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GENDER EMBEDDEDNESS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF THE 5 “M” FRAMEWORK (SUMMARY)

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Principal Topic
Theory predicting differences between male and female entrepreneurs is under-developed. Most theory is gender neutral. However, recent research suggests women’s socialization leads them to perceive opportunity differently (DeTienne & Chandler, 2007), their social roles/place might exclude them from social networks creating information asymmetries (Welter, et al, 2006), and institutional aspects of entrepreneurship affect women differentially (Baughn, Chua and Neupert, 2006). New theoretical development in women’s entrepreneurship proposes a gender aware framework comprising “5 M’s” (Brush, de Bruin & Welter; 2009). The framework is rooted in the premise that entrepreneurship is socially embedded (Davidsson, 2003) and draws from institutional theory. It extends three “M’s” - market, money and management, described as the building blocks of business viability (Bates, et al, 2007). Market encapsulates opportunity, management encompasses human and organizational capital and money refers to financial capital. It adds “motherhood”, as a metaphor representing the household/family context, proposing this has a larger impact on women than men in the entrepreneurial process. The fifth “M” is the meso and macro environment; meso, reflecting intermediate structures and institutions, and macro, referring to expectations of society and cultural norms. The framework is intended to be holistic, but simultaneously suggests that distinct gender differences would be identified because of the gender embeddedness of women (de Bruin, et al, 2007).

Method
Our study empirically tests this gender aware framework using data from the 2008 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). We seek to answer what the effect of motherhood/family embeddedness is on:

1. The perception of opportunity among male and female entrepreneurs.
2. Business goals and aspirations for growth of ventures founded by male and female entrepreneurs.

On the basis of the GEM data, measures of motherhood/household embeddedness, opportunity, aspirations and expectations for growth are delineated. Analysis includes descriptive statistics, chi square and multivariate analysis.

Results and Implications
Preliminary results show significant differences between male and female entrepreneurs regarding perceptions of opportunities, source of advice received, management capabilities and start-up funding. Wide variations exist across level of country development. Gender embeddedness, as reflected in motherhood and family embeddedness, has a distinct impact on the perceived opportunity which in part also explains gender variations in entrepreneurship across countries. Results have implications for policy-makers interested in fostering women’s entrepreneurship, and for entrepreneurship research by highlighting the theoretical need to take into account the embeddedness of entrepreneurial phenomena.

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