



From Taking Flight to Putting Down Roots: A Narrative Perspective of the Entrepreneurial Journey of a Refugee

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Introduction

Significant world events in the first two decades of the twenty-first century have highlighted the impact of global mobility on the interrelationships between and within countries and communities. Factors such as the European refugee crisis, political turbulence in Venezuela, the growth of economic migrants and the general globalisation of human capital, has raised global awareness regarding movements of both voluntarily and displaced people. It has also engendered an ongoing debate regarding the impacts of these movements of people and it has created public disquiet regarding how to resolve the complex economic, political, social and cultural issues surrounding the integration of the world's displaced people. But the plight of displaced people is nothing new, as humanitarian principles of offering refuge to such people date back to the seventeenth century (Bakewell 1999). Currently 'displaced people' is a term used to describe those that have been victims of severe disruption within and between societies (Newman 2003). Such displacement

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can be from conflicts such as civil wars (Fazel et al. 2012), economic collapse of the state (Newman 2003), political unrest (Miyares 1998), persecution due to race, religion or nationality (Newman 2003; Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson 2013) and environmental displacement (Moberg 2009). Newman (2003) reasoned that:

the distinction between different types of immigrants – including asylum seekers, economic migrants, and those displaced by war and in need of temporary protection – is often clearer in theory than in reality. (Newman 2003, 8–9)

Current definitions have been criticised as excluding a great many of the world's displaced people. For example, existing international legal instruments do not adequately deal with the current reality of asylum needs (Newman 2003) or those displaced by natural disaster (Moberg 2009). As a further cautionary note, there are also some concerns about validity regarding records of the number of displaced persons (Bakewell 1999). Gemenne (2011) argued that estimates and predictions are often generated for media attention rather than being empirically grounded. They also contend that it can be difficult to provide accurate data from developing countries which lack the statistical capacity to monitor migration movements. To further complicate matters, there can be issues of people inhabiting borderless zones between countries (Tangseefa 2006) and there is a lack of acknowledgement of persecution that occurs within private settings—especially those affecting women (Boyd 1999).

Despite disagreements on definition, there is broad concurrence that the worldwide measuring and classification of the various displaced people is significant from a sheer mass perspective. Within the world's estimated migrant population of 258 million (United Nations 2017), recent international data indicates that 68.5 million of these are forcibly displaced. These have been classified as: 25.4 million refugees (of which over half are under the age of 18); 3.1 million asylum seekers; and 40 million internally displaced people. Almost 85 per cent of these displaced people are in developing countries (UNHCR 2019b). Furthermore, there has been a rapid increase in displaced people worldwide. Heilbrunn et al. (2019) have observed that internally displaced asylum seekers and refugees have increased from 17 million in 2000 to 67.75 million in 2016, with a major recent spike in numbers since 2014 (when they were estimated at 35.85 million), thereby recording the highest level of migration in the world's history.

Refugees

Estimating the numbers of refugees and their different categorisations is extremely difficult. A UNHCR (2019a) report suggested that of those people that do move to other countries, 28.5 million refugees have been categorised as either people seeking asylum due to victimisation or persecution, quota refugees under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) status determination, or identified as newly recognised UNHCR climate change displaced persons. Across economic and social debate regarding disadvantaged and minority communities, refugees are considered amongst the most marginalised groups of immigrants. These are people fleeing across international frontiers from life-threatening conditions (Shacknove 1985). They are immigrant groups that are exposed to discrimination, impoverished living conditions and high rates of joblessness (Heilbrunn et al. 2019). Furthermore, they have suffered from cumulative exposure to violence stemming from terrible circumstances and have suffered high levels of stress and trauma (Fazel et al. 2012). According to the early work of Shacknove (1985), refugees must be persons whose home state has failed to secure their basic needs, as in: (1) persons deprived of basic rights; (2) persons with no recourse to home government and (3) persons with access to international assistance. The refugee literature (e.g. Boyd 1999; Bond Rankin 2005; Heilbrunn et al. 2019) regularly refers to the definition of a refugee that was established by the 1951 UN Convention which stated that:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

Excluded from this definition are internally displaced people, the victims of natural disasters, economic migrants and the victims of violence who are not also subject to persecution (Heilbrunn et al. 2019). In 1974, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) added to this definition by stating that:

The term “refugee” shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of nationality. (Bond Rankin 2005, 406)

A similar regional definition was made for Latin America in the Cartagena Declaration of 1984 (Bakewell 1999). Of the OAU convention, Bond Rankin (2005) suggested that although it does reflect a particular African vision, it exposes the shortcomings of the 1951 UN Convention, but also the problems surrounding the vagueness and ambiguity of the OAU definition. The UNHCR continued to address the issue of definitional clarity as evidenced with the 2005 publication of comprehensive procedural standards governing its refugee status determination (Kagan 2006) and the more recent acknowledgement of the climate change refugee phenomenon (UNHCR 2019a). This complexity has, not surprisingly, led to considerable inter-country variability in the refugee determination process (Boyd 1999). Despite (or perhaps because of) the challenges and variations surrounding the definition, the refugee status decision-making process in many Asian and Western countries is not conducted by national governments, but by the UNHCR (Alexander 2009). Indeed, numerous countries have introduced mechanisms to keep refugees out unless they go through the UNHCR refugee status determination (RSD) which, although established to guarantee a 'fair hearing' for all (Alexander 2009), has been open to variable interpretations.

Those displaced people that do meet the RSD criteria face further challenges in their new country of residence. Discrimination, poverty, un- or underemployment, language barriers and trauma all make the transition exceedingly difficult. Researchers such as Heilbrunn et al. (2019) have asserted that employment is considered to be a vital component for the successful inclusion and integration of refugees into their new communities. This theme is not new and has already gained prominence in the broader ethnic minority immigrant employment and self-employment literature (Mace et al. 2005; Piperopoulos 2010; Clark and Drinkwater 2010; de Vries et al. 2015; Jones and Ram 2015). However, refugees experience higher levels of labour market difficulty than economic immigrants, plus they have raised levels of difficulty regarding country-specific legal restrictions, personal and structural discrimination, learning a new language and acquiring new knowledge, and an unwillingness on the part of authorities to accept documentation and credentials from their homeland. Furthermore, the reason for leaving their home countries are typically deeply rooted in a complex set of political, cultural, social and economic conditions. Therefore, the long and arduous journey commonly taken by refugees and asylum seekers to integrating into their new host country can frequently translate into they becoming a marginalised group. As a practical solution to integration, people within refugee communities are consequently drawn (pushed or pulled) into self-employment. Certainly, there is literature affirming a

strong positive relationship between ethnic minority disadvantage and the push to self-employment (e.g. Light 1979; Clark and Drinkwater 2010) which draws a positive connection between rates of entrepreneurship and social and economic performance (Hiebert 2003; Zhou 2004; Jones and Ram 2015). The next section considers the current advances in academic literature regarding refugee entrepreneurs.

Refugee Entrepreneurs

This chapter identifies a refugee entrepreneur as a displaced person who has entered a new country through RSD and asylum seeker programmes and who starts, owns and manages a business in their host country. A vast majority of these refugee entrepreneurs start businesses due to necessity as they are not able to find suitable formal employment in their host countries (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006, 2008; Refai et al. 2018; Freiling and Harima 2019; Shneikat and Alrawadieh 2019). Entering into the labour market of the host country is challenging for refugees due to not having (or not having formal proof of) education or professional qualifications (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006). Often, they are pushed into entrepreneurship as ‘doing something is better than doing nothing’ (Freiling and Harima 2019). Occasionally, pull factors such as desire for independence, availability of resources and integration within the wider community are cited as reasons for business start-ups (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006; Shneikat and Alrawadieh 2019).

For many refugees, entrepreneurship is a means of sustaining themselves and their families. However, Lee (2018) contended that it should not be considered merely as a livelihood option as entrepreneurship also facilitates the integration of refugees into their host countries (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006; Shneikat and Alrawadieh 2019). According to Valtonen (2004), entrepreneurship offers:

the ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural and political activities, without having to relinquish one’s own distinct ethnocultural identity and culture. (Valtonen 2004, 74)

As their business ventures become established and a viable source of income, this improves a refugee’s standard of living, provides recognition and facilitates linkages with the host community. Entrepreneurship in effect enhances the integration process for such refugees. In addition, their businesses allow refugees to make economic contributions to their host country and boost domestic entrepreneurship (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006; Harb et al. 2018).

For example, Harb et al. (2018) found that Syrian refugee entrepreneurs in Lebanon conducted complimentary business activities and even established partnerships with Lebanese businesses. Beyond economic benefits, refugee-owned businesses also facilitate social change, such as Burmese refugees in South Korea using business ventures to further political activism in their home country (Lee 2018).

Studies related to refugee entrepreneurship are often grounded on theories that allow the phenomenon to be examined as an embedded concept. For example, the work by Refai et al. (2018) on entrepreneurial identity in Jordan draws upon the 'habitus' concept (Bourdieu 1977). Habitus, a theory of human social practice, is grounded on the argument that:

individuals act in the context of a structured framework of evaluations and expectations which lead to the conscious or intuitive prioritising of certain dispositions and practices. (Kelly and Lusi 2006, 832)

It provides a context where economic, social and cultural capital is valued and given meaning (Kelly and Lusi 2006). Using the 'habitus' concept, Refai et al. (2018) demonstrated that context-specific disposition (e.g. employment practices) and destabilised habitus (e.g. unstable situations due to lack of options) emerged for Syrian refugees in Jordan. These circumstances influenced refugees' perceptions on social conditions and their ability to engage in entrepreneurship (Refai et al. 2018).

Recently Meister and Mauer (2018) used mixed-embeddedness theory to study refugee entrepreneurs and business incubation. Mixed-embeddedness theory, prominently used in migrant entrepreneurship, has an interactionist approach and encompasses both actors (the migrant entrepreneurs) and the opportunity structures (Kloosterman et al. 1999). It combines the micro-level of the individual entrepreneur and his/her resources with the meso-level of local opportunity structures. Then, the meso-level structures are broadly linked to macro-institutional frameworks (Kloosterman 2010). The Meister and Mauer (2018) work combined social networks with mixed-embeddedness amongst refugee entrepreneurs in a business incubation setting and studied co-creation of ventures with refugees by the local population in Germany. Their findings suggest that a customised incubation model could contribute to the embeddedness of refugee entrepreneurs in their host country and increase their entrepreneurial success.

A further contribution is the use of refugee integration theories, such as the framework of Valtonen (2004) to capture the journey of a refugee from pre-flight, settlement, through to integration into a new community, as the basis for examining refugee entrepreneurs. For example, Garnham (2006) extended

the human capability framework which was used by the New Zealand Department of Labour and was based on the work of Valtonen (2004). The Garnham (2006) framework identified capacity and then matched these with opportunities unique to the refugees. The refugees might have home or host country capacity influences (such as skills or education) that have been gathered from their experience in their home country or through the asylum-seeking journey. They then pursue entrepreneurial opportunities within their new host country which matches with their skills attained through training, education, voluntary work or other means (Garnham 2006).

A Refugee's Journey from His/Her Home Country to a Host Country and Entrepreneurship

The findings arising from the limited existing empirical work that is available demonstrates that a displaced person's journey from his/her home country to a host country, as an asylum seeker or a refugee, shapes their entrepreneurial activity. This section identifies stages of this journey as it considers life before seeking asylum/refugee status, the transitional journey to a new host country and the entrepreneurial activity within the host country. By this means a review can be undertaken to explain how a displaced person's experience in each of the stages may ultimately influence their entrepreneurial behaviour in the host country.

1. Life before seeking asylum/refugee status

A refugee's (displaced person's) home country experiences can influence the choice and size of the business in their host country. For example, many refugees start businesses in trades and services (e.g. convenience stores, telephone shops and snack bars) and handicrafts sectors that require low-level skills (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006, 2008). Male refugees who were previously self-employed in their home countries or whose families had been active in entrepreneurship have a higher tendency for engaging in business start-ups (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006). Refugees are typically heavily imprinted with home country-specific values, norms and attitudes, and generally have a narrow base of business options from which to choose (Freiling and Harima 2019). For example, Hartmann and Schilling (2019) explained that a Syrian refugee in Germany might consider only the traditional food habits of Syrians in starting his/her cheese diary (e.g. eating cheese every day for breakfast) because of their home country imprint. Furthermore, rather than

engaging in sectors for which they are qualified or sectors that they perceive as having greater market opportunities, refugees select sectors with limited entry barriers (Wauters and Lambrecht 2008). One such entry barrier might be a skill gap as a person's skills when they leave their home country may not match the labour market in their host country. A further factor can be the age of the refugee as older refugees, who in normal circumstances would never leave their home country (Gold 1998), find gaining new skills to be a challenging task. In addition, almost all the business options refugees select require limited investment of start-up capital (Wauters and Lambrecht 2008; Freiling and Harima 2019). This is due to refugees having limited assets, as most have left assets behind during their flight. They are unable to access the capital required in their country of origin due to the political or social situation within their home country and have little access to capital in their host country (Wauters and Lambrecht 2008).

2. *Transitional journey to a new host country*

The transitional journey of a displaced person to a new host country, first as an asylum seeker and later as a refugee, can enhance the disposition to be entrepreneurial through such factors as opportunity identification/creation, risk-taking behaviour, persistence, uncertainty management and resilience. Yet this journey is poorly understood. For example, if one considers the plight of an asylum seeker, the literature prior to a study by Heilbrunn et al. (2019) of refugee entrepreneurs provided only limited insights into the asylum seeking transitional journey and how it influences their entrepreneurial dispositions. The literature does contend that displaced people use a combination of legal (UNHCR RSD) and illegal methods (such as employing 'people smugglers') to facilitate the flight from their home countries. The root cause of seeking asylum, such as personal reasons (e.g. political persecution), social group discrimination (e.g. human rights violations) or social disasters (e.g. war) (Freiling and Harima 2019; Nardone and Correa-velez 2015) also determine the methods through which people take flight. In terms of social disasters, people take flight *en masse* and seek refuge in neighbouring countries by often staying in camps. Others take flight with the support of people smugglers which includes crossing borders using boats, on foot, or other means (Nardone and Correa-velez 2015). In these situations, smugglers can temporarily gain complete control of asylum seekers' lives (Freiling and Harima 2019). Regardless of the way people seek refuge, asylum seeking journeys and the life disruptions those journeys provoke are traumatic. In many cases, asylum seekers spend significant time in camps in order to gain

RSD which can extend into many years. In some worst case scenarios, detention centres can be used for the indefinite detention of asylum seekers for crossing the border illegally. Although adults can cope much better with traumatic events associated with asylum seeking, the emotional pain and lack of security can remain in the background for children and adolescents, even when they grow-up (Kronick et al. 2015; Nardone and Correa-velez 2015). However, these extreme circumstances can also develop people's resilience (Nardone and Correa-velez 2015) and the risk-taking propensity associated with entrepreneurship, frequently being taken to extreme levels as they feel that they have 'nothing to lose' (Freiling and Harima 2019). Although the life experience of asylum seekers can affect their self-efficacy (as neither the nature nor the scope of these beliefs are static), their positive post-resettlement experiences (such as assistance to start a business) can improve the general self-efficacy of refugees and enhance the long-term beneficial outcomes (Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson 2013).

During the transitional journey, the sheer waiting process in refugee/asylum seeker transition countries, where they temporarily stay until protection claims are validated, requires a certain degree of entrepreneurial disposition. A displaced person has to formally apply for refugee status with the UNHCR. Some asylum seekers lack the proficiency required to apply and sometimes need to appeal rejections of their claims for protection (Missbach 2015). In these situations, staying in refugee transition countries for a long period is impossible without the support of charity or social enterprises (Freiling and Harima 2019). Their situation is sometimes worsened due to laws and regulations prohibiting displaced people from taking paid employment and/or starting-up their own businesses (Refai et al. 2018; Freiling and Harima 2019). In addition, some asylum seekers are not eligible for government-funded support services (e.g. the Status Resolution Support Services in Australia only support quota refugees) (van Kooy and Ward 2018). In such cases, some start informal businesses although they are illegal. For example, Refai et al. (2018) recognised that Syrian refugees in Jordan conduct craft businesses, provide entertainment services (i.e. singing songs in parties) or become street vendors (i.e. selling drinks). de la Chau (2019) highlighted an example of a Kenyan refugee who started a business repairing electronic items in a camp where payments were largely in-kind (such as a meal, vegetables, clothing, etc.). These business owners are permanently vulnerable as their ability to register their business, obtain formal legal protection or expand their business is limited. At the same time, they are susceptible to paying bribes for quasi-protection (Freiling and Harima 2019). In extreme cases, although seeking asylum is a human right, Missbach

(2015) identified that some asylum seekers themselves turn to the business of people smuggling due to their dire situation and limited options. In effect, this rather dubious entrepreneurial activity can occur as a consequence of a combination of their inability to return to their home country, rejection of claims for protection and a lack of money. Missbach cited two cases of asylum seekers who turned to people smuggling due to their situation and even generated employment for mid-level functionaries such as recruiters, money collectors and facilitators.

3. *Life in host country*

For a refugee, starting and managing a business involves adapting to their new host country and overcoming start-up obstacles. Challenges relate to understanding the market and accessing entrepreneurial opportunities, developing human capital and social networks, and navigating the new institutional and societal context in which they reside (Wauters and Lambrecht 2008). Much of the available refugee entrepreneurship literature concentrates on exploring this stage and provides examples of said challenges. For example, Meister and Mauer (2018) confirmed that a lack of context and knowledge of the host country and limited proficiency in host country languages as being major factors that hinder interactions in their new socio-economic and legal-institutional environment. Refugees have limited local networks and resources in the host country (Meister and Mauer 2018) and are seldom members of professional associations (Wauters and Lambrecht 2008). As refugees also have no or limited assets to draw upon to secure formal financing, they typically rely on family and friends for support (Wauters and Lambrecht 2006). Tensions with the local community with regard to seizing opportunities can also be a challenge when expanding their businesses (Refai et al. 2018). For example, in Jordan, Syrian refugees are perceived to have high-level skills and are capable of producing high-quality products. This is viewed as a threat to the local population and it is considered to be a significant factor in the increased tensions between Syrians and Jordanians (Refai et al. 2018). However, these tensions may not be as visible in the Western World as in the Middle-East, due to labour markets in developed countries requiring a different set of skills. Furthermore, when asylum seekers are granted refuge, some legal systems foresee these refugees returning to their home countries and therefore allow only temporary stay conditions (Refai et al. 2018). It could be argued that a displaced person who has been granted protection due to political persecution in their home country, may be impacted by a change in political regime that eliminates the

underlying reason for seeking refuge. In such a situation, legal restrictions over their right to stay in their host country can also influence a refugee's desire to invest heavily in a business in the host country.

To overcome some of these challenges, refugee-support organisations conduct financial literacy and capacity development training programmes, establish linkages with external financiers and other agencies, and facilitate community collaborations (Fong et al. 2007). Initiatives designed to provide micro-loans, loan schemes that allow refugees to repay money when their businesses make profit and one-on-one mentoring sessions have also proven to be successful (Collins 2017). Refugees help themselves by engaging in collective bootstrapping where entrepreneurs, employees, families and acquaintances (mostly from a similar background) strive to support each other in achieving successful business outcomes (Bizri 2017). Others attend business administration courses, although these studies are much more suitable for someone who had spent time in the host country and have a grasp of the local language (Wauters and Lambrecht 2008). Harima and Freudenberg (2019) suggested that a further means of overcoming the disadvantage of foreignness is by co-creating ventures with the local population. This includes the use of community support programmes that enable communities and businesses to support refugees to start businesses (Collins 2017). In addition, having access to business incubators where refugees can use these platforms for cultural exchange, understanding markets and integrating into the ecosystem of the host country can help to manage the challenges of establishing viable businesses (Meister and Mauer 2018).

New Zealand Context

The vision of the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy is based on integration. The five goals of the strategy are: self-sufficiency; participation; health and wellbeing; education; and housing (New Zealand Immigration 2019b). The refugees considered for resettlement are referred by UNHCR and refugees who arrive under RSD are granted permanent residency in New Zealand (New Zealand Immigration 2019c). During the first six weeks of arrival, refugees are provided with information on working and living in New Zealand. This includes topics such as health, education (including English language), settlement planning, etc. (New Zealand Immigration 2019c). The top five nationalities that arrived as refugees to New Zealand from 2014 to 2018 were from Syria, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Colombia and Bhutan. Most of these refugees settled in New Zealand's North Island regions of Wellington,

Table 1 Refugee statistics in New Zealand

| | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 | 2017–18 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Refugee quota arrivals | 756 | 876 | 1017 | 1020 |
| Refugee family reunification arrivals | 321 | 304 | 328 | 300 |

Source New Zealand Immigration (2019a)

Auckland, Waikato and Manawatu (New Zealand Immigration 2019a). New Zealand, through its refugee Quota Programme established in 1987, resettles approximately 1000 refugees per year (New Zealand Immigration 2019a). In addition, the country offers 300 places each year for eligible refugee residents in New Zealand to sponsor family members to join them (see Table 1).

There is sparse academic research within New Zealand on refugee entrepreneurs. Garnham (2006) used a human capability framework within the refugee entrepreneurial context and identified that in New Zealand, refugees are neither restricted nor encouraged to be entrepreneurs. Similar to the international experience (e.g. Heilbrunn et al. 2019), these refugee entrepreneurs face challenges within the New Zealand social, legal and economic contexts that refugee entrepreneurs in other host countries also endure. For example, Najib (2014) studied Afghan entrepreneurs within the Christchurch region and found the typical challenges were financing the business start-up, navigating licensing requirements and English language barriers. In addition, the findings demonstrated that collectivist social norms, religious way of life and the associated sense of obligation to support their fellow refugees shaped their business start-up behaviour. Although better understanding of the refugee eco-system globally is required (Finsterwalder 2017), in New Zealand the percentage of refugees who are self-employed is low. According to the 'Quota Refugees Ten Years On' report (a multi-year study by the New Zealand Government), only 1 per cent of refugees were estimated to be self-employed (Labour and Immigration Research Centre 2012) as opposed to the World Bank estimate of 17 per cent self-employment amongst the total number of people employed in New Zealand (Trading Economics 2019). The refugee report also highlighted that most refugee employees were working as labourers, technicians or traders. This trend, with only a few exceptions, was similar to the occupations refugees had prior to their arrival in New Zealand. In contrast, the study found that 7.2 per cent of refugees were estimated to have been self-employed prior to arriving in the country, yet only 1 per cent is estimated to have become self-employed in New Zealand. In addition, many women were self-employed in their home countries, but none of these were found to be self-employed in New Zealand (Labour and Immigration Research Centre 2012).

Illustrative Cases: The Journey of a Refugee Entrepreneur

Despite the low number of self-employed refugees in New Zealand, there are cases of very successful refugee entrepreneurs. One such example is Patrick Lam who is an award-winning pie maker in Tauranga, whilst another is Mitchell Pham a co-creator of a successful software company in Auckland. Their experiences are discussed below to offer an illustration of the journey of a refugee entrepreneur.

1. *Life before*

Khu Hoac (also known as Patrick) Lam was born in Cambodia in the early 1970s (Roy 2016; Snowden 2018b). This was during a time when the country was destabilised through civil war and it experienced the rise to power of the Khmer Rouge who ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 (Roy 2016). The Khmer Rouge was a radical regime that would claim an estimated 1.5 to 2 million Cambodian lives, approximately a quarter of the country's population at that time (Stammel et al. 2013). In 1975, when Patrick was five years of age, his parents abandoned everything to escape the Khmer Rouge and fled with their three children to Vietnam (Roy 2016; Snowden 2018b). The family walked for many months and Patrick remembers being very scared, fleeing for their lives from war and deprivation, passing many dead bodies on their way to Vietnam. Until 1980, they lived within a Vietnamese community, but were then moved into a refugee camp by the country's government (Snowden 2018b).

Mitchell Pham has fond memories of his early childhood in Vietnam. He was also born in the early 1970s, during the Vietnam War. His parents were engineers and he was the oldest of three children. They lived in a predominantly rural area of Ho Chi Minh City (then Saigon). Mitchell has said '*I remember having a very open and natural environment to grow up in, much like Kiwi¹ kids*' (Snowden 2018a). Mitchell was four when Saigon was captured and the war ended. After the war the economy plummeted, there were food and water shortages and people had limited freedom. People began fleeing the country to survive. In desperation, Mitchell's parents tried twice to escape with the family, but they were caught and imprisoned on both occasions (Snowden 2018a).

¹'Kiwi' is a term used to denote New Zealanders.

2. *Transitional journey to a new host country*

Patrick and his family spent nine years in refugee camps in Vietnam where he said there was no work, no money, no school, a one-room shack to live in and the camps were strictly controlled. However, behind the barbed wire fences, the fourteen-year-old Patrick started his first (informal) business venture by making strong black Vietnamese coffee, whilst also helping his father who had a small coffee cart from which he served other refugees (Roy 2016). In the refugee camps Patrick had no access to formal education, but received rudimentary English lessons from other refugees (Roy 2016). The family lived a life of poverty whilst waiting to be accepted as legitimate refugees by a host country. *'We had no direction, we had no future'* Patrick said, *'We didn't know what would happen tomorrow, so I had no dreams'* (Roy 2016). At the age of nineteen, Patrick was accepted into Australia under a family sponsorship visa (Snowden 2018b). There he worked very hard in a juice factory, rising to the role of supervisor. During his twelve years in Australia, Patrick had kept in contact with a girl (Lynn) whom he met in the refugee camp and who had settled in New Zealand (Roy 2016; Snowden 2018b). In 1997 they married and moved to New Zealand to be closer to her family. A second reason for deciding to live in New Zealand was to start a business. Of New Zealand, Patrick has said it is: *'a really good country, nice weather and nice people. Also, it is quite easy to run a small business and it is good for us because basically we had not much money'* (1NEWS 2018).

When Mitchell Pham was barely twelve years old, his family leveraged everything they had for one last desperate attempt to escape, but could only muster enough money for one person. It was decided that as Mitchell was the oldest child, he would be sent. In effect, their last hope. With 66 others (NZ Herald 2011), Mitchell undertook the dangerous trek of trying to outsmart local government agents and police. They pretended to be on holiday in the Mekong Delta, where they boarded a fishing boat in the middle of the night and set off to escape to Indonesia where they would seek asylum (Snowden 2018a). Mitchell (as a 12-year-old) found it a terrifying experience. At one stage they were chased by a coastguard boat which was shooting at them with machine guns. Then in open sea they ran out of food, water and fuel before eventually being picked up in Indonesian water and quarantined until Indonesian authorities were contacted (Snowden 2018a). For the next two years Mitchell was held in four different refugee camps in Indonesia. The camps were overcrowded, lacking in food, clean water, sanitation, healthcare facilities or schools. According to Mitchell, there was no infrastructure and it

was a very difficult environment (Snowden 2018a). The camps had 20,000–30,000 inhabitants, with some residing there for decades and an average stay of eighteen years. To keep himself busy, Mitchell became involved with a volunteer team which built two Buddhist temples and taught refugees basic English at the UNHCR language school. Despite this he was still a child, alone and completely disconnected from his family. Indeed, he did not see them again until almost 30 years later in 1997 in Auckland, New Zealand (NZ Herald 2011). Mitchell said *‘It has shaped my view of how important family is in life’* (Snowden 2018a). Mitchell had nominated New Zealand as one of his top three preferences for settlement and attended an interview. He was subsequently accepted by New Zealand authorities, arriving as a 13-year-old refugee (Alves 2013; StudyInNewZealand 2018). He faced many challenges, including a different culture and climate, a new schooling system and a different way of life. *‘It took me ten years to fully adapt and integrate’*, he said (Snowden 2018a).

3. *Life as a refugee entrepreneur*

Patrick and Lynn bought a small lunch bar in Auckland which they ran for two years. Patrick tasted his first pie at the age of 27 in 1997 (Roy 2016). He had no experience of baking, so he took guidance from extended family in the bakery business and other knowledgeable people he had met (Snowden 2018b), and he began experimenting with new flavours for pies. Patrick believes that, as a business opportunity, bakeries are popular with Asian migrants because of limited English skills and they are suitable as family businesses (Roy 2016). Following their sale of the lunch bar, Patrick and Lynn moved to Rotorua and opened a bakery where he continued to perfect his pies, experimenting and learning from others, and he won his first baking award in 2003. In the same year changed his name from Khu Hoac to Patrick, so it would be easier for customers to pronounce and therefore better for business (Roy 2016). The business continued to grow and in 2007 they moved to Tauranga and started Patrick’s Pies (Snowden 2018b). Patrick and Lynn have three children and typically work twelve to thirteen hours a day, seven days a week. Patrick has personal confidence (Roy 2016), an experimental attitude (Snowden 2018b) and believes he needs to work harder because he comes from nothing (Roy 2016). He is continuously learning to keep-up with the competition. *‘We never stop learning and the competition is getting harder and harder every year. A lot of bakeries do really good pies and we know we have to keep doing better to get up there’* (Snowden 2018b). However, he is a perfectionist and

struggles to hand over any control to his staff. Patrick still has the Tauranga and Rotorua bakeries. He has said that he would love to open up more, but it is not practical, because he wants to control everything and he cannot be everywhere (Roy 2016). In 2018 he won his sixth New Zealand Supreme Pie Award, which is more than any other competitor in the competition's 22-year history (1NEWS 2018; NZ Herald 2018). His pies are renowned throughout New Zealand and he is known by many as the Pie King. According to organisers of the New Zealand Pie Awards, his story has encouraged other refugees and Asian bakers to participate in baking competitions and promote the multicultural baking landscape in the country (Roy 2016). He is very thankful to be living in New Zealand and believes only in his adopted country could he have achieved such success (Roy 2016).

Mitchell Pham attended university in Auckland, where he subsequently went into business with four friends in a rented house and founded the Augen Software Group (NZ Herald 2011; Snowden 2018a). Mitchell explains that their motivation for going into business was their passion. *'We did this because we all aspired to having our own business. We had many role models who were business entrepreneurs and we were passionate about the technology sector, so we thought we should combine entrepreneurship and the technology sector for our career path'* (Snowden 2018a). Their first product was a software package that could deliver school curricula online, but was said to be ahead of its time. In fact, in the early part of his career Mitchell said he firstly needed to understand the New Zealand culture, business etiquette, consumer behaviour and market dynamics. But he also came to realise being Vietnamese gave him a particular edge which differentiated him from others. *'Born in Vietnam and made in New Zealand. I am a Vietnamese Kiwi'*, he said (StudyInNewZealand 2018). Mitchell also said that New Zealand is the easiest country in the world in which to do business (StudyInNewZealand 2018) and following the initial setback, Augen attracted large New Zealand customers such as ASB Bank and began building contacts in Asia. In 2008, following the Global Financial Crisis, the Augen group had to consolidate and move in a new direction of facilitating socially responsive industries (NZ Herald 2011). Now he is partnering with other New Zealand companies to provide IT and green technology solutions to Asia. Vietnam was the initial market where Augen established an overseas office (Alves 2013). Mitchell has said many Asian countries face challenges in the green technology solutions area, so it makes economic sense to do business there (NZ Herald 2011). Mitchell has since been recognised as a 2011 World Economic Forum Young Global Leader and as a 2018 Kea World Class New Zealand Award recipient (NZTECH 2018). He is married to a New Zealander and lives on Waiheke Island (Alves 2013),

an affluent residential island a short ferry-ride from Auckland. He is active in supporting community health and disability, and serves on the Board of Refugee Services, Aotearoa NZ. Mitchell is proud of his achievements and says that he hopes policymakers recognise what former refugees have to offer to their new host countries. They are a 'pool of talent' he says. He dreams of owning a seaside Asian food restaurant one day (Snowden 2018a) and with regard to maintaining balance in life, he talks of taking time for exercise, family and leisure activities. But he does admit: '*Otherwise I will just keep working as I enjoy business so much*' (Alves 2013).

Discussion

The plight of displaced people is embedded in complex economic, political, social and cultural issues (Alrawadieh et al. 2018), and how to manage such a global phenomenon is often clearer in theory than in reality (Newman 2003). It is arguable that refugees are the most marginalised group of immigrants, exposed to high rates of discrimination, poverty and joblessness (Shacknove 1985; Heilbrunn et al. 2019) and have often suffered the stress and trauma of a long and arduous road to refuge (Fazel et al. 2012). Integration and sustainability within a new host society can be challenging, so a practical solution for people within refugee communities is to draw on self-employment. Patrick Lam and Mitchell Pham are acclaimed as refugees who overcame displacement and the challenges of refugee status, established successful businesses and have contributed to their communities (Snowden 2018a, b). Their personal stories, similar in many ways, have identifiable differences which shaped their entrepreneurial journey. Firstly, despite the differences in their refuge seeking journeys, both Patrick and Mitchell refer to some good childhood experiences in their home country, but both fled with their families at a very young age. This may infer that their home country imprint was less established than is evident with older refugees. Of further interest, Patrick spent a significant time (nine years) in refugee camps, whilst for Mitchell it was less than two years. Hence, Patrick was an adult when given the opportunity to settle in Australia, whilst Mitchell was still a teenager when, on his own, he settled in New Zealand. Therefore, the home country imprint could be assumed to be even further defused by a lengthy stay in camps in Patrick's case and in Mitchell's case because of his youth and separation from family. Furthermore, the time spent in refugee camps and within the resettlement programmes can also further shape a refugee's values and outlook on life. Patrick and Mitchell experienced community building within the difficult

camp environment. They were both engaged with entrepreneurial behaviour and voluntary work whilst living in refugee camps. Patrick sold Vietnamese coffee and worked with his father to manage a coffee cart servicing the refugee community, whilst Mitchell undertook voluntary work and taught other refugees rudimentary English. Although they lived with their family and in refugee camps, they were on their own once they were accepted for resettlement. Those experiences convinced Mitchell of the importance of the family, whilst Patrick explained that 'having nothing' led him to work hard in business. Therefore, the time they both spent in 'limbo' in refugee camps had such an impact on their lives, it contributed significantly to shaping their personal values about life, business and family. Their experiences also align with evidence from Kronick et al. (2015) and Nardone and Correa-velez (2015) because their stories reveal the development of resilience and persistence. Garnham's (2006) assertion is also affirmed, that the displaced person's experience before their flight and throughout the journey from home to host country needs to be a consideration when designing refugee integration policies and strategies such as promoting entrepreneurial behaviour.

The Patrick Lam and Mitchell Pham narratives also illustrate that successful business start-ups occur after spending time within the host country, after further education, a lengthy period of employment or running a small established venture. Whilst Patrick worked in a factory in Australia prior to moving to New Zealand and ran a lunch bar in New Zealand when he first married, Mitchell went to school and university in Auckland, and co-founded his business whilst he was still at university. Patrick was an adult when he was sent to Australia and then New Zealand, and his integration into the host society was through employment and marriage. As Patrick and his family had been engaged in entrepreneurship, this aligns with Wauters and Lambrecht (2006) contention that having previous experience prompts entrepreneurial behaviour. Patrick's case also aligns with the work of Najib (2014) which found that refugees first accept any job that they can get and then venture into entrepreneurship. In contrast, Mitchell's integration, although challenging for a teenager who was alone and navigating cultural and social differences, was mainly through his engagement with the New Zealand education system. These findings do not reflect the available literature on necessity entrepreneurship, as these narratives do not illustrate doing 'something is better than doing nothing' attitude identified by Freiling and Harima (2019). Both these refugees, contrary to necessity-driven motivation, had a pull towards entrepreneurial behaviour. Further evidence suggests that some New Zealand refugees rely on government benefits as the main income source (Labour and Immigration Research Centre 2012; Saied et al.

2013) and therefore ‘necessity’ was not an underlying reason for starting their ventures. The differing integration experiences of both entrepreneurs is also evident regarding how they started and now manage their businesses. Patrick used personally accessible resources such as learning baking from his family, experimenting with different pie flavours at home and obtaining customer feedback once he started his pie making business. But Patrick’s approach has also limited his potential expansion to other locations as he has retained the venture as a small family business where he can maintain control of all aspects of production and can do most of the work himself. Mitchell took a much more networked approach whilst at university, as he studied the New Zealand culture, markets and business etiquette. He then undertook a collaborative approach to co-creating his business start-up with friends he met at the university when combining his passion for technology with his career aspirations to become an entrepreneur. Hence, their stories somewhat align with the effectual approach for business creation (Saravathy 2001), since they both used available means and created their businesses through evolving opportunities.

The narratives also demonstrate how Patrick Lam and Mitchell Pham use dual identity in a contextually embedded way. Mitchell identifies himself as a ‘Vietnamese Kiwi’ and his contextual knowledge of both Asia and New Zealand has been vital for business expansion. For example, he firstly identified that green technology is a field of competitive advancement which Asian countries struggle to embrace, and secondly he demonstrated his ability to utilise his New Zealand context and capabilities to capitalise on business opportunities in these emerging markets. In contrast, Patrick uses his combined Cambodian and New Zealand identity (changing his name from Khu Hoac to Patrick) and his learned pie making talent to develop his products for the local market. The narratives illustrate that having exposure and embedding in both the local and international context can foster business success. This aligns with the mixed-embedded theory in migrant entrepreneurship (Kloosterman et al. 1999; Kloosterman 2010) and highlights the importance of refugee businesses becoming embedded in micro-macro-meso structures.

A key omission from these narratives is that they do not highlight the challenges faced by Patrick Lam and Mitchell Pham in starting and sustaining their ventures. Although Mitchell refers to the impact of the global financial crisis and Patrick refers to local competition and the constant need to learn and improve the business, their stories offer little insight into the significant challenges they faced during and after the business start-up. This is perhaps not surprising, as the method of data collection for these narratives

was exclusively secondary data available in the public domain. An additional consideration could be the timing of their business start-ups, because both Patrick and Mitchell had already spent some time in New Zealand and their propensity for hard work gave them the context and capability to address challenges effectively. It is also worth noting that New Zealand is one of the easiest countries in which to open a business with the highest ease of doing business ranking in 2019 (The World Bank 2019). Therefore, refugee contextual challenges, relative to other countries, may have been somewhat lower for both Patrick and Mitchell's ventures. Nevertheless, Najib (2014) pointed out that there are many social and institutional challenges faced by New Zealand refugees which means that the influence on entrepreneurial behaviour of contextual challenges requires deeper investigation.

Conclusion

This chapter provides several implications for understanding and promoting refugee entrepreneurship research. Firstly, it highlights the benefits of a narrative perspective to researching the complex interdependent web of home, transitional and host factors that influence refugee entrepreneurial behaviour. Whilst research into home life prior to flight, the transition through refugee settlement programmes and their host country integration is prominent in the literature, they are often considered in isolation of each other rather than as a single complete journey. Secondly, research that influences government policy can address issues regarding the benefits of investing in more 'pull' factors for refugee entrepreneurship such as refugee incubators, ease of doing business, online support, or 'be your own boss' programmes (Saeid et al. 2013). Thirdly, an opportunity exists to address the plight of refugee women (Boyd 1999), with their comparatively low levels of business start-ups, and why women who were previously self-employed do not start ventures in their host country. Fourthly, when government policy has safety structures in place, such as supportive social policies found in developed countries such as New Zealand, to what extent is the concept of necessity-driven entrepreneurship still valid? Finally, the concept of a hybrid identity requires greater consideration, as the talent pool of refugees can diversify the entrepreneurship landscape within the host country and it can also enhance the country's competitiveness in the global markets. This chapter demonstrates the gaps in understanding in the academic literature regarding refugee entrepreneurs and the opportunities that exist for detailed studies in this topic.

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