Diamonds are made under pressure

Unravelling the phenomenon of transnational entrepreneurs with a refugee background through the lens of effectuation
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Abstract

Sweden is today faced with one of the most extensive refugee waves in the history of the nation. The refugees’ attain valuable competences which are not being exploited, and alienation is becoming a serious societal problem. Researchers have stressed the importance of entrepreneurship and its positive effects on national socio-economic growth. The experience of immigrating has shown to trigger entrepreneurial activities, and it has become an apparent strategy of immigrant entrepreneurs’ to include home country resources and networks in their businesses in order to stay competitive. This has come to be known as transnational entrepreneurship, and the concept has proven to be even more favorable due to its positive socio-economic effects on dual contexts. This thesis considers the idea of refugees engaging in transnational entrepreneurship as a strategy to diminish the ongoing crisis. To enable this, a qualitative study was conducted to analyze the process of already established entrepreneurs with a refugee background. By doing so, practical and theoretical implications were able to be identified, subsequently contributing today’s refugees with valuable information on how to successfully engage in transnational entrepreneurship. By applying the theory of Effectuation on four individual cases, the authors were able to identify key aspects, allowing them to draw generalizations and final conclusions.

The outcome of this study suggests a distance to the homogeneous perspective given transnational entrepreneurs, and instead an added dimension considering the immigrants’ motives to migration. The findings in this thesis present how the resources and networks held by the transnational entrepreneurs relocate as a consequence of the additional aspect of the immigrants’ background as refugees. Furthermore, the findings of this thesis have added the dimension of multiple contexts to the theory of Effectuation and thereby enabled the theory to be applicable on an international business level.

Keywords: Transnational Entrepreneurship; International Business; Refugees; Entrepreneurial process; Effectuation.
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Kalmar, 25th May 2016

Rebecca Immonen

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1 Introduction

This chapter will serve as a foundation for the chosen area of research. It will provide a background to the topic followed by a problem discussion that will argue for the relevance of the topic as well as present practical and theoretical problems of the phenomenon. Furthermore, this chapter will present the research questions and purpose of the thesis, as well as acknowledge the delimitations and present the outline of the study.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The refugee crisis

Europe was in 2015 characterized with the most extensive refugee streams since the Second World War (Naimo 2016) as over a million refugees crossed the European borders (BBC 2016). These refugees primarily origin from Syria, Afghanistan and, Iraq (Naimo 2016), countries confronted by war, conflicts and persecution (UNHCR 2016). A refugee is defined “as someone who fled his or her home and country owing to “a well-founded fear” of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR 2010). In the first two quarters of 2015 the total amount of refugees in Europe increased by 12.1 % (UNHCR 2015), and during the same period in 2016 the rate was three times as high (Borger 2016).

The refugee streams have evoked world attention which extensively have resulted in a diverse societal response. European countries as well as European citizens are continually arguing whether the refugee stream should be considered as a threat or an opportunity (Naimo 2016). The Swedish response to the refugee stream has dynamically followed the trends in Europe. Politicians and experts all agree that something needs to change, but there is no clear answer to what exactly that change needs to involve (Dagens Industri 2015; Regeringen 2016). Valuable competences are ignored and problems concerning alienation are becoming increasingly apparent in the society. One suggestion to the diminishing of these problems has been the act of entrepreneurship, and specifically the importance of supporting, and encouraging refugees to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Aaden et al. 2015; IFS 2015; Romson et al. 2015).
Today, Sweden has a population of approximately 9.5 million, whereas about 15% are immigrants (SCB 2016). The immigrants settled in Sweden have different backgrounds as well as diverse motives to migration. There are those who have migrated to Sweden by own choice, due to education or employment opportunities, and those who have been forced to migration due to conflicts in their home country, the later referred to as refugees (Migrationsverket 2013). The immigrants settled in Sweden have regardless of their motives to migration shown a tendency to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Every fourth company started in Sweden today is founded by an immigrant. Statistics also show that immigrants in the age of 18-24 have twice as much propensity to start their own businesses compared to Swedish natives in the same age group (IFS 2015).

1.1.2 Emergence of Transnational Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a frequently discussed topic and has over the last couple of decades become a well-studied phenomenon (Dino 2015; Yeung 2002). Scholars have argued that entrepreneurship enhances capabilities for sustainable business growth, is vital for the profitability of companies, and that the practice has major positive impacts on the wealth of nations (Bensova 2015; Crossan & Apaydin 2010; O’Connor 2013). The characteristics of the entrepreneurial individual are important to the understanding of entrepreneurship. The most common characteristics used to describe an entrepreneur are high risk tolerance, desire to perform, independency, intelligence, creativity, innovative thinking, tolerance to uncertainty and a desire to make money (Nielsen et al. 2012).

Another aspect significant for the understanding of entrepreneurship is the entrepreneurial process (Gartner 1989; Johannisson & Landström 1999; Stevenson & Gumpert 1985). Recent studies in the process among entrepreneurs have primarily focused on the way opportunities are found or created (Drori et al. 2009), cultural effects on the entrepreneur (Baltar & Brunet Icart 2013) as well as the importance of networks (Lagrosen & Lind 2014). One of the most acknowledged contributors to the studies of the entrepreneurial process is Sarasvathy (2008) with her theory of Effectuation. The theory of Effectuation proposes a continuous cycle that evolves around the improvisational act of the entrepreneur. The process begins with assessing
the personal means of the entrepreneur, a calculation of one’s affordable loss, and a preliminary set of goals. This is followed by interactions, commitments and evaluation of available resources with a focus on networks. These commitments will continuously result in new individual means, affect future goals, and the establishment of new products, markets, and firms (Effectuation 2011; Sarasvathy 2008).

Globalization has affected the activities of entrepreneurs and consequently also the studies regarding the field. Cox (1994) describes globalization as "the characteristics of the globalization trend include the internationalizing of production, the new international division of labor, new migratory movements from south to north, the new competitive environment that accelerates these processes, and the internationalizing of the state[...] making states into agencies of the globalizing world".

The globalization and extensive width of the field entrepreneurship have generated into the emergence of new sub-sections emphasizing the characteristics of the entrepreneur, and how the entrepreneur engages in the process (Bruyat & Julien 2001; Davidsson et al. 2001). Scholars have addressed different types of entrepreneurship and offered various definitions based on how the entrepreneurial activities are expressed. One of the most recent approaches to this study is the focus on the correlation between immigrants and entrepreneurship (Chen & Tan 2008; Dana 2011; Hormiga & Bolivar-Cruz 2014)

Immigrant entrepreneurs are members of the first generation of immigrants (foreign-born) who have started their business in the host country (Brzozowski et al. 2014). Aldrich & Waldinger (1990) argue that immigrants are more likely than natives to engage in entrepreneurship as immigration activities could be linked to entrepreneurial characteristics. It is also argued that immigrants engage in entrepreneurship as a solution to the difficulties they often face when applying for existing vacancies (Elias 2014). Immigrant entrepreneurship is an important socio-economic phenomenon and has attracted the interest from scholars within various disciplines (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp 2013). The wide range of research have resulted in a comprehensive understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship as well as brought
attention to the evolving sub-section; transnational entrepreneurship (Drori et al. 2010).

Transnational entrepreneurship is a phenomenon which thrives from globalization (Drori et al. 2010; Gangadhar & Manohar 2015). Transnational entrepreneurship generates both host and home country economic gain, trade expansion possibilities, job opportunities, and cross-border networks (Baltar & Brunet Icart 2013). It is argued that transnational entrepreneurship is a useful tool among immigrants to utilize and exploit their background for host country integration purposes (Honig et al. 2010; Portes et al. 2002). Transnational entrepreneurs have, by virtue of their unique geographical affiliations, a unique position allowing them to exploit opportunities either unobserved, or unavailable, to other entrepreneurs located in a single geographical location (Drori et al. 2009). Transnational entrepreneurship is defined differently, but in this thesis it will be defined as “individuals who migrate from one country to another, concurrently maintaining business-related linkages with their countries of origin and with their adopted countries and communities” (Drori et al. 2009:1001). Baltar & Brunet Icart (2013) argue that the immigrant’s motives to migration affect future tendencies to engage in entrepreneurial activities, and that future research should distinguish and enlighten the different groups of immigrants.

The growing importance of entrepreneurship, the positive effects of transnational entrepreneurship, and the increasing amount of refugees crossing the Swedish borders have initiated the interest in further research regarding transnational entrepreneurship activities. Furthermore, these factors have raised enthusiasm about the possible benefits that emerge from these activities, as well as the possible theoretical and practical contributions of this thesis. This will be further elaborated in the following section.

1.2 Problem discussion

1.2.1 Practical problem

Sweden has during the last decades been characterized with a massive growth both in entrepreneurship and migration (Audretsch 2008; Goldin et al. 2011). In spite of this there is limited research assessing the possible correlation of these two
phenomenons. The lack of research is surprising consider the well-known fact that immigrants shows a higher tendency than natives to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, immigrants’ also possess a high risk tolerance, which is considered a significant characteristic among entrepreneurs in general (Aldrich & Waldinger 1990; Dana 2011).

Due to the prominent refugee streams in Sweden today, the country faces a historical opportunity for societal and economic growth. Immigrants engaging in entrepreneurship generate more jobs, tax revenues and integration opportunities (Kloosterman & Rath 2003). As entrepreneurship provides the host-country with positive outcomes immigrant entrepreneurship should be of central policy interest and a frequent hot point in the popular press (Pekkala Kerr & Kerr 2015). The segment of immigrant entrepreneurship referred to as transnational entrepreneurship generates extended positive outcomes to those identified in immigrant entrepreneurship as this concept operates on dual locations (Baltar & Brunet Icart 2013; Drori et al. 2010). Due to transnational entrepreneurship generating both host and home country growing potentials, combined with the current refugee streams, extended research should focus on how to utilize this phenomenon in the most appropriate way (Gangadhar & Manohar 2015). Theories in transnational entrepreneurship presents limited research regarding the individual’s motives to migration, nor how it reflects on the entrepreneurial process of transnational entrepreneurs (Baltar & Brunet Icart 2013). Transnational entrepreneurs who migrate to Sweden due to war, conflict and persecution have yet to be considered among researchers. The vast amount of refugees currently crossing the Swedish borders stresses the importance of further research in this topic.

The positive effects that transnational entrepreneurship has on host and home country are overlooked in practice (Brzozowski et al. 2014; Terjesen & Elam 2009). Research is needed to enlighten this phenomenon, and to yield extensive information on how to utilize transnational entrepreneurship. By assessing the way transnational entrepreneurs with a background as refugee engage in entrepreneurial activities, what obstacles they faced and which strategies were most successful the aim is to contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon. The practical outcome of this thesis could therefore contribute to the overall understanding of transnational
entrepreneurs with a background as refugee. This ought to be of great interest to policy makers, refugees aspiring to begin their entrepreneurial journey, and scholars interested in the field transnational entrepreneurship.

1.2.2 Theoretical problem

Previous research has stressed the importance of entrepreneurship and the positive outcomes it has on societies as well as on the economic development (Ekmekçioglu 2012; Nielsen et al. 2012). Even though the many proven positive outcomes of entrepreneurship, Yeung (2002) argues that some areas within the field still remain largely unstudied. Thomas & Mueller (2000) suggested that the study of entrepreneurship should be expanded to international markets as a response to the globalization. Baker et al. (2005) suggest to further investigate the conditions and characteristics that encourage entrepreneurial activity in various countries and regions.

Specific interest has been given to immigrants’ engagement in entrepreneurship. Aldrich & Waldinger (1990) argue that immigrants possess a higher tendency to engage in entrepreneurship than natives, Kloosterman & Rath (2003) suggest immigrant entrepreneurship as an option to avoid unemployment, while Portes et al. (2002) argue for entrepreneurship as a solution for immigrants to become more integrated in the society.

Further research has focused on immigrant entrepreneurs with business related links to the home country, generally defined as transnational entrepreneurship. Whereas traditional immigrant entrepreneurship theory focuses on the causes, strategies and economic impact on the host country, the study of transnational entrepreneurship facilitates the understanding of these aspects in the home country as well (Baltar & Brunet Icart 2013). Despite the newness of this type of entrepreneurship it has attracted scholars from multiple disciplines, but especially the one of social science. The phenomenon has been studied through the perspective of sociology, anthropology, economics, economic geography, host country adaption and regional planning (Drori et al. 2010). However, one perspective that has remained largely unstudied is one’s motives to migration and how migration by cause of conflicts might affect the immigrant’s engagement in entrepreneurship.
Research has stressed immigrants’ dependency on network, and the importance of networks in the entrepreneurial process (Chen & Tan 2009; Gangadhar & Manohar 2015; Munkejord 2015). Yet, again no consideration has been given to how this might differ for people with a refugee background. The effects of globalization and technology in general and the growing wave of people migrating in particular contribute to the need for a more distinctive focus of research (Bruyat & Julien 2001; Davidsson et al. 2001). The present stream of refugees crossing the Swedish borders, and the way these people interact with their new society through entrepreneurship is an area of research that arguably needs more research.

A scientific research gap has thereby been identified within the field of transnational entrepreneurship. By examining how transnational entrepreneurs with a refugee background engage in entrepreneurship, and by conceptualizing this into a framework, the aspiration is to provide a theoretical contribution to the field of transnational entrepreneurship. Subsequently, a start in the elimination of this research gap.

1.3 Problem definition

Previous research has argued for the high engagement in entrepreneurship among immigrants as well as the benefits evolving from transnational entrepreneurship. Due to the relevance and the socio-economic benefits arising from refugees engaging in transnational entrepreneurship it is interesting to find that not much research have yet been conducted on the topic. The need for a greater understanding on how the entrepreneurial process is exploited among refugees engaged in transnational entrepreneurship is important for those situated in a similar context, aspiring to establish themselves as transnational entrepreneurs. This paper seeks to serve as a tool or guideline to simplify the process of future transnational entrepreneurs with a refugee background. To enable this study one main research question has been conducted, supported by two sub-questions.
Research question
After assessing the problem and stressing the accuracy of the topic a main research question has been established.

Sub-question A
The first sub-question serves as starting point towards answering the main question. It aims to research why refugees chose to engage in transnational entrepreneurship and the motives behind it.

Sub-question B
The second sub-question serves as a complement to support the findings of the first sub-question. It focuses on how the transnational aspects affect the different stages of the refugees’ entrepreneurial process.

1.4 Purpose
The purpose of this thesis is to explore the phenomenon of transnational entrepreneurs with a background as refugees by applying the theory of Effectuation to it. This paper also aims to serve as a foundation for future studies aspiring to examine the development of transnational entrepreneurs with a refugee background. Furthermore, it intends to provide a more comprehensive and holistic view on the entrepreneurial process by adding a transnational perspective as well as a new dimension (refugees) to the already established model.

1.5 Delimitations
This study does not aim to investigate the phenomenon of transnational entrepreneurship among entrepreneurs with a background as refugees through a societal perspective, but through the standpoint of international business. The empirical data will only derive from entrepreneurs whom migrated to Sweden due to political instability, war, conflicts, or persecution and whom have already established a successful transnational business. The focus will not be on the specific businesses, but instead on the process of the establishment and maintenance of the business.
1. Introduction

• This chapter will serve as a foundation for the chosen area of research. It will provide a background to the topic followed by a problem discussion that will argue for the relevance of the topic as well as present practical and theoretical problems of the concept. Furthermore, this chapter will present the research questions and purpose of the thesis, as well as acknowledge the delimitations and present the outline of the study.

1.6 Outline

Introduction

• This chapter will present the empirical data that has been assembled through in-depth interviews with persons matching the criteria presented in the purposive sampling. A comparative outline of the interviewees' shared knowledge and views on the main areas included in the conceptual framework will be presented. Furthermore, to allow a more thorough understanding of the empirical findings, and to avoid information loss, the structure of this chapter will present each case separately.

Literature Review

• This chapter will provide a theoretical framework which will serve as the foundation for this thesis. The chapter begins by introducing the concept of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, theories concerning immigrant entrepreneurship will be presented to provide the reader with essential information necessary for a better understanding of the sub-concept; transnational entrepreneurship. Thereafter, theories of network, resources, and the entrepreneurial process will be outlined. The aim of this chapter is to present a framework that will conceptualize the theories of this paper and how they relate to each other.

Methodology

• This chapter will provide a comprehensive understanding of the methodology used to conduct this thesis. First, a description and choice of approach, method, and design for data sampling will be presented. This will be followed by an introduction of the cases and the techniques used for collecting the data. This chapter will be concluded with an overall discussion concerning validity, reliability, method criticism, and ethical considerations.

Empirical Findings

• This chapter will present the empirical data that has been assembled through in-depth interviews with persons matching the criteria presented in the purposive sampling. A comparative outline of the interviewees' shared knowledge and views on the main areas included in the conceptual framework will be presented. Furthermore, to allow a more thorough understanding of the empirical findings, and to avoid information loss, the structure of this chapter will present each case separately.

Analysis

• This chapter will assemble the different sections of this thesis by connecting the empirical data to the theoretical framework in a comprehensive analysis. The similarities as well as the differences among the four individual cases will be discussed through the lens of Effectuation, and thereafter culminate into a platform enabling the forthcoming chapter to reach conclusions and provide answers to the research questions of this thesis.

Conclusion

• This chapter will summarize the practical and theoretical implications discussed throughout the thesis. It will present answers to the research question and sub-questions, as well as offer practical recommendations and theoretical contributions. Finally, limitations of thesis will be presented, and suggestions to future policy change, as well as further research will be proposed in order to advance the field of transnational entrepreneurship.
2 Literature Review

This chapter will provide a theoretical framework which will serve as the foundation for this thesis. The chapter begins by introducing the concept of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, theories concerning immigrant entrepreneurship will be presented to provide the reader with essential information necessary for a better understanding of the sub-concept; transnational entrepreneurship. Thereafter, theories of network, resources, and the entrepreneurial process will be outlined. The aim of this chapter is to present a framework that will conceptualize the theories of this paper and how they relate to each other.

2.1 Entrepreneurship theory

To enable the establishment of a conceptual framework of something, a researcher must first define it and put boundaries around it (Shane 2003). Throughout the theoretical history of entrepreneurship, scholars from multiple disciplines have struggled with a diverse set of interpretations to conceptualize the abstract idea of entrepreneurship. This paper will along with modern entrepreneurship research define entrepreneurship accordingly to its origins in the four classic founders: Schumpeter (1883-1950), Kirzner (1930 - ), Knight (1885-1972), and Say (1767-1832). These four founders each enlighten a main characteristic associated with entrepreneurship, namely the entrepreneur as an innovator, arbitrageur, decision maker and coordinator (Högland 2015). Furthermore, the act of entrepreneurship involves a process of actions which stimulate market competition, drive innovation, create employment opportunities, increase productivity by introducing technological change and provide a route out of poverty (Carter & Jones-Evans 2006).

Entrepreneurship is not developed in a vacuum, thus is highly affected by the context in which the entrepreneur operates (Shane 2003). Trott et al. (2016) argue that the environment of an entrepreneur can be divided into two layers: transactional environment and contextual environment. The transactional environment is the closest one to the entrepreneur and consists of various actors including suppliers, customers, and government with whom the entrepreneur has frequent and direct interactions. The transactional environment is characterized by interrelated ties meaning that one actor's actions affect the entire transactional environment. The
contextual environment consists of factors rather than actors, and includes developments and changes in society, economy, demography or politics. These factors affect the entrepreneur but are not affected by the entrepreneur. It is argued that changes in the transactional environment are easier to predict than those appearing in the contextual environment. However, the future can never be completely predictable hence, the importance of risk tolerance when engaging in entrepreneurship. Trott et al. (2016) continue to argue that entrepreneurship is all about stepping into the unknown and break away from the familiar. For some people, this is less of a challenge than for others. This can be for a wide variety of reasons, including background and parental influence.

2.2 Immigrant entrepreneurship theory

In entrepreneurship theory, various sub-sections to the field have been established based on the entrepreneur’s characteristics or background (Kloosterman & Rath 2003). An immigrant is defined as “an individual who moves into a country for the purpose of settlement” (IOM 2015). The concept of immigrant entrepreneurship has proven to be of great importance in the host countries (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp 2013) as this concept generates economic growth as well as regional development (Head & Reis 1998; Wong & Primecz 2011).

The causes to the migrant’s entrepreneurial behavior’ has been studied through different approaches. It is argued that the migrant’s networks and resources affect the migrant’s entrepreneurial behavior (Light et al. 1993). Other studies enlighten how various contextual elements encourage immigrants to start their own business. For example, barriers the migrant faces when wanting to enter into paid vacancy or particular business structures in the host country (Solé et al. 2007). However, more recent studies argue that the wide extension of immigrant entrepreneurship thrives from the fact that immigrants’ possess a higher risk tolerance than natives as a result of the risks they had to undertake when moving from their home country (Levie 2007). Risk tolerance is one of the characteristics attributed to entrepreneurs (Ekelund et al. 2005; McCarthy 2000) and it is argued that people who tend to take risks or holds a lower risk perception shows a significantly higher probability of becoming entrepreneurs (Ahn 2010; Caliendo et al. 2009; Cramer et al. 2002; Hormiga & Bolívar-Cruz 2014; Masclet et al. 2009; Van Praag & Cramer 2001).
As presented in the beginning of this section, the field of entrepreneurship is dividable into different categories based on the entrepreneur’s characteristics or background. These categories can extensively be separated into even more specific sub-sections based on how the entrepreneur engages in activities. One segment to entrepreneurship is transnational entrepreneurship. This sub-section thrives from immigrant entrepreneurship as it holds similar characteristics of the entrepreneur, but adds an extra dimension by including two countries.

2.3 Transnational entrepreneurship theory

Transnational entrepreneurship is a relatively new approach to the field of entrepreneurship and offers a fertile ground to advance existing entrepreneurial research (Chen & Tan 2009). The growing impact of transnational entrepreneurship thrives from the increased globalization, international migration and the complex nature of international business activities (Drori et al. 2010). Consequently, this phenomenon has become more frequently reappearing in societies (Levie & Smallbone 2009). Traditional entrepreneurship is known to generate economic development in societies (Nielsen et al. 2012), and as transnational entrepreneurship involves both host and home country the economic development comes to generate a positive effect on both locations. Other benefits gained through this phenomenon are trade expansion possibilities between host and home country as well as the establishment of cross-border networks (Baltar & Brunet Icart 2013).

In the previous section regarding immigrant entrepreneurship, it is proven that immigrants have shown significant tendencies to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This phenomenon has provoked a growing interest among scholars to further research immigrants’ participation in border-crossing entrepreneurial activities, which has resulted in the establishment of transnational entrepreneurship (Drori et al. 2010). Scholars have suggested different definitions of this phenomenon. Yeung (2002) defines transnational entrepreneurship as the exceptional qualities required in the processes of creating and sustaining particular business ventures across national boundaries by social actors. Light (2007) describes transnational entrepreneurship as the situation in which an individual emigrates but still maintains economic linkages with his home country. Drori et al (2009) define the phenomenon as individuals who
migrate from one country to another, concurrently maintaining business-related linkages with their countries of origin and with their adopted countries and communities. In spite of the differences among the definitions there is one shared view concerning the characteristics of transnational entrepreneurship, this is the focus on cross-border entrepreneurial activities.

Transnational entrepreneurs simultaneously engage in two socially embedded environments, allowing them to maintain critical global relations that enhance their ability to creatively, dynamically and, logistically maximize their resource base (Drori et al. 2009; Flores et al. 2010). The dual location of operation provides the transnational entrepreneur with access to a unique flow of information. Information is regarded a necessity to the success of any organization, the transnational entrepreneur holds a competitive position as they identify and exploit opportunities either unobserved or unavailable to other entrepreneurs operating in a single geographic location (Chen & Tan 2009; Drori et al. 2009; Flores et al. 2010). Information is also provided through cross-border networks which facilitate the transnational entrepreneur with knowledge spill over, technology transfer, and human capital (Saxenian 2006). It is argued that entrepreneurs engaging in traditional entrepreneurship rely on social networks to cope with uncertainty, acquire legitimacy, and offset the absence of formal institutional support (Chen 2009). Subsequently, transnational entrepreneurs have to pay additional attention to the establishment of networks because they are operating on two different markets which add complexity to the environment of the entrepreneurs (Drori et al 2009). Therefore, networks have been considered crucial when engaging in transnational entrepreneurship (Chen & Tan 2009).

2.4 Network theory

Entrepreneurship theory has recently changed from viewing entrepreneurs as autonomous and rational decision makers toward considering entrepreneurs as embedded in social networks (Hoang & Antoncic 2003; O’Donnell et al. 2001). Networks have been described as the relationship between an entrepreneur and the many links with other individuals and organizations in the wider environment (Bagwell 2008). The term “network” has also been used to describe the structure of ties among the actors in a social system (Nohria & Eccles 1992). Networks consists
of strong and weak ties were strong ties provides the entrepreneur with resources such as financial, practical and emotional support from family member. Weak ties on the other hand, consider those relations the entrepreneur establishes with people in various professional contexts, providing the entrepreneur with business-related information, knowledge and ideas (Munkejord 2015). These ties allows entrepreneurs to access instrumental resources such as information, capital, market, technology, and expressive resources such as emotional support which they would not have obtained otherwise (Davidson & Honig 2003). These ties also enable the entrepreneur to understand and enact their context (Jack et al. 2008) and can be established on different geographical levels; local and global. However, recent studies have addressed a new level of network ties combining both local and global ties simultaneously. This type of network is referred to as glocal network ties and it is strongly correlated to transnational entrepreneurship (Chen & Tan 2008).

2.4.1 Transnational networks

Networks, globalization, and entrepreneurship are all interrelated. The growing impacts of globalization have enabled networks to expand beyond national borders and allowed social relations to be more geographically dispersed (Munkejord 2015). This kind of networking has been described as transnational network, and refers to the different types of sustained relations and activities established across national borders. As transnational entrepreneurs operate on dual markets they possess a unique transnational social network (Chen & Tan 2008). This enlarged type of social networking is commonly considered a competitive advantage for transnational entrepreneurs (Chen & Tan 2008; Jones et al. 2010).

Transnational entrepreneurs are due to their cross-border activities dependent on glocalized networks. Glocalized networks enable entrepreneurs to establish and exploit transnationally competitive ideas through the integration of resources in dual locations in new ways and is described as border-crossing networks with both local and global connections (Hampton 2001; Wellman 2002). This network concept provides the transnational entrepreneur with a comprehensive set of ties as it combines intensive local embeddedness with far flung global connections simultaneously (Chen & Tan 2008). Glocalized networks facilitate the entrepreneur in various ways throughout the entrepreneurial process. It serves as a useful tool
enabling the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities as those often consists of socially constructed imaginations. A diverse set of ties with multiple groups nurtures this creative behavior through inputs, fine-grained diverse information, and knowledge. Subsequently, as the entrepreneurial process continues, glocalized networks provide the entrepreneur with useful feedback to improve the entrepreneurial idea (Chen & Tan 2008).

2.5 Resource theory
The resource based view (RBV) is one of the most influential perspectives to organizational science (Kellerman et al. 2016) and it can be traced all the way back to Penrose (1959). She defined resources as “physical things a firm buys, leases or produces for its own use, and the people hired on terms that make them effectively part of the firm” (Penrose 1959). Over the last half a century additional research has evolved around the theory of RBV, whereas a noteworthy amount of focus has been acknowledging Barney’s (1991) research regarding strategic resources. Strategic resources are idiosyncratic; valuable, rare and difficult to substitute (Barney 2001; Höglund 2015). When a firm holds strategic resources it allows the firm to stay ahead of its competitors (Barney 2001; Crook et al. 2008). The RBV theory, argues that resources are essential for business success (Barney 1991). Runyan et al. (2006), Barney (1991) and Penrose (1959) divide resources into two categories; intangible and tangible. Intangible resources are argued to be crucial for the competitive advantage of businesses, and they are characterized as; rare, unique, and valuable. Tangible resources are also important in order to conduct a business. However, they are easy to replicate and are available for everyone as they do not carry the characteristics given strategic resources (Tehseen & Sajilan 2016).

In recent years scholars with a focus on entrepreneurship increasingly leveraged the RBV’s tenets into the field of their interest, addressing the importance of intangible resources in the perspective of the entrepreneur (Kellerman et al. 2016). These kinds of resources are necessary throughout the entrepreneurial process and can furthermore be divided into three categories: Financial resources, Human resources, and Social resources (Ireland et al. 2003; Nielsen et al. 2012).
Financial resources are resources regarded as capital supplied by the entrepreneur or external actors. There are two main types of financial resources: debt and equity. Examples of debt capital are mortgages, bank loans, and supplier credits, hence capital not provided by the entrepreneur. Equity capital is on the other hand those financial resources provided by the entrepreneur herself (Nielsen et al. 2012). In order to conduct an own business the entrepreneur needs to secure sufficient financial resources to enable efficient business operations, this is especially essential in the start-up phase of a business (Vuong et al. 2016).

Human resources emphasize intangible resources inherent with people such as knowledge and experience. Examples of human resources are: education, training, formal/informal experience, and engagement (Nielsen et al. 2012). These resources affect how the entrepreneurial process is expressed (Vuong et al. 2016). In comparison to the financial resources which decrease while utilized this type of resources often increases incrementally (Nielsen et al. 2012).

Social resources are considered as the resources provided by the entrepreneurs personal contacts (Nielsen et al. 2012). Family, relatives and friends and other social network peers are an integral part of the entrepreneurial process (Chang et al. 2009) as social relationships offers additional legitimacy to new venture (Vuong et al. 2016) Social resources, similar to human resources generates additional resources when they are maintained. However, social resources are not limited to only generate social resources as they also generate other categories of intangible resources (Nielsen et al. 2012).

2.6 Entrepreneurial Process
Numerous of scholars have tried to describe the way in which individuals engage in entrepreneurship. Shane & Venkataraman (2000) suggested the entrepreneurial process as the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities. This suggestion is founded on previous research made by Schumpeter (1934), Hayek (1945) and Kirzner (2000). Shane & Venkataraman (2000) ´s definition have received criticism which mainly focuses on how they portray opportunities as objective phenomenon, existing whether or not anyone discovers them. Another discussion regarding their theory is the limited inconsideration of social relationships
and the difference in entrepreneurs’ motivation and how these affect the entrepreneurial process (Baker et al. 2005). Sarasvathy (2008) is another researcher attempting to define the entrepreneurial process. She presented a new approach to the process emphasizing the importance of understanding improvisation and the individuality of each entrepreneur. This theory is referred to as Effectuation.

2.6.1 Effectuation

Sarasvathy (2008) argues that what makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial is their ability of thinking effectually which indicates that they believe in a yet-to-be-made future that can substantially be shaped by human action. It also includes the entrepreneur’s realization of the extent that this human action can control the future, and therefore not waste energy trying to predict it. This indicates that the future is shaped by humans and there is not much use trying to predict it, it is much more useful to understand and work with the people who are engaged in the decisions and actions that bring it into existence.

As entrepreneurs seldom face a predictable environment with complete information on the future the planning is given an improvisational approach (Nielsen et al. 2012). Sarasvathy (2008) refers to this type of planning as “Effectuation” and it is defined as the logic behind the improvisation perspective's approach to organizing. The Effectuation process offers an effectual way of thinking in an unpredictable environment. An entrepreneur operating within a context characterized by uncertainty and with a limited access to resources is given a strategic way of thinking and acting to successfully create a new market artefact (Sarasvathy 2001). Improvisation consists primarily of an unplanned process, in spite of this, there are some identified reappearing features in this cycle which is presented in Figure 1.
Figure 1: The Effectuation process (Sarasvathy & Dew 2005)

The Effectuation cycle starts with the individual and three means: Who they are; What they know; and Whom they know. By assessing these means the entrepreneur starts develop desirable goals within one's affordable loss. Affordable loss refers to the calculated risk an entrepreneur is willing to take at each step of the process. The cycle is characterized by execution; goals are made and unmade, revised and dynamically affected by the entrepreneur’s network. Sarasvathy (2008) stresses the importance of network and interactions. It is argued that the most successful entrepreneurs are involved in comprehensive networks, which enables them to access more resources which often has a non-linear impact on the eventual outcome. In fact, Sarasvathy (2008) argues that a degree of calculated “over-trust” and “intelligent altruism” in one’s network is a rational strategy for uncovering large multiplayer opportunities that would otherwise be hidden or impossible to achieve. Some of the people that the entrepreneur interacts with contribute with valuable commitments to the entrepreneurial process. Each commitment adds information back to the cycle which generates new means and new goals to the entrepreneurial process.

This theory argues that entrepreneurship, and the ability to think effectually is something that cannot just be taught, but when used in the right circumstances, it can even be contagious. The theory also stresses that previous entrepreneurial failure increases the odds for future individual success. Failure teaches the entrepreneur about affordable risk, suggests boundaries for over-trust behaviors, and offers hints
about how to maximize opportunity. Despite the positive outcomes resulting from failure one should never stigmatize it, but rather understand failure as a part of the effectual entrepreneurial process (Daniel et al. 2015).

The Effectuation cycle is also described through the perspective of the “five principle” (Sarasvathy 2008).

*The bird-in-hand principle (Start with your means)*
The first principle concerns the three means, who the entrepreneur is, what the entrepreneur knows and whom the entrepreneur knows. Hence, the first principle emphasizes the creation of something new through the exploitation of existing means rather than discovering new ways to achieve given goals.

*The affordable-loss principle (Focus on the downside risk)*
This second principle concerns the entrepreneur’s predicted commitment to what one is willing to lose. This principle also suggests that the entrepreneur find creative ways to exploit an idea within the means one can assemble. By understanding what the entrepreneur is willing to lose at each step of the cycle the overall risk associated with the engagement in entrepreneurship is reduced.

*The crazy-quilt principle (Form partnerships)*
This third principle stresses the importance of negotiating with any and all stakeholders who are willing to make actual commitments to the project, without worrying about opportunity costs, or carrying out elaborate competitive analyses. Since the amount of investments any given entrepreneur can afford to lose is likely to be rather small, it is considered to be more effectual to create partnership and work with self-selected stakeholders instead of spending time and resources on finding stakeholders based upon strategic analyses and future market predictions. By establishing pre-commitments with key partners early on in the cycle, the entrepreneur reduces uncertainty and co-creates the new market with its committed partners.
The lemonade principle (Leverage contingencies)
This fourth principle stresses the entrepreneur’s ability to turn threats into opportunities. This is achieved through the entrepreneur acknowledging and appropriating contingency by leveraging unexpected events rather than trying to avoid them, overcome them, or adapt to them. Effectual entrepreneurs embrace the surprise factor, and see the potential in these situations to create new markets. The lemonade principle is considered the core of entrepreneurial Effectuation – where others see distraction the entrepreneur see the ability to turn the unexpected into the valuable and the profitable.

The pilot-in-the-plane principle (Control vs. Predict)
This last principle urges the importance of entrepreneurs focusing on activities within their control, seeing the personal resources as the prime driver of opportunity recognition. This principle argues for the entrepreneur’s belief that the future is not found nor predicted, but rather created. Effectual entrepreneurs see themselves as the pilot in the plane, and believe their actions will result in the desired outcomes.

These five principles point to the logic of action - Effectuation. Effectual models begin with given means and seek to create new ends using non-predictive strategies. Extended research to the Effectuation process has suggested a more comprehensive framework, taking into consideration the importance of context in which the process occurs.

2.7 Conceptual framework
The literature review has shown that immigrants have a higher tendency to engage in entrepreneurship than non-immigrants. This is due to their previous experience of risk-taking as well as a consequence of the barriers immigrants’ face when applying for jobs in the host country. The context within which entrepreneurship develops makes a difference because the context affects the type of network and resources that the entrepreneur has access to during the process. Different context also play a part in affecting the entrepreneurs’ options, and opportunities. In contrast to immigrant entrepreneurs who only exploit opportunities in the host country context, transnational entrepreneurs utilize their unique position of having access to dual networks, unique flows of information, and resources to exploit and create
opportunities in dual contexts. The conceptual framework further demonstrates how the dual context affects each step of the entrepreneurial process among transnational entrepreneurs.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework
3 Methodology

This chapter will provide a comprehensive understanding of the methodology used to conduct this thesis. First, a description and choice of approach, method, and design for data sampling will be presented. This will be followed by an introduction of the cases and the techniques used for collecting the data. This chapter will be concluded with an overall discussion concerning validity, reliability, method criticism, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Abductive approach

Methodology is the linkage between the theoretical and empirical data and it aims to overcome the gap between theoretical statements, empirical observations, and experiences (Edling & Hedström 2003). There are two approaches commonly used when conducting a thesis, these are referred to as induction and deduction. The inductive approach derives from reality where the researcher utilizes observations and experiences to identify patterns and form explanations that will conclude in theory improvements (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). The inductive approach was not considered sufficient in this study due to the authors need for a theoretical base to more adequately research, and create an understanding of the studied phenomenon. A deductive approach emphasizes research which must not reflect on the true reality but instead derive from logical reasoning. The researcher forms testable hypothesis based on reasoning’s that can be either accepted or rejected depending on the correlation between the theory and the result (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). A solely deductive approach was not applicable in this study because of the limited existing research of the field. The newness of the phenomenon required a more experimental approach, allowing the authors to alternate between their empirical findings and theoretical framework, as well as the possibility to add additional theories when needed.

This type of alternation between induction and deduction is termed abduction and allows the researcher to utilize both previously mentioned approaches without fully embracing either one of them (Patton 2002). However, there is always an initiating approach to the abduction way, depending on which main force (theoretical or empirical) is driving the thesis forward. Similar to the inductive approach, abduction
is based on empirical findings, but contrary also include deductive notions of theoretical concepts (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2008). The alternation between theoretical- and empirical data, and the flexibility of the approach, allow the researcher to discover new patterns, interpret various phenomenons, and gain deeper understanding of the chosen research area (Dubois & Gadde 2002). This goes hand in hand with the aspiration of this thesis to provide a deeper understanding of the way immigrants’ with refugee background engage in transnational entrepreneurship, and was therefore considered the most appropriate choice. The abductive approach will have a deductive starting point, as theoretical reasoning will be the main driver in the progression of this study.

The abductive attitude is evident in this thesis through the complementary of theoretical sections. After the collection of primary data, the authors found it necessary in order to allow a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of transnational entrepreneurs with a background as refugees to add supplementary theories concerning resources, context, and network to the literature review.

3.2 Qualitative research

The purpose of research is to discover answers to the established research questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to reveal the truth which is hidden and which has not yet been discovered (Kothari 2004). There are traditionally two acknowledged methods of research: quantitative and qualitative (Kumar 2014). Quantitative research is often used in large-scale studies with a prominent focus on measuring something (Denscombe 2010; Edling & Hedström 2011), and aims to describe the reality through numerical data using statistical methods (Braun & Clark 2013; Golfshani 2003). Qualitative research is on the other hand primarily used for the purpose of understanding the reality or a phenomenon through interviews, observations and social interactions (Holme & Solvang 1997; Kothari 2004).

As this thesis aim to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of transnational entrepreneurs with refugee backgrounds, and how they engage in the entrepreneurial process, a qualitative research approach is regarded the most appropriate. This approach enlightens the individuals’ own stories and interpretations
of a certain phenomenon (Silverman 2005), and enables the authors to identify factors which are not numerical apparent. It allows the authors to study the complex reality of a given situation and thereby provide a deeper and more dynamic data collection, enabling the authors to answer the research questions more efficiently (Denscombe 2010).

There are both prominent advantages as well as disadvantages when conducting a qualitative research instead of a quantitative research (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). The main advantage is the rich and detailed data provided through for example interviews, enabling a superior understanding of a certain phenomenon (Bryman & Bell 2011; Denscombe 2010; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). A qualitative approach is considered most suitable due to the construction of the research questions in this thesis. However, it is important to acknowledge the disadvantages of the chosen method as well. Denscombe (2010) argues that the primary disadvantage of qualitative data is the fact that it is considered to be less representative in comparison to a quantitative research, and that the findings of a qualitative research often derive from a small number of cases; rising questions about the generalizability of this method.

3.3 Research design

Ghauri & Grønhaug (2010) refer to this section of the methodology as the overall design for the data collection and the upcoming analysis of it. Trochim & Donnelly (2007) argue that the research design is the glue that holds the research project together. The design reveals the nature of the research and describes how the thesis is to be completed. Yin (2014) summarizes the most used research strategies into five categories presented as: case study, experiment, the archival analysis, the history, and survey. These different designs are suitable for different studies, depending on the chosen research method and approach (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010).

It is argued that case studies provide a holistic and thorough understanding of a phenomenon (Merriam 2009; Yin 2014). Furthermore, Yin (2014) argues that if the purpose of research is to understand a present, real-life phenomenon, a case study design is the most appropriate. By reason of this thesis’ aspiration to fill both a theoretical and a practical research gap by creating a greater understanding for
transnational entrepreneurs with refugee background, a qualitative, in depth - case study has been considered the most suitable. Qualitative case studies can be further divided into single-case studies and multiple-case studies (Denscombe 2010; Yin 2014).

3.3.1 Case study design

Depending on the researcher’s interest and objective, case studies can be differentiated into two types: instinctive and instrumental (Stake 2005). An instinctive case study presupposes a single particular case to hold a significant interest in itself, and does not aim to generalize or understand a larger phenomenon outside of the single case. An instrumental case study on the other hand aims “mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw generalization” (Stake 2005:437). The division of instinctive and instrumental case studies also implies a differentiation between the choice to include either one single case or multiple cases in the study (Yin 2014). Based on the objective of this thesis a multiple-case study was considered most appropriate. The inclusion of multiple cases allows the authors to compare units within identifiable cases to find similarities and differences, and finally present a generalized result. However, the intention is not to set a universal truth, but rather to generate knowledge and an understanding of the phenomenon.

The number of cases included in this thesis was determined based on the findings collected by each case. The aim was to reach a level of data saturation which would enable a generalization to be drawn from the cases. However, the limited time aspect had to be taken into consideration as well, due to the time required to fully utilize all the information gained from the in-depth case studies.

3.4 Data collection

Data collected for research purposes can be considered as conventional fragments of information found in the researchers’ surroundings (Merriam 2009). There are two different devices to gather empirical data; primary and secondary data collection (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). There are distinct differences between these two approaches, which makes them suitable for different purposes, and requires different kinds of skills and resources (Denscombe 2010; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). The
empirical findings of this thesis will only derive from primary data, due to the non-existing secondary data available on the topic.

3.4.1 Primary data
Primary data refers to data collected by the authors themselves and is therefore given the character of being original (Bryman & Bell 2011; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010; Kothari 2004). When conducting a qualitative case study the techniques suggested for collecting primary data are: interviews, observations and document analysis (Silverman 2013). Merriam (2009) states that data collection through interviews often represent the majority of the data collected in qualitative research, as interviews provides a deeper understanding of behaviors, feelings, and how people interpret their surroundings (Denscombe 2010; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). An interview can be implemented differently, it can be approached through mail, phone, email and face-to-face meetings (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2010). In this thesis the primary data was collected through face-to-face interviews due to the fact that this approach provides enriched, detailed information which suit the purpose of this thesis. Another aspect which makes this approach suitable is that it is tolerant of ambiguity and contradictions due to the presence of interaction between the interviewees and authors, offering alternative explanations when necessary (Denscombe 2010). Due to the fact that the topic of this thesis involves theoretical expressions not commonly used on an every-day basis this approach is suitable as it reduces misunderstandings and misinterpretations. During the interviews’ the authors were asked multiple times by the interviewees to explain the pre-formulated questions. The authors were also able to ask additional questions and request the interviewee to elaborate when necessary. This enabled comprehensive interviews to be conducted as well as the establishment of a solid foundation for the analysis to flourish from.

3.5 Purposive sampling
Before starting the process of collecting data, the researcher needs to select the units that will serve as the sample for the thesis (Merriam 2009; Yin 2011). This can be accomplished differently through the use of various sampling techniques. The two most commonly used techniques are probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is commonly associated with random sampling, allowing the
researcher to draw statistical generalizations and is therefore more commonly used in quantitative studies (Merriam 2009). Subsequently, Merriam (2009) argues that for qualitative studies, which are more interested in studying the behavior of a specific event rather than the frequency of it, non-profitability sampling is more suitable. In opposite to the random sampling exploited in the probability approach, the non-probability approach collects samples based on the researcher’s subjective criteria. Purposive sampling is the most commonly used technique within non-probability sampling and allows the researcher to deliberately select samples that are representative of the phenomenon that the researcher is interested in (Silverman 2010). Furthermore, this type of sampling implies the selection of criteria when searching for the interviewees (Merriam 2009). These criteria should reflect the purpose of the research and direct the researchers to identify appropriate cases for the study.

Based on the information above a non-probability, purposive sampling strategy has been selected. The following criteria have been developed based on the research question of this thesis, and thus limited the sampling to only include interviewees who apply to these criteria:

1. People engaging in entrepreneurial activities that are carried out in a cross-national context.
2. People with a refugee background.

Based on these three criteria’s the authors used the keywords “entrepreneur” and “refugee” to search Swedish-online articles and websites to identify suitable interviewees. Based on the findings, eight interviewees were identifies and contacted for potential interviews. During the data collection, by the fourth interview, the authors identified a degree of empirical saturation. Based on this, as well as the limited time available, four interviews were considered sufficient to represent the empirical finding of this thesis.
3.6 Presentation of cases

This following section will provide a short presentation of the four cases that served as the foundation for the collection of primary data.

**Ali papa livs**

Abdallah Adel Suboh Obeidallah is the owner and founder of the oriental supermarket *Ali papa livs* located in Kalmar. The store was founded in 2015 and offers a wide assortment of Middle Eastern products. Obeidallah’s business is characterized by his Palestinian heritage and love for Middle Eastern food and beverages. Spices, bulgur, sesame oil, and halal meat are only some of the items offered in the store. Because of the nature of the products, Obeidallah has to import most of them from Middle Eastern countries such as Palestine, Egypt and Jordan. However, some of the products are available in nearer countries and therefore imported from Germany and Poland. One year after the establishment of *Ali papa livs*, Obeidallah decided to expand his business by establishing a wholesale.

**Ikramini**

Ikramini Noori is the founder and owner of *Ikramini*, a design company in Växjö. The company was registered 2013 but Noori’s passion for colors and design started more than 40 years ago in her home country Iraq. Ikramini is a fashion designer, scriptwriter, theatrical catwalk producer and much more. Her inspiration as well as parts of the materials derives from her Middle Eastern heritage and life experiences. Noori has come to receive positive attention with *Ikramini* and in 2015 she was awarded the price “Årets utmanare” (Challenger of the year) in the region of Kronoberg.

**Persian carpet store**

Due to the interviewee’s request of being anonymous neither the store name or the founder will be announced. The pseudonym “Arash Jafari” will therefore be incorporated throughout this paper. In 1980 Jafari decided to utilize his Persian heritage in the establishment of a Persian carpet store in a medium sized city in Sweden. Today, the store is still located in the same city and is operated by himself together with his wife. The Persian store carries a wide variety of carpets in different
sizes and designs. In order to ensure the best quality and price, Jafari imports all the items himself directly from his country of origin, Iran.

**Soya AB**
Phu Le established *Soya* in Jönköping 1994, and was the owner and operator of the restaurant up until 2011 when she sold the place. The concept of Soya is to offer a sincere Asian food experience through the usage of genuine imported Asian spices and traditional Asian cooking techniques. Since the establishment of Soya, Le has been awarded several prizes for her entrepreneurial skills. In 2001, she was for instance awarded a medal in entrepreneurship by the Royal Patriotic Companions, and in 2002 she was titled “Årets entreprenör” (Entrepreneur of the year) in the Jönköping region. After the establishment of *Soya*, Le expanded her entrepreneurial engagement by starting four additional restaurants, including a night club, English pub, Japanese restaurant and an Asian fast food restaurant. Today, Le has sold off all her businesses but does not dismiss the idea of starting a new one in the future.

3.7 Structure on interview
When preparing an interview it is essential for the researcher to analyze the research questions to enable an understanding of the information needed, and who is considered qualified to provide that kind of information (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). There are traditionally three ways to conduct an interview: structured, unstructured or semi-structured (Merriam 2009). A structured interview emphasizes a standardization of the interviews with fixed response categories, systematic sampling and/or loading procedures. This approach is suitable in combination with quantitative measures and statistical methods (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). When conducting an unstructured interview the researcher often only has a list or a set of themes about what the interview covers, and no specific questions are prepared in advance (Denscombe 2010). Semi-structured interviews emphasize interviews where the interviewees and questions have been determined in advance, but are not limited to only include the pre-determined questions (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). This approach gives structure to the interview but also provides the interviewees with a chance to speak more freely about the topic. Semi-structured interviews also allow the interviewers to ask follow-up questions, and request more elaborate answers when necessary. By adapting this approach the interviews' become more in depth,
and enables the interviewees’ to express thoughts and comments that might not have been disclosed otherwise (Denscombe 2010).

In depth interviews conducted in a semi-structured approach provides a more accurate and deeper understanding of a phenomenon or a person’s behavior. This is enabled through the utilization of open-end questions forcing the interviewees to answer accordingly to their own mind, and not limiting the answers to set alternatives (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). By assessing the characteristics of the different structures, while also keeping the research question of this thesis in mind, a semi-structured interview has been regarded the most suitable. In order to ensure that the interviewees would be able to provide valuable information a brief insight on the topic was orally provided during the first contact with the interviewees, as well as just before each interview. During the interviews an interview guide (Appendix 1) was used to guide the researchers throughout the interview, ensuring that no parts were left uncovered. The interview guide also served as a tool to keep the discussions from accelerating into conversation not relevant to the result of this thesis.

3.8 Operationalization

An important step of the establishment of an interview guide is to first make sure to conduct a proper literature review (Jacob & Furgerson 2012). By doing so, the authors will know what has already been studied and which areas still needs to be explored. Furthermore, a thorough literature review enables the authors to form the interview questions to match the aspired outcome of the interviews. Potter (2013) argues that the theoretical concepts of the literature review can be described as abstract terms with no linkage to the real world, and that the concepts therefore need to be operationalized before conducting the empirical research. Table 1 presents how the interview questions are linked to the conceptual framework, as well as the rationalization the purpose of each question.
Table 1: Operationalization

3.9 Method of data analysis

Merriam (2009) argues that the objective of the data analysis is to make sense of the collected data. Qualitative data imposes specific analytical challenges in comparison to quantitative data. This is because quantitative data investigates structured data such as numbers, while qualitative data aspires to gain understanding of a phenomenon through a mass of data collected out of a subjective point of view (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). The method of qualitative data analysis emphasizes the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the collected data (Marshall & Rossman 1995). Ghauri & Grønhaug (2010) argue that the key when analyzing qualitative data is to divide the collected data into constituent parts. They continue by addressing that there is no single universal method when analyzing qualitative data. Nonetheless, Miles & Huberman (1994) have distinguished three interactive components which are commonly appearing in qualitative analytical procedures, these are: data reduction, data display and the drawing/verifying of conclusions.
The data reduction is defined as “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written field notes or transcriptions” (Miles & Huberman 1994:10). This reduced and transformed data allows the researchers to start processing the information and draw accurate conclusions (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010).

The semi-structured design of the interviews resulted in interesting but also somewhat scattered outcomes. To simplify the process of analyzing, the findings were divided into categories reflecting the entrepreneurial process (means, goals, interactions, and commitments). The two authors separately listened to the recorded interviews, and summarized their thoughts and interpretations. Thereafter, the authors discussed and compared their findings, and if any disagreements were identified, the authors returned to the recorded interviews to make sure the right conclusions were drawn. By doing this, the researchers were able to analyze and draw final conclusions from the qualitative findings. It could therefore be argued that the analytical data procedures conducted in this thesis follows the qualitative analytical pattern suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994).

3.10 Quality of research

When conducting research it is crucial that the findings are regarded valid and reliable (Bryman & Bell 2011; Denscombe 2010). Yin (2009) argues that the quality of research is verified through different approaches. These approaches can be explained by two concepts: validity and reliability. Together they make up the core of what is accepted as scientific proof.

3.10.1 Validity

Bryman & Bell (2011) argue that the single most important research criteria assessing the quality of a study is validity as it evaluates whether or not the collected findings are relevant for the study. A quantitative research study is often considered to hold a higher validity in comparison to qualitative research (Holme & Solvang 1997). The underlying reason to this is the closeness to the subject that often is established in a qualitative research approach. The closeness to the subject might generate subjective judgments and misinterpretations which consequently reduces the accuracy and appropriateness of the collected data (Denscombe 2010; Yin 2003).
Despite the difficulties, there are accessible strategies in order to increase the reader’s perception of a qualitative study’s validity (Bryman & Bell 2011; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010; Kumar 2014). In this thesis multiple sources of evidence, as well as triangulation has been assessed to increase validity. Triangulation has been exploited by first allowing the authors to separately interpret and analyze the primary data before discussing it collectively. By doing so, the authors allowed for different perspectives and understanding of the content to be expressed and helped limiting the risk of misinterpretations and misunderstandings of the content.

3.10.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the stability of the validity (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010) and evokes the questions whether the findings presented in a study could be considered consistent or not (Bryman & Bell 2011; Denscombe 2010). Reliability is primarily associated with quantitative research methods and has in some cases been regarded as irrelevant for qualitative research (Stenbacka 2001). However, Patton (2002) and Kumar (2014) argue for the opposite. According to Kumar (2014), when conducting a qualitative research approach the reliability can be appraised based on how dependable or confirmable the study is. A study’s reliability is strengthened through detailed descriptions and explanations of the methods assessed throughout the study, enabling the reader to follow the process, how the results were interpreted and how the conclusions were drawn, based on those interpretations (Descombe 2010).

By conducting carefully detailed documentation regarding the methodological procedures executed throughout this study the authors strive to prove the reliability of the thesis. An interview guide was established in English (Appendix 1), but due to the convenience of the interviewees, three out of the four interviews were held in Swedish. This enforced the authors to translate the questions into Swedish and thereafter translate the answers back to English. The process of translating might have evoked subjective interpretations, and displayed traces of the researchers’ own preconceptions, which could arguably have implications for the reliability. To avoid this diminishing of reliability the interviews were recorded and carefully analyzed to avoid misinterpretations or information loss. The attachment of the interview guide
enables future researches to perform the same research again, which speak for the reliability of this thesis.

3.11 Ethical considerations

When conducting a qualitative study numerous ethical considerations may occur during the process of collecting primary data, as well as during the analyzing phase of the findings (Merriam 2009). Ethics are defined as moral principles and values affecting how the research is conducted. A researcher has moral responsibility to explain, understand and find answers to the established research questions as transparent, accurate, and honest as possible. This is achieved by carefully addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, and by providing a detailed methodology chapter (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010).

Moral dilemmas can especially be apparent when conducting research addressing sensitive topics, and the researcher is responsible for ensuring that the study does not cause any embarrassment or other discomfort to the interviewees (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010). Denscombe (2010) lists four standard measures which a researcher is expected to take into consideration in order to ensure the ethical standard of a thesis. These are:

(1) “Participants will remain anonymous”
(2) “Data will be treated as confidential”
(3) “Participants understand the nature of the research and their involvement”
(4) “Participants voluntarily consent to being involved”

When conducting this study, full transparency has been aspired, this is expressed through the thorough presentation of selected methodology. The interviewees have customarily been offered full anonymity and if they wish to be anonymous, the collected data cannot be traced back to them. Throughout the process of collecting primary data, considerations have consistently been given to the fact that the interviewees are previous refugees, which can provoke sensitive memories from their past. Before the interviews, the interviewees were informed of the purpose of this thesis, and how they possess information which could be significant to the result of
this thesis. This allowed the interviewees to get a pre-understanding of the subject, and a choice of whether or not they wish to participate.

During the collection of empirical data the researchers were several times asked not to include or record pieces of data. Therefore all transcribes will be censured to show respect to the requests of the interviewees.
4 Empirical findings

This chapter will present the empirical data that has been assembled through in-depth interviews with persons matching the criteria presented in the purposive sampling. A comparative outline of the interviewees’ shared knowledge and views on the main areas included in the conceptual framework will be presented. Furthermore, to allow a more thorough understanding of the empirical findings, and to avoid information loss, the structure of this chapter will present each case separately.

4.1 Cases

The interviewees who have participated in this study all share a common background as refugees. Another shared factor is the engagement in transnational entrepreneurship were the interviewees have utilized their access to dual context to gain competitive advantage on the Swedish market.

4.1.1 Obeidallah - Ali papa livs

Means: Obeidallah was born 1983 in Palestine. From a young age he was involved in the family business which conducted cargo operations between Middle Eastern countries, primarily Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. During this time, Obeidallah received comprehensive knowledge regarding import/export operations, customs, and logistics. In April 2006, 23 years old, Obeidallah was forced to leave his home country due to war and national instability. Obeidallah chose to come to Sweden because he had a Palestinian friend who already migrated to the country, while his family fled to Jordan. Today, Obeidallah believes that the risk full experience of being a refugee pushed him into the entrepreneurial track.

When Obeidallah arrived to Sweden, his friend who already lived in the country helped him to find employment. Obeidallah learned Swedish through his colleagues while working for different employers in Kalmar, and today he argues that mastering Swedish is the key to societal integration in Sweden. His first job was a position as a chef, followed by an employment at AlphaCE teaching immigrants about the Swedish systems, which subsequently provided him with essential information of the Swedish systems.
**Goals:** The objectives of conducting a business derived from Obeidallah’s self-belief that he could contribute with something for the Swedish society. He states that he had no problems finding jobs, and money was never a driving factor for the entrepreneurial engagement. An own business allowed him to decide everything out of a business-perspective himself as well as keep him busy. Obeidallah stresses how alone he felt in Sweden and how it pushed him into engaging in entrepreneurship “I was all alone here and I did not know what to do. I had to do something as I could not think about Palestine the whole time, 24 hours a day. I love Palestine but Sweden is my country too”. Throughout the entrepreneurial process the objective for the entrepreneurial engagement changed; what he currently aims for is having the biggest Middle Eastern whole-sale in Sweden.

**Interactions:** When starting a business in Sweden, Obeidallah found the rules and regulations for the business establishment difficult. However, due to the knowledge he received at AlphaCE he knew who to turn to, and therefore contacted the municipality office. The people working at the municipality facilitated Obeidallah with essential information in how to establish a business. The municipality provided guidelines which served him throughout the process, especially when it came to understanding the rules and regulations.

At AlphaCE Obeidallah frequently interacted with newly arrived refugees, most of them emigrated from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries. When interacting with these people, Obeidallah recognized a market demand, addressing the significantly limited Middle Eastern product selection, especially halal meat. The increasing amount of Arabs moving to the city of Kalmar emerged this demand which resulted in the formation of Obeidallah’s business plan. Obeidallah could relate to this market demand as he also missed Middle Eastern products when he first arrived in Sweden, especially halal products.

Obeidallah utilized the network he established when he was involved in the family business in Palestine to encounter the identified market demand in Kalmar. Combined with his previous knowledge in trade, customs and logistics, Obeidallah exploited his dual location position to conduct the business Ali papa livs. By
personally importing the demanded goods, he was able to purchase good quality products to a low cost.

In the beginning of the entrepreneurial process, before any active operations have been asserted, Obeidallah was scared and requested comfort and consultation among his friends in Sweden. He identified a common difference among his friends, whereas his native Swedish friends pushed him towards the establishment of his own business while his friends who origin from another country than Sweden, attempted to persuade him not to engage in entrepreneurship. The main reason for their discouragement derived from their interpretation of how it is to conduct own businesses in Sweden, primarily the high tax rate.

Obeidallah argues that the most essential aspect affecting his engagement in the entrepreneurial process has throughout been his network. His family in Jordan continues to support him in the process and he exemplifies “I receive great support from home not just money, sometimes a conversation...What are you doing at the moment? Have you sold a lot? No. Don’t worry. It will come around. Inshallah” In the beginning of the process the dual networks served as a superior factor enabling the establishment of the business but further into the process the Swedish network held a more significant role, serving personal comfort, information, and support.

**Commitments:** Today, Obeidallah frequently travels to Jordan to maintain business relations with the people he trade with. The relationship among him and the businesses in Jordan demands a lot of time from Obeidallah as he several times a week contacts them by telephone. Obeidallah stresses how difficult it is as an immigrant to receive bank loan in Sweden, as one has to fulfil several criteria which are very difficult to achieve when coming to Sweden as a refugee. However, to strategically overcome this, Obeidallah turned to the Palestinian banking system and they offered him a loan, sufficient for the establishment of his business in Sweden. Obeidallah stresses that it is extremely important to always cherish important relations and always do what is right.

Throughout the entrepreneurial process Obeidallah determinedly states that he is the same person as he was in the beginning of the process. Obeidallah recommends
people who share a similar background as him, aspiring to engage in entrepreneurship to commit in learning the Swedish language. He describes how it opens up for integration, increased network, and job opportunities. Furthermore, Obeidallah address the importance of Swedish work experience or engaging in trainee/internship before establishing an own business to learn the Swedish system. He also stresses that learning the Swedish language decrease the feeling of alienation. Obeidallah continues by saying “All immigrants are not the same” and this is something the Swedish inhabitants need to acknowledge.

4.1.2 Noori - Ikramini

Means: Ikramini Noori was born 1967 in Bagdad, Iraq. Noori studied electronic engineering at the university, and after the graduation she instantly started working as an engineer at the airport in Bagdad. Noori worked at the airport for several years but found the job very unsatisfying as it demanded a high intellectual level which “limited the art inside of me”. Despite the dissatisfaction she perceived from being an engineer she today reflects back on it and stresses how it provided her life balance “as engineers have an ability of making things happen, making idea’s into reality. Maybe otherwise I would have been fantasizing a lot, living up in the clouds”. She reflects on herself as a trinity; the body, the mind and the spirit “You cannot separate your soul from your mind from your body. When you start your business you have all these facets, like a diamond that has so many facets”.

Noori was born in an open-minded family were knowledge and creativity were encouraged. During the time she was engaged in engineering she felt that her creative talent was sleeping, and when she quitted working on the airport she started an unofficial business where she was allowed to express her creativity. In the organization she created pieces which during Saddam Hussein’s birthday had an official exhibition, where she was recognized for her talent in fashion. During Noori’s time in Iraq she loved to study languages. However, in the middle of her French studies the war escalated which in 2002 forced her to move to Jordan with her husband and their three children. In Jordan it was impossible for Noori to get a job as an engineer which encouraged her to continue working with her passion for oriental fashion. One day she was contacted by the princess of Jordan who wanted Noori to
design oriental clothes to her and the royal family, and she became a royal fashion designer.

Noori’s sister and her sister’s husband who stayed in Iraq faced the continuously emerging war and in 2008 they were both killed, which enforced Noori back to Iraq in order to get her sister’s three children. She adopted her sister’s children and since there was no possible way to support six children in Jordan, Noori and her family fled to Linköping, Sweden in 2008, 41 years old. Noori argues that the actions a refugee is required to undertake is hard for most people. However, she argues that being a refugee has affected her positively “I believe that the Universe is not playing games with us. What we think is a disaster [...] I believe it is meant to be that you move when your mission in one place is finished. You move to another place where you are more useful. Most prophets, if you go to religion, have left their home country and travelled for new greater purposes”.

**Goals:** Noori truly encourages people to engage in entrepreneurship as she considers employment limiting. She finds it satisfying to be “your own boss”. However, she stresses how hard it is to conduct own business. Noori found the Swedish system exaggeratedly bureaucratic and to her it seemed impossible to receive bank loans. Furthermore she argues that the negative aspect of the Swedish system does not necessarily has to be considered negative, “Maybe this road was not meant for me. Maybe I have to take another path more suited for me”. The fact that she could not receive a bank loan forced her to start her business incrementally.

Noori argues that the Swedish system focuses too much on the establishment of a comprehensive business plan “I never follow my business plan. I met some new people and the business plan explodes”. Her most recent objective of the business thrives from her interaction with a far flung relative which has resulted in the creation of a cartoon series. The inspiration to the cartoon comes from Swedish sagas combined with the Arabic tales she was introduced to in her childhood. The deep history of Iraq is embedded in her genes, and Noori argues that her ability to both use the history and show it through her creations has resulted in the success of her business. She started the company Ikramini with the main objective to fulfil her passion for creative work. Noori states that the overall objective of the business is
more spiritual than material. However, her business vision is to be “allowed to express that people are souls, not nationalities and that the body is just the humans’ jacket”. Noori says that throughout her entrepreneurial process she has been forced to compromise frequently in order to be successful, but she has always stayed true to her objectives as well as her vision.

The first three years conducting her business it had an economic loss. However, it was not affecting her since she believed in herself and knew what she was aiming for, and that the profit eventually would rise. In the fourth year the business generated an economic profit. Noori argues that the power and faith in oneself is the most important aspect when engaging in entrepreneurship “I just jump and it happens, and it happens in a beautiful way”.

**Interactions:** One Iraqi friend of Noori’s convinced her to migrate to Sweden due to the polite people and the common knowledge in English among the Swedish inhabitants. In Sweden Noori never found it hard to interact with natives. She had comprehensive skills in English which served as an interaction platform when she spoke to people in Sweden. The establishment of a Swedish network helped Noori to learn the Swedish language. Noori’s husband persuaded her to sell her property in Jordan in order to receive enough finance to buy a real estate in Växjö, where he aspired to conduct a supermarket. The supermarket was renamed Ikramini AB and it required tremendous attention from Noori which subsequently resulted in personal struggle and distress. The business generated economic loss which consequently resulted in her selling the business as well as a divorce, and Noori’s husband moved back to the Middle East, leaving her alone with six children.

Today, Noori looks back on the supermarket as a learning experience. It provided her essential skills in the Swedish system as well as information in how to conduct an own business. It also served her in order to develop the current objectives of Ikramini today “The supermarket opened my eyes, and up until this point I have built up my life, so now I will do what I love. I am not going to jump into business just to live”.

The business Noori operates today is highly affected by her network, both in Sweden but also in the Middle East. Due to war, her entire network from Iraq moved to other
countries, for instance; Jordan, United Arab Emirates, India and Finland. Noori states that her network provides true help in order for her to advance her business but also personal support. Throughout the entrepreneurial process Noori argues that she has grown as a person and become wiser, calmer and more spiritual. She states that these characteristics have attracted people to interact with her which subsequently, provided her with extended wisdom, allowing her to grow additionally, “People grow together”. She continues to describe how her wide network allows her to export her completed fashion pieces, as well as import design materials/ textiles in order to develop new pieces.

**Commitments:** Noori stresses that besides the belief in oneself, network is the most essential aspect throughout the entrepreneurial process. In order to make her business grow she had to take private loans from relatives in Jordan. Noori also received a small inheritance from her family. She is still in debt to her relatives in Jordan, but is frequently repaying the mortgage.

Today, Noori travels frequently to maintain her relationships, especially to the Middle Eastern countries. For personal support she uses Skype a lot to allow herself to visually engage with far flung relations. A contact Noori established in Linköping introduced her to Almi when Noori and her husband intended to purchase the real estate in Växjö. Since then, Almi has been of significant support. Throughout Noori’s entrepreneurial process, constant contact with Almi has provided her with information, help, and orientation when she asks for it. Today she considers Almi a partner and she encourages others who share similar background as her, to contact Almi. Furthermore, Noori argues that the refugees coming to Sweden today have no examples to follow when aspiring to integrate with the Swedish society, and the people in Sweden must acknowledge that these people are wounded. Swedish inhabitants must not increase the negative polarity sometimes given the refugees. If they are characterized as a burden, they will form into a burden. Today, Sweden is building and developing through the experience of receiving immigrants. In this process Sweden needs intermediaries, who can relate and understand both sides, to negotiate between immigrants and natives.
4.1.3 Jafari - Persian carpet store

**Means:** Jafari was born in Iran 1952 and left the country in 1971 together with his parents and siblings as political refugees. They moved to Uppsala where Jafari studied Swedish at SFI (Swedish for Immigrants) for three months before starting his bachelor of science in business and economics at the university in Linköping. He explains that it takes a certain amount of courage to leave a country, and to move to a place where one does not speak the language. He continues to explain that he believes that the action of doing so is easier for young people, because they are more likely to take risk. Subsequently, he adds that young people are also more likely to start their own company. He exemplifies this by comparing it to love; “Young people throw themselves into relationships and they are not afraid to compromise and adjust to each other’s routines. Older people on the other hand are too much set in their routines and do not like when someone tries to change them”.

Jafari started his carpet store when he was 27 years old. He states that it is important to believe in yourself and find the strength within. He says that one should never count or expect other people to help, but gratefully accept and thank people who do. He says that the most important thing is to be positive, “If you have a positive mindset everything will eventually work out”. Jafari declares how much he has learned from engaging in entrepreneurship, and emphasizes the fact that he is still learning. He believes that a part of whom and where he is today can be traced back to his background in Iran. However, he continues to argue that he is constantly affected by the environment and the people around him so it is hard to say what exactly has shaped him into the person he is today. Back in Iran Jafari still has family who operates similar businesses to the one he is operating today. He says that their knowledge and support provided him with the foundation to build his own business.

**Goals:** After graduating from the university in Linköping, Jafari started working at Ericsson but felt a desire to work for himself. He argues that the financial aspects were only partly the reason for the establishment of the store. The biggest reason was because he wanted to work with something that he really liked. He describes that he has always had a passion for art and handcraft, and that he saw an opportunity to include this in his new business. Jafari also emphasizes all the hard work it takes to operate a business but that the positive aspects, such as being the one to decide what
the future for the business will look like, weighs more than the negative. As an employee one is limited to the ambitions of someone else which results in a lower degree of engagements in contrast to if one would work for oneself. Jafari started his business small and then incrementally made it grow. He states that when starting something new it is easier to start small and then successively increase the selection of the store.

**Interactions:** Jafari and his family decided to go to Sweden because his best friend from Iran had previously moved to Sweden to study, and they had heard positive things about the country. Within a year of living in Sweden he mastered the language and describes this as "the opening of a whole new world". He continues to explain that people in Sweden are much keener to help if asked in Swedish. According to Jafari is knowledge, languages, and communication the most essential parts of the entrepreneurial process.

Jafari states that it is important to love and accept the country you are in, "I really love Sweden and if you feel that way, it will make everything work much better". He continues to explain how new languages and cultures enriches everything in life. He states that there are positive aspects in all cultures and it is important to utilize all these parts. He continues to argue that he created the strength of his Persian carpet business by combining the best from Iran and Sweden.

According to Jafari it is much easier to start a business in Sweden than it is in Iran. He explains that the municipality in Sweden is there to help, and that they do it in an honest way. Contrary, in Iran, it is much more difficult and instead of giving encouragement and support the municipality set up barriers to prevent entrepreneurial engagement. By starting his own business in Sweden, Jafari states that he has become more integrated in the Swedish society. However, he also adds that it is probably more a factor of the personality of the entrepreneur than of the actual action of starting a business. "I know a lot of immigrants that have started their own business but still do not feel as a part of the community".

**Commitments:** Jafari imports all his carpets personally from Iran because he strongly believes that they carry the best carpets. He travels there once or twice a
year to meet with his suppliers which he has established solid relationships with, many of them have lasted for over 30 years. He emphasizes the importance of dealing with the right people, since the profitability of his business is dependent on their work as well. His suppliers need to clean the carpets, treat them, and transport them in a way that will maintain the quality of the products. If a relationship does not feel genuine he cuts them out and establishes new ones. To keep a good relationship he communicates by telephone with suppliers numerous times a week. He argues that “connection is all that matters”, and that dealing with intermediates only makes things more expensive. If one can establish personal relations instead, the customers will receive a better price and the business will be able to stay competitive on the market.

When starting his business the connections in Iran were crucial. The bank in Sweden would not allow him a big enough loan to buy the first set of carpets needed to open the store in Sweden. His personal relations to his suppliers enabled him to buy the carpets on credit, until he had enough money to pay them back. Jafari states that it is of great importance that you take good care of your relations and especially the one concerning financial parts of your business, “What you do in your business will affect other people’s businesses. First, you pay everyone else, and then, if there is anything left, that is for you to keep”. He also continues to emphasize the relations to his customers, and the importance of caring for each and every one of them. He say that he believes that people can sense if one is only trying to make profit or if on sincerely wants the customer to buy something that will bring value to their life, “Always speak the truth and communicate from the heart”.

Jafari is very positive to Sweden but finds it important to address the limitations that he experienced; “The Swedish society are very good at supporting and helping people who are in desperate need for help, but are less good at supporting people who come to Sweden with real competences, high educations and who can contribute to the Swedish society” he continues to explain that “If you are strong they think that you can take care of yourself” and that the society should focus on supporting the “strong” as well. “It is the strong ones who will soon help to pay for the weak and they are the ones that will help bring revenue to the country and pay taxes”.
4.1.4 Le - Soya AB

Means: Phu Le was born in 1958 in Vietnam. When she was 12 years old her mother passed away and she was left to look after herself. She explains that people in Sweden do not know how it is to be poor, or how it feels to be really cold or hungry. She continues to describe how her early experiences have helped her develop a specific way of thinking “if you do not have the money to buy food you will figure out a way to get it”. It taught her to be more creative and find new solutions. Le does not have any higher education, and when her mother passed away she survived by weeding gardens, and babysitting for different families. By the age of 17 she met her husband, had her first child, and became a stay at home mom. In 1979 Le, her husband, and their four children had to leave Vietnam because of the conflicts and the instability in the country. She fled with her family on a boat to Indonesia, and then continued her journey with help from the Red Cross to Sweden.

Within a couple months Le had her first job in Sweden, and since then she has work in a shower factory, as a lunch lady, and as a waitress. Le has always had a genuine interest in food and cooking, and loved her job waitressing in the restaurant. She explains that the job included multiple personal meetings, and she continues to argue that the connections she made with her guests and colleges have been of great importance to her career. After a couple years waitressing at the restaurant, Le was able to save enough money to buy herself into the company and became a co-owner of the restaurant. She emphasizes the importance of her experience co-owning the place and everything she learned from doing so. After three years of co-owning the restaurant Le went back to working as a waitress until she got an offer to lease the operation of a restaurant located inside a hotel. She accepted the offer and managed to turn the business around. After three years of operating the restaurant she returned the business to its former owner and started her process to fulfil her own vision of starting her own restaurant.

Goals: The reason behind her engagement to start her own business was “to be able to provide for my four children and to make their life easier”. After living in Sweden for a couple years, Le and her husband decided to go separate ways and Le got full custody of their children. She was determined to provide for them and give them a solid foundation to learn and grow from, which sometimes meant working 20 hour
shifts. However, Le states that money has never been the main goal of her business and that the numerous grants’ in Sweden ensures that she never had to worry about being poor. “When I first came to Sweden I received many different grants, but I did not want them”. She continues to argue that “You never become hungry or poor in Sweden; there is no poverty in Sweden. It all about how you ration your assets. Poverty is when you do not have any food, no cloths, no place to live. Then you are poor”. She also adds that when she first started working in Sweden, other foreigners were saying that she was “stupid” and that she would receive more money through grants while staying at home with her children. She actually made less money after working eight hour shift, five days a week, then she would have made staying at home with the children. Despite this, Le still went to work, “if I do not go to work I will not learn Swedish, and then I will not be able to integrate into society, which consequently will affect my children’s integration into society”. She continues by saying that one cannot keep living in the past and that it is important to look forward.

Le says that her goal has changed over time. After reaching her first goal, to provide for her children, she developed new ones. She explains that “you should always keep challenging yourself” and that it is important to keep a creative mind. She also makes it clear that her goal has never been to become famous or impress someone else. “You cannot let your success rise to your head. That is when you lose control over your business”. Her goals are set for herself, and her own development. Le’s process to start her own business and reach her goals has not always been easy. She has faced numerous of obstacles when fighting for her idea. Having the bank loan and all the permissions needed approved was not an easy task and acquired a lot of time, stubbornness and patience to accomplish. During this process, Le still stresses the importance to do things right and not to take any shortcuts, as well as to keep believing in yourself and your idea.

**Interactions:** Le believes that the most important thing when immigrating to a new country is to make it into the working life, to be social, and become integrated. She says that one should “reach out to the society and not sit and wait for society to reach out to you”. For Le, her colleges have been of great importance in the process of becoming integrated in the Swedish society. They were the ones who taught her the language and the ones to help her with questions regarding the Swedish systems,
and where to turn for different errands. She often invited her colleagues, as well as neighbors to her home where she treated them to her Vietnamese cooking. This was always very well received and she got a lot of encouragement to start her own business. Le stresses the importance that her interactions with friends, colleagues and guests have had on her success, they are the ones who have taught her almost everything that she knows about how to start and operate a business. She also states that one can never gain too much knowledge, and that people therefore always should thrive to be greater, learn more, and push themselves.

Le suggests that to be successful, one should try to be creative and try to see what has already been done, and what is still missing. She states that it is good to be the first one with a new trend, and continues by explaining that when Soya first opened they were the first one to offer an “open kitchen” where the guests can see the chef cook the food, and that even today, 18 years later, this is still a trend. She ends the discussion by stating that she believe that her process could have been done without all of her help from her connections but that it would have made the whole process a tremendously more difficult.

Commitments: When Le first started her business there were no Vietnamese spices available in Sweden. “The reason why people go out to eat is to experience something different – something that they cannot make themselves at home” and that is why she decided to introduce real Asian cooking to the Swedish people. She travelled once or twice a year to Asia to import the real, genuine spices. She explains that it was important to her that the spices were real Asian spices, “It had to be real and not Swedish-Asian spices, because that is what would make my restaurant different from the other ones”.

Le enlightens the relationships that she established while working in the restaurant, and argues that these relationships were crucial for the establishment of Soya. It was actually one of her regulars who offered her the opportunity to lease the restaurant in a hotel. Another important person who helped her during the process was the property owner of the real estate where she opened Soya. When the bank would not approve her request for a loan, the property owner offered to issue a guarantee enabling her to receive the loan she needed from the bank. After six months of
operating Soya she was able to pay back the guarantee that the property owner signed for. She expresses her belief in the importance of cherishing your commitments, and by always doing the right thing and not to take any shortcuts. Le continues by stating that the most essential people throughout her entrepreneurial process has been her four children due to their emotional support and help along the way, “If they would not have behaved and understood the importance of me working so hard I could never have accomplished what I have today”.

Le says that she has stayed true to herself during the whole entrepreneurial process and that she is still the same person that came to Sweden almost 40 years ago. She continues by adding that the only thing that has really changed is the amount of knowledge she carries. Le recommends refugees who come to Sweden today and who wish to start their own business to start out small and then let the business grow. She explains that the most challenging part of the process is to receive financial support, but by starting out small and by developing a good business idea, one can do anything one wish for.

Le also states that people easily forget about their obligations and focus too much on their rights, as well as the help they can receive in Sweden. She continues to say that by making people aware of their obligations, the system would be more effective, “What is wrong in society today is that people who come to Sweden find out about their rights before they found out about their obligations. It is important to also make the obligations more clear”. Furthermore, Le explains that a person who receive help from society should give back to the society, and by doing so, the Swedish society would be able to help more people.
5 Analysis

This chapter will assemble the different sections of this thesis by connecting the empirical data to the theoretical framework in a comprehensive analysis. The similarities as well as the differences among the four individual cases will be discussed through the lens of Effectuation, and thereafter culminate into a platform enabling the forthcoming chapter to reach conclusions and provide answers to the research questions of this thesis.

5.1 Means

Sarasvathy (2008) argues that what makes entrepreneurs entrepreneurial is their ability to think effectually. She terms the starting phase of the effectual cycle “means” or if preferred “bird-in-the-hand”, and describes this phase to deal with the individual’s three means: Who they are, What they know, and Whom they know. The effectual reasoning is transparent throughout the four cases in the way the entrepreneurs utilize the resources and networks that they already possess in order to establish new competitive businesses. The starting phase of the four entrepreneurs’ process display primarily similarities but also some differences. The differences are apparent in the origin of opportunities. For Jafari, Le, and Noori the opportunity aroused internally from their previous experience and knowledge, which resulted in them introducing, and creating a new demand for their products. Contrary, for Obeidallah, the opportunity aroused externally from an already identified demand, which allowed him to then utilize his experiences in the process of developing his business idea. When forced to leave one’s home to start a new life in another country, it is not very surprising that previous experiences, knowledge and relations have shown a significant importance in the creation of new businesses. The effectual process suggests individuals to start with what they have, know, and one’s connections but after conducting the four interviews one could argue that the individual’s interest, passion and belief in oneself should be acknowledged as important means as well.

Trott et al. (2016) argue that entrepreneurship is all about stepping into the unknown and break away from the familiar. For some people, this is less of a challenge than for others. However, the step into the unknown does not always emphasize
operations breaking away from the conventional, rather actions embracing what was once familiar. By enhancing traditions from one’s past, and exploiting them on a new market, the entrepreneurs assess the mean “what do I know”. Transnational entrepreneurs operate in dual locations which allows them to creatively, dynamically, and logistically maximize their resource base (Drori et al. 2009; Flores et al. 2010). How the entrepreneurs’ choose to utilize their resources however, differs among the cases. Le exploits the human resources that she adapted in Vietnam through her cooking techniques, as well as knowledge in genuine Asian spices and food. Noori’s utilization of her human resources is apparent in her business and its prominent inspiration from Iraqi tales and the deep history of her nation. Obeidallah utilized the knowledge he received in Palestine regarding transport, trading, logistics, and customs in order to develop Ali Papa livs, and Jafari used the knowledge he received from his relatives’ engagement in their carpet businesses in Iran.

Human resources adapted from the Swedish society are transparent throughout the four cases as well, however merely in the form of knowledge of the Swedish language. By mastering the Swedish language the interviewees were able to interact with the Swedish society, and gain valuable information of the market. This information, combined with their previous knowledge of their home country, subsequently helped them to identify or create a market demand. These findings support Drori et al. (2009)’s saying that transnational entrepreneurs by virtue of their unique geographical affiliations, possess a unique position to exploit opportunities either unobserved or unavailable, to other entrepreneurs operating in just one geographical location. It could be argued that the ideas to these businesses would not have been identified by someone who does not share the same background, and that if these businesses never would have been conducted the society would not miss them.

One human resource inherent within all interviewees is the risk tolerance which arguably thrives from their background as refugees. This argument is supported by Levie (2007) who states that immigrants’ possess a higher risk tolerance than natives as a result of the risky actions involved in the migration process. Hormiga & Bolivar-Cruz (2014), Vaan Praag & Cramer (2001), Cramer et al. (2002), Caliendo et al. (2009), Mascalet el al. (2009), and Ahn (2010) argue that people who tend to take
risks or hold a lower risk perception show a significantly higher tendency of becoming entrepreneurs. This statement is strengthened by the four interviewees, who in the beginning of their entrepreneurial process assessed the mean “who am I” and arguably also the question what can I do with that? Obeidallah argues that the process of leaving his country due to conflicts and instability has been a factor which has pushed him into the entrepreneurial track. He used his heritage and knowledge of the Middle Eastern cuisine to develop his business, Ali papa livs. Noori and Jafari exploited their passion for art into their businesses, while Le established a business emerging from her passion for food. All interviewees consider their backgrounds as refugees, and the experiences gained from leaving the familiar to have affected them positively. This is especially prominent in Noori’s case where she explains that she interprets her background as a refugee as Universe communicating to her that she will be more useful somewhere else.

The utilization of social resources from the home country, or resources addressing the mean “whom do I know” is identified in three out of the four cases. For Obeidallah they are identified through his connections with both relatives and former stakeholders from engaging in the family business in his home country. Jafari knew people who were conducting similar businesses as the one he aspired to open, and Noori already had clients in the Middle East. In comparison to the other cases, Le did not have any social resources originating from Vietnam. Instead, her’s origin from Sweden and are for instance identified as restaurant guests and co-workers. The reason why Le does not have any social resources in Vietnam could arguably derive from the loss of her mother at a young age, and her life living in poverty in Vietnam. Noori, Jafari, and Obeidallah on the other hand, share backgrounds characterized by education and entrepreneurship which consequently have reflected on their means. However, the Swedish society provided all four cases with social resources in forms of colleagues who subsequently provided them with Swedish language skills. This supports Nielsen et al. (2012)’s theory that social resources often generates access to additional resources. However, in comparison to what Nielsen et al. (2012) state, the resources deriving from social resources are not limited to only include intangible, but to also include tangible resources exemplified by; spices, carpets, fabric, and Middle Eastern food products. An explanation for the theoretical shortcoming could be the literatures’ focus on traditional entrepreneurship. Tangible
resources are described as being easier to substitute and accessible for everyone (Tehseen & Sajilan 2016). However, this description does not take into consideration transnational entrepreneurs’ unique access to resources from dual markets. The tangible resources available to the transnational entrepreneur may be difficult for traditional entrepreneurs only operating on one market to access. Therefore, the tangible resources of transnational entrepreneurs embrace characteristics similar to those given intangible resources by Höglund (2015) and Barney (2001), resultantly providing the transnational entrepreneur with a competitive advantage.

5.2 Goals

Sarasvathy (2008) argues that after the entrepreneur has assessed the means, the effectual process continues by the imagining of possibilities that originate from these means, as well as a calculation of the entrepreneur’s affordable loss. The four entrepreneurs emphasized in this thesis all utilized their means in order to conduct their own business. However, their means have never equaled their goals, but rather been a tool in the process of reaching their goals. Obeidallah’s goal when first starting his business was to become his own boss, and to have something that would distract him from living and thinking too much about the past. To reach this goal he utilized his previous networks and resources from his home country together with new found connections providing him with knowledge essential for the establishment of his supermarket. Le’s first goal when establishing Soya was to be able to provide for her four children. She did not have any human resources from higher education but what she did have was her knowledge about genuine Asian cooking. Noori’s goal involved working creatively, as well as becoming her own boss. She reached this goal by assessing her creative side and doing what she loves. Jafari shared the goal of wanting to be in charge of his own business, and he as well managed to reach this goal by exploiting his deeply rooted passion for art and handcraft. The interviewees share a belief in their own entrepreneurial ability, and the value of their means. It is prominent that the human resources collected from their home country affect how the entrepreneurial engagement is expressed among the interviewees. All interviewees came to Sweden as adults, and the affect their settlement in their home countries have had on their means is legitimate. If the interviewees would have migrated to Sweden at a younger age, the home country’s influence on the entrepreneurial
process could arguably have been reduced, and if so, also affected the transnational expansion of dual networks and resources.

Le, Obeidallah, Noori, and Jafari all started their own business because they wanted to, and not because they had to, as neither one of the interviewees found it difficult to find employment in Sweden. They were all attracted by the limitless environment of being an entrepreneur, allowing them to take all decisions themselves as well as enact on their own ambitions. This aspect contradicts with Solé et al. (2007) ’s statement that contextual elements such as host country employment barriers or institutional business structures, forces immigrants into entrepreneurial activities. However, the fact that the entrepreneurs did not find any difficulties to get employment may derive from the contextual changes that Sweden has experienced in the last decades. The refugees arriving to Sweden today, in contrast to the four interviewees, might arguably face the barriers described by Solé et al. (2007) due to the wide extent of the present migration streams.

The goals set for Obeidallah, Le, and Noori are dynamically changing in relation to their interactions and commitments. As presented in the previous section, Obeidallah’s primary objective of conducting a business of his own was to be his own boss. However, over time, as the business incrementally has grown, his new objective is to become the biggest wholesaler of Middle Eastern food in Sweden. Noori’s venture objective was primarily to express her creative skills through fashion but over time she has expanded her business objective to create cartoon series. Jafari however, still addresses the same objective of his business since the establishment of the Persian carpet store. He aimed to work with his passion and to be in charge of his own business due to the limitations of working for someone else. When Jafari reached this goal further objectives were not established. Contrary to Jafari, Le argues that when she reaches an established goal she sets up new ones in order to constantly challenge herself, allowing her to develop, extend, and enrich her human resources in knowledge and experience.

The affordable loss principle emphasizes what the entrepreneur is willing to lose at each step of the process, and by doing so, the overall risk associated with engagement in entrepreneurship is reduced (Sarasvathy 2008). The four interviewees
stress the importance of starting a business incrementally in order to reduce risk. Obeidallah exemplifies this by first ensuring the success of starting the supermarket, before establishing the wholesale. Noori and Jafari were forced to start incrementally due to their limited financial resources. However, both of them argue that this approach reduced the risk of engaging in entrepreneurship and that this is the most suitable path when conducting a business. Le agrees with this statement and supplementary argues that with an incremental business approach it is easier to find financial resources.

5.3 Interactions
Sarasvathy (2008) stresses the importance of networks and interactions, and she argues that the most successful entrepreneurs are involved in comprehensive networks, similar to a patchwork quilt, which allows them to access additional information, inputs and feedback. Due to the fact that transnational entrepreneurs are set to operate within at least two contextual locations, additional complexity to the context is given. Trott et al. (2016) argue that traditional entrepreneurs face two types of context, which are regarded as more or less unpredictable. These are referred to as transactional and contextual. The dual context in which transnational entrepreneurs operate indicate two sets of transactional environments and two sets of contextual environments which consequently generates a highly complex and unpredictable environment. Chen (2009) argues that the entrepreneur’s ability to cope with these uncertainties can be traced back to the entrepreneur’s network, by commitments and information flow.

Munkejord (2015) divides networks into two categories; strong ties and weak ties, depending on how they influence the entrepreneur. Obeidallah has established a complex glocalized network, emphasizing both strong and weak ties, combining intensive local embeddedness with far flung global connections simultaneously. His ties with his family in Jordan, as well as the Palestinian bank is considered strong and have provided him with financial support and emotional support throughout his entrepreneurial process. Other strong ties originating from Palestine is the one friend who first convinced Obeidallah to migrate to Sweden, and then supported him through his integration process in Sweden. The widespread network with trading operators in the Middle East that Obeidallah established when working for the family
business, as well as the refugees that he interacted with when working for AlphaCE can both be considered as weak ties. The municipality in Kalmar was another weak tie who through their guidance enabled the establishment of Ali papa livs. However, Obeidallah states that the most important relation he has established is the one to a Swedish friend in Kalmar who has supported him on a personal level throughout the process, as well as his relations to his Swedish colleagues who taught him the Swedish language.

After addressing the different ties of Obeidallah’s network it is prominent that the network settled in the Middle East is more comprehensive than the one established in Sweden. In spite of this, Obeidallah argues that his Swedish network has been most essential when it comes to the establishment of Ali papa livs. This arguably derives from the personal support he gained from his Swedish friends as well as from Obeidallah’s belief that the Swedish language has been the key when engaging in entrepreneurial activities in Sweden.

Jafari has also established a glocalized network containing both strong and weak ties in his home country but in contrast to Obeidallah, Jafari’s case only presents weak ties to the host country. The strong ties Jafari has to Iran are those he has to his family, relatives and suppliers. These strong ties were crucial in the establishment of his Persian carpet store since they allowed him to buy the carpets from Iran on credit, as well as offered emotional support. Similar to Obeidallah, Jafari migrated to Sweden because he had a friend who had done it before. Another similarity among these two cases is the weak tie the entrepreneurs have to the Swedish municipality. Jafari received, as well as Obeidallah, essential information from the municipality in how to establish a business. Jafari learned the Swedish language through the university, and thereby he could interact with Swedish people in order to understand design trends, and demands in Sweden, which could also be considered weak ties.

Noori has similar to Obeidallah, but in contrast to Jafari, established a comprehensive glocalized network across multi-national borders. Her strong ties mainly derive from her country of origin but due to war these ties have resettled to other Middle Eastern countries. The strong ties established in the Middle East emphasize those who provided her with personal comfort and support, her family,
and the friend who recommended Noori to migrate to Sweden. Noori’s strong ties to the Middle East (Jordan in particular) provided her with key resources in the form of financial resources, enabling her to establish her business. Her relatives also generate weak ties by contributing with new ideas for her business. Other weak ties to the Middle East are those relations Noori established with the Jordanian royalties. However, Swedish networks have also played a significant role in Noori’s entrepreneurial process. Both Swedish and Middle Eastern persons have by their interaction allowed her to increase her wisdom, which subsequently resulted in her personal growth. She also established weak ties with Swedish natives who provided her with knowledge in the Swedish language. Almi was one essential weak tie for Noori in Sweden, as they facilitated her with information, help and orientation. Noori argues that Almi was critical for the establishment of Ikramini.

The definitions of strong and weak ties could be considered deceptive due to their indication of one tie being stronger/weaker than the other. This also affects the interpretations of the terms, and associations to the ties of being more or less valuable. The findings in this study indicate that weak ties should not be considered less valuable in comparison to strong ties as the values attached to a tie is highly individual, and affected by its contextual contribution. An example of this is the four entrepreneurs’ strong statement of the importance of the Swedish language, which was provided to all the entrepreneurs by weak ties.

In contrast to these three entrepreneurs, Le holds few home country ties and more extensive host country ties. This arguably derives from her socially restrained background, living in poverty, becoming an orphan at the age of 12, and a stay at home wife at a young age. Le’s strong ties can be summarized by her relations to her four children, the property owner in Sweden, as well as her relationship to her one regular guest who encouraged and offered her a start in the restaurant business. Le’s weak ties emphasize those relations she developed with her colleges, who subsequently provided her with essential knowledge in the Swedish language which also generated increased societal integration. However, the one weak tie identified in Le’s case is the business-relations she has established in Asia, enabling her to import genuine spices. By the comprehensive cross-border relationships evident in all the
four cases the shared utilization of strong and weak ties in a glocalized network is expressed. However, not in the way that Drori et al. (2009) express it.

Drori et al. (2009)'s defines transnational entrepreneurs as individual engaging in business activities between the host and home country. However, when adding the dimension of a refugee background to the phenomenon transnational entrepreneurs, the definition is challenged, and the use of home and host country falls short. Noori, Le, and Obeidallah were all affected by national instabilities as a consequence of war in their home countries which forced them to migrate to Sweden. However, what is interesting is the effect the war had on their resources and networks as well. Due to the war, their networks and resources were forced to relocate, which consequently resulted in the expansion of the network to include more countries, than those regarded as the entrepreneur's home and host country. Even though the networks and resources are technically originating from their home country, their current location has changed. To continue on the argument presented in the first section in this chapter, transnational entrepreneurs may not only engage in dual contextual and transactional context, but in multiple. Jafari, who is a political refugee, still maintains business linkages to his country of origin. This arguably derives from the fact that in his situation, his network and Iranian resources were not forced to relocate in comparison to the other cases.

5.4 Commitments

Sarasvathy (2008) describes commitments from stakeholders as an essential aspect of the crazy-quilt network established by the entrepreneurs. She continues to argue that the commitments between the entrepreneur and different actors established in the beginning of the entrepreneurial process serves as a platform reducing future uncertainty. As previously mentioned, all four entrepreneurs are engaged in comprehensive glocalized networks consisting of strong and weak ties. To maintain these business relations throughout the entrepreneurial process various investments has to be made. Obeidallah travels to Jordan once to twice a year in order to maintain essential business partners. He also regularly enact with his far flung relations by telephone communication, to ensure a good relationship to his suppliers, allowing business decisions to be more efficient. The importance of trustful relationships with one's suppliers is not a static one way commitment. The suppliers are also in a
dependency position towards the transnational entrepreneurs and if one of the parts fails to deliver services or products as agreed upon the relationship might be ruined, and both parts will suffer. Le and Jafari also engage in travels to their country of origin once or twice a year enabling them to establish trustful relationships to the suppliers settled in their home country. They also, similar to Obeidallah, engage in frequent telephone communication with their suppliers. The regular phone calls are the essence which allow the entrepreneurs to avoid intermediaries, consequently enabling them to offer end-customers fair competitive prices as well as high quality products. The choice not to include intermediaries in the business operation might be traced back to their networks and resources of dual markets, as their own personal relations makes the purpose of working with intermediaries redundant.

Noori also engages in frequent travels to the Middle East, regular telephone communication, and Skype, especially to her family who has supported her with financial resources to start her company. Noori is still in the process of repaying this debt. The entrepreneurs have in all the four cases stressed the importance of always doing what is right. This is expressed differently among the four cases; Noori is paying off her debt, Le argues that shortcuts may result in mistrust among those committed to her business, Obeidallah stresses the importance of properly revised business accounts, and Jafari states the importance of honesty, especially to his suppliers and customers.

Sarasvathy (2008) argues that the core of effectual thinking is the entrepreneur's ability to turn unexpected events into something good, to turn lemons into lemonade. The process the entrepreneurs have gone through, from being refugees, till now being successful entrepreneurs already speaks for their ability to turn negative experiences into something valuable. Furthermore, Sarasvathy (2008) argues that entrepreneurs need to believe in themselves and their ability to form their own future, like the pilot in the plane. These two aspects have been prominently transparent throughout the four cases. Each individual spoke proud of their own achievements and how they in difficult times had to turn to themselves in order to find the strength to keep on reaching for their goals.
6 Conclusion

This chapter will summarize the practical and theoretical implications discussed throughout the thesis. It will present answers to the research question and sub-questions, as well as offer practical recommendations and theoretical contributions. Finally, limitations of thesis will be presented, and suggestions to future policy change, as well as further research will be proposed in order to advance the field of transnational entrepreneurship.

6.1 Answering the research questions

The refugee crisis is very much a present phenomenon in Sweden today, and politicians and experts all agree that something needs to change, but they have a problem stating what exactly this change should involve. Researchers have stressed the importance of entrepreneurship and how it generates economic and societal growth. Therefore, this thesis considers the idea of refugees engaging in transnational entrepreneurship as a solution to the present crisis. By assessing the process of already established transnational entrepreneurs, with a refugee background, the authors were able to identify key aspects, which allowed them to draw generalizations as well as provide final answers to the research question of this thesis. This study aimed to answer the research question: (RQ) What does the entrepreneurial process look like for transnational entrepreneurs with a refugee background in Sweden? To enable a thorough answer to this question, the authors first turned to answer the two sub-questions: (A) Why do some refugees engage in transnational entrepreneurship? And (B) How does the transnational aspect influence refugees’ entrepreneurial process?

The first sub-question addresses the reason to refugees’ engagement in transnational entrepreneurship. The literature suggest refugees to engage in entrepreneurship as an alternative to unemployment, but this study has disproved this statement, and the findings suggest that unemployment has not been a factor affecting the engagement in entrepreneurship. Instead, the reason for engaging in entrepreneurship derives from an internal desire to be in control and fulfil personal ambitions. The transnational aspects of a business allow refugees to utilize their dual networks and resources not available to traditional entrepreneurs, providing them with an
opportunity to be more competitive on the market. Refugees’ unique position as immigrants in Sweden cohesively with their expertise of the home country market enables them to identify market gaps or create new ones by introducing new products.

The second sub-question deals with the transnational aspects’ influence on refugees’ entrepreneurial process. The results of this study have shown that the transnational aspects can be identified throughout the whole process but is especially apparent in the interaction, and commitment stage, as well as on the overall uncertainty. The context in which the entrepreneur operates includes a platform of interrelated actors, which the entrepreneur has to recognize and learn to deal with to be able to operate the business effectively. The transnational dimension to the entrepreneurial process increases the level of uncertainty by including at least one more context for the entrepreneur to consider. In order to cope with the increased uncertainty the entrepreneur relies on a comprehensive transnational network that requires regular interaction, mutual trust, and respect. Furthermore, the transnational aspects have increased the amount of network and resources available to the entrepreneur, which subsequently has provided the entrepreneurs with the choice to search beyond Swedish borders for help to overcome financial obstacles. This additional option has proven to be significant to the success of the entrepreneurs.

The main research question aims to unravel how the entrepreneurial process looks like among transnational entrepreneurs with a background as refugees. The result of this thesis shows that the means’ of the refugees who have migrated to Sweden as adults derive from the familiar context of the home country and are not affected by the host country. However, the experiences of leaving one’s home country due to conflict have affected the means as well as the probability of engagement in entrepreneurial activities. The second phase of the process shows an interlink with the means, not directly affected by either home- or host country, but rather a force from within the entrepreneur. The third phase of the process deals with interactions, and is affected by both host and home country. The interactions deriving from one’s host country is considered more important for the entrepreneurial process as it serves the entrepreneur with essential language skills and knowledge in how to conduct a business in Sweden. The interaction with the home country is mostly emphasized by
emotional support from family members and friends. The commitment phase of the process is characterized by a link between the host/home country and the entrepreneur generating mutual benefits by example bank loans, interest, trading opportunities, and taxes to both parts. This phase is essential to the success of transnational entrepreneurs and involves beneficial factors such as the accessibility to more resources but also requires commitment in the form of phone calls, business trips, and Skype sessions.

The entrepreneurial process among transnational entrepreneurs with a background as refugees is outlined in a way, which is not previously identified among researchers. Previous researchers have only addressed transnational entrepreneurs as a homogenous unit and have not considered the motives to migration. Due to this generalization, previous definitions of transnational entrepreneurs are considered insufficient, because of their limitation to only include host and home country. By adding the dimension of refugees to the concept, the authors found that conflicts forced the resources and networks from the home country to relocate as well. This indicates that the benefits deriving from transnational entrepreneurship under the given circumstances should not only emphasize home and host country but also include additional countries to the definition. A revised model (Figure 3) of the conceptual framework displays how the entrepreneurial process is outlined among transnational entrepreneurs with a background as refugees.

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Figure 3: Revised conceptual framework.
6.2 Implications for practice and recommendations

The positive effects that transnational entrepreneurship have on multiple markets are overlooked in practice. This study has stressed the benefits of transnational entrepreneurship among refugees and that national investments that are made today to enhance these entrepreneurial activities should be considered as a down payment to future national growth.

The empirical findings show evidence of difficulties refugees face when aspiring to conduct a business in Sweden, as well as strategies in order to overcome them. The financial aspects have been identified as the most challenging factor, but through exploitation of cross-national relations, this obstacle has been overcome. Another critical factor for in the entrepreneurial process is the accessibility of valuable information. For refugees, the Swedish system comes off as bureaucratic and in order to cope with this, refugees can turn to expert institutions as well as Swedish friends who are familiar with the system. The key to valuable information has proven to be through mastering the Swedish language, and interactions with natives.

Transnational entrepreneurship allows refugees to utilize their networks and resourced in the most effective way, allowing the refugee an opportunity to be competitive, which under other circumstances might not have been possible. The findings recommend more attention to be given to the individual’s skills and interest when first arriving to Sweden, to encourage the engagement in transnational entrepreneurship. The empirical findings suggest additional and more specific help to be given to those people who are showing entrepreneurial tendencies, because by encouraging these people to be more productive, they subsequently give back to the society by paying taxes. Furthermore, this creates an economic growth allowing the society to help even more people. Another positive outcome of transnational entrepreneurship among refugees is the increased interaction which subsequently helps to decrease alienation.

To the one aspiring to engage in entrepreneurial activities, the findings of this study suggest an incremental approach in order to diminish financial issues, and a thorough evaluation of one’s means to develop an appropriate business plan. It is suggested to
spend one or two years active in the Swedish society, learning about the system as well as language.

6.3 Implications for theory

The field of transnational entrepreneurs with a refugee background is a non-exploited area of research. After assessing existing research concerning the field, a theoretical research gap was identified regarding the motives to migration and how this affect the immigrant’s engagement in the entrepreneurial process. The outcome of this study suggests a distance to the homogeneous perspective given transnational entrepreneurs, and instead attaches a dimension of background and motives to the immigrants, as it affects how the process is outlined. The findings in this thesis address how the resources and networks of the transnational entrepreneur are relocated as a consequence of the additional aspect of the immigrants’ background as refugees.

Furthermore, the findings of this thesis have added the dimension of multiple context to Sarasvathy (2008)’s theory of Effectuation and thereby enabled the theory to be applicable on an international business level. By raising attention to the multiple contexts involved in the process of transnational entrepreneurs, and the cross national benefits arising from this phenomenon, the authors hope to have contributed to the interest of further research to be conducted to this new field. Due to the prominent refugee streams, further theoretical frameworks are needed, in order to understand this phenomenon, and to utilize the opportunities deriving from it in forms of societal and economic growth.

6.4 Limitations

During the progression of this thesis the authors found the newness of the topic challenging due to the limited theories available. Due to previous researchers neglecting of transnational entrepreneurs’ motives to migration more distinct limitations regarding motives could have provided more accurate results. Generalizations drawn from four cases could be challenged. However, based on the limited existing research on the phenomenon, all contributions to the field of transnational entrepreneurship add to the establishment of a fertile ground for the field’s future advancement.
Due to the lower number of refugees migrating to Sweden when the interviewees migrated, the accuracy of the result could be questioned due to the contextual differences in Sweden the last decades. The refugee stream present today could arguably have an effect on how the process for transnational refugees with a refugee background is advanced.

6.5 Future research

The authors to this thesis encourage and emphasize the importance of future studies to be conducted in the field of transnational entrepreneurship. Due to the limited research of the field the possibilities for future research is prominent. The discussed limitations to this study suggest future topics to address. The authors have identified two areas of specific interest for further research:

1. Comparative study focusing on entrepreneurs with a refugee background engaging in traditional entrepreneurship in comparison to transnational entrepreneurship.
2. Quantitative study focusing on immigrants migrating of positive reasons tendency to engage in entrepreneurship in comparison refugees.

To conclude this thesis the authors would like to stress, based on the premises of their findings, the intriguing and fascinating characteristics of each individual, as well as the topic of this thesis. Diamonds are made everywhere, and each diamond constitutes of a numerous set of facets, many of them still to be revealed.
7 References

7.1 Interview Participants

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2. Jafari, Arash, founder and owner of *Persian carpet store*. Face-to-face interview [05-09-2016].
3. Noori, Ikramini, founder and owner of *Ikramini*. Face-to-face interview [05-11-2016].
4. Le, Phu, founder and previous owner of *Soya AB*, and five other businesses. Face-to-face interview [05-09-2016].

7.2 Published Sources


7.3 Electronic Sources


International Organization of Migration (IOM) (2015). *Key migration terms.* Available at: https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms [Assessed: 04-12-2016].


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7.4 Figures and Tables

Figure 1. *The Effectuation Process* (Sarasvathy & Dew 2005). Page 18.
Figure 2. *Conceptual Framework* (Authors of this thesis 2016). Page 21.
Figure 3. *Revised Conceptual Framework* (Authors of this thesis 2016). Page 62.

Table 1. *Operationalization* (Authors of this thesis 2016). Page 31.
8 Appendix 1

Interview guide

Background information
1. Is it ok if we record this interview?
2. Do you which to be anonymous?
3. Brief information about yourself (Name, age, country of origin, time living in Sweden, reason for migration)
4. What did you do in your home country before you arrived to Sweden?
5. What is your business, how is it linked to your home country, how long have you been operating the business,
6. Who is your main customer?
7. Why did you decide to start your company?
8. Why did you choose to include your home country in your business?

Means
9. How have your home country affected you?
10. How have your host country affected you?
11. Have your background as a refugee affected your means (Who you are, what you know, whom you know)? If yes, in what way?
12. What were the most essential factors to you in the process of starting your business?
13. Where there any specific parts that were particularly difficult? How did you overcome these difficulties?
14. Since you started your business have you seen any change in yourself as a person? (If yes, in what way?)

Goals
15. What was your main goal when you started your company?
16. What role did your home country play when establishing the goal?
17. What role did your host country play when establishing the goal?
18. Have your goals changed since the start? If yes, in what way?
19. What do you consider your competitive advantage?
Interactions

20. Which people have been most important for the establishment and growth of your business? (Have there been any significant relations in your home/host country?)

21. Can you describe your relationship to these people? What have these relations contributed with to your business?

22. Have you received any support from governmental organizations in your host or home country?

23. Where did you find your financial support to start the business?

24. What are the benefits/downsides of engaging in relationships?

Commitments

25. How do you maintain long term relations in host/home country?

26. What is your most important business relationship? (How long has it been for?)

27. How have your long term relations affected your business?

Concluding questions

28. Is there any information that you know now that you which you would have known when you first started your business?

29. Have your engagement in entrepreneurship affected your integration process in Sweden?

30. Would you do anything differently if you could do it again?

31. Is there anything that we have not yet talked about that you would like to add?