final as the participants recognised and exploited multiple business opportunities in their pursuit to become self-employed.
- Only two participants (Monika and Sebastien) successfully completed their nascent entrepreneurial activities and launched their businesses. In spite of some similarities, there were also disparities in their process of exploitation.
- While some entrepreneurial opportunities were abandoned during the course of the study, by the end of the study, most of the participants temporarily put their exploitation efforts on hold, due to experiencing various impediments.
- Some participants realised that while they wanted to exploit their entrepreneurial opportunities, they did not deem the Irish context to be appropriate in comparison with their home countries.

Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

It seemed that the main aim was to pursue an entrepreneurial path for a better life rather than recognising an entrepreneurial opportunity first. While only two participants were able to bring their nascent entrepreneurial opportunities to fruition by the end of the study, their paths and directions differed. Others did not abandon their efforts completely but due to different impediments, at least temporarily put their nascent entrepreneurial efforts on hold. Even though none of the participants gave up their employment to exploit their entrepreneurial opportunities, they moved between employment and self-employment in their minds as they compared themselves with their desired selves in the future (Radersdoff and Guimond, 2006).

These findings adopted the previously developed typology with regards to different outcomes of the nascent entrepreneurial process (such as Carter et al., 1996; Gartner et al., 2004). While some of the outcomes of the gestation activities pursued by immigrants could be explained by the previously developed constructs, this study found an additional one. Previous studies in this area did not explicitly focus on studying the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants within a context of cross-cultural adaptation. This study showed that these two processes dynamically interacted over time. As these individuals operated in an unfamiliar context, some of them reached a decision that while they still wanted to become self-employed, for various reasons, they could not do it within an Irish context. This adds an immigrant specific dimension to the previous investigation, while at the same time, it enriches other previously debated outcomes of nascent entrepreneurial opportunities.

## 7.7. CONCLUSION

This second chapter of the discussion of findings focused on the economic adaptation dimension within which the nascent entrepreneurial process was situated. The discussion showed how the participants engaged in their economic adaptation over time, moving between their employment positions and nascent entrepreneurial process. The interactive and dynamic nature of this process was interlinked with the cross-cultural adaptation constructs. This added an additional layer to the investigation of the nascent entrepreneurial process undertaken by immigrants.

Apart from the employment paths theme, four other themes emerged in relation to the nascent entrepreneurial process as: the process of recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities, the process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities, the impediments to the successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities, and the outcomes of the process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. The methodological design of the study enabled the researcher to watch 'live' how these individuals engaged in the process of nascent entrepreneurial activities. Frequently, the participants pursued the entrepreneurial path as their employment positions did not provide the anticipated means of fuelling their striving for a better life. In spite of engaging in the exploitation process of their recognised entrepreneurial opportunities, they encountered varying impediments preventing or postponing the completion of their exploitation process in most cases. Even though two of the participants completed their nascent entrepreneurial process and launched their ventures, this was achieved by leveraging their limited resources and taking small steps. The discussion also shows how the interrelated processes coming from the cross-cultural adaptation domain

either helped or hindered their nascent entrepreneurial pursuits.

The findings of this study demonstrated the role and the importance of the cross-cultural and economic adaptation dimensions, enriching the answer to the research question. The final chapter brings together the findings from the previous two chapters by reuniting them into a theoretically based conceptual model. The final chapter also draws important theoretical, practical and policy conclusions from this research.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

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#### 8.1. INTRODUCTION

This research was concerned with answering the key research question: What is the nascent entrepreneurial journey of an immigrant within an Irish context of cross-cultural adaptation? The research endeavor was an iterative process between reviewing the literature and data generation. Theoretically drawing from both entrepreneurship and cross-cultural adaptation fields and their related sub-disciplines, the research findings presented in the discussion of the findings chapters (cf. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7) engaged in a conversation with these theories. As the research was based on a quasi-ethnographic research design, the discussion of the findings strove to provide a rich description and let the participants' speak about their experiences for themselves.

While references to the existing literature and the contribution of the research findings were highlighted throughout the discussion in the preceding two chapters, the purpose of this chapter is to reiterate the key contributions to the relevant literature and draw the thesis to a close. Thus the key theoretical implications of the findings presented in the previous two chapters are discussed, highlighting how the findings extend the existing theoretical knowledge. Moreover, this chapter also draws implications of the key findings and answers the 'So what?' question. This is achieved by firstly discussing the main contributions of this research in terms of theory and methodology. Secondly, practical and policy recommendations are drawn based on the specifics of this study's findings and its context.



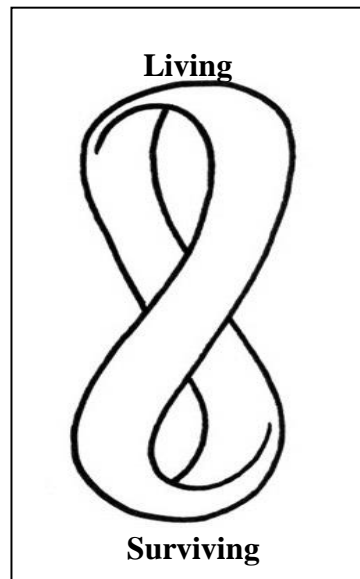
The limitations of this study are recognised and outlined and the chapter then finishes with some recommendations for future research.

## **8.2. SO WHAT IS THE NASCENT ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS OF AN IMMIGRANT WITHIN AN IRISH CONTEXT OF CROSS CULTURAL ADAPTATION?**

This research sought to answer a key question in relation to the nascent entrepreneurial process undertaken by immigrants within a context of cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland. The core of the themes emerged as a result of a process of data analysis and their implications are now drawn together.

As the discussion of the findings pointed out, the main aim of the participants was to achieve better lives. **Lietus** summarised the essence of this dynamic process: *The difference is that here you're living, while at home you're just surviving*' (LL/INT1). Thus the process of the nascent entrepreneurial efforts within a cross-cultural adaptation in an Irish context was an ongoing battle between 'living' and 'surviving'. Figure 8.1 graphically represents this 'red tread' which runs through all of the themes discussed in the previous two chapters.

**Figure 8.1–Graphical Representation of the Participants’ Striving Towards Living –  
‘Living versus Surviving’**



Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The core theme of ‘*living versus surviving*’ lies at the heart of the intertwined and dynamic cross-cultural adaptation and nascent entrepreneurial journeys of the participants. These journeys, with the key aim of moving away from ‘*surviving*’ and towards ‘*living*’, transcended over time and borders. This research captured one part of this ongoing journey and offered invaluable insights into the participants’ motivations, perceptions, experiences, and interactions.

While the participants’ experiences were highly individual and subjective, commonalities existed. These journeys towards ‘*living*’ and away from ‘*surviving*’, which were captured by this research, can be summarised as follows:

- Prior to emigration, the participants themselves and/or their spouses were moving away from ‘*living*’ and towards ‘*surviving*’ in their own home countries due to varied reasons

(such as punctuated career paths, personal problems, and poor economic prospects).

- After the participants' recognition of their unsatisfactory positions of '*surviving*' rather than '*living*' through a process of ongoing comparisons between their temporary selves/reference groups, they reached a decision to emigrate with a view of achieving better lives - '*living*'.
- Prior to the participants' actual move to Ireland, they engaged in multiple imagined journeys. They also employed destination selection strategies and utilised their transnationally located social networks in order to select the most optimal destination where they could achieve their aim of a better life.
- Once in Ireland, the participants attempted to restore their '*living*' and move away from '*surviving*'. From a cross-cultural adaptation point of view, the participants' personal predispositions, social interactions with different social networks, and their changing cultural identities, dynamically and continuously both enabled and disabled this pursuit. From an economic adaptation point of view, the participants' employment paths also became unsatisfactory and punctuated to a different extent. Thus instead of restoring '*living*' and achieving better lives as the participants' anticipated prior to their move to Ireland, they were slipping back to '*surviving*'.
- The participants engaged in a nascent entrepreneurial journey in an attempt to suspend their temporary '*surviving*' that they endured. They participated in the Emerge programme and engaged in some gestation activities during the process of the entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and exploitation. However, the nascent entrepreneurial journey was again dynamically and continuously both enabled and disabled by their cross-cultural adaptation positions and by the worsening economic recession.

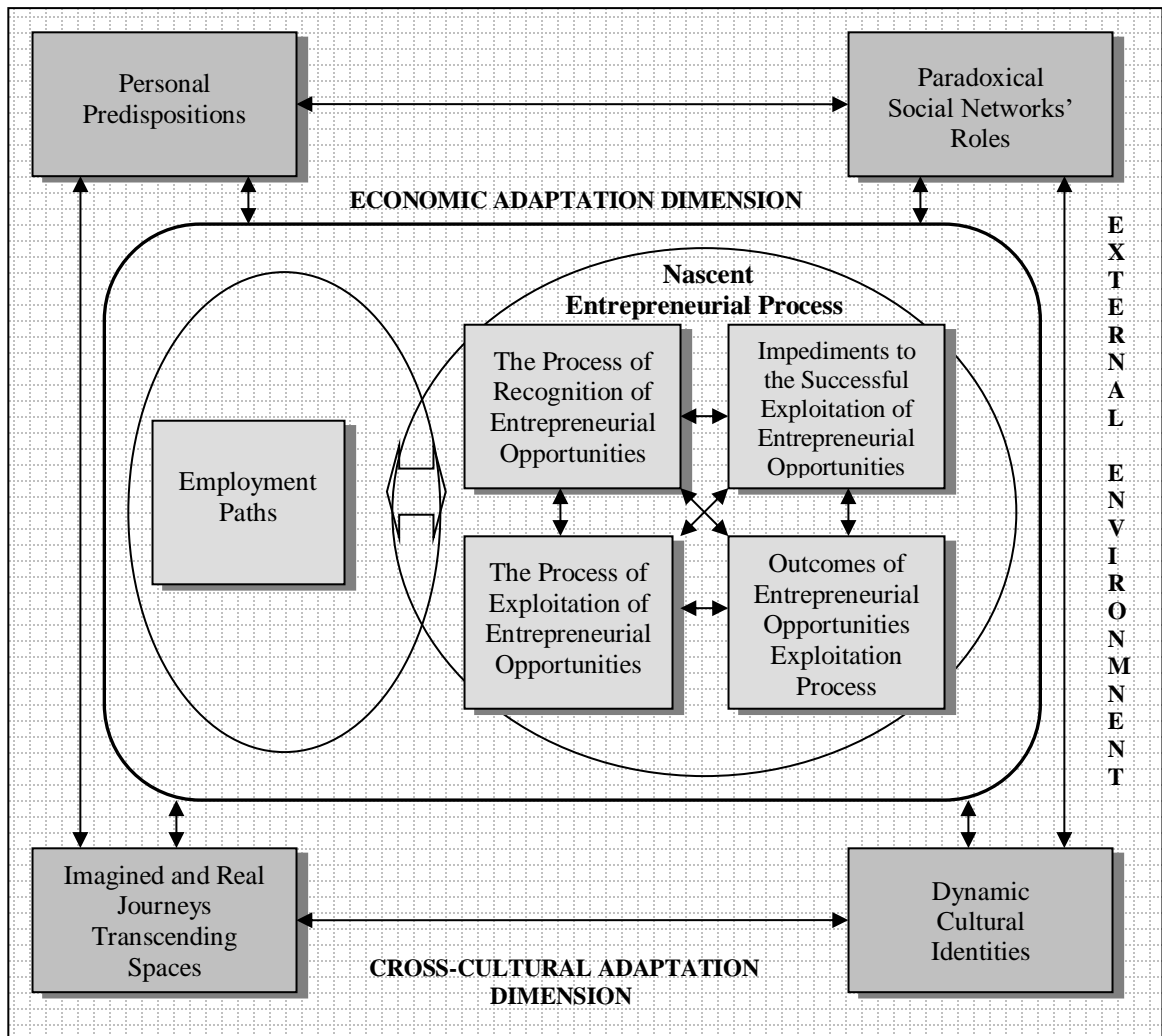
- During this process, the participants often went back and forward between their employment and self-employment positions, trying to pursue the optimal path to restore their '*living*'. Two of the participants successfully completed their gestation activities and launched their businesses, taking fragile steps towards '*living*'. Others, due to experiencing various impediments and resource constraints, remained in their former positions and endured temporary '*surviving*' as a safety measure.
- Although the participants engaged in multiple imagined journeys to their home countries during their stay in Ireland (as a result of their ongoing comparisons between their temporal selves/reference groups) they remained in Ireland. '*Surviving*' in Ireland was often considered much more favourably by the participants in comparison to '*surviving*' in their home countries. In fact, such comparisons meant that while the participants were '*surviving*' in Ireland, in contrast to their imagined positions in their home countries, they were still '*living*'. Thus by remaining in Ireland, the state of '*living*' was seen as more achievable than in the participants' home countries.

The dynamic and ongoing nature of the participants' attempts to move towards '*living*' and achieve a better life meant that the participants were constantly moving up and down along an imaginary path as illustrated in Figure 8.1. The findings of this thesis thus illustrated how the two dimensions of the cross-cultural adaptation and economic adaptation were dynamically intertwined, and mutually interacting processes, constantly moving between '*living*' and '*surviving*'. Thus the process of moving away from '*surviving*' and towards '*living*' was characterised by a continual, to-and-fro movement, temporarily making progress only to fall a few steps back again.

The findings of this research (cf. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7) explicate how the participants'

nascent entrepreneurial journey both dynamically and continuously interacted with their cross-cultural adaptation journey. These novel research findings cumulated into a conceptual model which is depicted in Figure 8.2.

**Figure 8.2 – A Conceptual Model of the Nascent Entrepreneurial Process within a Cross-Cultural Adaptation Dimension Pursued by Immigrants**



Source: Derived by Author from Data Analysis

The conceptual model illustrated in Figure 8.2 highlights the interactive interplay of two key dimensions: the cross-cultural adaptation dimension and the economic adaptation dimension (cf. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of these dimensions). Both of these

dimensions are connected with double-sided arrows which means that they mutually and dynamically interact with each other over time and specific situations. In addition, these two dimensions do not operate in isolation, rather they are embedded within the dynamics of the political and socio-cultural external environment context. The conceptual model in Figure 8.2 thus innovatively captures the complexities of the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants within a context of their wider economic and cross-cultural adaptation, while also incorporating external environmental changes.

Firstly, the cross-cultural adaptation dimension contains four key constructs:

***(1) Personal Predispositions***

The participants were endowed with varying characteristics prior to their immigration to Ireland which presented a prologue to their subsequent cross-cultural and economic adaptation. The personal predispositions which were observed over time included human capital variables (such as formal education, further training and prior career experience), linguistic predispositions, and individual personality characteristics (such as self-confidence, locus of control, constant need to do something and the risk taking propensity). These predispositions did not remain static, rather they changed to a varying degree over time and specific situations (cf. Chapter 6.2).

***(2) Imagined and Real Journeys Transcending Spaces***

The participants continuously engaged in multiple and dynamic journeys transcending spaces. The real journeys captured the physical movements between the participants' home countries and Ireland. Engaging in ongoing imaginary journeys meant that the participants constantly compared their current selves with their future selves and their reference groups either in the present or alternative location (cf. Figure 6.3, p. 209).

Through these imagined journeys, the participants engaged in ongoing cost-benefit analysis in which comparisons and justifications to stay or to go were made on different levels in their attempts to move towards ‘living’ and away from ‘surviving’ (cf. Chapter 6.3).

### ***(3) Paradoxical Social Networks’ Roles***

Social networks were pertinent to the participants’ cross-cultural and economic adaptation in Ireland. There were five types of social networks that the participants engaged in: nuclear family unit in Ireland, family and friends in their home country, own community in Ireland, other immigrant groups in Ireland, and the Irish people in Ireland. The intensity and nature of interactions with these social networks depended on the level of perceived commonalities which changed over time. The nature of interactions with different social networks was often paradoxical. This meant that while social interactions with own and co-immigrant networks provided emotional support and a sense of belonging, those social networks often hindered the cross-cultural and economic adaptation process for the individuals. On the other hand, social interactions with the natives which were often highlighted as supporting cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001), were perceived by the participants negatively, making the cross-cultural and economic adaptation process more difficult (cf. Chapter 6.4).

### ***(4) Dynamic Cultural Identities***

The theme of the dynamic cultural identities positions reflected the participants’ changing perceptions of their cultural identities. The participants’ societal level differences and their embedded cultural values transcended into their cross-cultural and economic adaptation processes and challenged the differences between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’. The

individuals' cultural identities also dynamically changed through social encounters with the Irish but these changes were often more negative, leading to a lesser contact with the host population. The individuals' cultural identity positions within an Irish context were subjective and changing feelings of content and a sense of balance rather than presenting assimilation to the host culture. Four different dynamic cultural identity positions were adopted at different times and specific situations by the participants: (1) 'I am the minority', (2) 'parallel cultural existence', (3) 'we don't belong here or there', and (4) 'this is home' (cf. Chapter 6.5).

These four key constructs in the cross-cultural dimension did not only dynamically interact with each other but also with the variables within the economic adaptation dimension. Thus these variables did not remain constant or static as their role and importance was found to vary over time, specific situations, and individuals.

Secondly, the inner dimension of the economic adaptation is placed within an outer, cross-cultural adaptation dimension in Figure 8.2. This dimension depicts two main forms of the economic adaptation that the participants of this study were found to pursue over time. Firstly, the 'employment paths' construct represents the varied employment trajectories of the participants, while the 'nascent entrepreneurial process' presents the second major form of the economic adaptation. The double-sided arrow between these two forms of economic adaptation illustrates that the individuals often moved between them or were engaged in both of them at the same time. In more detail, the economic dimension constructs are:

***(1) Employment Paths***

The participants pursued different employment trajectories over time in Ireland. Their employment paths were diverse and filled with opportunities and challenges as they



attempted to establish themselves in an economic sense and achieve better lives. While in some cases, employment related to home career position was secured by some participants, at other times the participants pursued employment which was unrelated to their home career positions or their educational background. Furthermore, due to different circumstances (such as family commitments or legal restrictions), some participants were temporarily unable to secure employment. The employment paths were often disjointed, compromised and punctuated and dynamically interacted with the cross-cultural adaptation variables. The nascent entrepreneurial path was often pursued simultaneously with a view of achieving anticipated benefits of economic adaptation (cf. Chapter 7.2).

### ***(2) The Process of Recognition of Entrepreneurial Opportunities***

This construct encompasses the participants' decision to become entrepreneurs and the process of the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities. The participants reached their decision to become self-employed as a result of ongoing efforts to achieve better lives. The motivation for becoming self-employed and the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities often co-evolved together over time. The participants often re-evaluated and changed their entrepreneurial ideas, while also moving back and forward between employment and entrepreneurial paths. Entrepreneurial opportunities were mostly recognised as a result of the participants' human capital and social interactions with non-Irish networks. Entrepreneurship was often seen as a constrained option or as a 'Plan B' (cf. Chapter 7.3).

### ***(3) The Process of Exploitation of Entrepreneurial Opportunities***

The ongoing process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities predominantly involved gathering of resources which would lead to a new venture birth. These gestation

activities were pursued in a structured way during an Emerge programme and also independently by the participants. The majority of the participants engaged in those gestation activities which did not require financial commitment. This was due to the financial constraints that the participants experienced. The individuals' cross-cultural adaptation paths mutually interacted with the process of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. The intensity of carrying out the particular gestation activities also changed for most of the participants over time (cf. Chapter 7.4).

#### ***(4) The Impediments to the Successful Exploitation of Entrepreneurial Opportunities***

All of the participants experienced varying difficulties during the process of exploiting their entrepreneurial opportunities. These impediments, which hindered the process of a successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities, stemmed from the participants' economic adaptation process but also from the cross-cultural adaptation domain and external environment changes. The key impediments which were identified included financial considerations, lack of business confidence, perception of the lack of local business knowledge, lack of social support, family responsibilities, perceived lack of skills, and perceived worsening economic recession. While some impediments were considered as temporary in nature, others were perceived by certain individuals as more prevalent and constant, deterring the nascent entrepreneurial journey of 'becoming' (cf. Chapter 7.5).

#### ***(5) Outcomes of Entrepreneurial Opportunities Exploitation Process***

The process of entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and exploitation was dynamic in nature. The participants recognised, exploited and abandoned more than one entrepreneurial idea and this often occurred simultaneously. Only two participants

completed their nascent entrepreneurial process and launched their businesses. Both of these individuals' efforts varied but commonalities also existed in that very little financial resources were invested, no business plan was prepared, and the gestation activities' frequency increased towards the end of the exploitation process. Other outcomes of the entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation process included continuing with the nascent entrepreneurial process, abandonment of the nascent entrepreneurial efforts, putting a temporary hold on the nascent entrepreneurial activities, and the decision to put the nascent entrepreneurial process in Ireland on hold. The latter outcome shows that while some individuals wanted to exploit their entrepreneurial opportunities further, they did not perceive the Irish context to be suitable in comparison with their home countries (cf. Chapter 7.6).

These constructs in the economic dimension actively interacted over time in a cyclical rather than a linear manner. The double-sided arrows in Figure 8.2 display the overlapping nature between the different phases of the nascent entrepreneurial process and employment paths undertaken by the study participants.

This conceptual model summarises the key relationships and processes that the individual participants engaged in during their cross-cultural adaptation and economic adaptation journeys during the study as they tried to regain their balance between '*living*' and '*surviving*'. While this conceptual model is based on data analysis, it is theoretically supported by the relevant writings from the cross-cultural, nascent entrepreneurship and other relevant literature (such as Granovetter, 1997, 1983; Bennett, 1993; Kim, 2001; Portes et al., 2002; Berry, 2005; 2008, Bhatia and Ram, 2009; Shane and Ventakaraman, 2000; Shane, 2003; Firkin, 2001; 2003; Davidsson, 2005, 2006). This conceptual model uniquely

and innovatively contributes to the previous academic debates by combining the constructs coming from the fields of cross-cultural adaptation and nascent immigrant entrepreneurship as identified in the literature review chapters (cf. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).

The main contributions of this research, as depicted Figure 8.2 and discussed in detail in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, enrich the understanding of the nascent entrepreneurial process pursued by immigrants within a context of their cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland. This research illustrated that viewing the nascent entrepreneurial process undertaken by immigrants within the process of cross-cultural adaptation can deepen the understanding of this elusive and dynamic process. More specifically, in addition to the above-discussed contributions, some of the key highlights of the novel findings relating to the nascent entrepreneurial process which came out of this study are:

- All of the participants, those from other EU countries and those coming from non-EU countries, experienced challenges in their cross-cultural and economic adaptation journeys.
- While the majority of the participants were highly educated, higher educational attainment did not always equate with easier cross-cultural adaptation or the nascent entrepreneurial journey (cf. Chapter 6.2).
- The difficulty with verbal communication was not the only impediment that the participants experienced during their cross-cultural and economic adaptation. More significantly, it was the underlying culturally-sensitive meanings that challenged the participants' process of their cross-cultural and economic adaptation (cf. Chapter 6.2 and Chapter 7.5).
- It was found that all of the participants had a constant need to do something which drove them forward in their efforts to achieve better lives. The participants' locus of control

also interacted with the participants' actions over time and specific situations. In addition, the study uncovered that the participants were sensitive to risk due to their constrained resources and the lack of social support in Ireland (cf. Chapter 6.2).

- The participants' level of self-confidence stemmed from their personal and cultural background but further evolved over time and specific situations during their cross-cultural and economic adaptation in Ireland. The participants' lack of self-confidence (in particular the female participants) were found to impede their nascent entrepreneurial efforts (cf. Chapter 6.2 and Chapter 7.5).
- The conceptual model of the 'Imagined and Real Journeys Transcending Spaces (cf. Chapter 6.3, Figure 6.2), which was developed as a result of data analysis, shows the multiple imagined and real journeys that the participants engaged in prior and after their emigration from their home countries. In particular, the imagined journeys, involving the constant comparisons between one's temporary selves/and reference groups (cf. Chapter 6.3, Figure 6.3) were found to be the driving force behind the participants' nascent entrepreneurial process as they strove to achieve a better life.
- The findings also highlighted one atypical case how one individual attempted to adapt to the social and economic life in Ireland over time but failed in this pursuit and returned to her home country (cf. Chapter 6.3).
- The dynamic nature of the five key social networks based on the changing perceived commonalities and intensity of interactions both aided and impeded the participants' cross-cultural adaptation and nascent entrepreneurial journeys. As a result of data analysis, a conceptual model depicting these social relationships was developed in this study (cf. Chapter 6.4, Figure 6.5). The findings uncovered the complex, changing and often paradoxical nature of the social and business related relationships developed by the participants (cf. Chapter 6.4 and Chapter 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5).
- The study uncovered how the roles of mothers and fathers interacted with the

participants' employment paths and their nascent entrepreneurial efforts in a different way (cf. Chapter 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4).

- The participants' dynamic cultural identity positions changed over time and situations, resulting in different levels of feelings of belonging or not belonging to the Irish environment. The study found the concepts of the 'perceived perceptions of self' and 'mistaken identity' as two constructs coming out of interactions with the Irish and negatively interacting with the participants' business confidence in the interaction with the Irish stakeholders (cf. Chapter 6.8 and Chapter 7.5).
- The key purpose of the economic adaptation through employment and self-employment was found to be related to securing financial resources for future benefits of better lives rather than career progression or entrepreneurial opportunity driven (cf. Chapter 7.2 and 7.3).
- The recognised entrepreneurial opportunities were mostly located within general, rather than co-immigrant markets in spite of little interaction with the Irish (cf. Chapter 7.3).
- Most of the participants tended to be involved in those gestation activities during the nascent entrepreneurial exploitation process that involved little financial commitment (cf. Chapter 7.4). This was due to their constrained resources which had to be allocated on a needs basis.
- Those participants who launched their businesses did so by using their own skills or complimentary skills of others rather than by investing financial capital into their ventures (cf. Chapter 7.6).
- The key impediments to the successful exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities came from the cross-cultural adaptation domain (the lack of safety social net, family responsibilities, business confidence) but also from the external environment changes of the worsening economic recession (cf. Chapter 7.5).
- The novel outcomes of the nascent entrepreneurial process which were observed over

time included the realisation that the participants wanted to pursue their entrepreneurial opportunity further but they did not want to do it in the Irish environment (cf. Chapter 7.6).

The adopted quasi-ethnographic research method and the small research sample enabled the researcher to gain a unique insight into the participants' experiences over a prolonged time period. Capturing the intertwined interactions of the nascent entrepreneurial and cross-cultural adaptation journeys over time thus answered the key research question and addressed research gaps identified in the literature review. The key theoretical contributions to the existing theories are discussed in the following section.

### **8.3. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

The key theoretical contributions of this thesis to knowledge are related particularly to the field of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship. The findings of this study answered Singh and DeNoble's (2004) call for entrepreneurship studies which would take into consideration the cross-cultural adaptation paths that immigrants undergo in a host country. Such an alternative view of the nascent entrepreneurial process pursued by immigrants was identified as a research gap in response to the previous studies on nascent immigrant entrepreneurship which often focused on the co-immigrant entrepreneurial orientation without taking a broader view of these two interrelated processes. The relevant cross-cultural adaptation theoretical constructs found in this study (the personal predispositions, paradoxical social network roles, imagined and real journeys transcending spaces and places, and the dynamic cultural identities positions), demonstrated how these variables dynamically and continuously interacted with the participants' economic adaptation and in particular their nascent entrepreneurial process.

The findings of this research also contributed to the academic debate about the reasons why immigrants enter the entrepreneurial process (Clark and Drinkwater, 2006) by highlighting their ongoing pursuit of moving from ‘*surviving*’ towards ‘*living*’. Such dynamic and challenging movements towards better lives were pursued through employment and self-employment avenues in a disjointed manner. Thus it was not necessarily only a labour market disadvantage (Light, 1972; Light and Gold, 2000) but a basic motivation of achieving personal goals that drove these immigrants to emigration and nascent entrepreneurial attempts to accomplish this aim. Theories from social psychology (Emmons, 1986; Miller and Brown, 1991; Wilson and Ross, 2000; Neal and Carey, 2004) offered additional and novel explanatory power to the ongoing temporal-self/reference group comparisons which were driving these individuals in their entrepreneurial pursuit towards accomplishing their aim of better lives.

The changing functions and structures of interactions within different social networks also dynamically interacted with the participants’ processes of cross-cultural and economic adaptation. Granovetter’s (1973; 1983) network theory and other relevant theoretical and empirical developments (Kim, 2001; Davidsson and Honig, 2003) were useful theoretical lenses to this research. The findings illustrated that social encounters within the cross-cultural adaptation dimension transcended into the nascent entrepreneurial domain. While the bridging social networks and social interactions with the host population were previously highlighted as beneficial (Kim, 2001; Berry, 2005), the findings of this study uncovered a paradoxical nature of such relationships. This meant that the interactions with the Irish community often resulted in negative responses and setbacks by the participants and this was



also evident within their nascent entrepreneurial efforts as contact with the Irish was almost feared by some of the participants. On the other hand, familial and other social networks of a strong nature (Granovetter, 1973, 1983; Kim, 2001) were found to be emotionally supportive but not always capable of easing the process of the cross-cultural and economic adaptation. The gender specific roles of mothers and fathers within a nuclear family were also found to be significant within both the cross-cultural and nascent entrepreneurial dimensions. While the participants were drawing on their existing social ties during the nascent entrepreneurial process, this was not the case for establishing connections with potentially useful Irish networks. Thus the study uncovered the changing nature and impact of the different social networks on the participants' cross-cultural and nascent entrepreneurial efforts over time which were often paradoxical in their nature.

The study also applied the existing theories within the nascent entrepreneurship field such as the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane and Ventakaraman, 2000; Shane, 2003; Davidsson, 2005), entrepreneurial capital (Firkin, 2001, 2003; Nee and Sanders, 2001), and the gestation activities view of the nascent entrepreneurial process (Carter et al., 1996; Reynolds et al., 2004) to an immigrant cohort. These theories were seen as providing a better explanatory power than existing theories within the immigrant/ethnic entrepreneurship realm (such as Light, 1972; Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990; Light and Gold, 2000). This was because the immigrant/ethnic specific theories often focused on already established entrepreneurs, focusing on studying them mostly on a group rather than an individual level. In addition, much of those previous immigrant/ethnic specific theories defined immigrant entrepreneurs from a disadvantaged and a Caucasian point of view, presupposing that immigrant entrepreneurs were different from the host country entrepreneurs and that they mostly operated within their co-immigrant/ethnic realm. Thus applying the general nascent

entrepreneurial theories to an immigrant cohort on an individual level enabled the capturing of the process nature of this phenomenon. The findings of this study blended these theories with the cross-cultural theories with a view to explaining the nascent entrepreneurship process undertaken by immigrants. The results of this study thus extend these theories by adding an immigrant dimension to them.

The study results supported the dynamic and cyclical relationship between the entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and their exploitation as emphasised by Shane (2003) and Davidsson (2005). The study results also enhanced the understanding between the role of individuals and the entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and exploitation process (Shane, 2003). This was done by showing the details of their intertwined and cyclical nature as the individuals often moved between the nascent entrepreneurial recognition and exploitation stages, rather than progressing forward in a linear manner. For example, the majority of the participants recognised an entrepreneurial opportunity, and carried out some exploitation before moving back again to the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition phase by refining or changing their business idea.

With regards to the concept of the nascent entrepreneurial gestation activities, this study contributed to the ongoing theoretical discussion (Gartner et al., 2004, Lichtenstein et al., 2008) by showing that the sequence and nature of the undertaken gestation activities was very subjective and individual. The findings also added an immigrant dimension to this process which was absent from the previous studies in this area. While investing one's own money into a business venture was highlighted as one of the most frequent gestation activities by Gartner et al. (2004), this was not the case in this study. Due to the constrained nature of

the participants' resources which were allocated on a need-basis in different areas of the participants' lives, the majority of the participants only engaged in gestation activities which did not require the commitment of financial resources. The worsening conditions of an economic recession also impacted on the course of the participants' gestation activities. During the course of the study as the economy declined, the participants either decreased their level of engagement in gestation activities or put them on hold completely. The study findings in relation to another gestation activity, business plan preparation, also adds to the academic discussion which emphasises the symbolic nature of this activity (Honig and Karlsson, 2004; Karlsson and Honig, 2009). Business plan writing was often seen by the participants as mechanical and without a strategic purpose as external finance was not sought by any of them. The findings of this study thus contribute to the current academic discussion in relation to the gestation activities undertaken during a nascent entrepreneurial process, while also adding the immigrant dimension to this process.

The impediments preventing these individuals from a successful exploitation of nascent entrepreneurial opportunities mostly related to the resources constraint and the inability to recombine these resources successfully. The participants often lacked financial capital and whatever financial resources were available to them had to be allocated firstly within their personal lives. While some of the participants were able to utilise their social networks or their own human capital in terms of their skills to reduce the need of financial capital, others were not able to recombine their resources during the nascent entrepreneurial process. These findings add to the theoretical notion of entrepreneurial capital acquisition and development proposed by Firkin (2001; 2003). While this theory and a similar theory developed by Nee and Sanders (2001) was empirically tested on established businesses, the results of this study extend this theory to the nascent entrepreneurship stage. This study also showed evidence of

how immigrants attempted to recombine their constrained resources over time in a longitudinal, real-time way rather than in a retrospective approach. While some of the previous studies within an immigrant realm incorporated a similar theoretical notion of forms-of-capital developed by Nee and Sanders (2001) (Ram et al., 2008; Versinina and Mayer, 2008), they did not address the nascent stage of the entrepreneurial process. Thus this study contributes to this discussion and shows the theoretical potential of the entrepreneurial capital concept.

The study also extended the previously developed outcomes of nascent entrepreneurial opportunities (Carter et al., 1996; Gartner et al., 2004) by adding an immigrant specific dimension. While the previous research found that nascent entrepreneurs either successfully completed their exploitation process, put their nascent entrepreneurial efforts on hold or abandoned them, this study found another outcome. This outcome demonstrated that some of the nascent immigrant entrepreneurs decided to discontinue their nascent entrepreneurial process within an Irish context but they anticipated that they would continue with the nascent entrepreneurial exploitation process upon their return to their home country. Such an outcome decision was often reached as a result of the participants' unfamiliarity with the cultural aspects of doing business in Ireland or due to their perceptions of limited resources and social support in case their entrepreneurial efforts failed. This additional outcome showed how context specific circumstances related to nascent entrepreneurship and cross-cultural adaptation impacted on such decisions.

This study also contributed further into the developing theoretical concept of transnational entrepreneurship (Drori et al., 2005; Drori et al., 2009) as to date there has been a lack of

focus on the nascent stage of emerging transnational entrepreneurial ventures (Riddle et al., 2008). The nascent entrepreneurial efforts of some of the participants were reaching beyond the Irish context in terms of establishing linkages with potential suppliers, business partners, and also customers. The findings pointed out the nature and the process of the development, execution and abandonment of such linkages with a view to producing business related advantages. Such geographically distant relationships were made closer by the advances in technology and communication as advocated in previous studies (Portes et al., 2002; Vertovec, 2007).

Methodologically, the study contributed to the literature by its qualitative, quasi-ethnographic longitudinal research design. There was a noticeable lack of such studies previously identified in relation to nascent entrepreneurship (Davidsson, 2006). Stayeart (2007) emphasised that nascent entrepreneurship studies should focus on the process of becoming, while Davidsson (2005) ascertained that nuances of this elusive process could be uncovered and understood better through the use of such inductive methods. Furthermore, in agreement with Patton (2002), the process as the focus of studying a nascent entrepreneurial process was the point, rather than just a means of arriving to a destination. From the outset of this study, it was not clear whether the nascent entrepreneurial efforts of the participants were going to result in a new venture birth or not. By adapting a real time, longitudinal study design, the researcher could watch these processes unfolding 'live'. The study uncovered the details with regards to the nascent entrepreneurial efforts and how they intertwined with the cross-cultural adaptation constructs. Such in-depth and detailed accounts of the participants' experiences of a nascent entrepreneurial process within a context of a cross-cultural adaptation would not be possible and effective in a quantitative, post-hoc investigation.

Supported by the research results and echoed by the inconsistencies based on the literature review (Dana, 2007), the often adopted definition related to foreign-born entrepreneurs needs to be revised. Many of the previous studies defined this cohort from a Western, Caucasian perspective excluding those who originated from similar economic and socio-cultural backgrounds (Emerge, 2007). This study, which was much broader in its definition, showed up the inadequacy of the previous definitions. The discussion of the findings pointed out that even those of common race, coming from other EU-countries, experienced challenges in both their cross-cultural adaptation and in their nascent entrepreneurial pursuit. While the two participants who brought their nascent entrepreneurial efforts to fruition came from EU countries, their cross-cultural and economic adaptation journeys were not straightforward. Thus the definition of immigrant entrepreneurs should be inclusive of all of those who did not undergo their main socialisation process within the host country, as intra-cultural differences do exist. Perhaps, it was this narrow definitional focus that previously painted such a disadvantaged picture of this entrepreneurial cohort (Whitehead et al., 2006; First Step, 2006).

The study location within an Irish context also provided some interesting insights and contributions. Firstly, it showed the increasingly negative impact of the economic recession on the participants' actions. The primary research in this study commenced in February 2008, when the economic recession was only becoming evident. However, as the state of the Irish and the global economy deteriorated over the study duration, the participants perceived their resources as even more constrained. This resulted in the participants' remaining in a 'safe mode' due to their inability to risk their resources. Additionally, the Irish environment with

regards to immigration and immigrant entrepreneurship is still in a developmental phase in comparison with traditional immigrant-receiving countries such as the UK and the US. With some exceptions (Mottiar and Laurinčíková, 2008), ethnic enclaves, ethnic economies, and areas with particular immigrant concentrations are not commonly found in Ireland. This lack of traditional immigrant structures may have interacted with the participants' entrepreneurial pursuit in that while supported by close familial ties, they did not draw on other co-immigrant communities in terms of resources and customer base which is common in other contexts (Light and Gold, 2000; Ram et al., 2008). The majority of the entrepreneurial opportunities recognised by the participants were in general product and services areas rather than in co-immigrant specific areas.

The research findings also contribute to the discussion within the cross-cultural adaptation field. The study results found that the process of cross-cultural adaptation was very subjective and changed over time and particular situations. While this cyclical and dynamic way was previously articulated by Kim (2001; 2008), it does not fit with Berry's (2005, 2008) cross-cultural adaptation strategies. Furthermore, while Kim's (2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory is based on interaction with the host population which facilitates this process, this study found the paradoxical nature of such interactions encountered produced negative or mixed results, rather than easing the process of cross-cultural adaptation. As highlighted earlier, the theoretical notion of temporal-self comparisons (Wilson and Ross, 2001) may be another useful dimension to explaining and understanding the process of cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants.

#### **8.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

The findings of this study also have some implications for practice. Most notably, the study results are relevant to the general and immigrant specific enterprise support providers. The findings of this study showed mixed perceptions of the benefits of the Emerge programme by the participants. While it provided a helpful platform where the individuals acquired and developed some relevant business skills applicable within a culturally different context, it did not provide adequate support in other areas.

The ongoing emphasis on the importance of networking in Ireland by enterprise programme trainers may be justified, but it may also further discourage rather than encourage immigrant participants from establishing business relationships with the Irish. Immigrant participants may have already experienced difficulties in their cross-cultural adaptation and encounters with the Irish community. Thus they would possibly benefit from a softer approach by the trainers who would integrate personal development into the course content.

Secondly, business plan writing should not be a compulsory part of the enterprise supports aimed at nascent immigrant entrepreneurs. The findings of this study showed that the participants did not seek external finance due to their resources constraint, and thus viewed the task of business plan writing as largely mechanical. Those who engaged in business plan writing did so due to the course requirement and added incentive of receiving part of the course fee back, rather than for their own entrepreneurial opportunities exploitation purposes. Without doubt, writing a business plan can help individuals to focus and clarify their thinking. However, enterprise support providers should support those wishing to write a



business plan on a one-to-one basis, addressing their specific needs. Instead of making it as a compulsory part of an enterprise programme, the need for business planning (including market research importance, financial planning and operations planning) should be facilitated instead.

It became evident that the study participants often lacked confidence in their abilities, in establishing new contacts, and in their cultural knowledge of the 'rules of the business game'. Thus nascent immigrant entrepreneurs would benefit from meeting established immigrant entrepreneurs from within their own communities and having them as longer term mentors during their entrepreneurial journey. This is something that could also be addressed by different immigrant communities' organisations such as embassies, and various business and non-business community associations. These bodies could organise seminars or discussions with established immigrant entrepreneurs for others who are interested in exploring economic adaptation through entrepreneurship. The established entrepreneurs would then not only become mentors but also role models for others from within their own community, advocating entrepreneurship as a possible alternative to employment or unemployment.

While there are both immigrant-specific and general enterprise supports available, perhaps the nascent immigrant entrepreneurs would also benefit from interacting with their Irish peers on a common enterprise support programme. They could be encouraged to support each other, creating a 'buddy' system of mutual support and cultural learning. In this way, the Irish and immigrant nascent entrepreneurs could be matched based on a complimentary business sector or other commonalities such as gender or family status. For example, female nascent entrepreneurs with children share very similar challenges and thus could support each other in their self-employment pursuit and associated challenges.

## **8.5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The need for creating a knowledge-based economy was highlighted in previous Irish enterprise policy recommendations reports (Enterprise Strategy Group, 2004; Small Business Forum, 2006; Fitzsimons and O’Gorman, 2009). Even though an entrepreneurship policy statement was published by the state enterprise agency Forfas in 2007, no legislation has been adopted to date. Based on this study’s findings it could be recommended that entrepreneurship legislation focuses on creating a supportive environment, inclusive of nascent immigrant entrepreneurs. In addition to Enterprise Boards and other enterprise agencies, immigrant-led organisations should be encouraged by the government to provide information, access to useful networks, and support for those wishing to start their businesses in Ireland.

The business permit system has very high barriers for anyone seeking such a permit both in terms of the start-up finance required and also in terms of the number of employees required at the business start-up phase. Immigrants from non-EU countries who can prove that they can provide employment for themselves and others from their own communities should be supported by the legislation. In this way, such immigrant entrepreneurs would not only create employment for themselves and their co-immigrant counterparts, but they would also foster innovation, introduce new products and services, and produce other positive locally based spin-off effects. The promotion of indigenous entrepreneurship was highlighted as critical by previous enterprise reports (such as the Small Business Forum, 2006), and immigrant enterprises could play an important role in this process.

By establishing local and skilled businesses, immigrant-led enterprises could aid the creation of a knowledge economy and help to revive the economy in a sustainable way. It is important to build a coherent and sustainable policy framework in this area so that immigrant entrepreneurs are not pushed into illegal activities within a black economy, leading to economic leakages. As immigrant entrepreneurship is still a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland, lacking adequate policies, the government should look to other countries for best practice and avoid previously made mistakes in legislation internationally. Any adopted policies should be put together with a sustainable view in mind, as policies of today impact on everybody's lives in the future.

While the government policies at a macro level are hugely important and beneficial, it is the locally based organisations that execute such policies and help to achieve real benefits. Thus local authorities, enterprise organisations and other community based agencies should be supported by the Irish government in their efforts to promote entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behaviour among the Irish and the immigrant population alike. Encouraging and supporting new enterprises through training, mentoring, incubation centres and other soft supports would help to increase the transition rates from a nascent stage to actual entrepreneurship (Riddle et al., 2008).

The government could consider financial credit arrangements for immigrant entrepreneurs, although public finances are limited during times of economic recession. At present, immigrants are largely disadvantaged when it comes to obtaining external funding as they do not fulfill the criteria of the Irish financial institutions. While some form of micro-financing does exist from the First Step organisation, this funding is limited in its scope. Thus

the government should look at best practice in terms of micro-financing schemes and incorporate such initiatives in Ireland.

This thesis and other research (Drori et al., 2009) showed that immigrants maintain transnational linkages with those in their home countries. These linkages have a potential in being developed into business opportunities. The government should consider such linkages as international trade co-operation could bring economic advantages to the Irish economy. Supporting such transnational enterprises could be done through easing some of the business permit legislation but also through establishing specialised transnational incubation centres, soft supports, and financial assistance to promote transnational businesses.

The study results showed that the participants felt excluded by the Irish community. Even though organisations promoting participation of both the Irish and immigrant members exist, these efforts are still fragmented and obstructed by a lack of funding. While there are many immigrants who positively interact with the Irish, the invisible division between ‘us’ and ‘them’ seem to persist in public discourses. Such division is increasingly evident during an economic recession. In order to prevent future problems of ghettoisation, the government should continuously highlight the benefits of a two-way process of integration and encourage initiatives with integration aims.

## **8.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

While highlighting the important research contributions, the study limitations also need to be acknowledged. The involvement of the person as a research instrument can be considered as

both a study limitation and as a key to gaining access to the invaluable experiences of the participants. The researcher, who was also an immigrant, was advantaged by such an insider status as the experiences of being an immigrant in Ireland could be shared with the participants and trust was established easier. At the same time, it needed to be recognised that the researcher could not claim explicit understanding of what the participants experienced by virtue of having a common immigrant status. In order to ensure value in the research, the researcher adopted a number of procedures such as always questioning her own assumptions, member checking, peer debriefing, and providing a detailed description of the data collection process (cf. Chapter 5.11).

The study is also limited by the number of cases. The sample was drawn from a pre-enterprise Emerge programme as a matter of availability and access. This resulted in the study participants being of very similar age but originating from different countries with diverse backgrounds. However, such a small, yet varied research sample allowed in-depth access to their rich experiences over time and enabled the exploration of diverse variables. In addition, such a level of involvement over a prolonged time period would not have been possible with a large sample size. A close examination of even one individual's lived experience can yield valuable insights into the nature of human experience. Even though the findings are not generalisable beyond the investigation of these individuals, this was neither the study purpose nor the intention. However, such close-up investigation and detailed understanding may shed new light into these processes and suggest areas for future investigation.

While the study duration of 18 months generated in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences, the researcher's resources were limited so it was not possible to live with the

participants and follow their actions on a day-to-day basis in a pure ethnographic manner. However, the quasi-ethnographic research design proved to be invaluable in allowing access into the participants' rich accounts and experiences. The researcher was able to maintain frequent contact with the participants and also 'lived' with the participants through their immigrant experiences.

Finally, as the nascent entrepreneurial process can take a substantial time period, a longer involvement with the participants would have enabled the researcher to follow up on any additional developments in this regard. For example, it would be interesting to see whether some of the participants would have returned to their exploitation process after the economic recession, and what directions the newly established businesses would have taken.

## **8.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study provided only some answers with regards to the nascent entrepreneurial experiences of a number of immigrants within a context of cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland. There are a number of future research recommendations stemming from the findings of this study:

- Combining the theories of cross-cultural adaptation and nascent entrepreneurship process as developed in this study, future studies carried out in a different context would uncover additional experiences and constructs. It would be interesting to carry out a similar study in more 'mature' immigrant contexts (such as the UK or the US) or in a context where assimilation policies prevail (such as in France).

- While this thesis focused on immigrants of different backgrounds and demographic characteristics as it was an explorative study seeking richness, future studies employing qualitative and longitudinal research design could focus on examining the nascent entrepreneurial efforts of certain cohorts. These could include women, men, members of the same origin, different family status, educational background, and age. For example, while Wong et al. (2009) studied the nascent entrepreneurial pursuit of immigrant women in the UK, the study was quantitative and hypothesis testing rather than focusing on uncovering the in-depth experiences of the participants' process of becoming entrepreneurs.
- A new emerging area of transnational entrepreneurship offers many opportunities for future research of nascent immigrant entrepreneurship. As immigrants are continuously embedded in more than one environment, in addition to the cross-cultural adaptation dimension, specific developments within a home country should be also considered. The relevant stakeholders located in different transnational spaces should also be included in such studies.
- Future studies could also focus on the theoretical advancement of the concept of entrepreneurial capital (Firkin, 2001; 2003) and its related construct developed by Nee and Sanders (2001). Even though some studies have already applied these concepts in studying established immigrant entrepreneurs, it would be useful to study such resources development during a nascent stage of the entrepreneurial process.
- Future studies should continue with incorporating and advancing general theories in the field of nascent entrepreneurship (Shane, 2003; Davidsson, 2005; Gartner et al., 2004) and enrich them with an immigrant dimension. These process-based theories have been

attributed with explanatory potential and thus they should be extended further rather than creating new theories.

- After further development and identification of important variables, quantitative studies will be helpful in this area as they will shed a different light into this elusive and still less understood part of an entrepreneurial process (Davidsson, 2006).
- Research potential also exists within wider economic influences and policy areas. It would be interesting to explore how nascent entrepreneurial efforts of immigrants differ during the times of an economic stability as opposed to the recessionary times during which this thesis investigation took place. In addition, an exploration of how government policies on immigration and entrepreneurship impact on nascent entrepreneurial efforts of immigrants would also make an interesting study.

These are just some possible research avenues which are open to those wishing to pursue future research in this area.

## **8.8. CONCLUSION**

The underlying purpose of this investigation was to understand the nascent entrepreneurial process of immigrants within a context of their cross-cultural adaptation in Ireland. This research combined theories from the entrepreneurship and cross-cultural adaptation fields in a novel way. The findings of the study emphasised how these two processes dynamically interacted over time, acting together as the participants pursued their pursuit for better lives in Ireland.



While the study was informed by the literature from its outset, the research process alternated between data generation, reflections, and literature review on an ongoing basis. The generated data allowed participants to speak for themselves, allowing relevant categories and themes to emerge, rather than predetermining them. This process was both challenging and rewarding at the same time. This research produced very detailed and in-depth accounts of the participants' cross-cultural and economic adaptation experiences within which the nascent entrepreneurial process was dynamically situated. The findings demonstrated that this process was very subjective and changed over time and particular situations. What remained common was the participants' pursuit for better lives and the ongoing shifts between 'surviving' and 'living'.

The core of this thesis was concerned with increasing understanding - understanding of the journeys that the participants engaged in as they pursued opportunities and endured challenges; understanding of what it was like for these individuals to exist in an unfamiliar environment; and understanding of their intrinsic motivations, perceptions and actions during these journeys. This research study sought to give the study participants' voices and let them tell their own story. Effectively, the research aimed to leave the reader with the 'now I understand' feeling, as even one individual's story can illuminate the essence of a human experience.

This study contributes to the existing research both by its findings and methodology. Even though the research findings were specific to the study participants and the study context, they created new insights into the existing theories. In particular, the novel application of the cross-cultural adaptation and nascent entrepreneurship research streams, added invaluable

insights and the sense of process into the participants' experiences. Such a contribution was also enabled by the study's choice of methodological design. The longitudinal, quasi-ethnographic research approach allowed a detailed exploration of the dynamics involved, and the individuals' actions and perceptions. It highlighted the interconnections between variables which would not have been necessarily visible or could be missed in a quantitatively designed study. Thus this study highlights the importance of the studied research phenomenon, extends the existing knowledge on a theoretical and a methodological level, and creates opportunities for future research.

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## APPENDIX A

### EMERGE PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

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3<sup>rd</sup> March – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008

Session	Date	Module	Time
1	3 March	Induction/Entrepreneurship	6.30-9.30 pm
2	6 March	Legal Structures/Company Registration	6.30-9.30 pm
3	10 March	Introduction to Business Plans	6.30-9.30 pm
4	13 March	Market Research Theory	6.30-9.30 pm
5	20 March	Market Research Practical	6.30-9.30 pm
6	27 March	Tax I (PAYE/PRSI)	6.30-9.30 pm
7	31 March	Tax II (Invoicing/Statements/VAT)	6.30-9.30 pm
8	3 April	Funding I (CEB/Bank 1/First Step)	6.30-9.30 pm
9	7 April	Funding II (Bank 2/Credi Union)	6.30-9.30 pm
10	10 April	Finance – Cashflow I	6.30-9.30 pm
11	14 April	Finance – Cashflow II	6.30-9.30 pm
12	17 April	Marketing	6.30-9.30 pm
13	21 April	Business English	6.30-9.30 pm
14	24 April	Selling Skills I (Understanding the selling process)	6.30-9.30 pm
15	28 April	Selling Skills II (Selling process, presenting, closing)	6.30-9.30 pm
16	1 May	Employment and Human Resources	6.30-9.30 pm
17	8 May	Health & Safety/Franchising	6.30-9.30 pm
18	12 May	Presentation Skills	6.30-9.30 pm
19	15 May	Finalising Business Plans	6.30-9.30 pm
20	19 May	Go Europe (Trading in the EU)	6.30-9.30 pm
21	22 May	Business Plan Presentation and Programme Wrap Up	6.30-9.30 pm

## APPENDIX B

### REFERENCE KEY TO PRIMARY RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS

Reference Key	Data Source
INT1*	Interview Round 1
INT2*	Interview Round 2
RNINT1	Reflective Notes Interview Round 1
RNINT2	Reflective Notes Interview Round 2
ONE x	Observational Notes Emerge (x - the number corresponds with a particular Emerge programme session as outlined in Appendix A)
RNG1	Reflective Notes Group Meeting 1 – 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2008
RNG2	Reflective Notes Group Meeting 2 - 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2009
RNIM1	Reflective Notes Individual Meeting Monika – 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2009
RNIM2	Reflective Notes Individual Meeting Monika – 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
RNIS	Reflective Notes Individual Meeting Sebastien – 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2009
ICE	Informal communication Email
ICS	Informal communication Skype
RDB	Reflective Diary Bus Journeys
RDFB	Reflective Diary Facebook
RDICT	Informal communication Telephone
RDICS	Informal communication SMS

\* Dates of interviews with the individual participants are as follows:

Participant	INT1	INT2
Sebastien	13 <sup>th</sup> September	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
Monika	28 <sup>th</sup> August 2008	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
Lisa	17 <sup>th</sup> September 2008	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
Lietus	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	-
Pamela	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2008	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
Obusi	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2008	19 <sup>th</sup> February 2009

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### Lucia Walsh (nee Laurinčíková)

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Laurinčíková, L and Cooney, T (2006) Profiling Home-based businesses – An Irish Perspective, *Irish Academy of Management Conference*, 6 – 8<sup>th</sup> September, Cork.