

Chapter 17

Career Development of Refugees



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Abstract The global refugee crisis has increased the interest of vocational researchers and practitioners into this vulnerable population. This chapter focuses on the career development of refugees, particularly the development of vocational aspirations among students with refugee backgrounds, job search and finding adequate employment, adaptation to work and career tasks and challenges, and career counselling interventions. Three theoretical frameworks (i.e., social-cognitive career theory, life-span life-space theory, career construction theory) are reviewed with regard to potential applications to the career development of refugees. Subsequently, the theoretical and empirical literature on refugees and career development is summarized. This literature suggests that refugees encounter various challenges in their host countries, and that integration and career success are the results of a complex interplay between multiple individual and contextual influences. The chapter concludes with implications for future research and vocational practice. For instance, future research could make greater use of established career development theories that focus on the interplay of individual differences, contextual factors, and agentic behaviours as predictors of career development and success. Career counsellors may contribute to refugees' career development and success by helping them integrate their past professional experiences and future vocational aspirations with current tasks and challenges in their host countries.

Keywords Career construction theory · Career development · Life-span life-space theory · Migration · Refugees · Social-cognitive career theory

People have fled persecution, violent conflict, and war for thousands of years; however, current levels of forced displacement are unprecedented, with more than 22 million refugees around the world in 2017 (United Nations 2018). Approximately half of these refugees came from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, and South Sudan, and half of them are younger than 18 years old (Spiegel 2015). A significant number

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of refugees who fled the civil war in Syria and the terror regime of the so-called “Islamic State” in both Syria and Iraq currently live in refugee camps in neighbouring countries (e.g., Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey). However, the final destinations of many refugees are also Western and developed countries such as Germany, Italy, and Sweden, as well as Australia, Canada, and the United States.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines refugees as individuals “who are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and unable to return there owing to serious and indiscriminate threats to life, physical integrity, or freedom resulting from generalized violence or events seriously disturbing public order” (UNHCR 2011, p. 19). Thus, refugees have to be distinguished from voluntary immigrants, who also cross national borders and typically seek employment in their host countries, but are not forced to leave their home countries by factors they cannot control, such as civil war (Tharmaseelan et al. 2010). In contrast to immigrants, refugees are also more restricted in their employment opportunities in the host countries, for instance due to problems with the formal recognition of their previous qualifications, as well as bureaucratic and practical hurdles with regard to their access to education, training, and employment schemes (Stewart 2007).

Refugees face numerous tasks and challenges once they arrive in their host countries and attempt to integrate into mainstream society and the labour market (Koyama 2017; Yakushko et al. 2008). They have to apply for asylum status and potentially seek reunification with their families, learn the language and culture of their host countries, and find work to support themselves and potential dependents (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006; Fleay et al. 2013; North 1995). Refugees often experience the transition from an agrarian or industrial society in a developing country to a post-industrial Western and developed country as very challenging (Abkhezr et al. 2015).

At the same time, governments in the host countries have to develop policies, practices, and procedures to support the integration of refugees into mainstream society and the labour market. Education and employment are central mechanisms to achieve this goal, but it often takes time until refugees are (formally) qualified to work in their host countries (Gericke et al. 2017; Spiegel 2015). For example, in Germany, only refugees who are officially granted asylum are allowed to work, and they have to pass an integration course that entails 600 h of German lessons and 100 h of civics (The Economist 2017). However, these efforts seem to pay off; research shows that stable employment not only reduces welfare dependency and facilitates integration of refugees into the host society but also improves educational and health-related outcomes of children of refugee families (Khoo 1994; Pernice and Brook 1996).

The focus of this chapter is on the career development of refugees, including (a) development of vocational aspirations among students with refugee backgrounds, (b) job search and integration into the labour market, (c) adapting to career tasks and challenges when employed, and (d) career counselling interventions for refugees. The first topic refers to students’ visions about their vocational future and the school-to-work transition. The second topic discusses vocational (re)training and

seizing opportunities for and overcoming barriers to employment. The third topic entails navigating employment relationships and dealing with career tasks and challenges (e.g., stressors such as discrimination at work). The fourth topic involves career development practices that vocational counsellors can use in working with refugees.

Generally, a career refers to the evolving sequence and combinations of people's work-related roles (also in combination with other life roles, such as parent or caregiver), activities, and experiences over time (Arthur et al. 1989; Super 1980). Consequently, career development entails continuous career phases during which different individual concerns and activities, as well as career tasks may arise and change (Greenhaus et al. 2000). In the remainder of this chapter, I first review potential applications of three prominent theoretical frameworks (i.e., social-cognitive career theory, life-span life-space theory, career construction theory) to better understand the career development of refugees in their host countries. Subsequently, I review the existing research literature on refugees and career development. I conclude by outlining implications for future research and vocational practice.

Potential Applications of Career Development Theories to the Situation of Refugees

Before reviewing the existing theoretical and empirical literature on the career development of refugees in their host countries, I describe important constructs and processes relevant to this topic from the perspective of three prominent theoretical frameworks of career development: social cognitive career theory, life-span life-space theory, and career construction theory. I chose these theories because they are the most widely used theories in the area of career development. Moreover, they complement each other well by addressing both content aspects (especially social cognitive career theory and career construction theory) and process/developmental aspects (especially life-span life-space theory) of career development (Brown and Lent 2016; Lent and Brown 2013; Super et al. 1996).

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social cognitive career theory focuses on how people develop their academic and career interests, how they make educational and career-related decisions, as well as various individual and contextual influences on academic and career-related behaviour and career success (Lent and Brown 1996; Lent et al. 1994). The theory assumes that people enact personal agency; that is, they are able and motivated to actively influence their career development and work environment. The theory is based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and the triadic-reciprocal model, which

state that individual difference characteristics (e.g., interests, abilities, motivation, values), contextual characteristics (e.g., work demands, resources), and active behaviour reciprocally influence each other. According to Lent et al. (2002), social cognitive career theory “attempts to trace some of the complex connections between persons and their career-related contexts, between cognitive and interpersonal factors, and between self-directed and externally imposed influences on career behavior” (p. 256).

Applied to the career development of refugees, social cognitive career theory highlights that it is important to focus not solely on refugees’ individual difference characteristics, contextual characteristics, or their agentic behaviour, but to take the complex interplay between these factors into account in predicting career and integration success (e.g., Yakushko et al. 2008). For instance, successful or unsuccessful labour market integration of refugees may be due to their level of knowledge, skills, and abilities; support received by their families, governmental agencies, or private organisations; their personal initiative; or a combination of different factors. Regarding agentic behaviour, social cognitive career theory suggests that refugees can, to a certain extent, actively steer their career development within the context of opportunities and constraints of the labour market in their host country (Lent et al. 2002). The theory also highlights the importance of cognitive factors such as self-efficacy (i.e., the belief in one’s ability to successfully complete a given task, such as applying for a job; Bandura 1986), outcome expectations (i.e., beliefs about the consequences of performing certain behaviours), and goals (i.e., intentions to engage in a particular activity). Vocational counselling interventions could be used to influence refugees’ occupational self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and goals. These cognitive factors, in turn, may impact refugees job search success, career performance, and occupational well-being.

Life-Span Life-Space Theory

In contrast to the predominant content focus of social cognitive career theory, life-span life-space theory (Super 1980, 1984) places particular emphasis on the life-long process of career development. Specifically, as other developmental theories, life-span life-space theory partitions people’s careers into a number of consecutive stages (Super 1953). Super described five major stages of career development, each of which is linked to normative age ranges and specific vocational tasks and behaviours: growth (age 4–13), exploration (14–24 years), establishment (25–44 years), maintenance (45–65), and disengagement (65 years and older). Despite these normative age ranges, Super acknowledged that people can “cycle” and “recycle” through these phases independent of their age if they, for instance, switch jobs and occupations. In addition, closely linked to the notion of career stages, the theory adopts a contextual and multi-role perspective on people’s career development, with each life role linked to normative expectations and behaviours (e.g., child, student, employee, caregiver, retiree). A key assumption of life-span life-space theory is that

each life role of a person can only be understood by taking the entire constellation of more or less salient life roles held by a person into account.

Based on life-span life-space theory, vocational research and practice regarding refugees' career development could focus on refugees' tasks and challenges in different career stages, such as early, middle, and late career, independent on their chronological age (Slocum and Cron 1985). For instance, many refugees might have to retrain and start careers in a different occupational field because their previous qualifications are not recognised or needed (Eastwood et al. 2006). Consistently, recent research in vocational psychology has highlighted the importance of adopting a lifespan developmental perspective on career development (Fasbender and Deller 2017; Ng and Feldman 2012). In addition, researchers and practitioners could focus on the interplay between various work and non-work roles held by refugees. Specifically, many refugees are not only job seekers or employees but also spouses, parents, grandparents, colleagues, or supervisors. In sum, it is important to take a contextualised and holistic perspective that takes various life roles into account when examining or guiding refugees' career development.

Career Construction Theory

Career construction theory differs from social cognitive career theory and life-span life-space theory in that it emphasises how people construct their careers by imposing meaning on their vocational experiences and actions in the form, for instance, of life stories that guide career behaviour (Savickas 2013; Savickas et al. 2009). Moreover, the theory suggests that people adapt to various career tasks, transitions, and traumas by drawing on psychosocial resources that they accumulate across the lifespan (Rudolph et al. 2017b; Savickas 1997). A central construct in career construction theory is career adaptability, which is defined as a psychosocial resource that helps individuals deal successfully with work and career tasks and challenges (Savickas 1997; Zacher 2014). Similar to social cognitive career theory and life-span life-space theory, career construction theory has differential and developmental foci (Savickas 2013). It explores individual differences in vocational personality types and interests and examines psychosocial adaptation and coping processes over time. These two foci, in combination with the dynamic and constructivist approach of exploring how life themes impose meaning on vocational experiences and behaviour, allow career researchers and vocational counsellors to understand how refugees construct their careers.

Career construction theory could be fruitfully applied to the career development of refugees by investigating how refugees differ from each other and from non-refugees in their vocational personality types and interests, how refugees draw on psychosocial resources and competencies to adapt to various career tasks, transitions, and traumas, and how refugees impose meaning on their often-fragmented career development. Particularly the dynamic and constructionist perspective might be useful to interpret and integrate refugees' memories of earlier vocational

experiences, present vocational experiences, and future career aspirations. Indeed, Pierce and Gibbons (2012) suggest that constructivist approaches to career counselling provide refugees with the opportunity to integrate their past life and work experiences with their new lives and careers in the host country. In sum, career construction theory and practice emphasise individuals' subjective experiences and narrative accounts of their own career development (Savickas 2001). Vocational researchers and practitioners could make use of refugees' "subjective careers," "career stories," and "life themes" to better understand and provide guidance to refugees regarding their career-related decisions and behaviours.

Review of the Literature on the Career Development of Refugees

Current theorising and empirical evidence on the career development of refugees, including the topics of vocational aspirations, job search, entering employment, adapting to career tasks and challenges, and career counselling intervention, is very limited (Morrice 2011). However, in the context of the global refugee crisis, including the large-scale displacement of people from Syria and Iraq since 2015, researchers in the fields of vocational and organisational psychology have begun to increasingly address these topics. This is reflected in a special issue with 12 conceptual, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method articles on the vocational behaviour of refugees in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (Newman et al. 2018a). Most of the studies reported in these articles focus on the individual level of analysis (i.e., refugees' experiences and behaviour) and are reviewed in the following sections.

Another special issue on the impact of the global refugee crisis on the career ecosystem (see Baruch 2015) was in preparation for publication in the journal *Career Development International* at the time of writing of this chapter (Richardson et al. 2018). As Richardson et al. (2018) note in their call for papers, "management and career scholars have remained relatively silent about the implications of the [global refugee] crisis for business and management practices and for individual careers and career systems in particular." Thus, in contrast to Newman and colleagues' (2018a) special issue, this forthcoming special issue focuses more on the contextual antecedents and consequences of refugees' career development.

In the following sections, I summarise the available theoretical and empirical literature on the career development of refugees. I begin by reviewing articles that have addressed vocational aspirations and the school-to-work transition of students with refugee backgrounds. Second, I review articles on the job search of refugees and the individual and contextual factors that play a role in the process of finding and entering employment and integration into the labour market of the host country. Third, I review articles that focus on how refugees navigate and adapt to various work and career tasks and challenges once they have found a job. Finally, I review articles that explored the effectiveness of career counselling interventions for refugees. For each

article, I summarise the main research questions, methods, and key findings. In addition, whenever relevant, I describe the theoretical frameworks from the fields of vocational behaviour and career development, including social-cognitive career theory, life-span life-space theory, career construction theory, that the authors have used to develop their hypotheses.

Development of Vocational Aspirations Among Students with Refugee Backgrounds

Only very few studies focused on academic experiences, development of vocational and career aspirations, and experiences of the school-to-work transition of (predominantly younger) refugees. For instance, Tlhabano and Schweitzer (2007) conducted a qualitative study in which they explored young Sudanese and Somali refugees' visions, hopes, and desires and how these psychological constructs impact their vocational aspirations across three time periods (i.e., life in the country of origin, transit, and resettlement). The authors found that refugees had high vocational ambitions despite facing various challenges, including disruption to their schooling and higher education in their country of origin as well as language difficulties after resettlement. In another article, Nunn et al. (2014) reported the results of an interview study with young people who migrated to Australia as refugees during adolescence. According to the authors, these young people with refugee backgrounds face several unique opportunities and challenges with regard to employment. Specifically, findings suggest that a complex and dynamic interplay between career aspirations, family obligations, educational opportunities, and social networks shape these young people's employment trajectories.

In another recent study, Prokop (2013) used a constructivist approach to explore coping strategies used by students with refugee backgrounds in order to persist in their post-secondary careers and technical education programs. Findings suggest that while students did not hesitate to ask their instructors for assistance, they tended to not make effective use of academic and social programs and services offered by the university or broader community. The primary reason for this lack of engagement with support services seemed to be that students held multiple life roles and had problems managing their time across these roles. Also using a qualitative case study approach, another study examined the importance of various career capital resources, particularly human capital (e.g., schooling, educational experiences; Becker 1975), of African refugees during the transition from the post-education stage to employment in Australia (King 2013). Specifically, King (2013) identified six factors that were particularly important in this transition: previous schooling received, English language skills, Australian mainstream schooling challenges and support, family support, academic achievement, and post-school preparation (see also Lenette and Ingamells 2013, for a description of a specific university initiative to facilitate pathways to employment for skilled migrants and refugees). Finally,

O'Reilly (2015) argued that students from refugee backgrounds are in particular need for careful vocational guidance at the end of high school. The author describes a career development activity for refugee students called "life story for life design." The activity conceptualises a career as a continuous, lifelong series of events and experiences and as a story that people tell about their own lives.

In summary, only relatively few qualitative-empirical studies have focused on students with refugee backgrounds and how these students view their vocational future and manage the school-to-work transition. Further research, both qualitative and quantitative, guided by well-established career theories and conceptual models specific to the situation of students with refugee backgrounds is clearly needed to gain further insights into this important topic.

Job Search and Labour Market Integration

Job search involves active behaviours that help individuals transition from school, higher education, or unemployment to employment (e.g., writing and submitting applications). Researchers typically focus on both individual-level factors (e.g., personality, motives, self-efficacy) as well as perceived and/or objective contextual factors (e.g., perceived environmental opportunities and constraints as per social-cognitive career theory, dearth of job openings in specific fields) to predict people's engagement in job search activities. Job search activities, in turn, are examined in relation to people's job search success and integration into the labour market (Kanfer et al. 2001; Zacher 2013). My literature search revealed several studies that have focused on individual and contextual predictors of refugees' job search experiences and behaviour as well as successful labour market integration. Willott and Stevenson (2013) conducted a study on attitudes toward work and job search experiences of professionally qualified refugees. Findings suggest that these refugees are initially highly motivated to work, strongly identified with their profession, but experience significant declines in self-esteem if they cannot find appropriate employment. Importantly, length of time spent in the host country was negatively related to refugees' optimism with regard to returning to their profession (see also Phillimore and Goodson 2006, for refugees' employment experiences in the United Kingdom). Two other studies similarly suggest that it is particularly important to provide particular support to individuals who have been refugees for a relatively long time. First, Codell et al. (2011) found in a sample of 85 refugees between 18 and 54 years that the length of time individuals spent as refugees is negatively related to their ability to secure meaningful employment. Second, a study with data collected over 10 years in Switzerland similarly found that the length of time that refugees wait for a decision on their asylum status is negatively associated with subsequent successful employment integration (Hainmueller et al. 2016). Hainmueller et al. (2016) further show that psychological discouragement mediates the negative association between time waiting for a decision and refugees' successful employment integration.

Several recent studies published in Newman and colleagues' (2018a) special issue on the vocational behaviour of refugees have used career construction theory (Savickas 2005) to gain a better understanding of refugees' job search and labour market integration. First, Pajic et al. (2018) examined antecedents of refugees' job search self-efficacy (i.e., the belief that they have the abilities to successfully find a job; Guan et al. 2013). The authors ground their hypotheses in career construction theory, and specifically the career construction model of adaptation that posits associations among adaptivity traits, adaptability resources, adapting responses, and adaptation results (Rudolph et al. 2017b; Savickas and Porfeli 2012). Specifically, Pajic et al. (2018) examined whether career adaptability mediates the relationship between psychological capital (i.e., a higher-order construct composed of hope, resilience, optimism, and generalised self-efficacy) and job search self-efficacy, and whether administrative and social barriers moderate the direct effect from psychological capital to career adaptability. Pajic et al. (2018) collected survey data from over 300 Syrian refugees re-settled in the Netherlands (59%) and Greece (41%). Results showed that psychological capital was indeed positively and indirectly related to job search self-efficacy via career adaptability. Social challenges (e.g., employment barriers, such as cultural and social differences) moderated this indirect effect, such that high compared to low perceived social barriers resulted in a weaker indirect effect. Surprisingly, and in contrast to expectations, high as compared to low perceived administrative barriers strengthened the indirect effect. The authors suggest that their results contribute to research on the career construction model of adaptation by highlighting the need to consider additional adaptability resources of refugees. In terms of practical implications, the findings suggest that it is necessary to reduce social barriers and to develop refugees' psychological capital and career adaptability through training programs and career counselling methods.

Another recent study focused on predicting refugees' career adaptability as an important psychosocial resource that can contribute to the integration of refugees into the labour market and host society (Obschonka et al. 2018). Obschonka et al. (2018) emphasised that increased uncertainty and rapid change in the world of work require personal agency or initiative. In their quantitative survey study, the authors examined integration processes of newly-arrived Syrian refugees in Germany, who encountered high levels of uncertainty, but also new opportunities. Results showed that self-efficacy and resilience positively predicted entrepreneurial alertness, which in turn positively predicted entrepreneurial intentions and career adaptability. Thus, this study highlights the potential importance of refugees' personality and entrepreneurial cognitions for labour market integration (see also Straub et al. 2017, for another study that, based on career construction theory, aimed to understand whether and how refugees engage in entrepreneurship to reconstruct their career in their host country).

The link between refugees' career adaptability and successful integration into the labour market is also the topic of a theory development article by Campion (2018). The author proposes a refugee-specific job-search model based on career adaptability, personal and structural barriers, and successful resettlement and labour market integration. While the vocational literature shows that high career adaptability is

generally linked to favourable career outcomes (Rudolph et al. 2017a; Rudolph et al. 2017b), Campion (2018) suggests that this may not necessarily be the case for refugees who frequently experience downward occupational mobility. Instead, she assumes that refugees with high levels of career adaptability prioritise the creation and use of social networks over the acquisition of adequate and high-quality jobs. The prioritisation, generation and use of social networks during the job search process by career adaptive refugees is expected to positively impact their physical and mental health, strength of social ties, and life satisfaction (i.e., subjective career and resettlement success). In contrast, the model assumes that this prioritisation limits the objective resettlement and career success of career adaptive refugees (i.e., lower status jobs, low pay, poor language ability).

Campion (2018) proposes a number of barriers that further strengthen the link between career adaptability and social network generation and use. Specifically, when discrimination threat is high and host country language ability is low, career adaptive refugees should focus even more on social network generation and use during the job search process. Moreover, Campion (2018) suggests that a decrease between previous employment and current job level in the host country will be greater for more highly educated refugees. Further research is needed to examine the model's propositions and applications. This research has not only the potential to contribute to the literature on refugees' career development, but also expand knowledge on the boundary conditions of the effects of career adaptability on indicators of career success.

In addition to personality characteristics and psychosocial resources such as psychological capital, self-efficacy, resilience, and career adaptability, researchers have investigated different forms of "capital" as predictors of labour market entry and integration. In a study with over 500 refugees conducted in Canada, Lamba (2003) examined the role of human capital and social capital (e.g., social networks and support; Luthans and Youssef 2004) for refugees' quality of employment. Findings suggest that refugees use both family and ethnic-group relationships as social resources in the job search process. However, many refugees experience that their human capital (e.g., previous qualifications) has little or no value in the labour market of their host country and that their social networks cannot buffer their downward occupational mobility. In a complementary study with refugees from Somalia, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia who resettled in the Netherlands, De Vroome and Van Tubergen (2010) found that host country specific education, work experience, language proficiency, and contacts with locals are positively associated with chances of finding employment and occupational status. These results are consistent with human and social capital theories.

Another relevant study focused on the role of formal employment service providers and informal social networks for refugees who are searching for a job in Australia (Torezani et al. 2008). The authors collected survey data from 150 refugees from former Yugoslavia, as well as African and Middle Eastern backgrounds, as well as interview data from employees working for employment service providers. Findings showed a mismatch between service providers' and refugees' perceptions and expectations of the employment services. Specifically, refugees perceived that the

employment services (especially job search training) provided them with the opportunity to develop their social networks rather than to acquire job search-relevant skills. Torezani et al. (2008) used the concept of “linking social capital”—people’s ability to leverage resources obtained from institutions beyond their immediate communities—to interpret their findings.

Gericke et al. (2018) conducted qualitative interviews with a sample of Syrian refugees in Germany, who already held permanent or temporary jobs. They discuss a four-stage model of labour market integration that outlines links between social capital and four stages: early integration support, support preparing for labour market entry, support entering the labour market, and support at work. Results of the interviews revealed that four types of social capital can be supportive and accessible to refugees: Bonding and bridging and bonding as well as vertical and horizontal social capital (see Granovetter 1973). Bonding social capital exists when people in close networks have similar backgrounds and characteristics, and when they share personal norms and values. Bridging social capital exists when people with weak ties connect to people from other social groups and share information and resources with them. Furthermore, taking into account relative social location, vertical social capital refers to ties between people with different social backgrounds, and horizontal social capital entails ties between people with similar social backgrounds, knowledge, and resources (Granovetter 1973).

With regard to gaining access to the labour market and maintaining employment, Gericke et al. (2018) found that vertical bridging social capital was the most valuable resource for securing adequate employment. In contrast, their results suggest that horizontal bonding social capital and independent job-searching methods tend to result in refugees obtaining low-skilled work or even becoming underemployed. These findings suggest that refugees need support particularly with regard to developing vertical bridging social networks.

Another qualitative study focused more broadly on the role of career capital of refugees searching for a job, including cultural, social, and economic capital. The researchers also investigated how these different forms of capital contribute labour market integration (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al. 2018). The study was carried out in Austria, which at the peak of the global refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016 received high numbers of asylum seekers. However, the authors suggest that refugees often encounter hostile and unfamiliar processes in the country and, thus, successful integration into employment is rather limited. Based on Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Bourdieu 1977) and a series of semi-structured interviews with Afghan and Syrian refugee job seekers, Eggenhofer-Rehart et al. (2018) explore how refugees relocate, acquire, and convert their career capital when entering a labour market that is not familiar to them. Results of the study suggest that when refugees attempt to integrate into the labour market of their host country, all forms of their career capital are under- and devaluated. Moreover, refugees who attempt to make use of their cultural capital face unfamiliar rules, threats to their vocational identity, and status loss. The authors suggest that high levels of proactivity (i.e., self-starting, future- and change-oriented behaviour) are required on part of refugees to acquire new career capital or transform existing career capital into forms of career capital that are potentially more valued by their host country.

Refugees' proactivity in dealing with barriers in the resettlement process is also the topic of a recent qualitative study by Wehrle et al. (2018). The authors focus on the negative consequences of barriers that refugees face during their integration into German society and the labour market. Specifically, Wehrle et al. (2018) argue that these barriers can harm refugees' fundamental identity needs for self-worth, distinctiveness, continuity, and control. The interviews highlight that refugees can develop proactive coping responses (i.e., protecting previous identities, restructuring their identities to adjust to their new situation) to deal successfully with these identity threats that results from various integration barriers. Interestingly, findings further suggest that refugees can achieve positive psychological growth, despite experiencing adversity in the resettlement and integration process, but only if they possess sufficient psychosocial resources and proactive coping strategies.

Moving on to a different, but related topic, vocational researchers have also examined links between more employment-related stressors and refugees' coping strategies in the process of labour market integration (Baranik et al. 2018). Drawing on the transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus and Folkman 1984), Baranik et al. (2018) used a mixed-method research design and analysed the content of open-ended survey responses collected from refugees in the United States. Results showed that the most frequently reported stressor (31% of answers) was "access and opportunity," which includes refugees' feelings that their previous work experience is not valued during job search, job search difficulties, and exploitation (e.g., working in a job with low salary). Other stressors mentioned were "acculturative stressors" (22%, e.g. learning the language of the host country), discrimination (13%), and interpersonal stressors (11%). The most frequently used coping strategies identified were "reflection and relaxation" (25%), problem-solving actions (24%), social resources (18%), and refugee-specific coping (17%). The latter coping strategy includes improving language skills, participation in assimilation and multicultural activities, and seeking social support from other refugees. Baranik et al. (2018) conducted further quantitative analyses using their survey data, which show that discrimination stressors, but not the other vocational stressors identified in the study, related positively to refugees' experiences of anxiety, depression, and sleeping disturbances. Consistent with the stress literature, findings further suggest that the use of avoidance-oriented coping strategies further increases strain-related outcomes. Based on their study results, the authors suggest developing programs to hire more refugees, broaden diversity and inclusion initiatives, and to provide refugees with actionable advice regarding stress management.

While the previous studies reviewed focus on processes across relatively short time periods (e.g., a few weeks, months), the experience of displacement in people's lives can also have consequences for their employment outcomes several years or decades later. Using longitudinal data collected from blue-collar workers in Sweden, Lundborg (2013) examined the integration of refugees into the labour market. The study showed that refugee age is positively, and time in the host country is negatively related to time spent in unemployment. Moreover, refugees from culturally distant countries (e.g., Iran, Iraq) spent more time in unemployment than refugees from less culturally distant countries (e.g., Eastern Europe; for further studies on

refugees' employment experiences and labour market integration in Sweden, see Bevelander 2011; Blight et al. 2006; Frykman 2012). Somewhat in contrast to the findings by Lundborg (2013), however, a study by Fozdar (2012) found that refugees from Muslim countries did not find it more difficult than other refugees to adapt to Australian culture.

In another longitudinal study, Ivlevs and Veliziotis (2018) examined labour market outcomes of internally displaced persons (i.e., people who flee from persecution and conflict but stay in their own country) 10–15 years after displacement in nine post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (e.g. Armenia, Croatia, Russia). They developed their assumptions based on the theory of cumulative disadvantage (O'Rand 1996). Their sample consisted of over 10,000 individuals in the *Life in Transition II* study conducted by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank in 2010. The authors compared displaced persons (10%) with those not affected by conflict (nearly 85%; the remaining participants were “conflict-affected non-movers”) with regard to several vocational outcomes, including employment status, informal work, and job satisfaction. Results revealed that the likelihood of being short- or long-term unemployed and to have experienced job loss is higher for persons displaced by conflict over a decade ago. Moreover, displaced women face greater disadvantage with regard to longer-term employment than men, and younger displaced persons were more interested in further education and training than younger persons not affected by conflict. Further, displaced persons were more likely to work in informal employment to support their families, but, somewhat surprisingly, there were no differences with regard to job satisfaction. Overall, the study's findings provide support for the theory of cumulative disadvantage and highlight the need for providing special support for displaced women as well as further education to younger displaced persons.

A qualitative study by Abkhezr et al. (2018) also emphasises the particularly vulnerable position of female refugees in the displacement and resettlement process. The authors base their inquiry on a social constructivist framework. They conducted semi-structured interviews with young African women, who provided detailed narrative accounts of their gendered experiences of oppression and abuse during the displacement and resettlement process. The interviews suggest that the women's personal agency and voice had been stifled in the transition from the poor conditions in their home country to their new and developed host country, Australia. Thus, similar to the theoretical article by Campion (2018), this research also challenges traditional perspectives on personal agency in the vocational context. However, the study also suggests that targeted career interventions with female refugees can result in positive outcomes such as re-establishing a sense of personal agency, mattering, and voice. In another study, Gaillard and Hughes (2014) explored how social initiatives could facilitate employment of female Sudanese refugees in Australia. Interestingly, the study found that initiatives that focus on the use of existing skills may create new opportunities for refugees in the labour market, whereas initiatives that teach new skills are more likely to link refugees to existing opportunities in the labour market (see also Warriner 2004).

In summary, studies on refugees' job search and labour market integration suggest that psychological characteristics related to personal agency (e.g., psychological capital including self-efficacy and resilience, career adaptability) can play an important role for refugees' successful integration into the labour market of their host country. Given favourable conditions (i.e., low personal, social, and structural barriers), these characteristics should positively impact refugees' job search self-efficacy and success as well as entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, refugees' bridging social capital and the broader construct of career capital can contribute to securing positive employment outcomes, such as finding adequate and secure jobs. Nevertheless, it is important that policy makers provide special support for particularly vulnerable subgroups of refugees, such as women and those with low levels of prior education.

With regard to theoretical frameworks, a number of recent studies have fruitfully applied career construction theory and related social constructivist theories to investigate how refugees attempt to find jobs and integrate into the labour market. Many of these studies focus on the key concept of career adaptability and its career-related consequences. This research complements earlier work that has used social cognitive career theory to explore how displacement circumstances, stressors, acculturation patterns, and oppression impact the career development of refugees (Yakushko et al. 2008). However, it is also noteworthy that several studies used additional theoretical frameworks and concepts from diverse literatures, such as social and career capital, identity development, and occupational stress and coping.

Navigating Work and Career Tasks and Challenges

In addition to studies on job search and labour market integration of refugees, research has focused on how refugees deal with work and career challenges once they have found a job. Importantly, research suggests that refugees often decrease in occupational status in their host country, and that they are more likely to work in rather undesirable jobs in a segmented labour market. For instance, a study by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) examined employment niches for newly arrived refugees in Australia. These niches include cleaning services, care of the aged, meat processing, taxi driving, security, and building. With the exception of the building industry, these jobs are low-status and low-paid jobs that are avoided by locals. The authors suggest that several potential mechanisms exist that relegate refugees to these undesirable jobs. These mechanisms include the non-recognition of previous qualifications, race and culture-based discrimination by employers, a lack of mainstream social networks, and governmental attempts to fill low-skilled jobs with migrants (see also Shutes 2011, for reasons why employment agencies may focus on placing refugees in 'easy to access', low-skilled and low-paid jobs).

Other studies have focused on how refugees adapt to their new employment situation and unmet expectations. Baran et al. (2018) report two studies with refugees in the United States. Drawing on the social cognitive career theory and psychological contract theory, the authors examine refugees' pre-relocation expectations concerning their future vocational situation in the host country and the question how to cope with unmet expectations upon arrival. For their first study, Baran et al. (2018) conducted in-depth interviews with refugees and employees of refugee assistance organisations. They identified several themes related to refugees' expectations and experiences with regard to employment in their host country. For instance, interviewees talked about resilience-building obstacles and challenges, turning points and status changes, expectations versus reality, support, self-evaluations, giving up, self-sufficiency versus thriving, and learned dependency. Findings of the second study were based on a survey with 60 refugees mostly from Afghanistan and Iraq. They suggest that some refugees have unrealistically high expectations regarding employment when they arrive in their host country. Consequences of these expectations not being met include the experience of underemployment, psychological contract breach, reduced job and life satisfaction, and thoughts about returning to their home country. Thus, Baran et al.' (2018) findings emphasise the importance of managing vocational expectations among refugees by providing them, for instance, with information about the host country's labour market.

Austin and Este (2001) conducted interviews with nine male refugees to explore how they adapt to working life in their host country, Canada. The men reported that significant underemployment, racism, exploitation, and threat of job loss were major sources of stress to them. In particular, they felt powerless, alienated, frustrated and angry. These feelings, in turn, affected their relationships with their family. The authors suggest that to help refugees adapt to their new working lives, host countries and organisations should recognise foreign qualifications, possibilities to upgrade qualifications and improve language skills, and combat discrimination in the workplace. Another qualitative study by Knappert et al. (2018) examined how national-level factors and organisational employment practices are associated with refugees' experiences of inclusion or exclusion at work. The authors collected interview data from Syrian refugees, employers, and experts from governmental and nongovernmental organisations in Turkey. Knappert et al. (2018) findings suggest that national-level facilitators of exclusion at work include institutional voids, societal rejection, and exploitation legitimisation. These factors facilitate precarious employment practices within organisations, such as access to low-skilled jobs only, unequal compensation, and a lack of developmental opportunities. Precarious employment practices, in turn, are linked with negative individual implications, such as feelings of exclusion and abuse, frustrated expectations, and subordination. The authors suggest that these processes may be particularly disadvantageous for female refugees. Specifically, when traditional gender roles exist both in their home and host societies, it is more likely that women's exclusion at work is reinforced, women may be sexually objectified and exploited, and their dependency and despair can be further amplified.

Finally, vocational researchers have also focused on the effects of work characteristics and organisational climate on refugees' work-related experiences. A study by Newman et al. (2018c) examined how perceived diversity climate is associated with work attitudes of refugee employees, as well as the psychological mechanisms underlying these associations. The authors collected data at two measurement points, 6 months apart, from 135 refugees in Australia, who had four different ethnic backgrounds (i.e., Iranian, Iraqi, Afghanistani/Hazara, and Pakistani). In line with their hypotheses based on conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll 1989), Newman and colleagues (2018c) found that perceived diversity climate is positively associated with affective organisational commitment of refugee employees, and that psychological capital (i.e., a higher-order factor composed of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy; Luthans et al. 2007) mediates this relationship. In addition, consistent with propositions of rejection sensitivity theory (Downey and Feldman 1996), the authors also find that the links of perceived diversity climate with affective organisational commitment and turnover intentions through psychological capital are stronger when employees identify more strongly with their ethnic group. Overall, the findings suggest that refugee employees might react differently to organisations' diversity policies, practices, and procedures, depending on factors such as psychological capital and social identification.

In another study, the same authors (Newman et al. 2018b) investigated how social support from work and non-work domains relates to refugee employees' well-being, again mediated by refugees' psychological capital. The authors collected survey data from 190 refugee employees living in Australia. Results showed that perceived organisational support and perceived family support, but not perceived supervisor support, are positively related to well-being of refugee employees. Psychological capital was found to fully mediate the association between perceived organisational support and well-being, and partially mediate the association between perceived family support and well-being. Again, these findings emphasise the importance of a supportive environment and psychological capital for refugee employees.

In summary, research on how refugees navigate their new work and career tasks and challenges has used a broad array of theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches. Findings suggest that both individual (e.g. qualifications, prior expectations) as well as contextual (e.g., employment practices, diversity climate, support) have important influences on refugees' vocational adjustment and well-being. Interestingly, some authors have combined career development theories with other theoretical frameworks, such as psychological contract theory, conservation of resources theory, and rejection sensitivity theory. Future research should increasingly use more complex longitudinal study designs, as these mitigate methodological problems (e.g., common method bias) and allow stronger inferences regarding causality. In particular, a number of studies in this area of research tested mediation effects based on cross-sectional data, which leads to substandard inferences (see Maxwell and Cole 2007).

Career Counselling Interventions

Only relatively few articles have addressed vocational or career counselling interventions specifically for refugees (Bragança 2017). In an early publication, Moehling (2008) suggests that career guidance education, particularly when designed for younger refugees, can play an important role for refugees' feelings of belonging, adaptation, acculturation, mental, and long-term-resettlement success. The author argues that career guidance education is particularly important given that most refugees have experienced traumatic events in their home countries and many experience their new situations in the host countries as challenging. Moehling (2008) concludes that effective career guidance education has the potential to offer the same educational, social, and economic benefits to refugee youth as for general student populations.

In a more recent article, Schultheiss et al. (2011) describe a career intervention, the "life CV," for refugees and asylum seekers. The intervention is based on a relational cultural paradigm and a life design career model. The authors propose that by creating a life CV and engaging in the associated sensemaking process, refugees gain different perspectives, self-insights, and presentation techniques useful for the job search process (see also Hughes and Scott 2013, for a similar career intervention developed for students with refugee backgrounds). In another article, Słowik (2014) proposes a new method called "life space mapping" for use by career counsellors, which can be used to help refugees reflect on and construct their careers. The author designed the method particularly for multicultural counselling, and it takes diverse life experiences and cultural values of the clients into account. Słowik (2014) reports having used "life space mapping" in career guidance and biographical counselling with several refugees and asylum-seekers and that the method encouraged refugees to more strongly value and use their biographical and professional experience for constructing their careers.

Finally, Abkhezr et al. (2015) summarised important contextual and practical considerations for career counsellors working with young people with refugee backgrounds in Australia. Most importantly, these considerations include enhanced sensitivity to diversity and multicultural issues. The authors point out that career counselling has its roots in social justice and, therefore, can be conceived as an important contextual resource that can help refugees integrate into mainstream society (see also Abkhezr and McMahon 2017).

Discussion

The overarching goal of this chapter was to gain a better understanding of the career development of refugees. To this end, in the previous sections, I applied three prominent theoretical frameworks from the vocational literature to the unique situation of refugees. Furthermore, I used four overarching themes to summarise and integrate

the existing theoretical and empirical literature on refugees' career development. In the following, before concluding this chapter, I discuss a number of implications for future vocational research and practice.

Implications for Future Theorising and Empirical Research

In this chapter, I described how three widely used career development theories—social cognitive career theory (Lent et al. 1994), life-span life-space theory (Super 1980), and career construction theory (Savickas 2002)—could be fruitfully applied to investigate and guide refugees' career development. Interestingly, previous empirical research on refugees' career development, if based on career development theories at all, has mostly used career construction theory, and particularly the central construct of career adaptability. In contrast, only few studies so far have adopted social cognitive career theory, and no study has explicitly referred to life-span life-space theory. Thus, a first recommendation is that future empirical studies on refugees' career development make greater use of established career development theories.

Life-span life-space theory could be fruitfully applied to study how the interplay between various life roles held by refugees (e.g., employee, spouse, parent) impacts their time and energy investments and, consequently, their career development. An important insight from this chapter is also that the integration of career development theories with theories from other fields, such as occupational stress and entrepreneurship research, can be a useful approach to understanding refugees' career development. Moreover, the development of new conceptual frameworks (e.g., Campion 2018) and conducting qualitative studies to build new theory (e.g., Gericke et al. 2018) on refugees' career development are laudable and valuable efforts. In terms of more specific topics within this area of research, most studies have focused on refugees' job search and integration into the labour market, as well as refugees' adaptation to work and career tasks and challenges. In contrast, additional studies are needed that focus on the development of vocational aspirations and the school-to-work transition of students with refugee backgrounds, as well as the development and evaluation of career counselling interventions with refugees.

Empirical research with refugees, particularly large quantitative studies, is a great challenge, because refugees are a hidden, hard-to-reach, and vulnerable population (Ellard-Gray et al. 2015). Ellard-Gray et al. (2015) suggest that when studying vulnerable populations such as refugees, it very important to pay attention to participant trust, risks, and resource constraints. Thus, it is not surprising that most studies on refugees' career development to date are qualitative and exploratory in nature and make use of very small and non-representative samples. In contrast, quantitative studies with more complex designs, such as multiple measurement waves, self- and other-reports, and standardised measurements are more difficult to conduct and, thus, still very rare (e.g., Ivlevs and Veliziotis 2018; Newman et al.

2018b). However, it is important to increase methodological rigor and generalisability in the study of refugees' career development. Increased methodological rigor can help mitigate problems such as common method bias and to allow stronger conclusions regarding causality. Moreover, it can aid a better understanding of the mechanisms and boundary conditions of associations between individual and contextual predictors and career-related outcomes.

The use of longitudinal study designs is particularly important in research on career development, which often has a lifespan focus. Moreover, research reviewed in this chapter shows that temporal factors, such as the length of time as a refugee or the length of time in the host country, are important factors that influence successful employment integration and vocational adjustment. Finally, additional research on more specific subpopulations of refugees, such as women/men, younger/older refugees, and refugees from different cultural backgrounds (e.g., Muslims) is needed to enhance our understanding of their specific experiences and needs. For instance, a few studies suggest that female refugees are a particularly vulnerable subpopulation (e.g., Gaillard and Hughes 2014) and, thus, it is important to identify, improve, and evaluate targeted forms of support for this group of refugees.

Practical Implications

Findings of the studies reviewed in this chapter suggest a number of implications for vocational practice. As noted by Richardson et al. (2018), the global refugee crisis has created several opportunities for caring and service professions, including career counsellors and social workers (see also Takeda 2000). Vocational practitioners can play an important role for refugees' integration into the labour market, and for empowering refugees to deal with various work and career-related task and challenges (Tomlinson and Egan 2002). First, vocational practitioners could offer guidance particularly to those refugees who arrive in their host countries with high and possibly unrealistic expectations and aspirations. When these expectations are not met, for instance because refugees cannot work in their profession in the host country and instead have to work in precarious jobs, refugees who are unprepared for these changes can suffer decreases in health and well-being (Baran et al. 2018). Counsellors could work with refugees to develop more realistic expectations and to help them prepare meet the requirements in the host country.

Second, practitioners could assist refugees who experience challenges due to multiple life roles that require investments of time and energy, possibly leading to roles conflict, reduced well-being, an unsuccessful integration. Research by Ivlevs and Veliziotis (2018) found that displaced women face greater disadvantage with regard to longer-term employment than men. Thus, it may be particularly important to offer career counselling and support to female refugees, who often have to juggle multiple life roles and consequently face greater challenges in the resettlement process (Yakushko 2006).

Third, practitioners could provide guidance to refugees in the often frustrating experience of job search. Research suggests that it is particularly important to enhance refugees' psychosocial resources (e.g., career adaptability), career capital, proactive behaviour, and coping skills to navigate such employment-related challenges.

Fourth, practitioners within organisations should create a welcoming and supportive corporate climate for refugees. This involves, for instance, providing instrumental, informational, and socioemotional assistance and combating discrimination in various employment practices.

Finally, it is also important to train vocational practitioners themselves to work with clients from refugee backgrounds (Pierce and Gibbons 2012). For instance, cultural awareness and sensitivity training programs might prove useful in this regard.

Conclusion

The global refugee crisis has increased the interest of vocational researchers and practitioners into this extremely vulnerable population. This chapter focused on the career development of refugees in their host countries, with an emphasis on the development of vocational aspirations among students with refugee backgrounds, job search and finding adequate employment, adaptation to work and career tasks and challenges, and career counselling interventions. Education and employment are key contributors to successful integration into mainstream society, and it is important to inform vocational practice by rigorous evidence. The studies reviewed in this chapter suggest that refugees encounter various challenges and threats in their host countries, and that integration and career success are the results of a complex interplay between multiple individual and contextual influences. Future research on refugees' career development could make use of social cognitive career theory, life-span life-space theory, and career construction theory to gain an even better understanding of the factors that play an important role in the career development of refugees. In this regard, it is important for research to examine the interplay of individual differences, contextual factors, and agentic behaviours as predictors of career development and success. Finally, the research findings reviewed in this chapter suggest that vocational practitioners can be an important source of instrumental, informational, and socioemotional support for refugees. In particular, career counsellors may contribute to refugees' career development and success by helping them integrate their past professional experiences and future vocational aspirations with current task and challenges in the host countries.

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