

ABSTRACT

This thesis research focuses on the experiences of Syrian newcomers and their path to success. Exploring the relation between tourism and migration in the Dutch tourism and leisure industry, the current thesis enhances the understanding of the complex processes that are involved in newcomer entrepreneurship. Since this research considers newcomers as active actors, their opportunities are explored through the Asset Vulnerability Framework. These issues are approached from a 'mixed embeddedness' perspective. The main question posed is: what experiences do newcomer entrepreneurs have on their way to success in the Dutch tourism and leisure industry? This will be answered by the following research questions: what are the assets and strategies used by newcomers in setting up and maintaining their business? What role does the government/ do NGO's have in this process? And how are these related to entrepreneurial success? The current research adds to the existing body of knowledge with the following points: 1) newcomer businesses are essentially the same as non-newcomer business in the sense that one has to offer a good product and service in order to survive; 2) rules and regulations regularly undermine TE's success when they should aim to stimulate it; 3) TE's are resilient and capable of making business happen despite unhelpful institutions, which leads to the following point that; 4) bureaucracy and language issues do generally not stand in the way of success; and 5) TE's often make use of heterogeneous networks, not so called exclusively 'ethnic' ones.

Consuming diversity
(Im)possibilities for newcomer entrepreneurs within the
Dutch tourism and leisure industry

Master thesis
Tourism and Culture

Leonoor Flierman
Maarten de Pourcq

Arts and Culture
Radboud University
2017-2018

1st July 2018

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank the people who took the time to talk to me. Despite their busy schedules, they told me their life stories, their securities and insecurities, their wins and their struggles. I was trusted with their personal views on life without expecting anything in return.

I would also like to thank Maarten de Pourcq, who carefully and constructively helped me through the process of writing.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my friends and family who are always there and my mom and dad, who look down from above.

Utrecht, 1st July 2018

Introduction

Migration and tourism

Walking into the former Amsterdam jail to interview a Syrian entrepreneur, I felt a sense of out-of-placeness. The jail was recently rechristened to a refugee center, now encompassing several initiatives set up by refugees or the refugee community. Although the public debate on the refugee flows had become heated, I had never been to a refugee center before. The art exposition in the building had just closed: the "Temporary Museum" aimed to connect the refugee center to society in an alternative way. I, myself, tried to make a connection with J., a Syrian entrepreneur, by finding out how he had experienced his stay in Holland so far in general and with the relevant institutions specifically. He immediately linked the integration system and building up a new life to meaningful work:

"I started reading about entrepreneurship in English because I didn't know Dutch and then translating it into Arabic and I felt like starting to share it with refugees that were in the camp with me (...). So, I started meeting with these guys. First, laws and regulations and then discussing what is special or different about doing business in this country. What are the soft skills you need to do business here. I know these guys, a lot of those I was talking to know how to make money. But they don't understand the etiquette of the people doing business here, that will make it easier for them to do so."

As the above quote partially shows, newcomers in general and refugees specifically deal with an array of issues. After having migrated, most newcomers have to process and recover from the flee/journey here, accepting to probably never being able to go back to their home country, often dealing with being separated from family and friends, with war traumas, and so on. The obstacles experienced by newcomers participating in a Toronto research while establishing their current business were financing; renting a place; marketing and market penetration; government regulation; lack of information; no Canadian experience or connection; product availability;

language or culture, and/or perceived discrimination; uncooperative community; and a lack of family support or weak partner (Texeira et.al. 2007: 182).

The ways in which people start a new life is as diverse as human nature itself. Starting a new life from scratch and consequently, succeeding a business in a new environment is highly admirable and also an important part of integration. This thesis research focuses on the experiences of Syrian newcomers (one participant born in the Netherlands) have setting up an entrepreneurship in the tourism and leisure industry, which assets and strategies they use and which obstacles they encounter. Exploring the relation between tourism and migration in the Dutch tourism and leisure industry, the current thesis enhances the understanding of the complex processes that are involved in trans-nationalist entrepreneurship (TE).

‘Syrianness’ and the market

One of the ways in which newcomers differentiate themselves in the market is by expressions of their cultural heritage. Commercial expressions of cultural diversity attract the attention of mass tourists (Rath 2007: 9). For instance, Arab looking letters on signs of an establishment are easy to distinguish from ‘Western’ establishment exteriors. The attraction of tourists is facilitated by a society dominated by branding and consumerism. A brand is „an impression perceived in a client’s mind of a product or a service. It is the sum of all tangible and intangible elements, which makes the selection unique” (Moilanen and Rainisto 2009: 6). As an entrepreneur, one has to brand that which one is selling. The participants in this research sell an experience defined by, what I would call, ‚Syrian-ness’, a term developed in the current research. This is an essential part of the identity of their brand (2009: 7). Because of this ‚Syrian-ness’ (of a restaurant, falafel place, etc.) it can be said that it is as much place branding as it is product branding: a place of ‚Syrian-ness’ in a Dutch city centre. In this sense, it is a place within a place and place-within-a-place-branding. From a metonymic perspective, the product of a Syrian restaurant (Syrian food) can stand for the broader whole of Syria or even newcomers, other countries and ‚Otherness’ in general. This will be further explored in chapter one.

Because Rath's work forms an important theoretical part of the current thesis, an introduction of this academic is appropriate. Jan Rath has an MA degree in cultural anthropology and urban studies and is professor in Urban Sociology at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). He has a special interest in post-migratory processes and (the interrelation with) the fast-changing social and physical environments of urban areas. Concerning the theme of TE he can be viewed as having a positive and promoting stance. He has provided research insights on policy improvements and has showed the importance of the wider political economy and the institutional context. The latter he has done by doing comparative international research, amongst others. Concerning the Netherlands, he has also written on TE and the interrelations with neighborhood change (socio-economical and infrastructural). Another important addition he has made to the existing body of knowledge is the notion that immigrants don't have a standard identity (since they are not one group, for instance).

A host and a guest

One of the reasons Syrian TE is interesting is because these individuals would traditionally be seen as a guest (in a receiving country), and now takes on the role of host (in their leisure businesses). His client, then, might well be the individual that would 'normally' be called the host but actually takes on the role of guest when visiting a, for example, Syrian restaurant in Amsterdam. Here we see an interplay of tourism and migration phenomena, manifested in a consumerist setting. Consumer society, according to Bauman, stratified along one's „degree of mobility“- dividing society into tourists and vagabonds: those who live by never satisfying their consumerist desire while adventuring; and those who „happen to be thrown out from the site they would rather stay in“ (1996: 86). In his quest on a global, all-encompassing analysis of a mobility-defined world, his categorization and implications of mobility are too simplistic and polarized by extremes. For instance, tourists supposedly have a „horror of the vagabonds“ (1996: 96) and tourist life wouldn't be that enjoyable if the vagabonds wouldn't be around to show the alternative (1996: 98). The researcher of the present thesis holds a less sinister and perhaps more idealistic view on the matter, convinced of the idea that newcomers were, of course, forced to migrate but are not to be despised (nor pitied).

This idealistic view by the researcher is not limited to the 'vagabond' matter. In general, I have the conviction TE is a positive phenomenon with consequences that benefit both integration and social, political and economical matters for the receiving country. Examples are diversification and growth of the economic market, integration and an opportunity for members of the receiving country to perceive newcomers as active members of society.

There are several ways of approaching TE. In their sociological analysis of place advantage of migrant groups, Hall and Rath discuss urban tourism as an outcome for ethnic groups who 'stayed behind' in the city areas since they have not had the socio-economic opportunity to move to suburban areas. Theories on ethnic entrepreneurship are spread across an horizon of what seem to be extremes: "human emancipation and possibility" versus "social entrapment and impossibility" (Bun and Hui 1995: 127 in Brettell & Alstat 2007: 384). Taking up entrepreneurship is explained by cultural and structural models. Structural models point to causes of unemployment and a lack of perspective because of a language barrier or discrimination (Hall & Rath 2007: 8) (Brettell & Alstat 2007: 383). This is called the "disadvantage hypothesis" (Min and Bozorgmehr 2003 in Brettell & Alstat 2007: 383). Cultural models point to beliefs and values that someone turns to in order to obtain and maintain business, including "ethnic networks" (2007: 383). Since this research considers newcomers as active actors, their opportunities are explored through the Asset Vulnerability Framework (further discussed in chapter three).

Even so, it cannot be denied that migration can go hand in hand with an array of social, political and economical issues. Mobility is a defining aspect of today's society. (Mass) immigration into Western countries is and has been one of the tone-setting developments within our globalized world. The diversity of the immigrant population in Europe is increasing in terms of not only origin but also length of stay, educational achievement and socioeconomic position (Rath et.al. 2016: 162). For instance, the number of Syrian immigrants increased from 8.620 in 2014 to 20.990 in 2015: an

increase of 243,5%.¹ Dozens and dozens of news articles on Syrian entrepreneurship in Holland touch upon the sudden and size-able increase of new businesses. TE highly effects cities economies (Rath et.al 2016; Tillaart 2007). It also positively adds to society by "new knowledge and heterogeneity they bring into the system", therefore possibly triggering "knowledge spillover, innovation, and new product development in a country" (Solvoll 2015: 8). The Chambre of Commerce (KvK) terms the phenomenon a "remarkable increase" in their 2015 annual overview.² Apart from continuous migration waves and accompanying developments, the tourism industry is growing continuously and is reaching historical numbers. Travel experiences become more complex as globalization developments such as migration continue to develop.

Tourism and migration are both defined in terms of spatial mobility (Sherlock 2001: 279) (Hall & Rath 2007: 3) (McRae 2003: 243) and are "{both contributing to} the production and the consumption of urban places" (Hall & Rath 2007: 3). Tourism and migration entail moving between places because of push and pull factors (Sherlock 2001: 278). Although theories on 'ethnic' entrepreneurship (Ram, Monder & Jones 2008) and the interrelations between tourism, migration and ethnic diversity continue to develop, they lack theoretical sophistication. The dynamics between the refugee crisis and the impacts on tourism is barely touched in the literature. This thesis seeks to add more information to and extend the knowledge of the interrelation between tourism and migration by analyzing the transformation of immigrants succeeding as tourism entrepreneurs and pitfalls herein. It is stated that 'ethnic' entrepreneurship can function as an integration strategy, economic activity being key (Rath 2011: 96) (Solvoll 2015). The job market can often be discriminatory and entrepreneurship then functions as a means for upward mobility (Solvoll 2015: 6). Newcomers that are self-employed generally have a higher income than those under payroll circumstances (Solvoll 2015: 6). Entrepreneurship can function as a route of integration and a way to

¹ "Syrië, arbeid en gezinsmigratie", Tableau Public, <https://public.tableau.com/profile/centraal.bureau.voor.de.statistiek#!/vizhome/DashboardImmigratie/Welkom>, accessed on 28th January 2018. The reasons for migration: work, refugee, family migration and otherwise/unknown.

² "Bedrijfsleven 2015: jaaroverzicht ondernemend Nederland", https://www.kvk.nl/download/Jaaroverzicht%20ondernemend%20Nederland%202015%20DEF_tcm109-414629.pdf, accessed on 28th January 2018.

establish a successful trade market with developing countries (Rath 2011: 95) (Rath 2007: 9).³ It is, however, not yet proven to be a means to upward mobility. This increases the importance of research on Syrian entrepreneurship and how it can be a positive contribution to individuals' lives and society. In Amsterdam, EE ('ethnic' entrepreneurship) contains 32,5% of the total amount of businesses (Rath 2011: 33).

Definitions and research questions

The terms 'ethnic'/'migrant entrepreneurship' are often used by authors. This, however, cannot be taken for granted because the term 'ethnic' is very dubious on itself because everyone has an ethnicity. Therefore, in this research, the target group will be referred to as either 1) TE: trans-nationalist entrepreneurs(hip)⁴ or 2) newcomer(s) (entrepreneurs). A newcomer is defined by his relative 'newness' to the receiving country (in comparison to non-migrants). An entrepreneur can be defined as "a person in effective control over a commercial undertaking for more than one client over a significant period of time" (Rath & Swagerman 2016: 53). In Europe, municipalities hold different definitions of transnationalism entrepreneurship, dependent on whether they have a generic or specific policy towards entrepreneurship. Some municipalities define it by ethnicity, some by nationality and others by immigration background. The municipality of Amsterdam conducts a generic policy and has no specific definition but manifests an understanding of TE as "first- or second-generation non-Western entrepreneurs" (Rath 2011: 111).

In this research, the following questions are posed:

What experiences do newcomer entrepreneurs have on their way to success in the Dutch tourism and leisure industry?

- 1) What are the assets and strategies used by newcomers in setting up and maintaining their business?**
- 2) What role does the government/ do NGO's have in this process?**

³ Although Rath (2011) makes recommendations for (all levels of) governance, the implications are assumed to be relevant for non-governmental parties as well.

⁴ Both of the terms 'TE' and 'TE's' will return numerous times in this research. 'TE's' is used for the reader's convenience, making it an easy differentiation between Trans-nationalist Entrepreneurship and Trans-nationalist Entrepreneurs.

3) How are these related to entrepreneurial success?

Approach

These issues are approached from a 'mixed embeddedness' perspective: the assumption that TE processes manifest in an interaction between individual capabilities and the larger political, economical and social structure. The goal of this research is, firstly, to enlighten the highly burdened associations with the term migration. Secondly, this research provides the opportunity to deepen the insight and add to the basic knowledge of the interrelation between tourism and migration. Instead of speaking in terms of services given by NGO's, this research perceives those services as ways of empowerment: newcomers are not helpless, rather, they are active actors. Making use of said services helps individuals to familiarize themselves with and become independent within the local/national institutional infrastructure and socio-cultural and socio-economical context.

NGO's are based on the premise that they can provide ways of empowerment where governmental forces cannot. Governmental policies throughout Europe lack on three important aspects. Firstly, they rarely have an economic or socioeconomic orientation (such as finding a job, starting a career or setting up a business) (Rath & Swagerman 2016: 164). Secondly, most cities researched decided to aim at 'deficiencies' of TE's instead of their opportunity structure (Rath & Swagerman 2016: 165) (this will be touched upon in the first chapter). Thirdly, the target group is not familiar with available services and/or are not very inclined to ask for services from outside and both governmental as non-governmental parties have difficulties reaching out to the target group (Rath & Swagerman 2016: 163). The latter seems a matter of awareness and/or other undefined restraints that could be related to cultural matters.

Methodology

This research aims to provide a practical framework for governmental and non-governmental institutions as a solution for or improvement of the above complications.

Semi-structured quantitative interviews were held with ten participants, who were recruited online or via networks of already contacted participants (the so-called 'snowball method'). One of the ways participants have been found online has been via Facebook, since not all enterprises had a fully completed website. Full contact information could be found on their Facebook page. When visiting a specific page on Facebook, the site refers you to similar pages on the right side of the screen. In that way, part of the participants has been contacted. Participants were situated throughout the country: Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Hilversum and Nijmegen. The interviews had a duration of at least 45 minutes: this was necessary in order to get a sufficient and 'emic' understanding (as far as the latter is possible) of their experiences and situations. Beforehand, a interview list with possible questions was made and adjusted if necessary (question list to be consulted in the annex). Each interview was recorded with the participants' permission and put on paper afterwards. Before starting the series of interviews with participants, an interview/sit-down with the concept manager of Pitztop was held. Pitztop is an NGO that facilitates encounters between newcomers and non-newcomers in order to create possibilities for both parties by opening up communication between them. The interview with Emmylou (concept developer) functioned as a way of orientating on the subject, to provide practical context in the Netherlands and has been used to set up the question list.

As all participants except one were not born in the Netherlands, some of them did not have fluent proficiency in Dutch, of which one might argue it decreases reliability/validity. However, the author's experience has been that a reciprocal understanding has always been achieved. Asking for clarification was one of the ways to deal with language obstacles, after which the participant or the researcher would paraphrase. The participants made sure to correct me if I had misunderstood something after paraphrasing. This points to prove my conviction of clear communication between the participants and me. When this could not be achieved, interviews were held in English, since the participants were generally quite well educated in English in Syria. By including one non-newcomer in the participant group, certain patterns in the newcomer group can be checked and doing so, increasing internal and external validity.

The data collected from the interviews were processed in NVivo: a qualitative data analysis program. 'Nodes' were essential in this program: subjects or themes of which the researcher wants to gain understanding. By creating a 'node tree' (a list of main and subsidiary issues) and dividing interview text fragments in the relevant nodes, an overview of the data content was created. NVivo also has the possibility of creating word frequency results, hierarchy charts and mind maps. In the Insight chapter, results are discussed per node.

Subsequently, there were three general issues concerning the methodological integrity of the research. As is the case with most surveys or (qualitative) interviews, social desirability in the answers of participants was an issue. Especially with questions on Dutch (institutional/political/cultural) hospitality and other subjects concerning the country or people that received them, participants might have been careful with answering negatively. A second general issue was the fact that the participant group is all-male. If the participant group would have contained a mix of sexes, different results might have come to the fore. If the researcher would have had the opportunity to interview female entrepreneurs within the target group, she would have been more than happy to. However, the demographics of the research group make this very difficult. One female owner was contacted but due to personal circumstances, an actual interview was not possible. Third, this research concerns people working in different sectors: the restaurant business, the night scene/going out corner and the tourism sector (eight, one and one participant(s) respectively). This might negatively effect the reliability. On the other hand, it gives a more general view on processes and dynamics within TE.

The first chapter will give a purely theoretical outline of research on TE. Concepts of agency and structure, branding, authenticity, diversity and cultural heritage give a wider context within which we can theorize TE. Chapter two continues this laying out of context and concretizes it by discussing research on assets and strategies used by newcomer entrepreneurs, as well as obstacles they encounter in real life. Chapter three discusses research results on assets, strategies and obstacles experienced by the participants.

1

Trans-nationalist entrepreneurship in theory

A scope of (im)possibilities

In order to gain a deeper insight in TE and its processes, this chapter lays out theoretical grounds in order to understand obstacles and possibilities/advantages that TE's encounter/have. These include the following aspects: larger socio-economic structures, branding, authenticity, intangible cultural heritage and consumption of the 'Other'. Lastly is an explanation of the Asset Vulnerability Framework through which we will be able to partially understand the practicalities of newcomer (im)possibilities.

Larger structures

TE: agency and structure

Throughout history, streams of migration have gone hand in hand with relatively high numbers of independent businesses among newcomers (Ram, Monder & Jones 2008: 354). Studies on TE started from the 1950's in the United States and from the 1980's in European countries (European Commission 2011: 11). Most theories on TE stem from sociology and disadvantage and cultural theory are two major ones within the field. The first theory claims that newcomers lack human capital (language, education and work experience) and are disadvantaged in such a way that they are steered onto the path of self-employment (Volery 2007). Several authors argue that the main reason to take up on entrepreneurship is because of experiences of blocked mobility and discrimination in the mainstream labour market (the latter being the array of employee/employer-based work). Volery righteously delegitimizes this theory by stating that entrepreneurship would then be an explanation not in terms of success but to avoid unemployment, pushing the discourse into one focused on informality and illegality. The cultural theory suggests that members of diaspora communities are

avored with certain characteristics that make entrepreneurship easier, such as an 'ethnic' network, prone to hard work, acceptance of risk, "compliance with social value patterns", etc. (2007: 33). Cultural theory seems to positively discriminate ethnic minorities, for as it turns the sails in terms of capability, it still considers newcomers as essentially and structurally different than members of the receiving community. In this time and day, one can easily discredit this theory by turning the tables and proning the question if this theory would have existed when more 'Western' people migrated to 'non-Western' countries instead of the other way around. The ethnic resource model holds a similar perspective to the cultural theory, assuming that certain groups are prone to having certain characteristics that increase chances of successful entrepreneurship (2007: 33).

Most studies on ethnic entrepreneurship focus on the paths to entrepreneurial success. Others state a likewise argument, focusing on cultural endowments (such as risk-taking behavior) or even blurring the differentiation between biology and culture with phrases such as "the entrepreneurial talent of ethnic minority firms" (Shaw et. al. 2004: 1986). In the eighties, discourse on TE was mainly focused on 'ethnic resources' such as values around family businesses, industriousness, an 'ethnic' network based on trust and familiarity, cheap labour, loyal customers, etc (Ram, Monder & Jones 2008: 354). Since then, an opposition of schools has emerged that are divided around the importance of ethnocultural factors. Critics on the ethnocultural approach on TE have pointed to the importance of the opportunity structure, which implies that "postindustrial urbanism, with its hiving off of manufacturing and its unprecedented demand for personal services, is a fertile environment for small enterprise of all kinds, and EMBs, in particular" (EMB's being Ethnic Minority Business; Ram, Monder & Jones 2008).

Although cultural factors, to all probability, play a role in TE, it should not underpin our understanding of it. Alongside value judgements and stereotyping, there are two important objections to sustaining such an ethnic resources model. The first is that certain behavior patterns are ascribed to factors of ethnic identity and culture while it is actually attributable to concepts such as class (the "fallacy of ethnic exceptionalism"). The second point of critique on the ethnocultural approach is that it undermines the importance of the greater structures in which TE's operate: "the

external world of markets, and other key institutions and actors" (Aldrich et al, 1984; Jones and McEvoy, 1986; Jones et al, 1989; 1992; Nowikowski, 1984; Ram, 1992; 1994; Virdee, 2006 in Ram, Monder and Jones 2008: 356). Waldinger (1990) offered a reconciliation of opposing schools by proposing the *interaction model*, which combines agency and structure and implies that TE outcomes are a product of an interaction between ethnocultural/socio-cultural and politico-economic factors (Rath 2007: 4) (Ram, Monder & Jones 2008).

In line with the ethnocultural approach, certain researchers focused on the concept of social embeddedness, which implies that individuals' business are (partially) facilitated by ethnically specific networks, to which trans-nationalists have privileged access (Rath 2007: 4) (Hall & Rath 2007: 15). However, because this social embeddedness is highly dependent on regulation and market dynamics, researchers have proposed the concept of 'mixed embeddedness'. Mixed embeddedness highlights the socio-economical and political environment as opposed to 'ethnic culture' (Ram, Monder & Jones 2008) (van den Tillaart 2007: 8) (Hall & Rath 2007: 15). Mixed embeddedness, just as the interaction model, takes into account both social relations and wider political and economic structures. Although this theory was backed up by an extensive constituency, the concept of *social embeddedness* continued to thrive in literature. This research will hold mixed embeddedness and the interaction model as part of the framework of analysis.

As previously stated in the introduction, a rapport by the European Commission (2011) concludes that governmental institutions throughout Europe are hesitant whether they need to focus, policy-wise, on 'deficiencies' of ethnic entrepreneurs themselves or their opportunity structure. The term 'deficiencies' implies that a state of 'having a culture' originating from another country undermines entrepreneurial success while the opposite might actually be the case. Next is a discourse discussion on marketing strategies defined by culture and 'ethnicity'.

Branding diversity

Authenticity and cultural heritage

Most of the research on TE tourism marketing focuses on space and place, the latter being the establishment itself and/or the neighborhoods where they are located. Concepts such as 'zoned ethnicity' (Rath 2007: 10) are developed from a perspective that focuses on deliberate expressions of culture and ethnicity. 'Zoned ethnicity' is also termed as 'ethnoscape': "landscapes of those who constitute the shifting world in which we live", referring to today's world dominated by processes of globalization (Appadurai in Shaw et. al. 2004: 1984). Trans-nationalist entrepreneurship in certain areas supposedly cannot succeed by mere presence of immigrants on itself but by facilitating a certain 'ethnic flavor' (Hall & Rath 2007: 17). The following facilities do entail such qualities: book and music stores, gift shops, travel agents, grocery shops, ethnic supermarkets and especially restaurants (2007: 17). Restaurants have the ability to brand themselves by putting forward the country-specific kitchen from which they serve their food. This phenomenon where a sign (e.g. Arab letters or baklava) represent a country-specific kitchen, a culture or people is called metonymy, first introduced by Barthes in this sense. Metonymy is a concept within branding theory whereby part of an entity represents the whole. By stressing, for instance, a Syrian kitchen in marketing communication the food is representative for the whole of 'Syrian-ness' (a term created during the process of this research). Barthes exemplified this with the *Panzani* poster: the tomato signifies *Italianicity* (1977: 50). Another example is New York's skyline or the Eiffeltower representing New York and Paris (Tuan in Smith 2005: 403). The same principle is facilitated in country-specific restaurants with an „ethnic flavor“. However, there is no objective reality, which implies that images are not only located at the individual level but the social level as well.

At this point, we stumble upon an interesting interplay of authenticity and consumption of the 'Other'. Research on Arab-American owners of Arab-themed restaurants in the United States shows how the concepts of authenticity and marketed self-representation come into play in newcomer entrepreneurship. Those restaurant owners,

„especially those that were intended to serve a general audience beyond the Arab American community, have invoked Orientalist tropes and stereotypes through the aesthetic of an ancient, exotic Arabia in order to sell the American public a putatively authentic cultural experience” (Stiffler 2018: 91).

This is what Wang calls the toured ‘Other’ (1999 in Park 2014: 64): a process in which tourists’ expectations and beliefs are projected upon the out-group that is associated with the visited destination (or space/place in general). Ethnic-specific restaurants can be seen as a form of commodification. Commodification is “a process by which ‘things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, hereby becoming goods and services” (Cohen 1988 in Park 2014). Heritage has often been accused of exploiting the past for commercial purposes and therefore decreasing the level of authenticity (Park 2014: 70). Authenticity is one of the most debated themes within tourism studies and the industry. It can be described as a construct and flexible concept subjected to tourists’ expectations (Park 2014: 61, Bruner 1994). In general, American-Arab restaurant owners decorate their establishments with images of camels, *ouds* and *arqilehs*, among others. This is what the tourist/consumer has come to see in terms of ‘Arabness’. The restaurant owners commodify Orientalist imagery, rhetoric and aesthetics that is aligned with a general public understanding of ‘Arabness’ in order to attract that public. Stiffler terms it as „self-Orientalism”, „mobilizing and modifying” Edward Saïd’s framework (1978). Identity-related adaptation for the sake of touristic development (in various forms) is also termed ‘postmodern simulation’: the explicit utilization of cultural identity in the branding of places (Hall & Rath 2007: 13). So, as Park states: “heritage is constantly reconstructed and reinterpreted in an attempt to meet the specific demands of tourists and reflect the socio-cultural changes of the contemporary world” (2014: 1). This is a constructivist notion of authenticity and, as I will show, the participants in this research manifest such a form of authenticity. Some academics differentiate between a ‘historical authenticity’ (‘essential’) and ‘touristic authenticity’ (‘constructive’) (Park 2014: 72). Stiffler handles the precariousness of anyone claiming anything to be purely Arab (including representations) well by using the term authenticity as

„to describe an Arabness (a cultural identity) that Arab Americans construct, which is authentic *only in that it reflects certain U.S. popular culture constructs of an authentic Arab*” (2014: 92) (Italics mine).

This is highly in sign with Medina’s statement that authenticity is “socially constructed and positioned through the collaborative production of culture in negotiations between tourist and tourees” (2003 in Park 2014: 72). Authenticity, in this sense, is understood as a construct that aligns itself according to the perception of the ‚out-group’. The (authenticity of) heritage “is not a fixed and unchanging entity but a culturally ascribed and socially constructed process” (Park 2014: 1). In a philosophical sense, then, imagination becomes reality.

I do think that the notion of newcomer businesses as exclusively utilizing their heritage as a marketing tool (as Hall & Rath do) might close one’s eyes to what might be the case as well, at least partially: an automatic expression of their cultural identity. The question is whether it can be said that neutrality even exists and the obvious answer is no. As Di Giovine states:

“(…) humans through their recipes, traditions, cultural patterns and manners of living try to re-create {food}’s taste (or creatively play on such re-creations) at every meal. Food thus helps negotiate symbolic and political meanings (Appadurai, 1991; Avieli, 2005) that are integral to identity formation” (2017: 201).

Or as Park makes clear:

“(…) obsession with the past is inextricably bound up with post-industrial social changes in which individuals are often dislocated from families, neighborhood and nations and even one’s former selves” (Park 2014: 7).

This dislocation is obviously very relevant to newcomers. The author assumes that newcomer entrepreneurs do not bring to the fore their cultural heritage as a marketing tool exclusively. This research will deepen insights on this issue.

More than consumption

The physical embodiment (mentioned earlier) of a cultural-ethnic group within this context is interesting. Rath's 'zoned ethnicity' points to the physicality of 'Otherness' and we see the same, although on a smaller level, in Stiffers Arab-American restaurants. Newcomer businesses in the food and leisure/tourism sector seem to cater to experiences beyond those of the gastronomical category. Otherness is represented and experienced in menus, décor and interaction with people. Little Italy (in bigger American cities), for example, even adds the experience of lurking danger (since they are supposedly the home of the Mafia) (Hall & Rath 2007: 12). The seemingly implicitness of embodiment of Otherness within newcomers' tourism enterprises might be inherently consequential of the fact that it entails physical places (restaurants). However, seeing the widely and highly frequently explicit references to a specific culture or ethnicity, one could also argue that a vague concept such as 'Arabness' might really need this embodiment. In any case, Arab-themed (or any region-themed) restaurants are an embodiment of and for the experience of the imagined 'Otherness'.

Although there has been extensive suspicion towards commodification and it is comparable to the ethnic resources model from the 1980's, Rath argues that articulation of cultural diversity helps foster inclusion and allows boosting of the urban economy (2007: 3). He pleads that commodification of cultural identity features creates opportunities that would otherwise not have existed (2007: 3). Without intentions of undermining Rath's plead for opportunities, the strategy of stressing one's culture and ethnicity, then, would be the only or most promising way for newcomers in becoming independent. One can debate whether that is an actual opportunity or a limitation on itself. Perhaps it is both.

Intangible cultural heritage

As much as individuals are the result of the system they grew up in, culture and cultural aspects are implicitly yet inextricably bound to one's existence. Within this existence, people will express what is part of them. Intangible cultural heritage is defined by UNESCO as

"The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly repeated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity" (2003: 2).

The participants, working in the restaurant, tourism and night scene, all have to do with hospitality. The practices, knowledges and skills that are part of intangible cultural heritage in general also applies for hospitality perceptions specifically. In this research, intangible cultural heritage will be expected to be seen in: the decor (also for the tourism and night scene participants); experiences and stories shared; preparing of the food; hospitality; and ways and expressions of marketing. Part of culture is its heritage, of which food "factors into the mediatory- yet productive- nature of cultural heritage" (2017: 202).

Food is a form of cultural heritage, even a "primary marker of cultural heritage" (di Giovine 2017: 213), and tourists are "physically moved to engage sensorially with heritage" (Harrison and Hitchcock in di Giovine). An asset example of culturally determined heritage concerning food is craftsmanship in cooking. As we will see in chapter three, some restaurants have cooks with craftsmanship from certain places in Syria that are associated with that craftsmanship. Hence, on national but also on local level "food necessarily takes on the chemical components of the environment in which it is cultivated - what is often considered *terroir*, or the "taste of a place"" (Truck 2008

in Di Giovine). As is the case with newcomer entrepreneurs in the restaurant business, this taste occurs far from its place of origin.

Apart from food, culture and expressions of it are not necessarily expected to be found anywhere in the expressions of TE businesses, however, one should be open to it in order to notify them. Participants working in another sector than the restaurant business might express their culture in a different way, perhaps more implicitly. This might be visible on the level of norms and values. Still, depending on the business, this expression can be explicit, by the 'look' of the physicality of the undertaking, for instance.

Asset Vulnerability Framework

The asset vulnerability framework is a way of analyzing *livelihood* strategies. The *livelihood approach* is one of the multidimensional approaches of poverty which, in contrast to more traditional approaches, does not only focus on the economical dimension but other aspects as well. Although the current thesis is not on the subject of poverty, the asset vulnerability framework is very relevant for understanding the (im)possibilities of newcomer entrepreneurs for it focuses on what one can use to improve his situation, whichever situation one is in.

The central assumption within the *livelihood* approach is that, when one is disadvantaged, the focus should be on the resources, possibilities and creativity instead on what is lacking. The approach takes into account vulnerability, risks, 'assets' and the interrelations hereof (Moser en Dani 2008: 58). One of the ways in which the asset vulnerability framework (AVF) uses the connection between vulnerability and assets is to explain how people adjust to a changing context. The central idea within the AVF is that individuals (or households) are managers of complex 'asset portfolios', managed inventively to minimize vulnerability and keep safe their livelihood (Moser 1996, 1998: 1). The most important concepts within the AVF is vulnerability, assets, capabilities and strategies. The extensive literature on these subjects reflects a fast

developing conceptual debate on the one hand but results in conceptual misunderstandings and overlapping categories at the same time. The following, therefore, is an explanation of the concepts as understood in this research and the interrelations hereof.

Assets and capabilities

Vulnerability is first and foremost related to the possession and control of assets. Simply put, assets refer to the way individuals use these to create their livelihood and minimize their vulnerability. The more assets one has, the less vulnerable one is (Moser 1998: 3). These can be both material and immaterial, in the form of a car, money, health, education and social networks. The current thesis holds an adjusted definition of Moser's' assets classification (1998: 4). In contrast to many of the other categorization, this definition fits the urban context and contains tangible assets, intangible assets and strategies. Capabilities is a concept fit for reflecting on the opportunity and opportunity structure of newcomer entrepreneurs. These will come to the fore in the third chapter in the form of assets and strategies used. Capabilities are defined as "the abilities to use different assets to cope with shocks and stress (Chambers and Conway 1991). The crucial point here is that the possession of assets/resources are only helpful if one is able to access these. When resources are accessible, they turn into actual assets. Tangible assets in this research contain financial income and savings (under which savings, credit, sent funds) available to the individual. Intangible assets are categorized in (social and professional) network, cultural heritage, working experience, personal attitude, the use of internet and soft skills which helps one to function in the Dutch business environment. As might be obvious, education, skills and working experience is part of human capital. Network is part of social capital, which can be understood as the trust based reciprocity within communities and individuals, and the access to broader institutions within society.

As previously stated, resources are effected by the larger opportunity and infrastructure: access to and use of resources are mainly influenced by policy, organizations and relations between individuals and organizations (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones 2002: 9). Accessibility is crucial and opportunities (capabilities) to use assets is defined by

contextual factors: institutional structures and processes which effect the juridical, social and economical rights of individuals. The opportunities of developing human capital is highly dependent on the access to social and economic infrastructure. This is, on its turn, dependent on the physical distance to, rights of access to and opportunities of being able to afford the relevant services (Siegel 2005). Hence, capabilities refer to the opportunities to respond to a changing environment and converting resources to assets. Examples are being able to acquire services and information; experiment and innovate; compete and work together with others; exploits new resources and situations (Chambers and Conway 1991: 4).

In the next chapter will be illustrated in how far newcomers are able to change resources into assets, use this for their livelihood advantage and in how far the institutional context creates opportunities and maximizes (or minimizes) these. It gives an insight in practicalities 'on the ground', giving an indication and practical context of the real-life situations before we commence the discussion of the insights of the current research.

2

Trans-nationalist entrepreneurship in practice

This chapter explores research outcomes on (in) how (far) newcomers currently (are able to) use assets and apply strategies in practice, and be in constructive contact with governmental and non-governmental institutions. As stated before, this is considered to be essential in their path to socio-cultural-economical integration. This exploration gives us a practical context in order to better comprehend the results from the data analysis in the chapter hereafter. First, statistics and general characteristics of Syrian newcomers in Holland are discussed, for which a June 2018 report by the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau (SCP) is used where more than 3000 Syrian newcomers (residence permit holders) were surveyed in Arab. Then, the larger context is laid out using Kloosterman's opportunity structure typology. The latter is created from a *mixed embeddedness* perspective. After some general information on Syrian entrepreneurs in the Netherlands, an overview is given of the macro-institutional framework TE's find themselves in. To conclude, an indication is made on which assets and strategies are actually used by newcomer entrepreneurs as reported in earlier research. It will appear that TE's face a variety of issues that decrease chances on successful entrepreneurship gravidly. However, capabilities and opportunities are still an important part of the story as well. This chapter creates a practical ground on which the results of chapter three will be embedded in.

Syrians in Holland

In the period of January 2014 and July 2016, 44.000 Syrians received a residence permit (SCP 2018). Of a total of 70.000 newcomers, Syrians are the largest group in that period. Factors concerning individuals that influence integration mentioned by the report that are relevant to this research, are put under the umbrella of 'resources': level of education and proficiency of the Dutch language. The 'receiving society' is also paid attention to by looking at social guidance/support, experiences with policy and

language courses. Integration is a two-way process, not only involving newcomers' willingness but the receiving society's willingness and tolerance as well.

The vast majority of SCP participants believe Holland is a hospitable country to newcomers, where their rights are respected as well as where they get a lot of opportunities (to start a new life). After newcomers become residents in a certain municipality, the social guidance commences, supposedly. Institutions in the bigger cities of the Netherlands are fairly familiar with TE and have developed legal specifications concerning this issue (Tillaart 2007: 16). Each municipality is responsible for the social support in its own territory. One of the ways support is provided is by helping filling in forms, arranging financial procedures, helping with setting up letters, informing newcomers on how the municipality works and taking out healthcare. Apart from that, municipalities are "supposed to" offer help in starting up integration and stimulation in social participation in general (SCP 2018). Finally, since 2017, there is a participation declaration which is meant to inform newcomers on their rights, obligations and the fundamental values of the country. Almost all SCP participants currently receive social support or have had received his. Apparently, the permit holders are very content and only seven percent is dissatisfied with the social support provided (SCP 2018: 21).

The report describes several factors that can be considered as assets (as discussed in the final paragraph in chapter two). Despite the reported contentment, Syrian newcomers have little financial means and a low level of employment. Only 12% has a paid job (SCP 2018: 118). The reason for this low number is because of insufficient "economic capital": insufficient language proficiency, inadequate work experience and Syrian diplomas not being appreciated here. Most of them state not being ready yet to enter the working life because they are concentrated on reuniting with their families, learning the language, getting adjusted to their environment and recovering from the travel here. Therefore, most of them depend on welfare. The SCP mentions that the incongruence between contentment and actual (un)successful integration can be explained by social desirability: probably, the participants do not want to speak badly about the country that has received them. The author of the present thesis is convinced to have experienced the same social desirability in answers on social support. In the

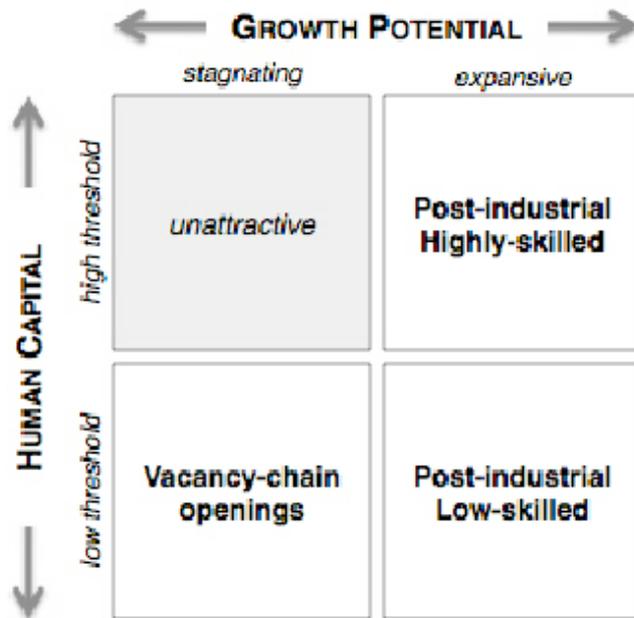
report, experiences with policy are explicitly mentioned as an example: Syrians are not used to being able to express critique on the government.

Most participants have an equal amount of social contacts with Dutch citizens as with other Syrians. Contact with the first mentioned group can help in finding a job, acquiring knowledge of the Dutch social system, improving language proficiency and in feeling included. Contact with other Syrians (“ethnic capital”) can also help in finding their way in the system (SCP 2018: 130).

Only a tenth of the newcomers has made and passed their integration exam. Most of them, however, are dedicated in learning the language by following a language course. Still, most of them think their current proficiency in the language is lacking.

Opportunity structure

Apart from individual equipment, each entrepreneur, newcomer or not, is dependent on the larger context he or she is in. This context can be identified as an opportunity structure, of which markets are an essential aspect (Kloosterman 2016). There are certain conditions to be met in order to be successful. First of all, there has to be a sufficient demand. Second of all, markets have to be accessible for the entrepreneur: e.g., he or she needs to have the resources to enter this market: financial, human, social and ‘ethnic’ capital (Kloosterman 2016: 29). Here we see the mixed embeddedness perspective reflected: TE is framed as individual equipment interrelated to larger structures of politics and economy. Education and work experience is an example of this interrelatedness for it can be a barrier or opportunity. Although Kloosterman’s approach is quite clinical and does not go into entrepreneurs’ experiences from an emic perspective, his typology of the opportunity structure (see table below) seems, for the most part, in line with results from the current thesis. Hence, participants who have a sufficient amount of assets and enter a market that is growing or constant, have more chance of success than in the opposite case. In the next paragraph an outline will be given on Syrian TE’s in the Netherlands specifically.



Syrian entrepreneurs in Holland

The next question is: how do Syrian newcomers achieve entrepreneurial success, using the capital available to them? Twelve percent of working newcomer Syrians in Holland is entrepreneur (SCP: 18). This number is exclusive of people working in family businesses. Linked to the low employment rate, this statistics on entrepreneurs might support Rath's theory of entrepreneurship as a way out of structural barriers.

Macro-institutional context

Amsterdam has been known for its financial and cultural industries. This obviously shapes the context entrepreneurial opportunity structure entrepreneurs find themselves in (2016: 160). Rath et.al. (2016), who did a survey on policy promoting 'ethnic' entrepreneurship in Western and Northern Europe, concluded that overall, this promotion is "far from self-evident" (2016: 163). Not only did the research show that TE "did not play a major role in the overall strategy supporting the integration of immigrants, in fact, we found a marked tendency to stay away from economic issues" (2016: 163).

Laws and regulations in the Netherlands create a shock for TE's, seeing the fact that, in the home country, such issues were much simpler (KIS 2018: 15). Entrepreneurs most of the time have to deal with the chamber of commerce, the trade register or other agencies, zoning laws and consider safety and hygiene standards as determined by law. Bureaucracy can constitute a real obstacle for TE's especially when there is an insufficient proficiency in Dutch or for those who have had poor education (2016: 160). Also, most of the TE's had a hard time receiving loans by banks (or other financial capital). Therefore, initiatives such as "Hands-on Microkrediet" offered an alternative: a loan of 5.000 euros and a coach with entrepreneurial experience (2016: 161).

Apart from the discussed research, the volume of research done on paths of success experienced by newcomer entrepreneurs in relation to policy is far from extensive, let alone for Holland specifically. The present research provides an important addition to this aspect of integration and social success.

Obstacles, assets and strategies

TE's face a series of obstacles due to consequences of the migration process. These include: an insufficiency in the host country's language; a lack of business management skills and competencies (Rath et. al. 2016: 162); insecure legal status; social segregation and loneliness; racism; barriers to family reunification; lack of recognition of qualifications and a lack of support in retraining options (Solvoll 2015: 21). Second and third generation newcomers have less issues with these aspects. Also, TE's have "insufficient connection with the local business culture, limited access to (mainstream) business networks, little understanding of the governmental and non-governmental business-support schemes and so on" (Rath. Et al. 2016: 162). Within the context of assets used by newcomers, Conservation of Resources Theory claims that loss of resources is the primary ingredient of stress due to migration (Hobfoll 2003). Herein, a distinction is made between personal (physical or psychological), social (benefits from personal relationships) and material resources (money or property) (Hobfoll 2003). This resource theory from the psychological corner has been applied to the integration of refugees. In doing so, a fourth typology was created: cultural resources (Ryan et. al.;. 2008) (Bakker 2016). These contain "skills, knowledge and

beliefs that are learned in a particular cultural settings, such as language and occupational skills" (Hobfoll in Bakker 2016: 31). A similar division of resources is made by Rath and Swagerman, resulting in human, social and financial resources (2016: 157). The category of social capital can be described as the 'ethnic' community newcomers supposedly find themselves in. This meaning of social capital goes along with the assumption that these networks are "often intense and reach(es) further than is normally presumed" (Volery 2007: 38). It supposedly helps newcomers in the following processes: "job search, hiring, recruitment and training and organizing information flows between newcomers and settlers" (2007: 38). This is all based on the assumption of newcomers having lesser chance on opportunities. Other assumptions made around the concept of 'ethnic' networks in TE is the back-up of clients it generates and resources for economic capital for setting up their undertaking (Volery 2017). This seems to be in the same line of positive discrimination as cultural theory. As a response to the model of 'ethnic' sources, markets and strategies, Tillaart (2007) rightfully brings the counterargument that practical research has pointed to these 'ethnic' resources and strategies not being as present in each migrant group, not being unique for newcomers, neither it being a guarantee for success (2007: 8). Also, ethnic-cultural perspectives in general (of which cultural theory is one) are based on the assumption that TE is manifested in an economical and institutional vacuum (2007: 8).

According to Conservation of Resources Theory, lost resources need to be regained because social and cultural resources acquired in the country of origin are lost. These concern social contacts and language skills (2016: 31). The current researcher is highly hesitant on the legitimacy of a 'cultural category' in resources. The concept of culture is much too encompassing, dynamic and interrelated to be put in a category next to, for instance, a finance 'box'. A long stay in an asylum centre mainly has a negative impact on human capital: Dutch language proficiency, host country education and work experience in the Netherlands (Bakker 2016: 32).

If we take the above into consideration, combined with Stiffers (2018) research on Arab-American restaurants, one would assume that there are more barriers than opportunities and that cultural heritage is one of the few assets. There is some indication, luckily, that this is definitely not always the case. The assets entrepreneurs

mostly rely on, depends on a combination of factors, of which the type of business and the relevant market are two of the most important (Rath et.al 2016). Easily accessible markets can be a curse and blessing for they have a low threshold but can have a very high competition rate. To be able to survive, entrepreneurs have to put in long hours against low wages (Kloosterman 2016) (Rath & Swagerman 2015: 152). The latter authors call this "low end markets" to which no high grade of capital in any sense is needed; production is "small-scale, low in added value and usually very labour intensive" (2015: 153). To be able to survive in this end of the market, they sometimes make use of informal arrangements in terms of employment (paying a salary below minimum law) or tap into their network for employees (Kloosterman 2016: 34). A way out of this situation is 'breaking out' by tapping into a more promising market. An advantage newcomers have is the differentiation in market supply they can generate. However, offering a 'unique' product related to the country of origin can offer a substantial advantage to non-newcomer businesses. This is most visibly the case for the food and beverage sector as well as restaurants (Tillaart 2007: 9). Newcomer businesses, in these cases, differ themselves highly from non-newcomer businesses in assortment, lay out and presentation (2007: 10). This asset of cultural heritage will return in the next chapter. To the researcher's opinion, the value of this heritage in entrepreneurial survival is reflected in the facts that: 1) these entrepreneurs deliver products and services to people who have been familiar with these from the country of origin and; 2) non-newcomers or other newcomers have learned to appreciate these products and services (2007: 15).

When entrepreneurs enter a high-educated/high-'skilled' realm of business, their chances are as good as indigenous entrepreneurs (Kloosterman 2016: 36). Important herein, however, is having a heterogeneous social network. This creates the opportunity of tapping into more promising markets than just 'ethnic' ones. When one doesn't have this sort of network, chances on survival decrease and are more comparable to those of lower educated TE's.

There is little research shedding light on actual TE assets used. However, research done on Syrian entrepreneurs in Syria shows the following:

- 1) Entrepreneurial orientation is positively increased by education and past business experience (Solvoll 2015: 17);
- 2) 'Social capital' is essentially formed by past experience, professional qualifications, language skills and social networks (2015: 17).

Volery, as one of the few having done research on TE strategies in practice, states that newcomers first acquire the needed capital while still employed (2017: 37).

So far, research results on TE seem more to indicate a discourse in terms of disadvantages rather than advantages. The current thesis aims to turn this around by looking at opportunities and ways of empowerment (upward social mobility). Also, in the end, and perhaps unsurprisingly, one's success depends on a variety of factors, under which the individual him or herself, the receiving society and the newcomer's "migratory and economic incorporation trajectories" (Rath et.al. 2016: 163).

In general, previous research has found that newcomers have insufficient 'economic capital': insufficient language proficiency, inadequate work experience and Syrian diplomas not being appreciated here. Also, bureaucracy can constitute a real obstacle for TE's especially when there is an insufficient proficiency in Dutch or for those who have had poor education. According to these other bodies of research, TE's have "insufficient connection with the local business culture, limited access to (mainstream) business networks, little understanding of the governmental and non-governmental business-support schemes and so on" (Rath et. al. 2016: 162). They mostly enter "low end markets", execute long hours and most often practice uneducated labour. Also, having a heterogeneous social network creates the opportunity of tapping into more promising markets than just 'ethnic' ones. When one doesn't have this sort of network, chances on survival decrease and are more comparable to those of lower educated TE's. These findings have commonalities with the findings in the current research but there are important differences (or alternative findings).

3

Insights

This chapter discusses the insights formed on the basis of ten semi-structured qualitative interviews. The average interview took an hour. The actual data processing was done with tree coding in NVivo. The tree code was set up in order to correspond to the sequence of the research subquestions. Important in this research is that it aims to unravel (un)successful experiences and the road hereto from the perspective of newcomers themselves, in as far as possible. This naturally influences the method of data processing: if a participant talks about bureaucracy in a way that does not apply to his individual case, it won't be assigned to the code 'bureaucracy', for it will obfuscate the findings. Also, for instance, a code such as 'experience' only contains quotes that refer to experiences relevant to their business.

We will first commence with general remark-abilities experienced during the interviews. First of all, during this research I was (once again) confronted with my presumptuous human nature. The participants being newcomers, I assumed their entrepreneurship would be predisposed by being an exception to the rule (in comparison to non-newcomers). However, the interviewees indicated that (their) success is defined by 1) delivering a qualitative good product (daily freshness and with good taste); and 2) being kind and sincere to customers in order to keep them content. This very much seems as the foundation of any commercial undertaking, whether the owner is a newcomer or not. The quality of products is slightly related to network and probably to cultural heritage; how to treat the customers is heavily related to perceptions of hospitality. Secondly, an interesting finding is that only two interviewees indicated an insufficient proficiency of the Dutch language as a problem. This is remarkable, since the most of the research indicates it as one of the two most important obstacles (bureaucracy being the second most important obstacle). The latter has indeed been indicated by the interviewees as a problem but not as significant as one might expect when looking at the literature.

What follows is a listing of most significant factors found. Out of ten interviewees, seven are restaurant holders, one works in the nightlife scene, one works in the tourism industry and one owns a shop in Syrian sweet delicacies (one of the most beautiful shops I have ever seen). All latter three are located in Amsterdam. Since ten people were interviewed, factors found in five files and more are deemed important. Seven out of 19 codes were thusly selected. A list of the non-frequent nodes/codes can be found in the annex.

Code frequency table.

RQ 1			
	<u>Intangible assets</u>	<u>Files</u>	<u>References</u>
	Experience	7	7
	Personal attitude	7	9
	Cultural heritage	9	20
	Network	10	25
	<u>Strategies</u>		
	Dutch appropriation	5	5
RQ 2			
	<u>Institutions</u>		
	Government unhelpful	6	9

RQ 3			
	<u>Obstacles to success</u>		
	Bureaucracy	5	8

Important factors

As clarified before, data acquired during this research are in the form of recollections of experiences of the interviewees themselves. In order to get a better grip on and deeper understanding of the factors relating to newcomer entrepreneurial success, a discussion of the seven important aspects/factors follows underneath.

Before commencing this description, it is important to clarify that almost all entrepreneurs spoken to are successful. What does successful mean? It has been defined as upward social and economic mobility through one’s business (Volery 2007). Another perception of success could be keeping the company operating and, preferably, being able to live off it. However, part of running a business is dealing with struggles of economic survival. Such issues with the participants were dealing with legal processes over restaurant ownership; unfair rental contracts; and unhelpful (non-)governmental institutions while facing such issues. Having struggles such as these does not mean one is unsuccessful: these are more technical problems than indications of failure since it doesn’t undo their individual talent for business, for example.

Intangible assets

RQ 1

Experience

Although previous experience in the leisure and hospitality business probably has a positive influence, it does not seem to have a specific relation with entrepreneurial success. The latter has been an entrepreneur in the States and several Arab countries for decennia and has quite a well-known and successful undertaking. At the same time, he is still building up his financial back-up in order to expand his business without being dependent on third parties who, if he makes a deal with them, will be in control of his business decisions. M. from Amsterdam had 18 years of experience in working in a restaurant before he started his own. This was very successful according to him (and the reviews on Facebook indicate the same) but because of the recent actions of his partner, he is without business now. To sum up: three cases of previous experience in the sector, all in a different situation concerning entrepreneurial success.

Two cases of which you notice how well the business thrives when you are there are N.'s place in Rotterdam and M.'S sweet delicacy shop in Amsterdam. Both claim they earn more than enough and Facebook reviews seem to support this success but both have been truck drivers for years and so have zero experience in the leisure and hospitality business. M. did use his experience in working with gypsum while constructing the inside of the shop. What both men have alike is their network: this will be discussed further in the relevant paragraph.

Personal attitude

The general opinion concerning entrepreneurship that one has to be active in order to succeed is reflected in participant's attitudes. A few of them explicitly mentioned one cannot "sit and wait" but needs to undertake action in order to achieve goals. Two of them mentioned having had to learn the language and having done this on their own, without any guidance in the form of a course or the like. M. from Arnhem, for instance, has learned the language himself when he was still living in Belgium. Most of them, however, do not mention language but an active attitude. According to several of

them, Syrians are in general very good businessmen. G. from Amsterdam, who is cited in the introduction, stated doing nothing is like a spiritual death to him: the first thing he undertook after his arrival in Holland was educating fellow refugee center residents on entrepreneurship (in the form of a workshop). For this, he first needed to translate English literature on entrepreneurship to Arab and ask the municipality for a workshop room. M. from Amsterdam (sweet delicacy shop) is also very admirable in this regard. After arriving in Holland 14 years ago, he worked as a cleaning gent for years while acquiring his truck driver diploma. After doing this, he saved up money from the truck-driving job that he later invested in the shop. Finally, Z. from Hilversum started working in the restaurant business after he decided he wanted to own his own restaurant later on.

Cultural heritage

This factor is divided into four aspects. It is a very present and multi-dimensional aspect of the undertakings, which is logical for obvious reasons: 1) the participants are, as anyone, to a certain extent part of the cultural system they grew up in; 2) 'Syrianness' defines what is different about their business.

Presentation and products: intercultural meanings

A couple of the participants indicated they wanted to impart the customer with a piece of Syria. F. in Nijmegen said he wanted to "bring something from Syria" by hanging up a photo of a mosque in Damascus (which used to be a church). The name of the restaurant is the same as the nickname for Damascus (this is relevant for the following participant as well). M. in Amsterdam stated:

"I want them to see a piece of Damascus. The name of our restaurant is the nickname for Damascus. It is the oldest city in the world. When you come in, you would say that you are actually there. We primarily have Dutch customers and they think it's so much

fun that they forget about the surroundings when they are inside; the busy street with all the tourists, which the locals don't like at all."

M. from Amsterdam (sweet delicacies) said he wanted to introduce the 'real' baklava to Dutch people: most of the baklava available in Holland are Turkish. He offers all kinds of sweet pastries and fresh coffee. "Baklava was invented in Syria in 1821", he said. He also intended to have an interior that is a mix of "ornamental" (hence: 'Syrian') and Dutch influences. He used the phrase 'Dutch style' as interchangeable with 'industrial', which we might interpret as 'from the West', although these are not interchangeable per se. M.'s place looks beautiful with an 'Arab-looking' counter and wall with beautiful elegant ornaments. The place is as sweet to the eye as the pastries are to the tongue. Most businesses had at least some references to the owner's' Syrian background, at least in the look of the signboard. Most of the time, the form and shape of the letters on the signboard had an 'Arab' look to them. Inside the facilities, there were always at least a few indications of a Syrian background, either in a general ornamental look that you usually do not find in a, for instance, burger or sushi place; or a photo or illustration of Syria in a few cases. However, most interiors had an overall look that, in the whole, did not immediately bring up 'Arabic' mental associations. The products, however, were always promoted as 'authentic' (ergo: how it is typically made in Syria or a specific place in Syria) and homemade.

Hospitality

This has turned out to be the most important aspect of how the participants give meaning to the interactional part of their business. In all cases (except in the tourism and nightlife scene case) treating the customer (better said: guest) well, was very important and explicitly connected to their homeland and culture. Often times, hospitality was defined by: 1) being flexible towards the guest: the guest is king 2) offering extra goods from the menu without charging 3) making the guest feel at home 4) making conversation with the guest. Two participants even included "listening to their problems" as part of their hospitality. Making the guest feel as good about him-/herself as much as possible is how, in Syria, guests are always treated: either at home or in an establishment.

Providing an exceptional large amount of food goes along with this: there, you will continue to be offered food, even when you state you have had enough. I was told it is a case of honor for the host. I was also told being a good host is implicit to Syrian culture and there it means to provide abundance, flexibility and a good feeling. Some would state that this legitimizes Culture Theory. However, this theory holds an overgeneralization since it focuses on migrants as one uniform group. This will be discussed more deeply in the conclusion chapter. From my own experience, I can say that said this feeling often times goes along with the feeling that you won't need to eat for the next three days. M. from Amsterdam (the tourism industry) explained that Syrians will always make an extra effort and take the blame before anything has gone wrong yet, opposed to Dutch traditions of hospitality.

F. in Nijmegen put the word 'house' in his restaurant name because it fits his philosophy of guests feeling at home.

Craftsmanship

Craftsmanship is the traditional preparation of the food. M. (Arnhem) has an oven that not everyone can use in preparing dough: it is an oven used in Syria and one has to have experience in order to properly use it. N. From Rotterdam has a cook working for him who is from Aleppo (Haleb):

"Look, that is Ali, he is a master in preparing meat. The best meat chefs are from Haleb. Those cooks from Damascus make the *kubbeh* differently than we do."

Hence, craftsmanship is an asset that can be considered part of cultural heritage since it is dependent on where someone comes from and is considered tied (historically) to that place. It is therefore a Unique Selling Point that newcomers sometimes use as part of their market differentiation.

Word of mouth

This aspect is directly related to marketing. Five participants explicitly indicated word of mouth (as an important influence to their success), almost all stated that as long as

the food is good and the guests are treated well, an increase in clientele is almost guaranteed. Two participants stated this the 'Syrian' way of doing.

Network

Apart from cultural heritage, this seems to be one of the most important factors overall. Nine out of ten participants have and use a network (as positively related to their success). M. from Arnhem and F. from Nijmegen are the exceptions here. M.'s financial struggles might be related to this but no assumptions on causal relations can be made either. Z. from Hilversum did not point to an elaborate network, however, his two contacts are not to be underestimated: one is an NGO initiator and the other the mayor of Hilversum himself. After meeting him at the opening of his place, a personal contact arose in which Z. asked for a terrace (by removing bike parking places) and the public, moveable toilets being removed from the side of his building. Both requests were fulfilled. The NGO initiator helped him in the contact with the municipality, banks (for a loan) and bureaucratic procedures. F. from Nijmegen indicated one contact, which was his booky, who would help him with a variable range of questions. Also, the last owner he bought the restaurant from, provided him with wholesaler's contact information. F. has only been in business for four months. Z. And M. from Amsterdam (night scene and touristic sector, respectively) both were able to use contact with an NGO as a stepping stone for contact with other NGO's and the business sector. Both were able to build their current career on the basis of those contacts (apart from their personal professional contributions, naturally). M. would, for instance, volunteer at an NGO before he was given more responsibility and later be able to generate some income from his own initiatives that grew out of these contacts. The same story goes for G. from Utrecht: he cooked for his neighbors, who were very enthusiastic. Via his contact person at Social Services, he came into contact with an NGO, through which he created the possibility to cook at a second-hand shop for free. Later, his dentist, who is from Israel, sponsored him in the financial arrangements for his falafel place. The dentist also arranged all the administration and contact with institutions. After searching on the internet for organizations and establishing contact with an NGO, Z. got the opportunity to host an event in one of the most famous nightlife hotspots in Amsterdam. As he states himself, he then moved, bit by bit, from

the basement to upstairs. M. from Amsterdam (sweet delicacies) retrieved most of his personnel from his own network: via his niece. His best friend is a top chef. M. from Amsterdam (who lost his last restaurant) got acquainted with his current colleagues via his previous job in a steakhouse. In the case of N. from Rotterdam, it is hard to relate the network aspect to his success. He definitely used a network but it was hard to establish for the researcher in how far this was essential in growing his business. One would have to compare several participants such as him with others that have the same kind of company and setting but are not born here. Then, some indication of the necessity of network for the businesses can be given. What is known, is that word of mouth and building further from there was very important in his case. The reason why identifying a network is hard to identify in his case, might be that he grew up in the Netherlands. With newcomers, it is easier to identify a network and correlate this to (steps to) success because one starts from zero.

Strategies

Dutch appropriation

This term refers to implementing practices, products or environments which the entrepreneurs associate with Dutch culture. It is performed in order to increase the likeliness of Dutch clientele. As can be seen in the table, it was explicitly identifiable with five of the participants. The first example is one that overlaps with the 'intercultural meanings' code. M. (sweet delicacy shop) facilitated a partially industrial atmosphere in his interior. M. (Arnhem) chose a 'neutral' look for his interior because he feels some Dutch people are spooked by places that look too Syrian. M. (Amsterdam touristic area) chose a 'modern' look and, as one of the few participants, chose to serve alcohol. Guests are also welcome to keep a table to themselves for a whole night, regardless of what they spend. Hygiene is also an important factor concerning Dutch clients, according to him. Keeping the restaurant extremely clean and obliging personnel to wear hats and gloves are part of this policy. N. From Rotterdam does not serve alcohol but does offer alcohol free beer. According to him, it suits his alcohol-craving guests well. Z. from Hilversum chose an EKO-certificate for

his biological meat products because “with Dutch people, it always works extremely well to have such evidence and confirmation”.

RQ 2

Government unhelpful

A sense of lack of help from governmental institutions is quite a present factor and obstacle to success. As is visible in the table, six out of 10 participants indicated such an experience. To give a little more insight in data acquired on the topic, the table below is included. As will be shown, this criterium overlaps with bureaucracy.

Data frequency table on institutions.

	Files	References
NGO helpful	4	7
NGO unhelpful	1	2
Government helpful	3	5
Government unhelpful	6	10

As the table above shows, some numbers are quite close. The data seem to be dominated by mainly an unhelpful government and reasonably helpful NGO’s. Since the limit of 5 files minimum is set, underneath is an outline of experiences where governmental institutions were lacking.

F. from Nijmegen, who also has a restaurant in Rotterdam, found the right location for his restaurant and had been in contact with his cousin for a while, who was able to provide him with the financial means in order to set up. However, he first

went to the municipality of Boxmeer to request the funds. After presenting his idea, he was told he should have come to them with the business idea before looking for a location. Now, the procedure would take three to four months longer, while he "could just take it over from the current owner" (F.). He called his cousin and they made the deal he would pay it back in the following four to five years. The exact same principle happened with G. from Utrecht. After having created his idea for a falafel place, he knocked on the doors of Social Services and BBZ (Bijstand voor Zelfstandigen, Welfare for Entrepreneurs). They provided him with negative advice because of an insufficient proficiency in the language. He also told the Social Services he would like to do MBO (vocational basic education) on holding a restaurant but he was provided with the same feedback on his language. His dentist, however (mentioned before), had the whole business plan and finances ready. G. decided to wait a little bit more on the municipality, who read the contract and told him it would be better for him to not sign it. Their only reason was, once again, the language. Eventually, G. decided to go ahead with the plan and partner up with the dentist. I will admit his language proficiency is not evolved so far in order to fully function in Dutch conversations and make clear exactly what he means immediately. It takes skills from his conversation partner but in the end, you understand each other. And his business is successful so one can put serious question marks whether the BBZ was right in their negative advice. He also asked Social Services and the BBZ if they could help him terminate his benefit (uitkering), which they eventually didn't but the dentist did.

The one who has the most misfortune in governmental help is M. from Arnhem. He said he had a very hard time and did not get any help from anyone, either governmental or non-governmental institutions. In hindsight, he thinks his booky, which had a look at the contract, did not know what he was talking about.

"If you start small and do not have a lot of money or knowledge of the Dutch system, then you have little leads of people helping you. Since I'm from Belgium, the municipality doesn't help me and the Legal Aid office only helps private individuals, not business related cases. A lawyer costs minimally 280 euros an hour. Here, you have to pay for your information. Being a member of the Catering Sector Association (Horecabond) costs 800-1000 euros a year. The Chamber of Commerce refers to their

website, just as Tax Services (Belastingdienst). You have to hand in so many plans but since I have financed the place myself, I don't have to explain myself to anyone".

He experienced a lot of being ping-ponged back and forth, from pillar to post. M. tries to socially contribute to Arnhem by employing newcomers as interns. There should be support from the municipality on this practice.

"In contact with the municipality, they only ask when an intern is getting a contract: not whether he speaks Dutch, whether he has previous experience, how it is going. The other day, an intern finished his internship of three months and no one came by to see how it went. My interns have no idea of their obligations and rights. Also, I have to pay the difference of their gross and net pay. The municipality wants newcomers to terminate their welfare but they don't care where they do that. Every time, it comes down to what an individual contact person thinks. The latter set up an internship of six months, for instance."

The same principle goes for M. from Amsterdam (who recently lost his business): he hired newcomers and the municipality showed great appreciation of this contribution. After his partner executed the aggressive acquisition, however, the municipality did not offer any help in regaining control of the business. M. calls this illogical and hypocritical:

"They were so enthusiastic about the way I handled things, I was in the newspaper, on television. It costs the municipality two to three working days to find a job for one permit holder. Now, eighteen permit holders have lost their job in one day. I am meeting with someone from the municipality this afternoon but I my expectations are low, since they haven't been wanting to do anything to help."

However, one of the fundamental issues with M. was that legally, he wasn't the owner. Everyone associated his name with the restaurant (since it was quite known) but on paper, his partner was the owner. One could wonder, then, how much the municipality can actually do.

Lastly, G. from Amsterdam asked for a room to give his entrepreneur workshop (as mentioned before). He also asked for some material such as a projector to lean but the municipality's response was negative. The latter could have done more, since they were aware that it was an activity that could contribute to newcomers' integration and societal success.

Bureaucracy

Most participants compared Dutch and Syrian systems when stumbling upon the issue of bureaucracy (which I never explicitly brought to the fore myself but always let the participant initiate in the discussion of it). They say the Dutch system is a good one (maybe to avoid the possibility of insulting) but that it is too much of a hassle. In Syria, they also have rules, some say it is even very comparable. However, in practice, it is "a difference of day and night" (Z. from Amsterdam). In Syria, there is a culture defined by handling business "under the table": corruption is inwoven through and through. Almost every participant mentioned corruption. "If you want a place for your restaurant, you pay 500 lira one day and the next week, you can start" (M. from Amsterdam (touristic scene)). M. is one of the initiators of a tour guide boat, telling alternative stories about the city. He is also one of the participants (like many) who employ other newcomers. He currently has a problem with the license of his boat: as part of their business concept, they use a boat that was actually one which refugees used in crossing the ocean. "Now they say the boat isn't made for the canal, while we already had a permit, it fits in the canal and we were already doing tours with that permit." Now they cannot sell any tickets because of this bureaucratic obstacle. M. is a very well connected person in the Amsterdam newcomer entrepreneurial scene and indicated bureaucracy as an ongoing obstacle through several of his initiatives (which count up to five).

"Finance is another issue, an NGO with social impact that is not measurable by money, you have to find another way to make revenue. Most of the cases are supported by founders but it is a lot of work to present your organization on paper so that we also had to do. I can't fulfill all the criteria in the Dutch language."

And:

"If you want something here, you could find the support although it is hard to find and very bureaucratic. It is not easy, it is not arranged by one phone call. Bureaucracy was a disadvantage in setting up my initiatives."

He also mentioned that the business proposals the municipality requests, take months to prepare. An example was while he was working for TakeCarebnb, which provides newcomers with temporary homes where they live with Dutch families. One of the things the municipality wanted reported was a list of all the people they matched, which he found preposterous.

"Why do I have to write down every name of the people we matched. You can come over, we are super transparent, you can look in all our files and costs, we can send you a copy of everything but they do not want everything, they want specific things. And such a proposal takes months to prepare."

The experience mentioned before where F. had difficulties with the municipality in getting a loan, also applies to the bureaucracy factor. M. from Amsterdam (restaurant in hotspot touristic area) did say he learned from the experience with his partner and knows now that he needs to put everything on paper. Z. mentioned having to follow the rules as something he would have wanted help with.

M. from Arnhem indicated that it is a lot of work to get everything on paper before you can start your business. Another issue to him was that once you get a business number from the Chamber of Commerce, your welfare is immediately terminated. When your business is not immediately thriving, it can be hard to survive.

"The hard points are the regulations. So many regulations. In my country, you open a business and then they come to you to see if everything is in order. You don't have to fix the license beforehand. Now, to save yourself time, you should study it and start at the right track so that the guy sees that you have ceramic and the grease pit is okay. In

my opinion, it works good. But in my country we have a problem, which is also not a problem, people find it a convenience, but it is (still) corruption."

Some practical general conclusions are that five participants explicitly indicated word of mouth (as an important influence to their success), almost all stated that as long as the food is good and the guests are treated well, an increase in clientele is almost guaranteed. Nine out of ten participants have and use a network (as positively related to their success). This is often a heterogeneous one. The data seem to be dominated by mainly an unhelpful government and reasonably helpful NGO's and half of the participants feeling to being ping-ponged back and forth. Another important point is that participants shift from one capability to another, if necessary. An example is G. from Utrecht who did not receive aid from the municipality because of his lack proficiency in Dutch. Therefore he decided to call upon his network; his dentist friend with economic capital. I call this phenomenon SAT: Shifting Assets Theory. Shifting assets seems to only happen if necessary and the assets then used can be provided from the individual him-/herself or the opportunity structure.

Conclusion

Starting a new life from scratch and succeeding a business in a new country is highly admirable and also an important part of integration. In general, very little was known on TE in the Netherlands, shown by the very little information SCP rapport, among others. This research has, firstly, added to the knowledge of TE in general and Syrian TE's specifically. It has also added to the more extensive insight in the processes and dynamics of TE and the paths to succes. This chapter will firstly discuss the general insights of the current research and differences with previous research, after which it will point out interpretations of these insights as well as indicate issues for further research.

General practical conclusions: current research

It is a given that participants who have a sufficient amount of assets and enter a market that is growing or constant, have more chance of succes than in the opposite case. The mixed embeddedness approach/interactionist model is a fruitful one, since it makes possible the unraveling of the dynamic between the individual and the broader whole. The most important assets/strategies used, as indicated in the factor frequency table, are network, cultural heritage, personal attitude, experience and Dutch appropriation. Other practical general conclusions on the first research question are that five participants explicitly indicated word of mouth (as an important influence to their success). Almost all stated that as long as the food is good and the guests are treated well, an increase in clientele is almost guaranteed. However, more is required in order to succeed: a good location, an appealing interior, a good network of clients, price-quality ratio, etc. Furthermore, the data seem dominated by heterogeneous networks; unhelpful governmental bodies and reasonably helpful NGO's; and a (conscious) differentiation on the market by the business's 'Syrianness' (the latter being the appearance of the business and products as well as the culturally scripted services). Hospitality is the most important of those services; it has been shown that the participants have a virtually uniform perception of hospitality. This perception includes

the opinion that the guest is king; he or she should feel special; the products should be fresh, homemade and of quality; the guest should have such a good experience that he/she tells others; and the owner is always open to critique.

Although several assets/strategies can be perceived as dominant, the individual as well as infrastructural/opportunity structure factors differ greatly per person/situation, with different outcomes on capabilities. Whereas sometimes one will not get help from the municipality despite several efforts and/or does not speak Dutch sufficiently, other times the individual will tap into his network and use his fluent English and professional attitude. Important findings for research question two were that a high number of participants experienced unhelpful governmental institutions and relatively helpful NGO's. Many stumbled upon slow bureaucratic processes, rules and regulations that far from stimulated TE. It has been shown that the participants have generally created their business by own force: helpful institutions are definitely a big advantage but when this is not the case, almost all of the participants found a way to make business happen themselves. This is an important finding on research question three. Even in the relatively helpful municipality of Amsterdam, TE's stumbled upon bureaucratic issues and have nevertheless worked hard to get where they are and used their network skills, previous experience, cultural heritage (implicitly or explicitly, consciously or unconsciously) and have put in lots of hours.

No causal conclusions can be made in respect of market differentiation and success but the author does conclude that this differentiation can be both an 'automatic' expression of culture and identity and a conscious choice in attracting guests at the same time. I conclude that newcomer entrepreneurs do not bring to the fore their cultural heritage as a marketing tool exclusively. However, this postmodern simulation seems to work well for them. Commodification of identity (i.e. expressions of 'Syrianness') is implicit of their business promotion. Important to keep in mind is that cultural expressions are not being used without thought: a few participants indicated that pictures of Syria scare some Dutch people. Dutch appropriation was an important factor in their marketing and is applied together with conscious expressions of 'Syrianness' or even 'Arabness'. This is another important finding on research question three. The 'Orientalist tropes' found in Stiffler's research on Arab-American restaurant

interiors is less applicable to the current research. Perhaps a very pronounced 'Arab' look is too baroque for the average Dutch taste. Nevertheless, my general impression was that the owners wanted to give the guests an experience of 'Syrianness'. One can indeed state that "heritage is constantly reconstructed and reinterpreted in an attempt to meet the specific demands of tourists and reflect the socio-cultural changes of the contemporary world" (Park 2014: 1).

Implications and future research

Although previous experience in the leisure and hospitality business probably has a positive influence, the current research does not seem to have a causal relation with entrepreneurial success. What might be the case is that one asset or strategy compromises for the other. It is not that assets/strategies are interchangeable but TE's might shift to another asset/strategy when he finds that the other is not a capable tool. I called this SAT: Shifting Assets Theory (chapter three).

Most participants compared Dutch and Syrian systems when stumbling upon the issue of bureaucracy. This fact is in line with Rath's & Swagerman's research (2016: 160). The participants say the Dutch system is a good one but that it is too much of a hassle. Concerning the language, most participants admitted having a lack of proficiency but hardly ever linked that to struggles of success. This is different than in Rath's & Swagerman's research, where the two factors are linked to each other. Future research could shed light on these inconsistencies. Another important finding concerning bureaucracy is that rules and regulations far from always stimulate TE (in line with Rath & Swagerman 2016).

All participants had the conviction that Syrians are good at creating business. This fact could lead one to plead for the Cultural Theory. However, this theory states that all migrants (despite which group they are in) have certain characteristics that help them in setting up business. Of course, this is an overgeneralization. Stating that Cultural Theory is applicable because Syrians are supposedly good businessmen is the same as stating that blue is a color and therefore every color is blue. Cultural Theory is a simplified explanation for the complex interrelations of cultural heritage, identity and

entrepreneurship. Yes, good entrepreneurship might very much be a cultural inheritance but the theory still implicitly claims that newcomers are essentially different than non-newcomers. Dutch people might have the cultural inheritance of being economical (or greedy), which can be very helpful in making business (as the Golden/Grey Age has shown). Cultural Theory, however, only focuses on migrants who went 'from the rest to the West' and considers this as one group. An alternative for Cultural Theory, then, is that every society has a different array of cultural aspects that might or might not increase chances of successful entrepreneurship. Last but not least, success depends on numerous factors, one of which are the characteristics of entrepreneurs as individuals, not as copies of one and the same static, 'culturally defined' blueprint. What could be different about TE's in comparison to non-newcomers is that they risk more and work harder because they have no other choice. This is, however, a causal relation that is hard to establish. Future research is needed in order to gain insight into this issue. I am, however, not too naive to state that newcomer entrepreneurs have as much chance on success as non-newcomer entrepreneurs. The first party, almost as an automatic consequence of migration and accompanying issues, generally start out with less capital than the latter. So there is something to say for the disadvantage theory. However, and this research has shown that, they have a fair chance when individual and environmental factors are appropriate.

A remaining question is whether stressing one's culture and identity is to be seen as the only or most promising way for newcomers to become independent. The answer is partially no, partially yes. Cultural expressions can be effectively used as a marketing tool, however, this is always only fruitful in combination with other assets and strategies. These can be any of the strategies/assets discussed, and since they are dependent on the larger opportunity and infrastructure, once again the effectiveness of the mixed embeddedness approach shows.

To sum up, the current research has added to the existing body of knowledge with the following points: 1) newcomer businesses are essentially the same as non-newcomer business in the sense that one has to offer a good product and service in order to

survive; 2) rules and regulations regularly undermine TE's success when they should aim to stimulate it; 3) TE's are resilient and capable of making business happen despite unhelpful institutions, which leads to the following point that; 4) bureaucracy and language issues do generally not stand in the way of success; and 5) TE's often make use of heterogeneous networks, not so called exclusively 'ethnic' ones.

Trans-nationalist entrepreneurship is full of potential. The spirit and will of newcomers making a new life for themselves should be stimulated by the receiving municipalities in every way. Only then integration, which is a two-way process, is possible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bakker, Linda. Seeking Sanctuary in the Netherlands: Opportunities and obstacles to refugee integration. Ridderprint, 2016.
- Barthes, Roland, and Annette Lavers. *Mythologies*. New York: Noonday Press, 1991.
- Bruner, Edward M, American Anthropological Association, and Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana (Mississippi State University Libraries). *Abraham Lincoln As Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism*. Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1994.
- Chambers, Robert, and Gordon Conway. *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods : Practical Concepts for the 21st Century*. Dp, 296. Brighton, England: Institute of Development Studies, 1992.
- Di Giovine, Michael A, Jonathan B Mabry, and Teresita Majewski. *Moveable Feasts: Food As Revitalizing Cultural Heritage*. 2017.
- Hall, C Michael, and Jan Rath. *Tourism, Migration and Place Advantage in the Global Cultural Economy*. 2007. 1-24.
- Hobfoll, Stevan E. "Influence of Culture, Community, and the Nested-Self in the Stress Process: Advancing Conservation of Resources Theory." *Peace Research Abstracts* 40, no. 1 (2003): 3-118.
- Kennisplatform Sociale Integratie en Samenleving. "Financiële en sociale zelfredzaamheid van nieuwkomers. Een verkenning van het landelijke en lokale beleid." 2018.
- Kloosterman, Robert C. "Matching Opportunities with Resources: A Framework for Analysing (migrant) Entrepreneurship from a Mixed Embeddedness Perspective." *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 22, no. 1 (2010): 25-45.
- Moilanen, Teemu, and Seppo Rainisto. "How to Brand Nations, Cities and Destinations: A Planning Book for Place Branding." In *Theoretical Framework for Developing a Place Brand*, 3-29. London : Palgrave Macmillan UK : Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Moser, Caroline O. N, and Anis A Dani. *Assets, Livelihoods, and Social Policy*. New Frontiers of Social Policy. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008.
- Rakodi, Carole, and Tony Lloyd Jones. "Urban Livelihood: A People-Centered Approach to Reducing Poverty." *Journal of Planning Literature* 17, no. 2 (2002): 262-331.

- Ram, Monder, and Trevor Jones. "Ethnic-Minority Businesses in the UK: A Review of Research and Policy Developments." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 26, no. 2 (2008): 352-74.
- Yalmar E. Ras, "Het Idee Chinatown: Een Studie naar Chinese Ondernemers en Cultuur in Chinatown Amsterdam" (master's thesis), Utrecht University, 2011.
- Rath, J.C, E. Guild, and J. Van Selm. "International Migration and Security. Opportunities and Challenges, 238 - 253." In *Feeding the Festive City. Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Tourist Industry*. Routledge, 2005,
- European Commission. *Promoting Ethnic Entrepreneurship in European Cities*. Edc Collection. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011.
- Rath, J, and A Swagerman. 2016. "Promoting Ethnic Entrepreneurship in European Cities: Sometimes Ambitious, Mostly Absent, Rarely Addressing Structural Features." *International Migration* 54 (1): 152–66.
- Shaw, S., S. Bagwell, and J. Karmowska. "Ethnoscapes As Spectacle: Reimagining Multicultural Districts As New Destinations for Leisure and Tourism Consumption." *Sage Urban Studies Abstracts* 33, no. 4 (2005).
- Dagevos, Jaco, Huijnk, Willem, Maliepaard, Mieke, Miltenburg, Emily. *Syriërs in Nederland*. Den Haag: Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, 2018.
https://www.scp.nl/Publicaties/Alle_publicaties/Publicaties_2018/Syriërs_in_Nederland
- Solvoll, Sølvi, Gry Agnete Alsos, and Oxana Bulanova. "Tourism Entrepreneurship – Review and Future Directions." *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 15, no. Sup1 (2015): 120-37.
- Stiffler, Matthew J. „Serving Arabness.” In *Arab American Aesthetics: Literature, Material Culture, Film, and Theatre*, edited by Therí A. Pickens, 9-199. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018.
- Teixeira, C., L. Lo, and M. Truelove. "Immigrant Entrepreneurship, Institutional Discrimination, and Implications for Public Policy: A Case Study in Toronto." *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space* 25, no. 2 (2007): 176-193.
- Volery, Thierry. "Ethnic Entrepreneurship: A Theoretical Framework." *Handbook of Research on Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship*. 30-41 (2007).
- Wang, Qingfang. "Ethnic Entrepreneurship Studies in Geography: A Review." *Geography Compass* 6, no. 4 (2012): 227-40.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS⁵

Could you tell me something about yourself?

Could you tell me something about setting up your business?

Which experiences do you have with the Dutch government? (Business-wise and personally)

Which experiences do you have with NGO's (idem)?

What kind of help or support would you have preferred here?

What windfalls and obstacles have you experienced since your arrival in the Netherlands?

How do you make your business (look) attractive to customers? (Atmosphere, flavours, look)

What is needed to be successful?

What do you want your guests/clients to experience?

What feedback do you get from them?

Where do you get your inspiration from?

What is hospitality, according to you?

What are differences between Dutch and Syrian hospitality?

How have you experienced differences or similarities in doing business here in comparison to Syria? What ways of interaction are there?

What are typical Dutch things in and outside of leisure?

⁵ As is often the case with qualitative, semi-structures interviews, the actual questions asked might differ a bit per person and situation. For some participants, some questions might not be applicable or a different question might be applicable. Sometimes, questions are paraphrased a bit.

NODES LIST

RQ 1

Intangible assets

- ◆ Soft skills (Dutch ones)
- ◆ Personal attitude
 - Usage of the internet
- ◆ Working experience
- ◆ Cultural heritage
- ◆ Network

Strategies

- ◆ Making a name (for the business)
- ◆ Dutch appropriation
- ◆ Marketing

Tangible assets

- ◆ Income
- ◆ Savings (and other financial resources)

RQ 2

NGO unhelpful

NGO helpful

Government unhelpful

Government helpful

RQ 3

- ◆ Obstacles to success
 - Language
 - Bureaucracy
 - General
- ◆ Achieving success