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REFUGEE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS CAREER 'RE'CONSTRUCTION: A DUAL EMBEDDEDNESS PERSPECTIVE (SUMMARY)

Yi Jiang

ESCP Europe, yjiang@escpeurope.eu

Caroline Straub Bern

University of Applied Science, Switzerland

Kim Kyver

University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

**REFUGEE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS CAREER 'RE'CONSTRUCTION:
A DUAL EMBEDDEDNESS PERSPECTIVE**

Yi Jiang, ESCP Europe, France

Caroline Straub, Bern University of Applied Science, Switzerland

Kim Klyver, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Principal Topic

In 2015, over 4.7 million refugees have made their ways to the EU. The refugee immigration is associated with serious challenges of integration in Europe. The focus of our study is to understand whether and how refugees become entrepreneurs to 're'construct their career in host countries. To address this question, conceptually, we borrow the concept of dual embeddedness, defined as simultaneous embeddedness in cultural norms, values and learned routines originating from the home and host country (Drori et al., 2009), as a theoretical lens to shed new insights into the extant career construction theory. This is because career construction theory does not sufficiently incorporate different perspectives on the phenomenon of refugees under investigation. It is applied in a rather stable environment (Savickas et al., 2009; Savickas, 2005), and does not take radical disruption into account (Merino-Tejedor et al., 2016; Guan et al., 2016).

Method

Empirically, we apply a comparative case study design (Eisenhardt, 1989). We selected and interviewed 11 refugees in Germany with an intention to become entrepreneurs. This empirical setting provided us with a compelling empirical research context in that entrepreneurship is becoming more and more prevalent for refugee integration, in comparison with employment engagement in the labor market (The Economist, 2017). We observed refugee entrepreneurs networking strategy through a dual embeddedness lens and examine how it is linked to career reconstruction outcomes.

Results and Implications

By studying how refugees use their networks to reconstruct their careers in host countries through entrepreneurship, we contribute to career construction theory in two ways. First, we challenge the taken-for-granted assumption in career construction theory that jobs are there to be discovered and taken. We propose that refugees can create new job opportunities when they reconstruct their career. With this new theoretical insight into the career construction literature, we offer two mechanisms: (1) information searching (Shane, 2000), and (2) willingness to cope with uncertainty (McMullen and Shepherd, 2006) to theorize how focus and interactions of host and home social networks (Drori et al., 2010; Kloosterman, 2010) can have implication on the degree of refugee career reconstruction.

CONTACT: Yi Jiang; yjiang@escpeurope.eu; (T): +33 659268173; 79 Avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France.