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Refugee Entrepreneurship

Towards a Nuanced Understanding of the Phenomenon

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Refugee Entrepreneurship

Towards a Nuanced Understanding of the Phenomenon

SOLOMON AKELE ABEBE | DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



Refugee Entrepreneurship

Towards a Nuanced Understanding of the Phenomenon

Forced cross-border migration and entrepreneurship have persisted as perennial themes throughout the annals of human history. However, the recent 'refugee crisis' has sparked a resurgence of interest in their interplay under the rubric of 'refugee entrepreneurship'. While its territory is not entirely uncharted, a surge in scholarly urgency and heightened scientific production have significantly expanded the corpus of refugee entrepreneurship literature. Yet, despite the contributions to date, this research area faces several challenges—spanning domain-specific and methodological issues to theoretical concerns—calling for further scholarly endeavour.

This thesis ventures into this emerging yet rapidly progressing research area, providing a nuanced investigation of the phenomenon and unravelling its complexities through a weave of systematic, methodological, theoretical, and empirical analyses across four interlinked studies. Systematically, it navigates the landscape of refugee entrepreneurship research, mapping its intellectual territory across various academic disciplines and consolidating existing knowledge. Methodologically, the thesis introduces an innovative sampling approach that pertains to the specificity of entrepreneurial refugees in terms of their 'hidden' nature and initial placement within the host country post-relocation. Theoretically,



it offers a balanced perspective on the agency-structure dialectic, capturing the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship through the interplay between refugees' voluntary pursuit of entrepreneurship and adverse circumstances and structural constraints linked with forced migration.

This dissertation is a testament to the growing recognition of refugee entrepreneurship as a specific area of scholarship, underscoring its contributions to research, policy, and practice. Through its comprehensive analysis, this volume lays the groundwork for further investigations, striving for a deeper understanding of this intricate phenomenon.



Refugee Entrepreneurship

Refugee Entrepreneurship

Towards a Nuanced Understanding of the Phenomenon

Solomon Akele Abebe



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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Document name: DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**Date of issue:** 14 September 2023**Author:** Solomon Akele Abebe**Sponsoring organization:****Title and subtitle:** Refugee Entrepreneurship: Towards a Nuanced Understanding of the Phenomenon**Abstract:**

This thesis strives to advance the emerging refugee entrepreneurship research through a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. A nuanced understanding entails an investigation of the specific factors shaping refugees' entrepreneurial activity in contrast with those of voluntary entrepreneurial migrant groups. It also involves the application of suitable methodological and conceptual approaches for capturing the phenomenon pertinent to refugees' specific nature and circumstances after forced migration. Refugee entrepreneurship has become a vibrant topic for scholarly investigation following the mid-2010s "refugee crisis". Previously overshadowed by immigrant entrepreneurship research, it currently requires a nuanced analysis to progress to its next stage of development.

This thesis contributes to such a nuanced understanding through a weave of systematic, methodological, theoretical, and empirical analyses of the phenomenon. Systematically, the thesis consolidates a domain-specific body of knowledge by navigating the intellectual landscape of refugee entrepreneurship and identifying the core themes and subthemes that define the current body of research. It improves upon the methodological foundation for building statistically robust empirical evidence related to the phenomenon. This is achieved by introducing and empirically validating an innovative sampling method that takes into account the "hidden" or "hard-to-reach" nature of entrepreneurial refugees and their initial placement in their host country post-relocation. Finally, the dissertation strengthens the conceptual foundation for understanding the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship through the lens of embedded agency. This conceptualization acknowledges the ways in which refugees may be constrained by their detrimental circumstances and the influence of their cultural and structural contexts, while simultaneously acknowledging their individual agency to volitionally pursue entrepreneurship and proactively orchestrate their journey towards it.

This dissertation offers utility for various stakeholders. For academics, it outlines the principal features of the phenomenon and articulates the theoretical and methodological frameworks through which it can be understood and captured. Policymakers and practitioners are provided with valuable knowledge that highlights refugee entrepreneurship in diverse contexts, illuminating its various facets to identify opportunities for improved support. The findings also enlighten prospective refugee entrepreneurs, casting light on the apparent realities of establishing and developing a venture after relocation and offering strategies to overcome their disadvantages.

Key words: Entrepreneurial Beliefs; Forced Migration; Hard-to-reach populations; Refugee Entrepreneurship; Refugee Crisis; Refugees; Refugee Integration; Refugee Policy; Sweden; Austria

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Refugee Entrepreneurship

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Solomon Akele Abebe



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About the cover

The cover page was designed by Jude Zawaideh, a young Jordanian fine artist. Jude has an uncanny knack for weaving the intricacies of an ever-evolving individual into her creations. She uses her creative prowess to delve into the multifaceted exploration of human identity, invoking changing perceptions of self, consciousness, and the concept of home. Her unique brand of artistry is not confined to this cover but extends to a broader body of work, a testament that can be further explored on her personal website, www.judezawaideh.com. Jude's art challenges the viewer, stimulating introspective thought and promoting profound connections with the subjects she chooses.

This cover is no exception. The strikingly powerful monoprint design is more than just a visual delight; it is a narrative that effectively encapsulates the complex and often overlooked nature of entrepreneurship in the context of refugees. It serves not only as a poignant representation of their struggle but also as a testament to their unyielding capacity to face and overcome substantial adversity. The cover illuminates the harsh realities of forced migration and the challenges associated with starting anew, all the while echoing the relentless pursuit of entrepreneurial dreams amidst collective constraints. The central motif, interlaced with a tapestry of figures and images, embodies familiar scenes and the shared narrative of refugees, reminding us of the refugees' perilous odysseys. But within these tales of hardship, there is an undeniable demonstration of their relentless resourcefulness, unbowed capabilities, and audacious resilience in rebuilding their lives and forging ahead with their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Coverillustration by Jude Zawaideh

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MADE IN SWEDEN 

*To my beloved parents Akele and Yeshihareg, my late
brother Ermias, my sister Betty, my sons Prince and
Gabriel, and my wife Kidist*

Table of Contents

List of appended papers	10
Acknowledgement	11
Foreword.....	14
1. Introduction	17
Fundamental challenges in current refugee entrepreneurship research	20
Aim and research questions	25
The settings for the study: Refugees, Sweden, and Austria.....	30
Key concepts.....	35
Disposition of the dissertation	36
2. Relevant literature and conceptual backdrop	39
Conceptualizing refugee entrepreneur/ship	39
Barriers to refugee entrepreneurship.....	41
An overview of current refugee entrepreneurship literature: Longitudinal developments, contexts, and nature of research.....	44
An integrated synopsis of extant refugee entrepreneurship literature: The primary focus of prevailing research	47
Major theoretical perspectives in refugee entrepreneurship research	52
Critics of current refugee entrepreneurship perspectives.....	64
Revisiting the refugee entrepreneurship literature through the determinism versus voluntarism debates	66
Integrating agency and structure/context in the analysis of refugee entrepreneurship: Towards the embedded agency perspective.....	71
Summarizing the theoretical debate in current refugee entrepreneurship research	73
Conclusion: Key takeaways from the analysis of existing refugee entrepreneurship literature relevant to this dissertation	74
3. Research design and methodology	77
Genesis of the research idea.....	77
Brief overview of the research process.....	79

Research design of the empirical studies	82
Data collection methods.....	83
Sampling strategies for survey data collection	83
Nature of the survey data and analysis strategy.....	91
Complementary secondary data for paper III	93
Qualitative data collection and analysis strategy	97
Reflections upon the methods and data for the study	103
Ethical considerations	105
4. Extended summaries	108
Paper I – Refugee entrepreneurship: Systematic and thematic analyses and a research agenda	110
Paper II – Facebook ad-based sampling and the challenges of representativity: Towards a sampling method for identifying entrepreneurial refugees in cross-national survey research	112
Paper III – Entrepreneurial beliefs of refugees: A matter of local population sentiments in the host city.....	114
Paper IV – Unfolding the dynamics of refugees’ entrepreneurial journey in the aftermath of forced displacement	117
5. Discussion	120
Returning to the research questions	120
Current scholarly understanding of refugee entrepreneurship	121
Advancing the methodological base for quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research	124
Conceptual foundations of refugee entrepreneurship research.....	126
6. Implications for research, policy, and practice.....	130
Implications for refugee entrepreneurship research.....	131
Policy and practical implications.....	134
Limitations and research outlook.....	138
References	142

List of Appended Papers

Paper I

Abebe, S. A. (2022). Refugee Entrepreneurship: Systematic and Thematic Analyses and a Research Agenda. *Small Business Economics*, 60(1), 315-350. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-022-00636-3>

Paper II

Facebook Ad-Based Sampling and the Challenges of Representativity: Towards a Sampling Method for Identifying Entrepreneurial Refugees in Cross-National Survey Research. (This paper was presented at the 21st Nordic Conference on Small Business and Entrepreneurship (NCSB) held in Kolding, Denmark, Spring 2022).

Paper III

Entrepreneurial Beliefs of Refugees: A Matter of Local Population Sentiments in the Host City. (Earlier version of this paper was presented at the Academy of Management (AoM) Conference held in Seattle, USA, August 5-9, 2022. The abstract is published as conference proceeding: Abebe, S. A., Fink, M., & Breitenecker, R. J. (2022). Entrepreneurial Beliefs of Refugees: It's Not Where They're From, But Where They Go. In S. Taneja (Ed.), *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings 2022* (1st ed., Vol. 2022). Academy of Management. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2022.14839abstract>)

Paper IV

Unfolding the Dynamics of Refugees' Entrepreneurial Journey in the Aftermath of Forced Displacement. (This paper is accepted for publication as a book chapter in the upcoming *Palgrave Handbook of Global Migration in International Business*).

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Over a decade of living in Sweden has presented me with numerous challenges. But ever since the exhilaration of embarking on this academic path, a dream I had always nurtured for its alignment with my inherent curiosity and not the allure of the corporate world, I knew I was making the right choice. This decision has indeed been transformative, yielding life-altering knowledge, introducing me to remarkable individuals, testing my resolve, and unveiling the rewards of diligence. Resilience was a quality I had to harness relentlessly in the face of criticism, daunting moments, considerable uncertainties in my residency situation in Sweden, and unexpected turns in my research process. While this dissertation is an individual endeavour, its completion greatly benefited from a supportive network of individuals who provided assistance in various ways. Be it through supervision and guidance, constructive feedback, or emotional support marked with moments of levity, each individual played a significant role. They contributed to my personal growth, moulding me into the person I am today. While it is impossible to acknowledge each one individually, here are the key figures to whom I owe immense gratitude.

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My dear younger brother, Ermias Akele, your premature death still pains me. Our shared memories and your unflinching support continue to warm my heart. My complicated circumstances prevented our final farewell, a regret I carry within me for the rest of my life. I believe that you are in heaven, watching over me and sharing in my triumphs. May your soul rest in peace. I miss you, brother!

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research endeavour but also marked the commencement of my PhD education. The realisation of this project would have been a mirage in the absence of their generous research grant. In a similar vein, I extend my warmest appreciation to the *Sten K. Johnson Stiftelse*, whose initial grant facilitated the creation of an entrepreneurship training programme for refugees in 2016. This crucial initiative was the cornerstone of my research project, lighting the spark that fuelled my desire to delve deeper into the realm of refugee entrepreneurship.

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Last but certainly not least, my deepest gratitude is extended to the participants of this study. Despite facing substantial upheavals and enduring daunting life circumstances related to forced migration, you have played an integral role in this study. Your willingness to share your entrepreneurial aspirations and experiences has contributed immensely to the scientific understanding of the topic. To all of you, this dissertation is earnestly dedicated!



Solomon Akele Abebe
Lund, 2023

Foreword

In the vast tapestry of human history, the phenomena of forced cross-border migration and entrepreneurship have consistently recurred. However, recent years have seen a renewed focus on their interplay due to the unfolding of the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in the mid-2010s. This spotlight has sparked a fresh wave of academic fervour under the rubric of ‘refugee entrepreneurship’. Despite its roots tracing back to the 1980s, this research area is still in its nascent stage, delicately carving out its identity and progressively disassociating itself from the broader domain of immigrant entrepreneurship. For years, it perched on the precipice of the academic domains of migration entrepreneurship and refugee livelihood studies. While its territory is not entirely uncharted, a surge in scholarly urgency and increased scientific production have significantly enriched the corpus of literature on this subject.

Nevertheless, despite the invaluable insights provided by scholars past and present, refugee entrepreneurship research faces diverse challenges. These range from domain-specific and methodological issues to theoretical concerns. The intellectual domain of the research area is often obscured by the lack of coherence arising from inconsistencies and fragmentation in extant thought and subject matter. The emerging need for quantitative, theory-testing research, supported by a statistically robust design to validate findings from existing exploratory and descriptive qualitative studies, is marred by the inherent ‘hidden’ or ‘hard-to-reach’ nature of entrepreneurial refugees. Moreover, knowledge production in this area has been primarily steered by social science and humanities researchers, creating a disconnect from scholarly conversations in entrepreneurship theories, particularly those with a processual and agency-centric focus. These issues, coupled with the demand for scientific evidence to inform policy and practice, necessitate further academic involvement to advance this research stream.

To address these challenges, this thesis presents a nuanced analysis of the refugee entrepreneurship phenomenon, unravelling it through a weave of systematic, methodological, theoretical, and empirical investigations across four interconnected studies. Systematically, the thesis traverses the landscape of refugee entrepreneurship research, charting its intellectual topography across varied academic disciplines and solidifying existing knowledge to establish a firm foundation for future research. Methodologically, it introduces and empirically validates an innovative approach that identifies entrepreneurial refugees via sampling through Facebook’s sophisticated algorithm, thus addressing the representativity challenges of identification inherent in quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research. Theoretically, informed by the assumptions of embedded agency, the thesis provides a balanced conceptualization of the agency versus structure dialectic, capturing the refugee entrepreneurship dynamics. It deciphers how refugees’ voluntary decisions to pursue entrepreneurship and proactively manoeuvre their journey towards it—an embodiment of their entrepreneurial

agency—intertwine with the adverse circumstances and structural constraints associated with forced migration.

This dissertation stands as a testament to the growing recognition of refugee entrepreneurship as a specific area of research and the significant contribution it can make to academic discourse, policy, and practice. Through this comprehensive endeavour, it is my hope to pave the way for further scholarly exploration and contribute towards a more nuanced understanding of this complex phenomenon.

1. Introduction

This introductory chapter provides a backdrop to the current state of refugee entrepreneurship research, delving into the problem statement and highlighting key challenges. It outlines the primary aim and the specific research questions guiding this dissertation. Given that this work is a composite, the chapter also presents a brief summary of the included papers, each of which contributes to the research aim by addressing the specific research questions. Additionally, it provides an overview of the empirical and geographical settings of the research.

Refugee entrepreneurship has recently emerged as an important aspect of migrant entrepreneurship (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). It has transitioned from relative insignificance merely a few short decades ago to become a central concept, primarily due to the so-called “refugee crisis” of the mid-2010s (Bizri, 2017; Harima, 2022; Krivokapic-Skoko, Watson, & Collins, 2023; Mawson & Kasem, 2019). According to UNHCR (2022) estimates, the global refugee population had reached approximately 103 million by mid-2022, highlighting the magnitude of this phenomenon. Refugee entrepreneurship refers to the process of founding and developing a venture in a new host country by individuals who have fled across international borders due to war, conflict, or persecution in their countries of origin (Fuller-Love, Lim, & Akehurst, 2006). Refugee entrepreneurs are forced migrants who engage in entrepreneurial activity in their host country during the period they receive “refugee status” based on international convention (Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Harima, 2018; UNHCR, 2022). Despite facing substantial barriers to entrepreneurship (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008), many refugees are establishing and managing their own businesses, with the phenomenon becoming increasingly evident and salient in both advanced and emerging economies (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021).

Following the significant influx of refugees in the mid-2010s, several host countries began to explore the potential of entrepreneurship as a means of accelerating refugee integration, which subsequently emerged as a top political and public priority (Harima et al., 2021). For instance, Germany and Sweden implemented policies and invested resources in initiatives aimed at promoting and

supporting refugee entrepreneurship (Harima, Freudenberg, & Halberstadt, 2019; Kazlou & Urban, 2023; Meister & Mauer, 2019). Scholars have also shown interest in examining its benefits for both refugees' vocational adaptation and the economic and socio-political development of their host societies (Obschonka, Hann, & Bajwa, 2018; Shneikat & Alrawdiah, 2019). However, since refugee entrepreneurship is an emerging phenomenon, academic understanding remains limited, and scientific evidence in the area, especially concerning the latest "refugee crisis", is only just beginning to accumulate (Embiricos, 2020). This knowledge gap means that scholars and decision-makers often rely on existing research on immigrant entrepreneurship (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). But refugees face specific circumstances and more complex and challenging obstacles to entrepreneurship than their immigrant counterparts due to the substantial disruption to their lives inflicted by forced migration (Ram et al., 2022). As a result, research on entrepreneurship among voluntarily relocated immigrants may not be fully applicable to refugee entrepreneurs (Abebe, 2022). There is therefore a need for a nuanced understanding and approach to the phenomenon, as implemented in this dissertation, to generate relevant insights for academic, policy, and practical purposes.

In fact, refugee entrepreneurship first surfaced in the academic literature during the 1980s (Fass, 1986; Gold, 1988), but it remained on the periphery of research for many years (Harima et al., 2021). Few pioneering scholars argued for the need to investigate refugee entrepreneurship as a separate topic, emphasising the ontological differences between refugees and immigrants in terms of their departure motives, migration experiences, and legal circumstances, and the impact of these factors on their entrepreneurial activity (Gold, 1988, 1992; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008). However, these calls did not subsequently mobilise further scholarly interest in the phenomenon. Although there exists an extensive body of work on refugees' livelihoods and economic adaptation, discussions surrounding their entrepreneurial activity have been somewhat marginal (Abebe, 2019, 2022; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020).

Research on migration and entrepreneurship has predominantly focused on voluntary migrant entrepreneurs. Refugee entrepreneurs have often been conflated, both theoretically and empirically, with immigrant entrepreneurs under the broader rubric of "migrant entrepreneurship" (Harima et al., 2021). However, the "refugee crisis" of the mid-2010s prompted increased academic interest in refugee entrepreneurship due to the political mobilisation and discussions surrounding refugees' specific profiles and situations, which influence their entrepreneurial behaviour differently (Bizri, 2017; Gürsel, 2017; Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Rashid, 2018). As a result, refugee entrepreneurship has become an up-and-coming research area with a rapidly expanding body of knowledge, as evidenced by the publication of an edited volume on the topic (Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Harima, 2018), a special issue in the *Journal of Small Business Economics* (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021), and an increase in the volume of literature, including publications in top-tier

entrepreneurship journals (e.g., Bizri, 2017; de La Chaux & Haugh, 2020; Harima, 2022; Jiang et al., 2021; Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020).

While current developments illustrate the potential for refugee entrepreneurship as a separate area of scholarship (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021), the state of extant research reveals several domain-related, methodological, and theoretical challenges that may impede its progress. Firstly, the research area lacks a coherent body of knowledge, making it difficult to establish a sustainable foundation for future studies (Abebe, 2019). Secondly, generating robust empirical evidence on refugee entrepreneurship is methodologically challenging due to the “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” nature of entrepreneurial refugees, which complicates the acquisition of representative samples for statistically-powerful research (Bloch, 2004). Thirdly, much of the current knowledge on this topic stems from social sciences and humanities research, which means that there is limited theory development within scholarly conversations in the field of entrepreneurship (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). The prevailing literature primarily explores how cultural and structural factors determine refugees’ entrepreneurial entry, while overlooking their volitional choices and ability to actively orchestrate their entrepreneurial journey, both of which reflect their entrepreneurial agency. Hence, there is a need to integrate current knowledge with entrepreneurship theories in order to develop the conceptual foundations for understanding the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship (cf. Jack & Anderson, 2002). Addressing these issues requires further academic efforts to advance this research area, a task this dissertation undertakes through a nuanced analysis of the phenomenon.

This introductory section provides an overview of the broader research context for the dissertation. The remainder of this chapter is organised as follows: The next section delves more deeply into the fundamental domain-related, methodological, and theoretical challenges within the existing refugee entrepreneurship literature that are currently hindering the development of this nascent research area. Following this, the next section delineates the overriding purpose of the dissertation, presents the specific research questions, and offers a summary of the appended papers. Subsequently, a concise discussion on refugees, the empirical focus of this study, is provided, as well as an introduction to Sweden and Austria, the geographical contexts for the research. Before wrapping up the chapter, definitions of the key concepts employed in the study are presented, followed by an outline of the overall organisation of the dissertation.

Fundamental Challenges in Current Refugee Entrepreneurship Research

Domain-related Challenges

Refugee entrepreneurship presents a compelling area of study, with significant implications for small business, entrepreneurship, and management research (Christensen et al., 2020; Fuller-Love, Lim, & Akehurst, 2006). This specific domain offers scholars from these fields a distinctive research domain to investigate the complex interplay between experiences of conflict, forced migration and entrepreneurial behaviour in unfamiliar contexts (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021). The earliest academic study to observe refugee entrepreneurship, while acknowledging its specific context, appeared in the mid-1980s (Fass, 1986). However, research in this area developed only sporadically for nearly the next three decades, until its rapid explosion in the wake of the recent “refugee crisis” (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). Despite the breadth of current literature, refugee entrepreneurship research remains inconsistent, with its development potentially impeded by the lack of coherent knowledge and a well-defined research scope.

The multidisciplinary nature of refugee entrepreneurship research has resulted in a fragmented body of literature (Harima et al., 2021; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). From its humble beginnings, and throughout its course of development, refugee entrepreneurship research has tended to evolve and progress independently across multiple, disconnected academic disciplines (Newman, Macaulay, & Dunwoodie, forthcoming). Researchers have explored the topic from diverse perspectives, such as sociology and anthropology (Campbell, 2007; Gold, 1988, 1992); political science (Fass, 1986; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008); history (Halter, 1995; Moore, 1990); human and economic geography (Kaplan, 1997; Miyares, 1998); and economics and economic geography (Basok, 1989, 1993; Gonzales, Forrest, & Balos, 2013), to name just a few. While this disciplinary diversity encourages varied viewpoints and generates multiple insights, it also presents challenges to the establishment of a sustainable knowledge base for future research as scholars emphasise different theoretical lenses, research questions, and methodologies. Moreover, Abebe (2019) observed that the absence of interdisciplinary conversations and cross-collaboration among researchers has further impeded the development of a coherent understanding, as demonstrated by the dearth of cross-collaborative efforts and restricted cross-citations in publications.

Current research has yet to reach a unified understanding of refugee entrepreneurship, whether as a phenomenon or as an area of scholarly investigation (Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Harima, 2018). At present, the research area is delineated by a loosely connected constellation of studies exploring entrepreneurial activity undertaken by individuals with a refugee background (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021). As yet, there is no unequivocal definition of refugee entrepreneurship or agreed-

upon criteria for identifying refugee entrepreneurs. Specifically, scholars have not reached a consensus on whether the research stream should focus solely on recently relocated entrepreneurial refugees or also include well-established and integrated individuals – or the duration of residence in the host country required to qualify as a refugee entrepreneur (Christensen et al., 2020; Krivokapic-Skoko, Watson, & Collins, 2023). Consequently, the research stream suffers from the absence of an agreed-upon scope that would unite refugee entrepreneurship scholars in a shared and distinctive intellectual project.

The indeterminate scope prompts researchers to work independently, offering their own accounts and perspectives without building upon each other's work. This not only hinders efforts to evaluate and compare findings across different studies, but also thwarts the accumulation and further development of refugee entrepreneurship knowledge, with downward implications for its viability as a separate research domain (Harima, 2022; Harima et al., 2021). The absence of clear boundary conditions for empirical work further complicates the conceptual delineation of refugee entrepreneurship from adjacent fields examining closely related phenomena, such as immigrant, diaspora, and transnational entrepreneurship (e.g., Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019). In essence, the emerging refugee entrepreneurship research is fragmented and heterogeneous, lacking an integration of knowledge (Harima et al., 2021). While fragmentation and heterogeneity are inevitable scenarios in emerging streams (Keupp & Gassmann, 2009), they underscore the need for a systematic overview and analysis.

Methodological Challenges

In order to gain a comparative understanding of refugee entrepreneurship across various entrepreneurial refugee groups and contexts, large-scale survey-based research is essential (Newman, Macaulay, & Dunwoodie, forthcoming). However, conducting quantitative empirical research on the topic is a complex endeavour fraught with methodological challenges, particularly when it comes to recruiting refugees to participate in surveys and obtaining representative samples. This endeavour is especially convoluted in cross-national and multi-sited comparative research contexts (Abebe, 2019; Bloch, 2007). This challenge can primarily be attributed to entrepreneurial refugees belonging to “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” populations (Bloch, 2004). In survey research, hidden or hard-to-reach populations denote subgroups of the general population with distinct characteristics, such as stigmatised or illicit behaviour and social vulnerability, subgroups who are significant for social research but have unknown size and boundaries, and for whom there are no population parameters (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). The absence of population parameters, in turn, impedes the attainment of representative sampling among such populations (Hulley, 2007).

Acquiring a representative sample of entrepreneurial refugees is challenging for two primary reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of readily available or complete

population registers of refugees for researchers to use as sampling frames. Although national migration and resettlement authorities in several host countries maintain records for administrative purposes, researchers are not always granted unrestricted access due to stringent regulations protecting refugees' privacy (Bloch, 2004, 2007). Furthermore, national statistical records, such as population census registers and labour-force surveys, often lack detailed, disaggregated variables based on reasons for migration and refugee status, which are required to identify entrepreneurial refugees (Bloch, 2004; Groenewold & Lessard-Phillips, 2012). Therefore, researchers face initial challenges in identifying refugees when seeking to employ representative sampling procedures for entrepreneurship research.

Secondly, compared to voluntarily relocated immigrants, potential or actual entrepreneurs from refugee populations are less willing to share personal information or answer survey questions, making it difficult to motivate them to participate in surveys (Vigneswaran & Quirk, 2013). Refugees have endured life-threatening and traumatic experiences before arriving in the country where they seek asylum, and then encounter complex legal processes, leading them to feel anxious or uncomfortable about participating in official research. This makes it difficult to motivate refugees to take part in surveys (Bloch, 1994, 1999, 2007; Robinson, 2002). Taken together, researchers seeking to generate a representative sample of refugees for quantitative entrepreneurship research encounter the representativity challenges of identification and motivation.

This dissertation focuses on addressing the representativity challenge of identification in refugee entrepreneurship research, because it constitutes the first significant obstacle to conducting empirically robust investigations on the topic. In fact, several non-probability sampling methods have been developed and utilised in survey research involving refugees in order to tackle the identification challenge. Common approaches include snowball, targeted, and self-selection sampling (Heimer, 2005; Robinson et al., 2006). Snowball sampling leverages social networks within the targeted refugee population to recruit respondents, but often struggles to generate a sufficiently large study sample (Kalton & Anderson, 1986). This method is effective only when strong ties exist among members of the target population (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Targeted sampling addresses snowball sampling limitations through systematic benchmark runs and mapping of initial contacts, provided that researchers possess in-depth knowledge of the targeted refugee population's characteristics and social structure (Watters & Biernacki, 1989). However, due to the necessity of preserving anonymity, complete information on refugees cannot be obtained, resulting in samples that lack representativeness (Morris et al., 2009). Self-selection sampling is also applicable to refugee research, because participants can voluntarily join the sample without disclosing their identity (Lavrakas, 2008). Nevertheless, study samples may exhibit strong bias because the intensity of feelings or opinions about the research topic can vary across different segments of the targeted refugee population, leading to disparate participation rates.

In conclusion, while the prevalent non-probability sampling strategies discussed above possess strengths for surveying refugee entrepreneurs, the mechanisms they employ during the identification process may introduce certain limitations that impact upon the representativeness of the resulting study samples. Past research employing snowball, targeted, and self-selection sampling methods has demonstrated that they suffer from low response rates (Magnani et al., 2005) and selection bias (Barratt, Ferris, & Lenton, 2015), hindering the generation of externally valid survey data. This suggests that no suitable survey sampling techniques have been developed for refugees, prompting researchers to continually search for new methods tailored to their specific circumstances and hidden attributes. Hence, there is a need for an innovative sampling method for surveying entrepreneurial refugees. While representativity may be unattainable in quantitative research on hidden or hard-to-reach populations (Vigneswaran & Quirk, 2013), this study aims to contribute to the development of a sampling method that closely approximates it in the context of refugee entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Challenges

From a theoretical stance, refugee entrepreneurship research has predominantly followed what Keupp and Gassmann (2009) describe as a “phenomenon-driven approach”. That is, many scholars have been primarily motivated by practical and policy-oriented concerns and, to a much lesser extent, by scientific purposes (Ayadurai, 2011; Chliova, Farny, & Salmivaara, 2018; Crush, Skinner, & Stulgaitis, 2017a,b; Latowsky & Grierson, 1992; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007). As a result, a significant proportion of this research has focused on empirically mapping and describing the phenomenon. However, this body of literature often lacks rigorous theoretical discussion, which leads to the conceptual framework underpinning the studies being either marginal or non-existent (Newman, Macaulay, & Dunwoodie, forthcoming). This suggests that a substantial fraction of the refugee entrepreneurship literature lacks sufficient levels of theorization or conceptual foundations (Abebe, 2019, 2022).

On the other hand, many studies draw upon eclectic theoretical perspectives and concepts. The knowledge base in this strand of the literature is primarily derived from social sciences and humanities research, with limited theory development within the scholarly entrepreneurship conversations (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). Several researchers have sought to explain refugee entrepreneurship through theories and concepts drawn from sociology, such as Bourdieu’s forms of capital (Atasü-Topcuoğlu, 2019), habitus (Refai, Haloub, & Lever, 2018), and practice theory (Yeröz, 2019); ecological theory (Collins, 2017); and the strengths approach (Fong et al., 2007). Others have drawn upon perspectives related to globalisation (Bhagat, 2020; Hawthorne, 2019), migration (Palalić, Dana, & Ramadani, 2018; Turner, 2020), and integration (Alrawadieh, Karayilan, & Cetin, 2019; Garnham, 2006; Louise & Jiang, 2018; Meyer & Pilkova, 2017). Although the use of such

diverse theories and concepts contributes to understanding the social and contextual aspects of refugee entrepreneurship, they are only marginally suited to understanding the entrepreneurial and behavioural aspects of the phenomenon (Abebe, 2019). Hence, current research lacks conceptual explanations for how refugees fare as entrepreneurs after their forced migration, what actions they take to establish and develop their ventures, and how refugee entrepreneurship unfolds.

Turning to the specific theoretical aspects that dominate current literature, several studies are conceptually grounded in the cultural, structural, and mixed-embeddedness perspectives. However, these perspectives were initially developed in the context of immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship research (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020; Lazarczyk-Bilal, 2019). Culturalist theories explain refugee entrepreneurship in terms of pro-enterprising cultural values and beliefs, which originate from the refugees' home culture and group characteristics (Gold, 1988, 1992; Halter, 1995; Johnson, 2000), and their possession of and access to ethnocultural resources (Campbell, 2005, 2007; Kaplan, 1997; Katis, 2017; Klaesson & Öner, 2021), and social networks (Bizri, 2017; Iannone & Geraudel, 2018; Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019). Structural theories link the phenomenon to conditions within the host country's structural context, including the disadvantages that refugees experience in the economic structure and labour market (Fass, 1986; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007; Meyer, 2018), social marginality (Hartman & Schilling, 2018; Kupferberg, 2008; Tenge, 2018), and politico-regulatory and institutional arrangements (Baltaci, 2017; Collins, 2017; Heilbrunn, 2019; Singh, 1994). The mixed embeddedness perspective combines aspects of both cultural and structural approaches (Price & Chacko, 2009; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

While these perspectives offer relevant insights, they only provide a limited understanding of the specific characteristics, behaviours, and circumstances of refugee entrepreneurs that set them apart from their immigrant counterparts. More significantly, none of these theories possess adequate theoretical antecedents or foundations to account for refugees' entrepreneurial agency (Cederberg & Villares-Varela, 2019), which reflects the ability of refugees to actively influence the prerequisites of entrepreneurship, and emerge as owners and managers of their businesses.

In essence, the cultural, structural, and mixed-embeddedness perspectives primarily explain the external conditions that determine the emergence of refugee entrepreneurship. These perspectives place excessive emphasis on the weight of external factors, providing a "push-view" in the analysis. As such, they lack the conceptual foundations for explaining the mechanisms underlying refugees' voluntary reasons or decisions to leap into entrepreneurship (the "pull-view"), or how they proactively orchestrate their entrepreneurial journey within the confines of their cultural and structural context (cf. Mitchell, 2015). Therefore, it is essential to integrate these perspectives with theories that emphasise personal agency and give equal emphasis to the individual refugee entrepreneur in order to understand

the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship (Ram et al., 2022). In other words, a theoretical exploration that captures the interplay between agency and structure/context is necessary in order to advance the conceptualization of the phenomenon (cf. Jack & Anderson, 2002).

To conclude, a “phenomenon-driven approach” is a natural starting point for nascent research streams prior to any domain-specific theorization efforts (Keupp & Gassmann, 2009). However, the development of pertinent theoretical foundations is crucial for the advancement of refugee entrepreneurship research (cf. Busenitz et al., 2003). To expand its current paradigm, which predominantly emphasises the severe disadvantages faced by refugee entrepreneurs, and attributes their entrepreneurial behaviour primarily to their home culture or host country conditions, it is essential to integrate existing research with established entrepreneurship theories and concepts. Agency-based models found within the entrepreneurship literature can enrich the current cultural, structural, and mixed-embeddedness perspectives by placing greater emphasis on refugees’ entrepreneurial agency (e.g., Ajzen, 1991). Such models highlight the individual choices made by refugees in their proactive pursuit of entrepreneurship.

Overall, the current state of theoretical development in refugee entrepreneurship necessitates further progress, with an emphasis on the perspectives of individual refugee entrepreneurs, their agency, and the processual nature of entrepreneurial activity. Building upon and extending the recent scholarly discussions on the topic (Ram et al., 2022; Refai & McElwee, 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022), this dissertation seizes the opportunity to address and deepen our understanding of the dynamics inherent in refugee entrepreneurship. By doing so, it aims to contribute significantly to the ongoing refinement and maturation of the phenomenon’s theoretical underpinnings.

Aim and Research Questions

In addressing the fundamental challenges faced by current refugee entrepreneurship research, the overall aim of this dissertation is to offer a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon through a comprehensive approach that incorporates a blend of systematic, methodological, empirical, and conceptual analyses. Such a nuanced approach entails an investigation of the specific circumstances and factors that give a distinct shape to the undertaking of entrepreneurship by refugees, arising from their experiences of forced displacement and the extreme life disruption associated with it, when compared to other, voluntary, migrant groups. To achieve this nuanced understanding, the dissertation focuses on three primary areas. Firstly, it consolidates a domain-specific body of knowledge by navigating the intellectual landscape of refugee entrepreneurship research. Secondly, it enhances the methodological approach to building robust empirical evidence related to the

phenomenon by introducing a tailored sampling method that considers the specificities of entrepreneurial refugees related to their “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” nature and initial placement in their host country after relocation. Finally, the dissertation strengthens the theoretical foundation for refugee entrepreneurship research by conceptualising it as a form of entrepreneurial occurrence. This perspective acknowledges the ways in which refugees may be constrained by their detrimental circumstances and the influence of their cultural and structural context, while still acknowledging their capacity to voluntarily pursue entrepreneurship and proactively orchestrate their journey towards it.

To achieve the overarching aim stated above, the dissertation comprises four individual studies positioned within the domain of refugee entrepreneurship research. These studies build on each other and help to achieve the overall purpose by answering the following three Specific Research Questions (SRQs):

SRQ1: What is the current state of refugee entrepreneurship research within the extant literature?

SRQ2: How can the challenges of representativity in identifying entrepreneurial refugees for statistically robust survey research be addressed, considering their “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” nature?

SRQ3: How can the conceptual understanding of refugee entrepreneurship be advanced by capturing refugees’ ability to volitionally pursue entrepreneurship and proactively orchestrate their journey towards it, given their detrimental circumstances and within the frames of their context?

Below are brief summaries of the appended papers that aim to answer these research questions. Figure 1.1 provides an overall visual representation of the individual papers, including the specific research questions they address, their overall purposes, and main findings.

Paper I systematically assesses and thematically maps the scholarly domain of refugee entrepreneurship research. This paper acknowledges the fragmentation and heterogeneity of extant knowledge, which may obstruct a unified understanding of the phenomenon. To tackle this issue, the paper posits that refugee entrepreneurship should lie at the nexus of forced cross-border migration and the undertaking entrepreneurial activity in foreign host contexts. By examining this convergence, the study delineates its intellectual territory, establishing a repository of prevailing knowledge to organise its subject matter into themes and sub-themes and define its research scope. The paper’s comprehensive methodology lays the foundations for collective research, enabling the construction of coherent theories, incremental refinements, and ultimately the formation of an ontological and epistemological basis for the research area. Researchers can build upon the systematised knowledge to develop novel theoretical and methodological approaches. In this way, Paper I serves as an essential starting point for researchers interested in the study of refugee entrepreneurship, and provides a roadmap for navigating the complex and dynamic nature of the phenomenon.

Paper II addresses the first methodological hurdle confronting researchers when carrying out statistically robust empirical research on refugee entrepreneurship. Paper I emphasises that refugee entrepreneurs constitute a “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” population due to their precarious life circumstances. Therefore, entrepreneurship scholars aiming to generate representative samples for large-scale, survey-based research designs confront the dual representativity challenges of identification and motivation. Paper II specifically addresses the identification challenge, and proposes a sampling method that identifies and recruits entrepreneurial refugees through Facebook’s sophisticated algorithm for targeted ads. The paper validates the feasibility of this sampling method with empirical evidence and illustrates its capacity to approximate the representativeness of samples drawn from entrepreneurial refugees for a cross-national study. By addressing the representativity challenge of identification in refugee entrepreneurship research, this paper serves as an invaluable resource for the efficient development of robust insights into the phenomenon.

Paper III examines the relevance of cultural and structural aspects for refugees’ development of individual agency as they engage in early-stage entrepreneurial activity in their host countries. Many extant studies, as presented in Paper I, explain refugee entrepreneurship by drawing on either cultural theories, which underscore factors related to refugees’ ethnic origins, or structural theories that stress the conditions in their host locations. However, (refugee) entrepreneurship encompasses volitional decision-making, which neither of these perspectives fully explains. To address this issue, this paper utilises the notion of embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007) as an underlying conceptual backdrop and incorporates the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) to theorise about refugees’ entrepreneurial agency as manifested in their individual entrepreneurial beliefs within the context of their ethnic background and host city location. This conceptualization captures the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship, encompassing the interplay between agency and structure, and gives full rein to refugee entrepreneurial agency in this process. Ultimately, this paper establishes a conceptual foundation for understanding the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship, while also responding to recent calls (Ram et al., 2022; Refai & McElwee, 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022) for a balanced application of the agency versus structure/context dialectic in research.

Paper IV expands upon Paper III’s investigation of the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship by further exploring the dynamics of refugees’ entrepreneurial journey through an inductive, theory-building design. A stage-process model is introduced, delineating the phases of refugee entrepreneurship, detailing the underlying subprocesses in each phase, and identifying the factors that drive progression forward. The paper’s process-oriented approach to refugee entrepreneurship advances the current static approach, which merely offers snapshots of its antecedents, by considering the cultural and structural factors that determine refugees’ entrepreneurial entry. Additionally, this paper highlights

refugees' capacity to proactively shape the prerequisites of entrepreneurship and what they do to establish and develop their own ventures in the host country. Hence, this approach also acknowledges refugees' entrepreneurial agency, a crucial factor that existing perspectives have overlooked but which is instrumental in enabling them to reconstruct their lives after forced displacement.

The paper further demonstrates that refugees' entrepreneurial agency is interwoven with detrimental circumstances and structural barriers related to forced migration. It recognizes the dual nature of these factors in shaping refugee entrepreneurship: on the one hand, the extreme disruption caused by forced displacement propels refugees towards small-business ownership as a means of turning their life position around; on the other hand, it creates detrimental circumstances constraining their entrepreneurial activity while simultaneously fostering the development of their capabilities to move forward. Therefore, this study's conceptual approach, which also draws upon the presuppositions of embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007), captures refugee entrepreneurial agency as a form of relative autonomy (Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022), contributing to a balanced understanding of the refugee entrepreneurship dynamics.

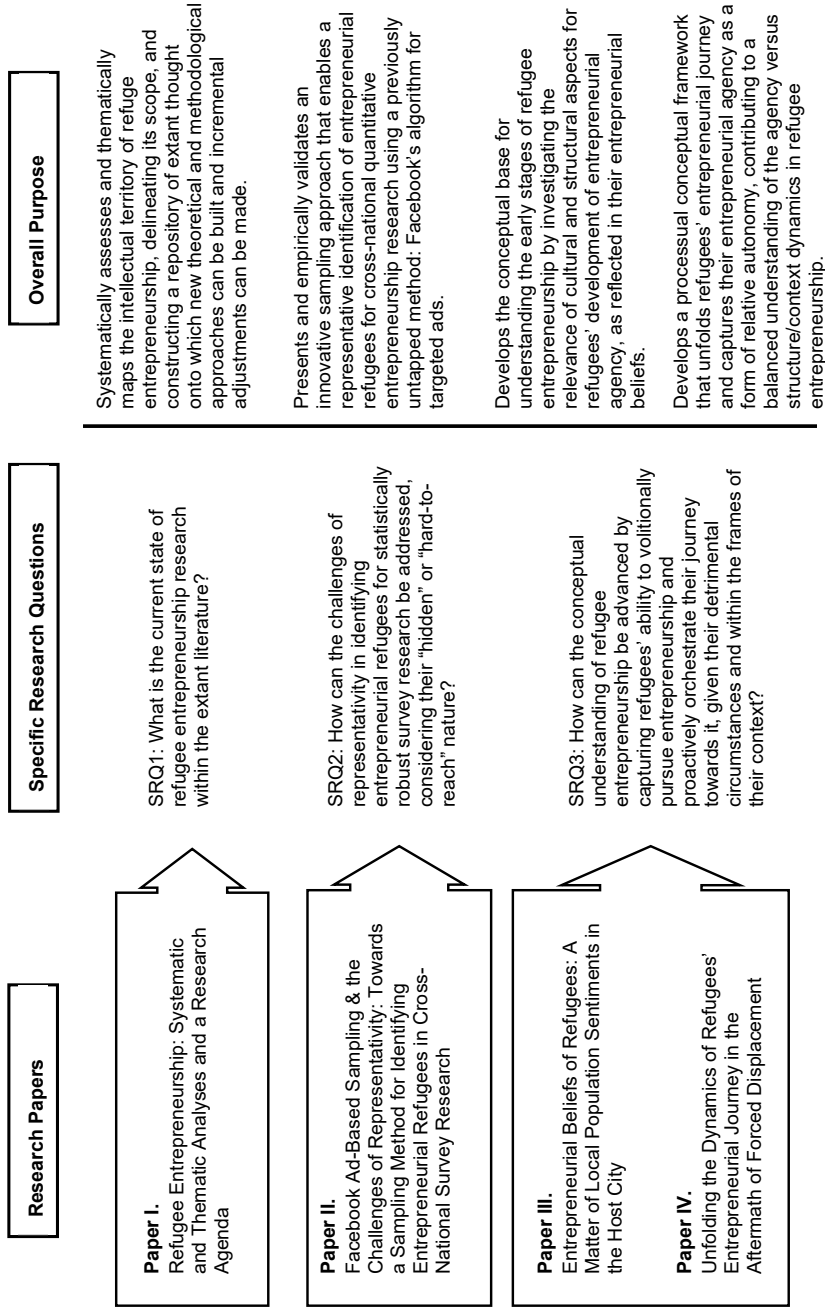


Figure 1.1 Summary of the appended papers in relation to the overall purpose and specific research questions of the study

The Settings for the Study: Refugees, Sweden, and Austria

The empirical part of this dissertation focuses on entrepreneurial refugees who have recently arrived in Europe from the Middle East and South Asia, resettling in Sweden and Austria during the “refugee crisis” of the mid-2010s. Refugees are interesting subjects for entrepreneurship research due to their specific characteristics and the extremely challenging circumstances they encounter while initiating and developing their businesses after relocation, which are very different from those experienced by voluntary migrants. These characteristics and challenges result from the drastic life disruptions they have experienced, caused by forced migration and resettlement in completely foreign contexts (Jiang et al., 2021; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008).

Sweden and Austria were chosen as pertinent geographical contexts for this study because they had the highest per capita intake of refugees during the designated period. Furthermore, these two countries exhibit starkly contrasting societal and structural/institutional conditions for refugee entrepreneurship, which makes the comparison intriguing (Berger & Strohner, 2017; Konle-Seidl, 2018). The difference between the two countries presents a context to examine how varying societal and structural factors can influence refugee entrepreneurship differently. The following subsections provide an overview of the study settings and the factors that make them relevant for entrepreneurship research.

Refugees: The Empirical Settings

The concept of “refugees” is grounded in the definition provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which originates from the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees. This definition categorises refugees as a unique subset of migrants who have escaped war, violence, conflict, or persecution and traversed international borders to seek safety in another country (UNHCR, 2022). In recent years, this definition has expanded to encompass individuals fleeing severe threats to their life, physical integrity, or freedom (Lister, 2013; Whittaker, 2006). Furthermore, individuals granted asylum status or subsidiary protection, such as the Syrian migrants who arrived in Sweden in the mid-2010s, are also deemed refugees, with access to legal protection, residency rights, and welfare assistance (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). This study defines refugees as those holding legal “refugee status” under the Convention. As the focus of this study is refugee entrepreneurship, it will not consider forced migrants who do not traverse international borders, such as internally displaced persons

(Richmond, 1993). Although these groups may be of interest to researchers and policymakers, they fall outside the purview of this study.

Refugee movements possess a lengthy history (Bernard, 1977); however, the numbers have increased dramatically since the dawn of the new millennium. In 2005, an estimated 12.8 million refugees existed worldwide, representing the highest number in history at the time, with the figure continuing to rise thereafter. The period between 2010 and 2019, the focus of this study, has been dubbed a “decade of displacement”, witnessing a total of at least 100 million refugees throughout its duration (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). Specifically, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, along with specific regions in Asia and Africa, have been the predominant catalysts for the sustained movement of refugees since 2012. The number of refugees reached an unprecedented peak during the latter half of the last decade, referred to as the “global refugee crisis”, with an estimated 21.3 million refugees in 2015, which rose to 25.4 million by the conclusion of 2017 and then exceeded 26 million in 2019. In 2017, approximately 68% of all refugees originated from five countries, with Syria representing the single largest source, accounting for 6.3 million refugees, followed by Afghanistan, with 2.6 million (UNHCR, 2022). While the majority of global refugees (84%) reside in the Global South, countries in Europe and North America have recently witnessed a significant influx.

The European Union (EU) has found itself at the epicentre of significant refugee movements in recent years (Kang, 2020). In 2015, a peak year, over 1.2 million asylum applications were filed in EU member states, with the majority originating from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. These three groups feature prominently in the empirical data analysed in this dissertation. Between 2008 and 2015, EU states granted residence permits to approximately 1.1 million individuals based on various forms of refugee status, while an additional 710,000 and 538,000 people received comparable permits in 2016 and 2017, respectively (Eurostat, 2021). Germany granted the highest number of refugee protections; however, Sweden and Austria – the geographical foci of this study – were also preferred destinations for refugees, alongside France, Italy, and the Netherlands (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021).

The massive influx of refugees into EU states during the mid-2010s was subsequently termed the “European Refugee Crisis” (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, & Wodak, 2018), highlighting the need to comprehend the economic dimensions of refugee movements, and accentuating the importance of integrating newcomers into public discourse and political agendas (Bevelander & Luik, 2020). In response, several host countries implemented substantial efforts to enhance the employability of refugees and labour-market opportunities for them. Furthermore, these countries formulated policies and initiatives aimed at supporting entrepreneurship among refugees and providing support for their ventures, recognizing this as a vital component of successful integration (Fasani, Frattini, & Minale, 2022). This context inspired the inception of the present study, which investigates refugee entrepreneurship in Sweden and Austria.

Refugees Versus Immigrants

As the foundation for refugee entrepreneurship research lies in the specificity of refugees in comparison to immigrants, this section delves into the relevant differences between these two groups. Fundamentally, refugees are ontologically distinct from immigrants due to differences in their motives for migration, the nature of their migration process, and their legal and life circumstances after relocation (Cortes, 2004). Immigrants voluntarily migrate in pursuit of career advancement. They carefully select their destination based on nation-specific regulations and the anticipated alignment between their qualifications and the demands of the job market (Anderson & Blinder, 2011; Wadhwa et al., 2008). Conversely, refugees migrate not by choice but out of dire necessity, often being compelled to leave their homeland due to life-threatening and violent circumstances. They lack the luxury of time to weigh their options, investigate opportunities, meticulously plan their relocation, or prepare themselves psychologically or financially before moving (Bernard, 1977). As a result, refugees' initial adjustment process following relocation is considerably more challenging than that of immigrants, and they experience more severe acculturation stress (Takeda, 2000).

Furthermore, many refugees arrive in their host countries after enduring extreme adversity, conflict, or violence, along with the accompanying destruction, injury, and loss of life (Tay & Silove, 2017). Exposure to such adversity and trauma, combined with sudden displacement, disrupts refugees' lives, leading many to experience personal dysfunction (e.g., depression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and anxiety) and negative fluctuations in cognition, mood, and reactivity, which substantially impair their physical and psychological well-being (McBrien, 2005; Newman et al., 2018). In summary, this sudden disruption creates life conditions for refugees that transform their identities, personalities, and psychological and social capital, all of which influence their career development trajectories including entrepreneurship.

Compared to immigrants, refugees also experience complex legal situations and institutional impediments in their host nations (Obschonka, Hahn, & Bajwa, 2018). While immigrants secure their legal status beforehand, refugees must navigate protracted asylum application processes that frequently result in subsidiary protection status and/or extended stays in restrictive camps (Chliova, Farny, & Salmivaara, 2018). Throughout this period, refugees are subjected to a stringent regulatory framework that precludes their rights to (self-)employment. The pervasive uncertainty surrounding refugees' legal limbo constitutes a significant obstacle to their immediate integration, further exacerbated by doubts regarding the feasibility of family reunification (Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

Overall, due to their specific circumstances, refugees encounter barriers that are distinct and much harder to overcome than those faced by immigrants, which adversely affect their labour-market participation and other economic pursuits

(Bakker, Dagevos, & Engbersen, 2017; Lee et al., 2020). Within the realm of entrepreneurship, refugees face even more complex challenges that place them at a considerable disadvantage and impose unique prerequisites for engaging in business start-ups (Jiang et al., 2021). The cumulative effects of refugees' specific conditions on their enterprising attributes and behaviours epitomise a socioeconomic phenomenon that Gold (1988, 1992), in his pioneering publications, termed "refugee entrepreneurship." Building on his earlier recognition of the phenomenon's distinctiveness, subsequent scholars advocated for a separate research domain focused on refugee entrepreneurship, understood as different from immigrant entrepreneurship (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008). This notion has recently gained broader recognition and attracted a sizable cohort of scholars (Abebe, 2022; Bizri, 2017; Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). Bearing this in mind, this dissertation endeavours to delineate some of the principal features encompassed by the phenomenon of refugee entrepreneurship and articulate the methodological and theoretical frameworks through which it can be captured and understood.

Sweden and Austria: The Geographical Settings

As previously mentioned, this dissertation focuses on Sweden and Austria as geographical settings for its empirical study. These countries were the primary destinations for many asylum seekers and refugees from war-torn nations during the study period. The target refugee groups for the study are refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine, as they constitute the largest ethnic groups in the recent mass migration to Europe, and specifically to Sweden and Austria (Konle-Seidl, 2018). The two countries share similarities in being entrepreneurial nations where small-to-medium-sized enterprises play a significant role in the economy (Lundström et al., 2014). Additionally, they both offer comprehensive social security and welfare provisions, which typically extend to migrant communities under normal circumstances (Koopmans, 2010). However, their contrasting approaches to refugee reception and integration, as well as the societal and politico-institutional structures related to immigration, provide an intriguing context for a cross-country analysis of early-stage refugee entrepreneurship activity.

During the peak of the crisis in 2015, Sweden accepted more refugees per capita than any other EU member state (Konle-Seidl, 2018). Major refugee migrations to Sweden have occurred in the past, including WWII refugees from Germany and neighbouring countries (Helgertz, 2011), asylum seekers fleeing the Iran–Iraq War in the 1980s, Balkan civil war refugees in the 1990s, and Somali and Eritrean refugees during the early 2000s, among others (Klinthäll, 2003). However, in 2015, the influx of refugees to Sweden reached a new peak in both scale and complexity, with over 160,000 applications for asylum and refugee claims – a number equivalent to 1.67% of the total population of Sweden (Eurostat, 2021). The largest group of these applicants were from Syria, followed by Afghanistan and Iraq; these three countries together accounted for over 70% of applicants at the time. While the years

following the “refugee crisis” witnessed somewhat tighter immigration policies to curb these high inflows (Hagelund, 2020), refugee integration remained at the top of the political agenda, with concerted efforts to facilitate the social and economic inclusion of refugees. In particular, numerous policy initiatives and support schemes emerged, both publicly and privately funded, aimed at rigorously promoting refugee entrepreneurship (Chliova, Farny, & Salmivaara, 2018), along with research grants to support the theoretical and empirical investigation of the phenomenon. It was in this context that the present study was conceived.

Within the EU, Austria had the second-highest number of refugees per capita during the crisis (Konle-Seidl, 2018). Similarly to Sweden, Austria has historically witnessed numerous refugee influxes driven by national disintegration, the two World Wars, the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, and the unstable political situations in Kosovo and Macedonia (Buber-Ennser et al., 2020). Since 1945, over two million asylum seekers have arrived in Austria, with 700,000 recognized as refugees and subsequently remaining in the country. The nation’s geographical location further positioned it at the epicentre of the “refugee crisis” of the mid-2010s, with 88,160 applicants, equivalent to 1.03% of the total population (Eurostat, 2021). Similar to Sweden, the majority of asylum applicants originated from Syria, followed by those from Afghanistan and Iraq (Konle-Seidl, 2018). However, in contrast to Sweden, the Austrian government demonstrated less commitment and invested only limited resources to support refugees on a large scale. Specifically, there were few tailored measures or initiatives designed to assist entrepreneurial refugees (Bristol-Faulhammer, 2017).

Sweden and Austria exhibited divergent societal narratives regarding immigration and foreigners during the study period, as well as distinct politico-regulatory structures. Reports indicate that, within the Austrian societal discourse, negative media rhetoric, attitudes, and sentiments towards non-EU immigration and opposition to refugees – particularly those from Muslim backgrounds – are more pervasive than in Sweden. For example, the Eurobarometer survey (EU, 2016) reveals that 56% of Austrian respondents held negative attitudes towards non-EU immigration, compared to 34% in Sweden. The proportion of respondents opposed to refugees was also substantially higher in Austria (28%) than in Sweden (9%). Similarly, the percentage of the population harbouring negative attitudes towards Muslim migrants was higher in Austria (31%) than in any other EU country, while it was only 16% in Sweden (EU Commission, 2015). These statistics underscore the significant disparities between Sweden and Austria concerning societal structures relevant to refugee entrepreneurship. In Austria, the perception of refugees, and particularly Muslim refugees, has deteriorated in recent years (Statistik Austria, 2021). The intensity of anti-refugee sentiments differs between the two countries’ populations, suggesting that aspiring refugee entrepreneurs are likely to encounter varying degrees of prejudice, stereotypical practices, and discrimination in each nation.

The Swedish government adopted a favourable stance towards immigration, emphasizing the potential benefits rather than the associated risks. In contrast to the Austrian focus on value-related concerns, such as refugees' adaptation to host-country traditions (Backman, Lopez, & Rowe, 2021; Konle-Seidl, 2018), Sweden's public discourse downplayed such issues. This distinction is also evident in the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, 2020), which assesses immigration policies and migrant conditions, including anti-discrimination measures and equitable treatment, rights, and opportunities. Austria imposed restrictions on refugees' early access to the labour market, while Sweden facilitated it through employment and business start-up opportunities for asylum seekers (Konle-Seidl, 2018). Additionally, Austria enforces legal barriers for migrants seeking to establish businesses in specific sectors (Haberfellner, 2003). Furthermore, the two countries diverged in their targeted strategies for nurturing refugee integration and entrepreneurship. Sweden allocated 1.35% of its GDP to supporting refugees, a stark contrast to Austria's 0.37%. The Swedish approach employed a fast-track system to expedite refugees' entry into (self-)employment by assisting with the translation of foreign credentials. In Austria, however, bureaucratic procedures surrounding skills certification could take up to two or three years, and foreign credentials are not translated (Konle-Seidl, 2018). In summary, these politico-regulatory discrepancies between Sweden and Austria during the study period underscore their suitability as relevant contexts for a comparative analysis of early stage refugee entrepreneurship.

Key Concepts

This section defines and describes the most important concepts used in this dissertation. Some concepts are explained further in Chapter 2. Table 1.1 below presents the concepts, definitions, and sources.

Table 1.1
Key concepts used in the study, with definitions

Concept	Definition
Entrepreneurship	There are various definitions of entrepreneurship, but this thesis refers to it as the process or journey by which individuals establish and develop their own businesses (McMullen & Dimov, 2013). This comprehensive definition is relevant to refugee entrepreneurship research, because it encompasses various entrepreneurial endeavours and outcomes, including self-employment businesses, irrespective of whether the venture was acquired or founded (Vinogradov & Elam, 2010).
Migrants	The term "migrant" broadly refers to people who move from one place to another, either within a country or across international borders, for various reasons. This encompasses a diverse range of individuals, such as refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and their family members, among others (Sasse & Thielemann, 2005). The entrepreneurial activity of these

	foreign-born individuals in a new host country, irrespective of their specific differences, is categorised under the umbrella of “migrant entrepreneurship” (Chiova, Farny, & Salmivaara, 2018).
Immigrants	Immigrants are individuals who voluntarily move to settle in another country for the long term, often motivated by the prospect of economic security and better life opportunities, provided they meet the immigration requirements specific to the country of destination. This group includes skilled migrants and expatriates, as well as their families (Christensen et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial activity undertaken by these individuals in the context of their new host country is referred to as “immigrant entrepreneurship” (Dheer, 2018).
Refugees	The term “refugees” refers specifically to forced migrants who have been granted official “refugee status” in their host countries but have not yet become naturalised citizens. This definition excludes other groups, such as non-refugee forced migrants, internally displaced persons who have not crossed international borders, and individuals in a new country seeking asylum, who have applied for it but are awaiting a decision on their claim (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021).
Refugee entrepreneurship	The process through which individuals displaced from their home country due to war, violent conflicts, or persecution establish and develop business ventures in their new host country – where they have received refugee status – during their early stages of resettlement.
Diaspora entrepreneurship	The process by which migrants and their descendants undertake entrepreneurial activity that span the national contexts of both their countries of origin and countries of residence (Riddle, Hrivnak, & Nielsen, 2010; Safran, 1991).
Transnational entrepreneurship	This involves the process of establishing, managing, and expanding ventures in a cross-national context by migrants who actively engage in international business activity, taking advantage of global markets and leveraging resources, networks, and opportunities from their former countries of origin, currently adopted countries, and other countries of business interest (Drori, Honig, & Wright, 2009).
Entrepreneurial beliefs	Strong and deeply held assumptions, or salient information, that underpin individuals’ sensemaking, self-reflection, and decision-making processes related to engaging in entrepreneurship (Krueger, 2007).
Entrepreneurial behaviour	For the purposes of this study, entrepreneurial behaviour encompasses both the general act of engaging in entrepreneurship and the specific entrepreneurial activity undertaken during the process of establishing and developing a business (Esfandiari et al., 2019).
Entrepreneurial agency	This denotes the ability of individuals to willingly decide to pursue entrepreneurship and actively navigate the journey towards it (McMullen & Dimov, 2013).

Disposition of the Dissertation

This dissertation is a composite work comprising four independent but interconnected studies situated within the emerging stream of refugee entrepreneurship research. Each study contributes to achieving the overarching purpose of the dissertation in distinct yet complementary ways. This volume includes an introductory summary, known in Swedish as a “Kappa”, and four appended academic papers. The Kappa presents an overview of the research

background, problem statement, study settings, theoretical framework, research design, and methodology. It also provides summaries of the four studies and their main findings, and presents the theoretical contributions of the thesis, as well as implications for academia, policymakers, and practitioners. The following sections detail the structure of the Kappa.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for the rest of the dissertation, offering a general background to the research. The chapter begins by presenting the problem statement, encapsulating the fundamental domain-related, methodological, and theoretical challenges faced by the current understanding of refugee entrepreneurship that the dissertation addresses. The chapter then introduces the overarching purpose and the specific research questions. A summary of the appended papers is provided, illustrating how each contributes to fulfilling the overall purpose. Subsequently, the chapter offers an overview of the empirical and geographical settings, emphasising their specific and relevant aspects for the empirical studies. The chapter concludes by defining the key concepts employed throughout the dissertation.

Chapter 2 establishes the conceptual foundations by reviewing the pertinent literature upon which this work draws and to which it aims to contribute. It primarily builds on the author's comprehensive systematic reviews (Abebe, 2019, 2022). The chapter begins by introducing the conceptual context of refugee entrepreneurship and proceeds to examine the current state of the literature in this area. It then explores the major theoretical perspectives underlying the bulk of current research on the topic and identifies their limitations. Finally, the chapter delineates how this dissertation conceptually addresses these limitations.

Chapter 3 delineates the methodology employed in the dissertation and is broadly organized into several sub-sections. The chapter begins by briefly outlining the background and context that prompted this research, followed by explaining the research process leading to the development of the four studies appended to this dissertation. It subsequently delves into the research design, including the strategies used to generate and analyse the empirical material, along with the types of data sources, variables, and analyses employed in each empirical paper. The chapter then provides reflections on the methods and data, and ends with deliberations on the ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the four papers comprising the core of the dissertation and demonstrates how each paper contributes to advancing knowledge and provides a nuanced understanding of refugee entrepreneurship. The chapter is structured to provide an overview of the respective aims, conceptual frameworks, key findings, and contributions of each paper, thereby offering the necessary background information for the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the main findings and contributions of the dissertation. The chapter begins by revisiting the research questions and discusses the study's findings in light of previous research.

Chapter 6 underscores the principal implications of the dissertation for refugee entrepreneurship research, policy, and practice. In addition, the chapter outlines the primary limitations arising from the research design, data, and methods employed, as well as the choice of informants and research context. Building upon these limitations, the chapter suggests directions for future research.

2. Relevant Literature and Conceptual Backdrop

This chapter sets out the foundations for the study by presenting its theoretical underpinnings. Building upon earlier and updated versions of my literature analysis, it introduces the concept of refugee entrepreneurship, examines the state of extant literature, and summarizes the theoretical debates in order to assess current knowledge on the phenomenon. It also identifies gaps and limitations and proposes ways to address them. The chapter concludes by introducing the conceptual approach implemented in this dissertation.

Conceptualizing Refugee Entrepreneurship

From a conceptual point of view, refugee entrepreneurship resides at the crossroads of two core constructs: “refugeehood” – the state and experience of being a “refugee” – and entrepreneurship (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008). Therefore, in the paragraphs below, I attempt to define and unpack these constructs and their relation in order to grasp and conceptualize the phenomenon.

The “politics of bounding” renders the categorization and labelling of migrants into “immigrants” and “refugees” problematic (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). However, acknowledging this distinction is relevant due to the distinct causes and experiences of migration, modes of movement, legal situations, and structural positions that influence their entrepreneurial behaviour and outcomes differently. Bearing this in mind, I concur with Desai, Naudé, and Stel (2021) that the “refugee” category is unambiguous and fundamental to our conceptualization of refugee entrepreneurship.

Despite multiple ontological understandings of the term “refugee” (Arar & FitzGerald, 2023), this study adopts the definition based on the 1951 Convention upheld by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This pivotal document informs both academic and practical definitions of the concept, describing refugees as individuals located outside their country of origin who have been granted international protection due to well-founded reasons of persecution,

conflict, generalized violence, or other extreme circumstances that threaten their ontological security (Marshall, 2011; Whittaker, 2006).

As explained in the previous chapter, refugees differ from proactive migrants, such as professionals, expatriates, and guest workers, who are referred to as immigrants (Cortes, 2004; Demetriou, 2018). This distinction arises from the forced or involuntary departure, limited freedom to decide on their mobility and destination, blocked access to their home country, and complex legal circumstances (refer back to the discussion in Chapter 1). Furthermore, international laws and conventions differentiate refugees from internally displaced persons by defining refugees as those who have crossed an international border (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). Not all displaced people are refugees, because some are fleeing due to economic, environmental, or other issues not encompassed by the UNHCR definition (Richmond, 1993). Hence, the discussion in this dissertation focuses on refugees as recognized in the conventional definition.

The multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship has long been a challenge for scholars seeking to provide a clear definition, as research in this field is marked by ambiguity surrounding the concept (Iversen, Jørgensen, & Malchow-Møller, 2007). Despite the numerous definitions in the literature, two primary schools of thought have shaped theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship (Landström, 2007). The behavioural stance explains it as the process of organizational emergence, with entrepreneurs being individuals who are involved in the dynamic process of establishing a venture, or have recently founded one (Gartner, 1985, 1988). The opportunity-based stance views entrepreneurship as the nexus between opportunities and individuals who identify/discover and pursue them in order to develop new product/service offerings (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2007). This dissertation draws on the behavioural stance because it helps to understand the process that predates organisational existence by focusing on those activities that enable individual entrepreneurs to establish and develop their venture.

Drawing on the behavioural perspective, this dissertation broadly defines entrepreneurship as the process by which individuals establish and develop their own businesses. This definition is pertinent to the context of refugee entrepreneurship for two reasons. Firstly, within this context, entrepreneurship is fundamentally about survival, and refugees engage in it out of necessity (Harima et al., 2021; Zighan, 2021). Due to their experiences of trauma and personal dysfunction, refugees are often unable to deploy the cognitive skills required to recognise, evaluate, and exploit growth-oriented opportunities in the immediate aftermath of forced migration. Instead, they initially focus on businesses based on their skills or available resources, without considering if the venture truly represents a competitive differentiation in the market (Jiang et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2018). Secondly, it accommodates various forms of entrepreneurial endeavours and outcomes, including small self-employment activity, regardless of the origin of the business, whether it be through founding or acquisition (Vinogradov & Elam, 2010).

In light of the above discussions, refugee entrepreneurship can be conceptualized as the process or journey through which individuals who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries due to persecution, civil war, or violent conflicts establish and develop their ventures in their new host country (Abebe, 2019; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008). Refugee entrepreneurs are involuntary/forced migrants who set up and develop businesses in their new host country after the period during which they have sought and received “refugee status”, as defined by international conventions (Fuller-Love, Lim, & Akehurst, 2006). These definitions pertain exclusively to entrepreneurial refugees – whose movements are primarily driven by extreme push factors and “acute” circumstances (Kunz, 1981), rather than pull factors, although these are frequently inextricably intertwined – and refers to those individuals who have crossed international borders and engaged in entrepreneurship during the early stages of their resettlement.

The empirical studies in this dissertation adhere to these definitions in order to identify and select samples reflecting the specific characteristics of refugee entrepreneurs. In this way, the conceptualization of refugee entrepreneurship in this dissertation facilitates a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, capturing the specific experiences of this particular group of entrepreneurs as they embark on the journey to establish and operate their own businesses in the aftermath of their relocation. As the distinct entrepreneurial behaviours of refugees are inherently linked to their detrimental circumstances and barriers to entrepreneurship, the following section will explore these aspects in greater depth.

Barriers to Refugee Entrepreneurship

In order to better grasp the specificity of refugee entrepreneurship, it is important to have a thorough understanding of the situational and contextual circumstances under which refugees set up and operate their own businesses. Refugees often face significant challenges in rebuilding their lives from scratch. They experience severe disruptions due to being forcibly displaced from their original contexts, which served them well, and relocated to unfamiliar and foreign locations. As highlighted by Harima (2022), these disruptions create significant obstacles for those who undertake entrepreneurship. A comprehensive study entitled: “Barriers to Refugee Entrepreneurship in Belgium” (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008) found that refugees face higher and harder-to-overcome impediments to entrepreneurship than other migrant groups, a conclusion that is also supported by other studies (Alrawadieh, Karayilan, & Cetin, 2019; Embiricos, 2020; Ram et al., 2022). These barriers arise from two sources: limitations related to the acute refugee experience at an individual level and limitations imposed by the new environment in which they find themselves, which can include barriers at the community, market, or institutional

levels (Chliova, Farny, & Salmivaara, 2018). A synthesis of the most common types of barriers to refugee entrepreneurship at different levels is provided below.

Individual-level barriers facing refugees are related with inapplicable human capital, insufficient local knowledge, and psychological trauma, which can all have a negative effect during business startup. After relocation, refugees' human capital (i.e., their knowledge, skills, and capabilities) may not be accepted in the host country due to institutional differences between their home and host countries (Harima et al., 2021). For those with qualifications from their homeland, their diplomas may not be recognized in the host country, making it hard for them to gain work experience relevant to their business. Additionally, many refugees may have lost formal certificates during their flight (Ram et al., 2022). These issues can lead to refugees being relegated to low-paying jobs on the labour market, which can make it difficult for them to save enough money to start a business. Another significant challenge is limited local language proficiency. Due to this, refugees may struggle to obtain business licences, build professional networks, navigate the local business environment, and develop a good understanding of local market opportunities (Fong et al., 2007; Katis, 2017; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007). Furthermore, refugees' confidence, motivation, and aspirations – all of which are essential for starting a business – can be impaired by the shock and traumatic experiences of violent conflicts or the perilous journey during their escape (Jiang et al., 2021; Plak & Lagarde, 2018).

At the meso level, barriers to refugee entrepreneurship include limited social networks, scarce market opportunities, and discrimination. As the movements of refugees are chaotic and uncontrolled, they cannot create or maintain the same kinds of chain-like ethnocultural networks as immigrants do to configure uncoded inputs of finance, customer base, and labour supply for their businesses (Gold, 1988, 1992). Upon arriving in the host country, they are initially placed in isolated refugee camps; then, after attaining the right to residency, they are dispersed across different locations within the host country. As a result, refugees are unable to configure co-ethnic resources, constraining their business networks and access to critical entrepreneurial resources (Robinson, Anderson, & Musterd, 2004). Furthermore, refugees must usually start businesses in the least profitable and unpromising market sectors, which present little chance of upward mobility or higher earnings (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

Market-related obstacles are also driven by racism and anti-refugee hysteria generated in response to the mass movements of displaced people (Ram et al., 2022). Studies have revealed that negative societal sentiments and exclusion prevent refugee entrepreneurs from accessing certain markets and selling products, while also reducing their chances of securing startup financing (Bhagat, 2020; Maalaoui et al., 2018; Tengeh, 2018; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). The discrimination and racism that refugee entrepreneurs face can further limit their access to resources, such as financial and social capital, which can be critical for starting and developing a business.

Macro-level barriers to refugee entrepreneurship are politico-institutional and include issues arising from refugees' legal status, bureaucratic hurdles, and restrictive regulatory regimes (de Lange et al., 2020; Kessler, 2018; Rashid, 2018). Prolonged legal limbo constitutes the primary challenge, as uncertainty and extended periods of inactivity diminish refugees' interest in entrepreneurship (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). Moreover, strict regulatory regimes often prohibit refugees from establishing businesses until they have secured official legal status, which may be time-consuming (Haberfellner, 2003). Even after obtaining legal status, refugees might still confront regulatory impediments to starting businesses in certain specific industries (Ram et al., 2022). This hinders their ability to access the necessary resources and support for business development. Negative experiences with state services upon arrival, excessive bureaucracy and red tape, and complex legal prerequisites also deter refugees from taking steps towards entrepreneurship (Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007; Ram et al., 2022). As a result, navigating the system and procuring resources becomes arduous for refugees, resulting in discouragement, disempowerment, and a decreased likelihood of pursuing an entrepreneurial career.

Despite facing some of the biggest entrepreneurial barriers than any migrant groups, many refugees still exhibit a strong desire and inclination towards starting their own businesses (Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006), even in resource-poor environments. For example, *The Economist* (2018) reported that in the Zaatari camp in Jordan, refugees have established over 3,000 informal start-ups, generating \$13 million in revenue per month. The number of refugee-owned businesses is on the rise globally as more refugees turn to entrepreneurship to create livelihoods and restore their careers after forced displacement (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021).

This phenomenon, in which refugees thrive in business start-ups despite facing numerous barriers, has been referred to as the “paradox of refugee entrepreneurship” (Collins, Watson, & Krivokapic-Skoko, 2017). Simultaneously, an emerging strand of research under the umbrella of migrant entrepreneurship acknowledges how the interplay between forced displacement, experiences of conflict, and refugee situations in host countries creates a unique context for understanding entrepreneurial behaviour (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021). The mobilization of scholars around this idea, along with a vigorous scholarly focus, has led to the emergence of refugee entrepreneurship as a research stream. Despite the growing academic and policy interest and urgency to explore the topic, refugee entrepreneurship is not a completely uncharted territory (Abebe, 2019). The next section presents an overview of its extant knowledge landscape and longitudinal developments.

An Overview of Current Refugee Entrepreneurship Literature: Longitudinal Developments, Contexts, and Nature of Research

Refugee entrepreneurship is not an entirely new phenomenon, being a feature of the vast tapestry of human migration history (Bernard, 1977). However, its first recorded academic observation emerged in the mid-1980s in the United States. Sociologist Simon Fass (1986), in his study “Innovations in the Struggle for Self-reliance: The Hmong Experience in the United States,” detailed how refugees initiated various business projects to increase their self-reliance and decrease their dependence on public assistance. Although Fass (1986) touched only briefly upon the social and economic aspects of refugee entrepreneurship, he was the first to bring scholarly attention to the phenomenon.

In the following years, other North American scholars began investigating self-employment and small business ownership among different refugee groups. Much of the early research centred on homogeneous groups of refugee entrepreneurs from the former Soviet Union (Halter, 1995; Miyares, 1998) and Southeast Asia during and after the Vietnamese and Laotian Civil Wars (Fass, 1986; Kaplan, 1997; Smith-Hefner, 1995). These refugee groups shared similar characteristics with immigrant entrepreneurs in terms of their access to ethnic enclaves and resources, as well as high levels of human capital, social class, and urban experiences. Thus, many refugee entrepreneurship studies were influenced by immigrant entrepreneurship theories and concepts. Despite this, the sociologist Steven Gold (1988) was the first to explore how the ontological distinctions between immigrants and refugees are manifested in their entrepreneurial activity. In his subsequent publication, Gold (1992) further developed his idea by comparing the characteristics, resources, and motives driving self-employed refugees with those of non-refugee groups described in the immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship literature. Gold’s work laid the foundations for refugee entrepreneurship research, presenting a pioneering proposal for a separate analysis of the phenomenon.

Gold’s (1988, 1992) pioneering role becomes evident when considering that it took more than a decade and a half before other researchers picked up his ideas and addressed refugee entrepreneurship. This is evident from the barely nuanced treatment of the topic in the bulk of migration and entrepreneurship research for many years. On the one hand, the analysis of refugee entrepreneurs was often subsumed within the more established field on immigrant entrepreneurs (Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Iannone, 2018) by empirically and theoretically conflating the two groups, despite the marked ontological differences arising from their migration motives, the nature of their movement, and legal circumstances (Bernard, 1977). On the other hand, within the extensive scholarship on refugees’ livelihoods and economic behaviour, their entrepreneurial activity received little attention (e.g., Hauff & Vaglum, 1993; Takeda, 2000; Valtonen, 1999).

However, with the significant increase in refugees arriving in Western societies since the mid-2000s, interest in refugee entrepreneurship was reignited. A few notable scholars, such as Fong et al. (2007), comprehensively examined the successes of refugee entrepreneurs and the challenges they faced at both the individual and family levels and the community and agency levels, while Lyon, Sepulveda, and Syrett (2007) undertook empirical analysis of their local impacts from a policy perspective. Another prominent piece of scholarship came from Wauters and Lambrecht (2006), who systematically investigated refugee entrepreneurship by focusing on its potential and practice. Building on Gold's (1988, 1992) earlier calls for separate analyses, they also suggested a distinct research domain on the topic. A couple of years later, the authors developed the first empirically based explanatory model for understanding the multifaceted barriers hampering refugee entrepreneurship (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008), a study that is a frequently cited reference in current research on the topic.

The initial contributions to refugee entrepreneurship research did not generate significant interest until the “refugee crisis” of the mid-2010s, which prompted urgent academic work amidst political mobilization and discussions about refugees' specific profiles and the factors influencing their entrepreneurial activity (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021; Jiang, Straub, & Klyver, 2017; Mawson & Kasem, 2019). Most of these studies emerged from Europe and Asia, as these regions were popular destinations for the latest refugee waves from East Africa, the Middle East, and West Asia. The majority of refugees during this crisis were Syrian, and several studies have investigated their entrepreneurial activity, particularly in Germany (Freudenberg & Halberstadt, 2018; Harima, Freudenberg, & Halberstadt, 2019; Meyer, 2018; Obschonka, Hahn, & Bajwa, 2018), due to its open-door refugee policy. In Asia, research has examined Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, such as Turkey (Alrawadieh, Karayilan, & Cetin, 2019; Gürsel, 2017), Lebanon (Bizri, 2017), and Jordan (Refai, Haloub, & Lever, 2018; Mehtap & Al-Saidi, 2019). African studies have focused on diverse refugee groups in Cape Town and Johannesburg (Crush, Skinner, & Stulgaitis, 2017a, 2017b; Crush et al., 2017).

As more and more studies delve deeper into the realm of refugee entrepreneurship, research on the topic has evolved, and has entered a new phase. Earlier research primarily emphasized the supply side, focusing on the entrepreneurial characteristics and resources of refugees (Johnson, 2000; Halter, 1995; Kaplan, 1997; Miyares, 1998; Smith-Hefner, 1995). However, current research is shifting towards understanding the demand side, exploring the structural factors and politico-institutional circumstances that shape the entrepreneurial landscape for refugees (Baktir & Watson, 2020; Baltaci, 2017; Collins, 2017; Heilbrunn, 2019; Heilbrunn & Rosenfield, 2018). Overall, the current scholarly analysis of the phenomenon in different contexts has led to a growing research stream dedicated to the topic (Abebe, 2019; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). This is evident from the release of an edited refugee entrepreneurship volume (Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Iannone, 2018) and a special issue of the *Journal of Small Business*

Economics (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021), alongside a rapid expansion in the breadth of the literature, including several publications in high-ranked entrepreneurship journals (Bizri, 2017; Jiang et al., 2021; Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020).

Despite this growth, the research stream faces several challenges as it advances. Primarily, themes and subthemes of refugee entrepreneurship are only loosely connected due to the multidisciplinary nature of the research, fragmented scholarly efforts, and limited cross-disciplinary dialogue between researchers (Harima et al., 2021; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). In addition, the increasing diversity of refugee entrepreneurs in terms of their socio-economic profiles, individual attributes, and institutional and situational circumstances has led to a lack of consistent definitions and boundaries for the phenomenon (Harima et al., 2021). As a result, it is difficult to conceptually distinguish refugee entrepreneurship from related fields such as immigrant, transnational, and diaspora entrepreneurship (Sandberg, Immonen, and Kok, 2019). Taken together, these challenges have resulted in a lack of accumulated knowledge and coherent literature, hindering its potential as a separate research area (Abebe, 2019; Harima et al., 2021). Therefore, research on the topic requires organization and systematization to enable it progress further towards its next stage of development.

In terms of its nature, much of the published empirical knowledge relies on qualitative research, in which the data generated often features only a limited number of interviewees (e.g., Kachkar et al., 2016; Masson & Kasem, 2019; Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019) or single-case studies (e.g., Abebe & Moog, 2018; Alkhaled, 2018; Bizri, 2017; de la Chau, 2018). While these studies explore and describe the focal phenomenon of refugee entrepreneurship empirically, they are limited in their ability to provide extensive insights. Only a few studies employ quantitative methods. Among these, some rely on secondary data sources, such as organizational reports (e.g., Kaplan, 1997) or publicly available datasets and repositories (e.g., Fass, 1986; Miyares, 1988; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008) that were created without any discernible reference to accepted and systematic sampling techniques, limiting the transferability and generalizability of their findings. A few scholars have collected data directly from refugee entrepreneurs using self-administered questionnaires (e.g., Crush & Tawodzera, 2017; Johnson, 2000; Obschonka, Hahn, & Bajwa, 2018; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006), but these have typically involved small samples. Hence, there is a need for comprehensive, large-scale, survey-based research to confirm the qualitative findings and enable cross-comparisons across different refugee groups and contexts, thereby building up robust empirical evidence for policy and decision-making (Newman, Macaulay, & Dunwoodie, forthcoming). Methodologically, this entails developing sampling strategies and tools that can address the “hard-to-reach” or “hidden” nature of refugee entrepreneurs (Bloch, 2004).

In terms of theoretical application, extant refugee entrepreneurship studies can be categorized into two groups: those with minimal or no theoretical foundation, and those that rely on eclectic theories (Abebe, 2019). Studies in the first group often

have a marginal or non-existent grounding in the literature and are primarily driven by policy and practical concerns rather than scientific curiosity (e.g., Ayadurai, 2011; Chliova, Farny, & Salmivaara, 2018; Crush, Skinner, & Stulgaitis, 2017a,b; Latowsky & Grierson, 1992; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007). These studies tend to have limited theoretical depth and reflection, and their research objectives and questions are often shaped by policy and practical priorities.

On the other hand, studies in the second group draw upon non-entrepreneurship theories and concepts adopted from diverse disciplines in the social and behavioural sciences and the humanities (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020; Lazarczyk-Bilal, 2019). Some of these studies apply globalization (Bhagat, 2020; Hawthorne, 2019), migration (Palalić, Dana, & Ramadani, 2018; Turner, 2020), and integration (Alrawadieh, Karayilan, & Cetin, 2019; Garnham, 2006; Louise & Jiang, 2018; Meyer & Pilkova, 2017) perspectives. Other studies employ sociological theories, such as Bourdieu's forms of capital (Atasü-Topcuoğlu, 2019), habitus (Refai, Haloub, & Lever, 2018), and practice theory (Yeröz, 2019); ecological theory (Collins, 2017); and the strengths approach (Fong et al., 2007). Notably, as will also be discussed later on, several studies borrow theories from sociological research on immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship, originating as far back as the 1960s (see reviews by Abebe, 2022; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). While these theories offer valuable insights into the social and contextual factors influencing refugee entrepreneurship, their applicability to understanding it as an entrepreneurial occurrence is only marginal.

The overall analysis of theory application in current refugee entrepreneurship research reveals a lack of clear conceptual foundations or development within this emerging research stream. This underscores the necessity for further theorizing efforts to advance the research area and enable understanding of the refugee entrepreneurship dynamics. Before delving into such discussions, the next section provides a brief synopsis of extant literature on the topic, highlighting the primary focus of prevailing research.

An Integrated Synopsis of Extant Refugee Entrepreneurship Literature: The Primary Focus of Prevailing Research

Figure 2.1 presents an integrative analysis of the current state of knowledge on refugee entrepreneurship, revealing that much of the research concentrates on factors leading to (antecedents) and resulting from (outcomes) this phenomenon at

macro, meso, and micro levels.¹ One line of inquiry focuses on factors associated with refugees' home and host countries. At the macro level, studies investigate antecedents related to the entrepreneurial culture and traditions in refugees' countries of origin (Halter, 1995; Johnson, 2000) and structural conditions in host countries, such as migration and refugee policies (Crush, Skinner, & Stulgaitis, 2017a,b; Werker, 2007), labour-market conditions (Kupferberg, 2008), supportive institutional settings (Birdthistle, Flynn, & Rushworth, 2019), and institutional voids (Heilbrunn, 2019). At the meso level, research examines the group or network attributes of entrepreneurial refugees. Antecedents of refugee entrepreneurship discussed in this literature strand include refugees' group characteristics (Gold, 1988), bounded co-ethnic self-help networks (Omeje & Mwangi, 2014), ethnic enclaves (Kaplan, 1997), and access to broader social capital and networks (Bizri, 2017; Williams & Krasniqi, 2018). A few studies also investigate antecedents related to the societal environment in the host setting, such as the presence of pro-enterprising sociocultural values and norms in the host region (Baltaci, 2017; Singh, 1994). The other strand of research investigates the interactive effects of key cultural factors from refugees' home countries, group characteristics, and host structural factors (Barak-Bianco & Rajiman, 2015; Tömöry, 2008; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

A recent body of literature explores the antecedents of refugee entrepreneurship at the micro level. Here, researchers highlight cognitive factors such as entrepreneurial motivation (Cetin et al., 2022), intention (Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Welsh et al., 2022), and crisis self-efficacy (Klyver, Steffens, & Honig, 2022), as well as psychological capital factors, such as resilience (Alkhaled, 2019; Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020; Yeshi, Harima, & Freiling, 2022), as precursors. These studies draw upon psychological and cognitive theories, such as Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (Shapiro & Sokol, 1982). Although these studies introduce an agentic perspective to refugee entrepreneurship research, their narrow psychological focus does not fully capture the interplay between individual and structural/contextual factors, limiting our understanding of the phenomenon's dynamics.

Moving from antecedents to entrepreneurial entry, recent research has investigated entrepreneurial opportunities for refugees and the processes they follow. A handful of studies in this area have observed the opportunity structure for refugee entrepreneurs (Price & Chacko, 2009), their opportunity identification strategies (Omoredede & Axelsson, 2018), their opportunity production process (Jiang et al., 2021), and their resource mobilization (Harima, 2022). Three studies have attempted to explain the refugee entrepreneurial process. In an earlier study,

¹ Macro-level refugee entrepreneurship research focuses on the sociocultural, politico-institutional, economic, and other factors related to refugees' home and host countries; meso-level research focuses on factors related to refugee community groups and host regions; and micro-level research focuses on factors related to individual refugee entrepreneurs.

Garnham (2006) proposed a conceptual process model of refugee entrepreneurship, drawing on the refugee integration and transition approach developed by Valtonen (2004: 87) and the Human Capabilities Framework (Tipples, 2004). Barth and Zalkat (2021) examined refugee entrepreneurs' motivations, challenges, and success factors across various phases of the entrepreneurial process, from startup and growth to exit, within a rural context. Another study presented an entrepreneurial process model for refugees, focusing on broader phases such as escape issues, the transition process, host conditions and facilitators, refugee entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions, and refugees' social integration within the host country (Santamaria-Velasco, Benavides-Espinosa, & Simón-Moya, 2021). Additionally, scholars have recently explored the entrepreneurial strategies that refugees employ to develop their businesses (Ram et al., 2022). While these studies provide initial insights into the refugee entrepreneurial process, there still exists a lack of empirically-underpinned conceptual understanding that untangles the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship. Specifically, more research is needed to understand how refugees proactively orchestrate their entrepreneurial journeys and what actions they take to establish and develop their ventures after forced migration.

Finally, scholars have also analysed the outcomes of refugee entrepreneurship. At the macro-level, research has investigated both the economic and non-economic contributions of refugees to host societies, such as introducing new techniques and processes (Moore, 1990), and their potential as neoliberal economic agents (Turner, 2020). At the meso-level, studies have explored the role of refugee entrepreneurship in promoting social inclusion and community cohesion in urban neighbourhoods (Harb, Kassem, & Najdi, 2019), forming social capital (Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007), and enriching spatial practices in cities (Kadkoy, 2020). At the micro-level, refugees' entrepreneurial activity has been shown to foster their economic self-reliance (Embricos, 2020) and social and economic integration into the host society (Alrawadieh, Altinay, & Cetin, 2021; Atasü-Topcuoğlu, 2019; Louise & Jiang, 2018; Shneikat & Alrawadieh, 2019; Zehra & Usmani, 2023).

In conclusion, the existing refugee entrepreneurship literature primarily seeks to elucidate the factors contributing to its causes and success, focusing on cultural and structural factors that may exist before forced migration or emerge after resettlement in the host country. That is to say, most research seeks to understand the external factors driving certain refugee groups towards entrepreneurship and to identify the elements that contribute to their success. For this purpose, several studies have converged on theoretical frameworks that emphasise the independent effects of refugees' group characteristics and resources, and host structural factors (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020; Lazarczyk-Bilal, 2019). These studies often draw from cultural and structural perspectives developed in sociological research on ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. Other studies employ composite perspectives, such as the mixed embeddedness approach (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, & Rath, 1999; Kloosterman, 2010) or the interactive ethnic business development model (Waldinger et al., 1990), which consider the interplay of cultural and structural

factors. Given this context, the subsequent section examines the primary theoretical perspectives featuring current refugee entrepreneurship research, and the studies that have adopted them, followed by an evaluation of their strengths and limitations in understanding the dynamics of this phenomenon.

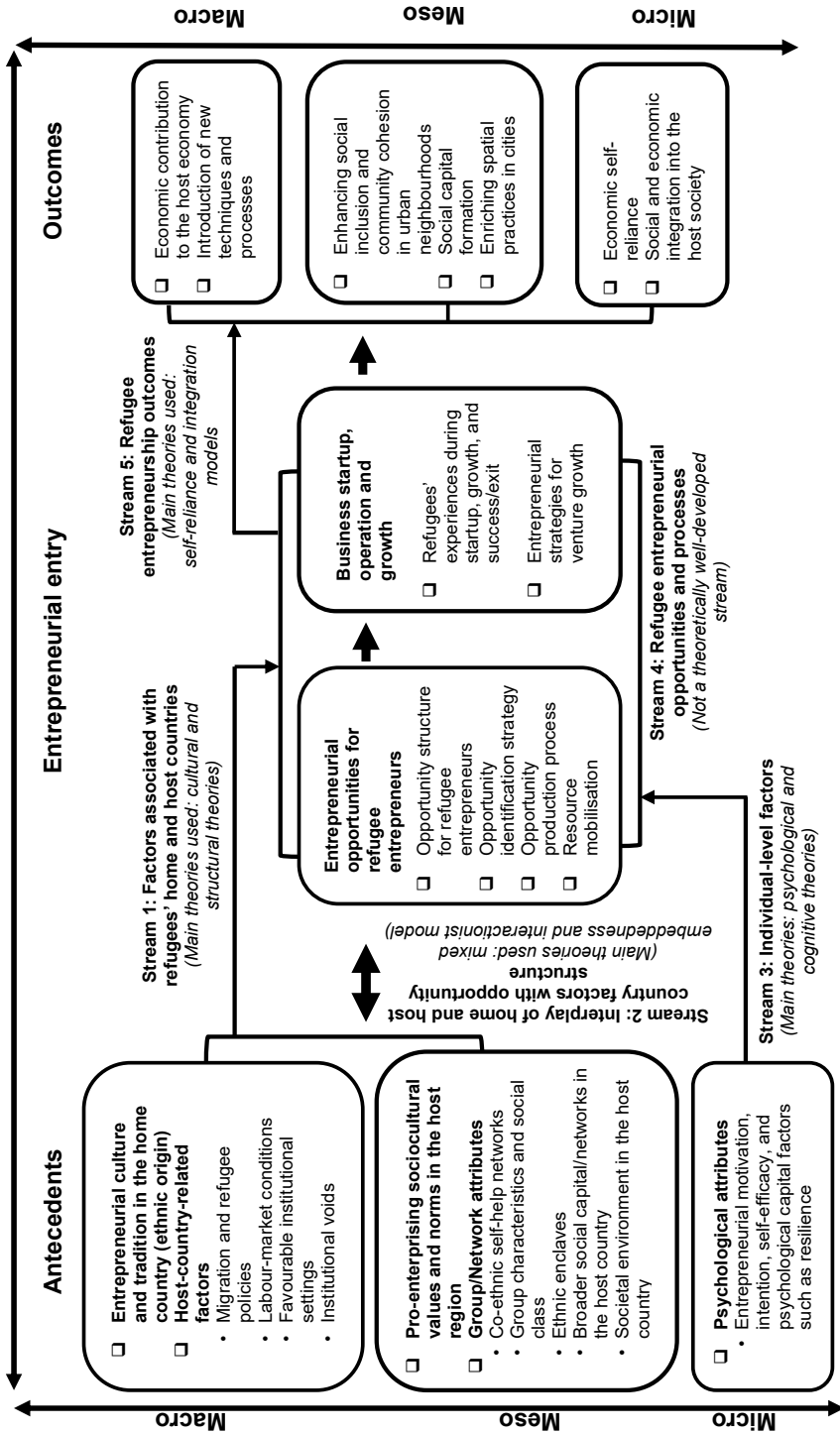


Figure 2.1
Integrative analysis of prevailing refugee entrepreneurship research (Author's own analysis)

Major Theoretical Perspectives in Refugee Entrepreneurship Research

Culturally-oriented Perspectives: Emphasizing Refugees' Ethnocultural Repertoire or Milieu

Culturally-oriented perspectives focus on the group-specific ethnocultural repertoire or milieu of refugees, in the form of either orthodox (imported) or reactive cultural values, distinct group traits, social structures, and collective resources (Table 2.1). The orthodox cultural perspective links refugees' entrepreneurial activity to the shared cultural values, beliefs, norms, and traditions they bring with them into the host society as part of their home cultural baggage (Light, 1980). In light of this, earlier research has suggested that refugees from certain countries of origin may carry pro-enterprising cultural values, virtues, and endowments that inherently predispose them towards starting a business. For example, in his two pioneering works, Gold (1988, 1992) linked the entrepreneurial behaviour of Soviet Jewish refugees from Ukraine and Vietnamese refugees to their culturally innate "entreprogenic" character. He argued that these groups possess collective character traits and values, such as a hustling mentality, acquisitiveness, acceptance of risk, and thrift, which are considered important prerequisites for entrepreneurship. In another study, Halter (1995) similarly concluded that former Soviet Jewish refugees were overrepresented in entrepreneurship because they believed in an entrepreneurial predisposition inherent to their ethnicity.

The impact of cultural factors stemming from refugees' country of origin is further emphasized when comparing the levels of entrepreneurial involvement among different groups in their host country. For example, research on self-employment among Southeast Asian refugee groups in Canada found that Chinese Vietnamese refugees were more likely to engage in entrepreneurship than ethnic Vietnamese or Laotian refugees due to their cultural orientation towards owning and managing businesses in their home country (Johnson, 2000). Overall, studies that apply the orthodox cultural stance view refugee entrepreneurship as a phenomenon driven by innate cultural entrepreneurial predispositions and beliefs brought from the country of origin (cf. Dana, 1997).

Table 2.1

Summary of core refugee entrepreneurship literature with culturally-oriented perspectives

Author/Year	Main research focus	Theoretical foundation	Findings	Explanatory focus
Gold (1988)	Small-business activities of former Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees, the two largest refugee groups in the United States since 1975	Orthodox cultural	Former Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees entered into self-employment due to their pro-enterprising cultural values, virtues, and endowments that inherently predispose them towards starting a business.	Macro level
Gold (1992)	The employment potential of refugee entrepreneurship in the case of former Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees in California	Orthodox cultural	The entrepreneurial behaviour of Soviet Jewish refugees from Ukraine and Vietnamese refugees was linked to their culturally innate entroprogenic character.	Macro level
Halter (1995)	Self-employment among former Soviet Jewish refugees	Orthodox cultural	Soviet Jewish refugees were overrepresented in entrepreneurship because they believed in an entrepreneurial predisposition inherent to their ethnicity.	Macro level
Johnson (2000)	Differences in self-employment among three distinct groups of Southeast Asian refugees in British Columbia, Canada	Orthodox cultural	Chinese Vietnamese refugees were more likely to engage in entrepreneurship than ethnic Vietnamese or Laotian refugees due to their cultural orientation towards owning and managing businesses in their home country.	Macro level
Kaplan (1997)	How has the Indochinese population in Saint Paul, Minnesota, established an ethnic subeconomy with limited resources?	Ethnic enclaves	Despite limited financial resources, education, or skills, Indochinese refugees established successful businesses due to their access to ethnic resources, such as cheap family labour and protected markets within the ethnic enclave.	Meso level
Katis (2017)	The dynamics of entrepreneurship within Vietnamese refugee communities	Ethnic enclaves	Ethnic enclave resources played a key role in the small business start-ups of Vietnamese refugees.	Meso level

Klaesson & Öner (2021)	The relevance of segregation and ethnic concentration for the labour-market outcomes of forced migrants in terms of employment and entrepreneurship in Sweden	Ethnic enclaves	Ethnic enclaves played a significant factor in the self-employment prospects of forced migrants.	Meso level
Campbell (2005)	Contextualization of informal refugee entrepreneurship in urban areas locally and globally	Ethnocultural institutions, and perspectives on economic globalisation and transnational migration	Transnational ethnic-based networks helped many urban refugees to become successful entrepreneurs and prominent business people, particularly in the 'informal' marketplace.	Meso level
Campbell (2007)	Somali refugees' business activities in the local context, within the specific history and development of Nairobi, and globally	Ethnocultural institutions, and perspectives on economic globalization and transnational migration	The transnational entrepreneurial behaviour of Somali refugees was attributed to their clan/kinship-based support systems and institutions.	Meso level
Omeje & Mwangi (2014)	The multiplicity of challenges encountered by the Somali refugee business community in Nairobi amidst their far-reaching business exploits	Ethnocultural institutions	The informal clan/kinship structure reconstituted by three generations of Somali refugees in urban Nairobi served as a base for building successful transnational businesses.	Meso level
Northcote & Dodson (2015)	Refugee and asylum seekers in Cape Town's informal economy	Ethnocultural institutions	Access to social and kinship networks were sources of financial and other forms of support to engage in entrepreneurial activity in hostile and xenophobic settings.	Meso level
Baktir & Watson (2020)	Trust-driven entrepreneurship for the community well-being of refugees and their local hosts	Social capital	Social capital generated from refugees' strong and weak ties in the host country was essential for refugee entrepreneurship in subsistence contexts.	Meso level
Bizri (2017)	Characteristics of refugee entrepreneurial start-ups	Social capital	Distinctive dimensions of refugees' social capital influenced the creation, success, and survival of their entrepreneurial start-ups by maximizing the pool of opportunities in the host country.	Meso level

Halkias et al. (2009a)	The characteristics and business profiles of Albanian refugee entrepreneurs in Greece	Social network	Social capital generated from refugees' strong and weak ties was a significant contributor to the successes of refugee businesses.	Meso level
Halkias et al. (2009b)	The characteristics and business profiles of small firms owned by refugees of African origin in Greece	Social network	Both refugees' strong and weak ties contributed to the successes of refugee businesses.	Meso level
Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok (2019)	Analysis of refugee entrepreneurship through a social network view of immigrants with a refugee background starting transnational businesses in Sweden	Social network embeddedness and social capital	Strong ties with family and close friends provided refugees with bonding social capital for becoming entrepreneurs.	Meso level
Iannone & Geraudel (2018)	Social capital formation process of nascent refugee entrepreneurs	Social capital (Nahapiet, & Ghoshal, 1998)	Refugee entrepreneurs benefited from the referral of a weak tie relationship drawing from a larger native network of social capital, enabling them to form key business and social relations.	Meso level
Williams & Krasniqi (2018)	How does human and social capital influence the entrepreneurial activity of forced migrants?	Human and social capital	Host-country networking exerted a positive effect on the entrepreneurial activity of refugees, while co-ethnic networking was found not to be important.	Meso level

Source: Author's own analysis

Reactive cultural perspectives explain how circumstances arising from ethnic solidarity within refugee communities affect the factors that drive refugee entrepreneurship (Dana, 1997). Research using these perspectives focuses on aspects of being a minority in the host country that influence entrepreneurial behaviour. These factors can be grouped into two main concepts: “ethnic enclaves” and “ethnocultural institutions”. Ethnic enclaves refer to the concentration of specific ethnic refugee groups in a particular geographical area, such as residential neighbourhoods or municipalities, which creates a favourable environment for entrepreneurial activity (Portes, 1981). One example of this is the study by Kaplan (1997), which shows how ethnic enclaves formed by Indochinese refugees in Saint Paul, Minnesota, facilitated the development of their businesses. Despite limited financial resources, education, or skills, these refugees were able to establish successful businesses due to their access to ethnic resources such as cheap family

labour and protected markets within the enclaves. Similarly, Katis (2017) studied entrepreneurship among Vietnamese refugees in Victoria, Australia, and found that ethnic resources and enclaves played a key role in their small business start-ups. A recent study in Sweden also found ethnic enclaves to be a significant factor in the self-employment prospects of forced migrants (Klaesson & Öner, 2021).

Ethnocultural institutions are self-help networks formed on the basis of bounded co-ethnic solidarity and membership in cultural groups, ethnic or kinship relations, and religion. Studies of urban refugee communities in Nairobi, Kenya, have attributed their entrepreneurial behaviour to clan/kinship-based support systems and institutions (Campbell, 2005, 2007). This was later confirmed by Omeje and Mwangi (2014) in their study of Somali refugee business communities in the same context. Northcote and Dodson (2015) also found in their research on diverse refugee groups in Cape Town, South Africa, that access to ethnocultural institutions facilitated their entrepreneurial activity in an extremely hostile, xenophobic, and politically repressive context.

Some scholars have refined the reactive cultural perspective by focusing on the effects of social capital generated from refugees' strong and weak ties in the host country (Baktir & Watson, 2020; Halkias et al., 2009a, 2009b). Studies have shown that social capital, generated from both a small set of local ties and co-ethnic communities, maximizes the pool of opportunities to support entrepreneurial activity. For example, Bizri (2017), in her study of Syrian refugee entrepreneurs in Lebanon, found that the structural, cognitive, and relational dimensions of social capital play a key role in supporting their entrepreneurial activity. Similarly, Sandberg, Immonen, and Kok (2019) found that strong ties with family and close friends provide refugees with the bonding social capital they need to become entrepreneurs. Other studies have highlighted the role of bridging social capital that emerges from broader connections, acquaintances, and networking with host communities and organizations (Iannone & Geraudel, 2018; Williams & Krasniqi, 2018). Overall, ethnocultural institutions and social networks are assumed to be the causes and success factors for refugee entrepreneurship by providing access to financial capital, co-ethnic labour, business knowledge and information, and protected markets, as well as ensuring economic cooperation. Hence, studies applying a reactive cultural stance understand refugee entrepreneurship as a socio-ethnically enhanced, adaptive response behaviour (cf. Dana, 1997).

In summary, culturally-oriented perspectives highlight the importance of ethnicity-specific entrepreneurial attributes, cultural and ethnic resources, and the prevalence of (ethnic) social capital or networks. In other words, these perspectives consider that the ethnocultural background or environment plays a crucial role in the development of refugee entrepreneurship.

Structurally-oriented Perspectives: Emphasizing Host-Country Conditions

Structurally-oriented perspectives emphasize factors external to refugees' cultural backgrounds, such as the economy, labour-market policies, societal attitudes towards refugees, and institutional settings in the host country (Table 2.2). These factors, in conjunction with the opportunities and constraints they engender, are deemed crucial determinants of refugee entrepreneurship. A prevalent structural perspective is the "blocked mobility" hypothesis (Ram, 1997), which asserts that refugees resort to self-employment in order to circumvent unemployment and underemployment. Different studies show that refugees often pursue entrepreneurial path due to their disadvantaged economic position and the structural barriers they encounter in the labour markets of their host countries (Fass, 1986; Garnham, 2006; Jiang et al., 2017; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007; Meyer, 2018). These impediments include limited proficiency in the host language, restricted social and professional networks, a lack of transferable skills, non-recognized credentials, limited knowledge of local norms, and discrimination (Predojević-Despić & Lukić, 2018). As a consequence of destabilizing and discriminatory structural conditions, many refugees turn to entrepreneurship to compensate for their blocked upward mobility or disadvantages.

Another line of research conducted within the framework of the blocked mobility hypothesis finds a causal link between refugees' perceived loss of social status and their involvement in entrepreneurship. Upon relocating to a new host society, refugees often experience a loss of career identity as their skills are undervalued and their human capital depreciates (Tengeh, 2018). The status and experience associated with being a refugee can precipitate feelings of shattered self-worth, diminished social status, and loss of prestige (Garnham, 2006). Some refugees may attempt to counterbalance these situations by becoming business owners in order to validate their worth and bolster their self-esteem (Kupferberg, 2008). In relation to this, several studies show that refugees engage in entrepreneurship as a means of transforming the "refugee image" and attaining social recognition, reducing their reliance on welfare benefits, and accelerating their integration process within the host country (Garnham, 2006; Hartman & Schilling, 2018; Meyer & Pilkova, 2017; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006).

Furthermore, some studies highlight the differential effects of hostile versus favourable/supportive institutional contexts on refugee entrepreneurship. A particular vein of research draws on the assumptions of institutional void perspective (Mair & Marti, 2009), positing that refugee entrepreneurship emerges in xenophobic and highly repressive urban spaces to fill the vacuum left by existing formal institutions (Crush & McCordic, 2017; Crush, Skinner, & Stulgaitis, 2017a; Crush et al., 2017; de la Chaux, 2018; de la Chaux & Haugh, 2020; Werker, 2007). Building on the same stance, two recent studies have revealed that refugees embarked on business venturing in order to address their own needs and those of

their communities in the absence of any support or service provision from the host environment (Heilbrunn, 2019; Heilbrunn & Rosenfeld, 2018). The overarching conceptual understanding in these studies is that refugee entrepreneurship emerges due to institutional voids and economic detours stemming from repressive refugee legislation, policies, and regulatory environments.

On the positive side, research has also highlighted the significance of supportive host institutions, both at the macro and meso levels, in fostering refugee entrepreneurship. At the macro level, scholars have applied the entrepreneurial ecosystem framework to explain how such ecosystems nurture the phenomenon (Birdthistle, Flynn, & Rushworth, 2019). Meanwhile, at the meso level, studies have leveraged business incubation models (Bristol-Faulhammer, 2017; Collins, 2017; Harima, Freudenberg, & Halberstadt, 2019; Harima & Freudenberg, 2020; Kong, Bishop, & Iles, 2018) to elucidate the particularities and impacts of business support systems tailored for refugees, as well as their role in supporting their entrepreneurial activity.

Additionally, two studies emphasize the positive outcomes of a favourable institutional environment in host regions. Research conducted by Singh (1994) demonstrates that regions characterized by norms that promote entrepreneurship create favourable business conditions, which in turn facilitate refugee entrepreneurship. Another study, by Baltaci (2017), specifically highlights the positive implications of pro-entrepreneurial sociocultural values and cognitive frameworks in host regions.

Table 2.2

Summary of the refugee entrepreneurship literature with structurally-oriented perspectives

Author/Year	Main purpose	Theoretical background	Findings	Explanatory focus
Jiang et al. (2017)	Refugee entrepreneurship as career (re-) construction	Blocked mobility hypothesis	Refugees are pushed into entrepreneurship due to labour-market disadvantages.	Macro level
Meyer (2018)	Factors determining entrepreneurial activity of refugees	Blocked mobility hypothesis	Poorly trained and untrained refugees are pushed into entrepreneurship as they are not able to meet labour-market standards.	Macro level
Fass (1986)	Experiences of Hmong refugees in the struggle for self-reliance in the United States	Blocked mobility hypothesis and self-reliance concept	Hmong refugees entered self-employment due to facing considerable difficulties in participating in the labour market, and to avoid reliance on public welfare support.	Macro level

Predojević-Despić & Lukić (2018)	Entrepreneurship as a mode of integration for former refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in Belgrade, Serbia	Blocked mobility hypothesis	The conditions of high unemployment triggered high entrepreneurial activity among refugees.	Macro level
Tengeh (2018)	From refugee to successful entrepreneur	Blocked mobility hypothesis	Loss of career identity triggers the leap to entrepreneurial self-employment.	Macro level
Kupferberg (2008)	The challenges of entrepreneurial creativity among refugee men in Denmark	Blocked mobility hypothesis	The overriding motives among refugee entrepreneurs to start their own businesses is to prop up faltering self-esteem, which arises out of structural exclusion from the labour market.	Macro level
Wauters & Lambrecht (2006)	The potential and practice of refugee entrepreneurship in Belgium	The reaction model (Borjas, 1986)	The primary motive for refugees to start businesses arises from the need to integrate into the host labour market.	Macro level
Meyer & Pilkova (2017)	Challenges of promoting refugee entrepreneurship in Germany	Integration model by United Nations	Refugees engage in business start-ups due to push factors towards a necessity-driven entrepreneurial motivation.	Macro level
Hartman & Schilling (2018)	Refugee entrepreneurship in Germany	Blocked mobility hypothesis	The practices of the labour market lead refugees into self-employment	Macro level
Werker (2007)	The dynamics of refugee camp entrepreneurialism	Institutional theory	Refugee entrepreneurship in camp settings is influenced by host-country policies, such as restrictions on refugees' movement and work, as well as by the physical and economic isolation of the site.	Meso level
Garnham (2006)	Refugees and the entrepreneurial process	Refugee integration model (Valtonen, 2004)	Refugees become entrepreneurs out of a need to secure their financial future and to overcome labour-market discrimination.	Macro level
de la Chaux & Haugh (2020)	How and why refugees establish new ventures in resource-poor settings	Institutional theory	Institutional misalignment facilitates refugee entrepreneurship.	Meso level

de la Chaux (2018)	Refugee entrepreneurship in extreme environments	Institutional theory	Substantial informal entrepreneurial activity emerges in repressive camp settings to fill the vacuum left by formal institutions.	Meso level
Crush et al. (2017)	Refugee entrepreneurial economies in urban south Africa	Refugee economy	Many urban refugees are unable, for various reasons, to access formal employment in the cities and turn to the informal economy for their livelihoods.	Meso level
Heilbrunn & Rosenfeld (2018)	The story of a refugee entrepreneur in an institutional void environment	Institutional void (Mair & Marti, 2009)	Refugees start their own businesses to attend to their own needs and those of their communities, in the absence of any form of support or service provision from the host environment.	Macro level
Heilbrunn (2019)	Refugee entrepreneurship in institutional void settings	Institutional void (Mair & Marti, 2009)	In intentional institutional void environments, refugee entrepreneurship emerges to address economic detours through bricolage.	Macro level
Birdthistle, Flynn, & Rushworth (2019)	How supportive is the Australian entrepreneurial ecosystem to support incoming Syrian refugee entrepreneurs?	Entrepreneurial ecosystem	A strong entrepreneurship ecosystem in terms of human capital, accessible markets, and finance enables refugees to become entrepreneurs.	Macro level
Collins (2017)	Assessment of a small business startup programme for refugees	Social ecology model (Panter-Brick et al., 2006)	Startup programmes for refugees facilitate their entrepreneurial activity.	Meso level
Harima, Freudenberg, & Halberstadt (2019)	Functional domains of business incubators for refugee entrepreneurs	Business incubation (Becker & Gassmann, 2006)	Refugee-specific business incubators nurture the entrepreneurial entry of refugees by providing them with structured business knowledge, alleviating their anxiety related to institutional differences, motivating them, creating access to social capital, and supporting them with personal matters.	Meso level

Harima & Freudenberg (2020)	Co-creation of social entrepreneurial opportunities with refugees	Business incubation and acceleration literature	Entrepreneurial support systems specifically tailored to the needs of refugees facilitate their participation in business startup activity.	Meso level
Kong, Bishop, & Iles (2018)	Social enterprises for culturally and linguistically diverse refugee groups in Australia	Business incubation	Social enterprises facilitate the entry of refugees into venture start-ups.	Meso level
Singh (1994)	The emergence, growth, and performance of refugee businesses in the Indian bicycle industry	Institutional theory	Enterprising-oriented norms at regional level result in conducive policies and support programmes promoting entrepreneurship, which in turn foster refugee entrepreneurship.	Meso level
Bristol-Faulhammer (2017)	Startup assistance and successful refugee entrepreneurship in Austria	Literature on startup programmes	Startup programmes help refugee entrepreneurs with business development.	Meso level
Baltaci (2017)	Comparison of the entrepreneurial tendencies of Syrian refugees in different regions of Turkey and Germany	Literature on sociocultural and economic values	Syrian refugees in the German host regions manifested higher entrepreneurial tendencies than those in Turkey due to the existence of pro-entrepreneurial sociocultural values and patterns of thinking.	Meso level

Source: Author's own analysis

Composite Perspectives: Emphasizing the Interplay of Cultural and Structural Factors

Moving beyond perspectives focusing on specific factors, there are also composite perspectives that combine different aspects of the cultural and structural stances (Table 2.3). One example of this is the interactionist model (Waldinger et al., 1990), which conceptualizes refugee entrepreneurship as a result of the interaction between the ethnocultural backgrounds of refugees, in terms of their group characteristics and resources, and the opportunities available in the host country. This perspective has been used to explain the entrepreneurial involvement and success of refugees in different host countries. For example, Tömöry (2008) argues that the entrepreneurial success of the 1956 wave of Hungarian refugees in Canada can be attributed to the interplay of their predisposing factors – such as high human capital, entrepreneurial culture, risk-taking propensity, and opportunities for resource mobilization in the host country – with favourable market conditions and access to business ownership.

This model suggests that refugee entrepreneurship is determined by both refugees' individual characteristics and the opportunities available to them in the host country, highlighting the importance of considering both cultural and structural factors in analyzing the phenomenon.

The interactionist model, while useful in understanding how certain social and ethnocultural characteristics of refugee groups may influence their entrepreneurial activity, does not fully explain the origins of refugee entrepreneurship. This is because it mainly focuses on the supply side, neglecting the dynamic institutional contexts in which entrepreneurial opportunities for refugees arise (Mitchell, 2015). The host country's institutional-regulatory environment plays a crucial role in shaping the opportunities available to refugees and their ability to access entrepreneurship (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). This is where the mixed embeddedness perspective comes in, which takes into account both the supply and demand sides, recognizing the interplay between the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of refugees as well as their host country's institutional and regulatory environment (Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, & Rath, 1999).

Mixed embeddedness is an improved version of Waldinger et al.'s (1990) interactionist model. Scholars who use this perspective argue that refugee entrepreneurship emerges from the dynamic interaction between the social structure of the refugee entrepreneur(s), the opportunity structure, and the wider institutional-regulatory environment (Barak-Bianco & Rajman, 2015; Price & Chacko, 2009; Sepulveda, Syrett, & Lyon, 2011; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). The social structure includes human capital such as skills, competencies, and education, as well as the social and ethnocultural networks providing critical resources for business start-ups. The opportunity structure refers to the way in which the entire spectrum of opportunities to establish a business is formed in line with market conditions (in terms of aggregate demand for goods and services in the economy) and the market's accessibility to new entrants. Entrepreneurial opportunities for refugees and their access to entrepreneurship are also determined by policies, regulatory frameworks, and the dominant business practices of the host society (Ram et al., 2022; Villares-Valera, Ram, & Jones, 2022). In summary, the emergence of refugee entrepreneurship can best be understood through a comprehensive analysis of the interaction between refugees' characteristics and resources, on the one hand, and economic conditions and the wider institutional-regulatory context of the host country, on the other (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

Table 2.3

Summary of core refugee entrepreneurship literature applying composite perspectives

Author/Year	Main purpose	Theoretical background	Conclusion	Explanatory focus
Tömöry (2008)	Entrepreneurship among the 1956 wave of Hungarian refugees in Canada	Interactive model of ethnic business development (Waldinger et al., 1990)	Predisposing factors and opportunities for resource mobilization interact with favourable market conditions and access to business ownership, giving rise to many successful Hungarian refugee entrepreneurs.	Macro and meso levels
Wauters & Lambrecht (2008)	To investigate the barriers towards refugee entrepreneurship in Belgium	Interactive model of ethnic business development (Waldinger et al., 1990) and mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman, 2010)	Refugee entrepreneurship emerges from the dynamic interaction between the social structure of the refugee entrepreneurs, the opportunity structure, and the institutional and societal environment.	Macro and meso levels
Barak-Bianco & Rajjman (2015)	The business experiences of African asylum seekers and refugees in Israel	Mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman, 2010)	Impelled by blocked upward mobility, refugee and asylum-seeker entrepreneurs with a marginal and precarious status initiate and operate their businesses in a challenging economic and political environment, facilitated by resources and a customer base offered by their co-ethnic community.	Macro and meso levels
Price & Chacko (2009)	The mixed embeddedness of ethnic refugee entrepreneurs in a new immigrant gateway	Mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001)	Mixed embeddedness is a valuable lens by which to understand refugee entrepreneurship at the metropolitan scale.	Macro and meso levels
Sepulveda, Syrett, & Lyon (2011)	To develop a contextual analysis of the development of new migrant enterprise	Mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman & Rath, 2003)	Elements of ethnicity, migratory status, and other similar variables interact with wider political and economic contexts to shape the diverse processes of refugee business startup and operation.	Macro and meso levels
Senthanar et al. (2021)	Entrepreneurial experiences of	Mixed embeddedness	The entrepreneurial activity of women	Macro and meso levels

	Syrian refugee women entrepreneurs in Canada	(Kloosterman & Rath, 2001)	refugees is challenged by economic, regulatory, and gendered contexts, pushing them to operate in unregulated areas, which are not financially rewarding.	
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Source: Author's own analysis

Critics of Current Refugee Entrepreneurship Perspectives

Although there is a growing consensus among scholars regarding the specificity of refugee entrepreneurship (Essers et al., 2017; Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Harima, 2018; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008), it is often still explained based on perspectives borrowed from ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship research. As highlighted in the previous sections, refugee entrepreneurship research is grounded in cultural, structural, and mixed-embeddedness perspectives.

Orthodox culturalist perspectives emphasize the purported collective cultural traits of refugees from their origin (Gold, 1988, 1992). However, this conceptualization has faced criticism for oversimplifying the intricacies of refugee entrepreneurship by presuming a culturally homogeneous group and for its tendency to equate culture or ethnicity with entrepreneurship (Pütz, 2003). Thus, this perspective perceives culture or ethnicity as the primary focus, resulting in the portrayal of refugee entrepreneurship as a group-level phenomenon, rather than an individual-level one.

Nevertheless, the reality of contemporary refugees is more complex and diverse, because they originate from various backgrounds and possess a range of individual attributes such as age, gender, human capital endowment, and sociocultural orientation (Backman, Lopez, & Rowe, 2021; Harima et al., 2021; Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Iannone, 2018). Scholars contend that these personal characteristics, in conjunction with experiences of conflict, displacement, and refugee ascription, intersect with ethnicity to generate different entrepreneurial positions, experiences, and outcomes for each refugee (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021; Cederberg & Villares-Varela, 2019). This underscores the need to analyse refugee entrepreneurship at an individual level in order to capture the determinants significantly influencing refugees' entrepreneurial entry decision and journey.

Additionally, there are limitations to the cultural perspective's emphasis on ethnocultural resources and ethnic enclaves as primary drivers of refugee entrepreneurship. The reactive cultural theory posits that access to social and "ethnic" networks, geographical concentrations of refugee communities, and inter-relational connections in the host country facilitate the phenomenon (Campbell, 2007; Kaplan, 1997). However, refugees often encounter difficulties in forming

these networks and accessing such resources due to their disorganized and chaotic migration processes (Gold, 1992; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006).

In addition, the common practice of geographically dispersing refugees within their host countries after successful asylum applications further constrains their ability to settle in specific areas and establish ethnic enclaves that could offer them with valuable entrepreneurial resources and protected markets (Gold, 1988). Such circumstances illuminate the challenges that refugees face in creating mutual support networks, compared to immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurs (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). As a result, it is crucial to consider alternative perspectives in order to explain the entrepreneurial activity of refugees.

Furthermore, while cultural theories in general underscore the significance of ethnic resources and social networks, they overlook the broader institutional and socioeconomic context, as well as adverse circumstances constraining refugee entrepreneurs (Mitchell, 2015). Factors such as limited access to credit, language barriers, anti-refugee sentiments and discrimination influence refugees' entrepreneurial consideration and journeys (Harima et al., 2021; Ram et al., 2022). Additionally, the cultural perspective neglects government policies and regulations, which play a pivotal role in shaping their entrepreneurial opportunities and outcomes (Cederberg & Villares-Varela, 2019). Restrictive policies may limit the types of businesses that refugees can initiate and their access to financial resources, while supportive policies that offer business training and loan options can enhance their chances of success (Harima, Freudenberg, & Halberstadt, 2019; Harima & Freudenberg, 2020). Hence, to better understand and explain refugee entrepreneurship, a comprehensive perspective is required – one that encompasses not only ethnocultural resources and social networks but also the socioeconomic, institutional and regulatory context in the host location.

As previously discussed, structural perspectives offer an alternative understanding to cultural perspectives by concentrating on the broader socio-economic and institutional context within which refugees initiate and operate their ventures. However, they have been criticized for oversimplifying the complexities of the refugee experience and leading to overgeneralizations (Mitchell, 2015). By exclusively focusing on the macro- and meso-level, these perspectives disregard the multiplicity of factors, challenges, and circumstances faced by refugees, all of which significantly influence their individual entrepreneurial entry decisions, trajectories and outcomes (Pütz, 2003).

Furthermore, structural perspectives also neglect the agency of refugees and their capacity to make proactive choices, decisions and actions in the face of detrimental circumstances. By emphasizing the constraints and disadvantages encountered by refugees, structural perspectives downplay the role of human agency and overlook the resilience and resourcefulness that refugees often demonstrate when establishing and developing their own businesses (Cederberg & Villares-Varela, 2019). In conclusion, structural perspectives offer valuable insights into the external factors

that affect refugee entrepreneurship, but they need to be supplemented by other perspectives that take individual-level experiences and agency into account.

Mixed-embeddedness provides a comprehensive analysis of the refugee entrepreneurship context by integrating both cultural and structural factors (Ram et al., 2022). Nonetheless, this perspective is not without its shortcomings. One of its primary limitations is that it oversimplifies the complexities and diversities of refugee entrepreneurial experiences (Pütz, 2003). By neglecting individual-level factors, it may not fully capture the specific challenges and opportunities encountered by refugee entrepreneurs (Storti, 2018).

Furthermore, the mixed-embeddedness perspective tends to overemphasize the manner in which structural factors cast a long shadow over refugee entrepreneurship. It overlooks the proactive ways in which refugees navigate and manage their constraints when considering an entrepreneurial career as well as during the founding and development of their businesses (Ram, Jones, & Villares-Varela, 2017; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2018). In other words, the emphasis on structural factors obscures the understanding of refugees' entrepreneurial entry decision-making and their volitional actions as they orchestrate their entrepreneurial journey (Refai & McElwee, 2022; Storti, 2018). Therefore, the theorization of entrepreneurial agency within this perspective also remains underdeveloped.

In conclusion, while the cultural, structural, and mixed-embeddedness perspectives are relevant to refugee entrepreneurship research, they exhibit limitations when seeking a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. By focusing on external factors, these perspectives provide deterministic explanations, neglecting refugees' individual agency, that is, their ability to reflect upon their circumstances and voluntarily pursue entrepreneurship in their host countries. The next section further elaborates on these issues by revisiting current refugee entrepreneurship research in relation to the ongoing theoretical debates surrounding determinism versus voluntarism.

Revisiting the Refugee Entrepreneurship Literature through the Determinism versus Voluntarism Debates

A significant and longstanding debate in social science theories concerns the presuppositions of voluntarism (agency) and determinism (structure) (Bourdieu, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Giddens, 1984). This debate has been transposed to the study of entrepreneurship and small-business management (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007; Venkataraman & Sarasvathy, 2005). As per the deterministic viewpoint, sociocultural, normative, and regulatory processes establish an overarching structure within which entrepreneurial actors are both embedded and constrained. Seen from this standpoint, the surrounding structure/context shapes individuals' cognition, influences their interests, forms their identities, and directs

their entrepreneurial actions (Jelinek & Litterer, 1995). In contrast, the voluntaristic perspective perceives entrepreneurial actors as autonomous, knowledgeable, and self-directed individuals with the capacity to reflect over their circumstances and act proactively, potentially innovating in ways that deviate from societal structures and institutions (Garud & Karnøe, 2003; Mutch, 2007).

This section revisits the refugee entrepreneurship literature in light of the theoretic distinctions between determinism and voluntarism to appraise the current state of academic thought in this nascent research area. It also suggests a potential approach for addressing this debate in the conceptualization of the phenomenon. As noted in the previous sections, conceptualizations of refugee entrepreneurship have been built upon the culturalist, structuralist, and mixed embeddedness perspectives.

The culturalist perspective postulates that refugee entrepreneurship results either from inherent entrepreneurial cultural predispositions, or is a socioethnically enhanced adaptive response behaviour (Dana, 1997). Essentially, it posits that the presupposed ethnocultural nature of economic activity, ingrained in behaviours and traditions brought from the home country, deterministically shapes refugees' entrepreneurial decisions and behaviour. From a social theory standpoint, research emphasizing cultural perspectives tends to be structuralist in nature. This implies that structures are conceived as pre-conscious rules of thought and behaviour originating from the country of origin, which are not only deeply embedded in the consciousness of prospective refugee entrepreneurs, but are also collectively shared as a cultural code (Pütz, 2003). Hence, refugees engage in entrepreneurial activity because they continually reproduce the fundamental reality of such culturally programmed and trans-contextual abstract systems of rules from their specific ethnic group or country of origin.

The one-sided ethnocultural determinism ideal, which attributes refugees' entrepreneurial behaviour primarily to cultural traditions and ethnic resources, reduces refugee entrepreneurship to a mere ethnocultural phenomenon (Rath & Kloosterman, 2000). In this sense, culturalist perspectives are implicitly connected with structuration, given their view that ethnocultural attributes and resources shape the reproduction of refugee entrepreneurial activity (Drori, Honig, & Wright, 2009). Accordingly, studies anchored in cultural perspectives tend to convey the notion that the refugee entrepreneurship process is predominantly ethnoculturally driven, rather than economically motivated (Rath & Kloosterman, 2000). Such viewpoints overlook the role of refugee entrepreneurs as active economic agents. According to Mitchell (2015), the cultural perspectives' shortcomings in explaining enterprising refugees as independent economic actors are associated with the lack of academic efforts to position refugee entrepreneurs within the mainstream body of entrepreneurship research.

Studies adopting structuralist readings have likewise faced criticism for their unidimensional, and deterministic explanations. One structuralist stance associates the emergence of refugee entrepreneurship with the experience of significant structural impediments, such as discriminatory labour-market policies and

institutional voids (Heilbrunn, 2019; Kupferberg, 2008; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007). Within this framework, refugee entrepreneurship is perceived as an adaptive behaviour that occurs in response to disadvantages, social grievances, and marginalization (cf. Dana, 1997). Other dimensions of structural perspective regard it as a phenomenon cultivated by conducive host institutions (Bristol-Faulhammer, 2017; Singh, 1994). This shows that studies influenced by structuralist assumptions, whether explicitly or implicitly, treat refugee entrepreneurship as a consequence of structural determinants. Hence, they have limitations when seeking to provide a more nuanced understanding of the origins and context of refugees' individual entrepreneurial decision-making or actions. This limitation may stem from strong reliance on structuralist interpretive patterns, whereby the decisions and actions of refugee entrepreneurs are primarily perceived as reactions to meso- and macro-level structures beyond their immediate control (Pütz, 2003). In general, by overly stressing the deterministic aspects of the phenomenon, refugee entrepreneurship research with a structural focus portrays refugee entrepreneurs as passive subjects, rather than proactive entrepreneurial agents.

In a similar vein, mixed embeddedness overemphasizes the gravity of structural factors, and thus provides a framework that explains the entrepreneurial behaviour of refugees as primarily determined by the interplay of markets, institutions, social relationships, and networks (Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). For example, scholars have applied this framework to highlight the influence of structural factors on the outcomes of refugee entrepreneurship in both advanced Western (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008) and hostile socio-economic and political (Barak-Bianco & Rajjman, 2015) environments, the opportunities available to refugees in large urban areas (Price & Chacko, 2009), and their strategic use of resources (Harima, 2022). To some degree, these studies acknowledge the agency of refugees in leveraging different types of resources; however, they do not fully capture how they proactively pursue entrepreneurship and actively shape their journey towards it (Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). Overall, the mixed embeddedness perspective provides a comprehensive examination of structural factors, which aids in understanding the conditions and context of refugee entrepreneurship. However, it falls short in its attempts to illustrate how individual refugee entrepreneurs navigate and act in the face of structural constraints (Mitchell, 2015).

The deterministic view to the study of refugee entrepreneurship, which draws on culturalist- and structuralist-oriented perspectives, has been challenged in recent years by a growing number of scholars embracing voluntarism (Table 2.4). This stance emphasizes the voluntary actions of refugees in shaping their entrepreneurial pursuits (Cetin et al., 2022; Refai, Haloub, & Lever, 2018). Despite facing numerous disruptions and obstacles during their early stages of adaptation post-resettlement, refugees exhibit a high degree of entrepreneurial agency and take proactive steps to shape their circumstances (Jiang et al., 2021). New research offers different accounts on how refugees respond to their context through entrepreneurship as a

means of reconstructing their lives and career paths (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021; Obschonka, Hann, & Bajwa, 2018).

While voluntarism-oriented studies acknowledge refugees' entrepreneurial agency, they often lack a clear discussion of its relationship with external factors or the broader structure/context. Such research typically focuses on refugees' individual characteristics, such as their identity (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021; Refai, Haloub, & Lever, 2018), resilience (Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020; Yeshi, Harima, & Freiling, 2022), or motivations and intentions (Kachkar & Djafri, 2022; Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Welsh et al., 2022). According to Ram et al. (2022), this narrow psychological focus, while congruent with the call for an "agentic perspective" in the study of refugee entrepreneurship, as proposed by Obschonka, Hann, and Bajwa (2018), does not fully consider the interplay between individuals and their situational circumstances or context.

Table 2.4

Summary of core refugee entrepreneurship literature with agency-oriented perspectives

Author/Year	Main purpose	Theoretical background	Conclusion	Explanatory focus
Obschonka, Hann, & Bajwa (2018)	To examine the early integration process of refugees	Entrepreneurial cognition and personality factors	The findings underscore the relevance of an agentic perspective in the study of refugees, with a particular focus on the importance of entrepreneurial cognition.	Individual level
Mawson & Kasem (2019)	Exploring the entrepreneurial intentions of Syrian refugees in the United Kingdom	Intention models (Ajzen, 1991; Shapero & Sokol, 1982)	Personal development of independent refugee arrivals linked to the migration experience shapes their entrepreneurial intention.	Individual level
Refai, Haloub, & Lever (2018)	Contextualizing the entrepreneurial identity of refugees	Habitus (Bourdieu, 2000)	Entrepreneurial identity is a driver of refugees' entrepreneurial activity in constraining circumstances.	Individual level
Refai & McElwee (2022)	Conceptualizing refugees' endeavours to achieve upward social mobility through sub-entrepreneurship	Combining mixed embeddedness with Max Weber's (1978[1922]) metaphor of the 'Iron Cage of Rationality'	Refugees cleverly contemplate their implicit skills, opportunities, and processes to escape constraining institutional contexts.	Individual and context
Kachkar & Djafri (2022)	To investigate the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in	Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)	Attitude and perceived behavioural control predict refugees' entrepreneurial	Individual level

	predicting the intentional behaviour of refugee entrepreneurs		intention, but not subjective norms.	
Cetin et al. (2022)	Entrepreneurial motives, entrepreneurial success, and life satisfaction of refugees venturing into tourism and hospitality	Concepts of entrepreneurial motivations, success, and life satisfaction	Personal motives play a crucial role in increasing the perceived success of refugee entrepreneurs, leading to an improvement in their life satisfaction.	Individual level
Jiang et al. (2021)	Opportunity-production process of aspiring refugee entrepreneurs in their host countries	Opportunity-production process model (Wood & McKinley, 2010) and embeddedness	Refugees actively navigate the opportunity-production process in different ways in relation to how they use their cognitive abilities and social networks in their home and host countries.	Individual and context
Harima (2022)	Resource mobilization in refugee entrepreneurship	The concepts of embeddedness and proactive resource mobilization	Forced migration leads to loss of certain resources while simultaneously creating opportunities for building resources by forging new connections.	Individual and context
Adeeko & Treanor, 2021	To analyse the complexities of identity work among women refugee entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom	The concepts of identity work and intersectionality	Entrepreneurial identity enables the refutation of stigmatised refugee label; hence, it is personally enhancing by improving well-being and socioeconomic standing.	Individual
Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020	Refugee entrepreneurs' resilience outcomes in the face of substantial and persistent adversity	Positive psychology (Sheldon & King, 2001) and positive organisational scholarship (Cameron & Dutton, 2003)	Resilience outcomes are both a consequence and an antecedent of entrepreneurial action.	Individual level
Klyver, Steffens, & Honig (2022)	To investigate psychological factors in explaining Ukrainian refugee entrepreneurs' venture idea novelty	Psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007) and behavioural syndrome personal initiative (Frese, Hass, & Friedrich, 2016)	Crisis self-efficacy is the most important psychological factor in explaining new venture novelty among refugee entrepreneurs.	Individual level
Ram et al. (2022)	To explore the outcomes of refugee ventures	Mixed embeddedness combined with Edwards and	Refugee entrepreneurs actively deploy multiple strategies in the face of	Individual and context

	and the strategies they put in place	Ram's (2006) framework on the dynamics of small firms	disadvantages to develop their ventures.	
Welsh et al. (2022)	To investigate the entrepreneurial intentions of recent Syrian refugees in Jordan	Entrepreneurial event model (Shapero & Sokol, 1982)	Net desirability of self-employment, tolerance of risk, and self-efficacy are related to entrepreneurial intentions.	Individual level
Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones (2022)	The entrepreneurial aspirations and capabilities of new refugees in the United Kingdom	Sen's (1999) capabilities approach combined with mixed embeddedness	Structural barriers drive the formation of aspirations to become entrepreneurs among refugees, while at the same time limiting their capabilities to do so.	Individual and context

Source: Author's own analysis

To conclude, voluntarism-oriented studies have introduced new viewpoints to refugee entrepreneurship research. However, they often disregard the influence of external factors that significantly influence refugees' entrepreneurial consideration and endeavours. Refugee entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon (Jiang et al., 2021). Hence, its understanding requires an investigation of the interplay between contextual and situational factors and the personal agency of refugee entrepreneurs. As indicated in Table 2.4, a few notable studies shed light on this interaction (Harima, 2002; Ram et al., 2022; Refai & McElwee, 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). These studies reveal that the structural conditions experienced by refugees not only exert a considerable impact on their entrepreneurial opportunities and actions, but also limit their agency, constraining their ability to make decisions and act on them. Therefore, to capture the refugee entrepreneurship dynamics, it is necessary to approach it with a balanced perspective that takes into account both the agency and constraints of refugee entrepreneurs. To achieve this, a theoretical perspective that encapsulates the relationship between agency and structure/context is necessary, and this will be the subject of the next section.

Integrating Agency and Structure/Context in the Analysis of Refugee Entrepreneurship: Towards the Embedded Agency Perspective

The previous section underscores that the bulk of current refugee entrepreneurship research tends to overlook refugees' voluntary engagement in entrepreneurial activity (cf. McMullen & Dimov, 2013). This is because the cultural, structural, and mixed embeddedness perspectives primarily featuring extant studies are rooted in theoretical antecedents, which focus on external conditions and success factors for entrepreneurship (Mitchell, 2015). These perspectives highlight external factors

affecting refugee entrepreneurship, such as refugees' ethnocultural characteristics and resources, and the host country's structural conditions (Ram et al., 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). However, they lack a conceptual foundation for explaining the mechanisms behind refugees' voluntary decisions to fare as entrepreneurs and how they proactively navigate their entrepreneurial journey. As a result, much of the literature portrays refugees as passive in the face of disadvantageous circumstances, disregarding their roles as entrepreneurial agents who orchestrate their own paths (Abebe, 2019; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). Hence, in order to understand the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship, it is crucial to combine these perspectives with others that emphasize personal agency and give equal weight to the individual refugee entrepreneur.

In this regard, the notion of embedded agency offers the underlying conceptual foundation to bring a balanced perspective to refugee entrepreneurship research (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). Developed to address the longstanding "structure versus agency" debate, this perspective contends that focusing on structure/context over agency, as seen in early works on institutions (including refugee entrepreneurship research), results in causally deterministic models that disregard individuals' voluntary choices and behaviours. On the other hand, overemphasizing agency – as observed in earlier, overly heroic conceptualizations of entrepreneurs in mainstream entrepreneurship research – leads to a decontextualized and ahistorical understanding. The embedded agency concept reconciles these two polarized viewpoints by acknowledging the mutually constitutive relationship between agency and structure (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984). In this way, the embedded agency lays the conceptual underpinning necessary for developing a more nuanced understanding of refugee entrepreneurship's complex dynamics.

In the entrepreneurship literature, different agency-based models have been identified to complement the existing cultural, structural, and mixed embeddedness perspectives by emphasizing refugees' individual choices and actions. For example, Ram et al. (2022) integrated mixed embeddedness with Edwards and Ram's (2006) framework of business dynamics to highlight the strategic choices of refugee entrepreneurs, their utilization of formal business networks, and their proactive resource deployment. This combination portrays refugees as resourceful agents who deploy multiple strategies to manage their challenging circumstances. Similarly, Villares-Varela, Ram, and Jones (2022) combined mixed embeddedness with the capability approach (Sen, 1999) to investigate the interdependence between refugee entrepreneurs' aspirations and their context. The capability approach highlights humans' ability to lead their lives by maximizing the available choices. These authors' combined approach thus provides a balanced view of refugee entrepreneurship and strengthens the theorization of individual agency. Other human agency-based models for refugee entrepreneurship research include social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989), positive psychological capital theory (Luthans et al., 2007), human capital theory (Nafukho, Hairston, & Brooks, 2004), self-efficacy theory (Bandura & Adams, 1977), and self-determination theory (Deci et al., 1994).

Among the various models that accentuate entrepreneurial agency, this dissertation employs Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour because it provides a coherent framework that effectively captures the early-stage — both pre-decision and action — of refugee entrepreneurship (Kautonen, Van Gelderen, & Fink, 2015). This theory, which emphasizes individual actors and their volitional decisions and behaviour, offers insights into the cognitive mechanisms by which refugees exercise their agency in making entrepreneurial decisions and undertaking actions.

This study applies the Theory of Planned Behaviour to explore and theorize about refugees' entrepreneurial agency, as reflected in their entrepreneurial beliefs. Entrepreneurial beliefs entail deeply held assumptions or information that shape an individual's consideration and thoughts about engaging in entrepreneurial behaviour (Krueger, 2007). The Theory of Planned Behaviour suggests that entrepreneurial beliefs have a significant impact on entrepreneurial behaviour and comprise three components: behavioural beliefs, which pertain to an individual's perceptions of the consequences of entrepreneurship; normative beliefs, which address referent groups' expectations concerning entrepreneurship; and control beliefs, which cover factors that facilitate or hinder entrepreneurial behaviour (Tornikoski & Maalaoui, 2019). By incorporating entrepreneurial beliefs, the Theory of Planned Behaviour provides a comprehensive framework for understanding refugees' agency by addressing how their beliefs relate to their entrepreneurial intentions and behaviours.

Summarizing the Theoretical Debate in Current Refugee Entrepreneurship Research

To recap the theoretical discussion, I have analysed the existing refugee entrepreneurship literature from the viewpoints of determinism and voluntarism in order to assess the current understanding of the topic. Predominantly, the literature adopts a deterministic perspective, focusing on external factors as drivers of refugee entrepreneurial behaviour. Some of the studies underscore the cultural characteristics and traditions, innate entrepreneurial predispositions, and ethnocultural resources linked with refugees' country of origin (Gold, 1988, 1992; Halter, 1995; Johnson, 2000) as dictating their subsequent entry into and outcomes in entrepreneurship. Other studies argue the same by focusing on the socioeconomic conditions and politico-regulatory arrangements in refugees' host country locations along with the opportunities and constraints for their entrepreneurial activity (Heilbrunn, 2019; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007). There are also studies highlighting the interplay of cultural and structural factors (Tömöry, 2008; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

Conversely, the voluntarism-oriented literature highlights the role of individual agency and motivation in shaping refugee entrepreneurship. Scholars adopting this perspective argue that refugees make deliberate decisions to become entrepreneurs based on their personal goals, aspirations, and desires. They view entrepreneurship as a means of creating a better future for themselves and their families, despite the challenges posed by forced displacement and resettlement in foreign contexts (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021; Cetin et al., 2022; Klyver, Steffens, & Honig, 2022; Obschonka, Han, & Bajwa, 2018; Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Yeshi, Harima, & Freiling, 2022). Taken together, these studies emphasize that refugees possess the capability to become entrepreneurs and pursue entrepreneurship voluntarily.

In a nut shell, both determinism- and voluntarism-oriented views are essential for understanding the phenomenon of refugee entrepreneurship. The former sheds light on the challenges and barriers that refugees face, while the latter emphasizes their resilience, resourcefulness, and ability to shape their own lives. Recently, scholars have called for a more balanced theoretical investigation of refugee entrepreneurship, taking into account both agency and structure (Ram et al., 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). In line with this idea, this study employs embedded agency as an underlying conceptual foundation (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007).

Conclusion: Key Takeaways from the Analysis of Existing Refugee Entrepreneurship Literature Relevant to this Dissertation

The literature review presented in this chapter shows that an increasing number of scholars have recently recognized the need to distinguish the reasons, nature, and processes of migration when investigating migrant entrepreneurship (Barth & Zalkat, 2021; Bizri, 2017; Mason & Kasem, 2019; Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019). Since refugees do not primarily move voluntarily for economic or business reasons, the forced nature of their migration and the associated experiences of disruptive events, perilous journey, trauma, and constrained legal circumstances can have a significant impact on their entrepreneurial activity after relocation (Heilbrunn, Freiling, & Harima, 2018).

Such insights have fuelled the growing popularity of studying refugee entrepreneurship as a specific way to understand the relationship between forced international migration and entrepreneurial activity in unfamiliar contexts (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021). The research in this area is still in its early stages, but it is expected to gain more attention in the future because it enhances academic understanding, not only of the diversity within entrepreneurship, but also of how it can be successfully pursued by some of the most disadvantaged migrant cohorts,

who may ostensibly seem least suited to entrepreneurship. In this respect, refugee entrepreneurship research is pioneering, because it pushes the boundaries of traditional scholarship on migrant and mainstream entrepreneurship (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). However, there is still much work to be done to develop this emerging stream of research. The key issues to address are stated below.

Firstly, despite the growing body of literature, current refugee entrepreneurship research is heterogeneous and fragmented and lacks a strong scientific foundation for future scholarly endeavours. There is a lack of clear understanding of the phenomenon that could define its scope and boundaries (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). Additionally, the absence of a well-defined conceptual boundary for empirical research has led to a variety of interpretations of the phenomenon, making it difficult to distinguish the research area from related fields that study similar phenomena (see, for instance, Krivokapic-Skoko, Watson, & Collins, 2023; Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019). These issues have negative implications for its long-term viability as a distinct area of research. Hence, there is a need to consolidate and integrate existing refugee entrepreneurship knowledge and clearly define the scope of its inquiry.

Secondly, the “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” nature of refugees makes it difficult to gather robust empirical evidence on the phenomenon for local, national, and international policymaking and decision-making, as well as for cross-national comparative research (Bloch, 2004; 2007). The challenges involved in identifying entrepreneurial refugees for surveys further limit scholarly efforts to create large-scale datasets that would enable more advanced analysis and deeper insights (Leiler et al., 2019). This highlights the need for methodological development in refugee entrepreneurship research, specifically in terms of designing and empirically validating a sampling strategy that is appropriate for the specific characteristics of refugee entrepreneurs and their initial placement in host countries post-relocation.

Thirdly, the majority of refugee entrepreneurship studies have been conducted by scholars in the social sciences and humanities. Mainstream entrepreneurship and management scholars have been largely absent from this research area, with only a few exceptions in recent years (e.g., Klyver, Steffens, & Honig, 2022; Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020). This lack of participation has influenced the focus, direction, and content of research on the topic. Much of the literature focuses on identifying the factors that determine refugee entrepreneurship, including its causes and success factors (Lazarczyk-Bilal, 2019). The primary research focus has been to investigate how ethnocultural characteristics and resources, as well as the structure of the host economy and political-institutional conditions, influence refugees’ entrepreneurial entry and outcomes. Overall, the limited participation of entrepreneurship scholars in this area of research has created a knowledge gap in understanding how refugees become entrepreneurs, what they do to start and develop their ventures, and how they go about it.

Fourthly, extant refugee entrepreneurship research often follows a phenomenon-driven approach, either lacking any clearly stated conceptual foundations or drawing

on eclectic theories from multiple disciplines (Abebe, 2019, 2022). Within the latter group, many studies are conceptually grounded in culturally and structurally-oriented perspectives developed for immigrant entrepreneurs, despite the acknowledged specificities of refugee entrepreneurs (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020; Lazarczyk-Bilal, 2019). However, these theoretical frameworks are themselves predicated upon specific antecedents, which tend to focus primarily on the cultural and structural context of refugee entrepreneurship. As such, they are not well-suited to explaining the mechanisms underlying refugees' entrepreneurial agency, particularly their voluntary decision to pursue entrepreneurship and how they proactively shape their journey towards it. Consequently, there is a need for a conceptual foundation that captures the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship by considering the interplay between agency and structure/context when investigating this phenomenon.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter presents an overview of the methodology employed in this dissertation and is broadly organized into several sub-sections. The chapter begins by briefly outlining the background and context that prompted this study, followed by explaining the research process leading to the development of the four studies constituting the dissertation. It subsequently delves into the research design, including the strategies used to generate and analyse the empirical material, along with the types of data sources, variables, and analyses employed in each empirical paper. The chapter then provides reflections on the methods and data, and ends with deliberations on the relevant ethical considerations.

Genesis of the Research Idea

My interest in the topic of refugee entrepreneurship was ignited during the “Refugee Crisis” of the mid-2010s. At that time, similar to other European countries such as Germany and Austria, Sweden was confronted with the urgent task of integrating a large number of refugees into its society (Vogiazides & Mondani, 2020). However, previous research highlighted that refugees often encountered difficulties establishing themselves in the Swedish labour market (Åslund, Forslund, & Liljeberg, 2017). As a result, there was an ongoing debate and significant concerns about the feasibility of successfully integrating the recent waves of refugees, a topic that has remained a prominent feature in the country’s immigration discourse.

As societal attitudes towards refugees began to sour, I observed the emergence of a politically motivated discourse emphasizing their positive economic contributions. Certain Swedish local municipalities, and even politicians, began promoting entrepreneurship as an integral component of their efforts to portray a positive image of refugees and facilitate their vocational adaptation. This discourse overstated the potential and desire of refugees to pursue entrepreneurship, and its celebratory tone was also fêted by public institutions and some major local newspapers. This led to considerable efforts to promote entrepreneurship among refugees and institutionalize entrepreneurship-driven refugee integration. To this end, various

business support programmes targeting potential refugee entrepreneurs emerged in different parts of the country, supported by both private and public funds.

Inspired by such developments, a colleague from Lund University and I organized a short-term entrepreneurial training programme for refugees in the autumn of 2016. This programme was funded by the Sten K. Johnson Foundation, and received logistical backing from the university, along with different kinds of contributions from various public and private organizations, including the Swedish Employment Agency. Over the course of four months, we provided 20 refugees with both theoretical and practical entrepreneurial training, with the aim of equipping them to start businesses in Sweden. However, despite successfully completing the programme, most of the participants did not consider entrepreneurship a feasible pathway to integration. This outcome, albeit anticipated, highlighted the need for gaining a deeper understanding of the factors influencing refugees' consideration of entrepreneurship. This issue is something we later sought to investigate in Paper III.

We were particularly intrigued by the dialectic between the enthusiastic political and public discourse celebrating refugee entrepreneurship and the actual preferences of the refugees themselves. The discourse framed refugee entrepreneurship as a panacea to the “crisis” and an ideal pursuit for newcomers, notwithstanding their disruptive circumstances. In contrast to this, our interactions with refugee participants revealed a different perspective. We identified both opportunities and challenges specific to refugees seeking to undertake entrepreneurship.

Simultaneously, we also noticed that the political assumptions underpinning refugee entrepreneurship and the design of supportive initiatives were rooted more in culturalist perspectives drawn from immigrant entrepreneurship (Gürsel, 2017) than an evidence-based understanding. This culturalist perspective posits that certain refugee groups, such as Syrians, inherently possess culturally specific entrepreneurial values, attributes, and resources (Dana, 1997; Mitchell, 2015). Hitherto, refugee entrepreneurship research is still nascent, with no academic studies investigating these assumptions. Hence, there is insufficient scientific evidence to effectively guide policymakers and practitioners.

These issues ignited our scholarly curiosity to further study the refugee entrepreneurship phenomenon. The timing of our interest coincided with a research grant call from the Familjen Kamprad Stiftelse (Kamprad Family Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Research, and Charity), seeking research projects with a specific focus on developing scientific knowledge on the topic. We also discovered a similar project led by a research team at the Institute for Innovation Management at Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria. We submitted a joint application for the grant under the rubric “Characteristics, Conditions, and Scope of Entrepreneurship among Newcomers”² in Sweden and Austria. Upon receiving the grant, we began

² <https://familjenkampradstiftelse.se/info/characteristics-conditions-scope-entrepreneurship-among-newcomers/>

our research project, and my PhD study commenced on September 1, 2017. The next section outlines the research progress and the structure of the four papers.

Brief Overview of the Research Process

As stated above, this doctoral dissertation forms a substantial part of an extensive research project collaboratively initiated and carried out by a consortium of researchers from Lund University and Johannes Kepler University in Linz. At its inception, the overarching purpose of the project was to investigate refugee entrepreneurship as a multilevel process, employing a longitudinal research design with the intent to gather comprehensive survey data over multiple waves. The plan was to track prospective refugee entrepreneurs from their pre-decision stage and formation of entrepreneurial intention right through the series of cognitive and behavioural steps they engage in towards founding a business in their host country.

However, the successful completion of the first wave of data collection on refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs in 2019 was followed by the unforeseen outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This cataclysmic event, along with the enforcement of stringent lockdowns spanning over a year, particularly in Austria, significantly impeded the realization of our original research blueprint. Once the lockdown restrictions were eased, we distributed a second wave of survey questionnaires, leveraging the contact details provided by our respondents. Despite persistent efforts, we lost track of most of them; thus, their sustained engagement for subsequent phases of the study proved to be unattainable.

Given the challenges we encountered, the original longitudinal survey-based research design was no longer feasible. Hence, I shifted the focus to gain more nuanced insights into refugee entrepreneurship through a combination of systematic analysis and a mixed-methods approach. This led to an extension of the qualitative dataset, initiated in 2018 as part of a pilot study, ultimately leading to the development of Paper IV. In light of this, the paragraphs below detail the various stages of the study, stressing their contributions to the overarching research objective. It is critical to acknowledge that the obstacles encountered during data collection substantially influenced the final research design and methodology.

The first step involved a configurative mapping of extant refugee entrepreneurship literature to navigate its theoretical and empirical terrain that spans diverse academic disciplines. Given that refugee entrepreneurship is an emerging phenomenon, the primary purpose of this review was to delineate the current state of research and the approaches employed in prevailing studies. The review highlighted that the research area was characterized by highly contextualized findings, leading to a fragmented body of knowledge. Furthermore, the review revealed that refugee entrepreneurship research comprises an anthology of loosely connected studies, with an apparent lack of concerted efforts to establish a coherent

understanding of the subject. Hence, it was deemed necessary to address these concerns prior to undertaking further empirical research.

Accordingly, the first paper for the dissertation undertook systematic and thematic analyses of the prevailing refugee entrepreneurship research. An earlier version of this paper, which drew on 90 publications, was presented at the Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (RENT) Conference in Berlin, Germany, during late autumn 2019. A modestly revised version was published as a chapter in the book “Diversity and Entrepreneurship”.³ The most recent version of the paper, published in the journal “Small Business Economics” in 2022, incorporated the latest peer-reviewed academic contributions, broadening the scope to 131 publications in various formats.⁴ This paper provides a collective research foundation that serves to build coherent theory, form the ontological and epistemological basis for the research area, and guide future scholarly endeavours.

Specifically pertinent to this dissertation, the paper pinpoints three primary issues, laying the basis for the subsequent papers. First, it identifies the challenges of constructing robust empirical evidence on refugee entrepreneurship through large-scale, survey-based studies. The primary reason for this is the “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” nature of refugee populations (Bloch, 2004). Refugees represent subgroups difficult to identify in substantial numbers for surveys using representative probability sampling methods because there are no censuses or complete registers of them to serve as sampling frames (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). Moreover, the sensitive nature of their life circumstances often makes them less motivated to participate in surveys. Hence, researchers face the dual representativity challenges of identification and motivation to create representative samples of entrepreneurial refugees for survey-based research. Addressing these challenges is essential for advancing the methodological foundations of quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research.

In line with this, Paper II developed an innovative sampling strategy to identify members of hidden populations for surveys. The paper proposed and empirically substantiated the feasibility of Facebook’s sophisticated algorithm for targeted ads — the primary survey recruitment strategy for the overarching research project — to address the representativity challenges of identification in refugee entrepreneurship research. As Facebook ad-based sampling is widely used in medical and healthcare internet survey research (Parackal et al., 2017; Platt et al., 2016), this paper validated its use for entrepreneurship research. By validating this method for recruiting entrepreneurial refugees, this paper contributes to the

³ Abebe, S. A. (2019). Taking stock and moving forward in research on refugee entrepreneurship. In: Ratten, V., & Dana, L. P. (Eds.) *Diversity and Entrepreneurship* (pp. 23–62). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429293085-3>

⁴ Abebe, S. A. (2022). Refugee entrepreneurship: Systematic and thematic analyses and a research agenda. *Small Business Economics*, 60(1), 315–350. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-022-00636-3>

attainment of representative samples suitable for the application of advanced statistical analysis techniques to the topic. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 21st Nordic Conference on Small Business and Entrepreneurship (NCSB) in Kolding, Denmark, in Spring 2022.

Secondly, the literature review reveals that the majority of extant refugee entrepreneurship research is anchored in cultural and structural perspectives. The literature tends to explain the phenomenon through factors associated with refugees' ethnic origins or with reference to the conditions in their host location, respectively. However, entrepreneurship involves volitional decision-making, an aspect that neither of these perspectives fully captures. In response, Paper III adopts a more agency-centric approach, complementing the culturally and structurally oriented understanding of refugee entrepreneurship with the presuppositions of embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). It draws on the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a consistent foundation for theorizing refugees' entrepreneurial agency by considering their entrepreneurial beliefs in relation to their ethnic origin and host locations (Ajzen, 1991).

Empirically, this paper compares the entrepreneurial beliefs of refugees from four different ethnic backgrounds who resettled in four Austrian and seven Swedish cities. Based on these factors, it examines the cultural and structural aspects for their development of entrepreneurial agency. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the "Workshop on Refugee Entrepreneurship" organized at the University of Bremen in Spring 2022. An improved version was subsequently presented at the Academy of Management (AoM) Conference in Seattle in the summer of 2022, with the abstract published in the conference proceedings.⁵

Building upon the analysis of factors shaping the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship, it was vital to further unpack refugees' entrepreneurial journey through inductive theory-building. This was inspired by the insight gleaned from the literature review, which highlighted that current refugee entrepreneurship research typically adopts a 'snapshot' or static approach, limiting the investigation solely to its antecedents. The research largely focuses on the cultural and structural factors that influence refugees' entrepreneurial entry, without considering how they fare as entrepreneurs in the host country. As a result, Paper IV sought to capture how refugees proactively overcome their disadvantageous circumstances linked with forced displacement, and actively orchestrate their entrepreneurial journey to establish and develop their ventures. This paper enriches existing literature with a processual model unfolding the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship. The paper is

⁵ Abebe, S. A., Fink, M., & Breitenecker, R. J. (2022). Entrepreneurial beliefs of refugees: It's not where they're from, but where they go. In S. Taneja (Ed.), *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings 2022* (1st ed., Vol. 2022). Academy of Management. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2022.14839abstract>

accepted for publication as a book chapter in the upcoming “Palgrave Handbook of Global Migration in International Business”.

Research Design of the Empirical Studies

This dissertation applies a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, to provide a comprehensive understanding of refugee entrepreneurship (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Mixed-methods research designs are increasingly prevalent in entrepreneurship research, where they serve different purposes such as complementarity, expansion, and triangulation of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). In this study, this design serves the purpose of complementarity, that is, expanding and strengthening its conclusions, given that the research questions and the topic of refugee entrepreneurship require richer and more robust insights derived from various methods (Greene, 2007; Tatibekov, Dana, & Alzhanova, 2022). Although most mixed-methods designs are pre-planned, the design implemented in this study emerged organically during the course of the research. This was a strategic response to the challenges encountered in the data collection, rendering the mixed-methods design in this study an “emergent” one (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The quantitative approach incorporates a combination of cross-sectional surveys and secondary data. The survey data, collected for the overarching research project, provides valuable insights into refugees’ early-stage entrepreneurial activity by examining their entrepreneurial beliefs across varying ethnic origins and host city locations. The secondary data, sourced from various governmental and publicly accessible repositories, facilitates the investigation into societal, economic, politico-regulatory, and institutional conditions that impact the formation of entrepreneurial beliefs within the specific contexts of host cities. However, identifying a sufficiently large sample for a meaningful quantitative analysis of refugees’ entrepreneurial journeys poses considerable challenges. These challenges partly arise from the extended time that refugees require to engage in concrete entrepreneurial steps and actions in their host countries (Obschonka, Hann, & Bajwa, 2018), compounded by the inherent complexities of longitudinal quantitative research within this group.

In this regard, a qualitative approach proved not only suitable but also highly beneficial for theory-building purposes, particularly given the absence of previous studies inductively theorizing on the refugee entrepreneurial process (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). To maintain methodological rigour, this dissertation relies in part on data and analysis drawn from an inductive qualitative study design (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). The inductive qualitative approach helps to capture the sequence of events in refugees’ lives prior to, during, and following their displacement, thus providing a fundamental understanding of their entrepreneurial journey. This level of detail would be challenging to achieve using survey-based

designs (e.g., Obschonka, Hann, & Bajwa, 2018). Hence, the qualitative component is particularly advantageous for exploring the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship.

To conclude, the mixed-methods design combines the strengths of both survey-based and qualitative inductive research, thereby addressing the limitations inherent with each method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021). The quantitative component was somewhat constrained by its cross-sectional nature and the challenges of capturing the peculiarities of refugees' experiences in relation to the contexts of their origin and destination. Moreover, it could not encapsulate the in-depth narratives of their entrepreneurial journeys (Tatibekov, Dana, & Alzhanova, 2022). However, these limitations were circumvented by the qualitative component, which detailed the nuances and complexities of refugee entrepreneurs' life situations, experiences, and actions during their venture founding and development process from a longitudinal perspective (Dana & Dana, 2005). By integrating the two components, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the refugee entrepreneurship phenomenon.

Different sampling methods were employed to identify and recruit participants for the study, with further explanations provided in the following sections.

Data Collection Methods

Sampling Strategies for Survey Data Collection

It is already stated that entrepreneurial refugees constitute “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” populations. This makes it challenging to identify them through official records for sampling purposes. Hence, this dissertation utilizes a blend of non-probability sampling strategies in both the offline and online worlds to administer the survey data collection (Bloch, 2004; Duncan, White, & Nicholson, 2003). Non-probability sampling involves participant selection based on factors other than randomization, which could potentially introduce biases into sample selection. However, for hard-to-reach populations such as refugees, non-probability sampling appears to be the most feasible recruitment option (Vehovar, Toepoel, & Steinmetz, 2016).

The offline strategy incorporates three of the most commonly used non-probability sampling methods: snowball, self-selection, and targeted sampling. These have previously been employed in studies involving hidden or hard-to-reach populations (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Watters & Biernacki, 1989). Recognizing their inherent limitations, these methods were supplemented with online purposive sampling drawing on Facebook's sophisticated algorithm for targeted ads (Iannelli

et al., 2020). Facebook ad-based sampling was the primary strategy for this study. The following sections elaborate on the implementation of each data collection strategy in the study.

Offline Sampling Strategies

Snowball Sampling

Snowballing is a non-probability sampling method that depends on referrals from existing participants to obtain additional participants from their network of acquaintances (Watters & Biernacki, 1989). In this dissertation, snowball sampling was employed to identify and recruit refugees for a survey with the assistance of carefully chosen initial participants. The research team leveraged personal and professional connections to pinpoint key informants within the target refugee groups, who then helped in locating and recruiting additional eligible participants (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2011). This approach proved to be relevant due to the hidden nature of refugees (Bloch, 2004; Duncan, White, & Nicholson, 2003), as traditional methods such as random-route sampling or random-digit-dialling were ineffective within this group (Pötzschke & Braun, 2017).

To coordinate the data collection efforts, a Syrian research assistant with a refugee background was employed at Lund University in June 2019. The assistant was well-trained and possessed proven experiences from various government-sponsored refugee integration projects during the “refugee crisis”. Through a social network analysis, the team identified 39 starting points for snowballing (von der Fehr, Sølberg, & Bruun, 2018). Starting with the research assistant’s extensive networks within recently-arrived refugee communities in Sweden and Austria, the recruited participants were also encouraged to share the survey invitation with other eligible refugees. Two members of the research team, who had been actively involved in refugee integration projects, delivered entrepreneurship workshops for refugees and utilized their networks to refer additional qualified participants (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Snowball sampling may introduce selection bias if initial participants share certain characteristics or only refer people similar to themselves (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). To mitigate these biases, the team implemented multiple starting points for snowballing (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2011).

Targeted Sampling

Targeted sampling is a non-probability strategy for recruiting participants from specific subgroups within a population at predetermined locations through a benchmark-run analysis (Morris et al., 2009). This method was used in the dissertation to complement the snowballing approach and alleviate its potential limitations arising from overreliance on limited referrals (Vigneswaran & Quirk, 2013). To implement this strategy, the research team undertook an initial mapping of subgroups within the target refugee populations and developed a list of potential

key multipliers (Morris et al., 2009). The mapping exercise resulted in a matrix containing a comprehensive list of multipliers, including governmental and non-governmental supranational organizations, private initiatives, and other stakeholders working in the realm of refugee reception and integration in Sweden and Austria during the study period. The research team then matched the list of identified multipliers between the two countries to ensure similarity.

The research team devised detailed plans and strategies for engaging each multiplier with the intent of encouraging them to promote the research within their respective peer groups (Spring et al., 2003). In Sweden, 16 out of 22 multipliers expressed a willingness to participate. These were provided with a formal introduction letter explaining the research, the type of help required, and a link to the survey. However, in Austria, all 18 multipliers declined for various reasons, including limited resources, high workloads, and the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of 2018. As a result, the recruitment strategy had to be modified. To this end, the research team conducted an international media analysis. This proved instrumental in identifying seven prominent multipliers with a refugee background, including influencers and opinion leaders across various virtual groups, forums, social media channels, and information communities centred on migration-related topics. In total, the combined efforts of the 23 multipliers from Sweden and Austria facilitated the data collection process by sending the survey invitation and questionnaire link to refugees within their communities.

Self-Selection Sampling

The self-selection sampling strategy entails the recruitment of participants from specific refugee groups who choose to participate of their own accord after receiving a general invitation outlining the research objectives (Lavrakas, 2008). To implement this strategy, the research team compiled a list of 32 public places known to be frequently visited by refugee communities across a wide spectrum of locations. These places included public libraries, government offices commonly visited by refugees, such as National Employment Agency service centres, adult education centres, religious institutions, and other comparable locations. Additionally, the team identified about 20 events specifically organized for refugees by government and non-profit organizations, such as language cafés and integration activities.



Figure 3.1
A poster used for self-selection sampling in Sweden

Title: “Have you ever thought of owning your own business in Sweden?”

Body: “We are researchers from Lund University trying to understand the difficulties facing newcomers when starting their own businesses. Take part in the survey and let us understand the steps to achieving your dreams together.”

Instruction: “Scan the QR code and participate in the survey!”

After securing the necessary permissions, the research team displayed posters in Arabic and English at the selected locations and events. The posters provided information about the study and extended an invitation to participate in the survey. They also featured a QR code, offering a direct link to the online survey. Figure 3.1 displays a sample of the poster used in Sweden. This method proved effective in enabling prospective participants to easily access the survey on their mobile phones, a feature particularly crucial for refugees with limited access to other forms of communication. Moreover, the self-selection sampling method proves relevant for recruiting participants who are interested in sharing their experiences and opinions. Furthermore, it helps to identify and reach out to marginalized and less socially active refugees (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2011), who might be overlooked by the other sampling methods.

Online Facebook Ad-Based Sampling

The snowball, targeted, and self-selection sampling strategies were complemented with purposive sampling by leveraging Facebook’s algorithm for targeted ads (Iannelli et al., 2020). In this dissertation, Facebook ad-based sampling is the primary survey recruitment strategy, because it is the only non-probability approach that employs a sampling frame in the form of digital censuses of refugees (Grow et al., 2020). This approach is particularly useful for quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research, as it allows for the identification of eligible participants

from the target refugee population by launching one or more paid campaigns. These campaigns appear as banner or text ads on Facebook users' timelines or news feeds.

Potential respondents who click on an ad are directed to the survey landing page with the online questionnaires (Pötzschke & Braun, 2017). Facebook's ad system provides powerful features, including the ability to target and segment the user population based on demographics such as age, location, and gender. This targeting can be further refined by including or excluding other digital traces, such as interests or behaviours (Iannelli et al., 2020). This study targets Syrian refugees located in Sweden and Austria, aged 18 to 65, who are legally permitted to start a business in their respective countries. To further narrow down the audience, users were filtered by their Arabic language skills and their interest in the subject of Syria and the Syrian conflict. Based on these criteria, Facebook estimated a potential audience size between 211,200 and 248,500 people, which represents an estimate of the combined audience size in Sweden and Austria together during the study period.

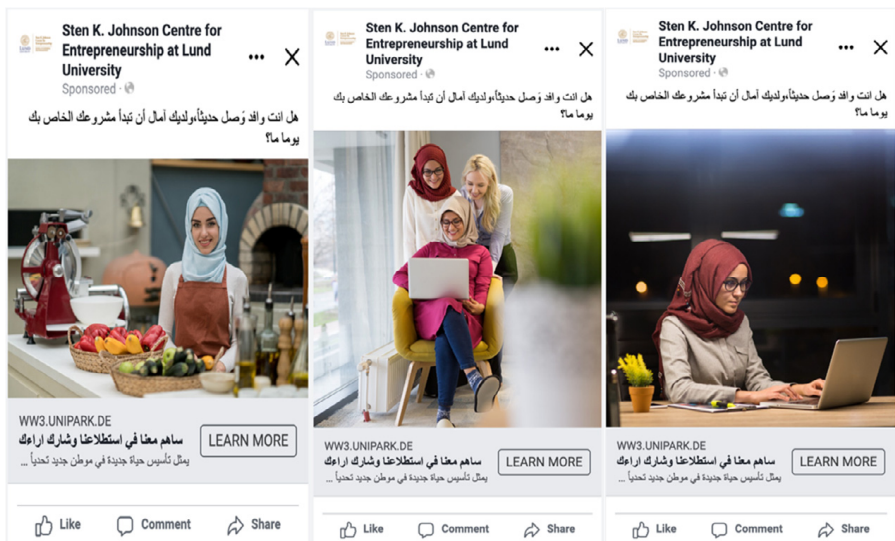


Figure 3.2
Banner ad set 1 for the first campaign

Implementation of the Ad Campaigns

Two paid ad campaigns were launched for this study over a period of 15 weeks from a Facebook page directly linked to the Sten K. Johnson Centre for Entrepreneurship at Lund University. The first campaign consisted of two ad sets, each targeting different genders. Each set contained three separate ads featuring similar Arabic text but different images to reflect the diversity within the target group (refer to Figures

3.2 and 3.3). The use of Arabic in the advertisement language also facilitated participant screening.

The ad text was carefully crafted to motivate prospective participants to take part in the survey (Pötzschke & Braun, 2017). The primary text inquired if users were newly arrived refugees with aspirations of starting their own businesses, while the headline text invited them to participate in the survey. A descriptive text was included to reduce non-converting clicks by explaining the survey’s aim and scientific significance. The description emphasized the challenges of establishing a new life in a new country, particularly when starting a business, and explained that the survey sought to better understand these challenges. To do so, it required individuals with initial experience establishing themselves in a new country and ambitions to own a company to share their experiences.

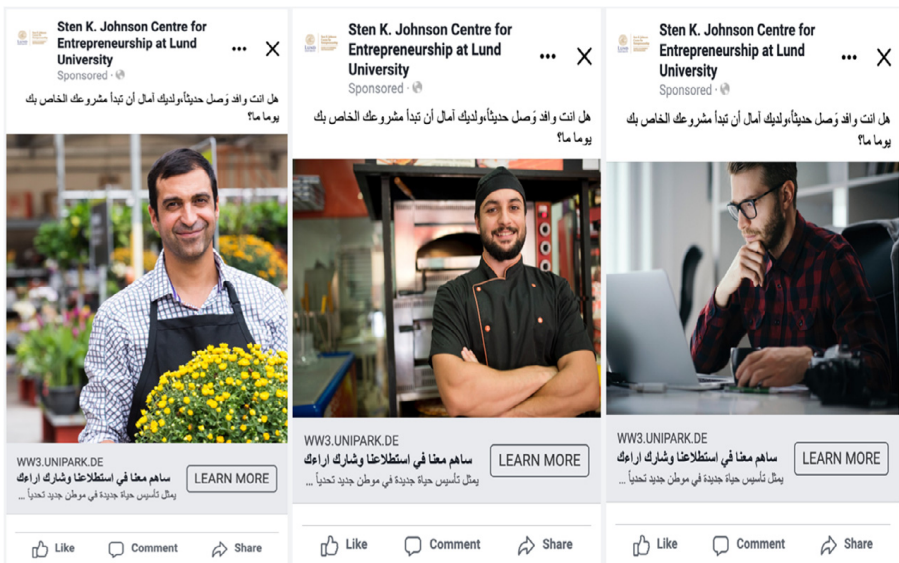


Figure 3.3
Banner ad set 2 for the first campaign

The first campaign’s banner ad sets 1 and 2 were launched on August 5, 2019 and continued until October 7, 2019. The sets generated between 240 and 250 clicks per day during the first few weeks. Facebook provides various auction-based bidding strategies, which rely on campaign objectives to determine the desired user action (Bennetts et al., 2019). The ads were intended to direct the target audience to the survey landing page and generate clicks. Therefore, Facebook’s traffic objective and “cost cap” bidding strategy were selected, setting a cap of approximately €0.48. This

was done to maintain cost control while maximizing volume. The strategy was effective in directing traffic to the online questionnaire and keeping costs low.

The Facebook ad campaigns were carefully monitored to make minor adjustments based on the metrics provided by the ad manager dashboard. This was important because Facebook's algorithm automatically prioritizes the best-performing ads (i.e., those with the most clicks during the campaign) within a given ad set. This could potentially result in a biased and homogeneous sample of users sharing certain similar characteristics (Arcia, 2014). To address this issue, five of the worst-performing ads were duplicated and rerun.

Between September 24 and October 7, 2019, the first campaign's impressions (i.e., the number of times any part of the ad appears on the user's screen) saw a decline, with daily click rates dropping below 50 clicks. To avert the risk of users getting accustomed to the ads, the second campaign was initiated on October 24, 2019, supplanting the first. This campaign comprised two new ads featuring identical content and imagery and targeted a broader audience of Syrian refugees, both male and female, residing in Sweden and Austria. The two ads shared an image of a group working with laptops and paper, as shown in Figure 3.4. The performance of the second campaign was also regularly monitored to implement the necessary adjustments and guarantee optimal results. Facebook's analytics data on impressions and frequency indicated that these ads had reached saturation. Hence, all the campaigns were terminated on November 22, 2019.



Figure 3.4

Ads for the second campaign directed towards a broader Syrian refugee audience in Sweden and Austria

Analysis of the Facebook Campaign Data

The Facebook sampling data collection procedure and the generated data were used in the composition of Paper II. This paper illustrates that sampling via Facebook ads addresses the representativity challenges of identification in quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research. A variety of analytical techniques were applied in the paper. Metrics gathered through the Facebook Ads Manager dashboard were analysed, including *paid reach* (i.e., the number of users who saw the ads in their News Feed at least once), *link clicks* (i.e., the number of users who clicked on the advertisement), and *cost per click* (i.e., campaign cost divided by the number of link clicks). From these, additional metrics that indicated the quality and completeness of the data and the overall feasibility of Facebook ad-based sampling were computed. These metrics comprised *view rate* (click-to-reach ratio), *completion rate* (recruits per unique link click), and *cost per recruit*.

The digital census on Facebook, consisting of the target Syrian population, was compared with official data from Statistics Austria and the Swedish Migration Agency on the actual number of Syrian refugees who received the right of residency during the study period. This comparison helped to determine whether the individuals identified in the Facebook database, matching the sampling frame, could be a reasonable approximation of the target population in reality.

To further assess the sample representativeness of the Facebook ad-based recruitment strategy, the study sample generated by this method was tested for selection bias. The analysis was done by comparing the gender and age distributions between the target population and the study sample using Chi-Squared tests.

Structure of the Survey Questionnaire

The participants recruited through snowball, targeted, self-selection, and Facebook ad-based sampling methods were redirected to the survey landing page linked to the online questionnaire. This questionnaire was organized into four distinct sections.

The initial section served as an introduction, offering participants a succinct overview of the study and its objectives, while ensuring that their responses would remain confidential.

The second section comprised screening questions, designed to identify participants who had been officially recognized as “refugees” by the Swedish and Austrian authorities, and who were aged 18 or above. Additionally, a cut-off criterion was applied for the duration spent in the host countries, asking about their year of arrival, with the intention of focusing on recent waves of refugees and maintaining the specificity of refugee entrepreneurship (Abebe, 2019). This section also presented an additional question to identify “acute” refugees: “Have you been forcibly displaced from your home due to war and conflict?” These parameters were strategically designed to exclude participants who did not meet the required criteria.

Moreover, considering the study's focus on the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship, supplementary questions were put forward. These questions asked whether the participants had already initiated or were currently operating a business. The target group for the study comprised refugees aspiring to become business owners or considering entrepreneurship as a prospective career path in Sweden and Austria, but who had not yet taken the first steps towards doing so.

The third section comprised items pertaining to the dependent variables, which included beliefs about entrepreneurship across the behavioural, normative, and control dimensions. To measure these constructs, eight statements per dimension were employed, drawn from Maes, Leroy, and Sels (2014). These statements were slightly modified to suit the refugee context, without sacrificing their validity. For instance, a sample item for the scale capturing behavioural beliefs about entrepreneurship read: "As a business owner in Austria/Sweden, you make a good living." Likewise, for normative beliefs about entrepreneurship, a sample item was: "My friends view business ownership as a logical choice for me in Austria/Sweden." To measure control beliefs about entrepreneurship, a representative statement was: "I believe I possess the knowledge or know-how to become a business owner in Austria/Sweden." Participants expressed their agreement with these statements via a five-point Likert-style scale, ranging from (1) "I do not agree at all" to (5) "I completely agree".

In the final section, participants were invited to share their preferred contact information, such as their phone number, WhatsApp, LinkedIn account, etc., for the subsequent data collection rounds.

Overall, the questionnaire was crafted to be concise and straightforward in order to sustain the respondents' interest and mitigate potential non-response bias at the survey design stage (Yu & Cooper, 1983). The online questionnaire was administered using the Unipark survey software, equipped with a "responsive layout" option. This enabled the questions to be displayed individually on smaller screens, such as smartphones (Pötzschke & Braun, 2017).

Nature of the Survey Data and Analysis Strategy

During the 15-week data collection period, unique survey URL links were created for each sampling strategy. This technique streamlined the monitoring process for recruitment sources, and facilitated the tracking of responses from each strategy. The paid Facebook ads identified the largest subsample, with 14,752 individuals clicking on the survey link. This figure is significantly larger than the subsamples identified by snowball sampling (171 individuals), targeted sampling (141 individuals), and self-selection sampling (114 individuals). In terms of completely filled-out questionnaires, the Facebook paid campaigns generated the largest sample by a significant margin, with 2,222 completed responses. This is compared to 68

responses from snowball sampling, 85 responses from targeted sampling, and 56 responses from self-selection sampling.

In total, the four sampling methods generated 2,431 cross-country observations from Austria and Sweden. The majority of respondents (78%) were from Syria, followed by smaller numbers from Palestine (8%), Iraq (5.8%), Afghanistan (2%), and other countries including Somalia, Eritrea, and Iran. Most respondents resided in Sweden (72%) and Austria (26%), with the remainder in other European countries. The majority of respondents arrived in either 2014 (20.8%) or 2015 (38.5%). Overall, these statistical figures solidly confirmed that the survey dataset accurately reflected the events that unfolded during the so-called “European refugee crisis”, in terms of the types of refugee groups and their years of arrival in Sweden and Austria.

The cross-sectional survey data from the first wave served to write Paper III of the dissertation. However, distinct screening measures were implemented to ensure the data’s suitability for addressing the paper’s primary objective. This paper aims to investigate whether refugees’ current geographical locations in various cities and/or their ethnicity are associated with their entrepreneurial beliefs. To obtain the final sample for the analysis, in line with the paper’s objective and the variables under consideration, we followed a three-step process.

Firstly, we selected refugee groups from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine for two significant reasons. As previously discussed, the proportion of refugees from these countries has been the highest in several host countries, including Sweden and Austria, during the ‘crisis’ (Konle-Seidl, 2018). Additionally, these refugees originate from countries with relatively distinct cultural values, beliefs, and traditions associated with entrepreneurship. This renders them suitable for comparing the differential effects of ethnic origin on entrepreneurial beliefs (Haddad, Ismail, & Al Habash, 2010; Stevenson et al., 2010). Please refer to the methodology section of Paper III for a detailed discussion on how these four refugee groups differ in terms of the entrepreneurial values inherent to their respective countries of origin.

Next, we excluded refugees who had relocated to countries other than Sweden and Austria. As discussed earlier, the justification for focusing on these two countries is primarily motivated by their highest intake of refugees, including the four groups represented in this study (Konle-Seidl, 2018). At the same time, the two countries exhibited different societal and public narratives on refugee immigration and politico-regulatory regimes. For instance, the evidence points towards concrete differences between Sweden and Austria in aspects of societal structure relevant to refugees, such as anti-refugee sentiments. As such, refugees from similar origins could experience varying levels of prejudice, negative stereotyping, and discrimination (EU, 2016; EU Commission, 2015). Moreover, the countries applied different regulatory conditions in aspects such as targeted measures to assist refugees with integration and entrepreneurship (Konle-Seidl, 2018; MIPEX, 2020). Due to such variations in politico-regulatory and societal structure, Sweden and

Austria provided relevant contexts for analysing the effects of host-country conditions on refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs.

We then refined the sample by filtering refugees into four Austrian cities (Vienna, Graz, Linz, and Salzburg) and seven Swedish cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Uppsala, Västerås, Helsingborg, and Växjö). Considering these 11 cities was necessary due to the federal structure of the states in Sweden and Austria. Additionally, these cities are major destinations for refugees in both countries, and their socioeconomic and institutional settings also vary significantly. Evidence indicates notable regional differences in their economic structure, socio-demographic composition, and entrepreneurial ecosystems (Keuschnigg, 2019; Statistik Austria, 2020). These factors, therefore, warrant analysis at the city level.

Out of a total of 2,431 observations, 979 met the specified criteria of being of working age, belonging to one of the four selected ethnic groups, and having settled in one of the 11 cities under consideration. Within this cohort, 669 respondents stated that they were not currently engaged in any entrepreneurial activity but expressed an interest in starting a business. After discarding responses with missing values for any of the dependent variables, the final sample for the paper consisted of 642 individuals. This sample was used to construct a model for testing whether a refugee's country of origin (referred to as "Ethnic group") and/or their current geographic location after displacement ("City") are associated with their behavioural, normative, and control beliefs about entrepreneurship. For the analysis, we employed OLS regression to test our hypotheses by simultaneously entering the variables that capture refugees' host city location and ethnic origin. We used F-statistics to assess model adequacy and T-statistics to determine the significance of regression coefficients.

Complementary Secondary Data for Paper III

Our initial findings revealed that the host city context matters for refugees' behavioural entrepreneurial beliefs. To thoroughly examine this influence, ancillary data reflecting the relevant societal, economic, politico-regulatory, and institutional dimensions in the selected host-city locations was required. To address this, we made use of secondary regional data, which covered these aspects across the target host cities.

We assessed the societal aspects by proxy of *anti-refugee sentiments*. To gain insights on these sentiments, data from the latest wave of the European Value Study (EVS), covering the year of observation, was used (EVS, 2022; Haerpfer et al., 2022). EVS is a cross-national, longitudinal survey research programme that captures the beliefs, opinions, attitudes, values, and preferences of European citizens. To gauge the *anti-refugee sentiments*, a factor consisting of six items was computed. These items were measured on a five-point Likert scale and assessed

whether a city's residents would feel comfortable having neighbours of a different race or migrant origin, their trust in people of a different religion and nationality, their perception of migrants' impact on local development, and their opinions on whether employers should prioritize native-born residents over migrants (see Table 3.1). The *anti-refugee sentiments* variable enables the capture of variations in the extent of stereotyping and social avoidance that refugees may encounter when engaging in entrepreneurial activity in their host cities. Such sentiments significantly influence the strength of refugees' entrepreneurial behavioural beliefs (Bhagat, 2020; Crush & Ramachandran, 2015; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

The economic dimension was evaluated through the labour market situation for refugees. This was indicated by the disparity in employment rates between foreign-born individuals and local residents in the host city. This data, which pertains to the observation year of 2019, was sourced from the OECD database (see Table 3.3). A high variation in employment rates could indicate discriminatory labour-market conditions for refugees, a circumstance that often drives them to consider pursuing an entrepreneurial career (Barak-Bianco & Raijman, 2015).

To account for the politico-regulatory and institutional conditions, data was collected on various proxy variables. The first includes *anti-refugee policies*, which were computed based on the proportion of seats held by right-wing parties in each city council. The data was retrieved from official publications on legislative election results provided by the Swedish and Austrian municipalities via their respective webpages (see Table 3.1). Insights derived from this information help to understand the potential political and regulatory challenges that refugees may encounter when embarking on their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Furthermore, data was also gathered on the *size of the immigrant community* and the *size of the ethnic entrepreneurship community* in the respective host cities. The immigrant community size holds relevance as it can influence the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship by facilitating the transfer of knowledge about the rules and regulations required for starting a business (Andersson, Larsson, & Öner, 2021). The immigrant community is quantified as the proportion of individuals from outside the EU27 as a percentage of the total population aged 15–64. This information was sourced from the OECD database (see Table 3.3).

Data on the ethnic entrepreneurship community corresponding to the observation year of 2019 was obtained from Statistics Sweden (SCB) and Statistics Austria upon special request. This variable was operationalized as the percentage of entrepreneurs from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine among the total population of entrepreneurs in the host city (see Table 3.2). A substantial size of co-ethnic entrepreneurship communities in a host city could suggest acceptance of entrepreneurship by migrants and refugees, as well as the existence of norms and values encouraging such initiatives and a supportive business environment (Andersson, Larsson, & Öner, 2021; Tavassoli & Tripl, 2019).

Table 3.1
Data on anti-refugee sentiments and policies in the selected Swedish and Austrian cities

City	Anti-refugee and immigration sentiments-Xenophobia *							Anti-refugee policies *					
	Neighbours: People of a different race (0=would not mind/1=would mind)	Neighbours: Immigrants/foreign (0=would not mind/1=would mind)	Trust: People of another religion (1=completely trust/5=not at all)	Trust: People of another nationality (1=completely trust/5=not at all)	Evaluate the impact of immigrants on the development of [your country] (5=very good/1=very bad)	Jobs scarce: Employers should give priority to (nation) people than immigrants (1=agree strongly/5=disagree strongly)	XEN_NeighRace	XEN_NeighImmig	XEN_TrustRel	XEN_TrustNation	DIS_ImmigDevCount	NOR_EmpPriorNa tiv5	REG_RightWing
Graz	0.0502	0.1187	2.24	2.19	2.69	2.36							0.1042
Linz	0.0893	0.1643	2.61	2.54	2.86	2.65							0.1774
Salzburg	0.0339	0.0763	2.35	2.34	2.80	2.43							0.0750
Vienna	0.0993	0.1523	2.46	2.39	2.87	3.08							0.0900
Stockholm	0.0090	0.0226	1.80	1.76	3.07	4.11							0.0803
Gothenburg	0.0127	0.0508	1.89	1.84	3.10	3.94							0.1075
Malmö	0.0231	0.0751	1.92	1.81	3.08	3.92							0.1494
Heisingborg	0.0127	0.0508	1.89	1.84	3.10	3.94							0.2147
Uppsala	0.0090	0.0226	1.80	1.76	3.07	4.11							0.0934
Vaxjö	0.0208	0.0313	1.84	1.80	3.27	3.71							0.1110
Västerås	0.0050	0.0101	1.88	1.74	3.17	4.01							0.1490

Source: * European Values Study (EVS, 2022; Haerpfer et al., 2022)

** Official results of legislative elections published on Swedish (for the year 2018) and Austrian (for 2019) municipal homepages

Table 3.2 Proportion of ethnic community and ethnic entrepreneurship community from Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Afghanistan in the selected Swedish and Austrian cities

	Total population of each city	Thereof people born in Iraq	Thereof people born in Palestine	Thereof people born in Syria	Thereof Afghan Population	Total owners of operative businesses (Self-employed)	Iraqi migrant entrepreneurs	Palestinian migrant entrepreneurs	Syrian migrant entrepreneurs	Total Afghan migrant entrepreneurs
City	COM_TotPopMuni	COM_SharPopIraq	COM_SharPopPalest	COM_SharPopSyria	COM_SharPopMidEast	COM_SharEntMuni	COM_SharEntIraq	COM_SharEntPalest	COM_SharEntSyria	COM_SharEntMidEast
Graz	266,144	0.0026	0.0008	0.0049	0.0085	12,326	0.0012	0.0004	0.0011	0.0033
Linz	176,836	0.0037	0.0000	0.0082	0.0187	7,046	0.0018	0.0007	0.0035	0.0088
Salzburg	129,494	0.0032	0.0001	0.0096	0.0201	7,623	0.0013	0.0007	0.0033	0.0190
Vienna	1,657,667	0.0039	0.0001	0.0112	0.0190	79,122	0.0018	0.0002	0.0027	0.0162
Stockholm	637,797	0.0229	0.0003	0.0098	0.0491	78,195	0.0157	0.0004	0.0066	0.0382
Gothenburg	376,833	0.0295	0.0013	0.0143	0.0733	28,370	0.0227	0.0010	0.0062	0.0642
Malmö	218,458	0.0462	0.0020	0.0220	0.0854	16,038	0.0377	0.0007	0.0075	0.0620
Helsingborg	89,472	0.0333	0.0013	0.0291	0.0708	7,001	0.0204	0.0004	0.0073	0.0357
Uppsala	142,852	0.0206	0.0038	0.0172	0.0621	9,996	0.0157	0.0016	0.0061	0.0511
Växjö	56,384	0.0295	0.0010	0.0147	0.0523	4,297	0.0249	0.0002	0.0054	0.0379
Västerås	92,365	0.0426	0.0004	0.0286	0.0875	6,066	0.0351	0.0003	0.0155	0.0697

Source: Calculated by the authors based on customized data obtained from Statistics Austria and Statistics Sweden for the year 2019

Table 3.3

Data on the proportion of immigrant community and labour-market integration in the selected Swedish and Austrian cities

		Share of 15–64-year-old population from outside EU27, in % of total (native plus foreign) 15–64 age population, all individuals (2019) ^a	Difference between foreign- and native-born employment rate (2019) ^b
Region	City	REG_ShareNonEU15_64Pop	REG_DifForNatEmploy
Styria	Graz	0.0670	12.449
Upper-Austria	Linz	0.1040	8.524
Salzburg	Salzburg	0.1210	9.008
Vienna	Vienna	0.2730	11.386
Stockholm	Stockholm	0.2090	11.169
West Sweden	Gothenburg	0.1867	9.492
South Sweden	Malmö	0.2067	15.558
South Sweden	Helsingborg	0.2067	15.558
East Middle Sweden	Uppsala	0.1940	19.6
Småland with Islands	Växjö	0.1610	21.074
East Middle Sweden	Västerås	0.1940	19.6

Source: ^a Database on Migrants in OECD Regions (OECD.Stat)

^b Data extracted on 06 Jan 2023 11:45 UTC (GMT) from OECD.Stat

OLS regression analysis was applied to evaluate the relevance of the above host city dimensions that were part of the theoretical arguments underpinning the supported hypotheses on the relationship between entrepreneurial beliefs and host location. F-statistics were used to evaluate model adequacy and T-statistics to determine the significance of regression coefficients.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis Strategy

The qualitative empirical data was gathered from 21 Syrian refugee entrepreneurs who had relocated to Sweden following the onset of the violent “Syrian Conflict” in 2011. The participants were selected via purposive sampling, which adhered to four criteria for theoretical relevance (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007): (1) being

Syrian nationals fleeing the war (acute refugees)⁶; (2) obtaining legal recognition as refugees by the Swedish government and acquiring the necessary residence and work permits to establish their businesses (excluding asylum seekers); (3) founding their own businesses as recent arrivals; and (4) not yet having obtained Swedish citizenship.

These criteria were relevant to effectively capturing the specific circumstances and behaviours associated with refugee entrepreneurship. These arise from the liabilities of refugeehood, unfamiliarity with host country institutions, and blocked home country access (Harima et al., 2021). Focusing on recently-arrived refugees helps to identify the specificity of refugee entrepreneurship and differentiate it from the entrepreneurship of well-established and fully integrated migrants. Previous studies have demonstrated that, once refugees become firmly established in their host countries and acquire citizenship, they gain access to essential resources and can re-establish connections with their home countries. This allows them to mobilize homeland resources and evolve as transnational and diaspora entrepreneurs (Halilovich & Efendic, 2021; Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019).

The recruitment criteria for the study were specific, and the participants were considered to be “hidden”, so a snowballing approach was implemented (Atkinson & Flint, 2002; Bloch, 2004). Participants were recruited through the broader networks of the Syrian-origin research assistant (17 participants) and the author’s and a researcher colleague’s established contacts (Atkinson & Flint, 2001) from their participation in entrepreneurship training for refugees during the “refugee crisis” (four participants). Although this type of sampling technique may be considered reductive, it was deemed appropriate for the study because it was the most effective way to access Syrian refugee entrepreneurs with the required characteristics (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2011).

Table 3.4 provides a summary of the characteristics of all 21 refugee participants, arranged in the order of their first interview. The participants’ backgrounds, socio-economic positions, and pre-adversity experiences were diverse, but their refugee experiences in Sweden were similar. This homogeneity enabled a deeper understanding of their experiences and how they navigated the Swedish socioeconomic and institutional landscape when starting and developing their own businesses. The findings of this study can contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of refugees with similar backgrounds in advanced societies like those of European states.

⁶Kunz’s (1973, 1981) Kinetic Model of Refugee Theory states that “acute refugees” have to leave their homes at a moment’s notice and with no preparation. They encounter more challenges than “anticipatory” refugees, who share similarities with voluntary immigrants in that they can depart in an orderly manner before the crisis unfolds.

Table 3.4
Profile of interview participants

Participants	Sex	Age	Education	Pre-adversity experience	Arrival date	Location	Type of business	Company date
Participant 1	M	49	Accounting degree	Accountant; credit manager	2014	Landskrona	Small kiosk	2017
Participant 2	M	42	Engineering degree	Property developer; owner of a real-estate company	2014	Landskrona	Water scooters, kayaks, and beach gear rental shop	2017
Participant 3	M	40	Engineering degree	Engineer in a company selling generator sets; worked in family business in the same branch; work experience in Emirates	2014	Malmö	A small watch shop	2016
Participant 4	M	43	Elementary	Grew up in a family that owned roastery	2015	Malmö	Syrian speciality nut store	2017
Participant 5	M	22	High school	No formal work experience, but grew up in a family business.	2012	Lund	A combined food retail store and hairdressing salon	2018
Participant 6	M	30	No university education	He had been developing his own business	2011	Stockholm	Online store for oriental treats	2019
Participant 7	M	35	Uncompleted university education	Owned a business in Syria	2014	Stockholm	Importing and selling Syrian desserts online	2019
Participant 8	F	40	No university education	Owned her own business in Lebanon	2018	Uppsala	Informal apparel trading	2019
Participant 9	F	45	University education	Co-owned a business with husband	2017	Umeå	Work-integrated cooperative	2019
Participant 10	M	40	Primary school	Owned different types of businesses	2015	Ronneby	Syrian bakery	2018
Participant 11	M	42	Degrees in auto mechanics and business administration	Accountant in an oil company; owned manufacturing workshop on the side	2015	Ronneby	Supermarket	2019

Participant 12	M	29	Interrupted environmental engineering degree	No formal work experience	2017	Stockholm	Online platform for Arabic clothes	2019
Participant 13	F	50	Degree in advertising, design and printing	Co-owned a printing press with husband	2015	Malmö	Women's beauty centre	2018
Participant 14	M	52	No formal education	Owned dairy product trading company	2014	Karlskrona	Small shop for Syrian dairy products	2019
Participant 15	M	54	High-school education	Owned an apparel store	2015	Ronneby	Arabic clothing store	2018
Participant 16	F	35	Degree in media and journalism; diploma in teaching	Teaching maths and informatics; owned an educational channel	2015	Karlskrona	E-platform for children	2018
Participant 17	M	40	High-school education	Owned an apparel business	2015	Kallinge	Arabic clothing line for women and children	2017
Participant 18	F	45	No formal education	Grew up in an entrepreneurial family; salesperson in her husband's wedding shop	2017	Lund	Informal décor service for weddings and birthdays	2019
Participant 19	M	54	Chartered accounting licence, and diplomas in business	Accountant in different countries	2015	Lund	Small restaurant	2017
Participant 20	M	35	Low formal education	Owned a bakery for 20 years	2014	Lund	Syrian bakery	2018
Participant 21	F	37	Informatics engineering degree	IT support for tech company	2014	Örebro	E-platform for teaching programming to kids	2019

The qualitative data collection involved multiple rounds of in-depth individual interviews, in which all but two participants were interviewed twice, either face-to-face or digitally. The data collection took place between 2018 and 2020. The interview guide was semi-structured, and the questions were open-ended, allowing the informants to elaborate on issues if they wished (Belk, 2007; Holt, 1997). During the first round of interviews, the participants were asked about their life histories, previous backgrounds, experiences of forced migration and its impact on their lives, sources of entrepreneurial motivation, challenges they had faced during resettlement and while starting their businesses, and their entrepreneurial journey in Sweden (Table 3.5). A significant amount of time was dedicated to gaining an in-depth understanding of each participant’s background and refugee experience. However, due to COVID-19 guidelines, certain interviews had to be conducted digitally, making it more challenging to gain contextual understanding in some cases. On average, the first-round interviews lasted for about 50–60 minutes per participant (Table 3.6). The transcripts were then carefully reviewed and analysed by the author and a research colleague, leading to the development of preliminary insights to inform the next round.

Table 3.5
Examples of interview questions

Interview questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How would you describe yourself? What have you done? (How was your previous life? What were you proud of in your life? (educational background, profession, family owned business, social status) - When did you arrive in Sweden? (Timeline story of the whole migration journey to Sweden and main events) - How have your experiences with forced migration impacted your life? - If you could choose any profession in Sweden, what would it be? Did you consider continuing the profession or area of study that you had? What happened? - Where you an entrepreneur before you came to Sweden? If not, have you ever thought that you would be an entrepreneur in Sweden? - When did you first start thinking about becoming an entrepreneur in Sweden? Was there any particular reason or incident that made you decide to start your own business? (What motivated you to become an entrepreneur in Sweden?) - Tell us the process of how you created the business, step by step (in sequence)! (What major steps and activities did you follow to start the business?) - What difficulties or hindrances have you experienced in your journey as an entrepreneur?

The second round of interviews delved deeper into the chronological account of the refugees’ entrepreneurial journey. Follow-up questions were included to triangulate previous responses. The interview guide was designed to help participants provide consecutive and detailed accounts of their venture founding and development activities, and future plans. However, exit strategies were not discussed, as it was too early for participants to consider this stage. The use of timeline-based interviews, in which participants verified and explained how events

related to their entrepreneurial journey had unfolded chronologically, helped to guard against memory failure resulting from retrospective accounts (Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997). The average duration of the second-round interviews was approximately 1 hour and 25 minutes (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6
Data sources

Participants	Interview 1 date	Length in hours	Interview 2 date	Length in hours	Interview formats
Participant 1	17/08/2018	2:00	03/06/2019	1:34	In person
Participant 2	10/09/2018	1:37	15/08/2019	1:57	In person
Participant 3	17/09/2018	2:27	N/A	N/A	In person
Participant 4	24/10/2018	2:40	N/A	N/A	In person
Participant 5	19/11/2019	2:00	10/08/2020	1:30	In person, Skype
Participant 6	09/01/2020	2:30	22/08/2020	1:45	Skype
Participant 7	22/01/2020	1:45	23/08/2020	1:20	Skype
Participant 8	23/01/2020	2:00	25/08/2020	1:30	Messenger
Participant 9	28/01/2020	2:00	27/08/2020	1:30	Skype
Participant 10	04/03/2020	2:30	29/08/2020	1:15	Skype
Participant 11	21/03/2020	2:00	31/08/2020	1:45	Skype
Participant 12	30/01/2020	1:30	13/10/2020	1:00	Skype
Participant 13	05/05/2020	1:45	17/10/2020	1:20	Skype
Participant 14	09/03/2020	1:45	21/09/2020	1:30	Skype
Participant 15	28/03/2020	2:00	19/09/2020	1:45	Skype
Participant 16	27/04/2020	1:45	09/09/2020	1:15	Skype
Participant 17	25/02/2020	2:00	21/09/2020	1:00	In person
Participant 18	19/06/2020	1:30	15/10/2020	1:35	In person
Participant 19	06/07/2020	3:30	21/10/2020	1:15	In person
Participant 20	07/07/2020	1:30	13/10/2020	1:10	Skype
Participant 21	07/07/2020	2:00	09/10/2020	1:25	Skype

All the interviews, except for four, were conducted in the participants' mother tongue, Arabic, to ensure data accuracy and capture the nuances of their experiences (Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki, & Welch, 2014). The Syrian research assistant, under the supervision of the author and a researcher colleague, conducted most of the interviews. The assistant was well-versed in the language, cultural norms, and realities of the participants, which helped to establish trust and rapport (Fontana & Frey, 2000). This approach enabled a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and their entrepreneurial journey. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed, with the Arabic interviews being immediately translated into English. In total, over 500 single-spaced pages of text were analysed for the final analysis.

The analysis followed an inductive approach with a longitudinal orientation on theory-building, as elaborated in Paper IV of the dissertation. This paper

investigates the entrepreneurial journey of refugees, given that previous research has focused on the antecedents of refugee entrepreneurship (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The analysis, which began during the interview process, progressed through three stages, which include sorting, reduction, and theorization (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013).

Sorting involved comprehending details and identifying initial categories, focusing on the life-stage transitions experienced by refugees. This organization yielded initial labels, expressed in the informants' own terms, which were later summarized into over 200 first-order codes. These codes were sorted chronologically to obtain an overview of refugees' life-transition processes.

During the reduction stage, the analysis concentrated on first-order codes capturing refugees' entire entrepreneurial journey across startup stages and explaining transitions between stages. Reorganizing and categorically reducing these themes resulted in 31 initial codes, revealing patterns. At this stage, the analysis shifted from inductive to abductive, considering data and theory simultaneously. Selected themes representing empirical observations were connected to higher-order conceptual categories using relevant literature. This process produced 12 second-order concepts, which were further organized into four aggregated dimensions.

Finally, identifying the interrelationships between these four aggregated dimensions and their underlying 12 second-order concepts led to a processual model explaining refugees' journeys in founding and developing their ventures in their host country.

Reflections upon the Methods and Data for the Study

This section critically examines some of the limitations related to the methods, data, and context of this study. These limitations originate from its design and the various challenges encountered during the research process. They have had an impact on both the progress of the research and the interpretation of its findings. As previously stated, the mixed-methods design was not pre-planned but emerged due to unforeseen developments during the execution of the survey research inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to the decision to pursue an additional qualitative component, which was initially started as a pilot study. While it was not possible to fulfil the common purposes of mixing in mixed-methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017), the emergent mixed approach helped to extend the breadth and range of inquiry. This was achieved by using the quantitative component for investigating the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship and the qualitative approach for the refugee entrepreneurial process.

Examining the limitations of each method individually, the quantitative approach exhibits certain shortcomings in terms of data components, which consequently constrain the level of detail attainable in the analysis. As previously mentioned, the survey was originally designed to be longitudinal, utilizing a correlational research approach to observe and collect data on a number of variables related to the refugee entrepreneurship process across different waves. During the first wave of data collection, information on refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs was successfully gathered. However, all other pertinent aspects of the home and host-country contexts and individual characteristics were scheduled to be collected during the second phase, which was set to occur six months after the first wave.

However, the global COVID-19 pandemic made this initial research plan unfeasible. As a result, the research was constrained to use only the first wave of data for the composition of Paper III. This limitation necessitated the use of "City" and "Ethnic origin" as categorical and dummy independent variables, respectively. However, these variables do not permit the establishment of causality or provide a comprehensive portrayal of the specific circumstances in the country of origin or host-city location. We attempted to encapsulate the influences of host-city location on refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs by using secondary data sources. The collected data did help in creating a theoretical and empirical foundation regarding the differential effects of host-city contexts on early-stage refugee entrepreneurship, but it was difficult to demonstrate the direction of the assumed differences. Moreover, the lack of control variables—such as prior entrepreneurial experience, gender, and age—relevant to the analysis further compromised the robustness of our data. In summary, while the model employed in the paper helps test certain theoretical propositions, the lack of sufficient variables and limited information inevitably curtails its explanatory power.

Similarly, limitations also exist within the qualitative data. The data collection process relied on retrospective interviews, which could potentially be subject to recollection bias as participants had to reconstruct their past experiences (Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997). Hence, these retrospective interviews are less effective in capturing refugees' entrepreneurial behaviour in real time (Langley, 2009). Furthermore, an excessive reliance on interview data might overlook other dynamics that could be better captured through field observations, a multi-stakeholder perspective, and supplementary data from refugee incubator management, mentors, and partners (Meister & Mauer, 2019; Überbacher, 2014).

Another issue concerns participant selection. This study operates on the premise that refugee entrepreneurs are forced migrants who engage in business founding and development activities soon after their arrival in their host country. Participants were selected strictly according to this criterion. While this approach helps to capture the specific aspects of the phenomenon, the sample lacks variety in terms of, for instance, experiences derived from residing in third countries during the migration process or instances of business failure. Hence, such factors are not

accounted for by the refugee entrepreneurship process model conceptualized in Paper IV.

Further limitations relating to the qualitative data include the homogeneous nature of the participants, who were all from Syria, where entrepreneurship is highly valued in the sociocultural norms (Mawson & Kasem, 2019). While this choice was theoretically relevant (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), it may not be representative of other entrepreneurial refugees. Additionally, the relatively small sample size of 21 may raise concerns, although it is justifiable given the study's focus on theorizing the entrepreneurial journey of refugees after forced migration and the difficulty of involving them in research (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Finally, the collected data only reflect the Swedish context, and the analysis and insights may not apply to other contexts where diverse institutional circumstances are likely to affect refugees' entrepreneurial journeys differently (Harima et al., 2021). Hence, it was not feasible to capture the contextual heterogeneity of refugee entrepreneurship, which entails the diverse situational and institutional circumstances of refugee entrepreneurs.

Ethical Considerations

Given refugees' vulnerabilities and sensitive life circumstances, it is crucial to consider ethical aspects when involving them in research. Ethical considerations not only help to shield them from potential harm but also uphold the "dual imperative" of conducting rigorous research that simultaneously proffers significant practical and policy implications (Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015; Tatibekov, Dana, & Alzhanova, 2022). With this in mind, the research team conducted an ethical self-assessment of the project, focusing on data collection and processing. Moreover, the team remained aware of the ethical implications of working with vulnerable populations, such as refugees.

Adherence to the ethical research criteria set by Lund University was stringently maintained throughout the project. This was supplemented by steadfast observance of the principles of 'doing no harm', voluntary participation, and confidentiality, which guided the formulation of the study design and the process of data collection. Furthermore, the research complied scrupulously with the Swedish Personal Data Act (SFS, 1998:204)⁷, the Personal Data Ordinance (SFS, 1998:1191)⁸, and European regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)⁹.

⁷ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/personuppgiftslag-1998204_sfs-1998-204/

⁸ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/personuppgiftsforordning-19981191_sfs-1998-1191/

⁹ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-topic/data-protection/data-protection-eu_en

The use of Facebook for research purposes presents ethical challenges, as there are no clear guidelines for this type of data collection. However, the research team took measures to ensure that the data collection was ethical and in line with relevant regulations. A social-media-based data collection expert familiar with Facebook's terms of service and online data protection policies was part of the team (Kosinski et al., 2016). This expert provided guidance on the ethical implications of using Facebook data and ensured that the data collection process did not violate any policies. As a result, we are confident that the data collection process complied with Facebook's policies, as we did not collect or record any user information or behaviour on the platform. Instead, we used Facebook's targeted ad services to display survey ads to potential participants who met the selection criteria. The decision to participate was left up to the individual once the ad was displayed.

For those who chose to participate, informed consent was sought and obtained in advance by providing a summary of the research topic, its duration, and what was expected of them. We also confirmed their willingness to provide contact details for further communication (Tatibekov, Dana, & Alzhanova, 2022). To preserve respondents' privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and dignity, the research team implemented a set of practices based on the GDPR and the "Helsinki Declaration", as articulated by Bos (2020). Participants were informed of the names and institutional affiliations of the research team members, the background and purpose of the study, why and how they had been selected, and what participating would entail for them, along with the research procedures. They were also informed that their identities would be anonymized and their data would be handled with confidentiality, with only the research team having access to it. Consent was sought and given in the participants' native language, Arabic, to avoid linguistic or cultural barriers, and no monetary incentives were promised to ensure that their participation was not induced (Deps et al., 2022). After the survey, a brief infographic summary of the findings was provided to the participants to show them how their data was being used in the study.

The same ethical considerations were maintained throughout the data collection process, including when using snowballing, targeted and self-selection sampling strategies, and the qualitative part of the research. For the interviews conducted digitally, the informed consent process was changed from written to verbal confirmation. During participant recruitment, the research team collaborated with multipliers who had strong data protection policies, in accordance with the GDPR, to implement the targeted sampling and snowballing strategies by following their protocols. If multipliers declined to collaborate, their decision was respected.

The team was also aware of the potential risk of violating sociocultural and political faultlines when using research assistants from the same country as the participants (Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015). Hence, steps were taken to ensure that there was nothing that could be at odds with the refugees participating in the qualitative study (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003). Additionally, ethical issues related to asymmetrical power relationships did not arise during the qualitative data collection

process because it was carried out by the research assistant and the author of this dissertation, who have both been refugees. This common background helped to establish trust with the participants (Deps et al., 2022).

Personal data handling was conducted in compliance with the regulations outlined above. The study did not collect any sensitive personal data, such as political views, religious or philosophical convictions, sexual orientation, or any other information that could cause physical or mental harm to participants, as mandated by the Modernized Convention 108 (Article 6)¹⁰ and the GDPR (Article 9). As a result, the study did not require approval from an ethics review board, in line with the Swedish Ethical Review Act.

In addition to obtaining participant consent, data processing was conducted fairly and transparently, adhering to the principles set forth by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.¹¹ Migration is a process involving individual decisions, life stories, and experiences; therefore, refugees' accounts of their decision to move or migrate and life experiences can be very personal and sensitive. Thus, analysis should protect refugees' identities and dignity (Tatibekov, Dana, & Alzhanova, 2022: 713). To safeguard participants' privacy, any identifying information was pseudonymized by assigning unique codes to their names, thereby disconnecting them from the data and ensuring that none of the interview excerpts in the finding sections could be traced back to them. Moreover, the empirical material, recorded on personal phones, was transferred to and securely stored on a password-protected, encrypted storage drive installed on a workplace computer provided by Lund University. By implementing these measures, the study aimed to uphold the highest standards of ethical research practices.

¹⁰ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/data-protection/convention108/modernised>

¹¹ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/about-fra>

4. Extended Summaries

This chapter presents a summary of the appended papers that constitute the dissertation, providing a brief introduction to the purpose, conceptual foundation, data and methods, and findings of each.

This dissertation comprises four studies, each contributing to the emerging refugee entrepreneurship research. Together, these studies provide a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, with each focusing on a specific research question and utilizing various arguments, conceptual frameworks, research designs, data sources, and analytical techniques.

A brief synopsis of each study is afforded in Table 4.1, below. Study I employs systematic and thematic analyses to investigate the current state of refugee entrepreneurship research, mapping out its intellectual territory. Study II suggests and empirically validates a novel sampling approach that accounts for the hidden nature of refugee entrepreneurs, addressing the representativity challenges of identification in quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research. Study III delves into the very early stages of refugee entrepreneurship, informing our understanding of the key drivers of entrepreneurial agency pertinent to the specific circumstances of refugees and their post-relocation adaptation process. Study IV further extends the exploration into the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship, analysing how refugees actively surmount adversity and orchestrate their entrepreneurial journey in their host country.

In the following sections, each study's purpose, conceptual framework, data and methods, and findings are described further.

Table 4.1
Brief summary of the four appended studies

Study	Type of study	Conceptual approach	Data	Analysis strategy	Finding
I	Literature review (systematic and thematic analyses)	The concept of refugee entrepreneurship, at the confluence of theories on refugees (Kunz, 1981) and entrepreneurship (Gartner, 1985)	A total of 131 peer-reviewed refugee entrepreneurship publications between 1986 and 2020	Systematic review (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003) and configurative thematic analysis (Gough, Thomas, & Oliver, 2012; Jones, Coviello, & Tang, 2011)	While refugee entrepreneurship is emerging as a separate research stream, it suffers from domain-related, methodological, and theoretical challenges, which need to be addressed to ensure its viability and further development.
II	Methodological (empirical)	Literature on non-probability sampling by leveraging algorithms for paid targeted advertisements on social media platforms, specifically Facebook (Iannelli et al., 2020)	Data on working-age (18–65 yrs.) Syrian refugees who relocated to Sweden and Austria between 2015 and 2018	Examining metrics collected through the Facebook Ads Manager dashboard, calculating additional metrics to evaluate data quality, and conducting Chi-Squared tests to check for selection bias	Facebook ad-based sampling method helps to approximate the representativity of non-probability samples drawn from entrepreneurial refugee populations by identifying respondents with relevant characteristics for robust survey-based design.
III	Empirical quantitative	Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), cultural perspectives (Halter, 1995), structural perspectives (Ram, Jones, & Villares-Varela, 2017)	Data based on 642 observations from Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan, and Palestinian refugees relocated to four Austrian and seven Swedish cities, supplemented with secondary data covering the relevant social, economic, and political dimensions of these cities	OLS regression analysis	Refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs are shaped by host city location rather than ethnic origin, with anti-refugee sentiments primarily impacting upon the expected outcomes of their entrepreneurial pursuits.
IV	Empirical qualitative	The notion of embedded agency as an underlying conceptual foundation (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007)	Rich qualitative data obtained from multiple rounds of 40 in-depth interviews with 21 Syrian refugee entrepreneurs in Sweden	Theory-building inductive analysis (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018)	Refugees' ability to proactively orchestrate their entrepreneurial journey, which reflects their entrepreneurial agency, is intertwined with detrimental circumstances and structural barriers linked with forced displacement.

Paper I – Refugee entrepreneurship: Systematic and Thematic Analyses and a Research Agenda

Purpose

Refugee entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing research area under the umbrella of migrant entrepreneurship (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). Despite an expanding body of literature prompted by a surge in scholarly interest, it remains relatively underdeveloped due to fragmented findings and an absence of coherent knowledge synthesis. This fragmentation has arisen due to the interdisciplinary nature of existing research and its dissemination across various outlets. Although such fragmentation is not uncommon in emerging streams (Keupp & Gassmann, 2009), the current state of refugee entrepreneurship research presents challenges for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners alike. Besides, its boundaries remain somewhat blurred with adjacent research areas, such as immigrant, diaspora, and transnational entrepreneurship (Dheer, 2018; Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019). Consequently, there is an emergent need for examining the current literature in order to identify research gaps, consolidate knowledge, and guide future academic pursuits.

Aligning with the modernist perspective on science, the advancement of a research stream requires a unified body of knowledge (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). From this standpoint, this paper delves into the realm of refugee entrepreneurship research, systematically and thematically mapping its intellectual territory. This is achieved by constructing a repository of contemporary thought, tracking its progression, and organizing the subject matter into major themes and subthemes. By doing so, the paper aims to enhance the accumulation of knowledge on refugee entrepreneurship, thereby enabling a unified understanding of this phenomenon.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, this paper situates refugee entrepreneurship at the intersection of refugee and entrepreneurship theories. It argues that the entrepreneurial behaviour of forced migrants is strongly influenced by their adverse circumstances, which arise from the disruptive context of being a refugee (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021). The nexus between these two theoretical domains underscores the specific challenges and opportunities that refugee entrepreneurs face, thus providing a fertile ground for scholarly exploration and analysis. For the purposes of this paper, refugee entrepreneurship is defined as the undertaking of entrepreneurial activity within a new host country by individuals who are granted “refugee status” there because they have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to war, violent conflict, or

persecution (Fuller-Love, Lim, & Akehurst, 2006). By establishing this working definition, the study delineates intellectual boundaries for refugee entrepreneurship research. This boundary-setting exercise facilitates the systematic identification and selection of relevant literature that aligns with the review objectives.

Data and Methods

This paper analysed 131 peer-reviewed scholarly works published between 1986 and 2020, which could be considered representative of the current understanding of refugee entrepreneurship. These publications were primarily obtained from the Scopus e-bibliographic database, with the selection further supplemented through snowballing techniques, reviews of conference proceedings, and Google Scholar searches. The works analysed include published articles (65.6%), book chapters (22.9%), conference papers (4.6%), books (2.3%), research reports (3.1%), and doctoral dissertations (1.5%). All the selected publications met two main criteria: substantial coverage of refugee entrepreneurship and a significant contribution to the research domain. To ensure a transparent and replicable process for identifying, examining, and selecting relevant refugee entrepreneurship studies, the research employed a systematic review approach (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

For the analysis, the study combined descriptive categorization and standardization of information — such as author(s), research purpose, methods, variables, theory, findings, and so on — with thematic analysis. Given the heterogeneous nature of extant scholarship, the thematic analysis employed a configurative approach (Gough, Thomas, & Oliver, 2012), involving the inductive organization and arrangement of patterns as they emerged from the data. During the final analytical stage, the author organized and interpreted the identified themes by following the analytical procedures suggested by Jones, Coviello, and Tang (2011). The rigorous methodology of this paper ensures that the findings are reliable and valuable for future refugee entrepreneurship research.

Findings

The comprehensive analysis in this paper explores the current state of refugee entrepreneurship research, examining aspects such as authorship, collaboration, disciplinary scope, scholarly focus, conceptual orientations, and thematic areas. It highlights key developments, findings, and inconsistencies and knowledge gaps while identifying four primary obstacles hindering the progress of research on the topic. Firstly, the research lacks robust theoretical foundations, as most scholarship gravitates towards empirically descriptive approaches and adopts eclectic theories from the social sciences and humanities, which are only marginally suitable for understanding refugee entrepreneurship. Secondly, the extant literature falls short to capture the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship, involving the interplay

between agency and context/structure, with its tendency to overemphasize the latter. Thirdly, there is a need for methodological improvements, such as developing new sampling tools tailored to refugees' hidden nature, in order to establish robust evidence relating to the phenomenon. Lastly, there is a lack of academic effort to create domain-specific knowledge and coherence within the research area. This paper offers suggestions for addressing the above challenges, and these issues are picked up by the remaining studies in the dissertation.

Paper II – Facebook Ad-Based Sampling and the Challenges of Representativity: Towards a Sampling Method for Identifying Entrepreneurial Refugees in Cross-National Survey Research

Purpose

Quantitative empirical research involving entrepreneurial refugees presents two primary methodological challenges for researchers striving to obtain a representative sample. First, the lack of a comprehensive and detailed register of refugees necessitates the exploration of alternative methods for identifying the target population (Bloch, 2004). Second, refugees' sensitive life circumstances complicate the process of motivating them to participate in surveys (Robinson, 2002). This paper primarily addresses the representativity challenges of identification, as it creates the initial, critical barrier to undertaking statistically-robust refugee entrepreneurship research. The paper introduces and empirically validates an innovative approach for identifying refugees in cross-national entrepreneurship research, using a previously untapped method: Facebook's algorithm for targeted ads. By expanding the scope of sampling methods, this paper enhances the methodological underpinnings for designing large-scale survey research and generating robust insights into the phenomenon. Furthermore, the paper highlights the limitations and contingencies of the proposed sampling method and recommends a procedure for future research.

Conceptual framework

This paper draws upon literature related to online non-probability sampling, with a specific focus on the use of algorithms for targeting paid ads on social media platforms, particularly Facebook. Building on the emergent literature within the medical and social science fields, the paper explores the potential of Facebook ad-based sampling to address the challenges associated with identifying hidden refugee populations (Iannelli et al., 2020; Kosinski et al., 2015). The paper further states that

the extensive and continually updated digital census provided by Facebook, which covers refugee populations well, along with its sophisticated ad-targeting algorithm, presents a powerful sampling tool. As a result, Facebook ads can aid researchers in achieving a close approximation of representativity, surpassing traditional methods typically employed to identify these groups.

Data and Analysis

The paper harnessed survey data gathered for an overarching cross-national project investigating the entrepreneurial intentions of refugees. This data was used to demonstrate how Facebook ad-based sampling addresses the representativity challenges of identifying participants for quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research. The sample comprises Syrian refugees, aged between 18 and 65 years, who relocated to Sweden and Austria during the mid-2010s “refugee crisis”. Data collection primarily involved two paid Facebook advertising campaigns conducted over a period of 15 weeks in the autumn of 2019. For comparison, ancillary data from Statistics Austria and the Swedish Migration Agency were also collected to provide the actual number of Syrian refugees granted residency rights in the two countries during the study period.

In this paper, various analytical techniques were employed. Metrics from the Facebook Ad Manager dashboard were examined. These metrics were *paid reach* (the number of users who viewed the ads in their News Feed at least once), *link clicks* (the number of users who clicked on the advertisement), and *cost per click* (the campaign cost divided by the number of link clicks). Additional metrics were also calculated to assess data quality, completeness, and the overall feasibility of Facebook ad-based recruitment. These included *view rate* (click-to-reach ratio), *completion rate* (recruits per unique link click), and *cost per recruit*.

Moreover, the digital census on Facebook, comprising the target refugee population, was compared with official statistics to ascertain whether the individuals identified in the Facebook database matching the sampling frame could reasonably approximate the actual target population. To further evaluate its representativeness, the study sample generated by the Facebook ad-based recruitment strategy was tested for selection bias. This analysis entailed comparing the gender and age distributions of the target population with those of the study sample using chi-squared tests.

Findings

The validation of Facebook ad-based sampling through a large-scale survey in cross-national research substantiates the claim that this method effectively identifies a digitally representative census of refugees who were resettled in Sweden and Austria during the study period. Therefore, the individuals who match the sampling

frame within the Facebook database can be reasonably considered a good approximation of the target population in the given research context. This study demonstrates that Facebook ad-based sampling effectively addresses the challenge of representativity when identifying refugees for quantitative entrepreneurship research. These findings contribute to the creation of tools and methods that leverage novel data sources to conduct statistically robust research in this domain. Such research not only facilitates sophisticated analyses, generating valuable insights, but also fosters the advancement and legitimacy of refugee entrepreneurship research. Further, it aids the development of empirically grounded guidance for both policy and practice.

Paper III – Entrepreneurial Beliefs of Refugees: A Matter of Local Population Sentiments in the Host City

Purpose

This paper delves into the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship, seeking to understand the drivers of entrepreneurial agency pertinent to refugees' specific circumstances and their early adaptation process post-forced migration. It examines presuppositions from cultural perspectives concerning the influence of ethnicity (Halter, 1995; Johnson, 2000) and from structural perspectives on the role of conditions in the host location (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008) in influencing their individual consideration of entrepreneurship. To this end, two hypotheses were formulated, stating that refugees' current spatial location in different host cities and ethnic origin shape their entrepreneurial beliefs, which form the cognitive and affective foundations of entrepreneurial behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Investigating the effect of these factors prior to the decision to start a business can reveal the individual-level drivers of refugee entrepreneurship. This could subsequently explain why only some refugees voluntarily opt for entrepreneurship during their initial integration stage, while others do not (Maes, Leroy, & Sels, 2014).

Focusing on entrepreneurial beliefs is particularly relevant within the refugee context, because these beliefs mirror crucial insights into the entrepreneurial agency factors (Bandura, 2006) that are needed to support refugees' positive development and career adaptation after resettlement. From a research standpoint, the study of entrepreneurial beliefs is also pertinent because refugees require more time than other migrant groups to engage in concrete entrepreneurial steps and actions due to their disruptive life circumstances (Obschonka, Hann, & Bajwa, 2018). Hence, investigating their entrepreneurial beliefs can facilitate a better understanding of the potential for entrepreneurship within this group and can help predict their subsequent entrepreneurial activity.

Conceptual Framework

This paper applies embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007) as its underlying conceptual foundation in order to incorporate arguments from cultural and structural perspectives while repositioning the individual at the centre of refugee entrepreneurship research (Rauch & Frese, 2007). The concept of embedded agency depicts refugees as entrepreneurial agents who make intentional choices within the constraints imposed by their context. Hence, it offers the conceptual backdrop for integrating agency and context-oriented theories, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics inherent to refugee entrepreneurship.

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is called upon to conceptualize refugees' entrepreneurial agency as reflected through their entrepreneurial beliefs. In cognitive entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial beliefs represent the deeply held assumptions underlying individuals' sensemaking and self-reflection concerning their engagement in entrepreneurial activity (Krueger, 2007). Within the TPB framework, entrepreneurial beliefs establish the foundations for explaining the cognitive processes giving rise to entrepreneurial behaviour. The theory posits that individuals' entrepreneurial behaviour is guided by three levels of consideration: (1) beliefs about the perceived consequences of entrepreneurial behaviour (behavioural beliefs); (2) beliefs about the expectations of referent groups about entrepreneurial behaviour (normative beliefs); and (3) beliefs about the influence of various factors that may either facilitate or impede entrepreneurial behaviour (control beliefs). According to Ajzen (1991), these three categories of belief are shaped by various exogenous or contextual factors.

To capture the contextual framework, this paper takes into account the ethnic backgrounds of refugees and their spatial locations in different host cities after being granted residency rights. In doing so, the study investigates the relevance of cultural (ethnic origin) and structural (host location) factors to the development of entrepreneurial agency among refugees.

Data and Methods

To test the hypotheses, a two-step approach was employed. In the first step, cross-sectional survey data was used to investigate the potential influence of refugees' host city location and ethnic origin on their entrepreneurial beliefs. The analysis included 642 observations on Syrian, Iraqi, Afghani, and Palestinian refugees, aged 18–65 years, who resettled in four Austrian cities (Vienna, Graz, Linz, and Salzburg) and seven Swedish cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Uppsala, Västerås, Helsingborg, and Växjö) during the so-called "European refugee crisis". Data collection took place in the autumn of 2019. A non-probability sampling strategy was employed, consisting of paid Facebook ads complemented by snowball, targeted, and self-selection sampling methods. The dependent variables were behavioural, normative, and control entrepreneurial beliefs, measured using

established scales (Maes, Leroy, & Sels, 2014). The independent variables included: (1) a categorical variable, *City*, comprising 10 dummy variables representing the four Austrian and seven Swedish cities; and (2) *Ethnic group*, operationalized with three dummy variables. The reference categories were Stockholm for *City* and Syria for *Ethnic group*.

Based on the finding that refugees' location in the different host cities matters for their behavioural entrepreneurial beliefs, the second-step analysis drew upon a unique set of secondary regional data to test the theoretical arguments underpinning the effects supported in the first step. To this end, five variables were included: (1) *Anti-refugee sentiments*, measured using a factor consisting of six items from the recent European Value Study (EVS, 2022; Haerpfer et al., 2022); (2) *Anti-refugee policies*, proxied by the share of seats held by right-wing parties in each city council; (3) *Size of the immigrant community* of working age, calculated as the share of individuals from outside the EU27 as a percentage of the total population aged 15–64 years; (4) *Size of the ethnic entrepreneurship community*, calculated as the share of entrepreneurs from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine within the total population of entrepreneurs in the host city; and (5) *Labour-market integration*, proxied by the difference in employment rates between foreign-born and native residents of the host city.

For the analysis, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was employed to evaluate the hypotheses, simultaneously entering the variables that capture refugees' host city location and ethnic origin as well as assessing the relevance of the different host city dimensions. In both steps, *Residence in host location*, reflecting the number of years that refugees had spent in their host city, was included as a control variable. F-statistics were applied to evaluate model adequacy, and T-statistics were used to assess the significance of regression coefficients.

Findings

The analysis reveals that refugees' behavioural entrepreneurial beliefs are shaped by the conditions in their host cities but not by their ethnic origin. Furthermore, neither the host city nor ethnic origin significantly impacts the normative and control entrepreneurial belief dimensions. Building upon the finding that the host city context influences refugees' behavioural entrepreneurial beliefs, the paper explores the specific dimensions of the city that affect this relationship. It identifies anti-refugee sentiment as the primary factor negatively affecting the outcomes refugees anticipate from engaging in entrepreneurship. Notably, the length of time that refugees have spent in their host city location does not have any significant influence on any dimension of their entrepreneurial beliefs.

The findings support aspects of the structural perspective, which underscore how the local population's openness, tolerance, inclusivity, and appreciation for refugees in the host location foster refugee entrepreneurship (Bhagat, 2020; Crush & Ramachandran, 2015). The behavioural entrepreneurial beliefs of refugees mirror

the local population's response to their presence. The analysis confirms the expectation that positive sentiments towards refugees among the host populace are associated with beliefs that their entrepreneurial behaviour will yield favourable outcomes (Ram, Jones, & Villares-Varela, 2017). This insight underscores the significance of structural factors, rather than cultural ones, for theorizing the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship. However, it also highlights the necessity of incorporating refugees' personal agency into a scholarly understanding of this phenomenon. Hence, this study lays the groundwork for future research and carries substantial implications for theory, policy, and practice.

Paper IV – Unfolding the Dynamics of Refugees' Entrepreneurial Journey in the Aftermath of Forced Displacement

Purpose

This study investigates what scholars have labelled the “paradox of refugee entrepreneurship” (Collins, Watson, & Krivokapic-Skoko, 2017), which alludes to refugees' capacity to fare as entrepreneurs despite experiencing extreme disruptions in their personal lives. Previous research has predominantly focused on the influence of ethnocultural characteristics associated with refugees' home countries (Bizri, 2017; Gold, 1988, 1992; Halter, 1995) and the obstacles they encounter within the host country's structure (Barak-Bianco & Rajman, 2015; Garnham, 2006; Johnson, 2000). This body of literature has primarily emphasized the antecedents of refugee entrepreneurship, often describing it as a group-level phenomenon determined by cultural and structural factors, rather than a process involving individual journeys.

Moreover, the prevailing paradigm in refugee entrepreneurship literature tends to portray refugees as being submissive to external factors, overlooking their personal agency to orchestrate the entrepreneurial process. In contrast, this paper adopts a process-oriented approach grounded in inductive research to illuminate how refugees proactively engage in entrepreneurship and navigate their path towards it after forced migration. Through a theory-building analysis (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013), the paper develops a conceptual model that unfolds the dynamics of refugees' entrepreneurial journeys.

Conceptual Framework

This study adopts an inductive approach, with the aim of building theory while drawing on the presuppositions of embedded agency as a sensitizing concept. This

perspective offers a complementary lens to the existing culturally and structurally deterministic understanding of refugee entrepreneurship, providing a more nuanced picture of refugees' entrepreneurial agency. By juxtaposing institutional and entrepreneurial aspects, embedded agency highlights the mutually constitutive nature of structure and agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). In this study, the overriding aim is to develop a theoretical model that presents refugees as knowledgeable and active agents, capable of reflecting upon their constraints, making decisions, and acting purposefully to orchestrate their entrepreneurial path within the frames set by their home and host country contexts. The paper's approach emphasizes the agency of refugees in shaping their entrepreneurial journey and highlights the ways in which they actively interact with the structures/contexts within which they operate.

Data and Methods

This paper draws on rich data from a total of 40 in-depth interviews with 21 Syrian refugee entrepreneurs in Sweden, conducted over multiple rounds. The selection of this group for the study is justified by their significant presence in the country during the research period, which coincided with the so-called "European refugee crisis" in the mid-2010s. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling strategy that adhered to four criteria of theoretical relevance (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007): (1) "acute" refugees who left Syria due to the civil war; (2) individuals granted residence permits as refugees (excluding asylum seekers and undocumented migrants); (3) recent arrivals who had established businesses in Sweden; and (4) those who had not obtained Swedish citizenship.

A snowballing approach was employed to identify participants through personal networks and contacts due to their hard-to-reach nature and the specific selection criteria (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Data collection took place between 2018 and 2020, with the majority of participants interviewed twice. Arabic, being their mother tongue, was mostly used in order to capture subtle details and ensure data quality (Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki, & Welch, 2014). The interviews chronicled the refugees' personal lives before, during, and after displacement, as well as their entire entrepreneurial journeys. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and those conducted in Arabic were translated into English for analytical ease.

Data analysis began during the interview process and progressed through iterative stages of sorting, reduction, and theorization, with the aim of developing theoretical constructs that eventually resulted in a conceptual model (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). In the first stage, preliminary labels were created, derived from participants' terms and phrases, to reflect key instances and events. These were later summarized into over 200 first-order codes, sorted chronologically, to outline the life transition process of refugees, while also emphasizing different aspects of their entrepreneurial journey. In the second stage, 31 selected first-order codes with shared themes were grouped and linked to higher-

level conceptual categories (i.e., second-order codes) that encapsulated the underlying meanings. Comparing first-order themes with the existing literature yielded 12 second-order concepts, which were subsequently organized into four overarching aggregate themes. Finally, the dynamic interrelationships among the second-order concepts and the four aggregate themes were elucidated, forming the foundation for the process model of refugee entrepreneurship.

Findings

The paper introduces an integrated processual model that unpacks the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship. This model is based on the premise that entrepreneurship in the refugee context is shaped by substantial adversity (Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020). Although theoretical explanations do exist for entrepreneurs responding to unfavourable events (Shepherd & Williams, 2020), the challenges faced by refugee entrepreneurs are particularly extreme and disruptive. These include the complete destruction of their original context, exposure to trauma from violent conflicts and dangerous flight, resettlement in completely foreign settings, and complex legal issues.

As a result, the model illustrates that entrepreneurship under such circumstances is a dynamic process that unfolds in three consecutive phases. These represent characteristic components of the refugee entrepreneurship process, each of which further consists of iterative underlying sub-processes. These phases are: (1) forced displacement leading to resource circumstances detrimental to entrepreneurship; (2) bouncing back from adversity, triggering the re-acquisition of entrepreneurial resources; and (3) developing perceived entrepreneurial self-efficacy, triggering entrepreneurial action and further exploration. Progression through this process is driven by enabling conditions that demonstrate refugees' personal capabilities to proactively rebuild their personal and professional lives.

The model highlights that refugees actively influence the prerequisites for venture founding and development. This reflects their individual agency, which provides the energy required to move from a disadvantaged position towards becoming entrepreneurial actors in their host society, who generate societal wealth through their ventures. By stressing the iterative and dynamic nature of the refugee entrepreneurial journey, the model can inform policy and practice, identifying critical points at which interventions can be targeted to support refugees in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

5. Discussion

This chapter returns to the dissertation's overriding aim and specific research questions and discusses how the appended papers contribute to addressing them. The dissertation's findings are also deliberated in light of previous research.

Returning to the Research Questions

As previously stated, this dissertation aims to develop a nuanced understanding of the refugee entrepreneurship phenomenon through four separate but interconnected papers. To achieve this overriding aim, the subsequent three Specific Research Questions (SRQs) have guided the individual papers:

SRQ1: What is the current state of refugee entrepreneurship research within the extant literature?

SRQ2: How can the challenges of representativity in identifying entrepreneurial refugees for statistically robust survey research be addressed, considering their “hidden” or “hard-to-reach” nature?

SRQ3: How can the conceptual understanding of refugee entrepreneurship be advanced by capturing refugees' ability to volitionally pursue entrepreneurship and proactively orchestrate their journey towards it, given their detrimental circumstances and within the frames of their context?

A nuanced understanding of refugee entrepreneurship entails acknowledging the diverse, multifaceted, and specific nature of refugees' experiences and the challenges and opportunities they face when considering an entrepreneurial career as well as initiating and operating businesses post-relocation (Gold, 1988, 1992; Harima et al., 2021; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008). This approach posits that migrant entrepreneurship is not a monolithic phenomenon but rather a diverse landscape shaped by factors associated with individuals' reasons for migration and their experiences thereof, along with the politico-legal circumstances under which they establish their businesses. In the context of refugees, such factors include the diversity of their backgrounds (for instance, ethnic origin, social class, and gender) (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021), the nature of their displacement and flight (Mawson & Kasem, 2019), the specific sociocultural and institutional settings in host countries, and their legal status after relocation (Harima et al., 2021).

At its core, a nuanced understanding of refugee entrepreneurship necessitates an investigation of the factors that specifically shape refugees' entrepreneurial entry decisions, experiences, and journeys in contrast to those of self-initiated entrepreneurial migrant groups such as immigrants, and ethnic minority entrepreneurs. It also involves identifying suitable methods and conceptual approaches to capture refugees' entrepreneurial activity pertinent to their specific nature and circumstances linked with forced migration. The subsections below revisit how this dissertation contributes to such an understanding in relation to its primary purpose and underlying research questions through a blend of systematic, methodological, theoretical, and empirical analyses of the phenomenon.

Current Scholarly Understanding of Refugee Entrepreneurship¹²

With respect to SRQ1, this study systematically navigates the landscape of refugee entrepreneurship research, charting its intellectual territory across various academic disciplines, and identifying the core themes and subthemes that define the current body of knowledge. The analysis unveils a rapid expansion in the breadth of refugee entrepreneurship literature. However, as an emerging area of study, it faces hurdles due to inconsistent and fragmented understandings in the existing scholarship, potentially hampering further progress. This inconsistency arises from the dearth of a coherent understanding of refugee entrepreneurship, both as a phenomenon and as a subject of academic investigation. At present, the research area is marked by a compendium of disconnected studies (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021). Furthermore, the heterogeneity of entrepreneurial refugees, coupled with their diverse flight and resettlement patterns and legal circumstances, adds complexities that often result in researchers working independently, each with their own subjective interpretations of the phenomenon (Harima et al., 2021).

As a result, extant studies offer inconsistent accounts of refugee entrepreneurship, with some even providing no definition, creating conceptual ambiguities. The lack of well-defined parameters for empirical work further blurs the distinction between this research area and its neighbouring disciplines, such as immigrant, diaspora, and transnational entrepreneurship (see Krivokapic-Skoko, Watson, & Collins, 2023; Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019). In the absence of a coherent understanding of the phenomenon, evaluating and comparing results across different studies and contexts proves challenging for scholars. On the whole, refugee entrepreneurship is currently bereft of an agreed-upon research scope that unites scholars in a common

¹² An expanded version of this section is accepted for publication as a book chapter in the upcoming Routledge book- *Refugee Entrepreneurship: A Research Companion*.

and clearly differentiated intellectual venture. These situations raise concerns about its viability and prospects as a separate research stream.

This dissertation addresses some of these issues by conceptualizing refugee entrepreneurship and defining its scope to further domain-specific knowledge. In this pursuit, this study revisits the fundamental relationship between refugeehood and entrepreneurship, acknowledging that, ontologically, the scope of its research lies at the crossroads of the two. The study draws on refugee theories to identify the factors specifically affecting refugee outcomes, including aspects both preceding and following flight (Kunz, 1973, 1981; Paludan, 1974; Richmond, 1993). It also harnesses entrepreneurship theory to theorize refugee entrepreneurial activity, situating it within the nexus between individual agents and the broader structure/context (Gartner, 1985; Jack & Anderson, 2002). Accordingly, the study posits that the scope of refugee entrepreneurship should encompass the specific dimensions that inherently characterize refugees and differentiate their entrepreneurial behaviour from that of voluntarily relocated immigrant entrepreneurs (Gold, 1988, 1992; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006). These dimensions include the initial reasons for and mechanisms of refugee movement, contextual heterogeneity, and the temporality of the refugee experience.

The complexities inherent in the nature of refugee movements have significant implications for refugee entrepreneurship. This study empirically focuses on refugee entrepreneurs who were forcibly displaced due to violent civil wars and conflicts. These individuals are what Kunz (1981) designated as “majority-identified” refugees, engaged in “acute” kinetic movements. The study’s emphasis contrasts with considerations of “anticipatory” and “self-alienated”¹³ refugees. These groups share similarities with voluntary immigrants, as their motivations for migration are driven more by personal convictions than by experience of substantial adversities, and their movement involves careful planning.

Evidence from this study reveals that refugees subjected to “acute” movements encounter circumstances detrimental to entrepreneurship. These include, but are not limited to, the loss of critical resources (e.g., assets, finances, and credentials), high levels of uncertainty and psychological distress, and difficult acculturation processes borne from their experience of violent and conflict-ridden events (see also Christensen et al., 2020; Harima, 2022; Mawson & Kasem, 2019). In contrast, refugee entrepreneurs who anticipated adverse events could transfer their homeland resources and are, therefore, less likely to experience these constraints. Their entrepreneurial behaviour may not differ significantly from that of immigrants. Hence, refugee entrepreneurship research needs to empirically focus on refugees who have experienced “acute” movements to capture specific refugee entrepreneurial characteristics and behaviours.

¹³ According to Kunz (1981), it is difficult to establish whether individuals belonging to self-alienated groups are refugees or voluntary immigrants.

Further, this study indicates that refugee entrepreneurship varies based on the specific situational circumstances and conditions in the host locations where refugees establish and operate their ventures. The cultural and institutional difference between the home and host countries, as expressed in Paludan's (1974) concept of "new" versus "traditional" refugees, holds significance, underscoring the need to consider the potential effects of contextual differences. This study specifically focuses on "new" refugees, who are culturally, ethnically, and racially distinct from the host society and originate from comparatively less developed countries. Such refugee entrepreneurs face numerous obstacles related to language and culture, which are crucial for understanding market opportunities, translating human capital, accessing local social networks, and navigating institutional and societal environments (Embiricos, 2019; Lyon et al., 2007; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). Conversely, investigating "traditional" refugee entrepreneurs who share language, heritage, values, and traditions with their host community could yield contrasting results (see Bizri, 2017). This underscores the importance for researchers to consider the cultural and institutional contexts of both home and host countries and how these differences influence refugee entrepreneurship.

Another critical element is the considerable variation in social, politico-regulatory, and institutional conditions across diverse host locations. This study's cross-national analysis shows that certain host contexts are favourable for refugee entrepreneurship, providing supportive social attitudes, policies, legal frameworks, and infrastructure that spur the phenomenon (De Jager, 2015; Meister & Mauer, 2019). In contrast, other contexts may be xenophobic (Bhagat, 2020), institutionally void (Heilbrunn, 2019; Heilbrunn & Rosenfeld, 2018), or resource-poor (de la Chaux & Haugh, 2020), creating marginal and precarious conditions for refugee entrepreneurs. As a result, refugees' entrepreneurial motivations, experiences, and outcomes vary based on their host context (see also Harima et al., 2021). These diverse situational and institutional factors contribute to the heterogeneity of refugee entrepreneurship, rendering it difficult to generalize findings beyond the empirical setting of a specific study. Hence, scholars need to acknowledge this heterogeneity and contextualize the phenomenon by considering the specific situational circumstances and conditions in which it occurs.

Lastly, this study underscores the relevance of factoring in the temporal aspects of the refugee experience in empirical investigations. During the early relocation period, refugee entrepreneurs suffer from the liabilities linked to their refugeehood and foreignness within their host institutions. However, the findings show that upon becoming naturalized citizens, they are able to re-establish ties with their homeland and also gain access to third countries (also see Krivokapic-Skoko, Watson, & Collins, 2023). Their embeddedness in different socioeconomic contexts allows them to maintain vital global relations that enhance their ability to creatively, dynamically, and strategically maximize their resource base (Halilovich & Efendic, 2021; Drori, Honig, & Wright, 2009). Depending on the span of their businesses, refugees may metamorphose into transnational and/or diaspora entrepreneurs (see

Sandberg, Immonen, & Kok, 2019). Hence, in order to capture refugees' specific entrepreneurial behaviour, which differentiates them from the other categories of migrant entrepreneurs, scholars should select samples prior to the cessation of their refugeehood.

To conclude, refugee entrepreneurship presents a multifaceted subject for scientific investigation (Adeeko & Treanor, 2021; Harima et al., 2021). That said, this dissertation presents a scholarly analysis of the phenomenon based on the intersection of “acute” cross-border forced migration and entrepreneurship. This focus provides a basis for defining the scope of this emerging research area. However, it is also imperative to take into account the initial migration context and the temporal aspects of the refugee experience. Accordingly, refugee entrepreneurship research should concentrate on entrepreneurial refugees who have been forcibly displaced in an “acute” manner, and are in the early resettlement stages—prior to the cessation of their refugeehood, either through the acquisition of new citizenship or repatriation (cf. Whittaker, 2006). The influence of contextual heterogeneity should also be afforded specific attention in both theoretical and empirical analyses (Refai, Haloub, & Lever, 2018; Welter, 2011). By factoring in these dimensions, researchers can better capture the specific nature of the phenomenon and gain a nuanced understanding of it.

Advancing the Methodological Base for Quantitative Refugee Entrepreneurship Research

In relation to SRQ2, this study enhances the methodological base for empirical quantitative analysis of refugee entrepreneurship. Attaining representativity in survey research on refugees and other hidden populations is often seen as an unattainable ideal (Bloch, 2004; Duncan, White, & Nicholson, 2003). However, this study strives to develop methods that approximate representativity as closely as possible within refugee entrepreneurship research. This effort is guided by an expanding body of literature in the medical, healthcare, and social sciences that leverages the pervasiveness of the internet and digital technologies, such as smartphones and social media, to enhance traditional sampling methods (see Iannelli et al., 2020).

Building upon this scholarship, the present study proposes and empirically validates the use of Facebook ad-based sampling to identify and recruit refugees for quantitative entrepreneurship research. Over the past decade, Facebook has established a multi-dimensional and continuously updating digital census that includes a significant proportion of hidden or hard-to-reach populations (Ribeiro, Benevenuto, & Zagheni, 2020; Zagheni, Weber, & Gummadi, 2017). Notably, refugees are well-represented in Facebook's databases, because the platform facilitates the sharing of crucial information during their migration process and after

relocation (Anderson & Daniel, 2020; Dekker et al., 2018; Kutscher & Kreß, 2018). In addition, Facebook's advanced targeting algorithm enables the identification of refugee groups that match predefined criteria based on users' digital footprints on the platform (Grow et al., 2020).

By leveraging these attributes, insights from Paper II demonstrate how researchers can use Facebook's powerful interfaces and attribution models provided by its paid targeted advertising service to identify members of refugee populations for entrepreneurship research. Given access to aggregate-level basic statistical information for control purposes, using Facebook ads to identify refugees may prove to be a viable method for researchers to approximate a representative sample of technologically literate refugee populations with social media coverage. This sampling approach is sensitive to the typically hidden nature of refugees and their initial placement in various geographical regions of the host country following their successful asylum applications. Thus, the sampling of refugees for entrepreneurship research through Facebook ads can approximate the representativeness of collected samples, thereby addressing the representativity challenge of identification.

In Bergh et al.'s (2022) typology of methodological advancements, this study provides an incremental contribution by introducing comparatively modest modifications with broad relevance to refugee entrepreneurship research and practice. Such a contribution is critical in this research area, as the current knowledge is predominantly derived from small-scale, exploratory, and descriptive qualitative studies (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). Therefore, scholars are calling for statistically robust quantitative research for a comparative understanding of the phenomenon across different refugee groups and contexts (Newman, Macaulay, & Dunwoodie, forthcoming).

Quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research, despite offering the potential to raise new questions and rigorously re-examine existing ones, also poses challenges due to the "hidden" or "hard-to-reach" nature of entrepreneurial refugees (Bloch, 2004). Moreover, non-probability methods, like the snowball, targeted, and self-selection sampling traditionally used to survey these groups, often suffer from low response rates and selection bias. These limitations inhibit the generation of externally valid, large-scale survey data (Barratt, Ferris, & Lenton, 2015; Magnani et al., 2005), emphasizing the current need for improving sampling approaches pertinent to refugees and other hidden entrepreneurial groups. Therefore, researchers are continually exploring novel methods that cater to the specific needs and characteristics of these populations (Iannelli et al., 2020).

This dissertation contributes to the call for developing efficient and innovative methods to systematically investigate issues related to the human migration process with the application of contemporary digital technologies (Tatibekov, Dana, & Alzhanova, 2022). By expanding the sampling toolkit for quantitative refugee entrepreneurship research through Facebook ad-based sampling, this study not only supports scientific progress but also provides crucial tools that yield robust insights into the socio-economic issues associated with the phenomenon. This development

also enables the use of complex data analysis techniques, leading to novel insights and elevating the academic legitimacy of the research stream. Furthermore, representative samples from entrepreneurial refugee groups contribute to providing a strong evidence base for policy and practice.

Bergh et al. (2022) contend that the value of a methodological advancement is defined by its position across a four-stage lifecycle: (1) inception; (2) refinement and comparison; (3) knowledge consolidation and dissemination; and (4) displacement. This study contributes to the first two stages by introducing and validating Facebook ad-based sampling as a method for surveying refugee populations for entrepreneurship research. This dissertation is pioneering in proposing this approach and providing empirical evidence for its efficiency in this specific research domain. The study outlines the methodology and validates its technical aspects that are relevant to entrepreneurship research. It also underscores the need for applying this approach within refugee entrepreneurship research, outlining its merits and limitations, delineating boundary conditions for its use, and offering cautionary guidance. Additionally, the study includes checklists, best-practice recommendations, and tailored suggestions for implementing the sampling method within the context of refugee entrepreneurship research.

In conclusion, this study provides strong empirical evidence supporting the use of Facebook ads as a viable tool to identify entrepreneurial refugees. This constitutes the first crucial step towards addressing the challenges of representativity in refugee entrepreneurship research. The study showcases the potential of this strategy to advance the methodological underpinnings of this nascent research area. The insights might also be relevant to identify other hidden entrepreneurial groups in research areas such as informal, illegal, or criminal entrepreneurship (Smith & McElwee, 2014; Salvi et al., 2022).

Conceptual Foundations of Refugee Entrepreneurship Research

Regarding SRQ3, this dissertation advances the foundations for conceptualizing refugee entrepreneurship as an entrepreneurial occurrence, emphasizing individual refugee actors and their agency, while also considering their specific circumstances linked with forced migration, and their home and host country contexts. As previously stated, the bulk of knowledge production in refugee entrepreneurship research has been undertaken by scholars within the social sciences and humanities, and this has resulted in a disconnection from scholarly conversations in entrepreneurship theories. Specifically, several extant studies are conceptually grounded in culturally and structurally oriented perspectives (including mixed embeddedness), which direct their primary focus towards the external conditions for refugee entrepreneurship (see reviews by Abebe, 2019, 2022; Lazarczyk-Bilal,

2019). Such perspectives primarily offer a contextual-deterministic understanding of the phenomenon, disregarding the entrepreneurial agency of refugees.

In recent years, scholars have begun implementing a voluntaristic-oriented approach, by responding to Obschonka, Hahn, and Bajwa's (2018) call for an agentic perspective in the analysis of refugee entrepreneurship (see Adeeko & Treanor, 2021; Cetin et al., 2022; Kachkar & Djafri, 2022; Klyver, Steffens, & Honig, 2022; Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Refai, Haloub, & Lever, 2019; Shepherd, Saade, & Wincent, 2020; Welsh et al., 2022). However, while these studies acknowledge refugees' exercise of entrepreneurial agency, their narrow psychological focus overlooks its interplay with the external circumstances and structures/contexts that refugee entrepreneurs inevitably have to deal with.

As the findings in this study demonstrate, in the specific case of refugees, the disruptive life circumstances stemming from forced displacement and the conditions in their host environment post-relocation significantly impact their entry into entrepreneurship and their journey towards it. These factors influence refugees' personal agency, that is, their ability to engage in conscious decision-making and to act on those decisions (Harima, 2022; Jiang et al., 2021; Ram et al., 2022; Refai & McElwee, 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). As a result, entrepreneurial agency within refugee entrepreneurship must be seen as a moderate degree of voluntarism or relative autonomy (Freiling, 2009; Freiling, Gersch, & Goeke, 2008). This underscores the need to investigate the interplay between agency and structure/context in the conceptualization and analysis of the phenomenon.

Bearing this in mind, the dissertation builds on the presuppositions of embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007) as a foundational concept to counterbalance the prevailing focus on external and circumstantial factors in current refugee entrepreneurship research. It does so by assigning equal emphasis to the agency of refugee entrepreneurs. Embedded agency aligns with the core tenet of moderate voluntarism, which posits that individuals possess and exercise agency to make volitional choices within the strictures of their surrounding structures/contexts and other constraining circumstances (Freiling, 2009; Freiling, Gersch, & Goeke, 2008). This perspective contrasts with extreme voluntarism, which overemphasizes individual agency and neglects structural influences, and determinism, which ascribes causality solely to the surrounding context and denies agency.

The embedded agency view of refugee entrepreneurship acknowledges that the interaction between refugees' agency and the structures/contexts in which they operate shapes their entrepreneurial entry, process, and outcomes (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). This conceptualization enables an understanding of how structural barriers and circumstances related to the refugee experience drive their volitional decisions to pursue entrepreneurship while simultaneously enabling and constraining their entrepreneurial capabilities (Refai & McElwee, 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). By focusing on this interplay, the embedded agency provides the conceptual backdrop for creating an understanding of the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship.

In line with the discussions above, Paper III applied Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), a well-established conceptual framework for theorizing entrepreneurial agency during the early stages of entrepreneurship. Using the TPB, the paper examines how refugees exercise their agency through sense-making and self-reflection in order to volitionally decide on engaging in entrepreneurial behaviour within the parameters of their home and host country contexts. The findings underline the importance of refugees' contextual responsiveness and empowerment in understanding their subsequent entrepreneurial behaviour. By integrating the core presuppositions of structural perspective and TPB, the paper achieves a balanced application of the agency versus structure dialectic in its analysis of the phenomenon. This conceptual approach enables an exploration of how societal and politico-institutional conditions in the host location shape refugees' ability to make voluntary decisions about pursuing an entrepreneurial career post-relocation.

Similarly, Paper IV introduces an integrated conceptual model that incorporates the assumptions of embedded agency and highlights the dynamic process of refugee entrepreneurship. The model illustrates how refugees' ability to proactively orchestrate their entrepreneurial journey is intertwined with adverse circumstances and structural barriers experienced due to forced migration. It acknowledges that forced migration shapes refugees' active pursuit of entrepreneurship in two directions (see also Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). On the one hand, the extreme disruptions to their lives motivate refugees to become small business owners in order to overcome their situations and reconstruct their lives. On the other hand, while sudden displacement creates adverse circumstances that constrain their entrepreneurial entry and progression through the entrepreneurial process, it also enables them to develop capabilities, such as resilience, motivation, and self-efficacy, to help them move forward. Hence, the model offers insights into the nature of entrepreneurial agency in the context of refugees, fueling the energy needed for them to transition from a detrimental position and extreme disadvantages towards becoming entrepreneurial agents within the host society, capable of generating societal wealth through their ventures.

Overall, this dissertation advances the theoretical foundations of refugee entrepreneurship research by conceptualising refugees as embedded entrepreneurial agents through the lens of embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). This perspective implies that refugees possess the capacity to volitionally pursue entrepreneurship and influence its prerequisites, despite the adverse circumstances they face and the constraints imposed by their surrounding structures/context. Entrepreneurial agency is particularly relevant to refugees, who must take proactive steps to rebuild their lives and overcome the significant life disruption they encounter (Obschonka, Hahn, & Bajwa, 2018). Host structures, which include strict regulatory regimes, anti-refugee societal sentiments, economic and institutional barriers, and other constraining factors like the loss of homeland resources, not only restrict refugees but also provide opportunities for them to develop their

entrepreneurial aspirations and capabilities and shape their entrepreneurial journey (Refai & McElwee, 2022; Senthanaar et al., 2021). Hence, the concept of embedded agency captures the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship by providing a backdrop for integrating macro and micro theory. The former captures the circumstantial and structural setbacks faced by refugee entrepreneurs, while the latter relates to their individual agency to overcome these constraints (Babbie, 2020; Tatibekov, Dana, & Alzhanova, 2022).

6. Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

This chapter summarises the implications of the dissertation for refugee entrepreneurship research, policy, and practice. Moreover, it delves into the primary limitations associated with the research design, data, and methods employed, including the selection of informants and research context. Building upon these limitations, the chapter ends by delineating prospective research opportunities and trajectories.

The primary aim of this composite thesis is to provide nuanced insights into refugee entrepreneurship, by investigating the specific array of factors that shape this phenomenon. To accomplish this, the dissertation implements a comprehensive approach through a blend of systematic and thematic, methodological, theoretical, and empirical analyses, which are conducted across four separate but interconnected papers. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the main contributions of each of the appended papers. This is followed by a discussion illustrating how they jointly contribute to the advancement of refugee entrepreneurship research, policy, and practice.

Table 6.1

An overview of the four studies and their primary contributions

Paper	Purpose of the study	Type of paper	Main contributions
I	Explores extant refugee entrepreneurship research through a combination of systematic and thematic analyses	Literature review	Establishes the ontological and epistemological foundations for the emerging refugee entrepreneurship research by mapping out its intellectual territory, creating a repository of existing knowledge to organize its subject matter, and delineating its scope.
II	Presents and empirically validates an innovative approach for identifying a representative sample of refugees for cross-national entrepreneurship research by utilizing the Facebook's algorithm for targeted ads	Methodological	Contributes to the development of innovative tools and methods that address the "hidden" or "hard-to-reach" nature of entrepreneurial refugees and capitalize on new data sources for statistically robust refugee entrepreneurship research.
III	Investigates the drivers of entrepreneurial agency that are pertinent to the specific circumstances of refugees and their resettlement process following forced migration	Empirical (quantitative)	Develops the conceptual base for understanding the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship by investigating the relevance of cultural and structural aspects for refugees' development of entrepreneurial agency.
IV	Unfolds the dynamics of refugees' entrepreneurial journey in the host country	Empirical (qualitative)	Develops a dynamic process model that outlines the consecutive phases of refugee entrepreneurship, details the underlying iterative sub-processes in each phase, and identifies the factors that drive progression forward.

Implications for Refugee Entrepreneurship Research

The primary research implications of this dissertation are threefold. Firstly, the study establishes the foundations for developing domain-specific theories on refugee entrepreneurship by delineating its specific aspects, providing initial efforts towards conceptualizing the phenomenon, and defining its research scope. While refugee entrepreneurship is currently emerging as a specific research area within the broader field of migrant entrepreneurship, most studies still rely on perspectives developed in the context of voluntary or self-initiated immigrant, and ethnic

entrepreneurs. These perspectives, however, have limited applicability for capturing the specific aspects of refugee entrepreneurship. As a result, there is a lack of conceptual development in the literature that captures the specificity and distinct aspects of the phenomenon.

The dissertation addresses this gap by revisiting the fundamental relationship between refugeehood and entrepreneurship, and suggesting it as the scope of refugee entrepreneurship research, acknowledging that, ontologically, it is the convergence of these two constructs. The thesis demonstrates that theoretical explanations of refugee entrepreneurship should be rooted in the specific circumstances of refugees, which relate to their experiences of flight, forced displacement, and resettlement conditions. In order to understand the distinctions and diversity inherent in the phenomenon, this study draws upon refugee theories (George, 2010; Kunz, 1973, 1981) that offer insights into the specific nature of refugees and how their experiences shape their entrepreneurial decisions and journeys differently from those of immigrants. Moreover, the study underscores the need to consider the contextual heterogeneity inherent in the phenomenon. This stems from refugees' diverse situational circumstances, and the temporality of the refugee experience, which is linked to their specific legal standing and living conditions in their host locations.

By integrating these aspects, the study proposes a conceptualization of refugee entrepreneurship that captures its specificity and accounts for the experiences and challenges faced by refugees in their host countries. In doing so, the study contributes by establishing an ontological foundation for refugee entrepreneurship research, delineating the scope of its inquiry, and creating an epistemological basis for scholars by providing boundary conditions for their empirical studies. This will support the ongoing academic efforts to solidify refugee entrepreneurship as a viable research stream different from other disciplines investigating related phenomena, and will enhance its theoretical underpinnings.

Secondly, this thesis contributes to recent theoretical developments in refugee entrepreneurship research by putting greater emphasis on the individual agency of refugee entrepreneurs. This is done to counterbalance the current deterministic understanding of the phenomenon, which is mostly cultural and structural/contextual-oriented. A large number of studies emphasize the substantial circumstantial challenges that refugees encounter while establishing their businesses in host countries (Embiricos, 2020; Kupferberg, 2008; Lyon, Sepulveda, & Syrett, 2007; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). These studies often perceive obstacles as external factors, existing "out there", without considering the ways in which refugees exercise their agency to overcome them. At the same time, a significant body of refugee entrepreneurship research explains refugees' entrepreneurial behaviour by using cultural theories, which refer to their ethno-cultural backgrounds and resources (Campbell, 2005, 2007; Gold, 1988, 1992; Halter, 1995), or structural theories that emphasize the social, institutional, and economic conditions of host countries (Singh, 1994; Price & Chacko, 2009;

Sepulveda, Syrett, & Lyon, 2011). However, these theories do not capture the intricate interplay between individual refugee entrepreneurs and their context/structure. By overly emphasizing either cultural or structural factors, existing perspectives tend to overlook the entrepreneurial agency of refugees.

This study, informed by the presuppositions of embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007), offers a balanced examination of the agency versus structure dialectic within refugee entrepreneurship. It elucidates how refugees' volitional decisions to engage in entrepreneurship and proactively navigate their entrepreneurial journey—thus reflecting their entrepreneurial agency—are interlaced with the adverse circumstances and structural barriers resulting from forced migration. This conceptualization also chimes with recent studies (Ram et al., 2022; Refai & McElwee, 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022) by giving a balanced role to refugee entrepreneurial agency. This is a factor that is less well incorporated by the predominant cultural, structural, and mixed embeddedness perspectives (Abebe, 2022), but it is very important for refugees striving to rebuild their lives after being forced to move.

In essence, the analysis of refugee entrepreneurship through the lens of embedded agency establishes the conceptual foundation for a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. It bridges theories that capture individual agency, such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), with cultural or structural/context-oriented theories, like the mixed embeddedness framework (Kloosterman, 2010) and institutional theory (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006). By incorporating the agency of individual refugees into the prevalent cultural- and structural-oriented perspectives, this conceptual approach shifts the focus back to the actor and emphasizes the structure versus agency dialectics within refugee entrepreneurship (cf. Gartner, 1985; Jack & Anderson, 2002). Hence, the conceptual groundwork in this thesis enables researchers to examine the roles played by societal, economic, and politico-institutional conditions, alongside the detrimental circumstances associated with forced migration, in explaining why some refugees proactively choose and pursue entrepreneurial paths while others do not. In this way, the study offers a vital theoretical addition to the refugee entrepreneurship research, and encourages further investigation.

Thirdly, this study addresses the need for further investigation into the entrepreneurial aspects of refugee entrepreneurship. It does so by enriching the existing literature with a processual understanding of the phenomenon. Extant body of knowledge on the topic, primarily derived from non-entrepreneurship research, often focuses on the characteristics of refugee entrepreneurs and their ventures, the nature of their resources, and the situational and contextual circumstances surrounding their business start-ups (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020). As a result, the prevailing literature tends to adopt a static or snapshot approach, emphasizing only the antecedents and outcomes of refugee entrepreneurship—that is, the external factors driving refugees' entrepreneurial entry and contributing to their success

(Abebe, 2019). However, there is a need to expand this understanding to explain how refugee entrepreneurship unfolds.

To address this need, the thesis presents a processual theoretical model that delineates the dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship, including its phases, the constituent underlying sub-processes, and the enabling factors facilitating progression forward. While some efforts have previously been made to investigate the refugee entrepreneurship process (Barth & Zalkat, 2021; Garnham, 2006; Santamaria-Velasco, Benavides-Espinosa, & Simón-Moya, 2021), this thesis sheds new light on the dynamics of refugees' entrepreneurial journey. It provides integrated answers to questions about how refugees actively influence the prerequisites of entrepreneurship and how they fare as entrepreneurs in their host countries post displacement. The processual model illustrates the actions that refugee entrepreneurs take to establish and grow their ventures and the strategies they employ to achieve these objectives. By linking refugee entrepreneurship research with contemporary entrepreneurship theories, this study contributes to a more processual and dynamic analyses of this significant phenomenon.

Policy and Practical Implications

The significance of this thesis extends beyond its research implications, as it is also relevant to both refugee entrepreneurship policy and practice. This is particularly important in light of the recent influx of refugees into Western societies and the emergent demand for improved refugee integration strategies (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). Entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as a means to enhance refugees' upward mobility, facilitating their labour-market and social integration (Jiang et al., 2017; Shneikat & Alrawadieh, 2019). As such, this research offers a crucial foundation for policymakers and practitioners in refugee host countries, such as Sweden and Austria, to navigate the topic of refugee entrepreneurship and develop positive outcomes for both refugee entrepreneurs and the wider society. Furthermore, this study provides valuable insights for refugees aspiring to undertake entrepreneurial activity after resettling in a new host environment. A more in-depth discussion on these issues follows below.

Implications for Policymakers and Refugee Entrepreneurship Support Programmes

Firstly, this study presents policymakers with a valuable knowledge by highlighting refugee entrepreneurship in diverse contexts, thus shedding light on its various facets. The objective is to understand its specific nature and potential for improved support, which has significant implications for policy formulation. In particular, standardized policies designed to promote refugee entrepreneurship may prove

ineffective if they do not take into account the nuanced nature of this phenomenon in terms of its determinants, impacts, and forms. Policymakers also need to consider the distinct statuses and situations of refugee entrepreneurs compared to voluntary entrepreneurial migrants.

This study offers a nuanced account of the specific characteristics of refugee entrepreneurship, encompassing the nature of refugees' entrepreneurial start-ups and resources, their motivational sources and drivers, and the varied institutional and situational contexts in which the phenomenon unfolds. This analysis reveals that a one-size-fits-all approach, which treats all migrant entrepreneurs as a homogeneous or monolithic group, will yield limited results (Desai, Naudé, & Stel, 2021). At the same time, resorting to immigrant entrepreneurship literature to devise policies and intervention schemes for supporting refugee entrepreneurs would also fail to achieve the intended effects (Naudé, Siegel, & Marchand, 2017). Hence, policymakers can only design effective measures tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of refugees if they possess a nuanced understanding of the particularities and specificities of their entrepreneurial activity.

Secondly, this study informs policymakers and practitioners about the roots of refugee entrepreneurship by identifying the factors that influence refugees' individual beliefs about engaging in entrepreneurial behaviour. The formation of entrepreneurial beliefs is considered as a lead indicator of entrepreneurial activity. Given that promoting entrepreneurship is a top priority in many host countries' refugee integration policies, this information is essential for the effective allocation of public resources. It is also noteworthy that many refugees remain in the pre-startup phase until they surmount the liabilities associated with forced displacement (Obschonka, Hann, & Bajwa, 2018). Thus, focusing on lead factors, such as their entrepreneurial beliefs, is vital for understanding entrepreneurship within this specific group. In light of this, this dissertation emphasizes the necessity of creating favourable conditions for refugee entrepreneurship in the host locations, beginning from its earliest stages. This is crucial for supporting and encouraging prospective refugee entrepreneurs.

The political enthusiasm for refugee entrepreneurship, prompted by the mid-2010s "refugee crisis", was often rooted in sanguine accounts linking the phenomenon with refugees' inherent predisposition towards business ownership based on their ethnicity (Gürsel, 2017; Ram et al., 2022). However, the findings of this study indicate that refugees' likelihood to pursue entrepreneurship is independent of their ethnicity or country of origin, but rather is linked to their perception of the business start-up conditions in their immediate host country location. Specifically, anti-refugee sentiments among the local population have a considerable impact on their entrepreneurial entry decision, making it far less likely. This discovery underscores the importance of implementing initiatives and interventions that promote societal change.

One strategy to effecting change at the societal level involves establishing a support system that combines networking activities with business skills

development. Such a system can cultivate connections between refugees and mainstream businesses, financial institutions, local communities, and public organizations, thereby enhancing refugees' perceptions of the local business environment's vitality. This, in turn, encourages them to view entrepreneurial career in a positive light (Meister & Mauer, 2019). Furthermore, disseminating success stories of refugee entrepreneurs across various media platforms and organizing award programmes for these individuals can encourage positive sentiments within the host society by showcasing their economic roles and contributions. Promoting a positive societal perception of refugees' roles in society can enhance their behavioural entrepreneurial beliefs.

Thirdly, this study offers policymakers empirically-validated insights into the specific circumstances under which refugees fare as entrepreneurs. The findings reveal that refugees embark upon business start-up and development process after undergoing a cyclical subprocess of resource loss, which adversely affects their ability to access the means for successful entrepreneurship. The loss of home-country resources, including physical and material assets, social networks, and savings, creates distressing situations and unfamiliar contexts in which refugees cannot apply their accumulated knowledge and skills to navigate and understand the host country context (see also Harima, 2022).

As a result, they require more support than other entrepreneurs to mobilize entrepreneurial resources during the pre-entry stage. Even after these efforts, however, their businesses typically remain small-scale and necessity-driven, with low profit margins and extended working hours, until they eventually develop their actual entrepreneurial skills and are able to transfer their qualifications. This predicament may increase the risk of perpetuating segregation and engendering second-class citizens, rather than facilitating refugees' integration, unless policymakers and support systems intervene promptly to help them in overcoming their acute resource disadvantages.

The above insights suggest that policymakers should establish intervention schemes that enable refugees to utilize their previous human capital by developing appropriate tools for skills assessment and recognition of qualifications. Such schemes allow refugees to capitalize on their accumulated cognitive abilities and facilitate the building up of new resources in the host country, which is crucial not only for successful venture founding and development (Jiang et al., 2021) but also for activating additional home-country resources.

Besides, policymakers can support aspiring refugee entrepreneurs in building up host-country resources as early as possible by providing them with practical assistance through individual empowerment and skill development. Offering business training, advisory, and coaching services with a focus on the host country's market opportunities and legal-institutional requirements for business start-ups can harness refugees' potential and enhance their entrepreneurial skills, competence, and knowledge (Harima, Freudenberg, & Halberstadt, 2019).

Moreover, the insights gleaned from this dissertation reinforce the role of refugee-specific support systems, such as refugee business incubators and accelerators (Harima, Freudenberg, & Halberstadt, 2019; Meister & Mauer, 2019). These support systems are crucial to bolster refugees' actual entrepreneurial self-efficacy during the pre-startup stage, enabling them to pursue more viable business opportunities from the outset. In summary, such initiatives can foster entrepreneurship among refugees, facilitate their successful integration into the host country's economy and society, and ultimately generate positive outcomes for both refugee entrepreneurs and the wider community.

Overall, enriched by the conceptual resource of embedded agency (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007), this study has significant implications for stakeholders involved in refugee entrepreneurship policy and practice. It presents a balanced perspective of refugees' aspirations and capabilities, while acknowledging the challenges and constraints they encounter. By offering a nuanced understanding of the interaction between individual refugees, structural/contextual factors, and the circumstances enabling or constraining their entrepreneurial activity, this study challenges overly simplistic policy assumptions based on cultural perspectives.

The dissertation emphasizes the need to take into account the specific circumstances of individual refugees when designing and implementing refugee entrepreneurship policies. It specifically suggests that equal weight should be given to refugees' aspirations and capabilities, while also acknowledging their disadvantaged social positions (see also Ram et al., 2022; Villares-Varela, Ram, & Jones, 2022). This approach helps policymakers and practitioners better understand the actual situation of refugee entrepreneurs, identify barriers and opportunities for change, and implement tailored solutions addressing their specific circumstances.

In doing so, policies and interventions can be more effective in supporting positive outcomes for both refugee entrepreneurs and the host society. For this, the study highlights the importance of adopting a nuanced approach to refugee entrepreneurship policy and practice. To conclude, by recognizing the complex interplay between structural factors and individual entrepreneurs' agency, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies to support refugee entrepreneurs in realizing their full potential.

Insights for Prospective Refugee Entrepreneurs

This study also provides invaluable insights for aspiring refugee entrepreneurs, shedding light on the apparent realities of establishing and developing a venture in their host countries and offering strategies to overcome their initial disadvantages. During the early stages of resettlement, refugees often encounter resource circumstances detrimental to entrepreneurship. As already discussed, these disadvantages arise from the iterative sub-process involving their loss of homeland resources, their inability to transfer accumulated knowledge and skills (loss of cognitive anchors), and their hindered interaction in the host country. Hence,

refugees must engage in resource mobilization sub-process by activating homebound and building new entrepreneurial resources (see also Harima, 2022).

The findings suggest that refugees can initiate this sub-process by leveraging any retained resources (those not entirely lost) and actively seeking out and building additional resources within the host country. Doing so will not only expand their entrepreneurial resource repertoire, but also trigger the activation of additional homeland resources, thereby enhancing refugees ability to identify and pursue viable business opportunities and facilitate venture growth and development. The study particularly highlights the significance of resources acquired in the host country for this purpose (see Jiang et al., 2021).

This entails that refugees aspiring to start their own businesses after relocation should proactively invest in learning the language, understanding the business culture and institutions, developing knowledge of local markets, and building networks within their host countries. Such efforts can include language acquisition during the asylum phase, volunteer work, attending social events, participating in entrepreneurial support programmes and business training courses, short-term formal employment, and engaging local accountants and legal experts (see also Konle-Seidl, 2018). Immersing themselves in the host country as early as possible enables refugees to expedite their entrepreneurial journey by acquiring critical human, social, financial, and institutional capital resources required for starting, managing, and developing their ventures. Simultaneously, they can also effectively utilize their prior human capital, including skills, experience, and knowledge.

Overall, this study offers indispensable guidance for prospective refugee entrepreneurs about the significance of understanding the specific business context and potential obstacles when initiating a venture in a foreign country. It underscores the impact of cultural and institutional differences between refugees' country of origin and the host nation, language barriers, and acculturation processes on their entrepreneurial activity. Moreover, the study underlines the instrumental role that host country networks and resources play in facilitating their entrepreneurial journey and the need for becoming acquainted with the various forms of refugee support schemes (Chliova, Farny, & Salmivaara, 2018). Furthermore, it is crucial for prospective refugee entrepreneurs to anticipate stereotypes and negative sentiments and acquire the skills to navigate these challenges. In conclusion, the research elucidates that resilience, determination, adaptability and ability to surmount obstacles are specifically relevant when launching a business as a refugee.

Limitations and Research Outlook

As in any research endeavour, this study is subject to potential limitations linked with its design, the nature of its data, the methods employed, the selection of informants, and the research context. While these limitations may have influenced the study and its findings, they also unveil promising avenues for future research.

Consequently, both the limitations and the outlook for future research are transparently discussed below.

In terms of research design, this study employed an emergent mixed-methods approach to examine refugee entrepreneurship. This implies that the qualitative approach was strategically added after the initiation of the quantitative study in order to address challenges in the survey data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Morse & Niehaus, 2009). The emergent mixed-methods design has proven instrumental in broadening both the scope and depth of inquiry into the phenomenon. However, employing a carefully planned mixed-methods approach could introduce different perspectives to the investigation (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Therefore, future researchers should consider implementing a well-structured mixed-methods design because this approach can help to validate or clarify the results obtained from one strategy by using the insights gained from another, all within the confines of a single study.

When the limitations of each method are examined separately, the quantitative approach reveals certain shortcomings in terms of data components, which in turn constrain the level of detail achievable in the analysis. The insights into the pre-decision stage of refugee entrepreneurship hinge on self-reported surveys focusing on the behavioural, normative, and control dimensions of refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs, which are the dependent variables, in relation to their host city location and ethnic origin, which are the independent variables. This implies that the dependent variables are cognitive, while the independent variables are self-reported or automatically recorded facts.

Although separating the capture of values for the independent and dependent variables helped to alleviate issues related to Common Methods Bias (Harrison, McLaughlin, & Coalter, 1996), it curtailed the level of detail in the analysis. Therefore, while the study empirically established the influence of ethnic origin and host metropolitan regions, a detailed picture of the specific aspects affecting refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs could not be captured within the research because the independent variables took on dummy and categorical values, respectively.

Furthermore, the lack of control variables such as prior entrepreneurial experience, gender, and age — all of which are relevant to the analysis — further limited the robustness of the data. In summary, although the model assisted in testing certain theoretical propositions, the insufficiency of variables and the limited information available thwarted the establishment of a direction for the hypotheses, and ultimately constrained its explanatory power.

Given these limitations, future research should employ alternative measures to simultaneously capture the essential dimensions of both home and host-country contexts that influence the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship. One potential approach is the application of institutional theory, which can reveal the cultural–cognitive, normative, and regulatory institutional pillars at the host-country level shaping refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006). Furthermore, researchers might consider various metrics to account for contextual variation in

regional settings, such as gross regional product (GRP), entrepreneurial entry rates, and other factors pertinent to host-city locations (Kibler, Kautonen, & Fink, 2014). In addition, scholars should apply more tangible measurements to evaluate the influence of refugees' home cultural values on their entrepreneurial beliefs. Some measures of cultural values used in previous studies include the Schwartz Value Survey (Liñán, Romero Luna, & Fernández Serrano, 2013) and the Value Survey Module (Urban, 2006). The adoption of such operational instruments can help to specifically capture the precise effects of refugees' cultural backgrounds on their subsequent consideration of entrepreneurial career after forced migration.

Another related limitation arises from the cross-sectional nature of the dataset, which precludes in-depth causal analyses based on statistical associations. To address this issue, future research should employ comprehensive, multi-wave data collection, bearing in mind the challenges inherent in conducting quantitative research among the "hard-to-reach" refugee populations (Bloch, 2004). It is also imperative to implement appropriate methods tailored to their specific circumstances and hidden nature.

Similarly, several limitations also exist within the qualitative data component. The data-collection process primarily relied on retrospective interview accounts, which may be subject to recall bias as participants had to reconstruct their past experiences (Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997). To mitigate such issues, future research should employ longitudinal designs and adopt prospective or contemporaneous data-collection approaches (Langley, 2009). These would help to capture the entrepreneurial thoughts and actions of refugees in real-time, and elucidate the process dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship as it unfolds. Furthermore, an excessive reliance on interview data might overlook other relevant subtleties that could be better captured through field observations, ethnographic methods, a multi-stakeholder perspective, and supplementary data from refugee incubator management, mentors, and partners (Meister & Mauer, 2019; Überbacher, 2014). Such data sources can be relevant both for triangulation purposes and as part of the theorizing process.

Another limitation stems from participant selection. This study is grounded on the premise that refugee entrepreneurs are forced migrants who have recently arrived in their host country and engaged in venture founding and development during the early stages of their adaptation process. As such, all the participants were selected based on these criteria. While this approach assists in capturing the specificities of refugee entrepreneurship, future research could focus on samples of individuals with refugee status who have experience of residing in third countries during the migration process, or those who started their own business after several years of resettlement in the host country. These alternative scenarios might yield different results. Simultaneously, the sample for the qualitative study did not include refugee entrepreneurs who had experienced business failure. Incorporating such individuals could lead to a more complex understanding of the refugee

entrepreneurship process, in comparison to the process model presented in this study.

Further limitations of the qualitative data include the homogeneous nature of the research participants, all of whom were from Syria, where entrepreneurship is highly valued within the country's sociocultural norms (Mawson & Kasem, 2019). Although this choice was theoretically motivated (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), it may not be representative of other entrepreneurial refugees, particularly those from countries with lower national self-employment levels. Additionally, the relatively small sample size of 21 interviewees may raise concerns. However, this is justifiable, considering the study's emphasis on theorizing the entrepreneurial journey of refugees, coupled with the challenges of recruiting and motivating them to take part in research (Bloch, 2007). Nonetheless, a larger sample could bolster the robustness of the results. Finally, the collected data reflects the Swedish context; hence, the analysis and insights may not be applicable to other contexts, where diverse institutional circumstances may affect refugees' entrepreneurial journey in different ways (Harima et al., 2021).

Moreover, there are limitations linked to the research participants and context. Specifically, this study focuses on what Paludan (1981) would refer to as "new refugees". That is, the refugee groups from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine are culturally, racially, and ethnically different from the native people of Sweden and Austria, and originate from less developed countries than these host nations. Given that they are more likely to experience difficulty in their acculturation process and resettlement, and face a substantial institutional gap, their entrepreneurial beliefs and processes may not be representative of "traditional refugees", who are culturally and ethnically similar to the people in the host country (Kunz, 1973, 1981). Thus, future studies should investigate the early stages of refugee entrepreneurship and the overall entrepreneurial journey of "traditional refugees", or observe the participants of this study in culturally analogous host settings.

Furthermore, scholars have argued that refugee entrepreneurship, as a phenomenon, is contextually dependent (Harima et al., 2021). This is also evidenced by the variations in refugees' entrepreneurial beliefs between Sweden and Austria, as observed in this study. Therefore, future research could replicate this study in different settings, such as hostile and repressive host countries; institutionally void (Heilbrunn, 2019) and resource-poor environments such as refugee camps (de la Chaux & Haugh, 2020); and semi-urban and rural spatial contexts. In particular, there is a need for further cross-national and cross-continental research to compare refugee entrepreneurship across different cultural, social, economic, and institutional settings. Investigating the influence of contextual heterogeneity in refugee entrepreneurship research will further enrich the understanding of its nature, dynamics, and specificity, illuminating the diverse circumstances, conditions or environments that may enable or constrain the phenomenon.

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