

FEMALE REFUGEES
ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET IN A LIMINAL SPACE

by

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This thesis is dedicated to my three beautiful children, Patric, Chloe and little Gabriel.

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I started this doctoral journey very much alone. But now I have so many people to thank for their support and friendship.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how refugee women develop and express entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space as contextual setting during new venture creation. The research addresses a central question: How do female refugee entrepreneurs navigate entrepreneurial mindset across three dimensions - as a *subject of change*, through a *process of change*, and as an *agent of change*? The study builds upon existing theoretical foundations in liminality studies, examining how these spaces between established social structures shape the conditions where entrepreneurial agency emerges. The research design incorporated an initial pilot study which served three essential functions: it generated preliminary empirical insights into female refugee entrepreneurship, enabled critical assessment of the proposed methodology, and validated a draft conceptual framework for analysing the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. This exploratory phase proved instrumental in refining the subsequent primary investigation.

A novel analytical approach combining Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) with Derridean Deconstruction underpins a four-year ethno-case study of four refugee women. This methodology captures the evolving cognitive, emotional, and behavioural states of these women as they engage in entrepreneurial activities. The study's objective, guided by FPDA's insights into power, subjectivity, intersectionality, representation, and marginalisation, examines how refugee women's entrepreneurial mindsets adapt and transform, while integrating Derridean deconstruction to interrogate binary oppositions and dominant hierarchies within entrepreneurial discourse. Through systematic identification of privileged assumptions and taken-for-granted power relations, the analysis establishes how these women reconstruct entrepreneurial identities through discourse that both reproduces and resists established entrepreneurial narratives. The research examines the

complex interplay between structural constraints - including financial barriers and discriminatory practices - and sociocultural pressures stemming from gendered obligations, cultural expectations, and conflicting role demands. By destabilising traditional entrepreneurial binaries and questioning normative assumptions, the analysis demonstrates how refugee women navigate and reconfigure entrepreneurial subjectivities within existing power structures.

The findings advance entrepreneurship theory through introducing the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship and resource regrouping*, which challenge linear progression models in both refugee and gender entrepreneurship literature. This theoretical contribution reveals how entrepreneurial mindsets develop within contexts of uncertainty, leading to diverse outcomes that include both conventional and unconventional entrepreneurial paths.

This study challenges the hegemonic representation of entrepreneurship by examining the structural barriers and identity changes that lead to diverse outcomes, including paths diverging from conventional entrepreneurial trajectories toward employment or unemployment. Through analysis of refugee women's discourse and experiences, this research presents theoretical contributions regarding entrepreneurial mindset development within transitional contexts characterised by uncertainty. The findings establish implications for policy development responsive to the contextual and shifting nature of entrepreneurship as experienced by women in marginalised positions.

Keywords: Refugee Women, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Liminal Space, Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis, Derridean Deconstruction, Ethnographic Case Study, Cognitive, Emotional, Behavioural, Entrepreneurship, Cyclical Entrepreneurship, Resource Regrouping

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Chapter. 1 Background

'Refugees are neither seen nor heard, but they are everywhere. They are witnesses to the most awful things that people can do to each other, and they become storytellers simply by existing. Refugees embody misery and suffering, and they force us to confront terrible chaos and evil.'
(Helton, 2002, pp.8)

The quote unveils the hidden assumptions underlying refugees' visibility, voice, and presence, calling for an interrogation of these fixed notions. It presents a paradox where refugees are both *'neither seen nor heard'* and *'everywhere'*, destabilising the conventional understanding of visibility and audibility as indicators of presence and agency. This binary opposition is problematised by the liminal space refugees occupy, challenging the assumption that visibility and audibility necessarily equate to power and agency, while invisibility implies absence and powerlessness. By merely existing as refugees, they assert their narrative authority and disrupt traditional notions of agency and storytelling.

The phrase *'Refugees embody misery and suffering'* introduces a binary opposition that reduces refugees to mere carriers of suffering, erasing their complex identities and experiences. This reduction is problematic, emphasising the need to recognise the humanity and agency of refugees beyond their embodiment of hardship.

Moreover, the quote suggests that refugees *'force us to confront terrible chaos and evil'*. Here, the language of force implies a disruption of our comfort zones, challenging our established worldviews. It calls us to question the fixed meanings of *'terrible chaos'* and *'evil'* and examine the power dynamics inherent in these concepts. By engaging with the complexities and contextual factors that shape these notions, we can foster empathy, understanding, and ethical responsibility in our engagement with the refugee experience.

As Mesić (1995, p.658) suggested, refugees are generally seen as a 'grey mass of impoverished people dependent on someone else's help'. There is a tendency to lose view of all fundamental distinctions, both in the reason they chose to take refuge and their feelings

about it. Insufficient attention is paid to differences between and within refugee communities regarding life perspectives. This insouciance follows through to perceptions of their entrepreneurship endeavours where all refugees are grouped together. This is partly due to the universal agenda of self-reliance for those on the margins of society (UNHCR, 2005).

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter to the thesis outlines the dual focus of the research project. On the one hand, it studies female refugee entrepreneurs and how they navigate enterprise in the liminal space. Central to this investigation is the research question: *How do refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset within a liminal space?* This question frames the thesis and guides its exploration of the complex interplay between systemic barriers, individual agency, and entrepreneurial opportunities. This investigation is grounded in a feminist poststructuralist lens, which interrogates the assumptions underpinning traditional entrepreneurial discourses and highlights the complexities of marginalised experiences. By adopting this perspective, the thesis critically examines how female refugee entrepreneurs negotiate the entrepreneurial mindset within a liminal space shaped by systemic inequities and intersecting oppressions. The focus on women in this context is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it provides an overview of the current refugee crisis, one of the most significant global challenges in recent history, shaped by historical, geographical, and socio-cultural factors (Serrano, 2010; Saunders et al., 2019). With millions of people displaced due to conflict, persecution, and violence, the refugee crisis highlights the systemic failures of political and economic systems to protect individual rights and dignity, as observed by Arendt (1993), Bauman (2004), and Miller and Straehle (2021).

Secondly, it explores the contemporary politics of refugees through the perspectives of scholars such as Bauman (2013, 2016), who critiques the nation-state's prioritisation of borders over human security; Zizek (2016), who highlights the failures of neoliberal

capitalism in exacerbating displacement; Mbembe (2017), who links the crisis to colonial histories and calls for decolonisation; and Bhabha (1990), who underscores the agency of refugees and the importance of recognising their narratives and identities.

Thirdly, it highlights the importance of female refugee entrepreneurship in mitigating the effects of the refugee crisis by fostering economic self-reliance and empowerment (Varshney, 2019; Ojediran and Anderson, 2020; Rashid and Ratten, 2020; Ng et al., 2022). Through their entrepreneurial activities, female refugees contribute to their families' income, generate employment opportunities, and promote local economic stability, while also challenging patriarchal norms and advancing gender equality (Ge et al., 2022; Kakar, 2022; den Boer and Haack, 2023). However, these contributions are not without challenges, as structural barriers such as limited access to financial resources and discriminatory policies continue to impede their success (de Lange et al., 2021; Lee, 2020; Adeeko and Treanor, 2022).

The chapter then discusses the rationale and motivation behind this study, emphasising the underrepresentation of female refugee entrepreneurs in research, particularly within gender-sensitive frameworks that account for the unique experiences and barriers faced by this group (Al-Dajani, 2022; Adeeko and Treanor, 2022; Cheung and Phillimore, 2017). It highlights the inadequacies of existing theoretical models, such as Interactionist (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990) and Mixed Embeddedness (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001), which largely overlook the gender dynamics in migration and entrepreneurship (Ram et al., 2017), and calls for a more inclusive approach to understanding refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys (Kašperová and Ram, 2023; Collins and Low, 2010; Carter et al., 2015).

It also outlines the focus of the thesis, presenting the research question, how refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space and the three

dimensions of the study: the refugee woman as a *subject of change*, in a *process of change*, and as an *agent of change* through entrepreneurship. Additionally, it defines key concepts such as liminal space, characterised by uncertainty and change, as a setting for entrepreneurial journeys.(Turner, 1967; Thomassen, 2014), and the entrepreneurial mindset, conceptualised as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural capacity to identify opportunities, take initiative, and manage entrepreneurial risks (Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch, 2021; Shir and Ryff, 2022)..

Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the thesis structure, describing how the research addresses the underrepresentation of female refugee entrepreneurs through an exploration of the entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space (Van Gennepe, 1909; Turner, 1977; Thomassen, 2015). It outlines the conceptual framework, integrating theories of liminality, economic integration (Kuhlman, 1991), and mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman, 2010), while highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities faced by female refugee entrepreneurs navigating socio-cultural and structural barriers (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Carter et al., 2015; Ram et al., 2017). Each chapter builds on these foundations to provide a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial mindset and its implications for policy and practice.

Female refugees often face additional challenges compared to their male counterparts, including gender-based violence, discrimination, and limited access to resources and support, making their experiences distinct and worthy of separate investigation (Duncan, 2022; Kakar, Ullah and Salam, 2022; Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2022; Pertek et al., 2023, Vincent 2023). While entrepreneurship is frequently framed as a pathway to empowerment and economic self-reliance for marginalised populations, these representations often fail to account for the structural inequities that shape female refugees' lived experiences (deBeer and Tumaine, 2020; Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022; Al Dajani, 2022). A critical evaluation is required to

assess whether entrepreneurship effectively addresses these systemic barriers or merely shifts the burden of socio-economic integration onto already marginalised individuals. Nonetheless, studying female refugee entrepreneurs provides an opportunity to investigate how entrepreneurship can serve as both a site of empowerment and a site where inequities are reproduced.

Secondly, examining the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs offers a critical opportunity to explore the extent to which entrepreneurship can act as a pathway for empowerment and economic self-reliance for marginalised populations. However, this potential must be contextualised within the structural and systemic barriers that often constrain such outcomes (deBeer and Tumaine, 2020; Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022; Al Dajani, 2022).

This is significant given entrepreneurship's immense potential for facilitating socio-economic integration and empowerment among refugee women, a potential that is often overly romanticised or uncritically celebrated in entrepreneurship research (Kabbani, 2018; Kakar, Ullah and Salam, 2022). While entrepreneurial activities can undoubtedly impact not only these women's lives but also their families, communities, and host societies, there is a need to critically question whether this impact is universally positive or equitably distributed. By positioning entrepreneurship as a panacea, we risk overlooking the systemic barriers, exploitative conditions, and precarities that often define the entrepreneurial journeys of marginalised women. This makes understanding their experiences crucial not for valorising entrepreneurship, but for shaping more inclusive, contextually aware, and critically engaged policy and practice.

On the other hand, this research moves beyond simplistic narratives of entrepreneurship as empowerment by exploring a range of theoretical issues and establishing a conceptual map to steer feminist poststructuralist interrogations of the entrepreneurial

mindset. Such a perspective offers the opportunity to challenge prevailing discourses around entrepreneurship that often lack an appreciation for the complexities and nuances of female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences (Marlow, 2020; Astamirov, 2020; Diaz de Leon Mora, 2021; Khademi, Essers and Van Nieuwkerk, 2023). Moreover, it brings into focus the tensions between the entrepreneurial ideal and the lived realities of operating at the margins, where structural inequities and intersecting oppressions constrain the transformative potential of entrepreneurial activities.

These challenges necessitate a critical examination of the entrepreneurial mindset through a feminist poststructuralist lens, which interrogates the assumptions underpinning traditional entrepreneurial discourses, particularly those rooted in neoliberal ideals of individualism and meritocracy. This perspective challenges the simplification of entrepreneurship as inherently empowering, instead highlighting the complexities, contradictions, and systemic inequities that shape the entrepreneurial experiences of female refugees.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a more inclusive and contextually sensitive understanding of entrepreneurship, not as a universal remedy, but as a contested and often contradictory site where systemic constraints shape the possibility of agency. By unsettling traditional, neoliberal notions of entrepreneurship, this study highlights the need for policy and practice to address the structural conditions that perpetuate marginalisation, rather than relying on entrepreneurship as a panacea.

1.2 Refugee Crisis

The current refugee crisis is one of the most significant challenges of the 21st century. This exodus on a planetary scale has defined the refugee paradigm since 2015. Serrano (2010) suggested that displacement is a composite outcome of accumulated contextual causes, which Saunders et al. (2019) deem as historical, geographical, and socio-cultural

contexts. With millions of people forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, and other forms of violence, the refugee crisis has created a complex and pressing humanitarian issue that demands global attention. In this context, refugee women's experiences, who often face compounded challenges of gender-based violence, discrimination, and limited access to resources and support, are particularly relevant.

Hannah Arendt (1993) famously referred to the refugee as the *quintessential stranger* whose very existence challenges the stability and security of the nation-state. For Arendt, the refugee represents the failure of political systems to protect individual rights and dignity and society's inability to provide a sense of belonging and security. Similarly, Bauman (2004) highlighted the plight of refugees as individuals who have been cast aside and dehumanised by a world that no longer sees them as valuable. He argued that the refugee crisis exposes the limitations of our current political and economic systems, prioritising stability and security over the lives and well-being of individuals. Miller and Straehle (2021) argue that the idea that refugees are exempt from responsibilities and obligations is not in harmony with the current political discourse surrounding asylum. They stress, whether warranted or not, that the current political and moral discourse concerning refugees centres as much on the responsibilities and obligations of refugees as it does on the government's duties.

In light of these perspectives, the experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs must be contextualised within the larger social, political, and economic structures that shape their lives. By examining how gender, class, ethnicity and education intersect to impact the experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs, a more profound understanding of the intricacies of the entrepreneurial mindset among refugee women entrepreneurs can be attained, illuminating the transformative potential that arises from navigating this unique context.

1.3 The Politics of Refugees

The contemporary politics of refugees is a topic that has been widely discussed and debated by many contemporary scholars. (Bhabha,1990; Bauman, 2013; Zizek, 2016; Mbembe, 2017)

Bauman (2013, 2016) argued that the current refugee crisis is a direct result of the failure of the nation-state to provide a secure environment for its citizens. He contended that the nation-state is more interested in protecting its borders and sovereignty than providing refugees with a safe haven. From an alternative view, Zizek (2016) believes that the current refugee crisis directly results from the failure of neoliberal global capitalism. He contends that neoliberalism has created a world where refugees are forced to flee their homes due to economic exploitation and political instability.

Mbembe's (2017) perspective on the contemporary politics of refugees focuses on the colonial history of Western powers and their role in creating the conditions that have led to the refugee crisis. He argues that the Western powers have contributed to the instability and violence in many parts of the world, which has displaced millions of people. He believes that the solution to the refugee crisis lies in decolonisation and the need for Western powers to take responsibility for their actions. Finally, Bhabha's (1990) stance focuses on the importance of recognising the agency of refugees and their ability to create their own narratives. He argues that refugees should not be viewed as passive victims but as active agents capable of shaping their destinies. Bhabha emphasises the importance of providing refugees with the space and resources to tell their stories and assert their identities.

These four scholars offer contrasting views on the contemporary politics of refugees. While Bauman (2013, 2016) emphasised the failure of the nation-state, Zizek (2016) focuses on the failure of neoliberal global capitalism. Mbembe (2017) highlights the role of

colonialism in creating the conditions that have led to the refugee crisis, and Bhabha's (1990) emphasises the importance of recognising the agency of refugees. However, despite their differences, these scholars all agree that the refugee crisis is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted solution that addresses both the structural and political factors that have contributed to it.

1.4 The Significance of Female Refugee Entrepreneurship

Female refugee entrepreneurship significantly influences the refugee crisis, presenting both opportunities and challenges in mitigating its effects. Positively, it promotes economic self-reliance and empowers women, enabling them to overcome multiple barriers such as displacement, gender-based violence, and limited access to education and employment opportunities. This path to financial independence and social integration, as highlighted by Varshney (2019), Ojediran and Anderson (2020), Rashid and Ratten (2020), and Ng et al., (2022), not only addresses immediate economic needs but also fosters long-term resilience and stability within refugee communities, contributing to mitigating the crisis. However, these entrepreneurial efforts face considerable challenges, including restricted resource access, legal obstacles, and potential socio-cultural resistance. These issues can impede the success and sustainability of such ventures, necessitating support and interventions to ensure they positively contribute to mitigating the broader challenges of the refugee crisis.

By starting their businesses, female refugees can create a source of income for themselves and their families, contribute to the local economy, and generate employment opportunities for others (Ge et al., 2022; Dar and Sheikh, 2023). Additionally, entrepreneurship can provide a sense of purpose and empowerment, helping female refugees to regain control of their lives and rebuild their sense of agency in the face of adversity. (Al Dajani, 2019; Eggerman, 2023).

Moreover, female refugee entrepreneurship can defy patriarchal norms and promote gender equality. (Almakhamreh, 2022; Kakar, 2022; den Boer and Haack, 2023). Through their business ventures, refugee women can defy traditional gender roles and expectations, opening up new possibilities for themselves and other women in their communities (Marlow, 2020). This can lead to greater social acceptance of women's economic contributions and challenge systems that have long excluded refugee women from economic participation.

However, it is essential to note that entrepreneurship is not a panacea for refugee women's challenges. Structural barriers, such as limited access to financial resources and discriminatory policies, can still pose significant challenges to female refugee entrepreneurs (de Langeet al., 2021; Lee, 2020; Adeeko and Treanor, 2022). Importantly, while entrepreneurship can be viable for some, it might not be appropriate for every refugee woman because of limitations like lacking skills, experience, or resources. Instead, there are significant opportunities to uplift and support this demographic by emphasising the entrepreneurial mindset during the early stages of entrepreneurship rather than just focusing on business actualisation (Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch, 2021; Shir and Ryff, 2022).

1.5 Rationale and Motivation for this study

Studies into female refugee entrepreneurs remain largely unrepresentative, and the paradigm of refugee entrepreneurship tends to draw on migrant and immigrant entrepreneurship frameworks to provide an unpinning to its research. These models do not account for refugee entrepreneurs' idiosyncrasies, those exceptional factors that distinguish them from the wider immigrant group. Notwithstanding the often-ignored demographic aspect of gender, a growing body of research neglects an important agent: the female refugee entrepreneur and her liminal journey (Al-Dajani, 2022, Adeeko and Treanor, 2022).

To date, very few studies have looked specifically at female refugee entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom. The publication of the independent Alison Rose Review (2019) commissioned by the Treasury aimed to demonstrate female entrepreneurs' enormous unrealised economic potential. According to Azmat (2013); Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (2011), migrant women of whom refugees are a subgroup account for a growing share of entrepreneurs using new venture creation as a means of survival to avoid poverty and prejudice in their host country's labour market. Ahl (2006), Collins and Low (2010), and Azmat (2013) all emphasise that women's entrepreneurship and business ownership are consistently neglected in comparison to that of men. Azmat (2013) goes as far as to suggest that gender dimensions are often ignored in the literature.

Ram, Jones, et al. (2017) argue that predominant theoretical frameworks largely overlook the gender dynamics in social structures that impact migrant entrepreneurship. They note that models like the Interactionist (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990) and the Mixed Embeddedness (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001) fail to account for the gendered nature of migration flows. Additionally, strategies to address this issue should consider the underrepresentation of migrant women, as highlighted by Kašperová and Ram in 2023. Gender-specific studies within refugee entrepreneurship remain uncharted. According to Azmat (2013), although there has been isolated research on identifying the barriers that migrant women entrepreneurs face, there has been no unified attempt to establish a framework that lays out all the possible obstacles, as well as the associated theoretical explanations, that influence refugee women's entrepreneurship.

Collins and Low (2010) explain that the literature on entrepreneurship often ignores the study of immigrant or ethnic entrepreneurship, while the immigrant or ethnic entrepreneurship literature often focuses predominantly on males as entrepreneurs. Carter et al. (2015) remark that entrepreneurship research tends to investigate ethnic minority

entrepreneurs and women as two groups that deviate from the representation of the mainstream entrepreneur: white, male, and middle-class. Al-Dajani et al. (2015) emphasise the importance of challenging the prevailing assumptions about the typical woman entrepreneur, often perceived as a white, heterosexual female based on the standards of the Global North. They argue for recognising the significant contextual influences on the entrepreneurial experiences of women, particularly emphasising the unique and distinct profile of refugee women entrepreneurs in Jordan. This approach underscores the need to view women's entrepreneurship through a lens that is sensitive to specific countries, diverse backgrounds and situations, moving beyond a one-size-fits-all perspective.

Cheung and Phillimore (2017) stated that between 2008 and 2012, 29.3 percent (32,231) of principal asylum applicants in the United Kingdom were women. Increasing females' participation in refugee diaspora streams; is referred to as the 'feminisation of migration.' Interdisciplinary academics have highlighted the ramifications of this change of demographics to consider how being female influences the process of migration and integration. Despite this, female refugees have received insufficient research attention amongst entrepreneurship scholars. Gender is further inhibited as studies utilise non-gendered language portraying the typical refugee as male. Bloch, Galvin et al. (2000), Cheung, and Phillimore (2017) all pinpoint variations in integration outcomes by gender and argue that a standardised integration approach is unsuitable, emphasising gender sensitivity may be necessary for policy areas such as economic adaption.

Research focusing on female refugee entrepreneurship promises significant implications for various stakeholders. Notably, for female refugees aspiring towards entrepreneurial pursuits within their host countries, such research can illuminate their path, providing much-needed insights and strategies. For policymakers vested in promoting female refugee entrepreneurship, understanding the intricacies of this field becomes vital. Grasping

the challenges and potential solutions in this context would enable them to craft strategies that genuinely foster such entrepreneurial activities.

Moreover, given the increasing prevalence of refugee resettlement worldwide, the pertinence of this research becomes ever more pronounced from a policy standpoint. An influx of refugees necessitates informed, considerate, and effective strategies to integrate them into their host societies, and entrepreneurship stands as a promising avenue for such integration.

To summarise, and leading into subsequent sections, it becomes crucial to revisit our understanding of women's empowerment in the context of entrepreneurship. As Al-Dajani and Marlow (2013) and Wolf and Frese (2018) illustrate, financial autonomy does not directly equate to overthrowing women's subordinate power structures. It is suggested by Jennings et al. (2016) that flexible work arrangements, as opposed to traditional corporate structures, might play a more substantial role in fostering women's empowerment. Therefore, in any discourse on empowerment, especially concerning female refugee entrepreneurs, the concept of power, its dynamics, and its interplay with women's self-identity must be a central consideration.

1.6 The Focus of the Thesis

This thesis investigates how refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space. It examines their journey across three phases: as subjects of change while being asylum seekers and refugees, as participants in a process of change within the liminal space, and as agents of change through entrepreneurship.

Research Question

How do refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space?

Dimensions

- a. Refugee woman as the *subject of change* (asylum seeker and refugee)
- b. The refugee woman in the *process of change* (within the liminal space)
- c. Refugee woman as an *agent of change* (entrepreneur)

These dimensions establish the framework for understanding the complex journey of refugee women entrepreneurs. Each of these phases, representing a distinct role or transition in their entrepreneurial journey, will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

Liminal Space

In this thesis, the liminal space is presented as a contextual setting in which refugee women entrepreneurs navigate their journeys. This setting is characterised by uncertainty and growth. For refugee women entrepreneurs, the liminal space provides the backdrop for the transition from the inception of an entrepreneurial idea to the fruition of a new venture. This period, filled with significant challenges and opportunities, represents substantial personal and professional changes. Therefore, understanding how refugee women engage in this setting while adopting an entrepreneurial mindset is essential. The role of liminal space as part of the setting will be further elaborated as the thesis progresses.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

The entrepreneurial mindset is conceptualised here as an interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects that enable an individual to identify opportunities, initiate actions, and manage the risks associated with entrepreneurship. This mindset is crucial for understanding how refugee women navigate the challenges and opportunities within the liminal setting.

As the thesis unfolds, the concepts of liminality as a setting and the entrepreneurial mindset will be examined more deeply, focusing on both the theoretical constructs and the lived experiences of refugee women. The goal is to provide a complex, multi-layered

understanding of these concepts and their roles within the entrepreneurial journey that takes place in a liminal context.

1.7 Thesis Structure

Despite multifarious problems with definitional debates and a paucity of specific research, this thesis is guided by the principle that the term female refugee entrepreneur and the spaces she occupies on her journey to self-actualisation maintain a high degree of significance in contemporary UK research and policy. The assumption that female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences are situated in the marginalia of contemporary refugee entrepreneurship and that their experiences are considered coeval to migrant women entrepreneurs prompts a theoretical study of two bodies of knowledge: refugee entrepreneurship and female refugees on the entrepreneurial journey. This renewed perspective and reflexivity in terms of applicable frameworks offer new ways of seeing.

Moreover, female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences and voices should be placed more centrally in refugee entrepreneurship discussions. These feminine voices are of significance to help frame and digest the perspectives of research in this field. To use a Foucauldian-type illustration, the female refugee entrepreneur's experience is the subjective pole to the objective pole of refugee entrepreneurship. With this in mind, the first three chapters of this thesis largely reflect pre-existing conceptions of entrepreneurship by ethnic groups, migrants, and refugees and introduce a conceptual framework that further explores various dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset in the context of refugee women.

Chapter 1 offers a broader global context exploring political frames that highlight gender and political apathy in the discourse around refugees.

Chapter 2 engages with two key areas of literature: refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship. It reviews existing theories and models to build a comprehensive

understanding of the entrepreneurial experiences of female refugees. The chapter begins by defining key terms and clarifying the distinctions between refugees and migrants. It explains the legal, social, and economic implications of these categories, emphasising how they influence individuals' rights, opportunities, and challenges in host countries.

The evolution of UK government policy concerning refugees over the last twenty years is traced. It critically examines how these policies have impacted refugees' economic opportunities, noting the absence of an entrepreneurial perspective. The chapter highlights how policy frameworks have often overlooked the potential of entrepreneurship as a means of economic integration for refugees. The chapter then discusses economic integration theories, focusing on Kuhlman's (1991) model, which outlines stages of *identification*, *internalisation*, and *satisfaction* in the integration process. It critically assesses the limitations of these theories in explaining the entrepreneurial journeys of female refugees, arguing that they do not fully capture the unique challenges and dynamics faced by this group. The chapter then introduces liminality as the setting for the study. By exploring the concept of liminality, originally introduced by Van Gennep (1909) and expanded by Turner (1977) and Thomassen (2015), the chapter provides a setting to observe the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women starting their own businesses. Liminality refers to the transitional phase where individuals are between their previous identity and a new one that is yet to be fully established. The chapter aligns Van Gennep's three-part structure of rites of passage; *separation*, *transition (liminal stage)*, and *incorporation*, with Kuhlman's (1991) model for the economic integration of refugees, which includes *identification*, *internalisation*, and *satisfaction*.

Alternative perspectives, such as Kloosterman's (2010) Mixed Embeddedness Model, are considered while exploring the complexities of how social networks and cultural capital influence business development for female refugee entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the

entrepreneurial mindset from the opportunity school of thought is introduced, questioning the dominant assumption that refugees and migrants are subject to similar push-and-pull factors.

In the latter part of this chapter, the concept of gendered entrepreneurship is critically assessed, with an emphasis on the specific challenges faced by female refugee entrepreneurs.

Finally, the conceptual framework is introduced, articulating how the entrepreneurial mindset of female refugees is negotiated in response to structural constraints and the uncertainties of new venture creation.

The liminal space is explored in more detail in Chapter 3, and the suggested framework is further developed and refined to encompass the entrepreneurial mindset.

Chapter 4 introduces the research methodology, combining Derridean Deconstruction and Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) to examine how refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset in liminal spaces. This chapter highlights the iterative and reflexive nature of the research, shaped significantly by insights from a pilot study. The pilot study not only informed the methodological approach but also prompted a re-evaluation of the philosophical underpinnings, showcasing the interplay between theory and practice (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012).

The chapter begins with an overview of the research timeline and the pilot study's contributions, followed by a discussion of the philosophical foundations that emerged from this reflexive process (Hudson, 2020; Kingsman & Davis, 2024). This structure reflects how the study evolved from broader qualitative principles into a more situated and adaptive inquiry, prioritising reflexivity and participant-centred methods (Yip, 2024).

An ethno-case study methodology was adopted, integrating ethnographic methods with case study analysis to explore gendered and contextual complexities of entrepreneurship in displacement contexts (Marlow, 2020; Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). Longitudinal engagement with four refugee women entrepreneurs provided insights into how cognitive,

emotional, and behavioural dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset interact within liminal spaces (Kuratko et al., 2021; Kelly & McAdam, 2022).

FPDA, combined with Derridean Deconstruction, served as a critical lens to uncover power dynamics, intersectionality, subjectivity, marginalisation, and representation. This analytical framework illuminated how refugee women construct entrepreneurial identities while navigating systemic constraints (Baxter, 2003, 2008; Weedon & Hallak, 2021).

Ethnographic techniques, including participant observation and conversational interviews, captured the interplay of individual agency and structural barriers (Whitehead, 2005). Ethical considerations and reflexivity were central, ensuring authentic representation of participants' voices while addressing translation and interpretation challenges (Senthanar et al., 2020).

The chapter concludes by linking methodology to the empirical chapters. Chapters 5 and 6 introduce the research participants, female refugee entrepreneurs, whose narratives provide deep insights into the entrepreneurial mindset in the liminal space. These empirical chapters also form integral components of the conceptual framework. Chapter 5 (Analysis) focuses on the foundational elements depicted on the left-hand side of the framework, which encompasses both Individual (Internal) factors and Socius (External) factors. The analysis examines Internal factors, including demographics (gender, class, ethnicity, education), human capital (skills and knowledge), and social capital (networks and relationships). It also explores External factors, such as host-related factors (conditions in the new country), opportunity structures (available business possibilities), and push/pull factors (forces that either compel or attract individuals toward entrepreneurship). Together, these structural and contextual conditions shape entrepreneurial engagement by creating patterns of constraint and enablement, which are further analysed using a feminist poststructural kaleidoscopic lens of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation.

Chapter 6 (Analysis) examines the dynamic interplay between being a subject of change and an agent of change, as represented by the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions within the liminal space. Refugee entrepreneurs oscillate between these roles, navigating their entrepreneurial journeys in non-linear and adaptive ways. This chapter critically analyses how cognitive processing, emotional responses, and behavioural adaptations manifest within these dimensions and interact to enable or hinder entrepreneurial actions. Additionally, Chapter 6 presents an in-depth case study of each participant and conducts a temporal analysis of their entrepreneurial mindset over the four-year ethno-case study, offering a longitudinal perspective on their navigation of entrepreneurial challenges and opportunities.

By examining these dimensions, categories, and temporal trajectories in depth, Chapters 5 and 6 provide a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset in the liminal space, forming the foundation for the findings.

In Chapter 7, the research findings are examined through the lens of three dimensions: *subject of change*, *process of change*, and *agent of change*. These dimensions serve as analytical categories to address the central research question, "*How do refugee women navigate an entrepreneurial mindset in the liminal space?*" By situating the findings within the conceptual framework, this chapter connects key themes that emerged from the data to existing literature, unveiling distinctive factors that expand current understandings of refugee entrepreneurship.

This chapter also introduces and positions *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* as central theoretical contributions. These concepts, drawn from the analysis, challenge conventional assumptions of linear entrepreneurial trajectories and necessity-driven pathways. Their integration into the discussion highlights the strategic and adaptive nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys within systemic constraints.

Further, the findings are interpreted through the Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis Kaleidoscopic Lens, employing its tenets, Power, Subjectivity, Marginalisation, Intersectionality, and Representation, to provide a comprehensive understanding of how external structural factors and internal determinants shape the entrepreneurial mindset. The interplay between these forces is explored within the Socius (External) and Individual (Internal) dimensions of the framework, enriching the conceptualisation of the liminal space as a dynamic setting for entrepreneurial activity.

By synthesising these findings with theoretical and methodological contributions, Chapter 7 lays the groundwork for the final discussion in Chapter 8, which contextualises these insights within broader academic debates and implications for practice.

Chapter 8 then serves as the culmination of this thesis, integrating the findings from the four-year ethno-case study with the theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches outlined earlier. This chapter brings together the key contributions of the research, including the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*, which offer new perspectives on entrepreneurial engagement in constrained contexts. These concepts challenge dominant assumptions in refugee and gendered entrepreneurship scholarship, moving beyond binary distinctions such as necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurship and reframing entrepreneurial withdrawal as a strategic phase rather than failure.

The chapter also highlights the Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis Kaleidoscopic Lens, a methodological innovation that enabled a multi-layered exploration of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation within refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys. These tenets informed the analytical approach and provided a nuanced understanding of how refugee women navigate systemic barriers and exercise agency within the liminal space.

In addition to discussing the theoretical and methodological contributions, Chapter 8 evaluates the broader significance of these findings for policy, practice, and future research. It critically examines how refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys diverge from conventional linear models, demonstrating the adaptive and cyclical nature of their engagement with entrepreneurship and employment. The chapter concludes by addressing the limitations of the research and identifying opportunities for further exploration, ensuring that the complexities of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences continue to inform academic and practical discourse.

Chapter 1 Summary

This chapter has outlined the scope and aims of the thesis, which seeks to explore the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs in the liminal space and to engage with a range of theoretical issues from a feminist poststructuralist perspective, with a particular focus on understanding the entrepreneurial mindset within this unique context. The importance of understanding the complex and diverse experiences of refugees and the potential of entrepreneurship to achieve economic self-reliance and empowerment has been highlighted. This introductory chapter has also emphasised the need for a textured and intersectional approach to understanding the experiences of female refugees and how they navigate the liminal space of entrepreneurship.

The next chapter will extend this foundation by exploring two interconnected bodies of literature: refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship studies. This literature review will integrate the concepts of liminality and the entrepreneurial mindset, contributing to a preliminary conceptual framework that will guide this inquiry. By critically engaging with these bodies of literature, the chapter will set the stage for identifying key gaps and

underspecified areas, offering a comprehensive understanding of how these various elements converge to shape the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women.

Chapter 2. Literature and Theoretical Overview

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature and theoretical frameworks informing this study of female refugee entrepreneurship, focusing on two distinct yet intersecting bodies of literature: refugee entrepreneurship and gender entrepreneurship studies. Through critical analysis of this literature, this review identifies significant gaps in our understanding of how female refugees develop and express entrepreneurial mindsets within the liminal space of new venture creation.

This chapter is structured in four main sections. It begins with definitions and policy context, examining the distinction between refugee and migrant entrepreneurs and analysing UK policy developments. It then explores refugee studies, focusing on Kuhlman's economic integration model, and establishes the liminal space - the transitional context between past and present - as a setting for understanding refugee experiences. This leads to theoretical frameworks of refugee entrepreneurship, exploring various entrepreneurship theories and their application to refugee contexts. The chapter then examines the entrepreneurial mindset literature, with a particular focus on its development and expression during business creation. This is followed by gendered perspectives on entrepreneurship, analysing intersectional and feminist poststructuralist approaches. The chapter concludes with a synthesis leading to the study's conceptual framework.

Within refugee entrepreneurship literature, while scholars have examined economic integration and entrepreneurial activities of refugees (Kuhlman, 1991; Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008; Heilbrunn, 2021), there remains limited understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset during the critical phase of business startup. Current frameworks often treat the venture creation process as a purely economic or structural phenomenon,

overlooking the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of how refugee women develop and adapt their entrepreneurial thinking as they move from conceptualising to actualising their business ventures.

In gender entrepreneurship literature, while considerable attention has been paid to women's entrepreneurial experiences (Ahl, 2006; Marlow, 2020), the unique mindset development of refugee women during new venture creation remains underexplored. Traditional gender-focused entrepreneurship frameworks often fail to capture how refugee women navigate the complex cognitive and emotional territory between having an entrepreneurial idea and establishing a concrete business entity. The entrepreneurial mindset during this crucial liminal state of venture creation represents a critical gap in our understanding.

Building on these identified gaps in both refugee and gender entrepreneurship literature, this study examines how female refugee entrepreneurs navigate mindset shifts, specifically within the liminal space of new venture creation, focusing on three dimensions: as *subjects of change*, during the *process of change*, and as *agents of change*. By integrating insights from both literature streams, this research contributes to our understanding of the cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of refugee women's entrepreneurial journey during the critical phase of business startup.

The first section examines definitional issues and policy context, particularly focusing on the distinction between 'refugee' and 'migrant' entrepreneurs. This exploration of definitions provides context for examining specific policy developments, particularly in the UK context. The UK government's refugee policy over the last twenty years is notable for its lack of reference to entrepreneurs and, more specifically, the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship.

It was not until 2018 that the government made a concerted effort to gather data on how refugee entrepreneurs fare in modern Britain. In that year, the UK Refugee Entrepreneurship Pilot Scheme was launched to demonstrate the efficacy of refugee entrepreneurship programmes and experiment with different models of delivery (Richey et al., 2021). While this initiative marked progress, there remains an opportunity to further enhance these programmes by incorporating more inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches.

The policy analysis then examines how current frameworks create barriers or opportunities for refugee entrepreneurs, particularly in terms of legal and social challenges. While these policies often present entrepreneurship as a route to integration, scholars have critiqued the uncritical optimism surrounding this view (Carter et al., 2015; Ahl and Marlow, 2019; Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018). They argue that such perspectives often overlook the complexities involved, particularly the lack of differentiated data that adequately addresses the specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Finally, the discussion ties these policies to broader entrepreneurial opportunities for refugees, leading to a more focused look at refugee theories.

Having established the policy context and its limitations in addressing female refugee entrepreneurship, the chapter turns to examining theoretical frameworks that can help understand this phenomenon. The theoretical discussion progresses from broad refugee economic integration models to specific entrepreneurship theories, before examining crucial gendered perspectives that illuminate the unique experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs.

Following this contextual foundation, the chapter progresses through three interconnected areas. As Bakker and McMullen (2023) argue in their call for a shared theoretical conversation about unconventional entrepreneurs, we must develop more inclusive frameworks that can capture the diverse experiences of marginalised groups, including refugee women..

First, it examines refugee economic integration models, starting with Kuhlman's (1991) seminal framework and its contemporary adaptations. In exploring the economic integration of refugees, Kuhlman's (1991) model remains one of the few comprehensive frameworks for understanding refugee economic adaptation. Although Kuhlman originally designed his framework to evaluate refugees' economic integration, specifically in Global South countries of first asylum, it has been widely adapted to study refugee integration in various contexts, including Global North host nations. While subsequent scholars like Potocky-Tripodi (2003) and Koyama (2014) have adapted this framework for contemporary contexts, gaps remain in understanding gender disparities in economic outcomes. These limitations underscore the need for more complex and intersectional approaches that account for factors such as gender, household composition, and the specific challenges faced by refugee women in their pursuit of economic self-sufficiency. Their adaptations and limitations will be examined in detail in section 2.2.3.

Second, it explores entrepreneurship theories, from classic definitions to modern frameworks specifically addressing refugee entrepreneurship. Beginning with Shane and Venkataraman's (2000) seminal definition that positions opportunity recognition as central to entrepreneurship, the review traces how entrepreneurship theory has evolved. This evolution encompasses Lounsbury and Glynn's (2019) contextual perspective and UNCTAD's (2018) emphasis on 'capacity and willingness' to manage ventures, which aligns with Henderson's (2008) focus on risk-taking and innovation. These contemporary perspectives build upon the foundational works of Schumpeter (1934), Knight (1921), and Kirzner (1978), who characterised entrepreneurs as innovators and risk-takers. However, crucial critiques from Ahl (2006) and Verduijn and Essers (2013) highlight the gender bias inherent in these traditional entrepreneurship portrayals.

Following this broad theoretical foundation, the discussion narrows to examine theoretical frameworks specifically relevant to refugee entrepreneurship. Of particular significance is Kloosterman's (2010) Mixed Embeddedness Model, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs operate within specific market, institutional, and social contexts. While Ram et al. (2017) and Sepulveda et al. (2011) highlight the model's contributions to contextualising migrant entrepreneurship, critical perspectives from Essers and Benschop (2009) reveal important limitations, particularly in addressing gender dimensions. This literature review reveals how dominant theoretical frameworks often conflate immigrants and refugees while inadequately addressing gender dimensions, highlighting the need for approaches that better capture the unique position of female refugee entrepreneurs.

While these frameworks provide valuable insights into refugee entrepreneurship, their application reveals significant intersections with gender that warrant deeper examination. The Mixed Embeddedness Model, for instance, while robust in explaining structural and market conditions, does not fully capture how gender shapes access to resources, market opportunities, and social networks. Female refugee entrepreneurs often navigate multiple, overlapping challenges that cannot be explained through refugee status alone. Their entrepreneurial experiences are simultaneously shaped by their position as refugees, their gender, and often their status as primary caregivers - dimensions that traditional entrepreneurship frameworks tend to treat separately rather than as interconnected influences. This intersection of refugee status and gender creates unique patterns of constraint and opportunity that require theoretical frameworks capable of capturing such complexity. Therefore, a turn to gendered perspectives on entrepreneurship becomes crucial for developing a more thorough understanding of female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences.

The limitations of these frameworks in addressing gender dimensions necessitate a turn to our second core theoretical focus: gendered perspectives on entrepreneurship. This section critically examines how gender permeates entrepreneurial activities, behaviours, and outcomes, challenging the notion of entrepreneurship as a gender-neutral endeavour (Marlow, 2019). The analysis employs two complementary theoretical lenses: Intersectional Theory (Dy and MacNeil, 2023) and Feminist Poststructuralism (Wooldridge, 2015). Together, these approaches provide a more comprehensive and layered framework for understanding how multiple identities and power dynamics shape female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences. The synthesis of these approaches reveals critical gaps in current understanding, particularly in how female refugee entrepreneurs navigate both structural constraints and individual agency in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Through this review of both refugee and gender entrepreneurship literatures, several key themes emerge. First, traditional entrepreneurship theories have inadequately captured the complex realities of female refugee entrepreneurs, particularly in their development of entrepreneurial mindsets within the liminal space of new venture creation. Second, the entrepreneurial mindset, encompassing resilience, opportunity recognition, and strategic thinking, emerges as a crucial yet understudied element in female refugee entrepreneurship. Finally, the intersection of refugee status and gender creates unique patterns of constraint and opportunity that require more sophisticated theoretical frameworks.

Drawing from these emerging themes, this chapter concludes by proposing an integrated conceptual framework that synthesises insights from refugee entrepreneurship studies, gender theory, liminality concepts, and entrepreneurial mindset literature. This framework addresses three key theoretical gaps identified in this review. First, it addresses the uncritical application of immigrant entrepreneurship frameworks to refugee contexts, without adequate consideration of how feminist poststructuralist and intersectional

perspectives could illuminate the complex interplay of structure and agency. Second, it examines the limited empirical research using feminist poststructuralism to understand refugee women's entrepreneurial mindset development during the liminal phase of venture creation. Finally, it addresses the need for theoretical frameworks that better capture how refugee women navigate cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of entrepreneurship within liminal spaces.

Building on this theoretical foundation, chapter 3 provides context about liminality as the setting for studying refugee women's entrepreneurship before subsequent chapters detail the methodological approach and empirical findings that extend our understanding of female refugee entrepreneurship.

2.2 Refugees - Understanding the Context

2.2.1 Refugee definition, policy and theory

As Zetter (2007; 2022) posits, the term refugee emerges not just as a simplistic label but as a nuanced category in the era of globalisation. This categorisation encompasses both immediate humanitarian concerns and deeper psychological dimensions. In terms of immediate needs, it stands as a testament to survival and adaptability, echoing MacDonald's (1986) emphasis on emergency assistance and multifaceted challenges. Beyond these practical aspects, the notion of refugee reflects a distinct mindset that evolves from the unrelenting human quest for safety and dignity (Dreyden-Peterson, 2019).

Refugees represent a distinct subset of migrants, bearing profound marks of displacement within their lives. These marks can be traced through lived narratives in refugee research (Eastmond, 2007; Zetter, 2022), revealing both individual experiences and collective patterns of adaptation and survival.

The academic understanding of refugee experiences has evolved significantly. Chimni (1998) critically examines the geopolitics of refugee studies, demonstrating how these experiences are profoundly interlaced with wider socio-political contexts. This analytical approach reveals a resilient mindset in the face of upheaval, particularly visible in narratives that have historically been marginalised and silenced. As Malkki (1995) suggests, this has led to an important shift from generic 'refugee studies' to a more refined understanding of each refugee's unique experience.

These accounts, fraught with struggle yet resilient and hopeful, not only echo Hyndman's (2000) exploration of the politics of humanitarianism but also challenge dominant narratives. This perspective invites a critical engagement towards understanding the refugee experience more holistically (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014; Agier, 2011).

A refugee, as defined by The United Nations, is 'a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution' (United Nations General Assembly, 1951). Those fitting this definition are entitled to certain minimum standards of treatment. However, this legal definition has been subject to scholarly critique regarding its practical implications.

Arendt (1951) fundamentally challenged this definitional framework, suggesting that the distinction between refugees and stateless persons is not useful because although refugees may not legally be considered stateless, they are effectively stateless. This perspective is echoed in more recent scholarship, (Bradley, 2014; Le Espiritu, 2022), arguing that portraying refugees as stateless may undermine their claims against their states of origin for the redress of their rights as citizens and advocates for a broader understanding of refugees beyond the narrow focus of being rightless and stateless.

This means that refugees may have been forced to flee their country and, therefore, do not have the protection of their government, but they do not necessarily have the protection of a new country either. As a result, they are effectively without a state and the rights and protections that come with citizenship. Arendt argued that this de facto statelessness is a significant challenge for refugees and needs to be addressed to provide them with adequate protection and support. Unravelling the characteristics of refugees is a multifaceted endeavour. However, certain common threads emerge across refugee experiences, including displacement, trauma, loss, resilience, cultural and linguistic diversity, and economic insecurity, all elements that influence the refugees' mindset.

Parekh (2016) argued that refugees are fundamentally characterised by their vulnerability and displacement from their homes and countries. They have fled from war, conflict, persecution, or natural disasters, seeking safety and security in other countries. This physical displacement often accompanies a profound sense of social and cultural dislocation, creating multiple layers of vulnerability.

The challenges refugees face are often compounded by societal perceptions in host countries. Refugees are frequently seen as a burden, requiring assistance with housing, employment, and integration into society (Bahar and Dooley, 2020). This perception stems from the idea that refugees fundamentally differ from the native population and potentially threaten the host country's social order (Fraser and Murakami, 2022). This othering process leads to stigmatisation based on nationality, religion, or ethnicity (Tewolde, 2021; Huizinga, 2023), creating a cycle where marginalisation reinforces vulnerability and hinders successful integration into host communities.

Refugees may exhibit remarkable perseverance and tenacity despite challenging and traumatic circumstances - hallmarks of a resilient mindset. Bauman (2013) asserted that refugees are among those who have been excluded from the globalised world and are forced

to live on the margins of society. Yet, despite refugees' challenges, he suggested they possess a remarkable capacity for adaptability and survival. This need for refugees to navigate complex environments is evidenced in recent research. Yetkin and Tunçalp (2024) found that refugee entrepreneurs must constantly negotiate their societal position in host countries. Their study revealed that 'refugee entrepreneurs attempt to negotiate their societal position by continuously challenging differential inclusion and exclusion through counter-strategies' (p. 898). Matheson, Asokumar and Anisman (2020) suggest that this ability to adapt is essential for refugees to create new lives and rebuild a sense of community and belonging. However, as Bauman (2013) noted this necessary adaptability often comes at a significant cost.

While refugees' capacity to adapt demonstrates remarkable resilience, Bauman argued that these very survival strategies can become vectors for exploitation. In the globalised world refugees' adaptability and survival strategies can also be viewed as a form of exploitation. In the globalised world, refugees are often face systematic marginalisation in employment contexts, where their survival strategies and adaptability are often leveraged against them (Hirst et al., 2023). This exploitation manifests in their concentration in precarious employment positions, particularly in sectors experiencing labour shortages. Research demonstrates (Hirst et al., 2023; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016; Fasani, Frattini, and Minale (2022) that refugees are frequently viewed merely as an inexpensive labour source, finding themselves restricted to low-skilled, temporary positions that offer minimal opportunities for career advancement or skill development. The persistent nature of this exploitation is particularly concerning - while refugees demonstrate significant adaptability in securing employment, these very coping mechanisms often reinforce their marginalisation and status as outsiders in the labour market (Vogiazides and Mondani, 2020).

The 2022 Global Refugee Work Rights Report (Refugees International, 2022) corroborates this, noting that refugees' adaptability and survival strategies in the globalised

world frequently lead to their exploitation as a source of cheap labour, exacerbating their marginalisation and reinforcing their status as outsiders.

Due to their unpredictable and volatile circumstances, refugees may need to adjust rapidly to survive and meet new challenges (Amnesty International, 2024). This adaptability and resourcefulness often emerge from the mindset that they must find solutions despite limited resources and support. These traits highlight the complexities of the refugee experience and provide a foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of the mindsets and experiences of refugees (Güngör and Strohmeier, 2020).

Having established the complex traits and experiences that shape refugee mindsets, from their forced displacement to their necessary adaptability in the face of exploitation and limited resources the next section raises an important question about categorisation itself. While this chapter has so far explored the fundamental characteristics of refugees, it is now crucial to examine how and why we distinguish between refugees and other displaced groups. This distinction is particularly significant when examining entrepreneurial contexts, where the implications of such categorisation can directly impact both policy formation and practical support mechanisms.

2.2.2 Refugee or Migrant. Is it important?

While the previous section established the fundamental characteristics of refugees, this section examines the crucial distinctions between refugees and migrants, specifically within an entrepreneurial context. To begin with, the section questions whether distinguishing between refugees and migrants is useful or necessary for entrepreneurship research. After that, the practical implications of these distinctions, particularly in policy and resource allocation, will be explored. Lastly, the section connects these distinctions to the entrepreneurial journey of refugees, setting up the transition to a discussion of UK government policies in the next section.

The concept of refugee labelling is already well established in academia. Zetter (2007, pp.174) described labelling as, ‘a powerful explanatory tool that implies something independently applied’, although he was discussing this in the context of refugee humanitarian discourse, it aligns closely with entrepreneurial studies in which contextualisation is paramount. This antinomy between refugee and migrant does not reside solely in entrepreneurship studies but exists in the rhetoric of both the UK government, media, and the wider discourse (see Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore, 2015; Gray and Franck, 2018). Even as early as 1973, Kunz had noted that ‘once the refugee is re-settled, he is more often than not equated by administrators and the general public alike with the voluntary migrant’ (Kunz, 1973, pp.128).

Irrespective of personal identity preferences, the refugee’s distinct business start-up and actualisation progression in entrepreneurship research is *sui generis*, a unique phenomenon predominantly determined by its political status. Therefore, it warrants examination as a distinct form of entrepreneurship. This designation should persist until a broader, more inclusive definition encompasses all refugees, whether they are driven by economic, environmental, or political circumstances. Focus on the peculiarities of refugee entrepreneurship can offer further knowledge contributions to government policy and support for all enterprise endeavours regardless of their prefix.

The academic discourse surrounding refugee entrepreneurship raises fundamental questions about categorisation and identity. A central debate concerns whether the category ‘refugee’ is a relevant or necessary addition to the entrepreneur’s title (Kloosterman (2003). This seemingly semantic distinction has significant implications for both research and practice. Several scholars argue that this categorisation is imperative for understanding both the economic impact and unique entrepreneurial experiences of refugees (Betts et al., 2017; Bovard, 2017; Crawley and Skleparis, 2018; Alrawadieh, Karayilan, et al., 2018).

Maintaining the distinction between refugee and migrant is vital to provide specific context. Cortes (2004) suggests that research that averages all immigrants may overlook essential differences.

The contemporary relevance of this distinction has significant policy implications. Government support for vulnerable and marginalised groups depends critically on understanding how entrepreneurial refugees specifically access and utilise both personal and institutional resources. This understanding becomes particularly crucial given that existing policies often fall short of addressing refugees' unique needs.

Research has consistently identified these policy gaps. Scholars like Lyon, Sepulveda and Syrett (2007) have long posited that government policies are inadequately adjusted for refugees' needs in self-employment. This misalignment becomes particularly evident in the context of integration. As Wehrle et al. (2018) highlight, refugees face distinct barriers when trying to re-establish their lives in host countries, particularly in terms of work integration.

In their study on refugee entrepreneurs in Belgium, Wauters and Lambrecht (2008) revealed some crucial differences between refugees' and immigrants' barriers. These barriers become particularly evident in technology sectors, where, as Pugalia and Cetindamar (2022) reveal, immigrant women entrepreneurs face compound challenges in accessing professional networks and overcoming gender-based discrimination. The main differences are situated in the categories of access to entrepreneurship and the presence of social networks.

The main differences are situated in the categories of access to entrepreneurship and the presence of social networks. Because refugees have to leave their country unexpectedly, they encounter more problems in getting their qualifications accepted. Accessing capital from their country of origin may be problematic, if not impossible, and they are often not well integrated into social or ethnic networks. They advise treating refugees as a separate category when analysing entrepreneurship.

Public discourse around displacement and migration often lacks precision in terminology. While ‘immigrant,’ ‘refugee,’ and ‘asylum seeker’ represent distinct legal and social categories, these terms are frequently used interchangeably in public discussions. This conflation becomes particularly problematic in the European context, where, despite their relatively small populations, refugees and asylum seekers receive disproportionate media attention (Leinonen, 2012, Olier and Spadavecchia, 2022). This leads to the perception of refugees as either helpless victims, dangerous threats to society, or people seeking to take advantage of welfare benefits offered by the state (as cited in Allen and Blinder, 2013; Martinez Lirola and Zammit, 2017). Davidavičien and Lolat (2016, pp.3) note that, ‘general expressions like migrant, immigrant, ethnic (minority), foreign or refugee entrepreneurship seem to cover the fuzzy topic of people businesses that are not origins from the country where the organisations are founded’. Bakker et al. (2017) indicate what the research phrase ‘refugee gap’ which implies that it is especially tricky for refugees as opposed to other migrants to access the economic sector of the host country easily. Obschonka and Hahn (2018) propose that the likely rationale for this refugee gap amounts to adverse effects that correlate with the refugee exodus, such as the loss of qualification documents and harrowing experiences during the diaspora as well as prejudicial reception in the host country. Potocky-Tripodi (2003) highlights that refugees face a multitude of challenges as they adapt to their new lives, challenges that are often more complex and multifaceted compared to those encountered by immigrants. Among these challenges, economic adaptation stands out as a particularly significant aspect, as noted by Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. (2014). This economic adaptation involves navigating the local job market, understanding financial systems, and often overcoming language barriers and limited recognition of their qualifications and work experience.

Whether refugees who have obtained citizenship from their host country are still considered refugee entrepreneurs remain underrepresented in academic discourse. This raises questions about the utility and validity of defining and categorising individuals based on their refugee status. It may be a redundant exercise for some but persists as a complicated matter for others.

The impact of citizenship status on the definition of refugee entrepreneur underscores identity's fluid and constructed nature. Citizenship status, as Brubaker (1992) has elucidated, profoundly affects how refugees are viewed and categorised within societal contexts, directly influencing the opportunities and experiences available to refugee entrepreneurs. This relationship between citizenship and entrepreneurial opportunity reveals the complex interplay between legal status and economic participation.

The process of obtaining citizenship itself reflects broader power dynamics within society. Bosniak (2006) posits that securing citizenship is not an impartial procedure but is influenced by governmental strategies and societal conventions. The state's authority to grant or deny citizenship is shaped by political, economic, and cultural determinants (Junn and Shachar, 2011). As Benhabib (2004, 2020) delineates, these state-level decisions about citizenship create frameworks that fundamentally affect how refugees are perceived and treated within society, extending well beyond legal status into social and economic domains.

This raises important questions about how power and societal norms shape the categorisation and labelling of individuals. For example, obtaining citizenship can result in a binary categorisation of refugees as either 'citizen' or 'non-citizens'. This binary categorisation can marginalise and exclude individuals who do not fit these strict definitions. Moreover, the focus on citizenship status as a defining characteristic of refugee entrepreneurs can obscure the intersections of other important aspects of identity, such as race, gender, and class, which also shape the entrepreneurial experiences of refugees. By prioritising

citizenship status over these other aspects of identity, the definition of refugee entrepreneur becomes limiting and fails to accurately represent the complex and diverse experiences of refugees.

The importance of recognising gender as a distinct category within refugee entrepreneurship becomes particularly salient when examining the unique vulnerabilities and challenges faced by women refugees. The intersectionality of refugee status and gender creates compound disadvantages that deserve specific attention in both academic discourse and policy frameworks. As highlighted by Pittaway and Pittaway (2004), the designation of ‘refugee woman’ carries significant implications beyond mere categorisation, it often becomes a marker of heightened vulnerability and potential exploitation. This vulnerability is exacerbated by limited legal protections and institutional support systems, creating additional barriers for women refugee entrepreneurs. While these gender-specific challenges will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter through the lens of gendered entrepreneurship, it is important to note here how the distinct challenges faced by women refugees in accessing resources, navigating social networks, and establishing businesses in host countries underscore the necessity of maintaining gender-specific subcategories within refugee entrepreneurship research. This granular approach to categorisation enables more targeted and effective support mechanisms while acknowledging the unique intersection of gender-based discrimination with the already complex challenges of refugee status.

These complex intersections of identity, status, and categorisation directly influence how government policies are formulated and implemented for refugee entrepreneurs. The understanding of refugee categorisation, whether based on citizenship status, gender, or other demographic factors, becomes particularly relevant when examining the UK government’s approach to refugee enterprise support. While the preceding discussion has established the importance of maintaining distinct categories for targeted support, it is crucial to examine

how these theoretical distinctions manifest in practical policy measures. The following section analyses the UK government's policy framework for refugees, exploring how well it addresses the multifaceted needs of different refugee groups and whether current policies adequately account for the distinct challenges faced by refugee entrepreneurs, particularly those with compound vulnerabilities.

2.2.3 UK Government Policy

This section explores the influence of UK government policies on refugee entrepreneurship. It begins by tracing the evolution of increasingly restrictive policies and their impact on refugees. Next, it evaluates recent developments, including the Refugee Entrepreneurship Pilot Study and the Nationality and Borders Act (2022), and their implications for refugee entrepreneurs. The analysis then examines the construction of asylum seekers in political discourse and critiques the uncritical optimism surrounding entrepreneurship as a pathway to integration. (Carter, 2011; Ahl and Marlow, 2021). They argue that such perspectives often overlook the complexities involved, particularly the lack of differentiated data that adequately addresses the specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Finally, it emphasises the importance of recognising refugees' inherent entrepreneurial mindset and addresses their underrepresentation in policies and research.

The United Kingdom has had a complex history with refugees and asylum seekers, with policies often reflecting the political and societal mood of the times (Kushner, 2003; Gibney, 2004; Kaye, 2013; Bleich et al., 2015; Kallio et al., 2021). Over the years, the UK's stance has evolved from a more open approach to an increasingly restrictive one, particularly following the Brexit vote 2016. Long-standing criticisms have been raised about the UK government's treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, often characterising their policies as hostile (Sales, 2002; Phillips, 2006; Mulvey, 2010; Allsopp et al., 2014; Mayblin, 2019).

A notable example of this restrictive stance is the hostile environment policy introduced in 2012, and the subsequent tightening of the asylum system serve as significant illustrations of the UK's restrictive stance towards refugees and migrants. This policy, according to critics, has instilled fear and uncertainty among migrants and refugees making it increasingly difficult for them to live and work in the UK by denying them access to essential services such as housing, healthcare and bank accounts (Webber, 2019). Furthermore, the

policy also made it a requirement for landlords, employers and banks to check the immigration status of their tenants, employees and customers. This has led to criticisms that the policy engendered a climate of fear and mistrust within migrant communities and fostered discrimination against people who looked or sounded 'foreign' (Yuval-Davis, 2018; Goodfellow, 2020).

Another example is the tightening of the asylum system. Since 2010, the UK government has made it more difficult for people to claim asylum by introducing stricter rules and longer processing times (Stewart and Mulvey, 2014). The government has also reduced the number of legal routes to enter the UK, such as closing the Dubs scheme, which was designed to help unaccompanied child refugees enter the country (McLaughlin, 2018; Campbell, 2022). Additionally, the UK government has been criticised for its treatment of refugees and migrants in detention centres, such as Yarl's Wood and Brook House.

Reports have documented poor conditions in the centres, including overcrowding and inadequate medical care (Epstein, 2018; Bosworth, 2021). There have also been reports of abuse and mistreatment by staff. These restrictive policies have been widely criticised for being inhumane and putting the lives of refugees and migrants at risk (Goodfellow, 2020). Critics like Vats (2021) and Achiume (2021) argue that these policies are driven by xenophobia, racism and nationalist sentiment and that they violate the human rights of immigrants and asylum seekers. In addition, some argue that the UK's restrictive policies violate international law, such as the UN Refugee Convention (1951), of which the UK is a signatory (Brittle, 2019; Webber, 2019; Achiume, 2021).

Turning to the period between 2021-2022, there were two major developments in the UK concerning refugees and entrepreneurship. The first was the publication of the Refugee Entrepreneurship Pilot Study by the Centre for Entrepreneurship (Richey et al., 2021), funded by the Home Office and the National Lottery Community.

Initially launched in 2018, this scheme aimed to support refugee entrepreneurship in the UK. It was designed as a year-long, tailored business support programme to demonstrate the effectiveness of entrepreneurship programmes for refugees and to trial various delivery models. However, as Street, Ng and Al Dajani (2022) highlight, these initiatives were not specifically gender-focused and their success will be depended largely on government support and funding, which have faced constraints due to the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

The second critical development was the passing the Nationality and Borders Bill on 22nd April 2022 (Nationality and Borders Act, 2022). The potential impact of this Act on refugee entrepreneurship is yet to be fully assessed. This key legislative document governing the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers introduces a distinction between two groups of refugees: Group 1 and Group 2. While this legal distinction may appear practical on the surface, it raises several critical issues. This binary categorisation may significantly influence the entrepreneurial landscape for refugees in the United Kingdom. The new Act implicated issues arising from these classifications, including the amount and type of support available to refugee entrepreneurs and the legal and personal stability required to grow a business. In addition, the Act's provisions may introduce further complications for refugee entrepreneurs' family members and could uniquely disadvantage female refugee entrepreneurs.

The differential treatment provisions within the Act have significant implications for the entrepreneurial ecosystem, potentially creating systemic biases that advantage certain refugee groups while disadvantaging others. This structural inequality becomes particularly significant when examined through the lens of liminality and entrepreneurial mindset development. The institutional context intersects with the 'process of change' dimension in the theoretical framework, as refugee women navigate these institutional barriers while developing entrepreneurial capabilities. This observation directly addresses the central

research question: ‘*How do female refugee entrepreneurs navigate entrepreneurial mindset in the liminal space, across three dimensions as subjects of change, during a process of change, and as an agent of change?*’ The structural inequalities embedded in the Act demonstrate how institutional frameworks can significantly shape the entrepreneurial journey of refugee women, influencing their transition from *subjects* to *agents of change* within the liminal space.

Moving on to the construction of asylum seekers in political discourse, the language of the legislation implies a reconsideration of the prior seven years of academic inquiry regarding the concept of refugee entrepreneurs. The bill grants asylum seekers the possibility of obtaining employment after six months under specific conditions, and the government will likely enforce the idea of entrepreneurship upon this marginalised population too. Perhaps ‘*Asylum Entrepreneurs*’? Yet, the crucial question remains: who will now be recognised as refugee entrepreneurs? The selective nature of the UK government’s approach to admitting refugees raises concerns about how these individuals are being constructed and defined. Costello and Foster (2022) highlight the varying treatment of refugees within the global system, including the impact of racialised migration controls and preferences for certain groups. This aligns with Mayblin’s (2019) observations on how policymakers’ conceptualisation of asylum influences governance, often through restrictive measures. Such measures are designed to limit the number of asylum seekers, frequently casting them in a negative light as economic migrants or ‘bogus’ asylum seeker, a narrative reinforced by media and political rhetoric (Palillo, 2019; Mountz, 2020; Hamlin, 2021). Consequently, the potential for recognising and supporting ‘*Asylum Entrepreneurs*’ is entangled in a complex web of policies and perceptions that often prioritise economic factors over humanitarian needs.

This construction of asylum seekers, particularly the figure of the ‘fraudulent asylum seeker,’ is repeatedly used to justify exclusionary policies that limit access to the asylum system (Mulvey, 2010). Such framing not only obscures the complex and varied reasons that individuals seek asylum but also reinforces harmful stereotypes about migrants as being inherently opportunistic and unworthy of protection (Protonotariou and Tsitlakidis-Charisiadis, 2021; Aldamen, 2023). The pervasive use of the term ‘illegality’ to govern migratory movements further reinforces a false binary between legal and illegal migrants, which systematically disregards the social, economic, and political factors that often drive migration (Stigum, 2009; De Genova et al., 2015; Swerts, 2021). This approach to governance not only perpetuates deeply embedded systems of oppression but also actively hinders the ability of asylum seekers to access their fundamental legal right to seek asylum and undermines the core humanitarian principles that underlie international refugee law (Protonotariou and Tsitlakidis-Charisiadis, 2021).

Shifting focus to the political rhetoric surrounding entrepreneurship, it frequently exhibits an uncritical optimism, casting it as an unequivocal pathway to integration, especially for women. Yet, as Carter (2011) illustrates, the economic returns from entrepreneurial ventures are neither straightforward nor uniformly positive; they are shaped by the intersections of household dynamics and the shifting stages of the business lifecycle. Despite such complexity, policy narratives continue to promote entrepreneurship as an unproblematic route to financial independence, ignoring evidence that questions the viability of sustainable incomes for women through entrepreneurial activity (Ahl and Marlow, 2021). This celebratory discourse obscures the precarious and inconsistent nature of entrepreneurial income streams, especially for marginalised groups like refugee women, who face compounded challenges in accessing resources and establishing viable enterprises. Rather

than offering empowerment, entrepreneurship in these contexts often presents a precarious and unstable livelihood, subject to the vagaries of an inequitable market environment.

Having critically examined the policy landscape and political discourse, it is paramount to identify the distinctive aspects of this phenomenon, considering not just the obstacles refugees face but also their innate entrepreneurial intent, a mindset cultivated out of necessity and honed by adversity (Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008; Bizri, 2017).

Understanding entrepreneurship as a tool for both economic and social integration is crucial for refugees (Kloosterman, 2010; Alrawadieh et al., 2019; Shepherd et al., 2020). Dashtipour and Rumens (2017) highlight that fostering refugees' entrepreneurial inclinations can pave the way for their integration. This is echoed by Betts and Collier (2015), who observe that refugees often possess resourcefulness, adaptability, and independence, traits fundamental to an entrepreneurial mindset. These characteristics not only contribute to personal success but also to the broader development of host countries. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2018) recognises refugees' potential to drive economic growth, innovation, new venture creation, and local economic development.

However, capitalising on these traits and ensuring the success of refugee entrepreneurs require supportive governmental policies, as noted by Kabbani (2017) and Alrawadieh, Karayilan, and Cetin (2018). Effective integration systems should leverage the economic contributions of refugees, transforming perceived burdens into opportunities. This perspective is supported by the Centre for Entrepreneurship (2018), which outlines the broad benefits of refugee entrepreneurship, including public sector savings, job creation, altered public perceptions, and enhanced economic activity.

Finally, despite these potential benefits, refugee entrepreneurs are often underrepresented in government policies and academic research, which tend to focus more on immigrant entrepreneurship. Shneikat and Rya (2017) argue that this oversight fails to

recognise the enterprising, resilient, and autonomous nature of refugees, who bring valuable entrepreneurial mindsets to their new communities. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2014) suggests that profiling refugee skills, capabilities, and experiences could guide more inclusive policies, providing equal opportunities and levelling the playing field for refugees. Consequently, policymakers must acknowledge and harness the entrepreneurial mindset within these individuals for the mutual benefit of refugees and host nations (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2018).

In conclusion, the analysis of UK government policies reveals a complex and often challenging landscape for refugee entrepreneurs. The evolution of increasingly restrictive policies, the introduction of the Nationality and Borders Act (2022), and the construction of asylum seekers in political discourse have significantly shaped the opportunities and barriers faced by refugees seeking to establish businesses in the UK. Despite the uncritical optimism surrounding entrepreneurship as a pathway to integration, particularly for women, the reality is far more complicated, with refugees often encountering precarious and unstable livelihoods. However, by recognising the inherent entrepreneurial mindset of refugees and addressing their underrepresentation in policies and research, there is potential for more inclusive and supportive approaches that harness the economic contributions of refugee entrepreneurs for the benefit of both refugees and host nations.

Having examined the impact of UK government policies on refugee entrepreneurship, it is essential to situate these findings within the broader context of refugee theories. These theories provide a framework for understanding the experiences, challenges, and strategies of refugees as they navigate the complex process of displacement, resettlement, and integration. By exploring key concepts and debates within refugee studies, we can gain understanding of the factors that shape refugee entrepreneurship and identify potential avenues for supporting and empowering refugee entrepreneurs. The following section will explore the relevance of

refugee theory to understanding the experiences and challenges of female refugee entrepreneurs, positioning liminal space as the contextual setting for this study.

2.2.4 Refugee Theory

This section explores the relevance of refugee theory to understanding the experiences and challenges of female refugee entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on the concept of liminal space as a contextual setting for this study. It begins by examining Kuhlman's (1991) model of refugee integration, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the economic adaptation of refugees. The section then applies this model to the specific context of refugee entrepreneurship, highlighting the unique economic challenges and opportunities that refugees encounter when starting and running their own businesses within the liminal spaces they occupy.

The concept of liminal space is first introduced within the broader literature on refugees, as it provides a valuable lens through which to understand the experiences of refugees navigating transitions and uncertainties. Drawing on the work of anthropologists such as Van Gennep (1909) and Turner (1977), the literature review explores how the experience of being 'in-between' cultures and identities can shape how refugee women approach entrepreneurship. The section compares and contrasts Kuhlman's model with Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage, suggesting that both frameworks can offer insights into the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women as they navigate the liminal spaces they inhabit.

As the setting for this study is re-introduced, the importance of liminal space is reiterated. The liminal space occupied by refugee women entrepreneurs is a crucial aspect of the setting, characterised by uncertainty, ambiguity, and transition, as refugee women seek to establish themselves in new social, cultural, and economic contexts. By focusing on the liminal space as part of the setting for this study, the section aims to shed light on the unique

ways in which refugee women navigate the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship in contexts of transition and uncertainty.

It is important to note that while the concept of liminality is used to better understand the setting and experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs, this study does not aim to contribute to the theory of liminality itself. Instead, the focus is on applying the concept of liminal space to the specific context of refugee entrepreneurship, to gain a more detailed understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by refugee women entrepreneurs.

Finally, the section reflects on how the concepts of refugee integration and liminality, as explored within the specific setting of liminal space, can inform our understanding of entrepreneurial mindset development among refugee women. It sets the stage for a more in-depth exploration of these themes in the following sections, which will examine how refugee women navigate the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship in the liminal spaces they occupy. Kuhlman's Comprehensive Refugee Integration

Although dated, the Kuhlman (1991) model is still the only comprehensive refugee economic adaptation theory. Kuhlman's complete model of refugee integration (Figure 1) built on Kuhn's (1981, p.50) theoretical framework on refugee exile and resettlement as well as Goldlust and Richmond's (1974, pp.198) model of immigrant adaption. Kuhlman postulated that: refugee economic adaptation is a function of six factors: demographic and ethnocultural variables of refugees; exodus-related factors; host factors such as economic variables; host country policy; residential characteristics including the length of stay; and non-economic aspects, such as integration. The journey to economic integration is marked by three steps: *identification*, *internalisation*, and *satisfaction*. Even though Kuhlman created a framework to assess refugees' economic integration in the developing world, in the country of first asylum, and not in developed countries, others have effectively tested it, particularly Potocky-Tripodi (2003) in her studies of refugees in the United States. Potocky-Tripodi

(2003) noted that although several studies had been conducted to recognise predictors of refugee economic status, only some of these had been conceptually based. These theoretical limitations had generated a fragmentary understanding of the phenomenon. Potocky-Tripodi's (2003) empirical testing of Kuhlman's theoretical model examined four of the six theoretical factors: demographic, host-related, residency, and acculturation characteristics. Potocky-Tripodi's (2003) study, which drew on data from a random sample of refugee groups in a telephone survey, found that education, gender, and household composition significantly affected economic adaptation indicators.

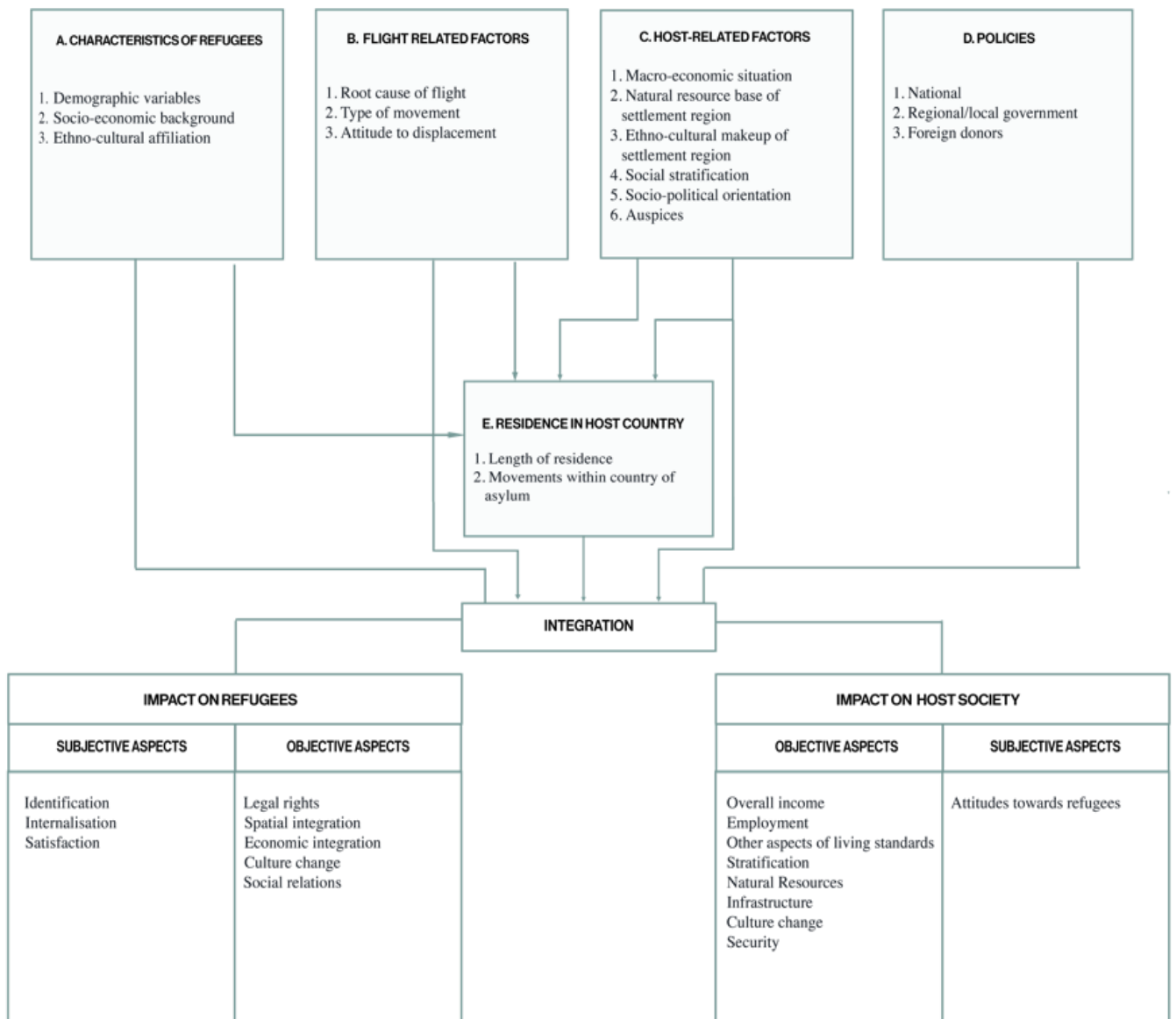


Figure 1. Kuhlman's (1991) Comprehensive Refugee Integration Model

Potocky-Tripodi (2004) also corroborated that even after considering human capital, family structure, and acculturation elements, women consistently experience lesser economic prosperity than men. Moreover, female refugees have a lower likelihood of employment than their male counterparts, and the presence of children in a household tends to correlate with reduced economic success. Koyama (2014) found a similar pattern emerging within provisional vocational and career training programmes designed to make refugees economically self-sufficient; women with young children were frequently discouraged from enrolling. Koyama (2014) cites an example: the regional office of the Department of Labor in Arizona, USA, provided English as a Second Language (ESL) and vocational training for the adult male refugee of a couple with young children while designating the adult female as the one to stay home and take care of the children. This example illustrates the exclusionary nature of enterprise toward refugee women with children. A barrier frequently identified often remains unaccounted for in the structure of framework models.

Although Koyama (2015) employed Kuhlman's Refugee Economic Integration theory in her research, her focus was on refugee women in employment in the USA, rather than specifically on entrepreneurs. Additionally, Zehra and Usmani (2023) used Kuhlman's (1991) model in their study, but their research was centred on family refugee entrepreneurship and the economic integration of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, not exclusively on female entrepreneurs.

While Kuhlman's model provides a valuable framework for understanding the economic adaptation of refugees, it is crucial to consider the unique and dynamic nature of the entrepreneurial journey undertaken by refugee women. The concept of liminal space serves as an important setting for exploring the entrepreneurial mindset of these women, highlighting how resilience, innovation, and risk-taking emerge throughout their experiences. By positioning liminality as the context in which their economic and personal transitions take

place, this study captures the complexity of their journey, ultimately revealing the interplay of mindset attributes that contribute to their economic adaptation and empowerment.

2.2.5 Liminal Space as a Contextual Setting: A Critical Insight

This section maps Van Gennep's (1909) liminal theory with Kuhlman's (1991) refugee integration theory to develop a new conceptual framework that captures the complex experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs. The liminal space is used as a contextual setting to understand the entrepreneurial mindset experienced by refugee women when starting their own businesses. Focusing on the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship, the purpose is to advance an understanding of entrepreneurial practice in phases of radical change, conceptualised as periods of liminality. Thomassen (2015) explores the movement of concepts between disciplines and how meaning changes and new spaces of imagination are created. The concept of liminality was originally an anthropological term introduced by Arnold Van Gennep at the beginning of the twentieth century. The concept referred to the in-between stage in ritual passages. What Turner (1977) referred to as a betwixt and between situations. Thomassen (2015) proposes that liminality should be thought of as a master term; that can illuminate processes of change within multiple disciplines. He advocates Van Gennep's (1909) work as a reference point for discussing transition periods. Chapter 3 will explore liminality in greater depth.

Refugees are transitory and have already passed through a passage of liminality when they move from asylum seeker to refugee. Chakraborty (2017) points out that the experience of being 'in-between' two cultures is what the refugee comes across in the host country. Liminality can help theorise moments when the relationship between structure and agency are not easily understood (Thomassen, 2015). Chakraborty (2017, pp145) defines a threshold as marking the point at which a passage (liminal passage) can be made from one space to another, 'Evoking images of entering and leaving, passages, crossings, and change.' These

thresholds are like portals opening new and previously unavailable paths; in this context, the trail leads from refugee to entrepreneur.

Van Gennep (1909) and Kuhlman (1991) propose models that align closely when applied to the refugee journey towards economic adaptation. Van Gennep (1909) identified a three-part structure to his rites of passage: *separation*, *transition* (liminal), and *incorporation*. These structures align closely with Kuhlman's (1991) model for the economic dimension of refugee integration (Figure 3). He refers to *identification*, *internalisation*, and *satisfaction* as points in the refugee journey towards economic adaptation.

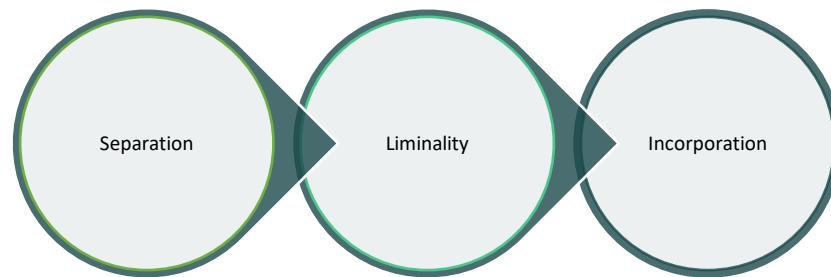


Figure 2. Van Gennep's (1909) model for the Rites of Passage (Author's own)

To expand on Van Gennep's (1909) model (Figure 2, p.60), separation refers to detachment from one's previous social identity. At the same time, the transition/liminal stage is characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty as the individual is neither part of their previous identity nor part of the new one. Next, the incorporation stage involves becoming a fully-fledged member of the new society. In Kuhlman's (1991) model (Figure 3, p.61), the identification stage involves exploring and adapting to the new economic environment, while the internalisation stage involves developing a sense of belonging and comfort within the new environment. Finally, the satisfaction stage consists in achieving economic and personal fulfilment. Van Gennep's separation stage aligns with Kuhlman's identification stage, as both involve leaving one's previous identity behind and exploring a new environment. Van

Genep's transition/liminal stage aligns with Kuhlman's internalisation stage, as both involve a period of ambiguity and uncertainty, as well as a process of developing a sense of belonging and comfort in the new environment. Finally, Van Genep's incorporation stage aligns with Kuhlman's satisfaction stage, as both involve achieving economic and personal fulfilment and becoming fully integrated into the new environment. While Van Genep's model provides a holistic lens for understanding the subjective and cultural dimensions of transition, Kuhlman's model brings in the measurable economic outcomes of integration. By mapping these frameworks together, this study builds a more complete model that reflects both the personal and systemic dimensions of refugee entrepreneurship.

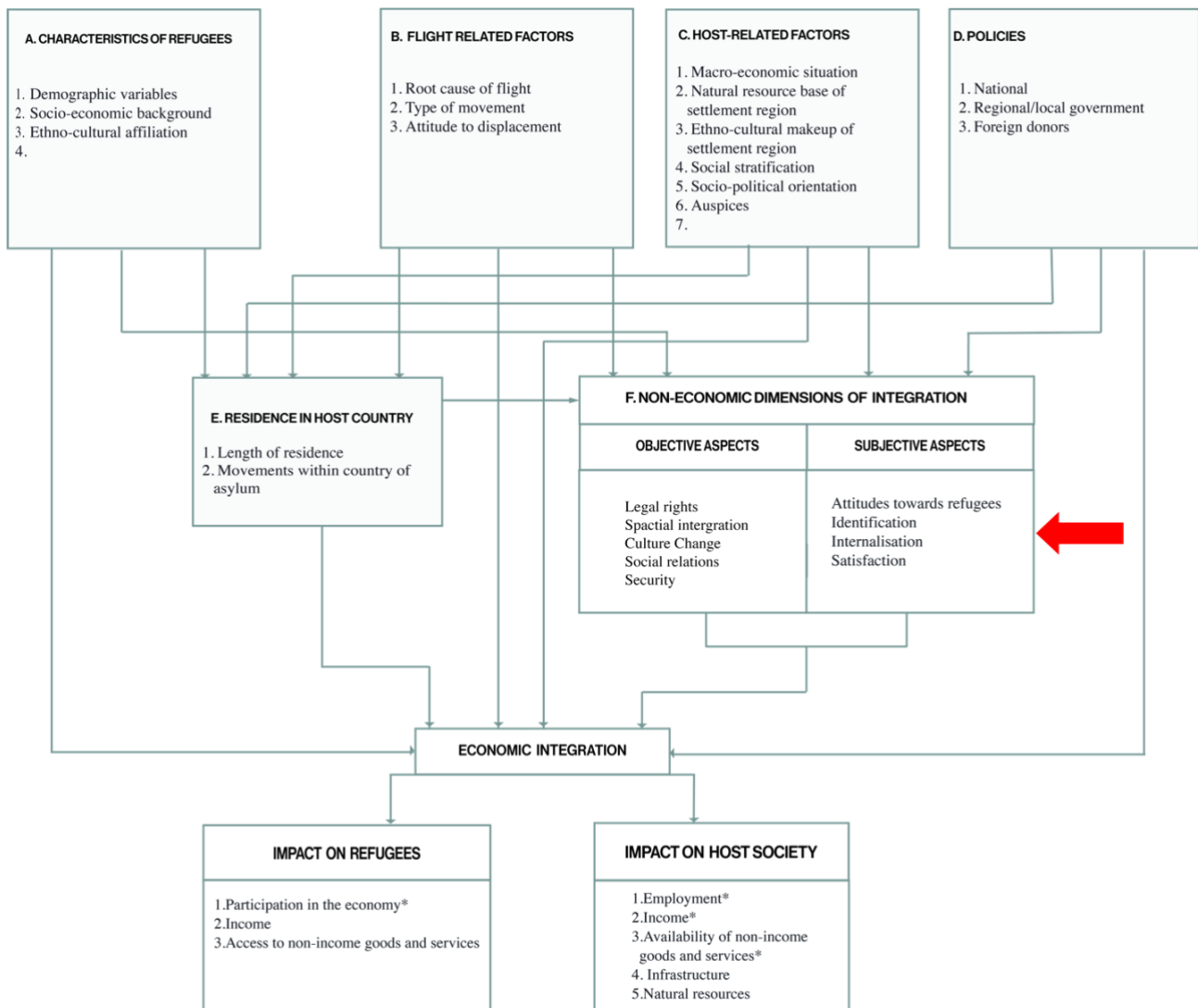


Figure 3. Kuhlman's (1991) model for the economic dimension of refugee integration

Building on the insights from the previous section, this research proposes a deeper synthesis to explore the relationship between the triadic elements of liminality. This central core component of the conceptual model will be further developed in subsequent sections to answer the research question of this thesis.

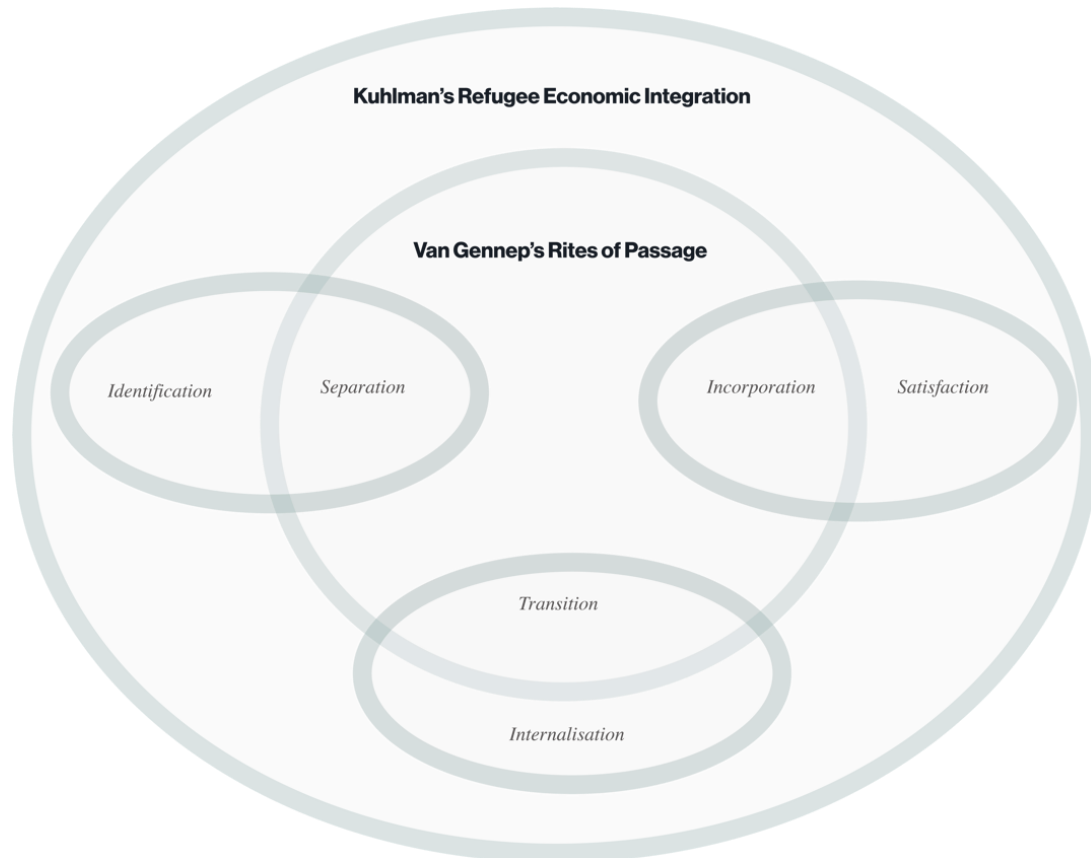


Figure 4. *Progressive Sunthesis of Van Gennepe's and Kuhlman's Tripartite Models (Author's own)*

As illustrated in Figure 4, the mapping between Van Gennepe's tripartite stages of rites of passage (*separation, transition, incorporation*) and Kuhlman's tripartite model of economic integration (*identification, internalisation, satisfaction*) forms the foundation of the conceptual framework. This synthesis of the triadic elements offers a comprehensive view of the personal and systemic dimensions involved in refugee entrepreneurship.

The subsequent sections will delve deeper into how this integrated triadic model of liminality can be further synthesised to distil the key concepts of the subject of change, the process of change, and the agent of change. This refined mapping of the triadic elements of liminality informs the analysis of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences, shedding light on the unique challenges, opportunities, and dynamics that shape their journeys within the liminal space.

The entrepreneurial mindset and its own triadic model, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions, will be introduced and mapped to this foundational understanding of liminality in the following sections. This synthesis of the triadic frameworks will provide a comprehensive conceptual framework for examining the experiences and shifts encountered by refugee women as they navigate the entrepreneurial journey.

In this context, the entrepreneurial mindset takes on unique characteristics shaped by the circumstances and experiences of refugee women. This mindset can be seen as the cognitive and emotional approach that these women bring to the entrepreneurial process, distinguished by qualities such as resilience, innovation, and risk-taking, all refracted through the lens of their refugee experience. In the separation stage, resilience plays a pivotal role. Here, refugee women may face a radical break from their familiar societal roles and economic activities. The challenges of this stage may force them to build and rely upon their resilience as they strive to learn and adapt to an entirely new socio-economic landscape while often simultaneously grappling with the emotional toll of their displacement.

In the transition or liminal stage, innovation becomes crucial. The ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in this stage, characterised by the lack of a clear societal and economic role, can serve as a catalyst for creative problem-solving and innovation (Betts, Bloom and Weaver, 2015). Refugee women are often required to navigate complex bureaucratic systems, learn new languages and skills, and adapt to foreign cultural norms while trying to secure

economic stability. These challenges can spark innovative solutions, leading to unique business ideas that leverage their skills, experiences, and cultural knowledge.

Risk-taking, a hallmark of the entrepreneurial mindset, takes on new dimensions in the incorporation stage. The risks faced by refugee women are multi-faceted, including not just financial risks but also social and personal risks. For instance, launching a business may expose these women to potential bias, discrimination, or even exploitation. Nevertheless, they embrace these risks to achieve economic independence and create a better future for themselves and their families (Heilbrunn, 2021).

However, it is important to note that while both models share some similarities, they are based on different theoretical frameworks and have different emphases. Van Gennepe's model is a sociological framework for understanding the process of change and transition. In contrast, Kuhlman's model is a theoretical framework specifically developed to understand the economic adaptation of refugees. Van Gennepe's model focuses on the subjective experience of the individual going through a transition, while Kuhlman's model focuses on the economic outcomes of the adaptation process. Additionally, Van Gennepe's model assumes that there is a clear and stable destination at the end of the transition process. In contrast, Kuhlman's model recognises the complex and ongoing nature of the economic adaptation process.

They can complement each other when focusing on female refugee entrepreneurs in a few ways. Firstly, Van Gennepe's model can help provide a more holistic and textured understanding of the subjective experiences and challenges female refugee entrepreneurs face as they navigate the economic adaptation process. Specifically, the separation stage can help to illuminate the gendered power dynamics that may have limited women's economic opportunities in their home country. In contrast, the transition/liminal stage can help to highlight the ongoing challenges they may face in accessing economic opportunities and

achieving economic empowerment. Finally, the incorporation stage can help illuminate the complex process of achieving financial and personal fulfilment and fully integrating into the new economic environment.

On the other hand, Kuhlman's model can help to provide a more concrete and measurable understanding of the economic outcomes of the adaptation process. Specifically, the *identification* stage can help to highlight the economic opportunities available to female refugee entrepreneurs. In contrast, the internalisation stage can help measure their economic integration and success. Finally, the satisfaction stage can help to evaluate the extent to which female refugee entrepreneurs have achieved economic and personal fulfilment.

When used together, these models enable a more comprehensive and granular understanding of female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences and outcomes throughout their economic adaptation journey. By documenting the subjective experiences and challenges faced by these women and measuring the economic outcomes of the process, these models can help identify the barriers and challenges that female refugee entrepreneurs face, as well as the opportunities and resources that can help promote their economic empowerment and success.

Liminality can be used to focus on various aspects of the refugee's life, notwithstanding their entrepreneurial endeavours. It is often in what Turner (1977) termed an '*ante-structural*' condition that entrepreneurs find themselves. As observed by Garcia-Lorenzo, Donnelly et al. (2018), these entrepreneurs get caught in a constant state of liminality within their entrepreneurial journey. This state leaves them unable to reach *incorporation* (Van Gennep, 1909), *satisfaction* (Kuhlman, 1991), and without a clear entrepreneurial direction.

In organisational studies, liminality has been considered a structurally imposed condition often with negative connotations; entrepreneurial studies, however, use the term

more positively. Garcia-Lorenzo, Donnelly et al. (2018) indicate a need to focus on the entrepreneurial process and engage with the liminal space to understand organisations and entrepreneurs' actions. They point out that the liminal threshold is neglected in entrepreneurial studies in the conditions of crisis.

The liminal experience of refugee entrepreneurs is particularly evident in studies of specific communities. Essers and Tedmanson's (2014) research on Muslim Turkish migrant businesswomen demonstrate how the dissolution of familiar social and community structures creates a distinctly entrepreneurial form of liminality. Their findings reinforce how entrepreneurship itself functions as a liminal, transformative process, one that parallels the broader transitions that female refugee entrepreneurs navigate. This alignment between entrepreneurial and refugee liminality suggests that the very conditions of displacement might catalyse entrepreneurial behaviour, as both states involve the creation of new ventures and ways of being.

The examination of liminal space as a contextual setting reveals its profound significance in understanding refugee entrepreneurship, particularly for female entrepreneurs. The critical insight emerging from this analysis is the alignment of two significant tripartite models: Van Gennep's rites of passage (*separation, transition, incorporation*) and Kuhlman's integration framework (*identification, internalisation, satisfaction*). This theoretical synthesis, mapping corresponding stages between the two models, establishes the core component upon which the conceptual framework of this thesis will be built. The triadic nature of both models captures the complex dynamics of transition, from initial displacement through liminal space to eventual integration, while simultaneously addressing both structural and experiential dimensions of refugee entrepreneurial journeys.

In the following section, this tripartite synthesis will be further developed and transformed to distil three fundamental elements: the *subject of change*, the *process of*

change, and the agent of change. This theoretical foundation provides a critical entry point into the discussion of refugee entrepreneurship, where subsequent sections explore how the entrepreneurial mindset, encompassing its own triadic elements of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions, operates within these liminal spaces. The synthesis of these tripartite theoretical perspectives forms the central core of the developing conceptual framework, offering a robust foundation for analysing how refugee entrepreneurs, particularly women, navigate complex transitions while pursuing business opportunities in their host countries.

Having established this tripartite theoretical foundation through the synthesis of Van Gennep's and Kuhlman's models, the discussion now turns to examine how these concepts manifest within refugee entrepreneurship. The concepts of *subject, process, and agent of change* provide a structured approach to observing the entrepreneurial journey of refugees. This aligns particularly well with foundational entrepreneurship theory, where the recognition and exploitation of opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000) mirrors the transformative processes identified in the tripartite model. The following section begins by grounding this analysis in key entrepreneurship definitions and concepts, before exploring how the entrepreneurial mindset's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions operate within the liminal spaces previously identified. This progression from theoretical synthesis to practical application will reveal how refugee entrepreneurs navigate the complex interplay between structural constraints and individual agency in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

2.3 Refugee Entrepreneurship

This section explores the evolving concept of entrepreneurship, the entrepreneurial mindset, and its application within refugee entrepreneurship, particularly within the liminal context established in the previous section. First, it provides a foundational understanding of entrepreneurship by discussing key definitions, including those from Shane and Venkataraman (2000), who highlight the central role of opportunity recognition in entrepreneurship. This view is complemented by perspectives such as UNCTAD's (2018) emphasis on the willingness to take risks and manage ventures. The discussion then moves to the entrepreneurial mindset, examining how it operates through cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions (Kuratko et al., 2021). These insights are particularly relevant in the context of refugee entrepreneurship, where navigating liminal spaces requires a distinctive form of agency.

Attention is then focused on refugee entrepreneurship, which is distinguished from broader immigrant entrepreneurship. Here, the unique challenges refugees face, systemic barriers, necessity-driven entrepreneurship, and the role of resilience, are examined through the work of key scholars (Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008; Heilbrunn, 2021). Next, Kloosterman's Mixed Embeddedness Theory is introduced, providing a framework for understanding how migrant entrepreneurs, including refugees, operate within the constraints of economic and institutional structures. This theory has been widely applied but remains subject to critique, particularly for its limitations in capturing the agency-structure interplay (Sepulveda et al., 2011).

Finally, the section identifies gaps and underspecified areas in current research. While immigrant entrepreneurship has received considerable attention, there remains a lack of focus on refugee entrepreneurship, particularly regarding the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee

women. This gap calls for a more context-specific approach to understanding their experiences.

Having outlined the scope of this section, the next step is to examine fundamental definitions of entrepreneurship that underpin both general entrepreneurship theory and its specific application to refugee contexts. Understanding these definitions is crucial, as they shape how entrepreneurship is conceptualised, studied, and supported in practice. These foundational concepts will subsequently help highlight the distinctive nature of refugee entrepreneurship and the unique challenges faced by refugee entrepreneurs.

2.3.1 Entrepreneurship Definition and Scope

Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional concept, and its definition often depends on the focus of the research being undertaken (Davidavičien and Lolat, 2016). One of the most well-known definitions, offered by Shane and Venkataraman (2000, 218), characterises entrepreneurship as the process through which ‘opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited’. This definition emphasises opportunity recognition as central to the entrepreneurial process, a view later expanded by Lounsbury and Glynn (2019), who argue that while opportunity recognition remains core to entrepreneurship, it can be framed differently depending on context, illustrating that entrepreneurship is as much about identifying potential as it is about managing ventures.

Other definitions complement this opportunity-focused perspective. According to UNCTAD (2018), entrepreneurship involves the ‘capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organization, and management of a productive new venture, accepting all attendant risks and seeking profit as a reward.’ This aligns with Henderson’s (2008) criteria in the Concise Encyclopaedia of Economics, which emphasises the risks involved in entrepreneurship and highlights key traits of the entrepreneurial mindset, a concept that will be explored in more depth later. These definitions suggest that entrepreneurship not only

involves opportunity recognition but also the ability to act on those opportunities through risk-taking and innovation. It is worth noting that this innovation is often driven by a distinctive entrepreneurial mindset that combines curiosity, adaptability, and a willingness to take risks.

Schumpeter (1934) viewed the entrepreneur as an innovator who disrupts markets, while Knight (1921) emphasised risk-taking as a core entrepreneurial trait. Similarly, Kirzner (1978) positioned the entrepreneur as an individual constantly alert to profitable opportunities. The perception of the entrepreneur as, a pivotal institutional actor is consistent with new venture creation, risk-taking, and opportunity exploitation. These activities can be seen as external manifestations of the internal entrepreneurial mindset.

However, such characterisations are not without their limitations, Ahl (2006) and Verduijin and Essers (2013) point out that the entrepreneur has predominantly been portrayed as male; the male pronoun was primarily used concerning entrepreneurs. This has begun to change with the recognition that the entrepreneurial mindset is not gender-specific and can be fostered in any individual with the capacity and willingness to innovate.

Building on these insights, the following section explores the triadic model of the entrepreneurial mindset proposed by Kuratko, Fisher, and Audretsch (2021), which will serve as a central component of the conceptual framework guiding this study's examination of female refugee entrepreneurship. This model will be instrumental in analysing how refugee women engage with entrepreneurship within the liminal contexts they navigate, offering a detailed exploration of their unique journeys.

2.3.2 Entrepreneurial Mindset

Scholars continue to grapple with why specific individuals possess a heightened ability to identify opportunities that others overlook, a question that has profoundly shaped investigations into the entrepreneurial mindset (Nauman, 2017; McMullen, Brownell and Adams, 2021). This study draws on the opportunity school of entrepreneurship, which views the entrepreneurial mindset as an essential cognitive and behavioural framework for recognising and acting on emerging opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Building on these insights, this section introduces the triadic model of the entrepreneurial mindset proposed by Kuratko, Fisher, and Audretsch (2021), encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. This model serves as a foundational component of the conceptual framework and will be instrumental in analysing how refugee women engage with entrepreneurship within liminal contexts, offering a detailed exploration of their journey.

Figure 5, below, illustrates the triadic model, demonstrating the interplay between the cognitive (thinking), emotional (feeling), and behavioural (acting) aspects that underpin the entrepreneurial mindset. This visual serves as a foundational representation of the conceptual framework that will guide the analysis throughout this research.

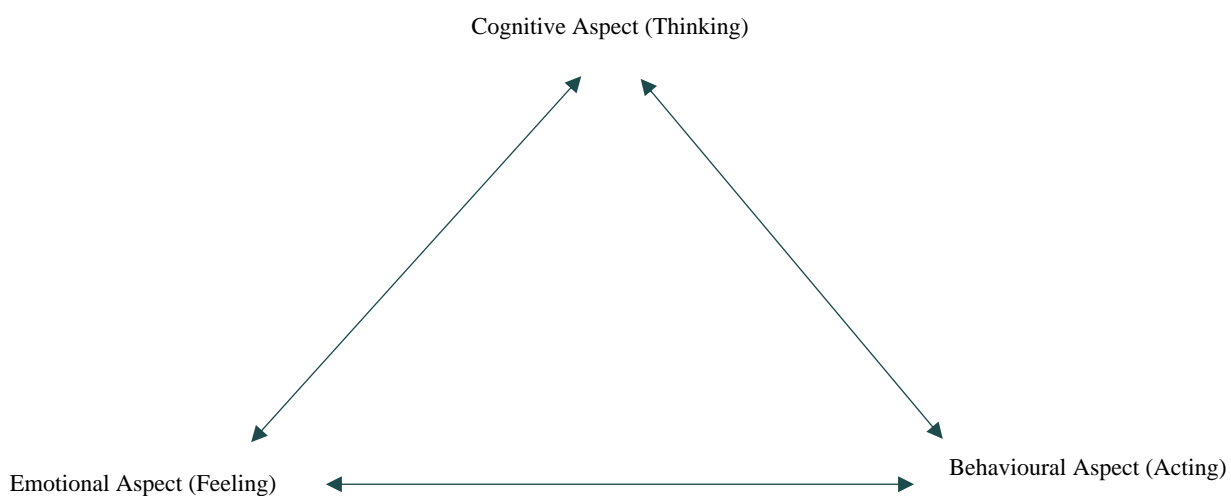


Figure 5. Kuratko, Fisher, and Audretsch (2021) *The triad of the entrepreneurial mindset.*

While the triadic model offers a conceptual device for understanding the entrepreneurial mindset, it will be complemented by other theoretical elements to create a more comprehensive and complex conceptual framework.

This section of the literature review first provides an overview of the entrepreneurial mindset and its significance, highlighting the need for a consolidated understanding of this complex construct. It then explores the intersection of the triadic model of the entrepreneurial mindset, as outlined by Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch (2021), with the elements of liminality, the *subject* of change, the *process* of change, and the *agent* of change. By mapping the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset to these corresponding elements of liminality, the review underscores the symbiotic relationship between the individual's entrepreneurial mindset and the journey undertaken by refugee women.

The triadic model as conceptual device focuses on the interplay of its three core dimensions, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. In the context of refugee entrepreneurship, these dimensions are mapped onto the specific stages identified for this study: *subject* of change, *process* of change, and *agent* of change. This mapping provides an essential perspective for understanding the experiences and shifts encountered by refugee women as they navigate the entrepreneurial journey. Examining the processes that constitute the entrepreneurial mindset, the critical role of entrepreneurial agency, and the individual's capacity to act upon opportunities, in effectively bridging the divide between recognising an opportunity and subsequent exploitation is acknowledged (McMullen, Brownell, and Adams, 2021).

Building on the importance of entrepreneurial agency, the concept of an entrepreneurial mindset is particularly significant in the journey of refugee women towards new venture creation. This section first examines the key perspectives and definitions of the

entrepreneurial mindset, highlighting the need for a consolidated understanding of this complex construct. It then proposes a triadic model of the entrepreneurial mindset, as outlined by Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch (2021), which serves as the foundation for exploring the symbiotic relationship between the entrepreneurial mindset and the elements of liminality. Finally, the paper maps the triadic aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset to the identified stages of liminality, underscoring the dynamic interplay between the individual and their environment in shaping the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women.

McMullen Brownell and Adams (2021) argue that entrepreneurial agency involves both the intention and action to pursue opportunities influenced by individual cognition and external constraints. This approach aligns with the opportunity school's focus on the interplay between individual cognition and external opportunities. For groups such as refugee women entrepreneurs, understanding entrepreneurial agency is essential, as they may face unique challenges like limited access to funding or systemic biases that impact their ability to act upon recognised opportunities (Bizri, 2017; Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008). By exploring how these entrepreneurs navigate their environments and exercise agency, we aim to gain deeper insights into the dynamic processes within the entrepreneurial mindset situated within the opportunity school framework (Freiling and Harima, 2019; Díaz-García and Jiménez-Moreno, 2010).

The concept of an entrepreneurial mindset is significant in the journey of refugee women towards new venture creation. This mindset, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects, is pivotal in navigating the complexities and embracing the opportunities the liminal space presents (Shepherd and Patzelt, 2018). Scholars like Obschonka et al. (2018) have emphasised the need for a deeper investigation into how such entrepreneurial mindsets develop in refugees during their integration process. The dynamic interplay between

the individual and their environment suggests interaction and the potential for refugees to influence their contexts.

The entrepreneurial mindset, a pivotal factor that underlies the entrepreneurial process, has been conceptualised from various perspectives in the existing literature (Hayton and Cholakova, 2012; Naumann, 2017; Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch, 2021; Larsen, 2022; Daspit, Fox and Findley, 2023; Pidduck et al., 2023). These multiple viewpoints, however, have given rise to many definitions, leading to ambiguity and confusion about the nature and function of the entrepreneurial mindset. It has become crucial to unify these diverse perspectives into a consolidated, coherent understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset, thereby providing a solid foundation for further exploration and analysis.

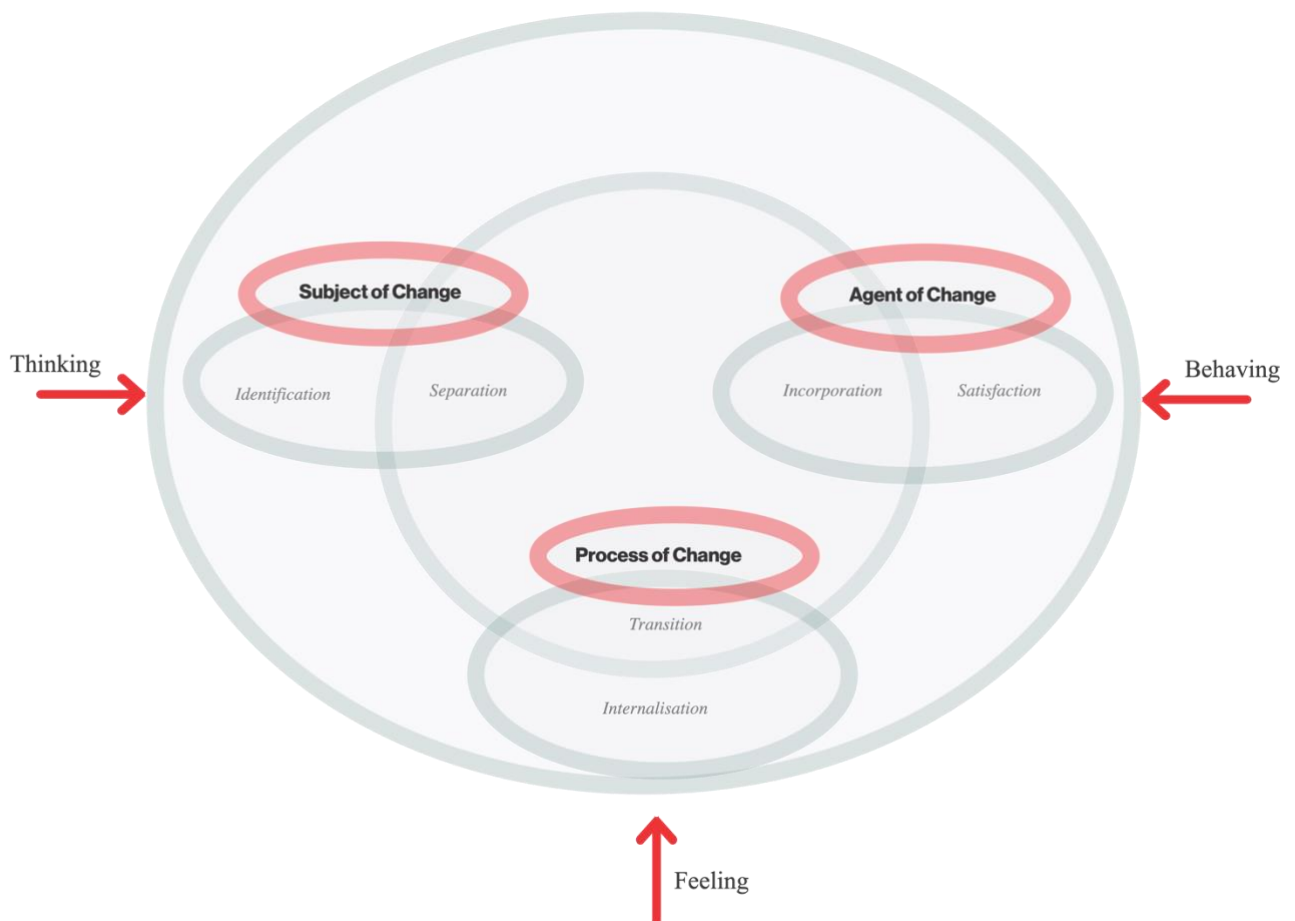


Figure 6. *Three-Framework Synthesis: Deriving the Change Model (Author's own)*

As proposed by Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch (2021), the entrepreneurial mindset's triadic model serves as an integration tool for various perspectives. This model recognises the inherent complexity of the entrepreneurial mindset, amalgamating three fundamental aspects: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. The model's intersection with the elements of liminality - *the subject of change, the process of change, and the agent of change* will be explored by mapping the triadic aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset to its corresponding element in liminality, underscoring the symbiotic nature of these constructs.

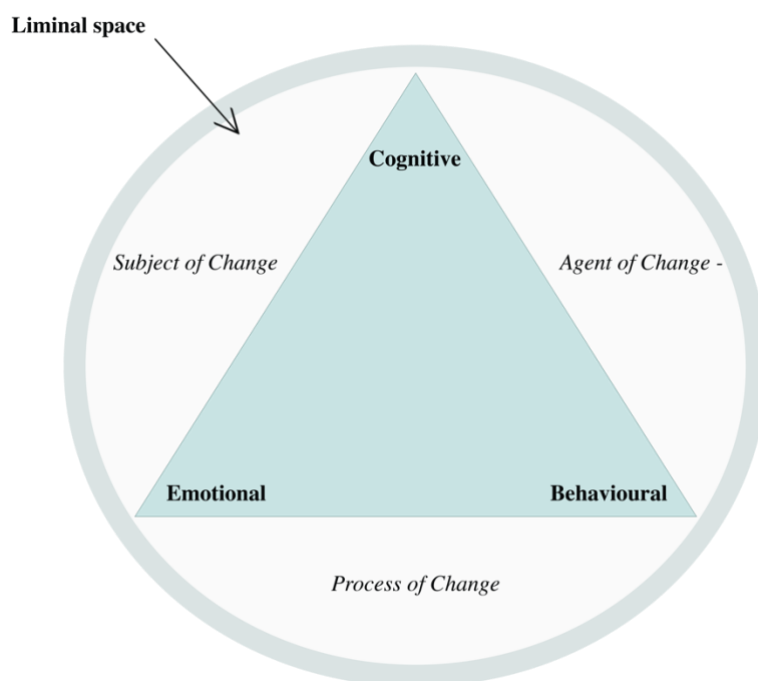


Figure 7. *Trilateral Convergence of Liminality and Entrepreneurial Mindset. (Author's own).*

This relationship is visually depicted in Figure 7, where the triadic model is integrated as a conceptual device within the broader conceptual framework. Here, the stages of change (*subject of change, process of change, agent of change*) are mapped onto the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset. In doing so, the figure highlights the triadic model's centrality in understanding refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys, while also acknowledging its interplay with other theoretical components.

Examining how the entrepreneurial mindset's triadic device aligns with elements of liminality highlights the pivotal role this conceptual device plays in observing refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys.

Before turning to refugee entrepreneurship theory, it is critical to acknowledge that while the entrepreneurial mindset's triad device offers valuable analytical purchase, it cannot fully encapsulate the deeply embedded socio-political, cultural, and economic forces that contour entrepreneurial agency. In the next section, the discussion shifts from an individualised cognitive focus to an engagement with refugee entrepreneurship theory—an approach distinct from the broader immigrant entrepreneurship literature. Here, attention will be paid to how institutional conditions, structural inequalities, and socio-economic constraints intersect with gendered identities to shape refugees' entrepreneurial activities. These broader structural elements, including both the socius and individual factors, will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Refugee Entrepreneurship Theory

Immigrant entrepreneurship includes but is not limited to, refugee entrepreneurship. For this study, a refugee entrepreneurship definition is considered exigent to differentiate it from other groups within immigrant entrepreneurship studies. Gold (1988) suggested that we distinguish between refugees and immigrants by highlighting how disparities are demonstrated in their entrepreneurial ventures. The entrepreneurial mindset typically encompasses traits like self-efficacy, resilience, risk-taking, and a propensity for innovation (Obschonka and Hahn, 2018). As Bizri (2017) demonstrates through his social capital perspective, refugee entrepreneurs develop unique approaches to leveraging their networks and community relationships, highlighting how these entrepreneurial traits manifest differently in refugee contexts.

Notice how the entrepreneurship traits intersect with those of the refugee in several ways, homing in on the idea of resilience and risk-taking and the essential relationship to refugee enterprise, suggesting a shared set of human capital (Mrożewski and Hering, 2022). But this assumption overlooks the deeper issues that place undue pressure on refugees to align themselves with entrepreneurs.

Comparing the traits of refugees and entrepreneurs is problematic because it overlooks the critical differences between their experiences and motivations. Heilbrunn (2021) reveals a layered understanding of refugee entrepreneurs, who often operate under significantly different conditions than traditional entrepreneurs. Refugees are often driven by necessity, fleeing persecution or violence, while entrepreneurs are motivated by opportunity and the desire to create wealth. This difference in motivation leads to a stark contrast in the challenges the two groups face. The challenges faced by refugees are often life-threatening and rooted in systemic problems like political instability, war, and human rights abuses. In contrast, entrepreneurs' challenges are primarily economic and tied to the competitive market (Dragon et al., 2022). Additionally, the comparison reinforces the notion that refugees are passive victims and entrepreneurs are active agents (Maestri and Monforte, 2022), ignoring the role of larger systemic forces in shaping their experiences. Therefore, a more nuanced and interdisciplinary approach is necessary to understand the challenges and motivations of both groups.

Exploring entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom with a focus on specific groups, such as 'Refugee' Entrepreneurship, helps to create distinct contextual prefixes for research in this field. This method aids in merging various terminologies and perspectives to form a comprehensive understanding tailored to each unique entrepreneurial subset.

Some might object that the term refugee as a prefix to entrepreneurship may evoke questions about identity and whether the refugee is entirely comfortable with and accepts this

identity. Or, whether by insisting on the specific prefix of refugee to entrepreneurship, we perpetuate a discourse of discrimination against the various manifestations of the migrant. Crawley and Skleparis (2018) argue that ‘these categories of ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant’ have been used to justify policies of exclusion.’ Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2014) highlighted the propensity to categorise refugees and migrants together and that this negates the political nature of the refugee identity.

‘Whether economic migrants or refugees, the newcomers are generally distinguished by a palpable ethos of self-sufficiency, an active desire to carve out an independent livelihood’ (Jones, Ram et al. 2014 pp.15). This assertion that newcomers, whether economic migrants or refugees, often exhibit a tangible sense of independence and a drive to self-reliance brings an essential aspect of the entrepreneurial journey to the foreground. This aspect, the entrepreneurial mindset, often remains shadowed when focusing exclusively on financial outcomes or business growth, recognising the ethos of self-sufficiency while bearing witness to the agency of these newcomers in their pursuit of economic autonomy, potentially risks overlooking the richness of the entrepreneurial mindset that fuels these endeavours. This mindset, typically characterised by resilience, creativity, risk tolerance, and adaptability, is forged by complex life experiences and challenges.

A comprehensive exploration of the entrepreneurial journey of refugees and migrants entails delving into the underlying mindset that propels them towards self-sufficiency. This approach involves probing into the cognitive processes and psychological characteristics, such as self-efficacy, proactiveness, and innovativeness, which numerous studies have shown to influence refugee entrepreneurial behaviour significantly (Bizri, 2017; Welsh et al., 2022; Mahbuba, 2022; Christensen and Newman, 2023)

The delineation of refugee entrepreneurship from other subsets within the wider immigrant entrepreneurship research, including economic migrants, is crucial in this

discourse. Refai, Haloub, and Lever (2018, p.1) advocate for ‘an enhanced focus on refugee entrepreneurship as an individual entity of its own merit.’ According to Kabbani (2017), each entrepreneurial context embodies a unique environment and specific obstacles; this is more noticeably underlined when examining the disparate motivations behind migration and how these, in turn, influence the entrepreneurial mindset and intent. Thus, it becomes evident that the entrepreneurial mindset holds significant weight in shaping refugee entrepreneurship’s distinct definition and understanding. A more in-depth exploration of this aspect is further developed in Chapter 3.

2.3.3 Kloosterman's Mixed Embeddedness Theory

'Mixed Embeddedness has become the standard reference when analysing migrant entrepreneurship' (Barberis and Solano, 2018, pp.3). This theory expands on Aldrich and Waldinger's (1990) Interactionist model, which focuses on the synergy between the attributes of migrants, such as individual characteristics, skills, and social contacts (Group Resources) and economic and market settings (Opportunity Structure). Mixed Embeddedness follows the same rationale as Interactionism, but significantly, two essential aspects differentiate it.

Firstly, most migrant firms are confined to either vacancy chain openings, usually dwindling markets like corner shops abandoned by indigenous owners, or post-industrial low-skill openings like catering, taxi driving, or personal services (Kloosterman, 2010). The majority of these ventures only remain viable through relentless hard work and often ignore regulations to cut costs, as observed by Jones et al. (2006) and Ram et al. (2007). Secondly, Kloosterman et al. (1999) introduced the government regulatory regime as an essential component in the interpretive body.

Ram et al. (2017) contend that Mixed Embeddedness has promoted more contextualised and balanced accounts of ethnic minority entrepreneurship. Also, Ram et al. (2017) refer to its focus on how institutional context shapes the entrepreneurial activities of migrants as an essential contribution of Mixed Embeddedness. The Mixed Embeddedness approach has advanced debate by reintegrating migrant agency within broader economic and political structures. Sepulveda et al. (2011) draw attention to this and point out that a strong emphasis on context is essential, with a clear recognition of the significance of divergent socio-economic and regulatory contexts.

On the other hand, Mixed Embeddedness is not without criticism; Sepulveda et al. (2011) feel that Mixed Embeddedness strays a little close to structural determinism, which stresses logical, anticipated results and suggests predetermined outcomes. They also argue

that the binary framework of agency and opportunity structure ingrained in the Mixed Embeddedness approach ‘means it struggles to conceptualise adequately the mutually constitutive nature of structure and agency, which is so apparent in diverse contexts of multiple interacting variables’ (pp.474). Moreover, although the Mixed Embeddedness approach recognises the importance of varying geographical scope, it says little about the dynamics of one-to-one relationships. Essers and Benschop (2009) suggest that conferring a pivotal role in the formally downplayed domain of gender studies could enhance Mixed Embeddedness.

Two studies exemplify the use of Mixed Embeddedness with a focus on female refugee entrepreneurs: Bergström (2022) delved into the economic integration factors relevant to foreign-born women by refining the mixed embeddedness model. Similarly, Apitzsch (2003) explored the business processes of migrant women and their biographical context, emphasising the significance of self-employment in achieving autonomy.

2.3.4 Gaps and Underspecified Areas

The majority of existing research draws from general immigrant entrepreneurship without specifically addressing the unique challenges faced by refugees. There is a lack of detailed examination of the intersection between the entrepreneurial traits and the experiences specific to women refugees, such as displacement and statelessness. Studies often do not adequately address the systemic and structural barriers refugee women face in the host countries, especially regarding access to resources and networks. Drawing from established models developed for the study of migrant and immigrant entrepreneurs can reveal critical omissions when these frameworks are applied to refugee entrepreneurs. Notably, the unique entrepreneurial mindset of refugees, particularly female refugee entrepreneurs, is often overlooked. These women’s experiences, characterised by resilience, innovation, and drive, risk being neglected when existing frameworks are used without adaptation. Their work

underlines the lack of female-centric perspectives in the most frequently referenced studies on entrepreneurship, indicating a significant gap in the current academic discourse.

Contemporary refugee entrepreneurship inquiry paradigms have acquiesced these established frameworks from migrant entrepreneurship, failing to challenge or adapt them to refugees (Betts and Collier, 2017). This results in a lack of understanding of the specific entrepreneurial mindset characteristics that define refugee entrepreneurs, such as resilience, resourcefulness, and the ability to seize opportunities despite significant obstacles. A practical framework for refugee entrepreneurship study needs to account for the broader societal and institutional factors that shape the experiences and opportunities of refugee women, including the aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset that enable them to overcome adversities.

The gaps and underspecified areas identified in the current refugee entrepreneurship research highlight the critical need to adopt a more refined, gendered perspective when examining this field. The unique experiences and challenges faced by female refugee entrepreneurs cannot be fully understood without directly engaging with how gender interacts with entrepreneurial activities, behaviours, and outcomes.

The gendered entrepreneurship literature provides crucial theoretical lenses to address these shortcomings. By examining how gender is embedded within the entrepreneurial process, shaping both opportunities and constraints, these gendered entrepreneurship perspectives offer a richer, more comprehensive understanding of the refugee entrepreneurship landscape. This section will explore the foundational concepts and theoretical approaches within gendered entrepreneurship, investigating the specific barriers and intersectional dynamics that impact female refugee entrepreneurs. The discussion will then move to Intersectional Theory and Feminist Poststructuralism, offering critical frameworks to interrogate power, discourse, and representation in the context of female

refugee entrepreneurship. Through this multi-pronged analysis, a conceptual framework can be developed that centres the lived experiences of this marginalised group.

2.4 Gendered Entrepreneurship

This section examines the complex interplay between gender and entrepreneurship, demonstrating how gender fundamentally shapes entrepreneurial activities, behaviours, and outcomes. Through four interconnected subsections, it explores how entrepreneurship, far from being gender-neutral, is deeply embedded with gendered assumptions and practices that influence entrepreneurial experiences and opportunities.

First, the section establishes how gender permeates entrepreneurial processes, challenging traditional assumptions of entrepreneurship as gender neutral. As Serrano-Pascual and Carretero-García (2022) demonstrate, entrepreneurship extends beyond economic activities to encompass broader societal issues, particularly gender inequality. This analysis reveals how entrepreneurial ecosystems often reflect and reproduce masculine norms, creating additional barriers for women entrepreneurs (Marlow, 2019).

Second, the discussion examines Female Refugee Entrepreneurship specifically, exploring how gender intersects with displacement to shape entrepreneurial experiences. Drawing on Astamirov's (2020) work, this subsection demonstrates how the 'female' aspect of refugee entrepreneurship is not merely a demographic marker but an essential lens for understanding the complex interplay of gender, displacement, and entrepreneurial activity. The analysis considers how refugee women often encounter distinctive hurdles compared to their male counterparts, rooted in societal norms and structural inequalities (Jamali, 2009).

Third, the section explores the specific challenges faced by female refugee entrepreneurs through an intersectional lens. As highlighted by Senthanar et al. (2021), these challenges include restricted access to education, rigid gender roles, and discrimination, all of which fundamentally shape how their entrepreneurial mindset develops and is expressed. The

discussion examines how these barriers influence not only access to resources but also the perceived legitimacy of refugee women entrepreneurs (Carranza, Dhakal and Love, 2018).

Finally, the section concludes with an examination of Feminist Poststructuralism as a theoretical framework. Building on scholars like Baxter (2016) and Weedon and Hallack (2021), this approach provides critical insights into how power relations and discursive practices shape women's entrepreneurial experiences. This theoretical lens helps illuminate how normative categories are constructed and maintained, particularly focusing on how marginalised women navigate complex socio-economic environments (Worwood, 2020).

Through this comprehensive examination, the section demonstrates how gender shapes entrepreneurship in multifaceted and intersecting ways, while also highlighting the theoretical frameworks that help us understand these complex dynamics. The section concludes by identifying critical gaps in current research and theory. As Dy and MacNeil (2023) highlight, there remain significant ontological tensions, particularly in reconciling intersectional, poststructuralist, and neoliberal perspectives. Despite the potential of feminist poststructuralism as a theoretical lens for understanding female refugee entrepreneurship, there is limited empirical evidence using this approach (Ahl 2004; Richard, 2022). The section particularly highlights the need for research that better integrates intersectionality with poststructural feminist perspectives, addressing the current theoretical fragmentation in understanding how refugee women entrepreneurs navigate spaces shaped by both structural constraints and individual agency.

2.4.1 The Gendered Nature of Entrepreneurship

The critical examination of gender within entrepreneurship studies emerged as a distinct field of enquiry in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Poggesi, Mari and De Vita, 2016). This initial body of work sought to make visible women's entrepreneurial activities and document the systematic barriers constraining their participation in entrepreneurial

ecosystems (Jennings and Brush, 2013). Before this intervention, the entrepreneurship literature had largely reproduced androcentric assumptions, implicitly constructing the entrepreneur through a masculine lens while claiming gender neutrality (Ahl, 2006). A critical turning point emerged in the 1990s as feminist scholars began to problematise the masculine paradigm underpinning entrepreneurship research and theory (Brush, 1992; Moore, 1990), challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions about entrepreneurial behaviours, capabilities, and success that privileged male experiences as the normative standard.

Early research (1980s-1990s) primarily focused on comparative analyses between male and female entrepreneurs, attempting to catalogue the distinctive characteristics of women-owned businesses and their founders. As Carter and Marlow (2006) demonstrate in their comprehensive review, this comparative approach dominated the literature, producing a body of work that, while documenting gender differences, often inadvertently reinforced gender stereotypes. Their analysis revealed that these early studies typically focused on identifying disparities in areas such as business size, sector choice, growth patterns, and access to financial resources, frequently positioning women's entrepreneurship as derivative or secondary to the male 'norm'.

A significant theoretical shift occurred in the 1990s when scholars began applying feminist theoretical frameworks to understand women's entrepreneurship more deeply. As Fischer et al. (1993) and others demonstrated, the application of liberal and social feminist theories provided new analytical tools for understanding gender differences in entrepreneurship. Liberal feminist approaches focused on identifying and addressing discriminatory barriers that prevented women from accessing the same opportunities as men, while social feminist perspectives examined how socialisation processes and structural factors shaped different entrepreneurial outcomes. This theoretical evolution led to the

current understanding that gender is not merely a variable to be controlled for, but a fundamental organising principle that permeates all aspects of entrepreneurial activity (Ahl, 2006; Bruni et al., 2004). Marlow and Martinez Dy (2018) further emphasise that gender analysis must consider how systemic barriers, and societal assumptions fundamentally shape entrepreneurial opportunities and access to resources.

Gendered entrepreneurship engages critically with how gender permeates entrepreneurial activities, behaviours, and outcomes. Rather than a neutral endeavour, entrepreneurship is inherently gendered, shaped by the interplay of societal norms, roles, and expectations. These factors influence not only who becomes an entrepreneur, but also the industries they enter, the resources available to them, and their capacity to succeed within an entrepreneurial ecosystem that is often embedded with male-centric assumptions. As Ghosh (2024) aptly reveals, thematic clusters in the discourse, such as access to finance, gender inequalities, societal perceptions, and policy interventions, demonstrate how gender shapes entrepreneurship in multifaceted and intersecting ways.

Serrano-Pascual and Carretero-García (2022) highlight how entrepreneurship, often constructed as a meta concept, extends beyond economic activities to encompass societal issues like gender inequality, embedding normative gender expectations within the very framework of entrepreneurial identity. Such representations frequently reinforce traditional gender norms by masking the gendered dynamics underlying entrepreneurial activities. Oliveira, Basini, and Cooney (2024) further problematise the disembodied and ostensibly gender-neutral portrayal of entrepreneurs within traditional research, arguing that this erases the embodied, situated experiences of women entrepreneurs.

The failure to acknowledge these gendered realities inevitably results in the marginalisation of women and a discourse that privileges male experiences as normative. Marlow (2019) also critiques the functionalist and neoliberal assumptions underpinning much

of entrepreneurship research, arguing that these assumptions create a false promise for women by emphasising individual agency as the solution to structural barriers. This critique highlights the importance of adopting feminist theoretical perspectives to challenge the dominant narrative that entrepreneurship is inherently beneficial for women without addressing the broader socio-political structures that perpetuate inequality.

Dean et al. (2019) provide a critical lens on the foundational assumptions within female entrepreneurship research, with particular emphasis on the ‘underperformance hypothesis.’ This hypothesis presupposes that female entrepreneurs are intrinsically less successful than their male counterparts when measured by traditional metrics of economic performance. Such an approach not only reinforces existing gender biases but also constrains the scope of entrepreneurship research by presenting female entrepreneurship as inherently lacking. Dean et al. (2019) argue that challenging these deeply rooted assumptions is essential to fostering an inclusive, diverse understanding of entrepreneurship that moves beyond deficit-based narratives. Marlow (2020) suggests that rather than fitting women into existing entrepreneurial frameworks, which often reflect masculinised norms, we should rethink how entrepreneurship might better serve women’s diverse needs and circumstances. This involves challenging postfeminist assumptions that emphasise individual empowerment while overlooking structural disadvantages.

The emphasis on female entrepreneurship remains crucial given the distinctive challenges and structural barriers women encounter in their entrepreneurial pursuits. Isolating these issues allows for more targeted strategies aimed at fostering inclusivity and equality within the broader entrepreneurial landscape. To advance this debate, we must recognise that gendering entrepreneurship requires a more expansive conceptual engagement with the construct and how it shapes entrepreneurial activity (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018). For instance, in this discussion, the need to recognise masculinity as a diverse construct and how

it is enacted through entrepreneurial activity is noted, but so are the simplistic assumptions of heteronormativity, or ‘the myriad ways in which heterosexuality is produced as a natural, unproblematic, taken-for-granted, ordinary phenomenon’ (Kitzinger, 2005, 478).

As noted by Serrano-Pascual and Carretero-García (2022), normative assumptions underpinning the current discourse on female entrepreneurship often act to reproduce, rather than dismantle, existing inequalities. In response, Oliveira, Basini, and Cooney (2024) advocate for a feminist phenomenological approach that centres the lived, embodied experiences of women entrepreneurs, thus enriching our understanding of their agency and positioning within gendered institutional contexts.

Dean et al. (2019) also underscore how the economic growth narrative has fundamentally shaped the discourse on female entrepreneurship. By privileging growth as the principal marker of entrepreneurial success, the diversity and multiplicity of motivations that drive women’s entrepreneurial endeavours are masked. Redefining success to encompass elements such as community impact, sustainability, and personal fulfilment offers a richer, more inclusive perspective on entrepreneurial success, challenging the narrow confines of growth-centric narratives.

Taken together, these perspectives build towards a more comprehensive and critical understanding of gendered entrepreneurship. They call for the deconstruction of biases and metanarratives that depict entrepreneurship as a male-dominated, growth-obsessed field, advocating instead for a paradigm that values and celebrates the diverse experiences and contributions of women entrepreneurs. Such a reimagined approach is not only pivotal for addressing the barriers women face but also essential for fostering an enriched, equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem that acknowledges and nurtures the heterogeneity of entrepreneurial experiences and successes.

Marlow (2020) emphasises that feminist-informed critiques are crucial to challenging the neoliberal and postfeminist narratives that depict entrepreneurship as a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, such critiques advocate for a collective, politically informed approach that acknowledges how systemic barriers shape the entrepreneurial experiences of women across different contexts. Marlow and Martinez Dy (2018) argue that considering gender as a pathway to resource accumulation and as an exchange mechanism will help us to more fully understand how entrepreneurial actors initiate and enact their ventures. They call for broadening the scope of gender analysis, recognising that gender influences all aspects of entrepreneurial activity, and advocate for moving beyond viewing gender as simply a ‘woman’s problem’ to understanding how it positions and affects all actors involved in entrepreneurship.

2.4.2 Female Refugee Entrepreneurship

The female aspect of the term ‘female refugee entrepreneurship’ is not merely a demographic marker, as Astamirov (2020) has illuminated, but rather an essential lens through which to capture the complex interplay of gender, displacement, and entrepreneurship. This perspective, Brush, de Bruin, and Welter (2009) contend, underlines the intricacies of the entrepreneurial mindset, particularly as sculpted by gender considerations. When diving into the challenges refugee women face as entrepreneurs, they frequently encounter distinctive hurdles compared to their male peers, deeply rooted in societal norms, gendered expectations, and structural inequalities. Jamali (2009) argues that these can span from mobility restrictions to cultural obligations and from difficulties in accessing credit to educational constraints.

Yet, it is essential to acknowledge, as Orhan and Scott (2001) have pointed out, that the significance of the female perspective in the refugee entrepreneurship context is not restricted to challenges. Female refugee entrepreneurs often showcase unique strengths in

their entrepreneurial endeavours, be it their knack for tapping into niche markets, their proclivity for leaning on social networks, or their adeptness at using soft skills in business transactions. These women, as Kabeer (2005) and Chant and McIlwaine (2015) suggest, have the potential to be pivotal in empowering other women, reshaping gender norms, and catalysing inclusive growth in their communities.

Ahl (2006) and Jennings and Brush (2013) stress the indispensable nature of incorporating this gendered perspective into refugee entrepreneurship studies for a holistic understanding. Such a perspective not only offers targeted insights for tailoring interventions and support mechanisms but also, as Al-Dajani and Marlow (2013) underscore, helps pinpoint ways to tap into the unique strengths of female refugee entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it propels us to re-evaluate and expand our broader comprehension of entrepreneurship, unearthing narratives and experiences often side lined in dominant discourse. Consequently, the *'female'* lens, intricately woven with the threads of the entrepreneurial mindset, stands out as a potent catalyst for both theoretical discourses and actionable interventions in the refugee entrepreneurship arena.

Mesić (1995, p. 658) underscores a prevailing perception of refugees as a 'grey mass of impoverished people dependent on someone else's help,' which often results in a loss of sight of the distinct characteristics, motivations, and emotions of individuals within this group. Such insensitivity extends to the perceptions of refugee entrepreneurship, including the significant differences within the subgroup of female refugee entrepreneurs. Azmat (2013) and Collins and Low (2010) concur that migrant women entrepreneurs represent a heterogeneous group, varying in ethnicity, age, skills, experience, financial and educational resources, and language abilities. All these facets bear implications for their entrepreneurial trajectory and success.

Contrary to the conventional entrepreneurial archetype that capitalises on market opportunities for profit, female refugee entrepreneurs often find themselves necessitated to take up the economic survival mantle. Within this context, an entrepreneurial mindset - characterised by resilience, creativity, and the ability to identify and seize opportunities - becomes an essential survival tool. This mindset, a confluence of self-sufficiency and survival instincts, often catalyses the entrepreneurial initiatives of female refugees.

Thus, in the context of this thesis, female refugee entrepreneurship can be defined as follows: A female refugee, as delineated by the UNHCR (1951), who, empowered by her entrepreneurial mindset, transitions from being a subject of change to an agent of change through the inception, organisation, and management of a new venture (UNCAD, 2018). This definition not only underscores the female refugee's resourcefulness and adaptability but also encapsulates the essence of entrepreneurship within the specific context of female refugee experiences.

Verduijn and Essers (2013, pp. 614) deplore the archetype of the entrepreneur as based on 'male rationality, risk-taking, conquest, domination and control, and the hegemonic entrepreneurial discourse reiterates the conventional female stereotype as subordinate, supportive and dependent'. Similarly, Van Kooy (2016) sees entrepreneurship as a problematic concept in the context of women from refugee backgrounds. This perspective is particularly important when considering the concept of the entrepreneurial mindset, which is often framed around conventional business practices and models.

Refugee women in entrepreneurship are often bound by societal norms and power dynamics, shaping their categorisation and labelling that reinforce their marginalisation and disempowerment. As a result, they are often stereotyped and categorised based on their refugee status, leading to assumptions about their abilities and potential (Freedman, 2015). This reinforces existing inequalities and can limit their access to resources and opportunities

(Kabeer, 2005). Systemic barriers such as limited access to funding and mentorship also restrict their ability to start and grow businesses (Brush et al., 2009). Refugee women's successes are often discounted and attributed to external factors rather than their skills and abilities (Erel, 2011).

The categorisation and definition of female refugee entrepreneurs carry significant implications, particularly in the context of the entrepreneurial mindset. This multi-faceted issue is influenced by societal norms, power dynamics, and the broader context of entrepreneurship research. Several scholars have shed light on these complexities, collectively underscoring the importance of re-evaluating traditional perceptions of female refugee entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial mindset (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018; Astamirov, 2020; Al-Dajani, 2022).

Welter (2011) argues that the prevailing process of defining entrepreneurship is susceptible to biases, which can exclude those who do not conform to conventional societal norms associated with entrepreneurship, often grounded in a narrowly defined entrepreneurial mindset. Khosravi (1999; 2007) draws attention to the undue emphasis on refugee status, emphasising that this can overshadow their entrepreneurial potential and their unique entrepreneurial mindset. Such an approach tends to generate a limited and stereotype-laden view of their capabilities, subsequently curtailing their potential contributions to society (Obschonka and Hahn, 2018; Chliova, Farny and Salmivaara, 2018; Lee, Viller and Vyas, 2023).

Given these considerations, it is essential to recognise and address the impact of power and societal norms on categorising and labelling refugee women entrepreneurs (Chant and Sweetman, 2012). This necessitates cultivating a more inclusive and diversified understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset, one that is cognisant and respectful of the experiences and potential of these often-marginalised individuals. Addressing systemic

barriers, such as limited access to resources and opportunities (Jennings and Brush, 2013), is another vital step towards nurturing a more inclusive entrepreneurial landscape. In this light, the archetype of the female refugee entrepreneur should encapsulate resilience, innovation, and a powerful entrepreneurial mindset that rises above adversity (McAdam, Harrison and Leitch, 2019).

Expanding on this line of thought, the archetype of the female refugee entrepreneur should be seen in a broader perspective that goes beyond conventional benchmarks of entrepreneurial success. The traditional entrepreneurship narrative, often defined in terms of financial success or growth rates, may not fully encapsulate the experiences and accomplishments of female refugee entrepreneurs. Indeed, female refugee entrepreneurs often operate within contexts marked by severe constraints and challenges, affecting their ability to achieve traditional entrepreneurial success as typically defined by economic self-reliance (Carranza, Dhakal and Love, 2018). However, it is crucial to note that this does not reflect a lack of entrepreneurial mindset. On the contrary, these women often exemplify entrepreneurial characteristics like adaptability, resilience, innovation, and resourcefulness, even without conventional success metrics (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013).

Therefore, to fully understand and appreciate the outcomes for female refugee entrepreneurs, it is crucial to look beyond economic self-reliance and instead focus on their entrepreneurial mindset. This would mean valuing their resourcefulness in the face of scarcity, their resilience amidst adversity, their innovative approaches to problem-solving, and their persistence despite the challenges they face. In this light, it is not just the attainment of economic self-reliance that should define the success of female refugee entrepreneurs but also the demonstration of a robust entrepreneurial mindset. This shift in perspective can lead to a more holistic and insightful understanding of refugee entrepreneurship, which can inform more inclusive and effective interventions, policies, and support systems. Moreover, it

broadens the very concept of entrepreneurial success, offering a more inclusive definition that is cognisant and respectful of these often-marginalised individuals' unique experiences and potential.

Having delved into the concept of female refugee entrepreneurship and its significant implications, the focus now shifts to the contextual landscape within which these entrepreneurs operate. Policies enacted by host countries, notably the United Kingdom, shape the entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges refugees face. Given the interconnectedness of the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs and the policy environment, it is imperative to examine the UK's government policy on entrepreneurship and refugees. The following section delves into these policies, evaluating their impact on the entrepreneurial journey of refugees. Focusing on the UK's government policy enhances understanding of the intersection between policy, refugee status, and entrepreneurship, thus shedding light on the complex dynamics of female refugee entrepreneurship.

2.4.3 Challenges for female refugee entrepreneurs

Refugee women entrepreneurs may face more limitations than male refugees for several reasons. Discrimination and gender-based violence, lack of access to education and training, limited access to funding and other resources (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018), socio-cultural barriers (Kainat et al., 2022), and lack of representation coupled with heavy care responsibilities (Spehar, 2021; Namak et al., 2022) are some of the main factors that can make it harder for women refugees to start running a business. These limitations can significantly impact the economic well-being of women refugees, and it is essential to note that each woman refugee's experiences are unique and should be respected and understood in their context.

The structural barriers that limit her access to support and resources must be dismantled. Senthana et al. (2021) underscore the importance of incorporating a gender lens

in studies focused on refugee entrepreneurship. They articulate that the circumstances experienced by refugee women are distinct from those encountered by men, and these differences can crucially influence their decision to venture into entrepreneurship. The limitations that female refugee entrepreneurs face are directly intertwined with how their entrepreneurial mindset develops and is expressed. It is a complex interplay where societal and structural constraints shape their entrepreneurial journey in distinct ways. For instance, their resilience, born out of the necessity to overcome numerous obstacles, might be less recognised or undervalued due to gender biases (Carranza, Dhakal and Love, 2018).

Restricted access to education limits their problem-solving creativity, and rigid gender roles curtail their adaptability, both crucial aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset. The risk-taking propensity, an essential characteristic of entrepreneurs, is often discouraged in women, while the relentless discrimination chips away at their self-confidence, dampening the self-efficacy required for entrepreneurship. Despite these obstacles, their resourcefulness, particularly evident in their ability to juggle entrepreneurial and care responsibilities (Hyndman and Giles, 2011; Marlow and McAdam, 2013; Abuhussein, 2022), often stands as a testament to their potential. Still, it is frequently overlooked or underappreciated due to gender stereotypes. Similarly, their ability to spot and capitalise on business opportunities is hampered by limited access to networks and information, a challenge less daunting for their male counterparts (Queiroz and Lythgo, 2015, Al-Dajani, 2022).

The contrast between the experiences of female and male refugee entrepreneurs underscores the need for tailored, gender-sensitive support strategies. By doing so, we can begin to dismantle the structural barriers that female refugees encounter, enabling them to fully utilise their entrepreneurial potential and contribute meaningfully to their host economies.

2.4.4 Intersectional Theory

Intersectionality has increasingly become a central analytical framework in gendered entrepreneurship studies. Dy and MacNeil (2023) argue that intersectionality is more than just a tool for understanding multiple intersecting identities and the inequalities they create. It serves as a pivotal concept, reshaping how entrepreneurial inequalities are perceived and examined. This perspective urges scholars to move beyond cursory analyses, calling for a critical examination of the broader, systemic forces; racism, patriarchy, and capitalism, that underpin and sustain these inequalities. By re-envisioning intersectionality in this manner, there is a clear need for more profound engagement with the complex, intertwined systems of oppression that both restrict and define entrepreneurial agency and possibility (Dy and MacNeil, 2023).

Building on this foundation, Romero and Valdez (2016) highlight how social categories, such as gender, race, and class, shift across social and economic contexts, intertwining to shape the entrepreneurial experiences of marginalised individuals. Anthias (2013) further develops this idea with her concept of trans locational positionality, which emphasises how identities are fluid and shift across different spatial and temporal contexts. This framework is particularly valuable for understanding how refugee women navigate their social positions in varied environments. However, as Dy and MacNeil (2023) caution, intersectionality should not be reduced to a simple tool for categorisation; rather, it should prompt deeper investigations into the power structures that shape these identity shifts. Anthias' (2013) perspective emphasises how identities are dynamically shaped by complex and intersecting forces without being confined to fixed categories, reflecting how social positioning shifts across different contexts of power.

While Anthias' (2013) perspective underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of identities, the experiences of refugee women often extend beyond these positional shifts.

Their identities frequently reflect a deeper instability as they navigate liminal spaces, wherein fluidity and contradiction become defining characteristics. In these contexts, identities are shaped by complex, often competing forces, rendering them difficult to categorise within fixed social boundaries. Consequently, traditional frameworks for understanding social identity struggle to account for the full scope of refugee women's lived realities, particularly in relation to the structural systems of power that shape their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Intersectionality in Entrepreneurial Studies

Turning to the application of intersectionality in entrepreneurial studies, Ram et al. (2017) note that current research often omits the intersection of identities such as ethnicity, gender, and other social differences. This challenges intersectional research, which must address the complex, non-linear interactions between these identities. Adeeko and Treanor (2022, p.28) emphasise that identity interplay is 'non-additive', creating interlocking dynamics that shape individual experiences. Similarly, Anthias and Pajnik (2014) argue that social identities, such as gender, faith, ethnicity, and class, operate simultaneously, intricately shaping the opportunities and challenges faced by entrepreneurs.

The Complexities of Intersectional Frameworks

While intersectionality provides a valuable lens for analysing factors such as family dynamics, communal support, knowledge acquisition, and structural barriers, it faces epistemological limitations when attempting to capture the full complexity of intersecting identities (Geerts and Van der Tuin, 2013). These identities are often intricate and contradictory, pushing researchers to move beyond reductionist explanations and consider the fluidity individuals embody. For example, gender and class identities may conflict, depending on the socio-economic context (Atewologun et al., 2016). This highlights the need for a more complex theoretical approach to fully account for these dynamic, intersecting identities.

Intersectional Theory in Entrepreneurial Research

Despite these complexities, an intersectional framework can effectively explore the factors influencing entrepreneurial ventures, including family and community roles, barriers to success, business incentives, and management know-how. This framework reveals a complex relationship between individual and collective agency and structural conditions. Romero and Valdez (2016) critique the gender-neutral approach in ethnic entrepreneurship research, arguing that it obscures key divisions, such as unpaid caregiving and gendered dependencies on the social wage (Vosko and Zukewich, 2006). This critique aligns with Anthias's (2013) argument that rigid categorisation fails to capture the fluidity of refugee women's social positions.

Intersectionality and Gendered Integration

Shifting focus to the intersection of gender and integration, Cheung and Phillimore (2017) highlight that neglecting gender and intersectionality in refugee integration studies often leads to flawed policies that fail to address the specific needs of refugee women. Their research emphasises the inherently gendered and intersectional nature of integration processes. This perspective is crucial for understanding the complex dynamics shaping refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences.

Intersectionality in Refugee Women's Economic Integration

Building on this foundation, recent studies have applied intersectional theory to examine the economic integration of refugee women. Ogoe (2022) investigated the experiences of resettled female refugees in Canada, revealing that systemic barriers, such as racism and discrimination, often push these women into lower labour market positions due to disparities in human capital and competition with Canadian-born and immigrant women. Similarly, Senthanar et al. (2021) explored the entrepreneurial experiences of Syrian refugee women in Canada, finding that factors like work-family flexibility, labour market barriers,

and social enterprise programs limited their access to the formal economy, leading many to rely on home-based businesses.

Barriers to Economic Participation for Displaced Female Entrepreneurs

Extending this line of inquiry, Omran et al. (2021) examined the diverse perceptions of success held by internally displaced female entrepreneurs. Their study found that work-family flexibility, social enterprise programs, and labour market barriers shaped the business ventures of displaced women, further restricting their access to formal economic participation. These factors often pushed them to rely on home-based businesses, limiting their ability to establish themselves in the formal economy (Al-Dajani et al., 2015).

While intersectional research has deepened our understanding of the diverse challenges faced by marginalised entrepreneurs, there is still a significant gap in the literature on how refugee women specifically navigate entrepreneurial ventures within liminal spaces. Existing studies tend to focus on structural barriers or social positioning but often fail to capture the fluidity of entrepreneurial mindsets that these women must continuously recalibrate in response to rapidly changing socio-economic conditions (Al-Hamad et al., 2024). This thesis will explore how refugee women navigate liminal spaces, where structural forces constrain their opportunities, and how they respond to both structural barriers and shifting social positioning by adapting their entrepreneurial strategies and mindsets within these unstable contexts.

Recent studies emphasise the significance of resilience and adaptability among marginalised entrepreneurs, showing that these traits evolve in response to dynamic socio-economic conditions. For example, Padilla-Meléndez et al. (2022) examined the entrepreneurial resilience of indigenous Quechua women in Bolivia, illustrating resilience as a dynamic process moulded by the intersecting challenges of marginalisation and poverty. This study provides a useful comparative perspective for understanding how refugee women

similarly cultivate resilience, adjusting their strategies and identities in response to the complex and unstable environments they encounter.

This exploration ties back to the intersectionality discussed earlier, offering a more dynamic lens to understand these experiences. Refugee women's entrepreneurial mindsets are shaped not only by intersecting systems of oppression but also by the fluid, unstable nature of their circumstances as they actively shift their approaches to navigate diverse socio-economic environments. This fluidity complicates traditional binaries of privilege and marginalisation and highlights the agency refugee women employ in reshaping their entrepreneurial strategies. Recent studies highlight the role of agency and fluidity in the entrepreneurial identity formation of marginalised groups. For example, Boddington (2024) discusses how gendered entrepreneurial identities are continuously reshaped, emphasising reflexivity and the agency to challenge and adapt gender norms within entrepreneurial spaces. This perspective supports the idea that refugee women entrepreneurs may similarly adjust their identities and practices to navigate and reshape the structural barriers they encounter.

To fully account for these complexities, this study proposes that intersectionality is best understood within a Feminist Poststructural framework, which allows for a more detailed analysis of how power, discourse, and subjectivity intersect in liminal spaces. This approach advances the current literature by providing a more refined perspective that captures the fluctuating and often contradictory mindsets these women embody while recognising the continuous recalibration of their entrepreneurial outlook in response to the challenges they face.

Maclaran and Stevens (2019) provide insights into how a Feminist Poststructuralist framework reveals the complex intersections of power, discourse, and identity within marginalised groups. Their discussion emphasises that Feminist Poststructuralism challenges fixed notions of identity by illustrating how identities are constructed and continuously

reshaped within power-laden social discourses. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding the shifting, context-dependent mindsets of individuals in marginalised settings, as it highlights the fluid and relational nature of identity within changing socio-economic and cultural landscapes. By framing identity as a product of ongoing discursive processes, Maclaran and Stevens' work offers a foundation for exploring how marginalised individuals, such as refugee women entrepreneurs, may navigate and negotiate their identities in response to intersecting systems of oppression.

Intersectionality is essential for a detailed analysis of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences, as it examines how multiple social categories, such as race, gender, and class, combine to shape both opportunities and limitations. These intersectional factors are closely linked to power structures that affect identity formation and contribute to marginalisation within entrepreneurial contexts. These intersectional factors are closely linked to power structures that affect identity formation and contribute to marginalisation within entrepreneurial contexts (Salmon and Singleton, 2023).

The intersectional approach highlights the complex interplay of social factors that shape refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences, revealing how overlapping systems of oppression contribute to marginalisation and influence identity formation. This perspective provides a foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges faced by refugee women entrepreneurs. The following section will explore Feminist Poststructuralism and its potential for illuminating the discursive construction of gender, power, and identity within entrepreneurial contexts.

Building on these insights, the following section will explore Feminist Poststructuralism and its potential for illuminating the discursive construction of gender, power, and identity within entrepreneurial contexts. Before introducing the conceptual framework, the discussion will consider how Feminist Poststructuralism can incorporate

Intersectionality as one of five critical lenses for analysis. Like a kaleidoscope that refracts light through multiple lenses to create intricate patterns, this multifaceted theoretical approach will offer a richer and more inclusive understanding of the complex realities navigated by refugee women on their entrepreneurial journeys.

2.4.5 Feminist Poststructuralism

Building on the foundational critiques of Poststructuralism established by Foucault (1972) and Weedon (1996), which challenge fixed notions of truth and highlight the ongoing construction and reconstruction of language and identity through shifting power dynamics Feminist Poststructuralism explores the discursive construction of gender, power, and identity within social and cultural contexts (Wooldridge, 2015). This theoretical framework is especially valuable in examining how these dynamics play out within entrepreneurial contexts, where gendered power relations shape the opportunities and barriers faced by women (Ahl, 2006; Kimbu et al., 2021).

Rather than viewing power as static, Feminist Poststructuralism recognises the fluidity of power relations, constantly shaping and reshaping gendered identities within complex socio-economic environments (Fox and Alldred, 2018; Rantala, 2019). This view contrasts with more essentialist feminist perspectives, which often conceptualise power in terms of domination and resistance (Brubaker, 2021), whereas Feminist Poststructuralism sees power as dispersed and relational (Brown, 2020).

By interrogating how normative categories are constructed and maintained, Feminist Poststructuralism brings to light the ways in which women, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds, navigate complex socio-economic environments. Worwood (2020), using a feminist poststructural lens, illustrated how white working-class young women in the UK internalised neoliberal ideals of individual responsibility, even in the face of significant structural constraints. This approach allowed Worwood to deconstruct how

dominant discourses shape subjectivities, revealing the power dynamics embedded in the pursuit of respectability. Although Worwood's focus is not directly on gendered entrepreneurship, her work demonstrates how feminist poststructural analysis can unpack the interplay of power, discourse, and identity construction in shaping individuals' experiences.

This perspective offers a lens to explore how gendered entrepreneurship is embedded within broader systems of power and exclusion, challenging dominant narratives that often obscure these intricate dynamics (Riach, 2023). Riach's feminist poststructuralist analysis highlights how power relations, mediated through discourse, shape the opportunities and limitations faced by women, adding depth to our understanding of power in entrepreneurial contexts.

To fully understand the foundational principles that underpin Feminist Poststructuralism, it is important to first explore Poststructuralism itself. Feminist Poststructuralism builds on these core ideas, specifically focusing on how gender and power intersect.

Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism, as Eaglestone and Pitt (1998) assert, is characterised by ongoing reflexivity and critical interrogation. Rejecting universal truths, it instead contends that knowledge is contingent, socially constructed, and fundamentally shaped by power dynamics. Poststructuralism does not strive for stable meanings; it embraces the inherent fluidity and contestation in the notion of truth. Rather than anchoring knowledge in supposed objective facts, Poststructuralism advances an evolving inquiry that is never final (Kuhn and Thoreau, 2019). It maintains a non-positivist stance, treating meaning as contingent, constructed through discourse that actively shapes identities and agency (Eaglestone, 1989; Pitt, 2009). Its goal is not to establish new theoretical certainties, but rather to expose the workings of power within the assumptions that underpin knowledge.

Poststructural theory provides a critical lens for examining marginalised groups, including refugee women entrepreneurs. Traditional methodologies often fail to capture the complexity of marginalised experiences, as they are confined within dominant paradigms. St. Pierre (2018) suggests that Poststructuralism invites researchers to explore previously unimagined possibilities, challenging the existing categories and focusing on what is yet to be thought. Moreover, Poststructuralism embraces experimentation, risk, and creativity, qualities inherently tied to the entrepreneurial mindset. In liminal spaces, individuals are free to explore new ways of being, challenge norms, and take risks. St. Pierre (2018, p.604) refers to this as the ‘provocation and challenge of post-qualitative inquiry, to create different worlds for living.’ Established norms and values are questioned in these spaces, enabling new ways of knowing and creating.

Challenges of Defining Poststructuralism

Trying to neatly classify or simplify poststructuralism into a set of distinct features may oversimplify it and potentially undermine its radical critique of fixed meanings and stable identities (Gavey, 2013). within the context of Poststructuralism, where the resistance to fixed meanings and stable identities is a core tenet. Gavey’s (2013) observation highlights a fundamental tension in poststructuralist research: how to balance fluidity and multiplicity with the need for rigorous, robust analysis.

In addressing this, it is important to recognise that Poststructuralism does not entirely dismiss structure but instead critiques the rigid, essentialist frameworks that dominate traditional epistemologies (Foucault, 1977; Derrida, 1976). This perspective encourages researchers to engage with the inherent ambiguities and complexities within their data, resisting the urge to simplify or reduce nuanced realities (Butler, 1990). Nevertheless, this does not imply a disregard for rigour or analytical depth. Instead, Poststructuralist analysis

demands a more critical engagement with data, where robustness is achieved through the recognition and exploration of complexity, rather than its simplification (Weedon, 1996). With an understanding of how Poststructuralism challenges fixed notions of truth and power, it is now possible to revisit Feminist Poststructuralism, which extends these critiques by specifically interrogating the dynamics of gender, power, and identity. This approach adds a gendered lens to the analysis, enriching the understanding of the lived experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs.

Feminist Poststructuralism

Feminist Poststructuralism extends the principles of Poststructural theory to interrogate the dynamics of gender, power, and identity (Baxter, 2016). Recognising that power relations are fluid rather than fixed; it argues that identities are continuously constructed and reconfigured through discursive practices. Weedon and Hallack (2021) caution against viewing Feminist Poststructuralism as a conventional theory or methodology; instead, it represents a critical stance on language, subjectivity, and power. This approach challenges the notion of a stable, coherent identity, which traditional feminist thought often assumes, by revealing how power structures continuously shape and maintain social hierarchies. Feminist Poststructuralists (Baxter, 2008; Giblin, 2016) thus emphasise the ongoing construction of gender, race, and class within discourse and practice.

Strengths of Feminist Poststructuralism

While Feminist Poststructuralism is valued for its critical insights, it has faced critique, particularly regarding its methodological clarity. Strega (2015) acknowledges the framework's ability to deconstruct fixed subjectivities but warns that its resistance to stable meanings can result in methodological ambiguity. This lack of prescriptive guidance, she argues, complicates the task of producing empirically robust analysis. Nevertheless, Strega remains an advocate, emphasising Feminist Poststructuralism's ability to disrupt dominant

discourses and uncover the power relations that shape marginalised identities. Her critique is thus balanced, recognising both the strengths and limitations of this approach.

Critique of Feminist Poststructuralism

Feminist Poststructuralism has garnered significant attention for its capacity to dismantle static understandings of identity and subjectivity. It emphasises the fluidity and continual construction of identity through discourse, with gender, race, and other intersecting categories forming a part of this dynamic process. Scholars such as Strega (2015) highlight how Feminist Poststructuralism exposes power relations that underpin dominant discourses, often marginalising women and other disenfranchised groups (see also Baxter, 2008). However, while acknowledging the analytical power of Feminist Poststructuralism, Strega (2015) cautions that its refusal to engage with fixed meanings may result in methodological ambiguity, particularly when robust empirical findings are necessary.

This critique highlights a broader tension within Feminist Poststructuralism: the delicate balance between deconstructing fixed categories and maintaining methodological rigour. Strega (2015) draws attention to this challenge, noting that while Feminist Poststructuralism offers valuable insights into the fluidity of identity and power, its focus on discursive flexibility can sometimes obscure empirical clarity. This is particularly evident when fluidity is prioritised over more stable frameworks necessary for robust analysis. Similarly, Giblin (2016) underscores the contribution of Feminist Poststructuralism to the layered and subtle understanding of women's experiences. Rather than conceptualising identity as fixed or singular, this approach engages critically with the intersections of power, language, and knowledge. In doing so, it illustrates how identities are dynamic constantly reshaped by social structures and power relations. Yet, as these critics argue, the risk of destabilising identity to the point of analytical incoherence must be carefully managed.

Feminist Poststructuralism has been pivotal in deconstructing traditional conceptions of a unified and fixed subject (Davies et al., 2006; Strega, 2015). It highlights the fluid and contingent nature of subjectivity, shaped by intersecting power relations (Kelly, 2023). By recognising subjectivity as socially constructed and dynamic, Feminist Poststructuralism has opened new avenues for exploring how individuals understand themselves and their experiences (Riley, Schouten, and Cahill, 2003). In the following section, subjectivity's relationship with power and discourse, informed by Feminist Poststructural insights, will be examined.

Ahl (2006) highlights that women's entrepreneurship remains under-researched compared to men's, with studies often treating gender as a secondary consideration (Romero and Valdez, 2016). While there is increasing recognition of the economic impact of women entrepreneurs, research remains disproportionately focused on men's entrepreneurial activities. Ahl and Nelson (2015) and Marlow and McAdam (2015) argue that despite the perception of entrepreneurship as a gender-neutral field, it is deeply embedded in masculinity, making it challenging for women to establish legitimacy within it.

Henry, Foss, and Ahl (2016) note a shift in research, moving from viewing gender as a variable to examining it as a significant influence within entrepreneurial discourses. Feminist Poststructuralism has been crucial in revealing the gendered nature of entrepreneurship, offering a framework to critique traditional, masculine-dominated narratives. Hurley (1999) suggests that feminist theory, with its transformative potential, provides an alternative perspective that could have significant socio-political implications. Feminist Poststructuralism argues that focusing on individual women's ventures fails to address the broader structural patterns that shape women's entrepreneurship.

Ahl and Marlow (2012) contend that by holding women accountable for structural barriers, existing discourse reinforces a gendered hierarchy, where masculinity remains the

normative standard. McRobbie's (2004) analysis, as cited in Ahl and Marlow (2012), found that research consistently framed women as deficient, whether in risk-taking, networking, or entrepreneurial strategies. Feminist Poststructuralism offers a systematic critique of such assumptions, urging scholars to reconsider entrepreneurial theory by incorporating the lived experiences of refugee women. This approach grants greater legitimacy to their ventures and challenges the heteronormative assumptions within entrepreneurship discourse.

Although slightly dated, studies such as Warriner (2004) and Dyck and McLaren (2004) employed feminist poststructural methodologies to explore refugee women's work identities and settlement experiences. While not directly focused on entrepreneurship, these works underscore the importance of Feminist Poststructural approaches in understanding the complex realities faced by refugee women.

While Feminist Poststructuralism provides a compelling framework for understanding the fluid and intersecting identities of refugee women entrepreneurs, critiques highlight the challenges of maintaining methodological clarity. In response, this study will adopt a structured approach to these complexities, which will be further outlined in the Methodology Chapter.

The critique of Feminist Poststructuralism highlights critical issues regarding the fluidity of identities, power relations, and marginalisation. These are particularly relevant when examining refugee women entrepreneurs, who operate within multiple intersecting systems of oppression and opportunity. To fully engage with the complexities presented in the literature, a focused and systematic exploration of these dynamics is necessary.

2.4.6 Gaps and Underspecified Areas

The literature review has revealed several critical gaps in understanding female refugee entrepreneurship, particularly regarding theoretical frameworks that can adequately

capture their complex experiences. While existing research has made valuable contributions, three key areas remain underspecified:

First, recent critiques of intersectionality highlight persistent ontological tensions, particularly in relation to poststructuralist and neoliberal perspectives. As Dy and MacNeil (2023) argue, both frameworks tend to privilege the individual, thereby overlooking the complexity of structural forces. This critique underscores unresolved issues within intersectional feminist theory, particularly around the interaction of structure and agency.

Second, despite the potential of feminist poststructuralism as a theoretical lens for understanding female refugee entrepreneurship, limited empirical evidence uses this approach (Ahl 2004; Richard, 2022). This underutilisation is particularly noteworthy given Feminist Poststructuralism's capacity to analyse power dynamics and representational issues inherent in entrepreneurship discourse.

Third, the methodological application of feminist poststructuralist frameworks to entrepreneurial narratives presents specific challenges. As Rantala (2019) notes, while traditional methodologies often struggle to adequately reveal and challenge normative discourses and power constructions, the fluid, context-dependent nature of feminist poststructuralist approaches can make systematic analysis challenging.

Bridging these theoretical gaps requires an integrative approach, with feminist poststructuralism serving as the theoretical foundation that binds together insights from multiple frameworks. While each theoretical lens offers unique contributions to understanding refugee women's entrepreneurship - Kuhlman's (1991) focus on economic integration pathways, Turner's (1969) and Van Gennep's (1909) conceptualisation of liminality as a transformative space, McGrath and MacMillan's (2000) examination of entrepreneurial mindset development, Kloosterman and Rath's (2001) analysis of structural

embeddedness, and Crenshaw's (1989) framework for understanding intersecting oppressions - none alone fully captures the complexity of female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences.

One potential reason for the limited use of feminist poststructuralist frameworks in this context may be the methodological challenges it presents for narrative analysis. While this approach is often employed in policy analysis, its application to the examination of entrepreneurial narratives and experiences has been more limited. Rantala (2019) notes that traditional methodologies often struggle to adequately reveal and challenge normative discourses and power constructions, suggesting the need for more flexible approaches to analyse complex social phenomena. However, the very qualities that make feminist poststructuralist frameworks valuable, their fluid, context-dependent understanding of power relations and subjectivities, can pose methodological challenges when attempting to structure a robust research process. This tension is particularly evident when examining the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women, where multiple, shifting subjectivities and power relations need to be captured and analysed systematically.

To address these theoretical and methodological gaps, this study develops a systematic framework based on five key tenets of Feminist Poststructuralism: Power, Subjectivity, Marginalisation, Intersectionality, and Representation. This framework provides a structured approach to examining how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial spaces while acknowledging the fluid, complex nature of their experiences. The study situates this framework within the concept of liminal space - the threshold between refugee and entrepreneurship narratives - where female refugee entrepreneurs navigate the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset. This positioning allows for a nuanced examination of how gender, power relations, and entrepreneurial mindset intersect in the context of refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys. These five key tenets

and their methodological application will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 4, where their role in shaping the research design and analytical approach will be fully elaborated.

Feminist poststructuralism's emphasis on power relations, discourse, and fluid subjectivities (Weedon, 1987; Ahl, 2006; Marlow and McAdam, 2012) provides the theoretical scaffolding needed to connect these perspectives. Its attention to how gender shapes entrepreneurial experiences and opportunities (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Henry et al., 2016) allows us to examine how refugee women entrepreneurs navigate both structural constraints and individual agency. As Essers and Benschop (2009) demonstrate in their work on female ethnic minority entrepreneurs, this approach is particularly valuable for understanding how marginalised women negotiate multiple identities in entrepreneurial contexts.

Despite its critiques, Feminist Poststructuralism effectively integrates Intersectionality as a critical lens to explore how various axes of identity intersect within discursive power structures. Crenshaw's (1989) framework provides a foundation for analysing overlapping systems of oppression, such as gender, race, and class, which are shaped through discourse yet produce tangible material consequences. The following conceptual framework draws on insights from both refugee studies and entrepreneurship research to create a threshold space where these disciplines intersect. This liminal space allows for exploration of female refugee entrepreneurs' unique challenges and opportunities, accounting for their intersecting identities and complex experiences, including the pivotal role of the entrepreneurial mindset. Through this framework, the study contributes both theoretically and methodologically to the field of gendered entrepreneurship research.

This integrated conceptual framework is situated within the concept of liminal space, which is theorised as a threshold where identities and possibilities are negotiated (Sørensen and Land, 2021). Prashantham (2019, p.513) further describes liminal space as a state where

‘one is no longer in the original state but hasn’t quite reached the new one. ‘By examining the potential trilateral convergence between liminality, entrepreneurial mindset, and feminist poststructural theory (as illustrated in Figure 3, p.65), this study aims to illuminate the unique challenges and opportunities faced by refugee women entrepreneurs. Turner’s (1969) conceptualisation of liminality as a transformative state suggests parallels with the experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs who occupy multiple ‘in-between’ positions: *subjects of change*, through a *process of change* and as *agents of change*. This ‘in-betweenness’ influences not only their identities but also their capacities for agency and resilience as they navigate complex cultural and economic landscapes (Essers and Benschop, 2007; Welter, 2011).

To analyse these dynamics, the framework draws on five theoretical tenets: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation. Each tenet provides an analytical lens for exploring how refugee women negotiate and redefine their positions within this liminal entrepreneurial space (Ahl, 2006; Calás and Smircich, 2006). Through the lens of feminist poststructuralism, this study investigates how an entrepreneurial mindset might develop and operate under such conditions of liminality, challenging traditional assumptions of entrepreneurship as an individualised and linear process (Poggesi, Mari, and De Vita, 2019)

Building on the earlier-discussed trilateral relationship, this convergence of liminality, entrepreneurial mindset, and feminist poststructural theory provides a focused conceptual framework for examining the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. By analysing these interconnected dimensions, this framework enables a detailed understanding of how refugee women’s entrepreneurial identities and practices develop.

2.4.7 The Conceptual Framework

The complex nature of refugee entrepreneurship demands theoretical frameworks capable of capturing both its structural conditions and lived experiences. While existing frameworks offer valuable insights into refugee economic integration (Kuhlman, 1991) and entrepreneurial mindset development (Kuratko, Fisher, and Audretsch, 2021), they often fail to capture the dynamic interplay between agency and structure that characterises refugee entrepreneurial journeys. This study presents an innovative conceptual framework that integrates feminist poststructural theory with concepts of liminality and entrepreneurial mindset to understand how refugee entrepreneurs navigate their entrepreneurial journeys.

This framework draws upon and synthesises multiple theoretical perspectives. The structural elements derive from mixed embeddedness theory (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001) and Kuhlman's (1991) refugee integration model, incorporating both internal factors (demographics, human capital, social capital) and external/socius elements (host-related factors, opportunity structures, push-pull factors, government policies). These structural components provide the contextual foundation for understanding refugee entrepreneurship.

Central to the framework is the concept of liminal space as a setting (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1909), within which entrepreneurial mindset dimensions are positioned for observation. Drawing from Kuratko et al.'s (2021) entrepreneurial mindset triad, the framework situates cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions within this liminal space. This positioning enables examination of how entrepreneurial mindset develops within transitional contexts.

The framework is grounded in feminist poststructural theory, operating through five conceptual components: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, representation, and intersectionality. These theoretical tenets function as what could be termed kaleidoscopic

analytical lenses, creating a systematic approach to analysing entrepreneurial experiences. Each tenet, while distinct in its analytical focus, contributes to understanding how refugee entrepreneurs navigate complex institutional landscapes while developing entrepreneurial capabilities.

This integrated theoretical approach advances the understanding of refugee entrepreneurship in several significant ways. The framework examines the relationship between structural conditions and individual agency, revealing the interactions between institutional constraints and entrepreneurial action. The analysis of mindset development within liminal space facilitates investigation of entrepreneurial capability development during transition periods. The feminist poststructural tenets provide analytical precision in examining how refugee entrepreneurs negotiate their entrepreneurial development. This approach enables systematic analysis of entrepreneurial experiences, identifying both constraints and strategic responses.

The subsequent sections provide detailed examination of each framework component, demonstrating how these theoretical elements constitute a comprehensive analytical tool for understanding refugee entrepreneurship. Through this detailed exploration, the framework demonstrates its capacity to analyse the complexity of refugee entrepreneurial experiences.

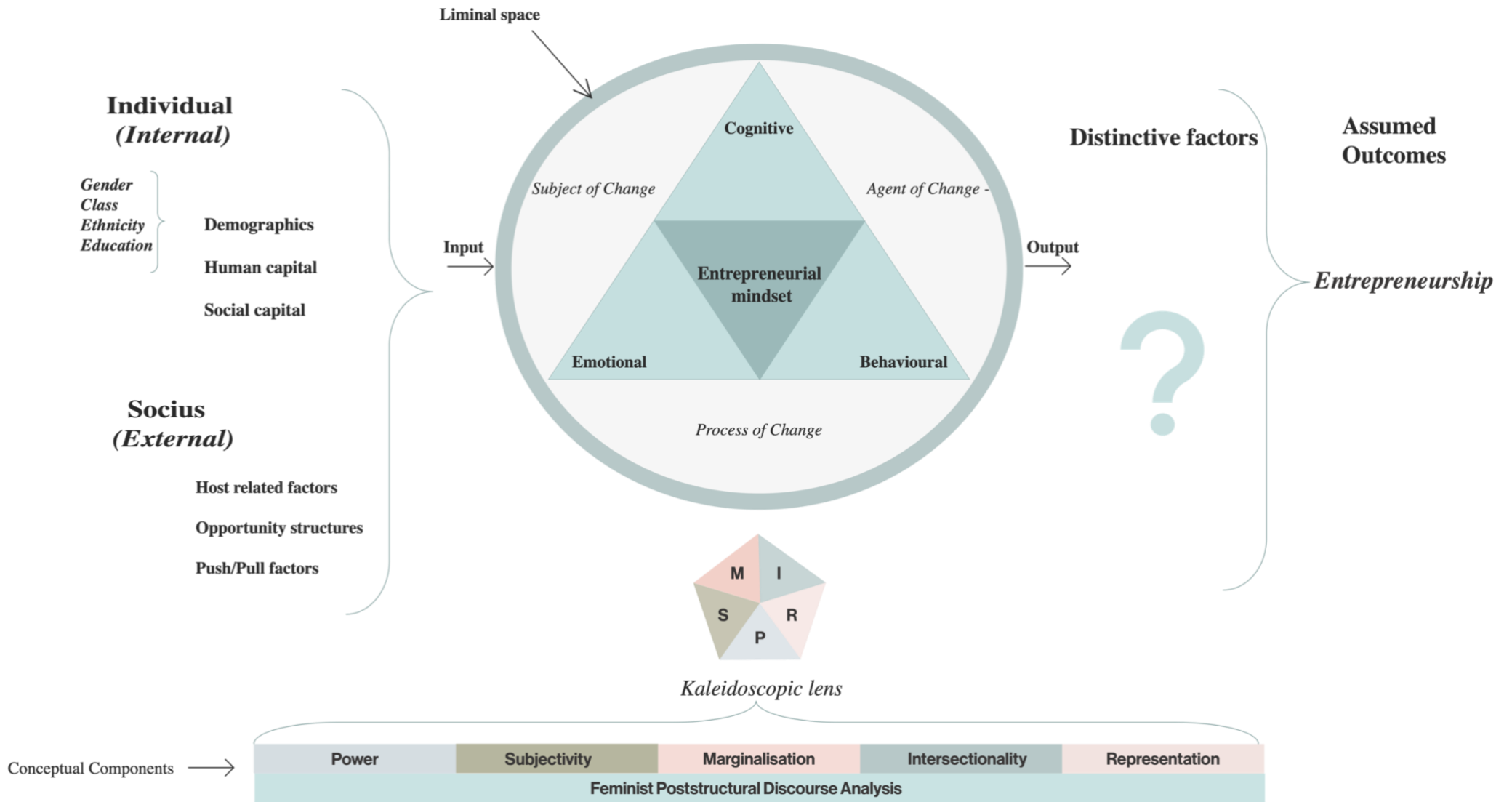


Figure 8. *Conceptual Framework* (Author's own)

Using Kaleidoscopic Feminist Poststructural Lenses

The conceptual framework presented here serves dual purposes: it provides both a theoretical lens for understanding refugee entrepreneurship and maps the architectural flow of this thesis. This integration of theory articulated through the thesis structure demonstrates how theoretical components align with and inform each chapter's development. The framework's composition mirrors the thesis structure, with each element corresponding to specific chapters that build upon one another.

The left side of the framework represents the structural foundations explored in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), drawing from multiple disciplines including refugee and forced migration theory, entrepreneurship theory, and immigrant/refugee entrepreneurship literature. These structural elements, comprising both internal/individual and external/socius factors, establish the contextual background essential for understanding refugee entrepreneurship.

Chapter 3 explores the theoretical space represented by the central circular element, where liminality theory provides the setting and entrepreneurial mindset dimensions offer analytical categories. This theoretical integration creates a unique lens for examining refugee entrepreneurial experiences. The methodological foundation, detailed in Chapter 4, rests upon five feminist poststructural tenets: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, representation, and intersectionality. These theoretical components provide both analytical tools and methodological guidance.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the analytical application, where the liminal space at the framework's centre represents the analytical core with entrepreneurial mindset serving as a golden thread weaving through the analysis. This mindset manifests through three key dimensions: *subject of change* (cognitive), *process of change* (emotional), and *agent of change* (behavioural). As *subject of change*, individuals develop understanding of self in the

entrepreneurial context, recognise opportunities and constraints, and develop entrepreneurial thinking. The process of change involves navigation of transitional experiences, development of emotional resilience, and adaptation to entrepreneurial demands. As *agent of change*, individuals express entrepreneurial agency, implement business strategies, and engage with entrepreneurial activities.

This entrepreneurial mindset thread binds together the liminal space as analytical setting, the feminist poststructural theoretical lens, and the methodological approach. This integrated analytical framework enables examination of how entrepreneurial mindset develops and manifests within the liminal space, while being shaped by both structural conditions and individual agency. The golden thread of entrepreneurial mindset provides continuity through the analysis, connecting individual experiences to broader structural patterns.

Chapter 7 presents empirical insights through distinctive factors emerging from the analysis, informing understanding of entrepreneurial processes, recognition of structural influences, and identification of agency manifestation. The theoretical integration in Chapter 8 represents the outcomes through theoretical synthesis, practical implications, and contribution to knowledge.

This architectural alignment demonstrates how the conceptual framework not only guides theoretical understanding but also provides a coherent structure for the thesis's development and presentation of findings.

The conceptual framework developed in this chapter draws upon feminist poststructural what could be termed as kaleidoscopic lenses to offer a structured, multi-dimensional approach to studying refugee entrepreneurship. These lenses, covering power, subjectivity, marginalisation, representation, and intersectionality, provide a foundation for analysing how refugee women navigate their entrepreneurial journeys. This framework

integrates theoretical elements from refugee studies, liminality, and entrepreneurship, creating a comprehensive structure that will guide the analysis throughout the remainder of this thesis. The subsequent sections will build on this foundation, using the framework to systematically explore the empirical realities of refugee entrepreneurship and to reveal how structural conditions and individual agency interact within liminal spaces.

Chapter 2 Summary

This chapter has examined multiple theoretical perspectives and bodies of literature that inform understanding of refugee entrepreneurship. Beginning with foundational definitions and policy context, the review distinguished between refugee and migrant entrepreneurs while analysing UK policy developments (Zetter, 2007; Zetter, 2022; Bakker et al., 2017; United Nations General Assembly, 1951; Arendt, 1951; Parekh, 2016). This analysis revealed how UK policies often create barriers rather than opportunities for refugee entrepreneurs, particularly women (Sales, 2002; Mayblin, 2019)

The intersection of refugee status and gender creates a unique entrepreneurial context that demands examination through both refugee entrepreneurship and gender-focused theoretical lenses (Bizri, 2017). While refugee entrepreneurship literature predominantly focuses on structural barriers and integration processes (Pugalia and Cetindamar, 2022), gender entrepreneurship studies highlight power dynamics and identity construction (de Bruin and Swail, 2024). The convergence of these literatures reveals how female refugee entrepreneurs navigate multiple layers of complexity, not only as refugees adapting to new environments but as women challenging traditional entrepreneurial narratives (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018). This dual theoretical foundation provides crucial insights into how gender and refugee status intersect to shape entrepreneurial opportunities, constraints, and strategies (Bakker and McMullen, 2023).

The exploration of refugee theory, anchored by Kuhlman's (1991) economic integration model, provided crucial insights into refugee adaptation processes. However, the review also identified significant limitations of Kuhlman's model in fully capturing the complex experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs, particularly in relation to intersectionality and gendered dynamics. The concept of liminality emerged as the vital contextual setting within which these entrepreneurs operate, providing the transitional space where entrepreneurial journeys unfold.

The entrepreneurship literature review revealed both the evolution of entrepreneurial theory and its limitations in addressing refugee contexts. Frameworks like Kloosterman's Mixed Embeddedness Theory offer valuable insights but fail to fully account for the unique challenges and opportunities faced by refugee entrepreneurs. Furthermore, recent critiques of intersectionality (Dy and MacNeil, 2023) highlight the ongoing ontological tensions between poststructural and neoliberal perspectives, particularly regarding their tendency to privilege individual agency over structural forces. These critiques underscore the need for a more complex approach that integrates both structural and agentic elements, which are especially pertinent for understanding female refugee entrepreneurs.

The review of entrepreneurial mindset literature, particularly Kuratko et al.'s (2021) triadic model, provided essential perspectives on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of entrepreneurship. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these mindset dimensions operate within the liminal context of refugee entrepreneurship, particularly for female entrepreneurs who navigate both structural constraints and personal aspirations.

Recent developments in both refugee entrepreneurship and gender studies highlight the timeliness of addressing these gaps. The growing recognition of refugee women's economic potential coincides with broader conversations about inclusive entrepreneurship

and gender equity in business. Current refugee entrepreneurship literature increasingly acknowledges gender as a crucial factor (Ram, 2021; Koyama, 2015), while gendered entrepreneurship studies are expanding to consider diverse contextual settings (Smith and Thomas, 2023), making the intersection of these fields particularly relevant for contemporary research and practice.

Gendered perspectives on entrepreneurship, examined through both intersectional and feminist poststructural lenses, highlight how gender fundamentally shapes entrepreneurial experiences. de Bruin and Swail (2024) advocate for combining constructionist and poststructuralist feminist approaches to understand both how “gender is done” and how gendered discourse in entrepreneurial ecosystems needs to change. While their work focuses on entrepreneurial ecosystems broadly, they highlight that research needs to be expanded to include other disadvantaged groups of entrepreneurs, including refugee entrepreneurs.

This underutilisation is noteworthy, given the theoretical potential of Feminist Poststructuralism to uncover power dynamics and representational issues inherent in the entrepreneurial experiences of marginalised groups. Additionally, the methodological challenges of applying feminist poststructural frameworks to entrepreneurial narratives were highlighted, pointing towards the need for more adaptable approaches that can accommodate the fluid, context-dependent nature of female refugee entrepreneurs’ experiences (Rantala, 2019).

These theoretical strands converge in the conceptual framework presented, which integrates feminist poststructural theory (Weedon, 1987; Baxter, 2016) with entrepreneurial mindset concepts (Güngör and Strohmeier, 2020; Kuratko, Fisher, and Audretsch, 2021), situated within the liminal space as contextual setting (Van Genneep, 1909, Kuhlman, 1991). This integration provides a theoretically robust approach for examining how refugee women

navigate entrepreneurial development within these transitional spaces, while acknowledging both structural constraints and individual agency.

This integrated approach responds to current calls in both refugee and gender entrepreneurship literature for more intricate theoretical frameworks that capture the complexity of intersectional entrepreneurial experiences. Although substantial research has explored gender dynamics in entrepreneurship (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018; Brush, Greene and Welter, 2020; Brush et. al., 2022) and the entrepreneurial endeavours of refugees (Al Dajani, 2022) separately, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these factors collectively influence entrepreneurial outcomes. Addressing this intersection is essential for advancing current entrepreneurship theory.

By combining insights from both fields, the framework offers a more sophisticated understanding of how gender and refugee status collectively influence entrepreneurial development, addressing a significant gap in current entrepreneurship theory. The conceptual framework's theoretical sophistication lies in its multi-layered approach. At the structural level, it incorporates both internal factors (demographics, human capital, social capital) and external elements (host-related factors, opportunity structures, push-pull factors, government policies). These elements create the context within which entrepreneurial activity occurs. At its core, the framework positions entrepreneurial mindset dimensions within the contextual setting of a liminal space, enabling examination of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of entrepreneurial development. However, bridging the theoretical gaps identified in this chapter requires an integrative approach that addresses both the structural and agentic dimensions of refugee entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on gender, intersectionality, and power.

Underpinning this structure, the framework employs feminist poststructural theoretical tenets - power, subjectivity, marginalisation, representation, and intersectionality -

as kaleidoscopic analytical lenses. These theoretical components offer a focused perspective for examining how refugee entrepreneurs navigate institutional landscapes while developing entrepreneurial capabilities. This approach also addresses the persistent gaps in understanding the unique interplay of multiple identities, power relations, and the entrepreneurial mindset in the context of refugee entrepreneurship. These theoretical tenets, their scholarly foundations, and their methodological application will be comprehensively explored and critically examined in Chapter 4, where their role in shaping the research design and analytical framework will be thoroughly detailed.

Having established these theoretical foundations and methodological intentions, the thesis proceeds to examine the specific context in which female refugee entrepreneurs operate. The following chapter builds upon this foundation by examining enterprise within the liminal space, focusing on how these theoretical elements reveal the complex realities of refugee entrepreneurship within this distinctive setting. Specifically, Chapter 3 further develops the interplay between the entrepreneurial mindset and the concept of liminality, examining how female refugee entrepreneurs theoretically navigate ‘in-between’ positions as they transition from *subjects of change* to *agents of change*. This chapter aims to articulate how the liminal context contributes to our understanding of structural constraints, power relations, and personal agency in the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women, thereby laying a conceptual foundation for further empirical investigation.

Chapter 3. The Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the liminal space as the contextual setting where cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions interact through three distinct yet interconnected aspects: the *subject of change*, *process of change*, and *agent of change*. Having established this foundational understanding, it delves deeper into how these three dimensions operate within the liminal space. The discussion then explores the input elements, comprising both individual factors (demographics, human capital, and social capital) and socius factors (host-related factors, opportunity structures, and push/pull factors) that exert structural pressures on this liminal space. The conceptual framework (Figure 8, p) serves as both a theoretical lens and an architectural roadmap throughout this thesis.

From this point forward, each chapter begins with a version of this framework, where opacity levels highlight the specific components under examination. In Figure 9, p, which guides Chapter 3, the fully visible elements, the liminal space and its structural forces, represent the core areas of investigation, while the faded elements indicate theoretical components that will be explored in subsequent chapters. This use of opacity visually distinguishes each chapter's specific focus, guiding the reader through the development of the conceptual framework step by step. By selectively highlighting elements, it becomes easier to see how each chapter fits into the broader theoretical landscape and builds towards the cumulative understanding presented in the final thesis. This visual technique demonstrates how theoretical components align with and inform each chapter's development, showing how each element corresponds to specific chapters that build upon one another.

Extending the literature review and theoretical introductions of Chapter 2, the focus narrows to liminal space as a contextual setting and the entrepreneurial mindset as a conceptual device as they relate to the journey of female refugees. The context of

displacement is introduced, explaining how this perspective justifies using liminal space as a contextual setting in this thesis. The aim is to position the displaced female refugee at the heart of the liminal space, recognising her as both subject of change and agent of change while examining the processes of change she experiences. Consequently, the discussion explores how refugee women navigate this interstitial space, grappling with its complexities and uncertainties. Various structural forces that impact their entrepreneurial journey are examined, including socius, host country factors, push and pull opportunity structures, government policies, and media discourse. These factors are crucial in shaping the environment where refugee women seek to establish themselves as entrepreneurs.

As the discussion progresses, it explores theoretical frameworks that provide a foundation for understanding the entrepreneurial experiences of female refugees. These contemporary theoretical perspectives offer valuable insights into the dynamics at play. Moreover, the chapter develops and elaborates on the conceptual framework by referencing contemporary theory. This model serves as a valuable mapping tool for the thesis, aiding in exploring and understanding the external structural forces and internal individual factors that influence the female refugee entrepreneur in a liminal space.

This chapter expands the conceptual framework by introducing key structural forces that shape the entrepreneurial environment for female refugees in liminal spaces. The incorporation of these forces - including socius factors, host country conditions, and opportunity structures, into the conceptual model builds upon the foundational theories established in Chapter 2. This enhanced conceptual framework provides a more complete lens through which to examine how female refugee entrepreneurs navigate both individual and structural dimensions of their entrepreneurial journey. This groundwork will guide the subsequent empirical investigation.

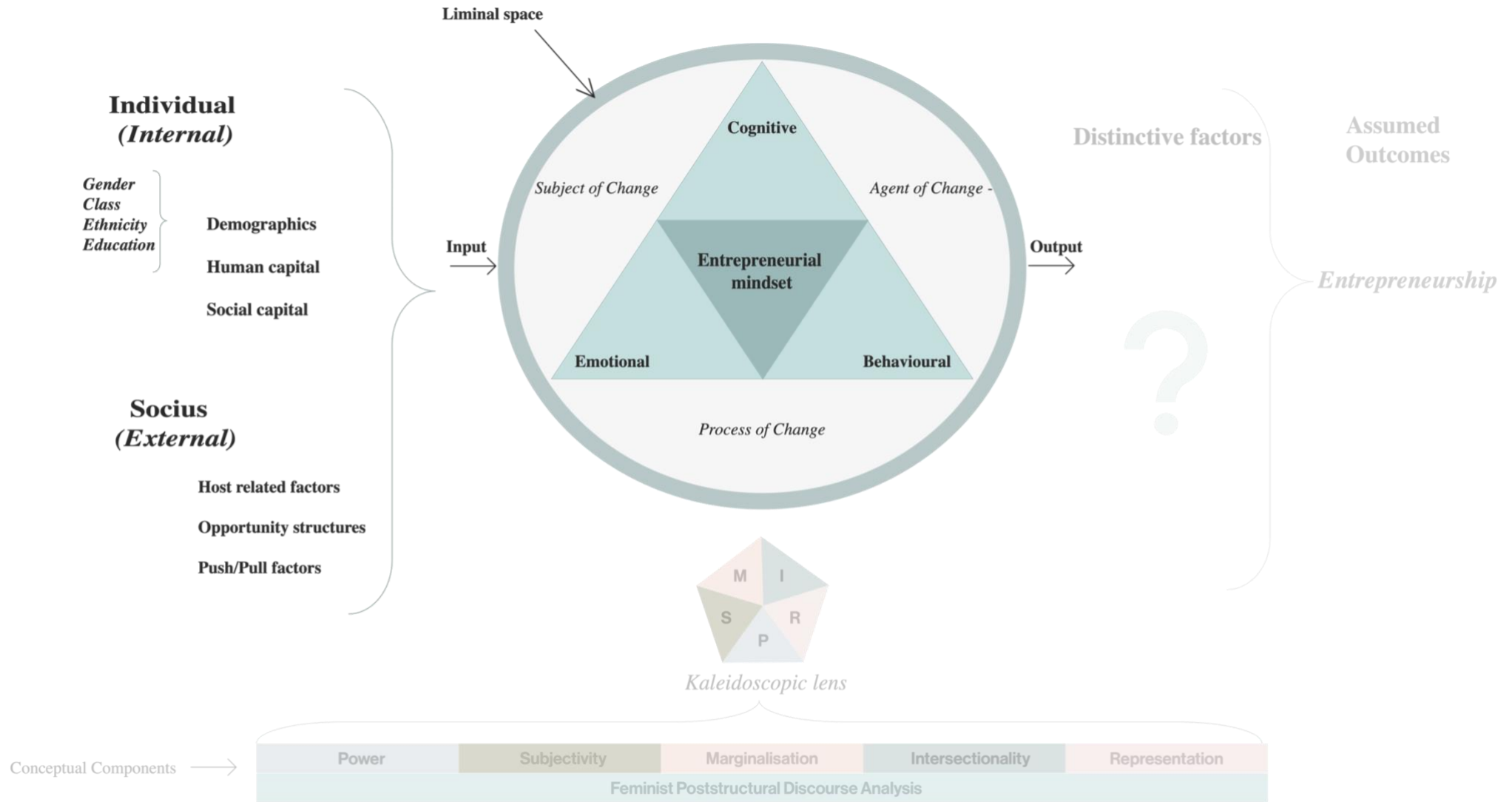


Figure 9. Chapter 3 Focus Areas within the Conceptual Framework (Author's own)

3.2 Developing the Conceptual Framework: A Multi-Step Process

A conceptual framework should provide clear definitions and explanations of the key terms and concepts related to the topic under study. Jabareen (2009) warned that a conceptual framework is not simply a list of concepts but a structure where each concept is essential. This framework should help provide a solid foundation for the research and make understanding the relationships between the different elements easier. The purpose of a conceptual framework is to guide the research by defining the key concepts and their relationships and to ensure that the study remains focused and well-structured. It also helps to ensure that the research is consistent, coherent, and logically sound. A conceptual framework does not offer a causal or analytical understanding of social reality. Instead, it provides an interpretive approach to understanding social reality. Unlike quantitative models that aim to explain things theoretically, conceptual frameworks provide a deeper understanding of the topic. These frameworks are indeterministic and, therefore, do not predict outcomes.

The conceptual framework in this study is not static; rather, it evolves and responds to the ongoing research process. This responsiveness adds significant depth to understanding the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women by accommodating the unpredictable and dynamic nature of their lived realities (Alkhaled and Sasaki, 2022). Refugee women are often navigating complex and shifting circumstances that range from legal barriers and socio-cultural constraints to personal adjustments in their new contexts (Gadomska-Lila and Scibior-Butrym, 2023). A static conceptual framework might overlook these fluid experiences, whereas an adaptable one ensures that the evolving nuances of their journey are accounted for in the analysis (Khademi, Essers and Van Nieuwkerk, 2024; Dharani, 2024).

For instance, as new insights are gathered from empirical data or as changing socio-political conditions are observed, the conceptual framework is adjusted to reflect these

realities (Maxwell, 2013). This iterative nature allows the framework to incorporate emerging themes that may not have been initially apparent, such as unexpected forms of resilience, the shifting role of community networks, or the impacts of policy shifts on their opportunities (Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018). By evolving alongside the research, the framework better captures the interplay between external structural pressures and individual agency, particularly how refugee women leverage their entrepreneurial mindset to navigate the liminal space between *subject of change* and *agent of change* (Morris and Tucker, 2023).

This dynamic approach thus adds richness to the analysis, portraying not only the challenges refugee women face but also their resourcefulness in adapting to evolving conditions (Lenette, 2011). As Fee (2024) demonstrates through her research, the refugee label and identity is deeply personal and subjective, with individuals actively choosing how they relate to this status rather than remaining passively defined by it. This responsiveness is essential for understanding how refugee women transition from being mere subjects of forced migration to active agents shaping their economic integration, thus reflecting the fluidity that characterises their entrepreneurial realities.

According to Levering (2002), the concept of human behaviour being explainable and predictable is based on the idea that external factors are tightly connected, while the idea that human actions can only be understood and not predicted is based on the concept of freedom. A conceptual framework is a structured approach that helps to understand the relationships and connections between different theories and concepts related to a topic. It organises these concepts and theories in a way that forms a coherent whole. The framework should be based on existing research and supported by evidence, and it should be flexible enough to adapt to new findings and changes in the field. The purpose of a conceptual framework is to provide guidance to researchers and practitioners, helping them understand the topic they are studying and how to apply their knowledge in practical ways.

Providing a conceptual framework should, as advocated by Ravitch and Riggan (2016), advance the argument about why this topic of refugee women entrepreneurs matters and why the chosen means to study this phenomenon are appropriate and rigorous. They warn the conceptual framework is not assembled before the start of the research and then left unchanged as a rigid base for the selected methods and analyses. A conceptual framework can be developed through the use of qualitative analysis. It should be a reactive instrument that responds to continuous research experiences and data, calling for inclusions and adjustments, thereby providing a framework for ideas and proposed undertakings that guide the research and prompt continual reflection.

The conceptual framework formed the superstructure of this study into female refugee entrepreneurs. The aim was to develop a conceptual framework of the female refugee entrepreneur as an agent negotiating a pathway of uncertainty whilst recognising that the process occurs in a social environment within which the entrepreneur can reduce unpredictability (Khademi et al., 2024). The idea of liminality within the entrepreneurship journey suggests reflexivity, which aligns with studies illustrating that entrepreneurship is used by refugees as a strategic tool for empowerment and integration in challenging contexts (Al-Hamad et al., 2024).

This liminal space also lends credence to entrepreneurship theories that indicate that entrepreneurial opportunities are formed endogenously by the entrepreneurs who create them (Santamaria-Velasco et al., 2021). Furthermore, the intersection of multiple embedded contexts has shown how refugee entrepreneurs can innovate and adapt to their surroundings to create new opportunities (Harima et al., 2021). These processes highlight the socio-political nature of entrepreneurship, particularly among displaced individuals, where empowerment is achieved through reflexivity and adaptive strategies (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013)

The construction of the conceptual framework for the study on how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space involved a multi-step process to provide a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. The first step was conceptualising the liminal space as a transitional locality characterised by spatiotemporal liminality, representing a critical phase in the entrepreneurial journey. This phase was chosen to frame the liminal space as it captures entrepreneurial intent to agent manifestation. Envisioning the liminal space as a three-dimensional journey, the refugee woman enters as a subject of change, undergoes a process of change, and eventually emerges as an agent of change. Each dimension of the liminal space represents a phase in her journey towards actualisation.

In the second step, concepts relevant to the study were identified and explored by drawing from various theories and theoretical models (Van Gennep, 1909; Goldlust and Richmond, 1974; Kuhn, 1981; Kulhman, 1991; Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch, 2021). The aim was to understand the opportunities and barriers that act as external forces impacting the actualisation of female refugees' entrepreneurship. The identified concepts included socius, encompassing host country factors, push and pull factors, opportunity structures, and government policies. Additionally, internal or individual factors such as demographics, human and social capital, gender, class, ethnicity, and education were also recognised. These concepts were then deconstructed and categorised under socius and individual factors to examine their role and influence within the liminal space.

Furthermore, integrating Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis as the framing theory enriched the conceptual framework. This analysis provided a lens to explore power, subjectivity, marginalisation, representation, intersectionality, and discourse. These six factors were critical for interrogating the three dimensions within the liminal space, considering the impact of external forces on refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences.

The synthesis of these concepts and including the Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis culminated in constructing the conceptual framework. This framework served as the overarching structure for the study, guiding the exploration of how refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space. By examining the interplay between the identified Socius and individual factors, the three dimensions of the liminal space, and the components underpinning the Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis, the conceptual framework aimed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and agency experienced by refugee women entrepreneurs.

The conceptual framework provided a robust and structured approach for data collection, analysis, and interpretation during the empirical research phase. It facilitated a holistic exploration of the refugee women's entrepreneurial journey within the liminal space, acknowledging the complexities and dynamics of their experiences. Ultimately, the construction of this conceptual framework aimed to generate valuable insights and recommendations to support and empower refugee women in their entrepreneurial pursuits, recognising their resilience, agency, and potential for change.

In the final stage, Jabareen (2009) explains the objective is to verify the validity of the conceptual framework. The concern is whether the proposed framework and its associated concepts are comprehensible not just to the researcher, but also to other experts and practitioners in the field. Is the framework presenting a logical theory that can be appreciated by scholars studying the subject matter from diverse perspectives?

It is important to remember that a conceptual framework is subject to change, and improvement as new information and perspectives are gathered. This is because the framework incorporates ideas and perspectives from various disciplines, and it should be relevant to all those fields of study. The goal is to keep updating and refining the framework

so that it continues to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in question.

3.2.1 Drafting the conceptual framework

The development of a comprehensive conceptual framework is essential for understanding the factors affecting new venture creation for refugee women. This framework encompasses several interconnected elements: demographics and human capital; social capital and networks; host country conditions; push and pull factors; opportunity structures; and government policies and regulations.

In the initial stages, these factors remain relatively stable, existing on the periphery of the liminal space where the refugee woman experiences *separation* and *identification* (*subject of change*). However, as she progresses into the transitional liminal space (*process of change*) with entrepreneurial intent, these factors become more dynamic and fluid. At this stage, power dynamics and implicit pressures become more explicit, directly influencing her entrepreneurial journey. Understanding this intricate interplay is crucial for comprehending both the challenges and opportunities refugee women encounter in new venture creation.

Following Bazeley's (2010; 2013) recommendation, this framework serves as a map for exploring and identifying factors that influence the Female Refugee Entrepreneur's journey. Initially drafted and tested during the pilot study, it ultimately functions as a scaffold for analysing the main study's data using Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA).

3.2.2 Mapping the Route

The route negotiation from refugee to entrepreneur through the liminal space is mapped out in the conceptual model and is explained in this section. The journey from being a refugee to becoming an entrepreneur is not merely a linear path but a multifaceted process that unfolds through the liminal space. Within this complex and unpredictable pathway, the

entrepreneurial mindset emerges as a pivotal influence, guiding and empowering the individual. Characterised by cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects, this mindset shapes the intricate interplay of decisions, actions, challenges, and adaptations. It's a continuous negotiation filled with uncertainty, potential growth, and inherent challenges of the liminal space. Far from a simple equation, the transition from refugee to entrepreneur requires a multifaceted perspective that transcends a simplified conceptual model. Recognising the nonlinear nature of this journey, the emphasis on the entrepreneurial mindset adds essential complexity, reflecting its critical role in shaping this process.

3.2.3 Change

Change is the rationale; it signifies progression and adaptation. The noun: change is used to describe the constant state of transition of the refugee woman. The prefixes of *subject*, *process*, and *agent* explain the agency she experiences in each of these states.

(arrows)

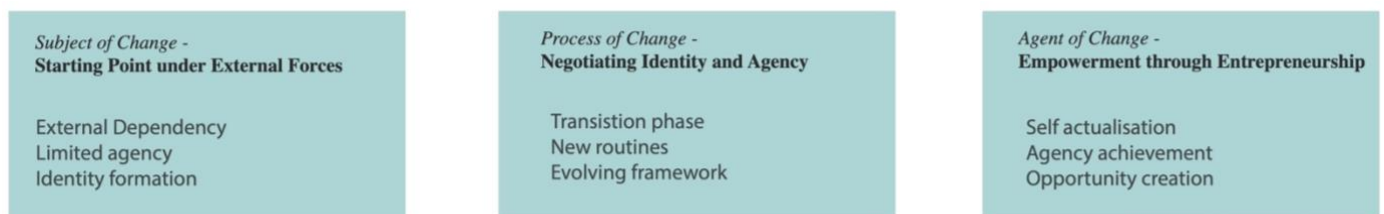


Figure 10. Phases of Entrepreneurial Agency Development in the Liminal Space (Author's own)

Subject of Change

For this study, the noun '*subject*' implies a dependent, subordinate to external decisions or circumstances; the refugee woman is that subject. Subject suggests she has no control or agency over her forced migration and ensuing settlement in the host country as a refugee. This period represents *separation* and *identification*. Bauman (2002) refers to refugees as sediments of other people's actions. From other people's stories, they derive their social characteristics, and their identity is composed.

Process of Change

From the subjugation phase, the refugee woman, through the entrepreneurial process, steps over the threshold into the liminal space. Once the refugee woman enters the liminal space, she embarks on a transition, an internalisation; this is her '*process*' of change.

The process of establishing new routines and general understandings can initially be unstable and subject to change. However, over time, these structures tend to become more fixed, forming a framework that defines the available choices and outlines the strategies for action. Essentially, what begins as a flexible and evolving process gradually solidifies into a more rigid and defined system, shaping how options and actions are perceived and pursued (Bauman, 2002).

Agent of Change

'*Agent of Change*' refers to the entrepreneur. The juncture when the refugee woman becomes an entrepreneur. Agier (2002) defines an agent of change as being an author of their life trajectories. Incorporation and satisfaction characterise this period of self-actualisation. Eringfield (2020) explains the change from dependency to self-reliance as altering the refugee's abstract figure. A displacement of their form from accepting an opportunity to initiating an opportunity through entrepreneurship.

3.2.4 Mapping the dimensions

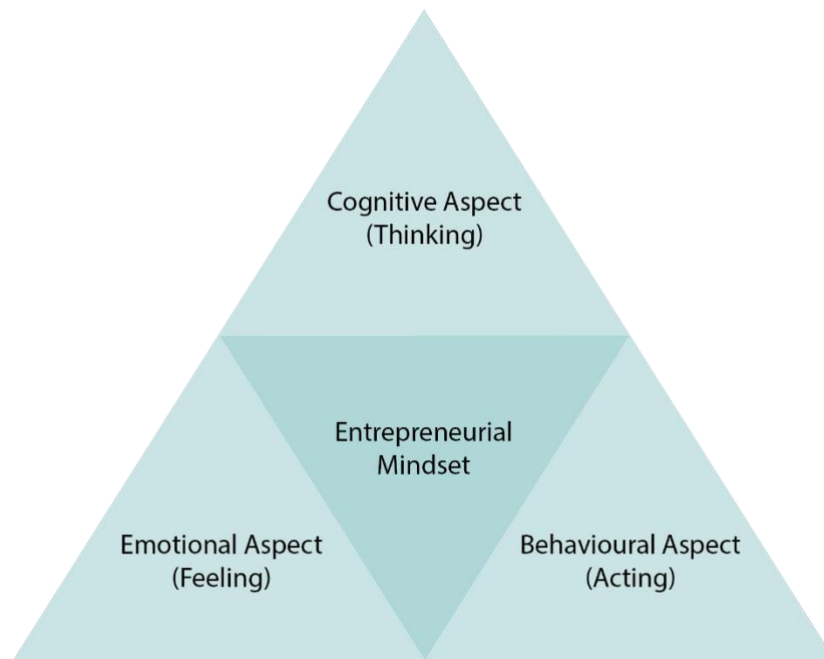


Figure 11. *The Triad of the Entrepreneurial Mindset adapted from Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch (2021)*

By overlaying these dimensions onto The Triad of the Entrepreneurial Mindset (Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch, 2021) as a conceptual device (see Figure 11), we can see how the cognitive facet of the entrepreneurial mindset intricately converges with the *subject of change*, manifesting through the recognition of the refugee woman's initial state of dependence. This cognitive dimension acknowledges the absence of agency over her circumstances and external determinants, consequently moulding her perception of her predicament. The cognitive framework serves as a lens through which her understanding is refracted, amplifying her realisation of the lack of control over her trajectory.

Paralleling this, the emotional resilience underscored by the Triad resonates with the process of change inherent in the refugee women's journey. The transition across the threshold into the liminal space is laden with emotional obstacles as she traverses uncharted territories of uncertainty. Her capacity to navigate emotional turmoil and adapt is paramount

at this juncture. The ability to manage the emotional strains accompanying this transformative phase becomes a linchpin, essential for her evolution within the dynamic landscape.

Simultaneously, the Triad's behavioural dimension seamlessly aligns with the concept of the agent of change. As the refugee woman assumes the mantle of an entrepreneur, her embodiment of the behavioural aspect becomes evident. Proactively initiating endeavours, cultivating networks, and immersing in entrepreneurial actions exemplify her agency within her entrepreneurial narrative. The behavioural spectrum represents the range of actions and strategies that reflect her progression and development.

The Triad of the Entrepreneurial Mindset, as a conceptual framework, integrates the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions that form the foundation of entrepreneurship. This framework aligns with the dimensions of change in the refugee context, highlighting the connection between these dimensions and the phases of *subject*, *process*, and *agent of change*.

1. The Cognitive Dimension coordinates with the *Subject of Change*, explaining the recognition of her initial dependency and the relinquishment of control.
2. The Emotional Dimension converges with the *Process of Change*, spotlighting the expedition through emotional turmoil as she grapples with the uncharted.
3. The Behavioural Dimension mirrors the *Agent of Change*, encapsulating the transformative journey where she metamorphoses into an entrepreneur, adapting her narrative through active endeavours.

The integration of these dimensions affords an enriched comprehension of the interplay between the Triad of the Entrepreneurial Mindset and the dynamic dimensions of change intrinsic to the female refugee's entrepreneurial journey (Figure 12).

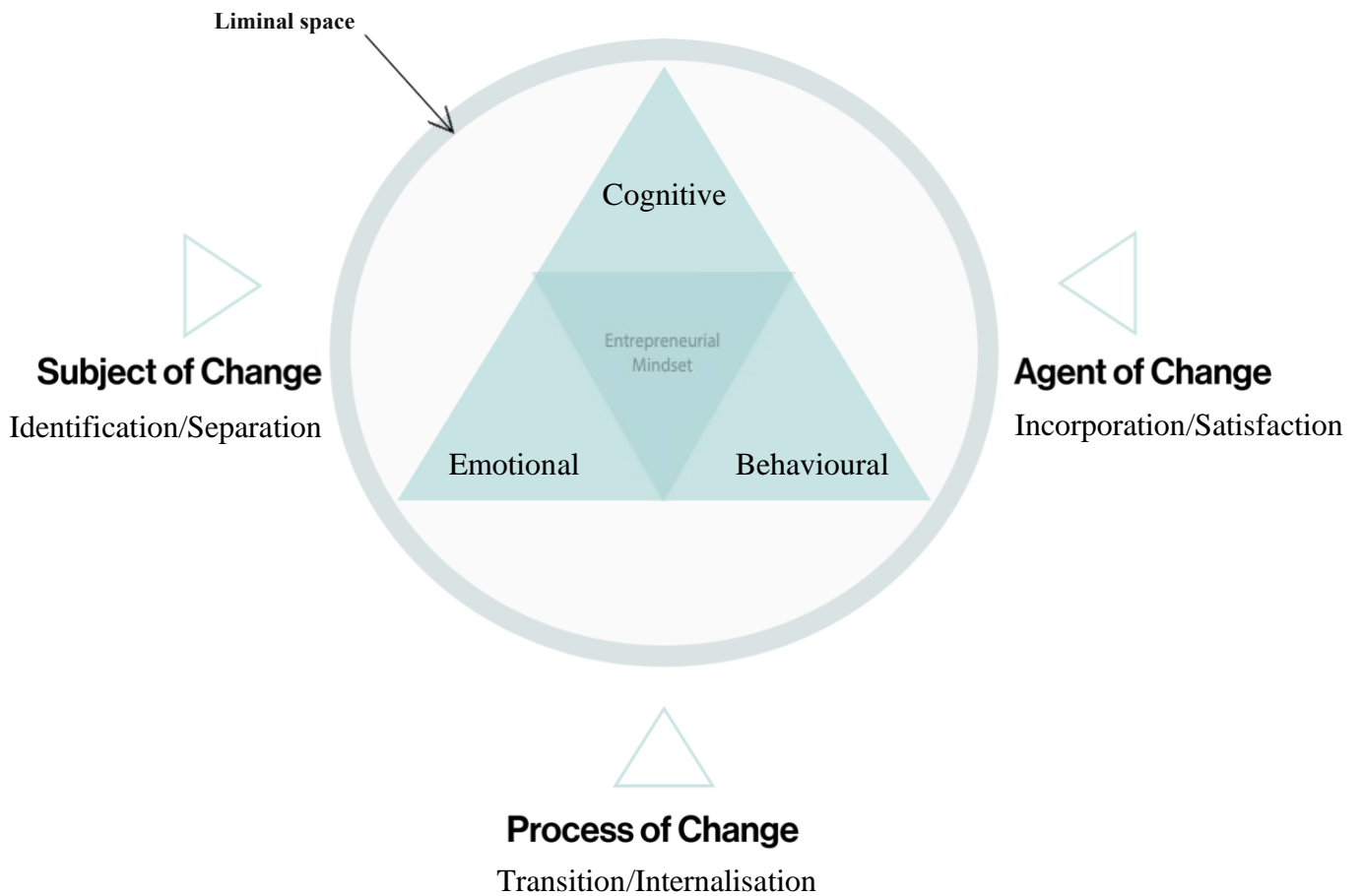


Figure 12. *Conceptual Integration: Entrepreneurial Mindset & Change in the Liminal Space* (Author's own)

This alignment between the entrepreneurial mindset dimensions and the change process provides a theoretical foundation for examining how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial opportunities. However, to fully understand this navigation, the unique context in which these changes occur must first be examined. The liminal space of new venture creation offers a crucial contextual setting for understanding the entrepreneurial journey of refugee women. This integration of liminal space as contextual setting and entrepreneurial mindset as conceptual device forms the foundation for understanding how refugee women navigate their entrepreneurial paths, as explored in the forthcoming sections. The unique challenges and opportunities inherent within the liminal experience, and how it shapes the entrepreneurial pursuits of refugee women, will then be unpacked.

3.3 Displacement and Liminality: A Conceptual Bridge

The intersection of displacement and liminality creates a unique context for entrepreneurial activity. As refugees move from emergency aid to self-reliance, the liminal space becomes not just a site of transition but one of possibility and redefinition. The entrepreneurial mindset emerges as a critical tool for navigating this space, helping refugee women transform their displacement experience into entrepreneurial opportunity. This connection between displacement, liminality, and entrepreneurship forms the foundation for understanding how refugee women navigate their entrepreneurial journeys

3.3.1 The Global Context of Displacement

Forced displacement is one of the most challenging matters facing the global community today. An increasing number of refugees face an extended exilic stay which, according to Milner (2014), is currently averaged at 26 years. Easton Calabria and Omata (2018) explain that humanitarian aid, such as the emergency provision of food, shelter and medicine, play a limited role in the lives of long-stay refugees, especially in the host country setting. The focus is instead on strengthening the economic capabilities of refugees and ultimately promoting self-reliance.

Perez Murcia (2019) specifies the term displacement as a process of people migration essentially framed by the passage of conflict. Powell (2012) explains that displacement requires a starting and ending position, but individuals inevitably locate themselves in the 'third space' as they cannot situate themselves entirely at the end. She elaborates that displacement is not a linear journey nor a logical link of identities. But instead, a rambling passage with no predetermined direction. This insight into displacement is in stark contrast to the very early, rigid models of displacement by Peterson (1958). Kunz (1973) criticised Peterson's Origin/Destination model as it made assumptions that migratory actions were single point trajectories.

3.3.2 The Liminal Space of Displacement

Powell (2012, pp. 301) further advises to think of displacement, ‘not in terms of moving from one place to another, which suggests a journey that ends, but instead as a transition; displacement then becomes a temporal space where identities are in metonymic relation to one another’.

In the opinion of Kalua (2009), the limen or liminal space becomes a kind of displacement suggesting liminality is an anti-structural concept. The concept of liminality suggests that it exists between structure and antistructure. This state is characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty, and it is in this space where individuals are freed from the constraints of societal norms and expectations. In this sense, liminality can be seen as antistructure, as it allows for the deconstruction of previously established structures and provides a space for the creation of new meaning. This displacement from established norms and expectations allows for new possibilities and potential for change, which can be particularly valuable for marginalised groups such as refugee women.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the liminal space, though ripe with opportunities for growth and new possibilities, may present significant challenges for individuals. It often exists outside traditional power structures and may lack the necessary resources and support systems for successful navigation and incorporation into new structures (Morris and Tucker, 2023). Despite these hurdles, the potential inherent in liminality is invaluable, particularly for those who inhabit this space.

3.3.3 Enterprise in Liminality

A key resource for managing the complexities and uncertainties of the liminal space is the entrepreneurial mindset. Unlike a static attribute, the entrepreneurial mindset is transitional, perpetually evolving, and adapting in response to an individual’s experiences and the ever-changing entrepreneurial environment (Kuratko, Fisher and Audretsch, 2021).

This dynamic mindset equips entrepreneurs with the capacity to navigate the uncertainties and challenges inherent in the liminal space, transforming these into catalysts for creativity, innovation, and change. Thus, even without traditional support structures, the transitional entrepreneurial mindset can be a critical tool for leveraging the potential inherent in the liminal space, thereby turning adversity into opportunity and fostering success amidst uncertainty (Morris and Tucker, 2023).

Kwong et al. (2019) argue that displacement creates a specific situation and imposes limitations and obstacles for individuals considering starting a business. In other words, the experience of displacement can make it difficult for individuals to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities and can act as a barrier to starting a business. This is because displacement often involves loss of resources, disruption of social networks, and changes to personal circumstances, making it challenging for individuals to access support, resources, and opportunities needed to start and sustain a business. Kwong et al.'s (2019) study highlights the importance of considering the impact of displacement on entrepreneurship and the need to address the limitations and obstacles displaced individuals who wish to become entrepreneurs face. They further suggest that alternative strategies to start-up in the host country may be necessary to overcome those rooted barriers.

According to O'Reilly (2018), uncertainty is a manifestation of the temporal experience of liminality. Arvanitis, Yelland and Kiprianos (2019) describe the refugee's liminal space as contradictory and ambiguous and as a space for productivity that can induce new opportunities, all of which designate the status of 'in-betweenness' and contextualise it in the light of refugee entrepreneurship.

Said (1975) distinguished between the terms, origin and beginning by stating that a beginning is referred to as an intentional act. In the context of refugee women entrepreneurs, Said's differentiation between origin and beginning can be understood through a Feminist

Poststructural lens. By critiquing the notion of a fixed origin or starting point, recognising that identities and experiences are constantly in flux and subject to power dynamics. In this liminal space, the role of the entrepreneurial mindset emerges as a pivotal factor to observe. The refugee women entrepreneurs' decision to start a business can be seen as a deliberate act of defiance against prescribed roles and expectations and an assertion of agency, rejecting the limitations placed on them by patriarchal and systemic power structures. This conscious beginning of their venture, infused with the entrepreneurial mindset, is not just a response to their circumstances but an active decision to reshape them. Through this process, they enter a liminal state not as passive victims but as active *agents of change*, reframing their narratives and creating new possibilities. Observing the transitional nature of the entrepreneurial mindset within this space can provide unique insights into how it helps navigate ambiguity, harness opportunities, and bring about change. Therefore, the displaced individual's entrepreneurial journey is not just about creating new businesses but also new identities and futures.

3.3.4 Liminality in Entrepreneurial Studies

The study of Jeremiah et al. (2020) notes that despite the transitory nature of business and entrepreneurship studies, there has been limited focus on liminality (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2021; Söderlund and Borg, 2018). As a result, there is a lack of knowledge about what occurs as prospective entrepreneurs become successful businesspeople, particularly the development of the entrepreneurial mindset during these transitional phases in the entrepreneurial journey. Jeremiah et al. (2020) further explain liminality as a concept that can be used to understand the disruptive effects of significant shifts, such as those in thinking, behaviour, and goals. It represents the transitional state between two states, conditions, or periods. It is the period between the past and the future. Similarly, Muhrs et al. (2019) consider the entrepreneurial life a permanent liminal state

where agency is dynamic, and liminality can be seen as both confounding and liberating. Hence, the concept of liminality is a pivotal concept in the situation-specific theory of female refugee entrepreneurship.

Several studies have delved into the concept of liminality, applying it to diverse contexts. For instance, Garcia-Lorenzo et al. (2018) focused on necessity entrepreneurs, while Loon and Vitale (2021) adopted a liminal perspective on integrating refugees into the workplace. In contrast, Öztürk's (2023) research on refugee women does utilise liminality as a theoretical underpinning. Still, its primary emphasis is on the role of cooperatives in aiding individuals through their indeterminate liminal phases. Thus, despite the broader discourse on liminality in various scenarios, there is still a notable gap in research specifically centred on refugee women entrepreneurs.

3.3.5 The impact of liminality on entrepreneurs

Liminality can impact entrepreneurs in various ways. On the one hand, the liminal state, which refers to the transitional phase between two established states, can offer opportunities for entrepreneurs to engage their entrepreneurial mindset by reflecting on their goals, reconsidering their business strategies, and embracing new ideas. This phase can also provide the necessary space for entrepreneurs to experiment and take risks (Daniel and Ellis-Chadwick, 2016; Prashantham and Floyd, 2019), allowing them to create something new and innovative (Kelly and McAdam, 2022). On the other hand, the liminal state can also present challenges for entrepreneurs. They may feel uncertain and unsure of the future during this phase, leading to feelings of stress and anxiety (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs may also face challenges regarding resource constraints, such as finances and time, as they navigate the liminal space. Additionally, the liminal state can bring up questions about identity and purpose, aspects intrinsically tied to the entrepreneurial mindset, which can be difficult for entrepreneurs to navigate (Muhr et al., 2019).

Prashantham (2019) points out that not all individuals are equally equipped to handle the challenges and difficulties of navigating the liminal process. This means that some individuals may struggle to deal effectively with the complexities and uncertainties associated with the transition period (Beech, 2011). This insight underscores the importance of the entrepreneurial mindset, which imbues individuals with the necessary cognitive and behavioural tools to manoeuvre through this transitional space successfully. It also means that some individuals may require additional resources and support to cultivate and maintain their entrepreneurial mindset while effectively transitioning and harnessing the potential of the liminal experience. Furthermore, not everyone can manage these difficulties while taking advantage of the creative potential of the liminal experience. In other words, the liminal experience can be challenging and complex, and not everyone can effectively navigate these challenges while tapping into their potential for creativity and innovation. This observation highlights the need to understand and support individuals during the liminal process. Some refugee women may require additional resources and support to transition and harness the potential of the liminal experience effectively (Öztürk, 2023).

Entrepreneurs face various challenges, including financial difficulties, the need to invest time and resources, and the toll on their mental and physical well-being. Many entrepreneurs find themselves in a state of uncertainty, feeling lost and confused (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000; Jeremiah, Suazo and Butson, 2020). However, these challenges can be a source of motivation and drive if managed properly. These typical financial, resource and energy demands faced by all entrepreneurs are amplified for refugee women entrepreneurs who face additional barriers and limitations due to their displacement, such as language barriers, lack of social networks, discrimination, and limited access to capital and other resources (Lee, Viller and Vyas, 2023; Luseno and Kolade, 2023) In addition, the feelings of loss and bewilderment can also be particularly acute for refugee women entrepreneurs who

may have experienced trauma, loss of home and community, and a loss of identity due to displacement.

Despite these challenges, the entrepreneurial journey can also provide refugee women with opportunities for agency and resilience, allowing them to take control of their lives and shape their futures. By managing the challenges and uncertainty of entrepreneurship, refugee women can transform the experience into a grounding and empowering one (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013).

3.3.6 Liminality and Poststructuralism

Neuman (2012) points out that poststructuralists do not reject the existence of structure but rather examine it in conjunction with the process. He suggests that a better way to understand the limitations of structure is to focus on the conceptualised process and its actors. In the context of this discussion, it would be instructive to consider the entrepreneurial mindset as an integral part of the actors participating in these processes. These refugee women, equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset, are not merely passive recipients of structural constraints. Instead, they actively engage with, navigate, and sometimes reshape the surrounding structures (Abdelzaher, Zalila and Ramadan, 2021). This entrepreneurial mindset, marked by proactivity, creativity, and a tolerance for ambiguity, becomes an essential tool in their arsenal, guiding their interactions with the structure and their path through the process. It is, therefore, pivotal to understand the nuances of the entrepreneurial mindset, as it shapes the actions and experiences of these women refugees within the structural and procedural landscape (Jiang et al., 2021).

By doing so, it becomes possible to shed light on the flaws within the structure and understand how refugee women cope with liminal experiences in the spaces between categories established by others. In other words, Neuman (2012) advocates for an approach that looks at the dynamic interplay between structure and process and how entrepreneurs

navigate and engage with the liminal experiences that arise from structure limitations. This focus on process and the significance of liminality highlights the potential to challenge the dominant. This shift in focus towards liminality as a sensitising concept can guide the direction of study towards marginalised agents, thereby helping to shed light on the challenges faced by these communities and providing a deeper understanding of their experiences. Turner (1969) believed liminal groups possess *ante-structural* qualities; Kalua (2009) further elaborated that liminality, in fact, transcends structure. By considering the refugee woman as suspended or even trapped between two sets of role expectations being that of refugee and entrepreneur, Neuman (2012) further suggests this position can result in apathy or lack of progress.

Neuman's (2012) emphasis on not just understanding the structure but the associated processes and actors is indeed pivotal, especially when discussing groups such as refugee women, who often inhabit these liminal spaces both socially and economically. Despite the theoretical richness of this perspective, there is a gap in empirical studies that deeply delve into the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women through the lens of liminality.

Given the challenges faced by refugee women (such as displacement, navigating new socio-cultural terrains, managing familial responsibilities, and often facing economic hardships), it is crucial that the academia ventures into understanding their lived experiences in entrepreneurial settings. By doing so, it can shed light on the mechanisms by which these women navigate, adapt, and potentially transform their liminal states, informed by an entrepreneurial mindset.

In this context, feminist poststructuralism emerges as an instrumental lens. First, Feminist Poststructuralism concerns how power and knowledge are constructed and maintained through social norms, practices, and institutions (Ahl, 2002; Calás, et al., 2009; Frost and Elichaooff, 2014; Kimbu et al., 2021). Refugee women, by their experiences in

liminal spaces, challenge these norms and institutions, making them prime targets for investigation using feminist poststructuralism. Second, feminist poststructuralism emphasises the role of subjectivity, agency, and resistance in shaping power relationships (Weedon, 2006; Baxter, 2008; Gavey, 2013, Weedon and Hallak, 2021; Serrano-Pascual and Carretero-García, 2022; Kelly, 2023) This allows for exploring how refugee women navigate and respond to their experiences in liminal spaces and how these responses are influenced by and shape power dynamics.

Finally, feminist poststructuralism is a critical approach that values the experiences of marginalised groups and seeks to challenge dominant power structures (Frost and Elichaooff, 2014). This aligns well with studying refugee women in liminal spaces, which aims to understand how these women cope with experiences that challenge prevailing norms and power structures. Of particular interest here is the interplay of the entrepreneurial mindset within this feminist poststructuralist framework. This mindset, encapsulating aspects such as perseverance, adaptability, and creative problem-solving, can be seen as a form of resistance and self-efficacy that enables these women to navigate through and possibly reconfigure the existing power structures (Borchers and Park, 2018; Obschonka and Hahn, 2018; Jiang et al., 2021). The focus on power, subjectivity, and resistance in feminist poststructuralism, coupled with an understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset of these women, makes it a particularly apt approach for studying refugee women in liminal spaces. This dual focus can contribute to a more layered understanding of how these women utilise their entrepreneurial mindset to negotiate their positions within these complex, often contradictory spaces.

3.3.7 The potential benefits and challenges of the liminal space as a contextual setting for entrepreneurs

Liminality, a state of transition, deeply influences the entrepreneurial journey. This threshold between two distinct states brings with it both ambiguity and uncertainty.

Entrepreneurs, particularly those equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset, face a duality in this liminal state. On the one side, they confront financial burdens, resource investments, emotional strains, and feelings of confusion. Yet, the transitional state also presents opportunities for innovation, as highlighted by McCabe and Briody (2016), allowing for introspection, goal reshaping, and refining business concepts. The very act of being ‘betwixt and between’ can ground entrepreneurs, fuelling their sense of purpose and motivation as they navigate their business ventures.

However, it is not just a theoretical idea; its implications are felt tangibly by specific groups. Consider refugee women entrepreneurs. The liminal space they navigate allows them to challenge societal norms, reconstruct their identities, and envision new possibilities. Such transitions can empower them to overcome traditional obstacles like gender-based violence and discrimination, as highlighted by Alkhaled and Sasaki (2022). Yet, this very liminality can simultaneously heighten their vulnerability. Limited access to resources, networks, and support systems, as indicated by Adeeko and Treanor (2022), can limit their entrepreneurial aspirations, making them susceptible to exploitation and abuse. The precarious nature of starting a business, intensified by their refugee status, means they grapple with amplified uncertainty, risk, and instability. Their unique experiences and intersecting challenges necessitate an in-depth understanding when analysing their entrepreneurial journeys.

Developing entrepreneurial competence, Kubberød, Fosstenløykken and Erstad (2018) argue, is a complex transformative process. Centring the refugee woman in the liminal space and using this as a lens to examine her entrepreneurial endeavours may provide insight into how refugee women transverse the liminal passage transforming through fluid dimensions from a *subject of change*, via a *process of change* to emerge as an *agent of change*. The pivotal role of the entrepreneurial mindset, embracing attributes such as innovation, resilience, and calculated risk-taking, is integral to this transformative journey.

Refugee women are, in the words of Martin (2004, pp. 13) as cited by Koyama (2014, pp.1), 'both agents of change and sources of continuity and tradition'. Arvantis, Yelland, and Kiprianos (2019) assert that the liminal state's ambiguous and constrictive nature means that refugees have to mediate themselves in an uncertain space that typifies their host country. In addition, liminality is a contextual position. In other words, an actor that is positioned as a liminal within a particular discourse is not necessarily a liminal in the context of other discourses (Rumelili, 2012).

Rumelili (2012) invites scholars to consider the construction of liminal spaces by political discourses, the positioning of certain actors within these spaces, and how the liminaries themselves practice what's liminal. Ghorashi et al. (2018) explain that the social situation in which refugees operate is constantly being challenged and contested between stability and uncertainty, where society tries to categorise and stabilise their uncertain experiences into pre-existing identity labels, yet the experiences of these female refugees fuelled by their entrepreneurial mindset, persistently challenge and disrupt those labels.

Liminal beings are perceived as threatening because they obscure the lines between established categories and challenge social norms (Schöpke-Gonzalez, Thomer and Conway, 2020). Liminality theory highlights the heightened level of awareness and effort required to make sense of these entities and the differences in how individuals cope with them (Kelly and McAdam, 2022)

One of the fundamental critiques of this idea is the assumption that entrepreneurship automatically offers female refugees' agency and a means of negotiating their identities (Astamirov, 2020; Adeeko and Treanor, 2022). While entrepreneurship can provide opportunities for agency and identity negotiation, it also operates within systems of power and privilege, and not all female refugees have equal access to these opportunities (Mehtap and Al-Saidi, 2019; Huq and Venugopal, 2021)

Transitioning into the subsequent section, the focus broadens to encompass the structural forces intersecting and interacting with the liminal space. While fostering a fertile ground for entrepreneurial ventures, liminality grapples simultaneously with the realities of existing societal, economic, and political structures. These structural forces act as enablers and constraints, exerting direct influence on how female refugee entrepreneurs navigate entrepreneurial journeys, shape their entrepreneurial competencies and mindsets, and ultimately redefine identities within their host societies. The interplay of these forces with the liminal space and the ensuing implications for female refugee entrepreneurship forms the crux of the forthcoming discussion.

3.4 Structural Forces

The experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs can be understood as being situated within an *antistructural* liminal space. This space is neither entirely within the dominant structure of the host society nor fully within the traditional structure of their own society. The concept of entering the liminal space to become economically self-reliant and empowered as an economic agent is anticipated. This transitional phase is envisioned as an opportunity for refugee women to shift from being *subjects of change* to becoming *agents of change* through a transformative process.

Villares-Varela, Ram and Jones (2022) argue that structural barriers drive the formation of aspirations to become entrepreneurs while at the same time limiting their capabilities to do so. These external structural forces can significantly impact the liminal space, turning it into a protracted waiting area. These prevailing structural forces could obstruct intended economic empowerment, leaving these refugee women stuck in prolonged limbo.

Charrad (2010) advises that women's agency should not be perceived in isolation from established gender hierarchies and institutional contexts. Instead, it must be understood

within the framework of structural constraints, situational conditions, and interactional dynamics. These structural constraints include systemic discrimination, lack of access to finance and business networks, and limited legal and regulatory frameworks that support entrepreneurship (Naguib, 2022). Moreover, refugee women may face additional challenges due to gender-based discrimination and the intersectional effects of other identities such as race, ethnicity, and religion. The fact that refugee women entrepreneurs cannot exit this liminal space is particularly concerning, as entrepreneurship is often presented as a means of achieving economic self-reliance and social mobility. Should this liminal phase persist suggests that deeper structural issues need to be addressed to create a more equitable and inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Addressing the underlying structural forces that could prevent refugee women from achieving economic self-reliance is essential to create a more empowering and supportive entrepreneurship ecosystem (Fong et al., 2007; Skran and Easton Calabria, 2020; Huq and Venugopal, 2021). This requires a panoramic approach considering refugee women entrepreneurs' complex and intersectional experiences and providing resources and support tailored to their unique needs and circumstances. Additionally, it is necessary to challenge and transform the dominant social and economic structures that perpetuate inequality and exclusion (Dykstra-DeVette, 2018). By establishing unrealistic expectations that are nearly impossible to achieve, structural forces may contribute to the entrapment of the refugee woman with entrepreneurial intent in the liminal space.

The socius, including the host country's environment, push and pull factors, opportunity structures, and government policies, all play pivotal roles in shaping the experiences of these entrepreneurs and must be taken into account in efforts to facilitate their economic self-reliance and agency.

3.5 The Socius

Deleuze's (1992) socius refers to the social and economic structures that shape individual and collective action within a society. These structures can create barriers and limit opportunities for marginalised groups such as refugee women. In the host country, push and pull factors can impact the socius and shape the environment where refugee women entrepreneurs operate. In addition, opportunity structures and government policies can either facilitate or hinder their entrepreneurship journey, impacting their ability to achieve economic independence and self-reliance. Therefore, understanding the socius and its impact on refugee women entrepreneurs is not merely a theoretical concern but a practical necessity crucial for developing effective support mechanisms and policies that challenge existing power structures and enable marginalised groups to access opportunities and resources. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, an exploration in detail will be presented on how various factors within the socius either facilitate or hinder different aspects of refugee women's experiences.

3.6.1 Host Country

Turner (2010), as cited by Kwong et al. (2019), suggested that a crucial hindrance in the start-up efforts appeared to result from poor access to physical resources and marginalisation within the host's enterprise ecosystem. Furthermore, the world's refugees cannot fully exercise their right to work due to restrictive host governments, which are reluctant to allow refugees to enter labour markets because they fear that refugees will take away jobs available to citizens. Despite this, the Centre for Entrepreneurship (2015; 2019) highlights that refugees were more likely to start a business in the UK than UK-born citizens and that immigrants, including refugees, were responsible for 24% of all new business creations in the UK.

Many refugees may have transferable skills and experiences from their home countries to the host country, which can help them start a business in a field they are familiar with (Embriricos, 2020; Yeshe, Harima and Freiling, 2022). Along with this, acquiring cultural knowledge is an essential aspect of human capital for refugee entrepreneurs. The understanding of their host country's customs, norms and values can help them navigate the business environment and build relationships. Due to their experiences of displacement and trauma, some refugee entrepreneurs have developed the ability to cope with uncertainty, adapt to new situations and persist in the face of a challenge (Baranik, Hurst and Eby, 2018; Harima, Freudenberg and Halberstadt, 2019; Harima et al., 2021). Hence, resilience and adaptability can be crucial human capital for refugee entrepreneurs.

In the context of resettlement and integration into host societies, refugees are often characterised as disadvantaged groups. However, Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) notice an indirect shift in the perception of refugees as vulnerable victims to 'responsible economic market actors' and ask whether the current perception of self-reliance based on neoliberal principles is feasible for refugees' economic empowerment and subsequent attainment of self-reliance through entrepreneurship?

The United Kingdom is home to a diverse enterprise ecosystem that offers entrepreneurs various resources and support systems. However, for refugee women entrepreneurs, accessing these resources and support systems can be challenging due to multiple factors, including social and economic barriers, language barriers, and discrimination. In recent years, several initiatives in the UK have been aimed at supporting refugee entrepreneurs, such as training programs, networking opportunities, and funding schemes (Chliova, Farny, and Salmivaara, 2018; Osman, 2020). These initiatives are designed to address the specific challenges faced by refugee entrepreneurs, including the lack of access to finance and business expertise. However, despite the availability of these

initiatives, refugee women entrepreneurs still face significant obstacles in accessing resources and support. For example, many of these initiatives require a high level of English proficiency, which can be a considerable barrier for refugee women who may not have had access to language training or education.

Additionally, cultural differences and biases can also impact the access of refugee women entrepreneurs to resources and support (Adeeko, 2022; Hartmann and Philipp, 2022; Street, Ng and Al-Dajani). For instance, some may feel uncomfortable seeking support from institutions and organisations due to cultural norms or stigmatisation of seeking help. To fully comprehend the challenges refugee women entrepreneurs face in their host country, it is essential to understand how push and pull factors, including those specific to gender, influence their economic choices and opportunities within the given context.

3.6.2 Push and Pull Factors

Push factors refer to the factors that drive refugees to leave their home countries and seek asylum elsewhere (Kang, 2021). These include political instability, war, persecution, or economic hardship. For refugees, push factors can make finding stable employment and living in their host countries challenging. Push elements within the host country; include limited access to work and social services (Potoky and Naseh, 2020), housing, healthcare and education challenges (Kaur et al, 2021) as well as difficulty with the language or culture (Walden et al, 2017). Even when refugees have access to resources and support services, their challenges with language and cultural barriers limit their abilities to navigate within the host country.

Additionally, it is imperative to acknowledge the contextual variability of push and pull factors across different host countries. This recognition highlights the necessity of embracing diverse experiences within the research on female refugee entrepreneurs. Such contextual variation aligns seamlessly with the notion of navigating the liminal space,

wherein the specific circumstances and opportunities available in distinct host countries can significantly impact the entrepreneurial journey. In essence, the discussion of push and pull factors within the context of refugee entrepreneurship not only provides valuable insights but also underscores the intricate interplay of external factors, agency, and contextual nuances that collectively mould the transformative path of female refugee entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, pull factors refer to the factors that attract refugees to a particular host country or region. These include access to resources, support services, and opportunities for employment and education. For refugees, pull factors can make a host country a more attractive destination and make entrepreneurship a viable option. When it comes to refugee entrepreneurship, some of the push factors include a lack of opportunities in the host country. Forced displacement could have disrupted access to education and skills training, which may make it difficult to find employment in the host country. Some of the pull factors are access to resources and support services. For example, in some host countries, refugees may have access to resources to help them start and grow a business. These may include business training and education, access to credit and networking opportunities (Chliova, Farny and Salmivaara, 2018; Rashid, 2022).

Desai, Naudé and Stel (2020) point out that since refugees are not in the first-place traversing borders for economic reasons, their enforced movement can play a meaningful role in their choice of economic activity. But these ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors are not limited to the diaspora experience or motivation but can manifest as a sort of obligation in the host country setting. Power dynamics can significantly impact the push and pull factors affecting refugee women’s entrepreneurship. Dominant groups (majority population, government, established institutions, socio-economic elites) can control the distribution of resources, such as funding, training, and mentorship, necessary for starting and growing a business, limiting opportunities for refugee women.

Bikorimana and Nziku (2023) found that necessity entrepreneurs are pushed to start a new venture because of a lack of employment in the labour market and have to establish a business in order to survive. However, negative stereotypes and prejudice against refugee women can create additional barriers, such as difficulties accessing capital or customers and a lack of support from peers and mentors (Gower et al., 2022). Laws and regulations that are not gender-sensitive or do not consider refugee women's experiences can also create barriers (Bloch et al., 2000; Spehar, 2021; Kainat et al., 2022). Social norms and expectations around gender roles and responsibilities can also shape opportunities and expectations for refugee women in the host country; for instance, cultural norms around women's caregiving responsibilities may limit their ability to devote time and energy to their businesses (Nawyn, 2010; Deng and Marlow, 2012; O'Neil et al. 2016; Yalim and Critelli, 2023). Understanding the role of power dynamics in shaping these factors is crucial to address the challenges refugee women face.

Some host countries may have a higher demand for entrepreneurs, making it attractive for refugees to start their businesses. According to Noorbakhsh and Teixeira (2023), certain host countries exhibit a strong correlation between market gaps and entrepreneurial tendencies among refugees. Their study on the European refugee influx found that cities with a lack of specific trades or services experienced a surge in refugee-led businesses that filled these gaps. Bahar, Dooley, and Huang (2018) have shown that economic incentives can significantly bolster refugee entrepreneurship. Their work on Syrian refugees in Turkey indicated that those with access to start-up grants were 50% more likely to establish a business than those without. Host countries may have a positive attitude to entrepreneurship, recognise the skills and capabilities of refugees and make it easier for them to start their businesses. As mentioned, Adsera and Pytilova (2016) assert that refugees fare better in entrepreneurial endeavours in countries with linguistic and cultural ties to their home nations.

For instance, Afghan refugees in Iran or Pakistan often benefit from the shared linguistic heritage, making business transactions and networking more accessible.

Push and pull factors can vary depending on the context of the host country (Kassab et al., 2022). Mayblin (2019) emphasises that the UK policy severely limits refugees' access to the labour market, justified by the economic pull factor, which suggests that refugees are primarily motivated by economic opportunities and will exploit the social welfare system in the host country. This narrative simplifies the complex reasons why people seek asylum and reduces it to a single factor, economic opportunity. Mayblin (2019) further argues that this narrative is not inevitable or natural but results from a particular way of viewing the world embedded in institutions and moral values. This perspective distances those in positions of power from asylum seekers' experiences and legitimises policies restricting their economic and social rights.

3.6.3 Opportunity Structures

Entrepreneurial opportunity structures refer to external conditions and circumstances that create opportunities for entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. These structures include market demand, government regulations, access to capital and availability of resources and infrastructure. They can also have broader societal factors, such as cultural attitudes towards entrepreneurship and role models. These factors help entrepreneurs identify potential opportunities and make strategic business decisions.

Entrepreneurship scholars (Shane and Venkataraman 2000; Steyaert and Katz 2004, Verduijn and Essers, 2013) stress that entrepreneurial opportunities come in various forms and do not necessarily equate with neoliberalist views. The fluidity and non-uniformity of opportunity structures in specific national contexts can sometimes exacerbate challenges for vulnerable groups like refugees (Kacar, Ozaduijn and Essers, 2021). Refugee entrepreneurs may struggle to find the capital with which to start up small businesses, as well as markets in

which to sell their goods and services. Their journey highlights the disparities inherent in the entrepreneurial landscape, underscoring the need to understand and address these differential structures for a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Given these constraints, the promotion of self-reliance based on neoliberal tenets such as minimal state intervention, unregulated markets and individualism as a viable solution for refugees deserves scrutiny (Easton-Calabria and Omata, 2018).

Organisations that provide microfinance and business startup loans can help refugee women entrepreneurs access the capital they need to start and grow their businesses (Nourse, 2003; Kachkar et al., 2016; Osman, 2020). Incubators and accelerators can provide refugee women entrepreneurs with resources, mentorship and networking opportunities, vocational training and translation services to improve their language skills and better communicate with potential customers and partners (OECD, 2019; Meister, 2019; Jürgens et al., 2022). Business development services, such as legal assistance and market research, can assist refugee women in starting and running a business. (Hailey, 1995; Fong et al., 2007; Wickramasinghe et al., 2020). Networking opportunities such as business events and mentorship programmes can help refugee women connect with potential customers, mentors and partners (Van Kooy, 2016; Solano et al., 2019; Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022; Gower, 2022). Online platforms like e-commerce can help refugee women reach a broader market and connect with customers and partners (Huang et al., 2022).

Finally, support from government and non-profit organisations to help refugee women overcome barriers and access opportunities to create new ventures. The UK government's Start-Up Loan Scheme provides loans and mentoring to entrepreneurs, including refugees starting a new venture (Cowling and Dvouletý, 2022). The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network TERN is a social enterprise. Through various programmes and initiatives, TERN provides refugee entrepreneurs access to business training, mentoring, networking opportunities, and

financial support. By equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge, TERN aims to create a conducive environment for refugee entrepreneurs to thrive and contribute to the economic development of their host communities (The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network, 2023).

Segueing into the broader canvas of entrepreneurial studies, Audretsch and Fiedler (2023) highlight the intricate dynamics of power in shaping entrepreneurial opportunities. They depict a world where dominant stakeholders, be it governments or legacy firms, exert their influence, and yet, individual entrepreneurs, including refugee women, retain the capacity to challenge and navigate these power structures.

The mindset with which refugee women entrepreneurs in the UK approach their ventures is deeply influenced by the lens of power dynamics. Beyond the tangible barriers, they navigate a web of societal constructs and dominant narratives that influence their beliefs, attitudes, and self-perceptions. These power-infused challenges are not just external hurdles; they also shape the internal mental frameworks of these entrepreneurs. Such challenges are not merely circumstantial but are systematically structured by prevailing societal norms.

3.6.4 Government Policy

The European Union's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan (European Economic and Social Committee, 2020) was initiated to incentivise start-up potential by identifying best practices to promote and support entrepreneurship and fund pilot projects for their dissemination. The action plan specifically states Pillar 1 of the action plan as Entrepreneurial education and training to support growth and business creation. But as Jordan (2018) highlights, these EU goals often conflict with what happens at national and local levels, particularly with migrants and refugees. Regarding political considerations, the current promotion of self-reliance for refugees is anything but innocent. The neoliberal movement has significantly impacted contemporary understandings of refugees and the need to

empower them. Host country government policies and practices have been significantly influenced by neoliberal thinking on this matter and Western restrictionism to those seeking asylum (Loescher, 2001).

The design of national policies to support the entrepreneurial efforts of refugees has become a significant issue in many countries. Several nations have adopted tailored policies and initiatives to support the entrepreneurial endeavours of refugees. In Germany, given the notable influx of refugees from regions like Syria, the government established a mentoring program that pairs local experienced entrepreneurs with refugee newcomers, providing them with resources, guidance, and networking opportunities (Ogundele and Oni, 2017). Canada has a private sponsorship program which allows individuals and groups to sponsor refugees to come to Canada, further bolsters entrepreneurial spirits by offering micro-loans, workshops, and mentorship through various organisations (Van Haren, 2021). In Australia, governmental support is evident in programs offering micro-financing solutions and business mentoring, enabling refugees and asylum seekers to actively contribute to the local economy (Osman, 2020). Sweden adopts an integrative approach by emphasising quick employment opportunities for refugees, ensuring a seamless assimilation of their diverse skills into the workforce (Neginskiy, 2022). On the other hand, Jordan, a significant host for Syrian refugees, collaborates with international entities to create special economic zones, allowing refugees to set up businesses, secure employment, and thereby foster an entrepreneurial spirit amidst prevailing challenges (Hofmann, 2020).

Cheung and Kwong (2017) caution a lack of understanding of the rules and regulations surrounding starting a business can pose difficulties for refugees, potentially hindering their success as entrepreneurs. This includes navigating the legal framework and accessing resources. Furthermore, the regulatory environment can vary between countries, making it challenging for refugees to adjust and succeed in their business ventures.

Improving their understanding of the institutional context through training and resources and implementing policies that support their integration into the local business environment could help mitigate these challenges. Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) highlight the lack of legal avenues to work as one of several reasons institutions cannot encourage self-reliance among refugees. This observation is linked to neoliberalism's political and economic influence, which has significantly impacted how the concept of refugee self-reliance is viewed and accepted today. The prevalence of neoliberal ideas has shaped and justified the current understanding of how refugees can become self-sufficient. The lack of legal pathways to work can be seen as a manifestation of these broader systemic issues. In other words, the restrictions on refugees' ability to find work can be seen as a result of larger political and economic forces that shape our understanding of what it means to be self-reliant and independent (Kassab et al., 2022). While these perspectives offer different views on the role of government regulatory regimes in shaping refugee entrepreneurship, they both underscore the need to understand the broader social and institutional contexts in which migrant entrepreneurs operate.

Deleuze's (1992) *socius* frames these structural forces related to refugee women entrepreneurs. It is evident that the host country, push and pull factors, opportunity structures, and government policies all shape the *socius* and impact the agency and subjectivity of refugee women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, by recognising and understanding the power dynamics within the *socius*, the barriers that hinder the actualisation of economic independence and self-reliance for refugee women entrepreneurs are identified. Overall, the *socius* provides a useful lens for analysing the various structural forces at play and the impact on the lives and experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs.

The *socius*, represents the complex network of social, economic, and political structures that influence individual and collective actions and experiences. This discussion

extends to the broader dynamics within the host country, where the interplay of these factors significantly shapes the entrepreneurial experiences of female refugees. This complexity is central to understanding the development of mindset across three key dimensions: the *subject of change*, the *process of change*, and the *agent of change*. Particularly, the ‘*agent of change*’ dimension emphasises the role of agency and empowerment in navigating the entrepreneurial landscape.

Recognising power dynamics, particularly in distributing resources such as funding, training, and mentorship. It resonates with the concept of agency within the ‘*agent of change*’ dimension, highlighting the importance of empowerment in the entrepreneurial journey of female refugees. Understanding these dynamics is essential to uncover the challenges and opportunities they encounter, providing a comprehensive perspective on the entrepreneurial endeavours of female refugees within the socius.

3.6 Individual factors

Entrepreneurial inclinations and trajectories are intricately moulded by individual determinants such as demographics, social and human capital, gender, class, ethnicity, and education. These determinants not only shape an individual’s entrepreneurial mindset but also influence their navigation through the liminal spaces of entrepreneurship, transitional phases marked by ambiguity and transformative potential. For instance, the literature suggests that gender may either encourage or constrain entrepreneurial aspirations (Díaz-García and Jiménez-Moreno, 2010; Obschonka and Hahn; 2018; Lazarczyk-Bilal and Glinka, 2020; Senthana et al., 2021; Huq and Venugopal, 2021, Welsh et al., 2022; Dagar, 2023).

Concurrently, elements such as class and ethnicity have multifaceted impacts, determining access to resources, networks, and even perceptions of entrepreneurial feasibility (Ram and Jones, 2008, Nayir, Eryilmaz and Ayci, 2023). Furthermore, education plays a dual role, offering both enhanced entrepreneurial preparedness and broader networks (Abebe,

2023; Nilsen, 2023; OECD, 2023). As entrepreneurs traverse the liminal spaces, these individual factors collectively dictate their perceptions, challenges, and opportunities, underscoring the deeply personal and transformative nature of the entrepreneurial journey.

3.7.1 Demographics

Demographic factors, including age, education, cultural norms, and language proficiency, influence the entrepreneurial mindset of female refugees, impacting their ability to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape effectively. These determinants shape their business strategies and affect their emotional resilience and decision-making processes.

In the cognitive dimension, educational background and language skills are paramount. A solid education equips female refugees with the necessary analytical skills for opportunity recognition and strategic business planning, as highlighted by de Lange (2021) and Zighan (2021). As Chliova, Farny, and Salmivaara (2018) discussed, language proficiency opens doors to essential networks and resources, enhancing their ability to analyse and engage with the market effectively.

Emotionally, demographic factors such as age and cultural background play a crucial role. Younger entrepreneurs may exhibit more adaptability and fresh perspectives, while those with more life experience might draw upon this for greater emotional resilience. Cultural norms can significantly influence how these women manage and channel their emotions in the face of entrepreneurial challenges, with some cultures providing stronger support systems.

Behaviourally, these demographic characteristics also influence the actions taken in pursuit of their entrepreneurial goals. Educational level can inform risk assessment and decision-making, leading to more strategic actions in business ventures. On the other hand, cultural norms may shape attitudes towards risk-taking and innovation, as seen in the work of Sandberg, Immonen, and Kok (2019), and Embiricos (2020).

These demographic factors are deeply intertwined with the unique challenges and opportunities female refugee entrepreneurs face. They shape their cognitive abilities in business and influence their emotional resilience and behavioural strategies. Recognising this interplay is crucial for providing support responsive to their diverse needs. Tailored resources and support systems must take into account these demographic influences to effectively aid female refugees in their entrepreneurial journey, as emphasised by Kaabel (2017), Van Hoof, Nyssen, and Kanobana (2020), and Abebe (2022).

3.7.2 Human Capital

Human capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals possess and can invest in to increase their productivity and earning potential. Human capital is a concept extensively recognised in entrepreneurship research, as underscored by meta-analytical studies (Dimov, 2017). Defined by Becker (1975) as encompassing the knowledge and skills, either broad or specific to a given task context, that individuals contribute to a task they undertake.

Fundamentally, human capital is anticipated to enhance task performance. In entrepreneurship, Ashourizadeh et al. (2014) underscore the significance of an entrepreneur's human capital as a pivotal determinant in comprehending entrepreneurial firms' performance. Specifically, there is an implicit understanding that education can bolster refugee women's capacity to seize entrepreneurial avenues. Reinforcing this notion, Kwong et al. (2019) posited that an entrepreneur's human capital, particularly post-displacement, is enriched with localised insights. A compelling finding from their study was that the underlying incentive for founding new ventures was often an aspiration to revert to their pre-displacement status.

From a cognitive mindset aspect, human capital, particularly education, plays a crucial role. It helps refugee women develop cognitive schemas for identifying opportunities and tackling challenges, as Kim (2022) noted. Their adaptability to new environments,

informed by their educational and experiential backgrounds, becomes a key cognitive asset in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Language proficiency, another facet of human capital, is vital for refugee entrepreneurs. It enables them to effectively communicate with clients, form strategic partnerships, and navigate complex legal and bureaucratic systems, as Çifçi and Atsiz (2021) point out. This proficiency not only enhances cognitive abilities like problem-solving and creative thinking, essential for understanding business strategies and market dynamics (Schuss, 2018) but also enriches their overall cognitive capacity for informed decision-making and strategic planning, as discussed by Gracia, Vázquez-Quesada, and Van de Werfhorst (2016).

Emotionally, language proficiency aids in reducing communication-related stress and anxiety, boosting self-esteem, and fostering a sense of belonging within the community (Sommer, 2020). This emotional resilience, bolstered by refugees' experiences, is crucial in coping with setbacks and maintaining focus on long-term goals, as Ameen and Cinkara (2018) observed.

From a behavioural perspective, language skills are critical for effective networking and customer engagement, as Kaptaner (2021) highlights. They enable refugees to participate in business ecosystems actively. The adaptive, innovative, and persistent behaviours that are part of refugees' human capital drive them to seek growth opportunities and adapt to changing market conditions, demonstrating the profound impact of human capital on their entrepreneurial mindset, as illustrated by Sarpong (2022).

3.7.3 Social Capital

Refugees face various challenges that leave them in particular need of social networks. Some of these challenges stem from the experience of asylum-seeking. These challenges include the separation from friends and family in their country of origin,

sometimes coupled with the trauma of witnessing the death of loved ones; the dispersal from any acquaintances they might have made in the UK upon applying for asylum; and the prolonged wait for a decision, during which their lives are essentially ‘on hold’. Additionally, they often confront the stigma of being perceived as ‘bogus’ by segments of the host country. This sense of isolation and feeling of being othered are intensified by experiences of harassment (Goodson and Phillimore, 2008).

Previous studies have emphasised the critical role of social capital in facilitating entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). While social capital is foundational to entrepreneurship, its true potential becomes evident when intertwined with the entrepreneurial mindset, which encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements. The cognitive dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset centres on the capacity to identify, analyse, and seize opportunities. It represents the analytical perspective through which entrepreneurs perceive the world, constantly engaging in scenario evaluation, outcome prediction, and strategic planning for business growth. In this context, social capital functions as a valuable knowledge reserve. The networks and relationships cultivated over time offer invaluable insights into market trends, as well as first-hand accounts of both successes and failures.

De Carolis and Saporito (2006) contend that both individual cognition and social capital are pivotal in comprehending entrepreneurial behaviour, a perspective aligned with a growing body of research highlighting the essential role of cognition in capitalising on entrepreneurial opportunities. Moreover, they underscore the significance of network relationships in stimulating and advancing novel ideas. Thus, social capital has the potential to shape an entrepreneur’s cognitive characteristics, consequently influencing individuals embarking on new entrepreneurial ventures (Cheng and Liao, 2020). It comprises

foundational elements such as trust, reputation, shared values and norms, and the relationships one cultivates.

Acting as a cornerstone of support, social capital offers individuals the reinforcement needed as they journey through entrepreneurship. The advantages it presents are manifold, from offering insights and resources to widening one's social network, a key element for business expansion. Whether it is the extensive connections encapsulated in network capital, or the critical insights provided by information capital, social capital plays a pivotal role. This network, strengthened by shared societal norms and trust capital, is more than just a conceptual framework. It equips entrepreneurs with the tangible tools required to break into new markets, secure essential funding, and tap into industry insights. Yet, a deficit in this capital can be a barrier to growth, leading to feelings of isolation and difficulties in forging vital business alliances (Hanson, 2009).

However, social capital's significance is not universal. Take, for instance, refugee entrepreneurs. These individuals encounter a unique set of challenges. A study by Mboko (2020) delved into the social capital dynamics of refugee entrepreneurs, with a focus on African refugees in the USA. The findings highlighted their predominant association with co-ethnic communities, while their interaction with established business support infrastructures was notably limited. A striking observation was their minimal connections with pivotal business figures like advisers and financiers, ties that are often foundational to conventional entrepreneurship.

Adding depth to this discourse is the gender dimension. Female refugee entrepreneurs grapple with a dual set of obstacles. Beyond navigating unfamiliar terrains both culturally and business-wise, they must also contend with the potential limitations of their social capital. Gender disparities might push them to the periphery, barring them from influential male dominated networks. In certain situations, rather than being an asset, social capital might

serve to further marginalise them, particularly if their accessible networks lack diversity (Bizri, 2017). Embedded discrimination within these networks can exacerbate this exclusion, restricting their access to crucial entrepreneurial tools and opportunities.

The emotional dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset explores the passion, resilience, and determination that propel entrepreneurs on their journey. Emotions are recognised as a pivotal force in entrepreneurship, serving as a wellspring of motivation while also carrying the potential to become stumbling blocks if not effectively managed. In this context, social capital serves as a valuable emotional buffer. Robust relationships and trust-based networks offer essential emotional support during the inevitable challenges encountered in entrepreneurial pursuits, providing not only encouragement but also empathy and, at times, mentorship (Kuratko, Fisher, and Audretsch, 2021). These connections to a supportive community can help alleviate the feelings of isolation that entrepreneurs often face and reinforce the emotional resilience necessary to navigate the turbulent path of entrepreneurship.

It is crucial to note that emotions can exert a direct and significant influence on other facets of the entrepreneurial mindset, impacting how entrepreneurs perceive and respond to various situations (Cardon et al., 2012; Morris et al., 2012). Therefore, there exists a reciprocal and self-reinforcing relationship among the different dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset (Shepherd et al., 2010). As highlighted by Williams, Huggins, and Thompson (2020), social capital supports entrepreneurs not only emotionally but also in practical terms, underscoring its multifaceted importance in fostering entrepreneurial success.

The behavioural dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset involves taking calculated actions to realise a vision. A strong foundation of social capital empowers entrepreneurs with the confidence and resources needed for effective execution. Networks provide resources, collaboration opportunities, and lessons from peers, aiding in decision-making. Networking,

as emphasised by Cui and Bell (2022), is crucial for individuals to connect with external stakeholders in the entrepreneurial context, underlining its importance in identifying opportunities.

3.7.4 Gender, Class, Ethnicity and Education

In Chapter 2, Romero and Valdez (2016) were cited highlighting the importance of considering the intersections of different social categories in analysing discourse and power in entrepreneurship. Similarly, Anthias and Pajnik (2014) stress the necessity of an intersectional approach to studying integration, examining how gender, faith, ethnicity, and class interact to shape opportunity structures and experiences. Cheung and Phillimore (2017) highlight the gendered and intersectional nature of the process in refugee entrepreneurship. These perspectives point to the patriarchal and sexist norms that constrain women's opportunities and self-expression, underscoring the need to analyse power dynamics and inequality within the broader social and institutional contexts where refugee women entrepreneurs operate.

Gender

Gender significantly influences the entrepreneurial mindset, impacting how women perceive and approach opportunities in entrepreneurship. Marlow and Dy (2018) emphasise the complexity in studying the influence of gender on entrepreneurial activity, urging a move away from oversimplified views of women entrepreneurs. This thorough understanding of gender's role is echoed by Dy and Marlow (2017) and Heilbrunn (2021), who delve into the intricate interplay of gender with other identity aspects.

Cognitively, the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, such as discrimination, bias, and limited access to funding, as highlighted by Balachandra et al. (2019), can shape their risk assessment and opportunity recognition. Societal expectations and stereotypes,

discussed by Martiarena (2022) and Ahl and Marlow (2019), influence women's cognitive approaches to entrepreneurship, potentially leading to a more cautious or conservative business strategy. Kanze et al. (2018) and Dean et al. (2019) further demonstrate the negative impact of perceived competence on women's business performance.

Emotionally, the entrepreneurial journey for women is often laden with additional emotional burdens due to societal roles and expectations. The lack of funding and resources (Balachandra et al., 2019) can lead to heightened stress and challenges in maintaining resilience and motivation. Martínez-Rodriquez et al. (2022) suggest mentoring and training can provide crucial emotional support and empowerment for women entrepreneurs.

Behaviourally, gender disparities in entrepreneurial propensity, as shown by Darnihamedani and Terjesen (2020) and Gimenez-Jimenez et al. (2022), indicate that women may exhibit different entrepreneurial behaviours than men. Yeröz (2019) highlights the impact of societal expectations and resource access on these behavioural differences. Mackenzie et al. (2019) suggest that recognising and supporting women's communal tendencies and prosocial motivations can lead to more successful entrepreneurial outcomes, highlighting the need for a gender-sensitive approach in fostering entrepreneurial behaviours.

Zisser et al. (2019) further affirm the significance of gender in determining an individual's likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurship. The differing attitudes towards entrepreneurship between men and women, as well as societal biases and challenges, underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding of how gender influences the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset.

Class

Class often receives less attention in identity discussions compared to gender or race but is equally influential. Gill (2015) notes that class shapes entrepreneurial identity and opportunities, with stereotypes and socio-economic divides influencing entrepreneurial

aspirations. Davis' (1983) seminal work explores in depth the intersection of race, gender, and class. Davis argues that the multiple dimensions of oppression women face are deeply interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation. This framework is especially relevant to the experiences of refugee women trying to become entrepreneurs.

Class, as a factor intertwined with race and gender, influences how refugee women cognitively perceive entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges. The awareness of class distinctions and their impact, as noted by Senthanar et al. (2021) and Change (2022), can affect their decision-making processes, strategic planning, and opportunity recognition. Women from different class backgrounds, influenced by their pre- and post-migration experiences, may approach entrepreneurship with varying perspectives and understandings of what is achievable or desirable.

Emotionally, class divisions can significantly impact the experiences of refugee women. The discrimination and exclusion faced by lower socio-economic groups, as highlighted by Knight (2016) and Erdirencelebi and Ertürk (2023), can lead to heightened feelings of marginalisation and stress. This emotional burden can affect their motivation and resilience, which are crucial for navigating the challenges of entrepreneurship.

Behaviourally, class distinctions influence refugee women's actions and strategies in their entrepreneurial endeavours. Limited access to financial resources, networks, and support systems for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Davies and Gannon, 2005; Wang, 2019; Khanin et al., 2022) can restrict their ability to take risks, seek funding, or expand their business networks. Conversely, women from higher socio-economic backgrounds within the refugee community might have more opportunities to leverage their status for entrepreneurial growth.

Understanding the intersection of class with gender and race is vital in comprehensively grasping the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women. As Yeröz (2019)

and Allsopp, Sigona, and Phillimore (2014) suggest, the fluidity and context-dependent nature of class within refugee communities mean that interventions and support systems must be adaptable and sensitive to these varying backgrounds and experiences. Acknowledging and addressing these complex intersections can lead to more effective and empowering entrepreneurial support for refugee women, recognising the unique challenges and strengths they bring to their entrepreneurial journeys.

Ethnicity

Mungai and Ogot (2012) and Alexander and Honig (2016) show that women from specific ethnic backgrounds are likelier to start and grow their businesses than others. One factor that influences this is culture (Busenitz and Lau, 1996). Certain cultures emphasise entrepreneurship and self-employment, encouraging women to own businesses. For example, Hanna (2022) reported that refugees are more likely to be entrepreneurs than native-born citizens due partly to cultural norms that value self-reliance and self-sufficiency. However, refugee women from specific ethnic backgrounds face more significant barriers to accessing resources and support necessary for starting and growing a business, which can influence entrepreneurial propensity. Refugee women from diverse ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately underrepresented among business owners (Ratten and Dana, 2019), potentially exposing them to discrimination when seeking access to credit and other forms of financing (Emanuel-Correia et al., 2022; Hagstrom and Pereira, 2021). This underrepresentation of ethnically diverse refugee women in entrepreneurship exacerbates challenges related to securing financial support, as ethnic biases or stereotypes can intersect with gender disparities, impacting their ability to access the necessary resources to start or expand their businesses (Dhinakaran, 2023).

Furthermore, there is evidence that certain ethnic groups face discrimination in the job market, which make entrepreneurship a more attractive option (Ahmad, 2020; Thijssen et al.,

2021; Lancee, 2021; Adamovic, 2022). Batainah et al. (2022) uncover that refugee women are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed than other immigrants, making entrepreneurship a viable alternative to other forms of employment. Additionally, there is evidence that certain ethnic groups have different motivations for starting a new venture (Kone et al., 2019). For example, refugee women entrepreneurs are more likely to start a business to support their families and communities, whilst host country women entrepreneurs are more likely to start a business to achieve personal and professional goals.

Moreover, the intersectionality of ethnicity and gender can play a role in shaping the entrepreneurial propensity of women. For example, Marlow and Al-Dajani (2017) claim refugee women face more barriers to starting and growing a business than host country women entrepreneurs due to the intersection of race and gender discrimination. Moreover, they found that intersectionality of ethnicity and gender can impact upon entrepreneurial potential.

Bauman's (2016) work highlights how ethnicity can shape these women's experiences and opportunities. According to Bauman, refugees are often seen as strangers who pose a threat to the dominant culture and are treated with suspicion and mistrust. This experience of being 'othered' can impact the ability of refugee women entrepreneurs to build relationships, access resources, and succeed in their businesses. Additionally, his analysis of the 'liquid modern' world and its impact on refugees can also be applied to the experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs. In this context, the fluid and uncertain nature of the global economy can exacerbate the challenges that refugee women face in establishing their businesses and make it more difficult for them to succeed. However, the same fluidity can also offer new opportunities for refugees to forge their own paths and create their own businesses, thereby challenging traditional norms and expectations.

Education

Education equips refugee women with critical knowledge and skills that are foundational for business success, fostering their ability to think critically and solve problems, key components in identifying and capitalising on entrepreneurial opportunities (Megersa, 2020; Desai et al., 2021). This enhanced cognitive capacity can level the playing field in competitive markets, helping to dismantle barriers linked to gender, class, ethnicity, and socio-economic status (Lazarczyk-Bilal and Glinka, 2020). Through education, refugee women can better understand and navigate the multifaceted process of new venture creation, increasing their strategic acumen and decision-making capabilities.

The impact of education extends beyond cognitive growth to influence the emotional aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset. By fostering confidence and resilience, education empowers refugee women to confront discrimination and other socio-cultural obstacles (Huq and Venugopal, 2021; Al-Dajani, 2019). It can reshape self-perceptions, encouraging women to challenge patriarchal norms and stereotypes, thereby enhancing their sense of self-efficacy and fostering empowerment (Russell, 2016; Afrouz, Crisp, and Taket, 2023).

On a behavioural level, education facilitates active participation in the economic sphere of host countries. It equips refugee women with the resources and social capital necessary to start and grow businesses, contributing not only to their personal and professional development but also to broader economic growth and gender equality initiatives. However, while education is a powerful tool, it is most effective when accompanied by an enabling environment that supports practical application through policies, mentorship, and community networks (Desai et al., 2021). Addressing these factors ensures that education translates into actionable outcomes, empowering refugee women to realise their entrepreneurial potential fully.

Building upon the foundational understanding of how gender, class, ethnicity, and education shape the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of entrepreneurship, it becomes essential to explore how these factors converge within the broader framework of the entrepreneurial mindset. This mindset, as outlined in Chapter 2's conceptual framework (see Figure 8), is critical for navigating the challenges and opportunities within the liminal space that refugee women face. Understanding the relationship between these individual factors and the entrepreneurial mindset offers insight into how these women navigate the phases of subject, process, and agent. The next section delves into this interplay, examining how internal characteristics and external socius elements interact to influence entrepreneurial growth.

3.7.5 Link between Individual Factors and Entrepreneurial Mindset

The entrepreneurial mindset is essential for navigating the liminal space, a setting defined by transition, ambiguity, and potential, as conceptualised in the framework outlined in Chapter 2 (see Figure 8). This conceptual framework emphasises the interaction between internal individual factors (e.g., demographics, human and social capital, gender, class, ethnicity, and education) and external socius elements (e.g., host country conditions, opportunity structures, and push/pull factors) within the liminal space. These interactions influence the progression through three key phases: *subject of change*, *process of change*, and *agent of change*.

Initially, in the *subject of change* phase, the individual, such as a refugee woman, finds herself in a state where external conditions, represented by socius factors in the conceptual model, dominate. This stage is characterised by dependency and limited control, shaped by structural barriers, socio-economic challenges, and external pressures, as highlighted by Ndlovu, Radebe, Xulu, and Mlambo (2023). The conceptual framework

positions this phase as a period when the entrepreneurial mindset starts to develop subtly, influenced by these external conditions and personal traits.

The *process of change* phase, aligning with the internalisation and reflection elements of the framework, involves cognitive and emotional reworking. This stage is marked by the individual's deeper engagement with their identity, capabilities, and aspirations in the context of entrepreneurship. Kuratko, Hornsby, and McKelvie (2023) emphasise that this phase represents a shift from passive reaction to active psychological engagement. Within the framework, this phase is supported by both internal individual factors and the dynamic interaction with external influences, facilitating resilience and strategic reorientation.

In the *agent of change* phase, the culmination of these interactions leads to proactive behaviour where the individual embodies the entrepreneurial mindset and takes deliberate actions. This phase, reflected in the behavioural aspect of the conceptual framework, demonstrates how internal strengths and external supports converge to empower the individual to engage in entrepreneurial activities. As noted by Gunther McGrath and MacMillan (2000), strategic thinking and adaptability are crucial in leveraging opportunities and overcoming uncertainties. McLartya, Hornsby, and Liguori (2023) further assert that despite continuous structural challenges, an internalised mindset equips the entrepreneur to navigate socio-political shifts effectively.

The conceptual framework from Chapter 2 illustrates how these phases, *subject*, *process*, and *agent of change*, are influenced by the integration of internal and external factors within the liminal space. This structured approach provides a comprehensive lens to understand the interplay between personal development and structural challenges.

Recognising these interconnected dynamics supports a deeper understanding of how refugee women navigate their entrepreneurial paths and sets a foundation for future research and strategies aimed at fostering resilience and entrepreneurship within displaced communities.

Chapter 3 Summary

This chapter examined how refugee women develop their entrepreneurial capacity within the contextual setting of a liminal space. Building upon Chapter 2's literature review, which introduced the concept of liminality, this chapter employs entrepreneurial mindset as a conceptual device to understand refugee women's experiences. Drawing from the opportunity school of entrepreneurship studies, this conceptual device shows how cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions interact through three distinct yet interconnected aspects: the *subject of change*, *process of change*, and *agent of change*. The chapter's theoretical contributions advance understanding of refugee women's entrepreneurial journey through several interconnected dimensions.

The chapter's contributions advanced understanding of refugee women's entrepreneurial journey through several interconnected dimensions. The development of a comprehensive conceptual framework mapped the complex interplay between socius factors, including host country conditions, push/pull factors, opportunity structures, and government policies, and individual factors encompassing demographics, human capital, social capital, gender, class, ethnicity, and education. Through applying the previously established conceptual devices within a Feminist Poststructuralist conceptual framework, the chapter demonstrated how refugee women navigated the liminal space. This approach enabled analysis of how refugee women's entrepreneurial development evolved as they transitioned from subjects through a process of change to agents of change within this liminal context.

First, the conceptualisation of the liminal space as a transformative environment shows how refugee women navigate their entrepreneurial path, shaped by both structural forces and individual factors. Second, the development of a comprehensive conceptual framework maps the complex interplay between socius factors, including host country conditions, push/pull factors, opportunity structures, and government policies, and individual

factors encompassing demographics, human capital, social capital, gender, class, ethnicity, and education. Third, the integration of the entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal context demonstrates its evolution across cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions as refugee women transition from *subjects* through a *process of change* to *agents of change*.

The intersection of displacement and liminality creates unique challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurial activity, as evidenced through the chapter's analysis. Particularly significant was the examination of how structural forces within the socius can either facilitate or hinder the entrepreneurial journey of refugee women, while individual factors shape their capacity to navigate these challenges. This dynamic interplay reveals the complexity of the entrepreneurial landscape these women must traverse.

Having established this theoretical foundation, the thesis now turns to the methodological framework that will guide the empirical investigation. Chapter 4 presents a detailed exposition of the research methodology, beginning with a restatement of the research question that drives this investigation. The chapter introduces a deconstructivist approach situated within a postmodernist paradigm, drawing from Feminist Poststructuralism and Derridean Deconstruction to investigate how refugee women entrepreneurs develop their entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal state.

This chosen methodological approach will be framed as a case study that uses ethnographic methods, providing the foundation for a complex exploration of refugee women's entrepreneurial mindset within a liminal space.

The chosen methodological approach takes the form of an ethno-case study, combining case study rigour with ethnographic sensitivity to context. This hybrid methodology provides a robust framework for investigating the multifaceted nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences, enabling deep exploration of lived experiences whilst analysing how structural forces and individual factors are navigated within the liminal

space. Furthermore, it facilitates investigation of the entrepreneurial mindset across the three dimensions identified, while clarifying how power dynamics and discourse shape the entrepreneurial journey.

This methodological framework harmonises with the theoretical foundations established in this chapter, providing sophisticated analytical tools to understand the transition of refugee women entrepreneurs from *subjects* to *agents of change* within the liminal space. The approach acknowledges the complexity of experiences while offering a systematic way to examine the relationship between individual agency and structural constraints in entrepreneurial activities. Through this carefully constructed methodology, the research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and empirical investigation of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences.

The intersection of displacement and liminality creates unique challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurial activity, as evidenced through the chapter's analysis. Particularly significant was the examination of how structural forces within the socius can either facilitate or hinder the entrepreneurial journey of refugee women, while individual factors shape their capacity to navigate these challenges. This dynamic interplay reveals the complexity of the entrepreneurial landscape these women must traverse.

In chapter 4, the methodology underpinning this research will be presented, reiterating the research question and offering a detailed explanation of the qualitative methods adopted. A deconstructivist approach within a postmodernist paradigm will be employed, drawing from Feminist Poststructuralism and Derridean Deconstruction to investigate how refugee women entrepreneurs develop their entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal state. This methodological approach will be framed as a case study that uses ethnographic methods, providing the foundation for a detailed exploration of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences in a complex social context.

The case study, employing ethnographic methods (ethno-case study), provides a robust framework for investigating the multifaceted nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences. This methodological approach enables deep exploration of their lived experiences, analysing how they navigate structural forces and individual factors within the liminal space. Furthermore, it facilitates investigation of their entrepreneurial mindset across the three dimensions identified, while clarifying how power dynamics and discourse shape their entrepreneurial journey.

This methodology is well-aligned with the contextual setting discussed in this chapter, providing appropriate analytical tools to understand how refugee women entrepreneurs transition from being *subjects* to *agents of change* within the liminal space. The approach considers the complexity of their experiences while offering a systematic way to examine the relationship between individual agency and structural constraints in their entrepreneurial activities.

Chapter 4. Methodology

This chapter is intentionally structured to mirror my own reflexive journey as a researcher, highlighting the iterative and dynamic nature of inquiry (Finlay, 2002; Pillow, 2015; Smith and Luke, 2024). The pilot study served as a pivotal event that deeply influenced my methodological, theoretical, and philosophical orientation, embodying the interplay between practice and theory (Pritchard and Whiting; 2012). Consequently, the chapter begins by outlining the research timeline and the pilot study's contributions, before presenting the philosophical foundations. This sequencing reflects how my thinking evolved: rather than imposing a preconceived theoretical approach at the outset, the pilot study's insights led me to critically re-examine and refine my methodological choices (Hudson, 2020; Kingsman and Davis, 2024), ultimately shaping the philosophical considerations that underpin the study.

By foregrounding the role of reflexivity in research design, this chapter demonstrates how lived engagement with participants, and the contextual richness of their experiences, informed the methodological and theoretical paths I eventually chose (CohenMiller, 2023). While initially guided by broader qualitative principles, the emergent nature of the research process required a more situated and adaptive approach, aligning with calls for reflexivity and participant-centred inquiry within qualitative research (Yip, 2024). The chapter's organisation, therefore, aims to convey a reflexive narrative that captures the non-linear and emergent nature of feminist poststructural research (e.g., Davies and Gannon, 2006; St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000). In keeping with this reflexive approach, the visual framework established in Chapter 3 is revisited here (Figure 13) to guide the discussion by highlighting the components central to this chapter's investigation.

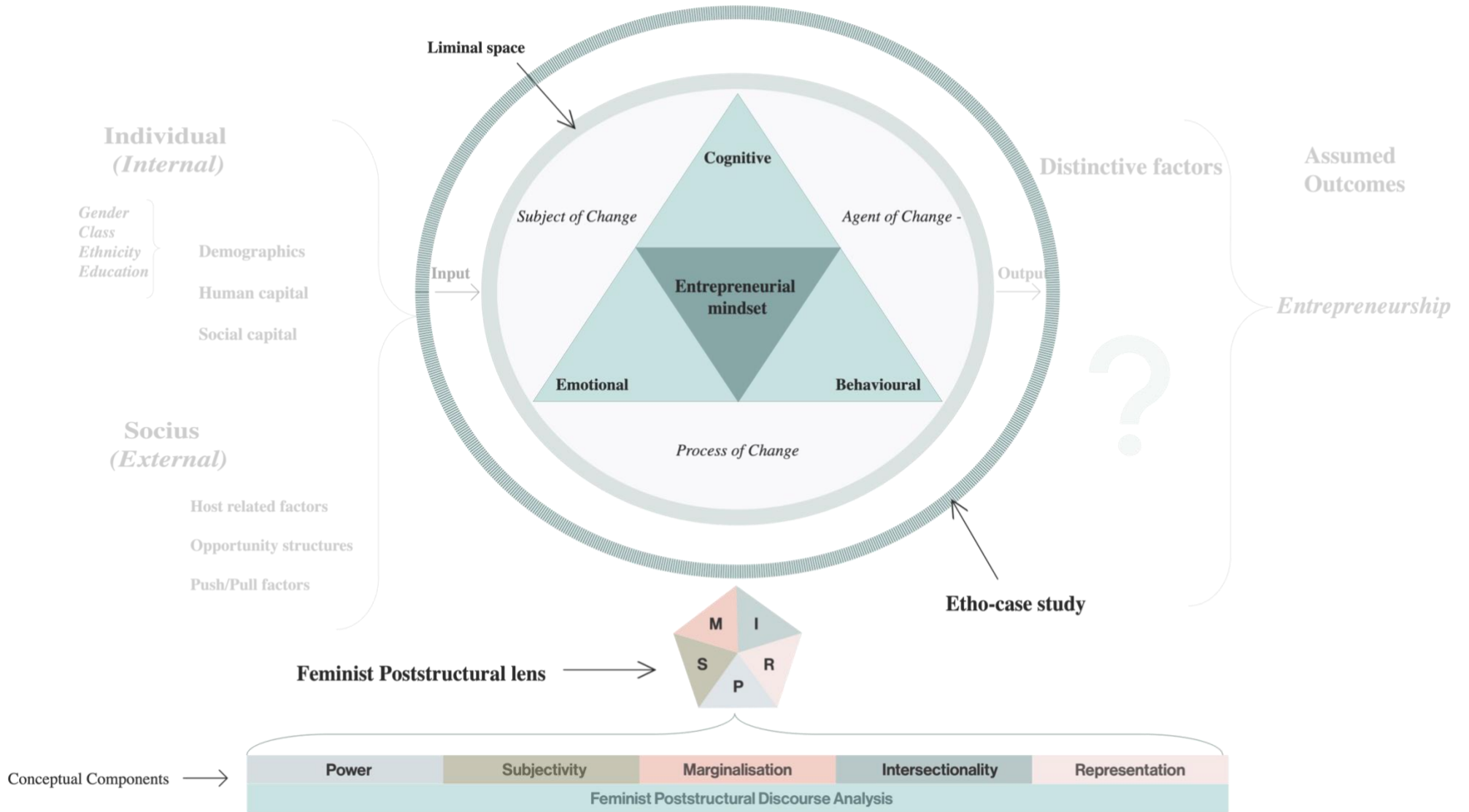


Figure 13. Chapter 4 Focus Areas within the Conceptual Framework (Author's own)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter articulates the methodological approach adopted to investigate the research question: *How do refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset in a liminal space?* Building on Smith and Besharov's (2019) approach to temporal bracketing, the chapter begins by presenting a timeline of the research evolution from 2018-2023, (Figure 14, p.187) providing transparency about how methodological insights emerged through sustained engagement with participants. This evolution is outlined through key phases in the research process, offering insight into how both the context and methodology were shaped iteratively. Following this a summary of data analysed across three distinct data collection periods is presented, showcasing how the temporal approach facilitated a detailed understanding of the entrepreneurial trajectories of refugee women.

The pivotal role of the pilot study is then examined, which significantly influenced the research design and methodological choices. The pilot study led to two substantial methodological shifts: firstly, a transition from structured interviews to more flexible conversational ethnographic methods, and secondly, a shift in scope, from a broad sample of fifty participants to an in-depth ethnographic case study following four refugee women entrepreneurs (Sands, Bourjolly and Roer-Strier, 2007; Kirkevold and Bergland, 2007). These shifts were driven by emergent insights into data quality and the importance of deep, contextually embedded narratives, which highlighted the value of focusing on a smaller, more cohesive participant group capable of providing rich, detailed data (Pritchard and Whiting, 2012; Quickfall, 2018).

Building on these methodological adaptations, the chapter proceeds to detail the philosophical foundations underpinning the research, examining the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological considerations that shape this investigation (Højgaard and Søndergaard, 2011; Butler, 1993; Davies and Gannon, 2005; Indira, 2020;

Maclaran and Stevens, 2019). This section provides an in-depth articulation of how ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology interconnect to form a cohesive philosophical mapping (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013). This mapping culminates in a synthesis that reveals how these elements collectively inform the exploration of refugee women's entrepreneurial mindset in liminal spaces (Fraser, 2013; McNay, 1992). Particular attention is given to how this mapping facilitates a comprehensive examination of power relations, agency, and identity formation, ensuring consistency with the broader aims of Feminist Poststructuralist inquiry (Højgaard and Søndergaard, 2011; Butler, 1993; McNay, 1992). At the conclusion of this section, a visual representation of this philosophical mapping (Figure 15, p.220) is provided, illustrating the culmination of these interconnected elements.

The discussion then extends to the analytical procedures, specifically focusing on the application of Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) and Derridean Deconstruction to reveal hidden meanings embedded within participant narratives (Baxter, 2008; Derrida, 1998). The use of FPDA, as highlighted by Baxter (2008), enabled an analysis of fluid subjectivities and the complex interplay of power relations that shape entrepreneurial experiences. Additionally, Derridean deconstruction was employed to dismantle binary oppositions and uncover embedded power dynamics within the narratives (Del Fa and Vásquez, 2020; Kiziltunali, 2022).

These methods provided a layered, critical lens to unearth the interplay of power, discourse, and identity within the context of refugee entrepreneurship. The chapter illustrates how these methodologies allowed for both depth and the critical reflection necessary to provide an authentic representation of refugee women's entrepreneurial trajectories (Rasche, 2011; Skoglund, 2017).

Subsequently, the chapter addresses the ethical considerations integral to conducting research with refugee women entrepreneurs. This includes a discussion of informed consent

processes, incorporating both written and ongoing verbal agreements, to ensure continuous consent throughout the research process (Indira, 2020; Atem and Higgins, 2024). The section further elaborates on confidentiality and anonymity measures, including practical steps taken to mitigate risks, ensure data security, and establish appropriate boundaries in the context of ethno-case research. The ethical framework outlined here details specific strategies for risk mitigation, particularly in relation to interpreter-mediated communication challenges, where the importance of insider perspectives proved crucial for data quality (Quickfall, 2018; Shaw et al., 2019).

In summarising this rigorous methodological approach, this chapter lays the foundation for the detailed empirical investigation and analysis presented in subsequent chapters. The chosen approach, shaped through iterative engagement with the pilot study, informed by temporal bracketing, and enriched by philosophical reflections, reflects the complex, fluid nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences. This methodology enables an authentic representation of the women's stories while maintaining a critical and reflexive engagement with theory and practice, ensuring that power dynamics, discourses, and identity formations are not only documented but critically interrogated.

Ultimately, this chapter aims to present a clear, robust, and reflexively crafted methodological journey that underpins the study. The methodological choices, shaped significantly by the learnings from the pilot study and sustained engagement with participants, demonstrate how methodological adaptability and theoretical coherence can enhance both the rigor and richness of qualitative inquiry. This adaptive approach ultimately allows for a detailed, context-sensitive exploration of how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial pathways, specifically within the uncertain terrain of liminality.

4.2 Timeline of Research

The evolution of this research design can be understood through distinct temporal phases, each marked by significant methodological insights and theoretical developments. In qualitative research, particularly ethnographic and case study methodologies, temporal bracketing provides a structured approach to understanding how research design evolves over time (Smith and Besharov, 2019). As Langley (1999) points out, using temporal bracketing allows researchers to emphasise how different periods of research bring new insights, altering the course of the study or adding complexity to the methodological framework. This temporal perspective is particularly valuable in revealing how initial assumptions were challenged and methodological decisions were refined through the research process.

Initially (October 2018 - April 2019), the research was designed to gather data from fifty participants over a year-long period through multiple workshops. The theoretical framework drew from two established bodies of literature: refugee integration models (Goldlust and Richmond, 1974; Kunz, 1981; Kuhlman, 1991) and immigrant entrepreneurship frameworks, particularly Kloosterman's Mixed Embeddedness model (2010).

The pilot phase (May 2019 - September 2019) centered on a two-day entrepreneurship workshop with pre- and post-workshop data collection. Using the concept of liminality (Van Gennep, 1907, Turner, 1969) as a contextual setting, the workshop was designed as a bounded temporal and spatial environment for observing entrepreneurial identity formation. Six refugee women entrepreneurs who had been trading for at least one year were recruited as facilitators, initially intended only as workshop leaders and mentors (Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022). However, during workshop delivery, these facilitators demonstrated remarkable clarity in articulating their entrepreneurial experiences directly in English, unlike many participants who required interpreters. Their narratives provided deep insights into

identity transition, business development, and cultural navigation, precisely the areas the research sought to understand.

The main study phase (2020 - 2023) saw a significant methodological shift, focusing on four participants. Their multiple roles, as refugees, entrepreneurs, and mentors, provided unique perspectives that enriched the theoretical development of the study. This methodological pivot, emphasising depth over breadth, aligns with van Teijlingen and Hundley's (2001) argument that pilot studies can fundamentally reshape research design.

The evolution across these phases demonstrates how methodological insights emerged through the research process, leading to stronger research outcomes through attentiveness to data quality and theoretical development (Malmqvist et al., 2019). The following sections detail each phase of this journey, revealing how methodological choices were made and theoretical insights emerged through sustained engagement with participants and data.

Figure 14 (page 188) presents the methodological evolution of the research using temporal bracketing analysis, based on the framework developed by Langley (1999) and Smith and Besharov (2019). The timeline shows how the research methods adapted across three distinct periods while maintaining core elements of the study.

Period 1 (2019-2020): Pilot Study The pilot study revealed that formal interview settings created barriers to capturing participants' experiences effectively (Sands, Bourjolly, and Roer-Strier, 2007; Kirkevold and Bergland, 2007). The study evolved in two key ways (Kezar, 2000): shifting from semi-structured to conversational interviews, and changing from studying 50 participants to an ethno-case study following four refugee women entrepreneurs in depth. These changes responded to practical challenges including language barriers (Bragg, 2022) and varying education levels among participants (Alvi-Aziz, 2008; Arroje and BurrIDGE, 2023).

The shift to an ethno-case study allowed for deeper engagement with participants in their daily contexts, aligning with Saunders' (2012) emphasis on matching research methods to participant needs.

Period 2 (2020-2021): Ethno-Case Study This period introduced informal conversational style interviews and observations to capture experiences beyond formal interview data. The addition of a feminist poststructural lens helped examine how power dynamics shaped participants' experiences and identities.

Period 3 (2021-2023): Analysis Phase The final period focused on data analysis, developing the feminist poststructural approach into formal discourse analysis (FPDA). Derridean deconstruction was added to examine tensions and contradictions in participants' accounts. The ethnographic work continued throughout this phase.

The timeline captures both stable elements (like ongoing observation and interviews) and adaptations in methods as the research responded to participants' needs and emerging insights. Each phase built on previous learning while adding new analytical depth.

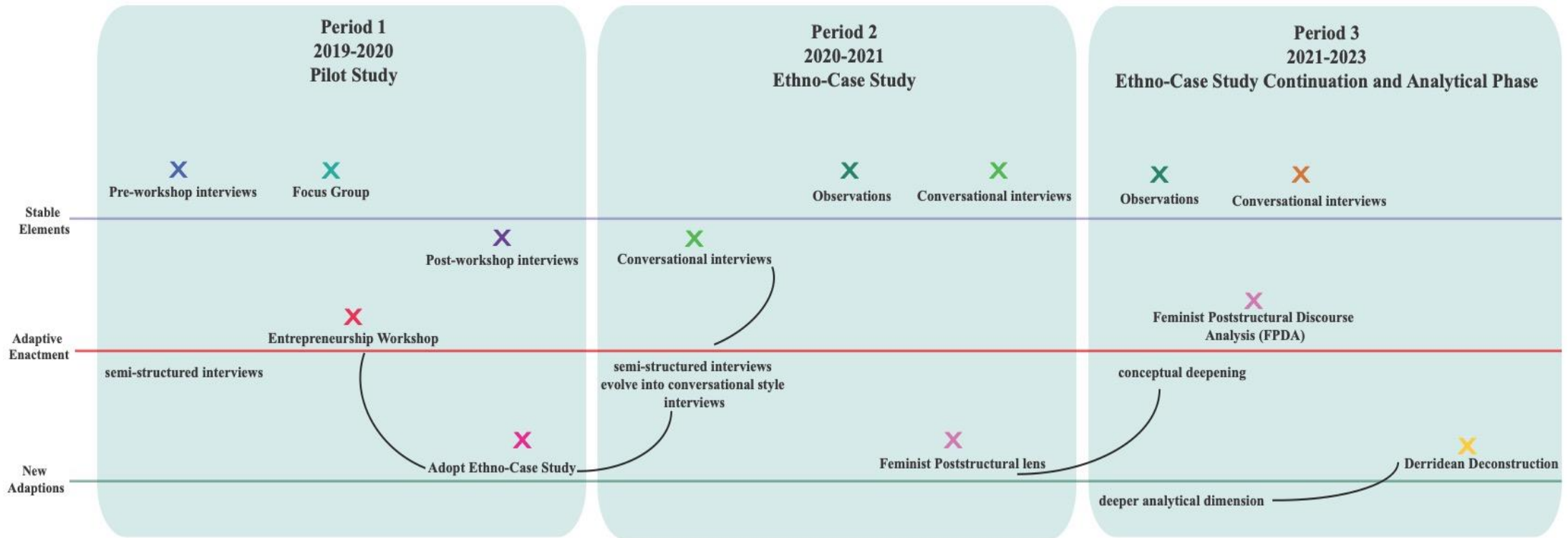


Figure 14. *Temporal Bracketing – Research Evolution (Adapted from Langley, 1999; Smith and Besharov, 2019)*

Data Category	Source Code	Date	Description	Hours/Frequency
Case Study 1				
Interview	INT-010	05/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	2 hours
	INT-011	08/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	2 hours
	INT-012	06/2021	Online (recorded)	1.5 hours
	INT-013	12/2022	Online (recorded)	2 hours
Observation	OBS-010	09/2019	Field notes	1 hour
	OBS-011	09/2019	Field notes	3 hours
	OBS-012	05/2022	Field notes	2 hours
	OBS-013	12/2022	Field notes	2 hours
Case Study 2				
Interview	INT-020	08/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	45 minutes
	INT-021	09/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	1 hour
	INT-022	09/2021	Face to face Interview (recorded)	2 hours
	INT-023	01/2023	Online (recorded)	1.5 hours
Observation	OBS-020	08/2019	Field notes	2 hours
	OBS-021	04/2021	Field notes	1 hour
	OBS-022	09/2021	Field notes	3 hours
Case Study 3				
Interview	INT-030	05/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	1 hour
	INT-031	08/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	2 hours
	INT-032	05/2022	Face to face Interview (recorded)	3 hours
	INT-033	02/2023	Face to face Interview (recorded)	1.5 hours
Observation	OBS-030	08/2019	Field notes	1 hour
	OBS-031	09/2019	Field notes	3 hours
	OBS-032	02/2023	Field notes	1 hour
Case Study 4				
Interview	INT-040	08/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	1 hour
	INT-041	09/2019	Face to face Interview (recorded)	2 hours
	INT-042	02/2022	Face to face Interview (recorded)	1.5 hours
	INT-043	06/2022	Face to face Interview (recorded)	1 hour
Observation	OBS-040	08/2019	Field notes	3 hours
	OBS-041	09/2019	Field notes	1 hour
	OBS-042	04/2022	Field notes	1 hour

Table 1. Summary of Data Analysed (colour coded to periods in figure 14)

The formal data collection outlined in Table 1. represents only the structured elements of this ethnographic study. Beyond the documented 48 hours of formal interviews and observations, extensive data was gathered through sustained engagement with participants in multiple settings. These included their business premises, their homes, my home, and at business events. This engagement involved informal conversations, shared meals over coffee, and ongoing digital communication through WhatsApp and phone calls.

During the COVID-19 interruption (2020-2021), while formal data collection was limited, contact continued through digital platforms. When restrictions eased, home-based meetings resumed, providing comfortable settings for conversations about their business experiences. The formal data collection increased from late 2021 as wider movement became possible again.

The ethnographic approach involved continuous data collection through varied informal interactions. These included weekly conversations in home settings, visits to business activities, and social gatherings over meals and coffee. Home-based gatherings in both my home and theirs created comfortable spaces for extended discussions. Throughout the research period, ongoing digital communication through WhatsApp and phone calls maintained consistent contact, especially when in-person meetings were not possible. These informal settings encouraged open conversations about business experiences, creating opportunities to gather rich data that formal interviews might miss (Selleck, 2017). This combination of formal and informal data collection aligns with ethnographic methodology, where sustained engagement in participants' daily lives provides deeper understanding than structured interactions alone (Atkinson, 2016). The timeline should therefore be understood as marking formal data points within a broader ethnographic engagement that spanned the entire research period.

The temporal analysis of the data revealed significant patterns in how participants' entrepreneurial mindsets developed and shifted over the research period. This longitudinal perspective captured complex oscillations between cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset, which will be examined in detail in Chapter 6. The shift from formal to informal data collection settings proved particularly valuable in documenting these mindset transitions, as participants became more open about sharing their internal thought processes, emotional responses, and behavioural adaptations. The extended engagement through home-based meetings and ongoing digital communication allowed for tracking how these mindset dimensions interacted and evolved over time. Chapter 6 will present a detailed analysis of these oscillations across the three temporal periods, demonstrating how participants' entrepreneurial identities developed through continuous interaction between thinking patterns, emotional responses, and business behaviours.

The decision to adopt an ethnographic approach was shaped by the need for deeper engagement with participants' lived realities, capturing intricacies that were not accessible through structured methods alone. The emphasis on informal interactions and extended periods of observation provided a comprehensive understanding of the participants' entrepreneurial experiences within their unique socio-cultural contexts. In particular, this research is framed within the concept of the liminal space, a contextual setting that captures the transition from the status of refugee to entrepreneur. This liminal space is crucial for understanding the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs as they navigate the entrepreneurial mindset. Having established the rationale for this ethno-case study approach, the following section will turn to the pilot study, which preceded and shaped these methods. This pilot phase served as a crucial foundation, testing initial research approaches and refining methodological tools, ultimately guiding the broader ethnographic study that

followed. The ethno-case study approach itself will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, including its methods, challenges, and contributions to the overall research design.

4.3 The Pilot Study

4.3.1 Introduction

The pilot study was designed as a preliminary step within this larger doctoral research project exploring how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset. While the main doctoral study planned to gather data from fifty participants over a year-long period through multiple workshops, the pilot itself focused on a single two-day entrepreneurship workshop with pre- and post-workshop data collection. This pilot was intended to test research methods, refine approaches, and inform the design of the subsequent year-long study. Pritchard and Whiting (2012) note that reflexivity during the pilot phase played a crucial role in allowing flexibility and adaptability within the research process. Rather than being a simple test of practicalities, the pilot became an opportunity to critically engage with methodological fit, ethical concerns, and emergent themes, leading to substantial refinements.

The pilot study proved transformative in identifying the final research participants. While initially designed to test methods with 22 participants (16 participants and 6 facilitators), it revealed that the facilitators, particularly four of them, provided uniquely rich data. These four women demonstrated exceptional capacity to articulate complex entrepreneurial concepts directly in English, while maintaining sustained engagement throughout the research process. Their multiple perspectives as refugees, entrepreneurs, and mentors offered layered insights into the entrepreneurial journey. Moreover, their demonstrated commitment to long-term engagement in the study provided opportunities for deeper theoretical exploration. This discovery led to a methodological pivot from a broad sample to an in-depth focus on these four participants, whose narratives offered deeper theoretical insights than would have been possible through interpreted interviews with a

larger sample.

The pilot phase revealed a significant methodological insight that would reshape the entire research design. The study's initial theoretical framework drew from two established bodies of literature: refugee integration models (Goldlust and Richmond, 1974; Kunz, 1981; Kuhlman, 1991) and immigrant entrepreneurship frameworks, particularly Kloosterman's Mixed Embeddedness model (2010). While these models provided valuable understanding of structural influences on entrepreneurial activity - from pre-migration characteristics to post-migration conditions - they lacked specific consideration of how gender intersects with refugee status in the development of entrepreneurial mindset. This theoretical limitation, combined with emerging methodological insights from the pilot, would prove crucial in refining the research approach.

Using the concept of liminality (Van Gennep, 1907; Turner 1969) as a contextual setting, a two-day entrepreneurship workshop was designed as a bounded temporal and spatial environment for observing entrepreneurial identity formation. This theoretical framing suggested that the workshop environment might serve as what Turner terms a 'threshold space,' a transitional environment where participants could explore their evolution from refugee to entrepreneur. Twenty-two participants attended the workshop, which was facilitated by six refugee women entrepreneurs who had been trading for at least one year. These facilitators were initially intended only as workshop leaders rather than research participants.

During workshop delivery, facilitators demonstrated remarkable clarity in articulating their entrepreneurial experiences directly in English, unlike many participants who required interpreters. Their narratives provided deep insights into identity transition, business development, and cultural navigation, precisely the areas the research sought to understand. This process aligns with the emphasis by Pritchard and Whiting (2012) on how pilot studies

can act as moments for critical self-reflection, refining both the research questions and chosen methodologies.

This pivotal moment, combined with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, reinforced the value of depth over breadth in data collection. These developments aligned with van Teijlingen and Hundley's (2001) argument that pilot studies can help refine research methods by revealing potential issues early on. The unanticipated richness of data prompted a re-evaluation of the methodological approach.

The upcoming section will detail the implementation of the two-day workshop, including design, participant recruitment, and data collection methods. It will also address the key challenges encountered, particularly those related to interpreter-mediated research, such as language barriers, conceptual translation, and data quality issues, which highlighted the facilitators' narrative complexity and prompted a shift in research focus. Quickfall (2018) highlights the value of insider knowledge, noting that shared experiences can overcome barriers that often hinder the collection of layered data. The facilitators' familiarity with the cultural, social, and entrepreneurial challenges faced by refugee women provided a richness that might not have been captured by an outsider perspective, emphasising the advantages of insider research in producing high-quality data.

The next section will explore how four of the original facilitators transitioned from workshop leaders to central research participants. Their multiple roles, as refugees, entrepreneurs, and mentors, provided unique perspectives that enriched the theoretical development of the study. The methodological pivot that occurred, in focusing on these four participants, allowed for deeper exploration of complex constructs like liminality, power dynamics, and identity navigation. Their ability to communicate effectively without interpreters ensured a high quality of data that would not have been possible through interpreted interviews with a larger sample.

The theoretical development section will then elaborate on the evolution of the initial framework, which originally lacked a specific focus on gender and identity intersectionality in entrepreneurial contexts. Through ongoing engagement with the facilitators, the conceptual framework evolved to incorporate concepts of power dynamics, identity formation, liminality, and intersectionality, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys.

The impact of these insights on the main study will be discussed, focusing on methodological refinements, such as shifting from broad participant recruitment to an in-depth focus on a smaller group. This evolution, emphasising depth over breadth, is consistent with insights from previous literature on qualitative research methodology (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Sampson, 2004). The conclusion will summarise the key learnings from the pilot, adjustments made to the research design, and how these strengthened the study both methodologically and theoretically.

Four facilitators maintained engagement throughout, contributing to the research process through their ongoing entrepreneurial development and sophisticated reflections. Rather than merely describing experiences, these participants articulated complex concepts about identity formation, liminality, and entrepreneurial development, directly enriching theoretical understanding.

The decision to focus on these four participants enhanced rather than limited theoretical development. Their ability to communicate complex concepts directly in English enabled deeper exploration of key theoretical constructs through the research process. Their narratives provided rich insights into liminal space navigation in entrepreneurship, revealing how refugee women construct and transform their identities while developing entrepreneurial capabilities. Their accounts illuminated power dynamics in entrepreneurial development, particularly regarding how gender intersects with refugee status during business creation

processes.

This focused approach facilitated theoretical depth that may have been diluted through interpreted interviews with a larger sample. The direct communication enabled a detailed and complex exploration of participants' experiences, strengthening the theoretical contribution through methodological refinement. As Sampson (2004) emphasises, pilot studies in qualitative research can anticipate gaps and highlight potential data collection inefficiencies, ultimately informing a more focused and adaptive research approach. The pilot study findings validated the decision to prioritise depth of theoretical development over breadth of sample size, demonstrating how methodological choices can enhance theoretical sophistication (Naranayan et al., 2023).

The participants' ability to articulate their experiences without translation intermediaries allowed for preservation of conceptual integrity, particularly regarding complex theoretical constructs around liminality, identity formation, and power relations. This methodological refinement proved crucial for developing theoretical insights about how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial spaces while managing multiple intersecting identities and structural constraints.

This evolution from pilot to main study demonstrates how methodological insights can emerge through the research process, leading to stronger research outcomes through attentiveness to data quality and theoretical development (Malmqvist et al., 2019). The pilot study not only tested the research instruments but also led to an unforeseen yet highly valuable refinement of participant selection, underscoring the critical role of flexibility in research design, as described by Majid et al. (2017).

The following sections will detail the implementation of the pilot study, including workshop design, participant recruitment, and data collection methods. They will address key challenges encountered, particularly those related to interpreter-mediated research, which

highlighted the facilitators' narrative complexity and prompted a shift in research focus. This discussion will show how four of the original facilitators transitioned from workshop leaders to central research participants, enriching the theoretical development of the study through their unique perspectives as refugees, entrepreneurs, and mentors.

4.3.2 Workshop Implementation and Emergence of Key Participants

The workshop implementation proved pivotal in reshaping the approach to participant selection and research direction. What began as a standard pilot to test methods became a crucial turning point in identifying participants capable of articulating complex entrepreneurial experiences.

The workshop was centred on a two-day entrepreneurship activity designed as a bounded temporal and spatial environment to observe the development of entrepreneurial mindsets. Drawing from Turner's (1969) concept of liminality, this setting functioned as a 'threshold space' a controlled, transitional environment where participants could explore their evolving identities as entrepreneurs. This echoes the discussion in Chapter Two on liminality as a critical context for change, where the concept acts as a vehicle to understand the transitional phase from refugee to entrepreneur (Van Gennep, 1909; Turner, 1977).

By creating a bounded space, the workshop provided participants with the opportunity to experiment with new roles, leaving behind old perceptions while not yet fully committing to their new identities. This aligns closely with the *separation phase* described by Van Gennep (1909), wherein individuals detach from their previous roles. The structured environment served as a *transition space*, fostering the participants' internalisation of an entrepreneurial mindset, much like Van Gennep's transition stage, which is characterised by ambiguity and exploration.

To expand on the role of the bounded temporal and spatial environment, the findings from Horner et al. (2016) provide valuable insights into how spatial boundaries shape memory and event representations. These boundaries help segment experiences into distinct and memorable episodes, facilitating long-term retention of significant events. Similarly, the entrepreneurship workshop acted as a '*bounded environment*', facilitating participants' identity shift from '*refugee*' to '*entrepreneur*'. The bounded nature of the workshop environment parallels the liminal phase as a setting where participants step into the unknown, engaging in experimentation and risk-taking.

In Chapter Two, liminality was introduced as a critical concept for understanding both the structural and subjective experiences of refugee women in their journey towards economic adaptation. Within the context of the workshop, this liminal space was actively constructed, allowing participants to negotiate between their former identities and their emerging roles as entrepreneurs. The workshop functioned as a threshold or portal, as Chakraborty (2017) describes, enabling new paths previously unavailable to participants and supporting their progression towards *incorporation*, akin to Van Gennep's final stage.

This liminal setting was crucial for fostering reflection and growth in a way that may not have been possible outside of a structured environment. The *separation*, *transition*, and *incorporation* that participants experienced in the workshop mirror the transformative journey discussed in Chapter Two, suggesting that the workshop environment acted not only as a practical intervention but as an embodiment of the liminal theory itself. By doing so, the workshop enabled refugee women to create segmented, meaningful episodes, reinforcing their evolving entrepreneurial identities through both memory and practice (Horner et al., 2016).

As Shaw et al. (2019) argue, acting ethically when working with under-researched populations requires careful consideration of social justice elements, especially concerning

language and communication needs. The need for ethical sensitivity became evident in ensuring that all participants, regardless of their language proficiency, could engage meaningfully in the workshop (Smith, 2009). This included considerations such as the use of facilitators who were not only skilled entrepreneurs but also culturally aligned with the participants, thus providing both linguistic and contextual support (Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022)

The workshop's design incorporated several innovative elements that emerged through collaborative planning. Rather than following the traditional model of host country mentors, six refugee women entrepreneurs who had been trading for at least one year were recruited as facilitators. During the planning phase, these facilitators demonstrated unexpected depth in articulating entrepreneurial experiences: *'Mentoring means guiding and helping them figure out their own path and what they want to do. I think it's important because I come from a culture that spoon-feeds, so I want to empower women from similar cultures and backgrounds to question and make their own life decisions'* (RE3)

This input led to crucial design features, including the creation of a women-only space with integrated childcare provision (Street and Ng, 2024). Such considerations were ethically imperative and methodologically enabling, allowing women who might otherwise face barriers to participation to engage fully. This design choice proved essential for enabling participation, as thirteen children, including a five-month-old baby, attended with their mothers.

While the facilitators were initially recruited solely to lead workshop activities for sixteen participants, their sophisticated understanding of entrepreneurial concepts and ability to articulate complex experiences would ultimately reshape the entire research direction.

4.3.3 Participant Recruitment (Pilot Study)

The targeted population consisted of 22 participants: 6 facilitators and 16 refugee women based in Kent and London who were either at the entrepreneurial intention stage or in early startup phases. Participants were identified through multiple channels including refugee charities, networks, and local councils. A pre-workshop interview process helped identify suitable participants, specifically those who were:

- Awarded or in the process of being granted refugee status
- At the entrepreneurial intention or early startup stage
- Willing to participate in a two-day workshop environment

4.3.4 Data Collection and Emergence of Key Participants

The pilot study employed a comprehensive, multi-modal approach to data collection. Initially, pre-workshop interviews were conducted with all twenty participants, including both facilitators and mentees, to understand their backgrounds and entrepreneurial aspirations. During the two-day workshop, data was captured through video recordings of the sessions and detailed field notes from participant observation. The workshop also incorporated focus group discussions, providing opportunities for collective dialogue and shared experience exploration (Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022). Participants documented their entrepreneurial planning through individual business model canvases, offering tangible evidence of their business development process.

Following the workshop, post-workshop interviews were conducted with fifteen participants to gather reflections on their experience and document any shifts in their entrepreneurial thinking. Particularly significant was the opportunity to conduct six-month follow-up interviews with four participants who had progressed to actively trading. These longitudinal insights proved valuable in understanding the transition from entrepreneurial intention to action.

This layered approach to data collection provided rich insights into both the immediate impact of the workshop and the longer-term entrepreneurial development of participants. The multiple data collection methods allowed for triangulation of findings and captured both individual narratives and group dynamics within the workshop setting. The pilot study's data collection process proved transformative in shaping the direction of the main research. While the initial multi-modal approach - including pre-workshop interviews, video recordings, field notes, and focus groups - was designed to capture broad insights from all twenty participants, it unexpectedly revealed significant methodological challenges and opportunities.

A crucial insight emerged during the pre-workshop interviews conducted through interpreters. Despite having Farsi and Arabic interpreters present, complex entrepreneurial concepts were often lost in translation or significantly simplified. However, during these same sessions, the six refugee women recruited as workshop facilitators demonstrated remarkable clarity in articulating their entrepreneurial experiences directly in English. Their narratives were not only clear but rich with insights about identity transition, business development, and cultural navigation.

The workshop itself reinforced this methodological revelation. While gathering data through video recordings and participant observation, I noticed a marked difference in the depth and sophistication of reflection between interpreted conversations and direct English communication. The facilitators, initially recruited for their entrepreneurial experience rather than as research participants, were providing the most theoretically rich data about the entrepreneurial journey.

Post-workshop interviews with fifteen participants further highlighted this disparity in data quality. However, it was the six-month follow-up period that proved decisive in participant selection. Four of the original facilitators had not only maintained contact but

demonstrated ongoing engagement with the research process. These women had progressed in their entrepreneurial journeys and could articulate their experiences with sophistication and complexity. Their multiple roles - as refugees, entrepreneurs, and mentors - provided unique perspectives that enriched the theoretical development of the study.

The decision to focus on these four women for the main study thus emerged organically through the data collection process. It represented not a compromise but an opportunity to gather richer, more insightful data about the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. Their ability to communicate complex concepts directly in English, combined with their multiple perspectives and sustained engagement with the research, offered the potential for deeper theoretical insights than would have been possible through interpreted interviews with a larger sample.

Initial Findings and Observations

The pilot study revealed several key patterns. In terms of educational and language dynamics, there were significant disparities in educational levels among participants, which influenced their ability to articulate entrepreneurial concepts effectively. Additionally, interpreter-mediated communication often posed challenges, making it difficult to capture intricate reflections.

Regarding cultural and social factors, it became evident that creating a women-only space was essential for fostering participation, while integrated childcare provision played a critical role in enabling mothers to engage fully. The peer-to-peer learning facilitated by refugee facilitators also proved to be highly valued by the participants, enhancing their learning experience.

In the area of entrepreneurial development, participants generated business ideas within traditional sectors such as food, clothing, and beauty. The involvement of experienced

facilitators significantly boosted participants' confidence, serving as role models and enhancing their belief in their own entrepreneurial potential.

The pilot also uncovered important methodological insights. The facilitators demonstrated a remarkable capacity for articulating their experiences, which enriched the data significantly. However, interpreter-mediated research was found to be limiting, often leading to a loss of complexity in the participants' narratives. Prolonged engagement with the participants, particularly with those capable of communicating directly in English, yielded more complex and theoretically rich data.

These findings shaped the evolution of the research methodology for the main study, allowing for adjustments that aligned the focus with the unique strengths of the collected data. The pilot highlighted both opportunities and challenges, leading to methodological adaptations that ultimately enhanced the depth and quality of the research.

4.4 Research Philosophy and Approach

This section articulates the philosophical foundations that underpin this research into refugee women's entrepreneurial mindset. It proceeds through five interconnected components that collectively form a philosophical mapping. Through this mapping, particular attention is paid to how these elements facilitate the examination of power relations, agency, and identity formation within a liminal space, while maintaining theoretical coherence with the broader aims of Feminist Poststructuralist inquiry. These components and their relationships are synthesised and visually represented in a philosophical mapping at the conclusion of this section (Figure 15, p.216).

First, the ontological foundations establish the nature of reality through a Feminist Poststructuralist lens, examining how this theoretical perspective shapes our understanding of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences as fluid, socially constructed phenomena embedded within power relations (Højgaard and Søndergaard, 2011; Butler, 1993). These perspectives highlight the discursive and material forces that influence the formation of entrepreneurial identities.

Second, the epistemological foundations outline how knowledge is conceptualised and co-created within this research paradigm, particularly focusing on the intersection between constructivist approaches and Feminist Poststructuralist thought in understanding refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys (Davies and Gannon, 2005). This perspective emphasises how knowledge emerges through engagement with others and is shaped by underlying power dynamics.

Third, the axiological and positional considerations critically examine the value systems and power dynamics inherent in researching marginalised groups, while reflexively positioning myself within these philosophical frameworks (Indira, 2020; Maclaran and

Stevens, 2019). This approach allows for an examination of how my own values and position influence the research process and outcomes.

Fourth, the methodological approach justifies and explains the adoption of abductive reasoning, demonstrating its alignment with both Feminist Poststructuralist principles and the complex nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences in a liminal context (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013; Rinehart, 2020). Abductive reasoning supports theoretical pluralism, providing a flexible approach to understanding the evolving realities of refugee women's entrepreneurship.

Finally, these components are synthesised to demonstrate how this philosophical mapping illustrates the entrepreneurial mindset within the specific context of refugee women's experiences, while acknowledging the inherent complexities and power dynamics at play (Fraser, 2013; McNay, 1992). The synthesis concludes with a philosophical mapping (Figure 15) that illustrates how ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological elements integrate within the liminal context of refugee women's entrepreneurship.

4.4.1 Ontological Foundations:

Subject, Process and Agent of Change

This section establishes the ontological position through three interconnected dimensions, examining how refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences are situated within, and simultaneously reshape, broader social structures and power relations. This ontological commitment reflects not only the theoretical framework of this study but also mirrors the trajectory of my own doctoral journey as a researcher. The theoretical framework integrates feminist poststructural insights about discursive power with new materialist understandings of agency to provide a comprehensive analysis of how entrepreneurial identities emerge through complex material-discursive networks.

It is crucial to clarify that in no way do I intend to undermine the real vulnerabilities and traumas faced by these refugee women. Their experiences of displacement, economic

uncertainty, and societal marginalisation are deeply complex and carry genuine hardships. The ontological alignment discussed here serves as an analytical lens, rather than a minimisation of the real struggles these individuals endure.

My research journey has followed a similar pathway to the conceptual framework underpinning this study: beginning as a '*subject of change*,' moving through a '*process of change*,' and ultimately becoming an '*agent of change*.' This mirrors the journey of the refugee women I study, as they navigate the liminal space of entrepreneurship. For them, the entrepreneurial mindset is a means of reconstructing their identities and shifting from being passive subjects of external forces to actively shaping their own futures. For me, the journey through my doctoral research has similarly been a transformative process. By engaging deeply with the literature, I too have moved through a liminal space from initial uncertainty in my research position to confidently articulating a complex ontological stance.

This resonance between the participants and my own path further situates the research within a lived understanding of liminality and its complexities. In both contexts, change is not linear but iterative, involving continuous negotiation between power, identity, and material circumstances. My role has evolved into that of a scholarly '*agent of change*' within the academic space as a Doctor of Philosophy whose insight aims to disrupt, critique, and extend understandings of marginalised entrepreneurship.

Through my literature review, I have identified five core tenets of Feminist Poststructuralism, *power*, *subjectivity*, *marginalisation*, *intersectionality*, and *representation* which serve as foundational concepts for understanding the shifting dynamics of identity and agency. Feminist Poststructuralism can be viewed as a kaleidoscopic lens, revealing not only the shifting interplay of power, discourse, and identity but also what Aitchison (2000) describes Feminist Poststructuralism as a theoretical and political approach capable of addressing both structural and cultural power relations. This is particularly crucial in today's

context where, as Fraser (2013) warns there is a troubling convergence between feminist ideals of empowerment and neoliberal modes of subject formation.

Feminist Poststructuralism conceptualises reality as inherently fluid and socially constructed, paying particular attention to the complexities of discursive and material/technological forces in constituting subjectivity (Højgaard and Søndergaard, 2011). Butler (1993) notes that materiality is always discursively formed, emphasising that there is no ‘pure body’ outside of its discursive construction. This understanding is further developed through Barad’s concept of intra-action, which shows how material and discursive forces are mutually constituted rather than pre-existing their relationship (Højgaard and Søndergaard, 2011).

The shared trajectory from *subject* to *agent* in both the researcher and the participants is clarified through this ontology. The ontological stance embraced here recognises agency not as individual empowerment alone but as something forged within the intricate entanglements of discourse, practice, and institutional settings, as described by McNay (1992). This is as true for my journey through academic discourse as it is for refugee women navigating entrepreneurial subjectivities within a liminal economic and social context.

This research framework is built upon three fundamental ontological commitments that also structure the personal and scholarly growth I experienced.

Rejection of Fixed Entrepreneurial Characteristics: Just as my own identity and research stance have evolved, this study rejects fixed entrepreneurial characteristics in favour of fluid, negotiated identities. For refugee women entrepreneurs, identity emerges through a dynamic combination of material conditions, discursive formations, institutional structures, and social networks (Bennett, 2010).

Intersectional Realities: The liminal space I navigated throughout my research echoes the concurrent realities faced by the participants. Intersectional oppression operates

through multiple, overlapping discourses, as discussed by Yuval-Davis (2006), a complexity that both myself and the refugee women have had to navigate in our respective domains.

Dynamic Power Relations: Power is neither static nor unidirectional; my journey through doctoral research has been shaped by dynamic power relations, much like the participants who must continuously negotiate their agency within neoliberal and patriarchal structures. As Brown (2015, pp.31) observes, neoliberalism works to ‘configure human beings exhaustively as market actors’, while simultaneously obscuring the material and structural conditions that constrain agency. This insight is particularly relevant for understanding both the researcher’s academic journey and the refugee women’s entrepreneurial experiences, as both involve negotiating power structures while developing critical awareness and agency.

This ontological position establishes a foundation for understanding not only the refugee women’s journeys but also my own development as a researcher. Both involve navigating and enacting multiple identities within dynamic power relations, moving through uncertainty toward empowerment, and ultimately positioning both the participants and me as *agents of change*. This fluid ontological stance naturally leads to questions about how knowledge of these experiences can be produced, particularly when knowledge itself is embedded within these same power structures. The following section explores the epistemological foundations that complement this ontological position, drawing connections between material-discursive entanglements and the methodologies required to unpack them.

4.4.2 Epistemological Foundation

Next, the epistemological foundation of this research is discussed. The epistemology underpinning this research is constructivist, recognising that knowledge is co-created through interactions between the researcher and participants, framed by discourses that shape and are shaped by power dynamics. This constructivist stance aligns naturally with deconstruction as

an analytical tool, as both approaches recognise the socially constructed nature of knowledge and seek to understand how meaning is created and maintained through social processes and power relations. Where constructivism provides the foundation for understanding knowledge as co-created, deconstruction offers the means to examine how this knowledge is structured, questioning taken-for-granted assumptions and revealing the power dynamics inherent in knowledge creation.

Deconstruction serves as a crucial analytical tool within this epistemological foundation, enabling the systematic examination of how knowledge about refugee women's entrepreneurship is constructed and maintained through power relations and discourse. The deconstructive approach aligns with both the constructivist epistemology and Feminist Poststructuralist principles by revealing how dominant narratives about refugee women's entrepreneurship are shaped by underlying assumptions and power dynamics. As an analytical tool, deconstruction facilitates the dismantling of taken-for-granted knowledge structures, allowing for the emergence of alternative understandings that better reflect refugee women's lived experiences. This is particularly relevant within the liminal space, where established knowledge frameworks are already destabilised, creating opportunities for new meanings and understandings to emerge.

To examine female refugee entrepreneurship and challenge the rhetorical structures that frame our understanding of self-reliance through entrepreneurship, it is essential to observe refugee women within a liminal space. This section explores the significance of liminality as a conceptual framework. The liminal space is inherently anti-structural. It provokes the deconstruction of the fabrics that govern her existence as a refugee prior to this limanoid state of new venture creation. The concept of liminality, defined as a state between established identities, resonates with the poststructural commitment to deconstructing fixed

power structures. It provides an analytical frame for exploring how refugee women renegotiate agency and identity through entrepreneurship.

Following this, the methodological choice is elaborated. Mohammed et al. (2015) emphasise that the use of case study methodology within a Feminist Poststructuralist framework is particularly valuable due to its flexibility and capacity to yield a deep understanding of power/knowledge relations. This research takes this concept further by adopting an ethno-case study methodology, integrating both ethnography and case study elements, which enables an in-depth examination of the lived experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs. Mohammed et al. (2015, pp. 99) evidence this in their observation, 'little consideration of how case study might be used in poststructural research to explore power relations.' Even though Ahl (2006, 2017) has worked to bring poststructuralism in women's entrepreneurship research to prominence, Yadav and Unni (2016) acknowledge that it remains at the margins of entrepreneurship theory. Mohammed et al. (2015) also highlight that case study methodology is well suited for exploring complex social discourses, such as how power relations impact refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys, making it a fitting approach for this study. However, I argue that it affords a space to scrutinise particular social situations in which refugee women operate so that one may observe the particularities of that situation.

The use of an ethno-case study methodology, which combines elements of ethnography and case study, within the Feminist Poststructuralist framework, although uncommon (Mohammed et al., 2015), provides a powerful lens for scrutinising the lived experiences of refugee women. This approach enables a flexible and reflexive methodology that engages deeply with the power/knowledge dynamics that shape their entrepreneurial processes, as highlighted by Mohammed et al. (2015). This ethno-case study approach enables both an in-depth cultural exploration through ethnographic methods and the focus on

specific instances provided by case study approaches. This combination allows for a detailed, contextually situated exploration of how power dynamics, identity, and entrepreneurship interact within liminal spaces.

Through this assumption of fluidity within Feminist Poststructuralism and the dynamics of an entrepreneurial mindset, one can expose how new feminist identities and boundaries are being continuously redefined and redrawn by the female refugee entrepreneur. The typical hallmarks of research that embrace a Feminist Poststructural perspective are relevant to this research. Feminist Poststructural theory is usually, as Berry (2013) characterises, sympathetic, addressing the advancement of those with minimum power, who are often the study subjects. Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2009) recognise that women are active participants in their development as subjects. Feminist Poststructuralism makes it possible for women to renegotiate their conception and simultaneously embrace numerous and perhaps contrary roles. Working within a Feminist Poststructural viewpoint ensures that the research question remains open and reflexive throughout the research process. Building on a postmodern ontology that embraces fluid and multiple realities, the epistemology of this study also reflects a constructivist approach, wherein knowledge is co-constructed through discourses that both constrain and enable the participants' agency.

Next, the concept of truth within the research paradigm is explored. Through deconstructive analysis, this research challenges traditional epistemological assumptions about entrepreneurship, revealing how knowledge about refugee women's entrepreneurial capabilities and experiences is often constructed through dominant discourse rather than their lived experiences. Davies and Gannon (2005) claimed that truth emerges through engagement with the other. In doing so, we can give voice and legitimacy to the suppressed and marginalised ways of seeing and knowing that were previously excluded. Goodkind and Deacon (2004) stressed that refugee women are often marginalised threefold due to their

economic, ethnic, and gender status yet are not represented sufficiently when research into refugees is administered. The exploration of potential shifts in agency within the liminal space, as the context for refugee women in entrepreneurship, uses a methodology focused on amplifying marginal voices to interrogate movement in agency. I needed to establish what I was looking for when searching for a theory to underpin the research into female refugee entrepreneurs. With my lens focused on the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women within the liminal context of entrepreneurial start-up, I realised that it was, in fact, a shift in power from powerless refugee to self-empowering entrepreneur, which necessitated a postmodernist paradigm to underpin this study. A Feminist Poststructural stance, coupled with insights from the entrepreneurial mindset, allowed me to vacillate in the early stages of my research, moving between those opposing power positions to truly understand the very nature of the subject focus: the entrepreneurial mindset of the female refugee entrepreneur within the context of a liminal space.

4.4.3 Axiology and Positionality

Locating myself as a Poststructural Feminist, my perspective on axiology is informed by the idea that established systems of power and value are inherently patriarchal and oppressive to marginalised groups. From this perspective, established systems of value prioritize the perspectives and experiences of men while marginalising and devaluing the perspectives of women and other marginalised groups. This can be seen in how established structures of knowledge and power have been used to silence and dismiss marginalised groups' voices and experiences while elevating those in positions of power (Indira, 2020). Feminist research is axiologically committed to amplifying the voices of marginalised groups, particularly refugee women, whose narratives challenge dominant patriarchal systems and highlight the resilience embedded in their entrepreneurial transitions.

Feminists argue for the need to deconstruct and question underlying assumptions and power dynamics that shape them (Poovey, 1988; Elam, 2006; Clark-Parsons and Lingel, 2020). This can involve examining ways in which patriarchal systems of power and knowledge have been used to shape and define what is considered valuable and working to shift these systems to prioritise the perspectives of marginalised women (Sanya, 2013). One way that Feminist Poststructuralism works to disrupt traditional systems of value is by highlighting the ways in which systems are constructed and maintained through language and discourse (Davies and Gannon, 2005; Wooldridge, 2015; Norton, 2021). For example, Poststructural Feminists have argued that the traditional systems of value reinforce the use of gendered language and imagery, which can be used to reinforce stereotypes and marginalise groups of people (Baxter, 2016).

In addition to deconstructing and disrupting traditional systems of value, Poststructural Feminists also argue for the need to create alternative systems of value that are more inclusive and empowering for marginalised groups (Maclaran and Stevens, 2019). This can involve working to create spaces and platforms for marginalised voices and perspectives to be heard and valued and investing in research and scholarship that centres on the experiences and perspectives of marginalised groups. The key approach to challenge this system is to deconstruct and question the underlying assumptions and power dynamics that shape them. In order to propose the creation of a new system of value that is more inclusive and empowering for marginalised women.

From a deconstructivism perspective, I acknowledge the inherent instability and multiplicity of language and meaning, including my values, beliefs, and interpretations that shape my understanding of the research materials and data. Bernard (2018) suggests that Poststructuralism, Critical Theory, and Postmodernism encourage us to recognise the impact of our own analytical and literary practices in constructing meaning and shaping our value

positions. This understanding drives my belief in conducting research for social change, as it recognises the potential for language and discourse to reinforce or challenge dominant power relations.

By allowing refugee women to express their experiences as female entrepreneurs, we deconstruct the dominant discourse and provide a platform for them to reflect on and articulate their experiences. In this way, the research holds intrinsic value for the women themselves. Furthermore, it contributes to a larger project of challenging dominant power relations and creating space for alternative narratives and representations.

Building on this axiological foundation, the following section explores how an abductive approach to reasoning and analysis aligns with and supports the Poststructural Feminist perspective in understanding the complex entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women in liminal contexts.

4.4.4 Abductive Approach

Through abductive reasoning, this research draws on theoretical pluralism, integrating refugee entrepreneurship theory with gendered entrepreneurship theory, underpinned by Feminist Poststructuralism and the entrepreneurial mindset, to understand refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences in liminal contexts, highlighting the complexity of power relations in these transformative journeys. Abductive reasoning supports theoretical pluralism, in line with Vincent and O'Mahoney (2016), emphasising awareness of the various biases shaping perceptions. Meyer and Lunnay (2013) describe abductive inference as being fundamental to theory-driven research, allowing for the broadening of knowledge and stimulation of the research process. Unlike deductive reasoning, abduction shows how something might be, rather than proving that it must be a certain way, making it particularly useful for uncovering unexpected findings and generating new theoretical insights. Rinehart (2020) establishes abductive analysis as an iterative, back-and-forth process between

empirical observations and theoretical propositions, emphasising how this approach enables researchers to remain open to unexpected findings throughout their investigations. Building on this foundation, Thompson (2022) further develops the methodology by demonstrating how theoretical frameworks can guide the exploration of empirical findings without constraining researchers to fit data strictly within established theories. This methodological flexibility proves especially valuable for exploring the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women in liminal contexts.

Abductive reasoning is an iterative process where emerging observations continuously reshape theoretical frames. This allows the researcher to remain responsive to the complex, evolving realities of refugee women's entrepreneurship, moving between observation and theory to generate detailed understandings. Ethnographic methods anchored in abduction offer adaptability, responding to shifting research landscapes and a fluid research question, a challenge in strictly quantitative methods (Müller, 2021). Temporal bracketing in this research functions as an abductive tool to segment and analyse shifts in agency and power among refugee women entrepreneurs over time, allowing for a clearer understanding of their journey through liminal phases.

The abductive analysis seeks the most plausible theoretical conclusion based on observations. This approach underscores the structures that precipitate observed processes. By delving into the liminal space, a domain inherently opposed to established structures, the nuances of female refugee entrepreneurship come to the fore, challenging conventional notions of self-reliance through entrepreneurship. The concept of liminality, defined as a state between established identities, resonates with the poststructural commitment to deconstructing fixed power structures. It provides an analytical frame for exploring how refugee women renegotiate agency and identity through entrepreneurship.

Building on extant theories and emphasising the entrepreneurial mindset, the abductive method yields deeper insights into the observed processes and their contextual backdrop. The idea of liminality, especially amidst displacement, further evolves in this inquiry. The research process encompasses (1) qualitative research for detailed experiences, (2) a literature review for contextualisation, (3) combined induction and deduction for theory formulation, (4) a pilot study to hone the research design, and (5) the main study for comprehensive insights. The ultimate aim is a contextual model amplifying a Feminist Poststructural perspective on refugee women's entrepreneurial transition.

4.4.5 Synthesis - Philosophical Mapping

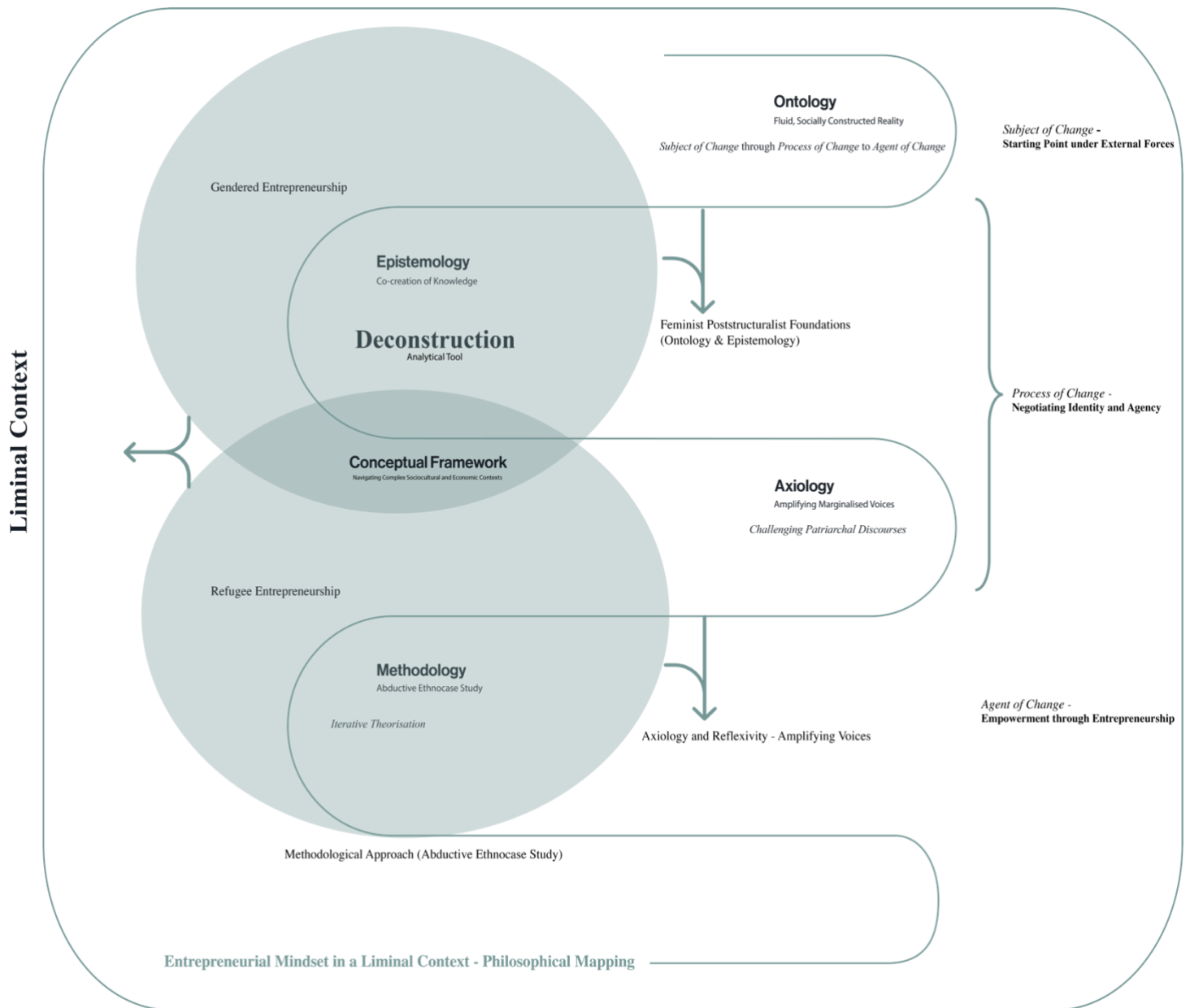


Figure 15. *Philosophical Mapping.* (Author's own)

As illustrated in Figure 15, this synthesis maps the ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological components that collectively inform understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women in a liminal context.

Ontological Alignment: The upper portion of the mapping positions Feminist Poststructuralist ontology as providing a crucial foundation, conceptualizing refugee

women's entrepreneurial experiences as fluid, socially constructed phenomena embedded within dynamic power relations (Højgaard and Søndergaard, 2011; Butler, 1993). This ontological stance, represented by the topmost arc, traces the progression from subjects of change to agents of change.

Epistemological Positioning: The mapping situates constructivist epistemology within the overlapping space between gendered and refugee entrepreneurship, informed by Feminist Poststructuralist thought. This intersection positions knowledge about refugee women's entrepreneurship as co-created through discursive and material engagement (Davies and Gannon, 2005). The central positioning of deconstruction as an analytical tool emphasises how refugee women renegotiate agency and identity within entrepreneurial venture creation (Rantala, 2019).

Axiological Commitments: The mapping's vertical alignment demonstrates how axiological considerations bridge theoretical foundations with methodological approaches. This structure reflects the critical examination of value systems and power dynamics inherent in studying marginalised communities (Indira, 2020; Maclaran and Stevens, 2019), illustrated through the connecting arrows that emphasise voice amplification and challenging patriarchal discourses.

Methodological Adaptation: The lower portion of the mapping shows how abductive reasoning and ethno-case study methodology provide flexibility in aligning theoretical pluralism with Feminist Poststructuralist elements (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013; Rinehart, 2020; Mohammed et al., 2015). This methodological stance, represented by the bottom arc, enables examination of how refugee women navigate power, identity, and agency within liminal entrepreneurial spaces.

This philosophical mapping illustrates the methodological integration of refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship perspectives, bound together through a

Feminist Poststructuralist theoretical lens (Ahl, 2006, 2017; Yadav and Unni, 2016). Figure 15 visualises this integration, demonstrating how these components cohere within the liminal context of refugee women's entrepreneurship while tracing the theoretical progression from '*subject of change*' to '*agent of change*'. This visualisation demonstrates the methodological rigour underpinning the conceptual framework developed in this thesis, while maintaining theoretical coherence with feminist poststructuralist inquiry. The mapping of these philosophical elements reveals how each component contributes to the investigation of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences within a liminal space.

4.5 Research Methodologies

4.5.1 Ethnographic Approach - Ethno-Case Study

Introduction to Methodology and Rationale

This research seeks to answer the question: *How do refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space?* Understanding this navigation requires a methodology that can capture three critical elements: the cognitive dimension of developing entrepreneurial thinking patterns, the emotional dimension of building business resilience, and the behavioural dimension of implementing entrepreneurial actions (Kuratko, Fisher and Auderetch, 2021). In ethnographic research, researchers adopt a flexible and iterative approach to gather data and develop insights into participants' experiences and perspectives (Whitehead, 2005).

The adoption of an ethno-case study approach responds to the established limitations of traditional methodologies in capturing women's entrepreneurial experiences, particularly within contexts of displacement and liminality. Standard research approaches often reproduce androcentric assumptions about entrepreneurship, failing to recognise how gender fundamentally shapes access to resources, opportunity recognition, and business development strategies (Marlow, 2020). By contrast, an ethno-case study approach enables a focus on lived experiences, capturing the gender-specific barriers that traditional methods often miss.

Furthermore, conventional methodological frameworks frequently overlook how power relations and structural constraints influence women's entrepreneurial activities, especially for marginalised groups such as refugee women (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013).

The unique attributes of refugee entrepreneurs, shaped by socio-cultural networks and collective resource mobilisation strategies, demand methodological approaches that can capture both individual agency and structural constraints (Bizri, 2017). The fragmented nature of entrepreneurial mindset research across disciplines has restricted understanding of

how different dimensions interact in entrepreneurial contexts, particularly under conditions of uncertainty and complexity (Daspit, Fox and Findley, 2023).

An ethno-case study methodology provides tools for examining how gender intersects with displacement status to shape entrepreneurial experiences within liminal spaces. This approach emerged from insights gained during the 2019-2020 pilot study, which revealed the inadequacy of structured approaches in capturing the complexity of women's entrepreneurial journeys. As Rantala (2020) argues, examining gender-specific challenges in entrepreneurship requires innovative methodological approaches that can reveal power dynamics and structural barriers while acknowledging women's agency.

The integration of ethnographic methods with case study analysis, complemented by Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA), enables examination of how refugee women develop entrepreneurial capabilities while navigating institutional constraints. This methodological framework provides mechanisms for analysing how gender shapes opportunity structures, resource access, and identity formation during the critical period of new venture creation.

Why this Approach?

The following section discusses why an ethno-case study was chosen as the methodological approach. This decision emerged as the most suitable for capturing the intricate experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs. By combining case study methodology with ethnographic techniques, this approach provided a way to explore deeply both the individual and collective aspects of their experiences during the critical phase of new venture creation. Parker-Jenkins (2018) suggests that a considerable number of scholars are not performing ethnography in the conventional manner. Instead, they are carrying out case studies that incorporate certain ethnographic methods. He proposes a new term, *ethno-case study*, to represent a hybrid with the advantages of both case study and ethnography. The

ethno-case study approach was specifically selected to answer how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset within liminal space, offering distinct methodological advantages that align with the research question's complexity.

The longitudinal nature of ethnographic observation enables monitoring of how entrepreneurial mindset develops across cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions within a liminal space (Kelly and McAdam, 2022). As participants navigate their transition from *subject* to *agent of change*, the sustained observation period reveals shifts in entrepreneurial thinking patterns, emotional resilience, and concrete business actions. Manning et al. (2019) demonstrate how this temporal dimension proves crucial for understanding the developmental nature of entrepreneurial mindset, particularly within the uncertain contexts that characterise liminal spaces.

Simultaneously, the case study component provides a framework for analysing how cultural transitions, support networks, and past experiences influence entrepreneurial mindset development. This contextual understanding shows the interplay between external factors and individual entrepreneurial mindset, revealing how refugee women adapt and develop their entrepreneurial thinking within specific circumstances. The ethno-case study approach enables deep examination of how participants process and respond to entrepreneurial opportunities while managing the complexities of their refugee status.

The ethnographic techniques allow observation of how mindset translates into concrete business decisions and problem-solving approaches. These real-time observations capture the practical manifestation of entrepreneurial thinking, demonstrating how theoretical mindset elements materialise in day-to-day business operations.

Furthermore, the combined methodology captures the complex process of entrepreneurial identity formation while managing refugee status. This dual focus reveals how participants develop their business identities within the constraints and opportunities

within a liminal space, showing how they navigate between established social structures and emerging entrepreneurial possibilities.

The integration of ethnographic methods with case study analysis proves particularly valuable for examining the research question's focus on navigation. Through sustained engagement with participants, this approach reveals how refugee women actively construct meaning within liminal spaces, developing entrepreneurial capabilities while managing various structural constraints. The methodology's emphasis on both individual agency and contextual factors enables comprehensive analysis of how entrepreneurial mindset emerges through dynamic interaction with liminal conditions.

Consideration of Alternative Approaches

Alternative methodologies were evaluated for their capacity to effectively capture the nuances of mindset development. Grounded Theory was considered for its systematic approach but ultimately deemed insufficient. Its primary focus on generating theoretical frameworks does not align with the goal of understanding the lived experience of mindset development. Additionally, the constant comparative method inherent in grounded theory risks fragmenting the continuous and fluid nature of mindset evolution. Senthanaar et al.'s (2020) application of grounded theory to Syrian refugee women entrepreneurs demonstrated this limitation. While their work successfully identified recurring entrepreneurial themes, the methodology's constant comparative method fragmented the continuous nature of mindset evolution. The segmentation inherent in grounded theory's coding process risked reducing the fluid development of entrepreneurial thinking to isolated theoretical constructs, potentially obscuring the dynamic nature of mindset formation within liminal space.

Phenomenology, while effective for capturing lived experience, proved insufficient for understanding how entrepreneurial mindset develops through interaction with evolving external circumstances. The methodology's emphasis on individual experience could not

adequately capture how cognitive thinking patterns, emotional resilience, and business behaviours emerge through engagement with structural forces identified in Chapter 3. Mawson and Kasem's (2019) phenomenological study of refugee entrepreneurs revealed crucial limitations for mindset research. Their work, while effectively capturing individual perceptions, struggled to account for the dynamic interplay between liminal experiences and entrepreneurial thinking development. The methodology's emphasis on individual experience proved insufficient for understanding how entrepreneurial mindset emerges through interaction with evolving external circumstances and social contexts. Furthermore, phenomenology's focus on capturing essence of experience did not adequately address the temporal dimension of mindset development crucial to this research.

The limitations of these alternative approaches highlighted the necessity of a methodology capable of capturing both the developmental nature of entrepreneurial mindset and its contextual manifestations. Ghanem's (2020) successful application of ethno-case study methodology to Syrian refugees in Amman demonstrated the approach's capacity for integrating observational insights with detailed personal narratives. This integration proves particularly crucial for understanding how refugee women develop and apply entrepreneurial thinking while navigating their liminal position. The methodology allows examination of mindset development as both an individual cognitive process and a socially situated practice, capturing the complex interplay between internal development and external manifestation of entrepreneurial thinking.

Advantages of Ethno-case Study for Research Context

This hybrid approach was particularly effective for addressing the research question due to the specific context of the participants, female refugee entrepreneurs navigating liminal spaces. The ethno-case study allowed for deep and ongoing observation, providing insights that a purely case study or purely ethnographic approach might have missed. This

was critical for understanding how these women transitioned from refugees to entrepreneurs within a context characterised by uncertainty and change.

According to Mahler and Pessar (2006), ethnography emphasises a comprehensive and reliant method that is particularly effective for exploring complicated ideas and experiences. In this research, the ethnographic techniques were chosen to allow the observation of participants over time, offering insights into the shifting identities and roles characteristic of the liminal space. This approach was particularly valuable in capturing participants' gendered experiences within the broader context of migration and entrepreneurship. Here, the ethnographer is principally concerned with observing and interviewing participants over a fixed period; therefore, it is specifically valuable for preliminary studies and conceptualisation. Mahler and Pessar (2006) further claim that ethnographic inquiries that bring gender into the discussions of the migration experience enrich the research considerably. Ethnography embodies an intuitive and adaptable method with what Delamont and Atkinson (2020) refer to as significant links to a range of different theoretical strands in the social sciences, including postmodernism.

Following this, the integration of Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) further strengthens the methodological choice. This analytical lens complements the ethnographic approach by critically examining the power dynamics inherent in the participants' experiences. As a postmodernist position, Feminist Poststructuralism allowed for a richer, more textured understanding of these women's evolving entrepreneurial identities.

Dissanayake and Pavlovich (2019) observe that case study research is ubiquitous in entrepreneurship research; however, they point out that it often lacks philosophical validation and epistemological and ontological scaffold. They note that many case study researchers do not realise that their case study method assumes a positivist stance, which may limit the

outcome's depth. Feminist Poststructuralism, as a postmodernist position, offers a richer and textured analysis particularly when exploring liminal spaces where multiple identities and power relations intersect.

Aldawod and Day (2017) questioned the appropriateness of postmodernism to underpin entrepreneurship research, they found that a lack of consensus on the definition of entrepreneurship, means that researchers accept the idea of multiple realities, which is a fundamental principle of postmodernist philosophy. It is important to reiterate that this case study draws on ethnographic methods.

How Ethno-Case Study was Implemented

The implementation of the ethno-case study methodology focused specifically on capturing entrepreneurial mindset development within a liminal space. The research centred on four refugee women during their early phases of entrepreneurship, selected through purposeful sampling based on their pilot study participation and demonstrated engagement with entrepreneurial activities. This selection strategy enabled deep examination of mindset development across cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions as participants navigated their entrepreneurial journeys.

The methodological implementation employed multiple data collection approaches to capture the complexity of entrepreneurial thinking development. Regular observation of business planning and decision-making processes revealed how participants developed and applied entrepreneurial logic. Informal discussions about business challenges and opportunities provided insight into evolving problem-solving approaches and opportunity recognition capabilities. Documentation of changes in business confidence and approach captured the temporal dimension of mindset development, while analysis of entrepreneurial identity formation revealed how participants reframed their self-conception within the business context.

Pilot Study as the Foundation for Methodological Choice

The methodological decisions were directly informed by insights gained during the pilot study. The pilot study revealed significant limitations in capturing how entrepreneurial mindset evolves. While structured approaches provided baseline understanding of business development, they could not adequately track the progression of entrepreneurial thinking, emotional capabilities, and concrete actions that emerged as participants navigated their liminal space, thus paving the way for the adoption of an ethno-case study. This choice was necessary for comprehensively understanding the challenges and opportunities that these refugee women confronted in the budding stages of entrepreneurship.

The pilot study involved pre-workshop interviews, a focus group, and an entrepreneurship workshop, along with semi-structured interviews conducted throughout. These initial approaches provided a structured, yet flexible, framework that offered essential learnings about the suitability of data collection tools. However, it also highlighted significant limitations in capturing the complex and multifaceted experiences of the participants as they navigated the liminal space, a contextual setting in this study, referring to the transformative period from refugee status to entrepreneurial identity.

Researcher-Participant Relationships

The next section will consider the evolving relationships between the researcher and the participants, focusing on how trust and rapport were developed through consistent, meaningful engagement. My relationship with the four female refugee entrepreneurs who participated in this study was a complex and developing one that evolved over four years, with each interaction contributing to a deeper understanding of their experiences (Hermanowicz, 2016; Neale, 2021). This level of engagement was critical for ensuring that the participants' voices were authentically represented and that the complexity of their journeys was appropriately captured.

Two of the participants I met through a refugee entrepreneurship mentoring programme, whilst the other two came to me through different channels (McLean and Campbell, 2003). One participant was introduced to me by a local volunteer from a refugee charity who had heard about my research. The second participant came to me after hearing about the pilot study through another participant. I did not approach any of the participants directly through any organisations, and participation in the study was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw at any time. However, following the pilot study, I made the decision to use purposeful sampling to focus specifically on these four participants for the ethno-case study. This was done to deepen the investigation into the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women. The selection was intentional because these individuals not only demonstrated openness to ongoing engagement but also represented diverse entrepreneurial experiences and challenges that were particularly relevant to the research objectives (Suri, 2011). This purposeful sampling strategy ensured that the richness of their experiences could be fully explored within the liminal space of new venture creation (Campbell et al., 2020).

Language proficiency emerged as a significant factor in how participants expressed and developed their entrepreneurial mindset. Three participants (the Yemeni, Eritrean, and Palestinian refugees) demonstrated fluency in English, enabling them to articulate their entrepreneurial thinking patterns and business strategies with greater precision. The Syrian participant, while less proficient in English, revealed different but equally valuable manifestations of entrepreneurial mindset through her actions and business development. These variations in language capability influenced how participants processed business opportunities, managed emotional challenges, and implemented entrepreneurial strategies. Their diverse linguistic backgrounds enriched understanding of how entrepreneurial mindset develops across cultural and communicative contexts within liminal spaces.

During the pilot study workshop (Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022; Street and Ng, 2024) the three fluent English speakers took on the role of facilitators, while the Syrian participant took part as a participant. Despite the language barrier, the Syrian participant's experience as a refugee woman entrepreneur was valuable to the study. Including participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can greatly enrich the depth and representativeness of research findings, ensuring a broader perspective that incorporates underrepresented experiences (Gibbs et al., 2023). She was selected as a case study participant because she had successfully moved from intention to startup, which was a significant accomplishment. She had also attended the initial meeting at my home, where the refugee women's entrepreneurship workshop was created, demonstrating her interest and commitment to entrepreneurship. This highlights the importance of including participants with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in this ethno-case study. It provided unique insights and perspectives that may not have been present in a more homogenous group. In this case, the inclusion of a participant who did not speak fluent English allowed for a more intricate understanding of the experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs, particularly those who face additional challenges related to language barriers.

Over the course of the study, I made regular visits either to participants' homes or to a chosen meet-up spot. In addition, early on in the research journey, I was invited to the home of one of the participants for dinner, which provided me with a deeper understanding of her cultural background and daily life outside of her entrepreneurial activities. This experience also helped to build trust and rapport between us, which further enhanced our ethnographic relationship. In addition, I also invited each participant into my own home, where we would often share a meal or chat over tea. This helped to build rapport and a sense of mutual trust and also helped to bridge some of the cultural and linguistic barriers that might have otherwise impeded our communication. Informal settings are instrumental in ethnographic

research as they enable the development of trust and rapport between researchers and participants. Interactions in casual, social environments often lead to deeper immersion, allowing researchers to access insights and perspectives that might not surface in more structured, formal interactions (Nair, 2021).

One of the participants spent a weekend with her two children at my home, which allowed us to spend more time together outside of the formal interviews. During this time, we cooked together and shared meals, and we also had informal conversations about her entrepreneurial journey and personal experiences. Sharing meals and informal conversations provided insights into how participants developed their entrepreneurial mindset within cultural and social contexts. These intimate settings revealed how women processed business challenges cognitively, managed emotional responses to setbacks, and formulated strategic actions while navigating their liminal status.

Another participant regularly visited my family home, and we developed a close friendship over time. She even spent Christmas with us one year, which was a meaningful experience for both of us. This level of intimacy and trust allowed for more in-depth and complex conversations about her personal and entrepreneurial ventures, which I incorporated into my ethnographic data. It also highlighted the hierarchical potential at play in our relationship, as I was aware of the possibility for my position as a researcher to impact our interactions and her willingness to share her experiences with me. Managing power imbalances between researchers and participants is a recognised challenge in ethnographic research, often requiring intentional strategies to mitigate these dynamics (Kaaristo, 2022; Sapkota, 2024). Therefore, I made sure to be transparent about my role and intentions throughout our relationship to foster a more open and equitable dialogue.

The nature of the study meant that these four participants also formed a wider network with each other, and we came together in my home with other refugee women entrepreneurs

to work on the visualisation and creation of a refugee women's entrepreneurship workshop. We also went away together as a group to run this two-day entrepreneurial workshop for other refugee women, which served as the pilot study for this thesis.

The shared experience of going away together to run the two-day entrepreneurial workshop was a significant aspect of the wider network formed by the four participants in this study. The bonding that occurred during this shared experience, along with the visualisation and creation of the workshop in my home, as well as facilitating the pilot study, contributed to the building of trust and a sense of shared friendship among the participants. This camaraderie was insightful to observe as the women shared their experiences, frustrations and insights on creating and managing their new ventures. The collaborative creation and delivery of the entrepreneurship workshop demonstrated collective manifestations of entrepreneurial mindset. Participants drew upon their developing cognitive capabilities, emotional resilience, and practical business experience to design content for other refugee women.

I did not observe all of them in their workplaces or daily activities, as their entrepreneurial ventures were done on the side of their primary jobs. However, I did have the opportunity to visit the pop-up restaurant of one of the participants and to try the delicious Yemeni food she had created. I also regularly visited the food stall where one of the participants worked. In addition, I attended events related to the entrepreneurship mentoring programme where two participants were involved, providing me with insights into their networking and business development activities.

I conducted multiple in-depth interviews with each participant, which typically lasted between 1 and 2 hours. These interviews were conversational and focused on the participants' experiences as female refugee entrepreneurs and their personal backgrounds and histories.

As I got to know each participant better, I found that our relationship evolved from purely professional to friendship and trust. We would often chat informally about our families, hobbies, and interests, and I found that this helped to build rapport and a sense of mutual respect. I was always mindful of the dynamics of power inherent in the researcher-participant relationship and was transparent about my role and responsibilities as a researcher. I also made sure to allow participants to share their perspectives and experiences and express their opinions and ideas freely. Navigating power dynamics in this kind of research is always a delicate matter. However, being sensitive to the participants' needs and concerns while maintaining a professional and ethical approach was crucial for building trust and rapport. Ultimately, I believe my relationship with each participant helped produce more nuanced and insightful data while ensuring that their voices and experiences were heard and valued.

As part of my commitment to ethical research practices, I allowed each participant to read what I had written about them and their experiences and provide feedback and corrections as needed. This helped to ensure that their perspectives were accurately represented and also helped to reinforce our ongoing relationship of trust and respect. Through conducting the ethno-case study and building trust with the participants, I could observe how entrepreneurial mindset manifested across multiple dimensions. Regular interactions revealed the cognitive development of opportunity recognition capabilities, emotional growth in business resilience and confidence, and behavioural evolution in strategic decision-making. I believe that without the context of the ethno-case study, it would have been difficult to gain such depth of understanding about mindset development.

Document analysis provided insight into how structural forces shaped entrepreneurial mindset development. Government policies, media coverage, and institutional materials revealed the broader context within which refugee women developed their entrepreneurial capabilities across cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions. Document analysis is an

integral component of ethnographic research, helping to provide context and depth to the findings by examining relevant materials such as government reports, media, and institutional records (de Carvalho, 2022). This provided insight into the broader cultural and social context in which these refugee women entrepreneurs were situated.

Through my interactions with each participant, I found that some preferred communicating through text or voice messages, while others preferred face-to-face interactions. Therefore, I adapted my communication style to suit their preferences and built rapport. Throughout the study, I kept field notes, documenting my observations and reflections on the interactions and experiences with the participants.

Derridean deconstruction and FPDA enabled examination of how power dynamics influenced entrepreneurial mindset development. This analytical approach revealed how gender norms and refugee status shaped participants' entrepreneurial thinking patterns, emotional responses to business challenges, and strategic actions in pursuing ventures.

The data collected from interviews, including my own observations and field notes, were analysed using Derridean deconstruction and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA). Derridean deconstruction allowed me to critically interrogate the language used by participants, unearthing the implicit power structures and embedded societal norms that influence their experiences as female refugee entrepreneurs. This approach aligns with Adil, Yasin, and Shahed's (2022) methodological work, which emphasises how deconstruction can uncover traditional gender norms within discourse and reveal how they are both reproduced and resisted. Their analysis provides a strong foundation for the utility of deconstruction in examining the nuanced interplay of gender, identity, and power relations.

FPDA enabled examination of how gender and power dynamics influenced entrepreneurial mindset development. This analytical approach revealed how societal structures shaped participants' business thinking patterns, emotional responses to challenges,

and strategic entrepreneurial actions within their liminal space. Umer, Sumaira, Maryam, and Sajid (2021) demonstrated the effectiveness of FPDA when paired with deconstruction in their study, where they analysed the construction and evolution of female identities through literary discourse. Similarly, my research uses FPDA to explore how female refugee entrepreneurs navigate their gendered identities within the entrepreneurial liminal space, providing an essential lens for understanding how power dynamics influence their journeys. This approach allowed for a critical examination of the power relations and discourses underlying the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs in the UK. In addition, the ethnographic approach facilitated a deep understanding of the challenges faced by these women, and the researcher-participant relationships allowed for a collaborative and participatory process where the participants could share their perspectives and experiences meaningfully.

Feminist Poststructuralism and Ethnography

St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) suggests that ethnography within a Poststructural frame considers the researcher, the researcher's authority, and the reader as questionable. Conducting an ethno-case study on refugee women entrepreneurs within a Poststructural lens reveals the kaleidoscopic interplay of biases, perspectives, and positionality that inevitably shape the research process and its outcomes. This recognition requires an acceptance that authority and interpretation of data are always in flux and must be understood as 'questionable'. The reality constructed about the subjects studied is not neutral or fixed but dynamically assembled through shifting perspectives and multiplicities of interpretation.

Figure 16 (p.235) illustrates how this Feminist Poststructural frame encompasses the ethno-case study approach, with the outer circle symbolising the methodological boundary in which the research takes place, viewing the liminal space through the kaleidoscopic lens of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation.

The research subjects, the refugee women, do not have fixed or stable identities; rather, their identities are multiple, fluid, and continuously evolving. Within this complexity lies their entrepreneurial mindset, characterized by resilience, adaptability, and innovation. As depicted in Figure 16, this fluidity is reflected within the liminal space of the ethno-case study framework, where cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions interact dynamically throughout the process of change. The context of forced migration and experiences of displacement significantly shape how these entrepreneurs perceive and construct their identities and experiences. It is crucial for readers to critically engage with this research, questioning both the authority and interpretation of the data. Reflection on biases and perspectives regarding the experiences of female refugees is vital (Krause, 2017).

In methodological terms, ethnography serves as the research method, while Feminist Poststructuralism functions as the theoretical perspective. The kaleidoscopic nature of this integration is demonstrated in Figure 16, which shows how the ethno-case study approach provides the contextual frame, while the Feminist Poststructural lens is constantly shifting, examining refugee women's experiences from multiple and intersecting perspectives. Although they occupy different roles, these methodologies share similar epistemological principles. The aim of an ethno-case study is to capture the viewpoints and experiences of refugee women, and by aligning this approach with Feminist Poststructuralism, the emphasis is on illuminating the diverse, sometimes contradictory voices of marginalised groups, while recognising how power dynamics shape the production of knowledge. This alignment provides a more layered and kaleidoscopic understanding of refugee women's experiences, particularly by emphasising the influence of gender, race, class, and other social determinants on their everyday lives.

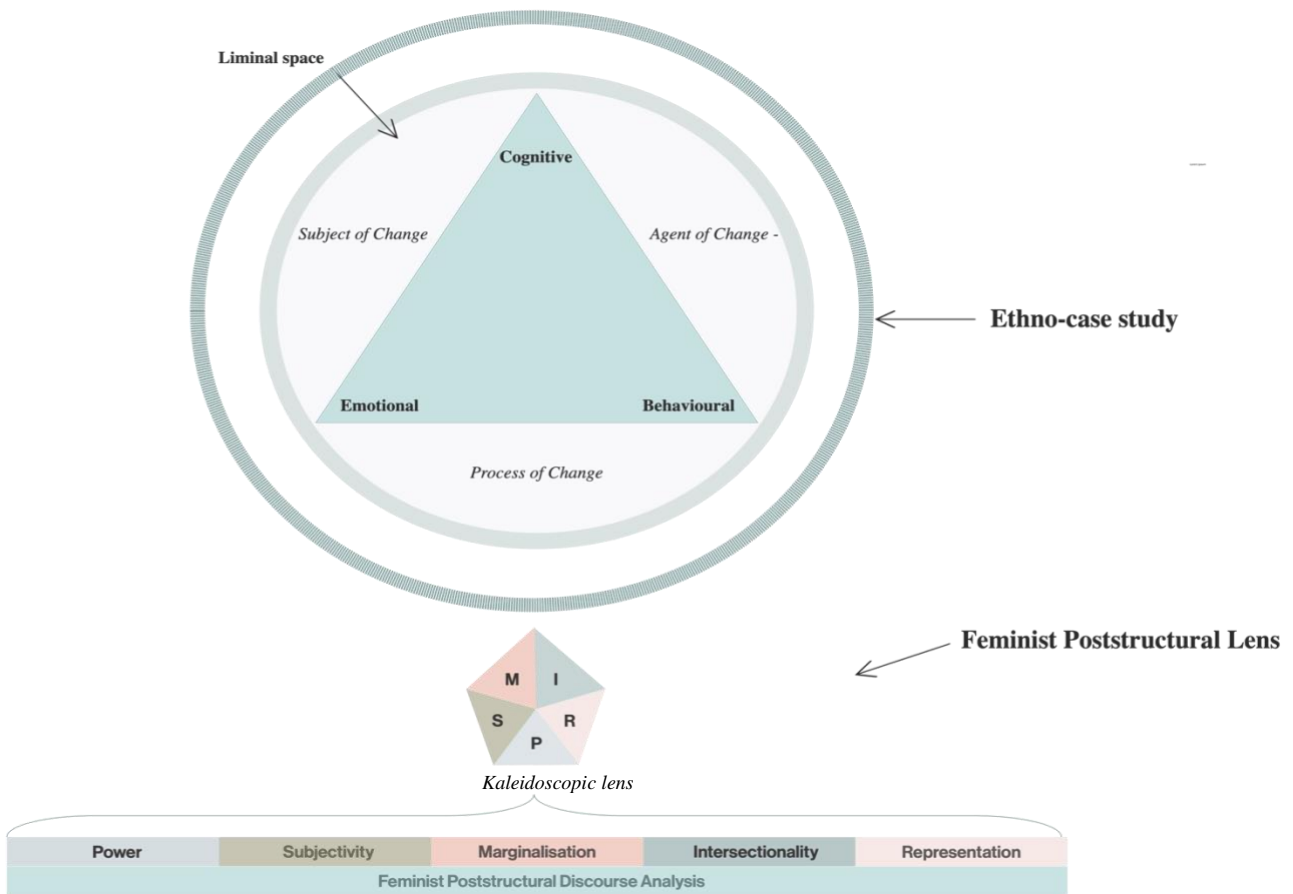


Figure 16. *Ethno-Case Study Analysis through Feminist Poststructural Lens* (Author’s own)

Knowledge emerges from social interactions and experiences rather than existing as something objective or neutral (Goldman,1999). Grasping how the studied individuals construct their knowledge through multiple lenses offers a richer understanding of their complex experiences. By integrating ethnography with Feminist Poststructuralism, the resultant knowledge becomes more inclusive, profoundly context-specific and reflective of a broader spectrum of realities. The Feminist Poststructural lens prompts continuous reflexivity regarding positioning and potential biases, underscoring the importance of considering how participants actively construct their knowledge within intersecting structures of power (Soedirgo and Glas, 2020; Davis and Khonach, 2020).

Integrating ethnographic methods with Feminist Poststructuralism offers a kaleidoscopic lens that reveals how the entrepreneurial mindset takes shape within liminal spaces, shaped by the interplay of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation.

As illustrated in Figure 16, this methodological frame provides a structured yet shifting approach for examining how the entrepreneurial mindset develops within the liminal space, with the kaleidoscopic lens focusing on power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation to understand how gendered power structures continually shape these experiences. This approach recognises that entrepreneurial thinking, emotional resilience, and business behaviours evolve through complex, multifaceted interactions between individual agency and structural constraints.

Ethnography, as a method, allows researchers to immerse themselves in the social worlds of their subjects, thereby gaining first hand insights into their kaleidoscopic realities (Behar, 2022; Kostrosits, 2023). This aligns seamlessly with the Feminist Poststructuralist perspective, which prioritises on comprehending the diverse perspectives of marginalised groups (Jovchelovitch, 2019; Lombardo and Kantola, 2021). The outcome of this integration is the production of knowledge that is not only more inclusive but also significantly more context-specific, capable of capturing the multifaceted realities faced by refugee women, while continually acknowledging the pervasive influence of power dynamics and societal structures on their experiences.

Moreover, Feminist Poststructuralism serves as a catalyst for reflexivity among researchers, urging them to critically examine their own positions, assumptions, and potential biases throughout the research process (Jamieson, Govaart, and Pownall, 2023; Savolainen et al., 2023). Such reflexivity is indispensable for navigating the research process with sensitivity and openness. By understanding their own position within the kaleidoscope of

perspectives, researchers can minimise the risk of inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes or perpetuating power imbalances, ultimately contributing to more ethical and equitable research practices.

Having established the effectiveness of the ethno-case study approach in capturing the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset among female refugee entrepreneurs, it becomes essential to delve deeper into the underlying power dynamics and discursive constructions that shape their experiences. The complexities of identity formation, agency, and structural constraints call for an analytical framework capable of critically examining these facets. Therefore, the next section introduces Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA), providing a rationale for its selection over alternative approaches like Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This discussion will explore why FPDA is particularly suited to this research context, highlighting its advantages in analysing the intricate interplay of gender, power, and identity among female refugee entrepreneurs. Additionally, it will detail how FPDA was implemented in this study to enhance understanding of how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset in the liminal space.

4.5.2 Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA)

Introduction

Building from the ethno-case study approach, this section introduces Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) as the analytical lens for interpreting how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset. Through FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens encompassing power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation (Figure 17), the analysis reveals how these women develop and express entrepreneurial thinking within a liminal space. Riach (2023) observes, Feminist Poststructural Analysis offers an effective framework for exploring how power and identity dynamics unfold within specific social contexts. While FPDA provides powerful insights, critiques regarding its micro-level focus and potential researcher bias are acknowledged. These critiques are mitigated by integrating Derridean deconstruction to account for broader systemic dynamics and by maintaining rigorous reflexivity throughout the research process, ensuring findings remain contextually grounded and transparent.

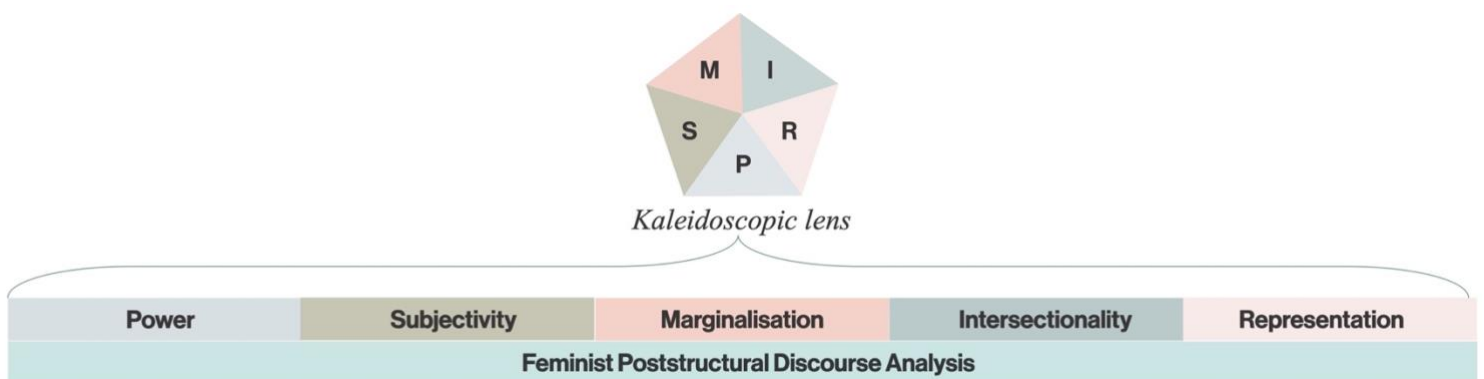


Figure 17. *A Kaleidoscopic Lens: Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (Author's own)*

This section begins by examining FPDA's theoretical foundations. Baxter (2008) establishes FPDA as a feminist perspective for analysing how individuals negotiate identities through interrelated yet conflicting discourses (Glapka, 2018). Key principles include

examining discourse as social practice, recognising the performative nature of identity, and maintaining critical self-reflexivity in analysis (Baxter, 2003). FPDA integrates feminist and poststructural theories to examine how language constructs and maintains gendered power relationships within entrepreneurial contexts.

Next, the discussion explores the advantages of FPDA over alternative approaches, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). While CDA focuses on systemic inequalities and dominant ideologies (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Fairclough, 2013), FPDA examines the fluid, contextual nature of power relations (Baxter, 2003; Seliga, 2023). Table 2 (p. 256) details this comparison, demonstrating why FPDA's emphasis on localised power dynamics aligns with studying how refugee women develop entrepreneurial mindset within liminal spaces.

FPDA's specific advantages for this research include its capacity to reveal intersectional experiences and fluid power relations. As Weedon and Hallak (2021) argue, FPDA enables examination of how gender, refugee status, and entrepreneurial thinking interact to shape women's experiences. The approach reveals how these women both reproduce and resist dominant entrepreneurial narratives while navigating structural barriers.

The section concludes by detailing FPDA's implementation through analysis of interviews, observations and documentary evidence. This analytical process examines patterns in language use that reflect power relations, while maintaining researcher reflexivity regarding positionality and interpretation. Through this structured application of FPDA, the research reveals how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space.

Theoretical Explanation of FPDA

Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) evolved from Weedon's (1987) foundational work on feminist poststructuralism and language analysis. Baxter (2003)

developed this theoretical foundation into a systematic analytical approach for examining how individuals negotiate identities through discourse. Baxter (2008) further conceptualises FPDA as a feminist perspective revealing how women navigate complex power relations and construct meaning within social contexts. This theoretical foundation proves particularly relevant for examining how refugee women develop entrepreneurial mindset, as demonstrated by Marlow and McAdam's (2015) analysis of women's entrepreneurial identity work and Yeröz's (2019) examination of immigrant women entrepreneurs' identity construction.

At its core, FPDA centres on the discursive construction of subjectivity, viewing discourse as an active social practice rather than passive reflection of reality (Weedon and Hallak, 2021). Key theoretical principles established by Baxter (2003, 2008) include recognising the performative nature of identity, acknowledging identity's inherent multiplicity, examining context-specific meaning construction, challenging binary power relations through deconstruction, and maintaining critical self-reflexivity in analysis.

The integration of feminist and poststructural theories within FPDA provides critical analytical tools for examining how language constructs and sustains gendered power relationships. Riach (2023) further emphasises the potential of FPDA to interrogate how intersecting power relations are mediated through discourse. As Glapka (2014) outlines, FPDA shares with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) a focus on language's centrality in shaping power dynamics. However, FPDA diverges by prioritising the micro-level of lived experiences, emphasising the local configurations of power and the continuous reconstruction of identities through discourse. This lens is particularly significant in feminist scholarship as it moves beyond macro-level generalisations to reveal the ways in which language operates as a site of both domination and resistance. By engaging deeply with poststructuralist

insights, FPDA underscores that language does not merely reflect reality but actively constitutes it, thereby shaping the possibilities for agency and representation.

This perspective is invaluable for exploring gendered power dynamics in contexts where marginalised voices, such as those of refugee women entrepreneurs, challenge dominant narratives. It highlights how discursive practices perpetuate or contest hierarchies, offering a robust framework for analysing the interplay of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality and representation.

As Gill (2014) argues, discourse analysis reveals how individuals build identities and navigate contested participation within social contexts. This theoretical integration enables examination of how refugee women both reproduce and resist dominant discourses while developing entrepreneurial mindset (McPherson, 2010; Skran and Easton-Calabria, 2020).

FPDA emphasises examining cultural variables in identity construction while recognising the interconnectedness of different discourses (Baxter, 2003). This theoretical perspective acknowledges that speakers' identities emerge through complex interactions between multiple discourses rather than existing as fixed categories (Baxter, 2016). Critical self-reflection remains essential when analysing discourse through FPDA, requiring researchers to examine their own positionality and assumptions (Seliga, 2023)

Baxter (2008) describes Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) as a feminist perspective that examines how individuals negotiate their identities, relationships, and positions in the world based on the interrelated yet conflicting discourses that define them. To clarify, Gill (2014) explains that understanding a discourse can help us to think about how people build their identities, make sense of their intention and manoeuvre contested participation and assumptions.

FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens, encompassing power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation, provides a comprehensive approach for analysing the

discursive construction of identities and social relations within a broader conceptual framework. This multifaceted lens aligns with the key principles of FPDA, which include viewing discourse as a social practice, recognising the performative nature of speakers' identities, acknowledging the diversity and multiplicity of speakers' identities, considering context-specific settings and communities of practice in constructing meaning, challenging binary power relations through deconstruction, recognising inter-discursivity, and emphasising continuous self-reflexivity (Baxter, 2003; 2008).

You've correctly identified another instance where you can incorporate the kaleidoscopic lens metaphor to maintain consistency in your description of FPDA. Here's how you can integrate the metaphor into the passage you provided:

The key principle of FPDA is based on the discursive construction of subjectivity. This includes viewing discourse as a social practice, recognising the performative nature of speakers' identities, acknowledging the diversity and multiplicity of speakers' identities, considering context-specific settings and communities of practice in constructing meaning, challenging binary power relations through deconstruction, recognising inter-discursivity, and emphasising continuous self-reflexivity (Baxter, 2003; 2008). FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens, encompassing power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation, enables a multifaceted analysis of these aspects. Furthermore, FPDA recognises the importance of considering other cultural variables in constructing speakers' identities and acknowledges the interconnectedness of discourse and texts with other discourses. Additionally, critical self-reflection is essential when analysing and interpreting discourse through the kaleidoscopic lens of FPDA (Baxter, 2008).

For this study, this method is understood to analyse language and discourse that combines feminist theory with Poststructural theory. It emphasises how language and discourse are used to construct and maintain social power relationships, particularly those

related to gender. FPDA also examines how these power relationships are reinforced and resisted through language and discourse and how they shape our understanding of the world. This method is beneficial for critically analysing texts, discourses and practices to reveal how gender relations are constructed and perpetuated in society.

As a researcher approaching the study of refugee women entrepreneurs from a Feminist Poststructural perspective, I employed a Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) to understand how power relations and discourses shape the experiences of these women. In particular, FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens allowed me to examine how language and discourse are utilised to construct knowledge and shape social reality and how power relations influence these constructions.

During my analysis, I was particularly interested in understanding how the discourse around refugee women entrepreneurs is constructed and how this construction impacts the experiences of these women. I accomplished this by analysing the language and discourse in the data collected from the case study, including interviews, observations, and other relevant materials. I looked for patterns in the language and discourse used, such as the use of specific terms or phrases, and how these patterns reflect and reinforce power relations. Additionally, I acknowledged my position as a researcher and how it might have influenced my research and analysis. Through this process, I could better understand how the discourse around refugee women entrepreneurs shapes their experiences and how power relations influence these experiences.

Baxter (2008) suggests that FPDA can provide a means to challenge dominant discourses and amplify the voices of marginalised individuals, such as women who are silenced or overlooked in management settings. However, FPDA mustn't support any agenda that may become, in Foucault's terms (1980, pp. 109), a '*regime of truth*' or '*regime of power*,' which can lead to the creation of its own '*grand narrative*.' Instead, FPDA is most

effective in small-scale, ethnographic case studies that allow subjects to have some degree of agency to change their conditions (Baxter, 2008). Furthermore, unlike other forms of critical discourse analysis with an emancipatory agenda, FPDA values complexity over the polarisation of subjects into powerful and less powerful categories.

Rationale for Choosing Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA)

The methodological choices for this research, Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) and an ethno-case study, merged from both theoretical considerations and practical insights gleaned from the pilot study. This dual approach was chosen to deeply explore the intersection of identity, power, and the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women in a liminal space, with careful attention to the challenges presented by language and translation, participant empowerment, and the need for ethical sensitivity in research design.

Evolution of Methodological Approach

The evolution of the methodological approach can be divided into three distinct periods, as reflected in the temporal bracketing of the research (Figure 14, p.187). Initially, the pilot study (2019-2020) aimed to explore the feasibility of engaging a larger sample of participants through various methods, including pre- and post-workshop interviews, focus groups, and an entrepreneurship workshop. This pilot study revealed significant challenges in using interpreter-mediated interviews, particularly regarding the depth of engagement. At the time of the pilot study, I was not yet aware of FPDA as a potential analytical tool. However, the challenges that emerged highlighted the need for a more intricate approach to discourse analysis, ultimately leading to the adoption of FPDA in the subsequent phases. As a result, the methodological direction shifted to an ethno-case study approach during the second period (2020-2021). It was during this phase that I adopted Feminist Poststructuralism and FPDA as theoretical and analytical lenses, followed by the integration of Derridean Deconstruction in the final period (2021-2023) to deepen the analysis.

Challenges of Translation and Interpretation

The pilot study's findings underscored significant challenges in conducting interpreter-mediated research, particularly when employing FPDA as an analytical tool. FPDA's primary focus is on how power, subjectivities, and identities are discursively constructed. This requires a nuanced understanding of the linguistic cues, rhetorical strategies, and subtle shifts in tone that participants use to negotiate meaning. During the pilot, it became evident that participants who required interpreters struggled to convey the complexity of their experiences, often resulting in a loss of depth and a dilution of meaning. In contrast, facilitators who communicated directly in English offered richer, more theoretically valuable data, especially regarding concepts like identity transition, cultural navigation, and articulating the entrepreneurial mindset.

Relying on interpreters inadvertently introduced additional layers of meaning-making, whereby the translator's subjectivity could influence how narratives were constructed and presented. This directly impacted the authenticity of participants' voices and ultimately compromised the depth of discourse analysis that FPDA demands. Consequently, while prioritising participants who were fluent in English emerged as a methodological refinement, I also included one non-English speaker (RE4) as part of the four key participants, utilising an interpreter to ensure inclusivity. This approach balanced the need for rich, complex data while maintaining the diverse representation of voices, acknowledging the complexities and challenges involved in interpreter-mediated communication.

Participant Empowerment and Reflexivity

FPDA, rooted in Feminist Poststructuralism, aims to empower marginalised voices through critical engagement with language and reflexivity. The pilot study showed the limitations that arise when participants are unable to fully articulate their experiences due to language barriers. Empowerment, within the FPDA context, hinges on participants being able

to navigate and reflect on their narratives in depth, critically assessing how their identities are constructed, how power relations operate, and how they articulate and develop their entrepreneurial mindset within their entrepreneurial journeys. The facilitators' ability to communicate directly in English allowed them to engage in this reflexive process far more effectively, providing insights that were rich in both depth and complexity.

The practical implication here is twofold: firstly, ensuring language proficiency among participants is essential for maximising the depth and quality of reflexive engagement; secondly, the need for such proficiency presents an ethical dilemma. Excluding participants based on language fluency risks reinforcing existing inequalities and marginalizing non-English speakers. To address this, the research design incorporated careful consideration of ethical sensitivity, including the potential for using supplementary visual or participatory methods in future iterations to enhance expressiveness without relying solely on language.

Practical Implications and Methodological Refinement

The methodological pivot towards depth over breadth, focusing on four key participants who could communicate fluently in English, allowed for greater theoretical sophistication in understanding refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys. The initial research design aimed for a broad participant base, but the richness of the data provided by the facilitators led to a significant shift. By concentrating on these participants, who acted not only as informants but also as co-constructors of knowledge, the research was able to delve deeper into the intersections of power, identity, and liminality. Their multiple roles as refugees, entrepreneurs, and mentors provided unique perspectives that enriched the theoretical framework, highlighting how power dynamics, identity shifts, and the articulation of an entrepreneurial mindset are navigated within liminal entrepreneurial spaces.

The ethno-case study approach was crucial in this context. It enabled a detailed examination of the facilitators' lived experiences, taking into account both their individual

narratives and the broader socio-cultural contexts within which they operate (Gallant, 2008). The ethno-case study approach allowed for an exploration of identity construction not as a static or isolated phenomenon but as a dynamic process shaped by interactions, discourses, and power relations within the entrepreneurial context. Moreover, the emphasis on insider perspectives, facilitators who had shared experiences as refugee women entrepreneurs was instrumental in capturing the nuanced ways in which these women navigated their entrepreneurial journeys, managed cultural expectations, and exercised agency.

Why this Approach?

The selection of Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) as the analytical framework for examining refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences emerges from both theoretical imperatives and empirical considerations. While alternative discourse analysis approaches exist, FPDA offers distinct advantages for investigating how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset within liminal spaces. This section establishes the theoretical and practical rationale for employing FPDA, examining its specific strengths for analyzing the complex power relations and identity constructions inherent in refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys.

FPDA's theoretical alignment with the research aims proves particularly salient. The approach's emphasis on examining localised power relations and fluid subjectivities aligns with the study's focus on how refugee women develop entrepreneurial mindset within liminal spaces. As Baxter (2003) argues, FPDA enables examination of how individuals negotiate multiple, often competing discourses - a central consideration when studying refugee women entrepreneurs who simultaneously navigate displacement, gender expectations, and entrepreneurial demands. This theoretical foundation provides analytical tools for examining how these women develop entrepreneurial thinking while managing various structural constraints.

FPDA's emphasis on facilitating localised, grassroots change makes it especially suitable for this research. Its focus on small-scale social change provides an ideal lens through which to examine how refugee women use entrepreneurship to reshape their circumstances. Additionally, FPDA's theoretical framework acknowledges that individuals move fluidly between positions of power and constraint, making it particularly valuable for understanding how refugee women entrepreneurs manage their overlapping identities and navigate varying degrees of agency within entrepreneurial spaces (Frost and Elichaooff, 2013).

The framework's capacity to reveal intersectional experiences represents another crucial advantage. While Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines systemic inequalities through broader societal structures, FPDA's attention to contextual power dynamics enables deeper investigation of how gender, refugee status, and entrepreneurial mindset intersect in specific situations. This granular focus proves essential for understanding how refugee women both reproduce and resist dominant entrepreneurial narratives while navigating structural barriers. As Weedon and Hallak (2021) demonstrate, FPDA reveals how marginalised individuals exercise agency within constraining circumstances, a key consideration for studying entrepreneurial mindset development.

FPDA's approach to reflexivity extends beyond simple acknowledgment of researcher position, recognising research practices themselves as inherently discursive and textual in nature (Frost and Elichaooff, 2013). This deeper understanding of reflexivity suggests that researchers are constrained by available subject positions in much the same way as their participants. This insight is particularly valuable when studying refugee women entrepreneurs, as it demands transparency about how the researcher's own position shapes not only data collection and interpretation, but also how knowledge is co-constructed between researcher and participants. This co-constructed nature of knowledge must be acknowledged within academic conventions. Such methodological awareness strengthens the

rigour of the analysis while maintaining sensitivity to power dynamics throughout the research process.

The framework's resistance to binary categorisations of power represents another theoretical strength. Rather than positioning refugee women entrepreneurs as uniformly disadvantaged, FPDA examines how power operates through multiple, intersecting channels across contexts (Frost and Elichaooff, 2013). This analytical flexibility enables investigation of how individuals simultaneously occupy positions of constraint and agency. As demonstrated by Marlow and Martinez Dy (2018), such analysis reveals how marginalised entrepreneurs navigate complex power relations while developing entrepreneurial capabilities. This theoretical stance is particularly valuable for understanding how refugee women entrepreneurs may experience marginalisation in some contexts while exercising significant influence in others, actively constructing and negotiating their entrepreneurial identities across different social and business spaces.

FPDA's integration with ethnographic methods provides practical advantages for data collection and analysis. The approach's attention to situated meaning-making aligns with ethnographic observation of how refugee women construct entrepreneurial identities through daily practices and interactions. This methodological synergy enables examination of both explicit discourse and implicit meaning-making processes that shape entrepreneurial mindset development.

Furthermore, FPDA's theoretical roots in feminist poststructuralism provide analytical tools for examining how gender shapes entrepreneurial experiences. The approach reveals how gendered expectations and power relations influence refugee women's access to resources, legitimacy, and opportunities. This gender-sensitive analysis proves essential for understanding barriers and enablers to entrepreneurial mindset development.

The selection of FPDA also emerged from practical insights gained during pilot research. Initial investigations revealed the need for analytical tools capable of examining complex power dynamics and identity constructions. FPDA's theoretical sophistication provided frameworks for analysing how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial spaces while managing various social expectations and structural constraints.

FPDA's apparent limitations, such as its resistance to universal truths and emphasis on multiple voices, actually strengthen its suitability for studying refugee women entrepreneurs. As Frost and Elichhoff (2013) argue, these characteristics enable a more sophisticated analysis of diverse experiences and complex power relations. While CDA focuses on broader systemic inequalities, FPDA's attention to multiple, localised experiences and its commitment to deconstructing power structures within discourse makes it particularly appropriate for examining how refugee women develop entrepreneurial mindset within specific contexts. This theoretical position acknowledges the complexity of their experiences without attempting to reduce them to a single narrative.

Through its integration of feminist and poststructural perspectives, FPDA enables examination of how refugee women construct entrepreneurial identities while navigating displacement and gender expectations. This theoretical foundation provides analytical tools for investigating mindset development within liminal spaces characterised by uncertainty. The approach's attention to power, subjectivity, and agency aligns with the study's aims of understanding how refugee women develop entrepreneurial capabilities despite structural barriers.

The theoretical and practical advantages of FPDA for examining refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences establish its suitability as an analytical framework. However, this methodological choice requires further contextualisation through comparison with alternative discourse analysis approaches. CDA, in particular, shares FPDA's concern with power

relations and social practices, yet diverges in significant theoretical and analytical aspects. Examining these distinctions illuminates FPDA's specific contributions to understanding how refugee women develop entrepreneurial mindset within liminal spaces.

This comparative analysis provides foundation for subsequent discussion of FPDA's practical implementation in analysing how gender, displacement, and entrepreneurial identity intersect in refugee women's experiences. The following section examines these methodological alternatives before detailing how FPDA was operationalised within the research design to reveal complex power dynamics and identity constructions in entrepreneurial contexts.

Consideration of Alternative Approaches

While both Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and FPDA examine the relationship between language, power, and social practices, they differ fundamentally in their theoretical foundations, analytical focus, and methodological approaches. Table 2, (p.252) provides a systematic comparison of these approaches across key dimensions, highlighting FPDA's particular advantages for studying refugee women entrepreneurs and its alignment with my research philosophy.

Dimension	Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)	Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA)	Advantages of FPDA for Studying Female Refugee Entrepreneurs	My Perspective and Philosophical Alignment as Researcher
Philosophical Foundation	Rooted in critical theory, focusing on structural inequalities and how language reflects and reproduces power dynamics.	Rooted in feminist and poststructuralist theories, focusing on multiplicity, fluidity, and context-specific power relations.	Addresses the intersecting influences of gender, refugee status, and entrepreneurship, ensuring a comprehensive understanding.	As a researcher, I view reality as socially constructed, fluid, and shaped by discourse, aligning with FPDA's rejection of fixed structures.
Focus on Power	Power is viewed as systemic and oppressive, often critiqued at macro-structural levels.	Power is viewed as relational, both enabling and constraining, and analysed within specific, localised contexts.	Captures how female refugee entrepreneurs navigate and reshape power dynamics in their unique contexts.	I understand power as relational, recognising that female refugee entrepreneurs navigate power structures while exercising agency in specific contexts.
Subjectivity	Subjects are largely positioned by overarching social structures and ideologies.	Subjects are seen as navigating and shifting between multiple discursive positions, shaped by situational factors.	Recognises the agency of female refugee entrepreneurs in resisting and adapting to dominant discourses.	My research philosophy focuses on capturing the fluid, discursive construction of subjectivities, which is central to understanding refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys.
Analysis of Gender	Gender is considered one of many axes of power but may not always be central to analysis.	Gender is central, analysed in relation to intersectionality with other identities (e.g., race, class).	Explores the compounded challenges and opportunities faced by female refugee entrepreneurs due to intersecting identities.	As a feminist researcher, I centre gender as a critical axis of analysis, considering how it intersects with other identities such as race and refugee status.
Methodological Approach	Systematic critique of dominant ideologies through structured textual and discourse analysis.	Combines deconstruction and situational analysis, emphasising context and competing discourses.	Offers a context-specific lens to examine the diverse lived realities of female refugee entrepreneurs across different settings.	My iterative and reflexive approach embraces deconstruction as a way to challenge dominant narratives and amplify marginalised voices in entrepreneurship.
Treatment of Discourses	Seeks to expose dominant discourses and their role in maintaining hegemony.	Explores the interaction between dominant and marginalised discourses, analysing how they intersect and compete.	Highlights how female refugee entrepreneurs challenge and transform dominant entrepreneurial and social narratives.	I aim to explore how marginalised voices challenge dominant discourses, while acknowledging the dynamic interplay between empowerment and constraint.
Goals and Agenda	Has an explicit emancipatory agenda focused on critiquing dominant structures to achieve social change.	Rejects grand narratives or ideological agendas, favouring localised, action-driven transformations.	Aligns with feminist goals of amplifying marginalised voices while avoiding essentialising female refugee entrepreneurs.	My research aims to amplify marginalised voices without imposing overarching narratives, ensuring that findings reflect localised and context-specific realities.
Reflexivity	Less emphasis on researcher positionality; aims for objectivity in ideological critique.	High emphasis on researcher reflexivity and acknowledgment of the constructed nature of analysis.	Ensures sensitivity to researcher bias, maintaining an ethical and self-aware approach to studying marginalised groups.	I adopt a reflexive stance, constantly examining how my positionality as a researcher shapes the analysis and interpretation of female refugee entrepreneurs' experiences.

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA): Implications for Research on Female Refugee Entrepreneur. (Author's own)

A primary distinction lies in the theoretical foundations and conceptualisation of power between these approaches. As Fairclough (2013) explains, CDA is rooted in critical theory, focusing on how language contributes to the reproduction of dominant ideologies and systemic power structures. This manifests in CDA's emphasis on macro-level structural inequalities and their linguistic manifestations. In contrast, FPDA draws on feminist poststructuralist theory to examine the fluid, contextual nature of power relations (Baxter, 2003). As Fairclough (2013) notes, poststructuralist approaches to discourse analysis tend to focus on the 'micro-level of social interaction' and the 'local, situated nature of meaning-

making' (p. 12). This theoretical grounding enables FPDA to capture how power operates in specific, localised settings while shaping the discursive construction of subjectivity and identity (Seliga, 2023).

The approaches also differ significantly in their treatment of subjectivity and gender analysis. As shown in Table 2 (p.252), while CDA tends to position subjects within overarching social structures, FPDA recognizes how individuals navigate multiple discursive positions shaped by situational factors. This is particularly relevant for understanding how refugee women entrepreneurs exercise agency while negotiating various structural constraints. FPDA's central focus on gender in relation to intersectionality (Weedon and Hallak, 2021) provides crucial analytical tools for examining how gender intersects with refugee status and entrepreneurial mindset.

Drawing on Fairclough's (2013) analysis of CDA and its contrast with poststructuralist approaches highlights the key differences between CDA and FPDA and demonstrates why FPDA is particularly well-suited for studying the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs. FPDA's focus on the fluid and contextual nature of power relations, as well as its attention to the discursive construction of subjectivity and identity, makes it an effective tool for examining how these women navigate structural barriers while exerting their own agency in specific, localised settings.

CDA provides a mechanism for understanding how power operates through language by scrutinising systemic structures of inequality (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Fairclough, 2013). Through this lens, CDA examines how language serves to (re)produce various forms of social inequality (Baxter, 2003). While CDA offers valuable insights into structural power relations and systemic inequalities, FPDA, the approach adopted in this thesis, provides a more complex analytical framework. FPDA's intersectional and reflexive lens is particularly suited for exploring the multifaceted experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs, offering tools to

examine both structural constraints and individual agency (Baxter, 2003; Weedon and Hallak, 2021).

Table 2. provides a comparison between Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA), highlighting key dimensions of each method and their relevance to studying female refugee entrepreneurs. '*CDA, rooted in critical theory, focuses on uncovering systemic inequalities and the role of language in maintaining oppressive power structures*' (Sanz Sabido, 2019, p. 19). Its primary aim is to critique dominant ideologies and achieve social change through macro-level analysis of texts and discourses (Van Dijk, 2015). In contrast, FPDA, which is grounded in Feminist Poststructural principles, adopts a more fluid and relational approach to power (Metcalf, 2008; Sauntson, 2012; Frost and Elichao, 2014; Rantala, 2019). FPDA examines how power operates contextually, both enabling and constraining agency, and emphasises the discursive construction of subjectivity and identity in specific, localised settings (Seliga, 2023). This approach reveals how power dynamics are fluid and situational, allowing for an understanding of how individuals are both shaped by and can resist dominant discourses.

Such insights are particularly useful for examining the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs, as FPDA can capture the complex ways in which these women navigate structural barriers while exerting their own agency. This approach also allows for an examination of how gendered power relations are discursively constructed and maintained, shedding light on the ways in which patriarchal structures are reinforced or contested in specific contexts (Lazar, 2005).

FPDA views language and discourse as constituting subjectivity, allowing for a detailed exploration of how women's professional identities are shaped and constrained by competing dominant Discourses (Mullany, 2007). One of the table's significant contributions is its inclusion of advantages that FPDA offers when studying female refugee entrepreneurs.

FPDA allows for a detailed and layered exploration of how intersecting identities, such as gender, refugee status, and entrepreneurship, shape individual experiences (Weedon and Hallak, 2021). Unlike CDA, which often employs a binary view of power as oppressor versus oppressed, FPDA acknowledges the fluid and overlapping nature of power relations, making it better suited to capturing the complexity of refugee women's lived realities (Rantala, 2019). This is particularly valuable in understanding how these women resist, adapt to, and reshape dominant narratives of entrepreneurship while navigating marginalisation and structural barriers. McCann's (2023) study on the representation of hegemonic femininity in British media demonstrates how FPDA can uncover both overt and covert power dynamics in discourse, which is highly applicable to examining entrepreneurial narratives involving marginalised women.

The final column of Table 2 reflects my research philosophy as a feminist poststructuralist researcher. It demonstrates how the principles of FPDA align with my positionality and commitment to amplifying marginalised voices, and embracing reflexivity in the research process (Baxter, 2003). For instance, FPDA's focus on reflexivity mirrors my acknowledgment of how my positionality as a researcher shapes the interpretation of findings (Baxter, 2010). Furthermore, FPDA's emphasis on context-specific analysis aligns with my aim to explore the dynamic, liminal spaces where female refugee entrepreneurs navigate entrepreneurial mindset. By integrating these insights, the table not only illustrates the methodological fit of FPDA for this study but also underscores its philosophical and ethical alignment with my research aims. As Jones (2020) highlights, feminist poststructuralists emphasise the significance of power in the construction of identity through women's difference in the workplace and the way discourses shape social practices.

Table 2, effectively compares CDA and FPDA, highlighting the latter's strengths in studying female refugee entrepreneurs. It also demonstrates how FPDA aligns with my

research philosophy, making it an appropriate choice for this study. The integration of FPDA's principles with my positionality as a feminist poststructuralist researcher ensures a critical, reflexive, and context-sensitive approach to understanding the complex realities of female refugee entrepreneurs. McCann's (2023) intersectional analysis of power dynamics among women provides a theoretical framework for understanding how different layers of marginalisation (gender, race, class, refugee status) intersect to shape opportunities and barriers in entrepreneurship, which can be effectively operationalised through FPDA.

How FPDA was Implemented

When applying FPDA to my data analysis, I first identified key discursive themes in the established literature relevant to my research. These themes helped me categorise my segmented quotes according to their underlying power dynamics and discourses such as **power** (Davies and Gannon, 2005; Mayock and Sheridan, 2020; Weedon and Hallak, 2021; Baxter, 2021), **subjectivity** (Alcoff, 2000; Arslanian-Engoren, 2002; Baxter, 2008; Baxter, 2016), **intersectionality** (Davis, 2014; Garneau, 2018; Maclaran and Stevens, 2019; Willett and Etowa, 2023), **representation** (Dolan, 1989; Colebrook, 2007; Lorraine, 2007; Frost and Elichaooff, 2014; Weedon and Hallak, 2021), and **marginalisation** (Weedon, 2006; Gavey, 2013; Strega, 2015). By examining how each segment was conditioned by its context, I could identify dominant and marginalised discourses and how they intersect with gender, race, and other social identities. This kaleidoscopic FPDA lens allowed me to critically analyse how power operates within the discourse, how subjectivity is constructed, and how marginalised voices are silenced or empowered through discourse. I used these tenets of Feminist Poststructuralism in conjunction with utilising Derridean deconstruction exposes underlying power dynamics and dominant discourses within the text. This method offers a systematic approach for analysing extracted quotes. Following this technique, detailed instructions are provided for segmenting the text and then categorising and analysing the extracted quotes.

FPDA:

Segmenting the Text:

'The expectation that I would come, I would need to start a business at some point, and I think for me as well, which is something that, I think, it is basically people's expectations.' RE1

- I read through the interview transcripts and policy documents and identified sections of the text relevant to my research question.
- I then extracted those quotes.
- I broke the text into smaller segments, usually between one and three sentences long.
- I assigned a code to each segment identifying a relevant topic or theme.

Categorising the Extracted Quotes using FPDA:

- I reviewed each segment of text and categorised it according to one of the six themes of FPDA: power, marginalisation, subjectivity, discourse, intersectionality, and representation.
- I then identified any other relevant factors, such as socius (opportunity structures, host country factors, government policy, and push and pull factors) and internal factors (demographics, human capital, social capital)
- I used an Excel spreadsheet to organise the extracted quotes by theme and additional factors, creating separate columns for each category.

Power	Representation	Intersectionality	Subjectivity	Marginalisation
The quote suggests that there are external expectations and pressures placed upon the speaker, which could be seen as a manifestation of power dynamics in society.	The quote suggests that the speaker feels pressure to conform to societal expectations, which could be seen as a reflection of the dominant discourses and representations of refugees and entrepreneurship in society.	The quote does not explicitly reference any intersections of identity, but it could be argued that the speaker's refugee status and gender may influence the expectations placed upon her.	The speaker acknowledges her own thoughts and feelings about the expectation placed upon her to start a business, indicating her own subjectivity in the situation.	The expectation placed upon the speaker to start a business could be seen as a manifestation of marginalisation, as it could be a result of the limited opportunities available to refugees in terms of traditional employment.

Table 3. *Categorising extracted quotes using FPDA*

Analysing the Extracted Quotes using FPDA:

- I reviewed each quote in the Excel spreadsheet and analysed it in relation to its category, looking for patterns and trends.
- I identified any discursive elements within the quotes, such as power dynamics, marginalisation of certain groups, subjective viewpoints, dominant discourses, intersections of identity, and representations of people or groups.

I used these findings to draw conclusions about the data and how they relate to my research question, referring back to the literature review and conceptual framework to contextualise my analysis. These steps allowed me to systematically segment and analyse my data using Derridean deconstruction and FPDA, providing a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the quotes and their discursive elements.

4.5.3 Derridean Deconstruction

This section establishes the theoretical foundation and methodological approach of this study's analysis, beginning with an introduction to Derridean deconstruction and its application to analysing refugee women entrepreneurs' experiences. Following this introduction, the discussion examines the specific rationale for selecting this approach and its implementation through FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens (see Figure 17, p.238). The section concludes by considering alternative approaches and demonstrating the particular advantages of FPDA for this research context.

Introduction to Methodology and Rationale

Deconstruction is a philosophical approach that challenges the concept of language as fixed or objective, demonstrating instead its inherent variability and instability. This approach has been applied across multiple fields, including literary studies, cultural studies, organisational theory (Rasche, 2011, Del Fa and Vásquez, 2020), information systems (Chiasson and Davidson, 2017), social sciences (Kiziltunali, 2022), and critical entrepreneurship studies (Skoglund, 2017, Kaasila-Pakanen and Puhakka 2018, Zollo et al., 2018). This study of female refugee entrepreneurs employs a Derridean deconstruction approach because it examines language's instability, multiple meanings, and the role of context in meaning construction.

Developed by French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1998; 2016), deconstruction contests the idea that language contains stable and fixed meaning, arguing instead that meaning constantly changes under the influence of various factors, including history, culture, and power dynamics. Deconstruction serves as an analytical tool for examining discourse across multiple fields, including literary theory, philosophy, and cultural studies. Through its analysis of how language constructs meaning, deconstruction identifies the contradictory ways we understand the world and demonstrates how social and cultural forces shape our perceptions and beliefs.

The application of Derridean Deconstruction as a methodological approach establishes specific analytical steps for examining the experiences and perspectives of refugee women entrepreneurs. Derrida's concept of the '*middle voice*' corresponds with liminality, representing a state that exists outside standard classifications (Poovey, 1988, pp.56). For refugee women entrepreneurs, this liminal position manifests both physically, as they move between cultures and societies, and structurally, as they challenge existing norms to establish new identities.

The '*middle voice*' describes conditions that challenge traditional binary oppositions, reflecting the experiences of entrepreneurs who operate between their previous identities and their current societal roles. By applying Derridean Deconstruction, the analysis reveals multiple aspects within these narratives, specifically those situated in transitional states. The concept of change inherent in both liminality and the '*middle voice*' aids in understanding these entrepreneurs' perspectives. Their experiences of continuous adaptation align with the transformative aspects the '*middle voice*' describes. Both concepts provide analytical tools for examining these experiences.

The theoretical alignment between the *middle voice* and *liminality* strengthens the methodological approach of this study. Refugee women entrepreneurs' narratives emerge

from positions that resist conventional categorisation, reflecting the *middle voice*'s capacity to reveal meanings that exist between established structures. Their accounts demonstrate how entrepreneurial activities serve as vehicles for navigating liminal spaces, creating new meanings, and establishing alternative forms of agency. This theoretical synthesis between the *middle voice* and liminality provides analytical tools for examining how these entrepreneurs construct meaning within transitional spaces.

Although Derrida (1977) advised against treating deconstruction as methodology, this research demonstrates how its principles apply systematically. This application requires addressing specific limitations through corresponding analytical strategies. The first limitation concerns interpretation subjectivity (Koshy, 2022). To address interpretative concerns, this study incorporates multiple data sources and analytical methods. The integration of FPDA with Derridean deconstruction strengthens the analytical approach through systematic reflexivity processes. Furthermore, the research maintains detailed documentation of analytical decisions throughout the process, establishing clear analytical trails.

The second limitation involves theoretical complexity and its implications for replication. The study addresses this through explicit analytical procedures that connect theoretical concepts to practical application. Through detailed analytical examples and comprehensive documentation of methodological decisions, the research establishes clear processes for analysis while maintaining theoretical integrity. These limitations and their management strategies strengthen the methodology's effectiveness. By addressing methodological challenges through specific strategies, this study demonstrates both theoretical understanding and practical application. The combination of Derridean deconstruction with FPDA provides analytical tools while maintaining theoretical foundations.

While Derridean Deconstruction provides powerful analytical tools for uncovering the instability and variability of meaning, it has not been without critique. Ellis (2018) raises concerns about its interpretative subjectivity, theoretical abstraction, and potential lack of methodological rigour. Additionally, Burman (2015) critiques deconstruction for its limited engagement with embodied and lived experiences, arguing that it risks marginalising feminist and intersectional perspectives. These critiques highlight the need for systematic strategies to address such limitations when applying deconstruction as a methodological approach.

To address interpretative subjectivity, this study integrates Derridean Deconstruction with FPDA, which incorporates reflexivity as a systematic process. As Carta (2019) highlights, poststructuralist approaches demand attention to methodological transparency and reflexivity to navigate the instability and relational nature of meaning in discourse. The use of detailed analytical trails and explicit documentation seeks to enhance methodological transparency and address concerns around interpretative subjectivity, while acknowledging the inherent instability and variability central to poststructural approaches (Carta, 2019; Rantala, 2019).

Furthermore, while Ellis (2018) critiques the theoretical complexity of deconstruction and its implications for replication, and Burman (2015) highlights its potential limitations for feminist and intersectional analyses, this research demonstrates how explicit analytical procedures connect theoretical concepts to practical applications, maintaining both rigor and accessibility.

By acknowledging these critiques and addressing them through robust methodological strategies, this study demonstrates the practical utility of Derridean Deconstruction for analysing refugee women entrepreneurs' experiences within liminal spaces. These methodological considerations underscore how deconstruction can be applied reflexively and systematically, bridging theoretical insights with actionable analytical practices.

Having established the theoretical foundations and addressed potential limitations, the following section examines why this particular methodological approach proves especially effective for analysing refugee women entrepreneurs' experiences.

Why this Approach?

The integration of Derridean deconstruction with FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens provides a comprehensive analytical framework for examining refugee women entrepreneurs' experiences. FPDA's distinctive feature is its kaleidoscopic lens, which examines data through multiple perspectives: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality and representation. Each perspective employs the three-step deconstructive analysis, identifying binary oppositions, examining dominant clauses, and analysing assumptions and biases.

The preceding discussion established how Derridean deconstruction combines with FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens to create a comprehensive analytical framework. This framework's practical application becomes clear through examining how it operates through specific analytical lenses.

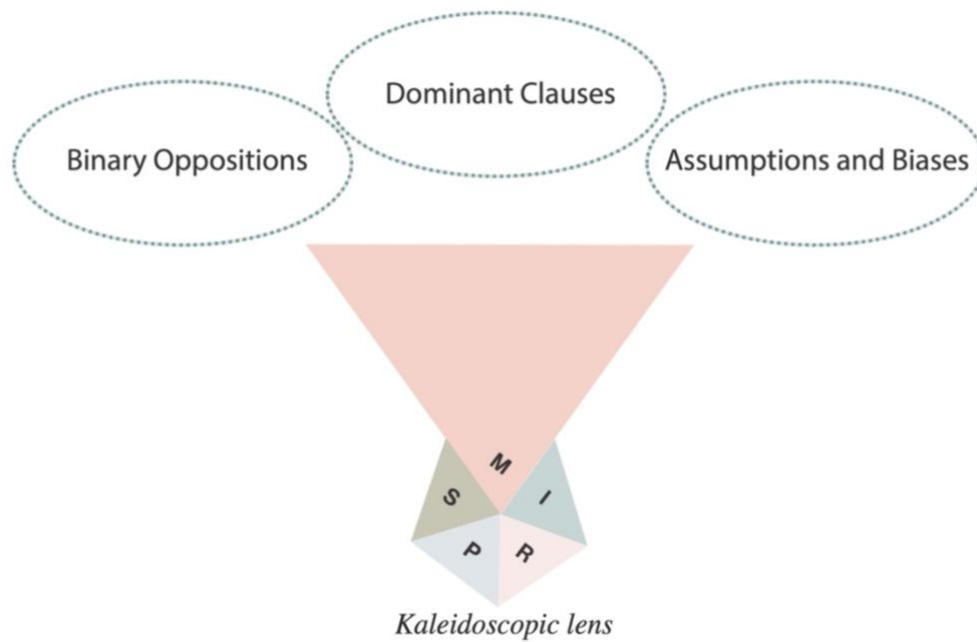


Figure 18. *Derridean Deconstruction through Marginalisation lens (Author's own)*

For example, in Figure 18 (above), the analysis through the marginalisation lens demonstrates how the three-step deconstructive process operates. Binary oppositions reveal fundamental tensions in refugee women entrepreneurs' experiences, such as inclusion/exclusion within business communities. Dominant clauses expose how specific interpretations of entrepreneurial success gain prominence while others remain peripheral. The analysis of assumptions and biases demonstrates how established entrepreneurial discourses privilege certain approaches while constraining others. This same three-step analytical process then applies through each subsequent FPDA lens, creating multiple layers of interpretation.

This methodological synthesis enables systematic examination of how language and power operate across multiple dimensions of entrepreneurial experience. Through the *Power* lens, the analysis exposes how institutional and social structures influence entrepreneurial possibilities. *Subjectivity* analysis demonstrates how these entrepreneurs construct and

reconstruct their identities. *Marginalisation* highlights how certain identities or groups face exclusion or reduced access to entrepreneurial opportunities. *Intersectionality* examines how multiple aspects of identity interact within entrepreneurial contexts. The *Representation* lens reveals how entrepreneurial narratives form and circulate within specific cultural contexts.

The application of deconstructive analysis through each lens of FPDA creates a layered understanding of entrepreneurial experience. Binary oppositions identified through one lens might reveal different meanings when examined through another, creating a complex analytical matrix. Similarly, dominant clauses shift significance across different analytical perspectives, revealing how power operates through multiple channels. The analysis of assumptions and biases through multiple lenses exposes how various forms of power intersect in entrepreneurial contexts.

This approach addresses limitations in traditional entrepreneurship research methods which often examine experiences through single analytical frameworks. The combination of deconstructive analysis with FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens enables examination of how entrepreneurial experiences form through complex interactions of power, identity, and social structures. This methodological innovation provides tools for analysing how refugee women entrepreneurs navigate and reconstruct meaning within liminal spaces.

This examination of the analytical process through the marginalisation lens demonstrates how the approach operates in practice. The subsequent sections explore alternative methodological approaches considered for this research, followed by a detailed discussion of Derridean deconstruction's particular advantages for examining refugee women entrepreneurs' experiences. The final section provides a comprehensive overview of how Derridean deconstruction's was implemented throughout the research process.

Advantages of Deconstruction for Research Context

Building on the prior analysis of alternative approaches, Derridean Deconstruction emerges as a particularly fitting tool to illustrate the analysis of refugee women entrepreneurs' experiences, especially in the context of the entrepreneurial mindset within liminal spaces. This section demonstrates how deconstruction has been employed in scholarship and underscores its advantages for dissecting the complexities of such entrepreneurial journeys.

The entrepreneurial mindset, characterised by cognitive, emotional, and behavioural adaptability, thrives in spaces of uncertainty and transition. Derridean Deconstruction, with its emphasis on disrupting hierarchical binaries and uncovering the margins of dominant discourses, aligns well with exploring how refugee women navigate the liminality of displacement and entrepreneurship. By deconstructing essentialist assumptions about both refugees and entrepreneurs, this approach reveals the interplay between resilience, creativity, and identity work, central components of the entrepreneurial mindset.

Through deconstruction, the iterative and dynamic processes underlying the entrepreneurial mindset can be more deeply understood. Specifically, this analysis examines refugee women's experiences as they transition through three interconnected dimensions: from a *subject of change*, through a *process of change*, to becoming an *agent of change*. These dimensions reflect how refugee women entrepreneurs contest and reconfigure limiting narratives about themselves, constructing opportunities from within constraints. This lens brings to light their strategic engagement with power, their subjectivities shaped by intersections of gender, displacement, and entrepreneurship, and their capacity to transform marginalisation into agency.

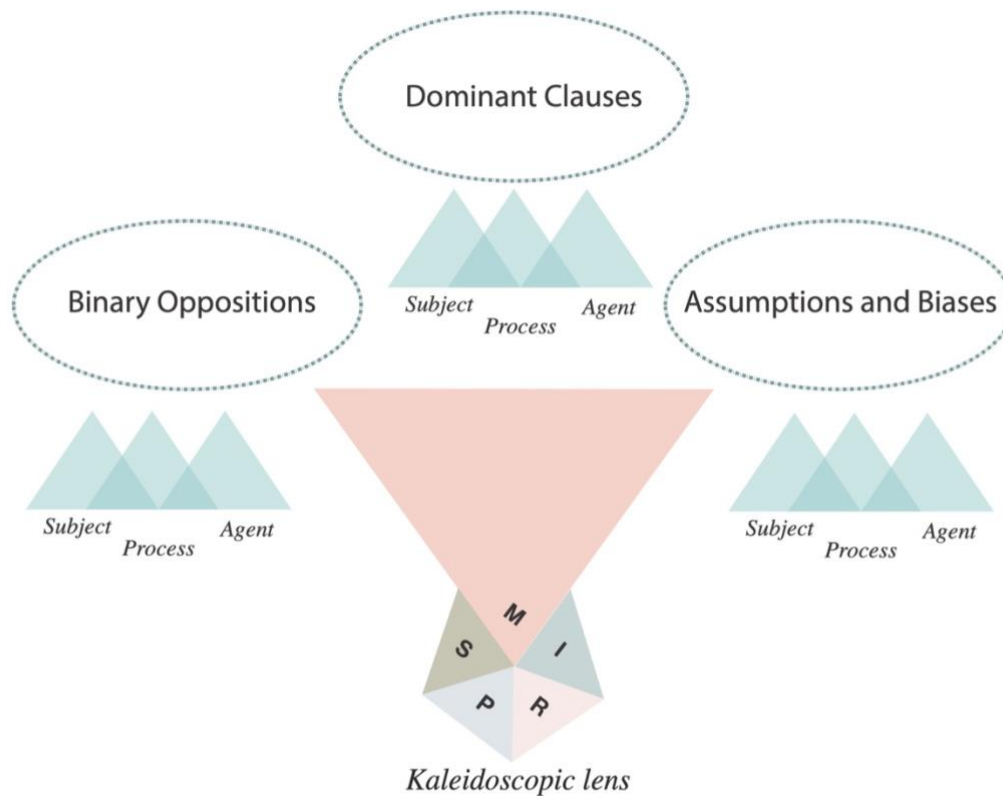


Figure 19. *Deconstructing Entrepreneurial Mindsets: A Kaleidoscopic Lens of Subject, Process, and Agent of Change* (Author's own)

As shown in Figure 19, the interplay of Binary Oppositions, Dominant Clauses, and Assumptions and Biases is conceptualised through a Kaleidoscopic Lens. These categories are deconstructed and refracted through the interconnected dimensions of *Subject of Change*, *Process of Change*, and *Agent of Change*, highlighting how refugee women entrepreneurs navigate and reconfigure their liminal realities.

Steyaert and Hjorth's (2006) work, complements this analysis by emphasising how entrepreneurship acts as a process of societal change. Their exploration of the multi-discursive construction of entrepreneurship aligns with Derrida's focus on disrupting fixed categories, underscoring how refugee women entrepreneurs deconstruct entrenched systemic barriers while reterritorialising their entrepreneurial identities. This text situates entrepreneurship as inherently social and dynamic, providing a critical foundation for

understanding how refugee women's entrepreneurial actions contribute to broader social change within liminal spaces.

Zollo et al.'s (2018) exploration of social bricolage, further enriches this perspective by illustrating how entrepreneurs creatively rearrange resources to address emergent social needs. Their use of a deconstructionist lens to unpack bricolage aligns closely with refugee women's strategies of making do in resource-constrained environments. This ability to improvise and reconfigure available resources highlights the practical application of the entrepreneurial mindset and underscores its centrality in navigating uncertainty and fostering innovation.

However, a significant gap exists in contemporary scholarship regarding the application of Derridean Deconstruction to entrepreneurial contexts, particularly in studies of gender and liminality. While the early 1990s witnessed a surge in feminist appropriations of deconstruction, such as Nash's (1994) focus on the production of feminist knowledge and Rorty's (1993) discussions on deconstruction's ideological potential, this momentum has not been sustained. The intersection of deconstruction and the entrepreneurial mindset remains underexplored, leaving a fertile area for advancing both theoretical and empirical research.

Although this study is situated within Feminist Poststructuralism, it draws upon Derridean Deconstruction to demonstrate how refugee women enact processes of deconstructing and reassembling discursive and material elements of their contexts. This enables them to navigate liminal spaces with agency and creativity. By framing their journeys through the dimensions of *subject of change*, *process of change*, and *agent of change*, this analysis highlights the ability of refugee women entrepreneurs to challenge dominant narratives and contribute to societal change. This resonates with Steyaert and Hjorth's (2006) call to reimagine entrepreneurship as a socially embedded phenomenon.

By combining the entrepreneurial mindset with Derridean Deconstruction, this analysis advances a richer understanding of how refugee women entrepreneurs harness cognitive, emotional, and behavioural flexibility to navigate liminal spaces.

How FPDA was Implemented

Derridean Deconstruction:

The assumption behind 'start a business' is that it is a necessary and desirable goal for refugees, specifically, in this case, for the speaker. This assumption implies that entrepreneurship is the best way for refugees to integrate into a new society and succeed. However, this assumption is biased and overlooks the challenges and barriers that may prevent refugees particularly women from starting a business, such as discrimination, lack of access to resources, and limited social networks.

This assumption assumes that refugees should assimilate into the dominant culture by adopting capitalist values rather than recognising and valuing the diversity of cultures and experiences that refugees bring to society.

Overall, the dominant term 'start a business' reinforces a narrow and biased perspective on immigrant integration and success and ignores the complexities of the refugee experience.

The quote suggests that there is tension between the speaker's personal needs or desires and the expectations that others have for her. The dominant term is 'people's expectations,' implying that the speaker is subject to external pressures and influences that may not align with her goals or aspirations. This dominant term may also carry certain assumptions or biases, such as the assumption that refugees or individuals from certain backgrounds are expected to start businesses or the belief that entrepreneurship is the only or best path to success. By deconstructing this dominant term, the speaker may be able to question and challenge these assumptions and carve out her own path based on her individual needs and values.'

- I reviewed each segment of text and identified any underlying assumptions, beliefs, or concepts that are taken for granted.
- I questioned these assumptions and explored any contradictions or ambiguities in the text.
- I analysed the segment using Derridean deconstruction, which involved identifying binary oppositions and deconstructing the dominant term in each pair to reveal its hidden assumptions and biases.

4.5.4 Methodological Integration: Addressing the Research Question

The integration of these three methodological approaches contributes to the conceptual framework for examining how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset within a liminal space. The longitudinal nature of ethnographic observation enables monitoring of how entrepreneurial mindset develops across cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions within a liminal space (Kelly and McAdam, 2022). As participants navigate their transition from *subject of change* through a *process of change* to an *agent of*

change, the sustained observation period reveals shifts in entrepreneurial mindset, emotional resilience, and concrete actions. Manning et al. (2019) demonstrate how this temporal dimension proves crucial for understanding the developmental nature of entrepreneurial mindset, particularly within the uncertain contexts that characterise liminal spaces.

FPDA's kaleidoscopic lens of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation highlights how refugee women construct and negotiate their entrepreneurial mindset while managing various structural constraints. Through this kaleidoscopic lens, the research reveals how gender and refugee status intersect to shape both opportunities and barriers in entrepreneurial mindset development. The addition of Derridean deconstruction, with its emphasis on disrupting hierarchical binaries and uncovering meaning within transitional states, enables examination of how these women transform apparent limitations of liminal space into sources of entrepreneurial innovation.

Together, these methodological approaches capture not only what entrepreneurial mindset looks like in liminal space, but more crucially, how it is actively developed and deployed by refugee women as they navigate between established social structures and emerging entrepreneurial possibilities. This methodological synthesis provides tools for examining both individual agency in mindset development and the broader structural forces that shape entrepreneurial mindset within liminal contexts.

4.7 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

This section details the specific procedures and techniques used to gather data for addressing the research question. It begins by outlining the participant selection criteria and providing opening profiles of the four female refugee entrepreneurs central to this study. The discussion then examines the primary data collection methods: participant observations and a combination of semi-structured and unstructured conversational interviews. The section also addresses the practicalities of online video and audio recording, before explaining the transcription process and analytical approach. Finally, it considers the practical limitations encountered during data collection and discusses how these were addressed. Throughout, the chosen methods are justified in relation to their ability to capture both the explicit and tacit dimensions of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences.

4.7.1 Purposeful Sampling of Participants

The study utilised a purposeful sampling approach to identify participants capable of providing rich, in-depth accounts of refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys. Purposeful sampling is particularly valuable for engaging marginalised groups, as it allows for the selection of individuals who can best contribute to the research objectives through their ability to articulate lived experiences and offer diverse perspectives (Yotebieng, Awah, and Syvertsen, 2019). This method was guided by key inclusion criteria and informed by insights gained during the pilot study (discussed earlier in the chapter). The final selection included four women who demonstrated the ability to articulate complex entrepreneurial experiences while representing diverse educational and entrepreneurial backgrounds.

To ensure the study's focus on the intersection of gender, refugee status, and entrepreneurship, participants were selected based on three critical criteria. First, all four women held official refugee status, positioning them within the broader context of forced displacement and enabling an exploration of the unique challenges faced by refugee women

navigating entrepreneurial pathways (Huq and Venugopal, 2021; Adeeko and Treanor, 2022; Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2023).

Second, the participants were actively engaged in entrepreneurship, either at the early startup stage or within the entrepreneurial intention phase, providing access to evolving perspectives on entrepreneurial identity formation and decision-making processes. This stage of engagement highlights the importance of understanding identity as a dynamic process shaped by structural and cultural challenges (Daspit, Fox, and Findley, 2023), while also reflecting how gendered assumptions and legitimacy concerns intersect with entrepreneurial practice (Stead, 2017).

Third, the pilot study played a pivotal role in identifying these four women as key participants. Initially recruited as facilitators for a two-day entrepreneurship workshop, they emerged as highly articulate narrators of their entrepreneurial journeys, offering sophisticated reflections on identity shifts, power dynamics, and cultural negotiation. Their ability to communicate directly in English, unlike other participants requiring interpreters, ensured that the data retained its conceptual integrity. Interpreter-mediated interviews can risk loss of depth and complexity in data, highlighting the importance of direct communication in preserving participants' reflections (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2011).

The final sample encompassed a diverse range of educational backgrounds, reflecting the heterogeneity of refugee women's lived experiences. Specifically, one participant held a doctoral degree, another a master's degree, the third a bachelor's degree, and the fourth had completed high school education. This diversity provided a valuable basis for examining how variations in human capital intersect with structural and personal factors to shape entrepreneurial trajectories (Stead, 2017).

Geographical and practical considerations further informed the sampling process, with all participants residing in Southeast England. This consistent regional context facilitated a

focused analysis of external influences such as community support, institutional resources, and opportunity structures while allowing for comparisons of their individual strategies for navigating entrepreneurship.

Finally, the selection of these four participants was grounded in both practical and ethical considerations, including their willingness for prolonged engagement and the trust developed during the pilot phase. Over the course of four years, the participants demonstrated a sustained commitment to the research process, enabling a longitudinal analysis of their entrepreneurial development. This extended engagement allowed the study to capture key moments of transition, challenge, and growth, providing theoretical depth that would have been diluted in a broader sample.

By focusing on this small, purposeful sample, the study prioritised richness and detail over breadth. Purposeful sampling allows for a detailed exploration of individual experiences and their broader implications, particularly in studies focusing on marginalised groups (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2011). ensuring that the participants' narratives offered a detailed understanding of entrepreneurial mindset navigation within a liminal space. Their varied backgrounds and sustained engagement allowed for an exploration of how refugee women construct and transform their identities while managing intersecting challenges related to gender, refugee status, and entrepreneurial participation (Tomlinson, 2010; Adeeko and Treanor, 2022).

	Initial Success	Key Challenges	Turning Points/Trajectory	Outcome (Foreshadowing 6.5)	
RE1	2019	RE1 is recognised as a 'serial entrepreneur' with significant public visibility. Her Yemeni pop-up restaurants receive praise and sell out, but she privately struggles with profitability. Networks grow through participation in media and events.	Struggled with securing enough funding and balancing expectations	Pivoted to a stable job in social media management due to financial instability	Public visibility and recognition create external pressure to succeed, masking underlying structural challenges such as lack of sustainable funding and financial stability.
	2020-2021	Balances full-time employment with entrepreneurial ventures	Feeling pushed into decisions by external expectations. Expresses guilt for not meeting community expectations despite her ventures being celebrated as success stories.	Stops wearing her headscarf, signalling personal transformation and negotiation of cultural identity. Begins questioning the sustainability of her ventures and expresses frustration with being 'stuck in the kitchen' during pop-up events.	Highlights internal conflict between external validation and personal agency. Growing tensions suggest potential burnout or a shift in focus.
	2022		<i>'At this point, yes, because and I don't blame anyone for thinking that way. So, for my following on social media, people still call me the chef. Oh yeah, (name removed) shit. They started expecting me to have all the answers and know all the tricks. Or how to perfect certain recipes, I'm like. I'm not a chef I am a content creator, and I am.'</i>	Reflects on her entrepreneurial identity, framing herself as a 'serial entrepreneur' who is always ideating new ventures.	Shifts towards pragmatic goals like homeownership while maintaining entrepreneurial identity through part-time content creation.
	2023	Successfully achieves homeownership in London, viewing employment as a strategic step.	Prioritises financial stability over entrepreneurship by returning to full-time employment as a Senior Social Media Manager. Reflects on the challenges of sending money home and securing funding for entrepreneurial ventures.	<i>'I would never accept to be behind and be the person who is still figuring things out.'</i> <i>'She can't just be that stupid and not look into all these opportunities.'</i>	Demonstrates agency in adapting to systemic barriers while keeping future entrepreneurial aspirations alive.

RE2	2019	Created a business resonating with her identity and values, despite being a single mother	Lack of role models, funding issues, and cultural barriers in business spaces	Launched a consulting firm in UAE	Initial optimism about combining entrepreneurship and motherhood.
	2020	Faced difficulties with the initial start-up and pivoted to an e-commerce business selling eco-friendly Hajj gift boxes.	<i>'I felt intimidated by these men, so I never pitched my idea, and I never got the funding.'</i> <i>'I just told him [the investor], they were very supportive. But would you ask that to somebody else?'</i>		Realisation of the need for financial stability alongside entrepreneurial ambitions.
	2021	Continued efforts with the e-commerce venture while balancing childcare and participating in mentoring programs.		<i>'Maybe someone could learn from the entrepreneurship journey—it's not about saying yes to everything because you feel obliged.'</i>	Struggled with balancing professional development, raising capital, and family responsibilities.
	2022	Started exploring opportunities in Dubai after traveling there and being inspired by its empowering environment for Muslim women.			Began envisioning an international future for her business ambitions.
	2023	Launched a consulting firm in the UAE focused on sustainability and empowerment, marking a shift in her entrepreneurial journey.	<i>'It was the first time I had been somewhere where I felt empowered as a Muslim woman.'</i>	<i>'Throughout my professional career and entrepreneurial journey, I've had the opportunity to take part in various conferences, pitch competitions, and events. I am much more confident.'</i>	Shifted into a new entrepreneurial phase with international aspirations and confidence.
RE3	2020	RE3 began her entrepreneurial journey with a focus on social impact and community empowerment, aspiring to create a venture employing and uplifting women. She exhibited a cognitive orientation toward innovation and social entrepreneurship.	<i>'I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment.'</i>	Shifted from entrepreneurship to teaching and spirituality, focusing on stability and personal growth	Strong initial drive for entrepreneurship but indications of internal conflict and systemic challenges ahead.

	2020	Faced internal conflicts about the risks of entrepreneurship, questioning her capacity to manage the pressures of starting and sustaining a business while navigating trauma from her background. Her fear of failure became a recurring theme in reflections.	<i>'Uh, because you know, we've come from an unprivileged background in a lot of sense. So, it feels like I can't just stop here.'</i>		Increased doubt about entrepreneurship; hints of possible redirection towards more stable pursuits.
	2021	Continued to explore entrepreneurial ventures but shifted her emphasis towards teaching and mentoring. She expressed increasing doubts about the feasibility of her business aspirations in light of systemic barriers and personal fears.			Shift away from business creation toward educational and mentoring roles, growing clarity in her reassessment.
	2022	Focused more on teaching and spiritual development, stepping back from active entrepreneurial pursuits. This shift reflected her reassessment of priorities and a desire to seek purpose and stability through education.	<i>'What do I need to change myself? To be less judgemental to be a better person.'</i>		Focus on spirituality and teaching, entrepreneurship increasingly de-prioritised.
	2023	Fully transitioned to teaching and independent research, embracing her educational background as a means of creating impact. Demonstrated confidence in her decision to pursue a non-entrepreneurial path while acknowledging ongoing challenges.		<i>'I am much more confident in who I am. Still, it's a challenge.'</i>	Full transition to education and personal development as her main professional focus.
RE4	2019	Joined the pilot study as a mentee during the early startup stage of her	Joined the pilot study as a mentee during the early	Transitioned to part-time work in an established food truck while pursuing	Demonstrated enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Early

		food truck business. Participated in focus groups and a 2-day workshop with enthusiasm.	startup stage of her food truck business. Participated in focus groups and a 2-day workshop with enthusiasm.	skills development through mentorship programmes	entrepreneurial motivation was evident.
	2020	Began the formal process of launching her food truck business. Struggled with poor English proficiency, incomplete paperwork, and failing the hygiene certification.	<i>'It's really difficult to get a job, and if I was to start my business, I would be able to run it myself. I want to be my own boss, to be in control of what I do.'</i>		Faced significant structural barriers, including language proficiency and bureaucracy, that hindered progress.
	2021	Contracted long COVID during the pandemic, halting her entrepreneurial activities. Focused on recovery.			Health challenges created additional obstacles, temporarily derailing entrepreneurial progress.
	2022	Post-recovery, attempted to rekindle her business but faced recurring barriers. Decided to work for an established business to improve her skills, English proficiency, and experience.			Strategic pivot to skill-building and gaining experience to overcome barriers.
	2023	Views current employment as an opportunity to prepare for her eventual entrepreneurial venture. Remains motivated to pursue her dream of starting her own business in the future.	<i>'I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business soon within the next year... I just want to know how to take that first step.'</i>	<i>'When you work for someone, you never upgrade yourself. But if you work for yourself, you're more independent, a more powerful you.'</i>	Adapts a long-term perspective, using employment as a stepping stone for her future entrepreneurial aspirations.

Table 4. Summary of Participant Trajectories

4.7.2 Observations

Observation is one of several ethnographic methods used in the data collection of this case study. Somekh (2011) reminds us that what is observed is ontologically shaped and is one of the most important data collection methods as it situates the researcher to record their personal impressions of what takes place. This type of record-keeping involving the self allows scrutiny and analysis after the event. Both Zahle (2102) and Musante (2018) submit that observation may be the only way to capture both tacit and explicit aspects of an experience. Clough and Nutbrown (2012) advise adopting what they refer to as ‘radical-looking’ to explore a situation’s roots. Musante (2018) further suggests that it is possible to explore the affective and cognitive aspects of gender relations and embodied subjectivities through observation, rather than through interviews.

The conceptual framework for this research will determine what is observed and is a decisive factor in the choice of observation method. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) insist shrewd observations and the documentation of observations in field notes are integral aspects of the conceptual framework’s operationalisation. Observation is a powerful way to discover new elements of a conceptual framework. A Feminist Poststructural lens guides the observation to deconstruct and challenge apparent understanding to expose the latent tiers of meaning. Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis’s design seeks to challenge participants’ obligation by observing the numerous and complex subject positions they are foisted into.

Participant observation in this case study allows for continued reflexivity about my positioning as researcher in relation to the participant’s movement within the liminal space. Angrosino (2008) guides us to shift our focus from observation as a method but rather as a perspective that emphasises observation as a context for interchange among those involved in the research collaboration.

DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) encourage the observer to develop the ability to seek as much detail as possible in the observed situation. By considering space, interaction with the researcher, the specific words spoken and non-verbal expressions. As a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic and face to face meeting restrictions, this research must consider the online venue as part of the observed space.

4.7.3 Semi structured and Unstructured Conversational Interviews

The observational insights and complexities of online engagement in this research necessitated a methodological approach that could capture both visible and tacit dimensions of participants' experiences. Observation enabled an understanding of both tacit and explicit aspects, as noted by Zahle (2012) and Musante (2018). However, the interview process needed to complement and deepen these insights, particularly in understanding participants' navigation of a liminal space. The combination of semi-structured and unstructured conversational interviews emerged as critical in achieving this depth and nuance.

By not dictating a priori sequences of predefined questions and answers, unstructured conversational interviews facilitated a deeper understanding of participants' complex behaviours. Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) highlight that the researcher relies on social interaction with the participant through conversation, generating questions in response to the participant's narration. This approach does not suggest that the conversations are arbitrary or desultory. Instead, the research aim remains central, and the general range of issues the researcher wants to address is encouraged. Johansson (2004) critiques much of established entrepreneurship research for relying on interviews where researchers ask and participants answer, reducing the richness of data into predetermined categories. Similarly, Brinkmann (2014) underscores that rigid qualitative interviews often miss the intriguing facets of the 'conversational episode'. Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) further warn that over-structuring

interviews constrains participants' answers, limiting the potential for rich articulation of the entrepreneurial experience.

The pilot study revealed significant limitations in the semi-structured interview format, particularly when working through interpreters. Despite having Farsi and Arabic interpreters present, complex entrepreneurial concepts were often lost in translation or significantly simplified. This aligns with Lee, Sulaiman-Hill, and Thompson (2014), who emphasise the difficulty of translating intricate topics in cross-cultural research, noting that language barriers can lead to oversimplification and a loss of depth. These challenges were especially apparent during pre-workshop interviews, where the structured format constrained participants' ability to fully articulate their experiences and perspectives (Brinkmann, 2014). Such methodological obstacles underscored the need for alternative approaches, such as conversational or participant-driven formats (Street, Ng, and Al Dajani, 2022), to better capture the depth and complexity of participants' narratives.

A crucial methodological insight emerged when the six refugee women recruited as workshop facilitators demonstrated remarkable clarity in articulating their entrepreneurial experiences through more natural, conversational exchanges in English. Their narratives, unrestricted by the confines of semi-structured questioning, provided rich insights into identity transition, business development, and cultural navigation that might otherwise have been lost. This observation aligns with a Feminist Poststructural perspective, as the conversational format enabled participants to frame their experiences through their own discursive frameworks rather than conforming to predetermined categories (Gallant, 2008).

The post-workshop interviews and six-month follow-up period further reinforced this methodological revelation. Video recordings and participant observations revealed a marked difference in the depth and sophistication of reflection between interpreted, semi-structured conversations and direct, unstructured dialogue. The four facilitators who maintained

engagement throughout the study demonstrated that conversational interviews allowed for more detailed exploration of their multiple roles as refugees, entrepreneurs, and mentors, providing theoretically rich data that enhanced the study's theoretical development.

The adoption of conversational interviews aligns with feminist poststructural approaches to data collection. Gallant (2008) illustrates how less structured interview approaches create spaces for participants to articulate their experiences through their own discursive frameworks, allowing for the emergence of complex power dynamics and competing discourses that shape their experiences. This methodological insight is particularly relevant when examining how refugee women construct entrepreneurial identities, as it reveals the socio-cultural discourses influencing their experiences (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Dykstra, 2016).

In this research, both semi-structured and unstructured conversational interviews were employed in the case study of female refugee entrepreneurs. The semi-structured interviews provided specific information related to the research topic while allowing some flexibility for participants to share their experiences in their own words. The unstructured conversational interviews enabled more informal and open-ended discussions, which were particularly valuable for understanding participants' experiences as female refugee entrepreneurs. This combination facilitated a more complete and complex understanding of the research topic.

This dual approach proved especially important when working with marginalised groups such as female refugee entrepreneurs, who often have unique experiences and perspectives not always captured in traditional interview formats. Using a combination of semi-structured and unstructured interviews also enabled attention to how systems of oppression, such as racism and classism, intersected with gender to shape the participants' experiences. Interview techniques included collaborative, reflexive, and interruptive

interviewing (Pillow, 2015), emphasising the context and social-political realities that shaped the interview process and participants' experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2014).

This approach had some limitations. It was at times challenging to implement in practice, mainly when unfamiliar with the specific topic or when the participants wanted to speak about topics very much off the subject. Additionally, the process could be time-consuming requiring high reflexivity and collaboration with the interviewee. Furthermore, ensuring that biases and assumptions were independent of the research results was challenging, especially when trying to have a reflexive approach. Finally, some may argue that this process could be too subjective and open to interpretation, making the results hard to replicate.

I consciously tried to reflexively engage in the research process and acknowledge my biases or assumptions. I sought to involve the participants in representing their experiences, avoiding any appropriation of their perspectives. Throughout the study, I consulted with field experts and sought feedback from peers to enhance the validity and reliability of my findings. However, this approach presented notable challenges. As Roiha and Iikkanen (2022) discuss, interviews with participants who share a prior relationship with the researcher often involve shifts between different conversational frames, blending formal and informal contexts. While this dynamic can yield rich insights, it also increases the likelihood of participants straying from the research focus, making it more challenging to maintain alignment with the intended objectives.

Additionally, the process was time-consuming and required high levels of reflexivity and collaboration (Berger, 2015). Ensuring that biases and assumptions did not influence the research results was challenging, especially when adopting a reflexive approach [Citation Needed]. Finally, some may argue that the process was too subjective and open to interpretation, making results difficult to replicate [Citation Needed]. To mitigate these

limitations, I consciously engaged reflexively, acknowledging my biases and assumptions, and sought to involve participants in representing their experiences without appropriating their perspectives (McCabe and Holmes, 2009).

The pilot study, conducted during Period 1 of the research timeline (see Figure 14, p.187), initially employed semi-structured interviews alongside workshop observations, focus groups, and participant-generated business model canvases (Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022). However, a significant insight emerged from the unstructured conversations that occurred organically among participants during the pilot study. These conversations provided remarkably rich data and insights into the participants' entrepreneurial experiences and mindsets. As highlighted by Baum (2015), in-depth and exploratory dialogues allow participants to share their stories, challenges, and reflections freely, offering a depth of understanding that structured methods, such as semi-structured interviews, often fail to capture.

Observing the richness and authenticity of these unstructured conversations was a pivotal moment, echoing Burgess's (2003) assertion that unstructured interviews, akin to conversations, provide unique opportunities to uncover meaningful data. It became clear that allowing participants to express their experiences organically, without the constraints of predetermined questions, yielded far more relevant and meaningful data for understanding their entrepreneurial journeys. Transitioning from semi-structured interviews to unstructured conversational interviews allowed for greater flexibility and depth in exploring participants' perspectives. As Brinkmann (2014) explains, unstructured interviews create space for organic dialogue, enabling researchers to capture richer and more intricate insights that might not emerge in more structured formats. This adaptation aimed to replicate the natural, free-flowing discussions observed during the pilot, creating space for participants to share their stories in their own words and on their own terms.

The unstructured conversational approach, employed during the Ethno-Case Study in Period 2 (see Figure 14, p.187), facilitated a more authentic exploration of participants' experiences, thoughts, and feelings related to their entrepreneurial development (Brinkmann, 2014). By following the natural progression of the conversation and allowing participants to guide the discussion, the interviews yielded richer, more in-depth data directly addressing the research questions. Moreover, this shift highlighted the presence of four key participants who demonstrated remarkable capacity to articulate their experiences with clarity and depth. Three of these participants, fluent English speakers, provided detailed and authentic data without the need for interpretation. This discovery informed the decision to focus on these four individuals in the main study, as their narratives held the greatest potential for theoretical insight.

The methodological shift to unstructured conversational interviews, informed by observations during the pilot study, was a crucial refinement shaping the research approach in subsequent periods (see Figure 14, p.187). This adaptation, along with the focus on key participants with strong narrative abilities, allowed for a more authentic and comprehensive exploration of the research questions, ultimately strengthening the depth and quality of the findings.

4.7.4 Online Video and Audio Recording

Online interviewing is now increasingly recognised as a valid and legitimate research method. Markham (2008) highlights that when ethnographic methods are transitioned online, the research scenario undergoes a change. Specifically, she underscores that identity construction becomes a more deliberate and conscious endeavour in online environments. However, it's important to note a subtle nuance: while the deliberate construction of identity online is highlighted, this doesn't necessarily mean that the online environment is always congenial for participants. Indeed, Mirick and Wladkowski (2019) emphasise the benefits of

reaching participants in locations or platforms where they feel most comfortable, whether geographically or online. Thus, while the online environment allows for a conscious representation, it does not equate to a congenial experience for all participants.

4.7.5 Transcription

To transcribe the interviews, I utilised Microsoft 360 Word's dictate and transcribe function, which allowed me to upload the audio files and receive automated transcripts. During the transcription process, I carefully listened to each interview while reviewing the generated transcript to ensure accuracy. I made manual edits to clean up any errors, fill in gaps where the software misinterpreted speech, and ensure that the text faithfully reflected the spoken content. As part of this process, I anonymized any identifiable information to protect participant confidentiality. Once edited, the transcripts were saved in a secure, password-protected folder on my Canterbury Christ Church University OneDrive.

To further organise the data for analysis, I imported the cleaned transcripts into NVivo, where they were stored alongside other qualitative data. This setup ensured that all data remained systematically organised and easily accessible for subsequent stages of analysis. Each transcript was reviewed multiple times within NVivo to ensure familiarity with the content and to confirm that the transcription accurately reflected the audio recordings. Contextual details such as pauses, laughter, and interruptions were also noted in the transcripts where relevant, to preserve the nuance of the conversations.

Throughout this process, I adhered to rigorous ethical standards by maintaining the security of the data and anonymising identifiable information. Additionally, I ensured that the transcription process was thorough and consistent across all interviews to provide a reliable foundation for subsequent analysis.

This transcription methodology allowed me to produce accurate and anonymised textual data, ready for thematic analysis and deeper exploration in alignment with the research objectives.

4.7.6 Mapping the Framework to Empirical Chapters

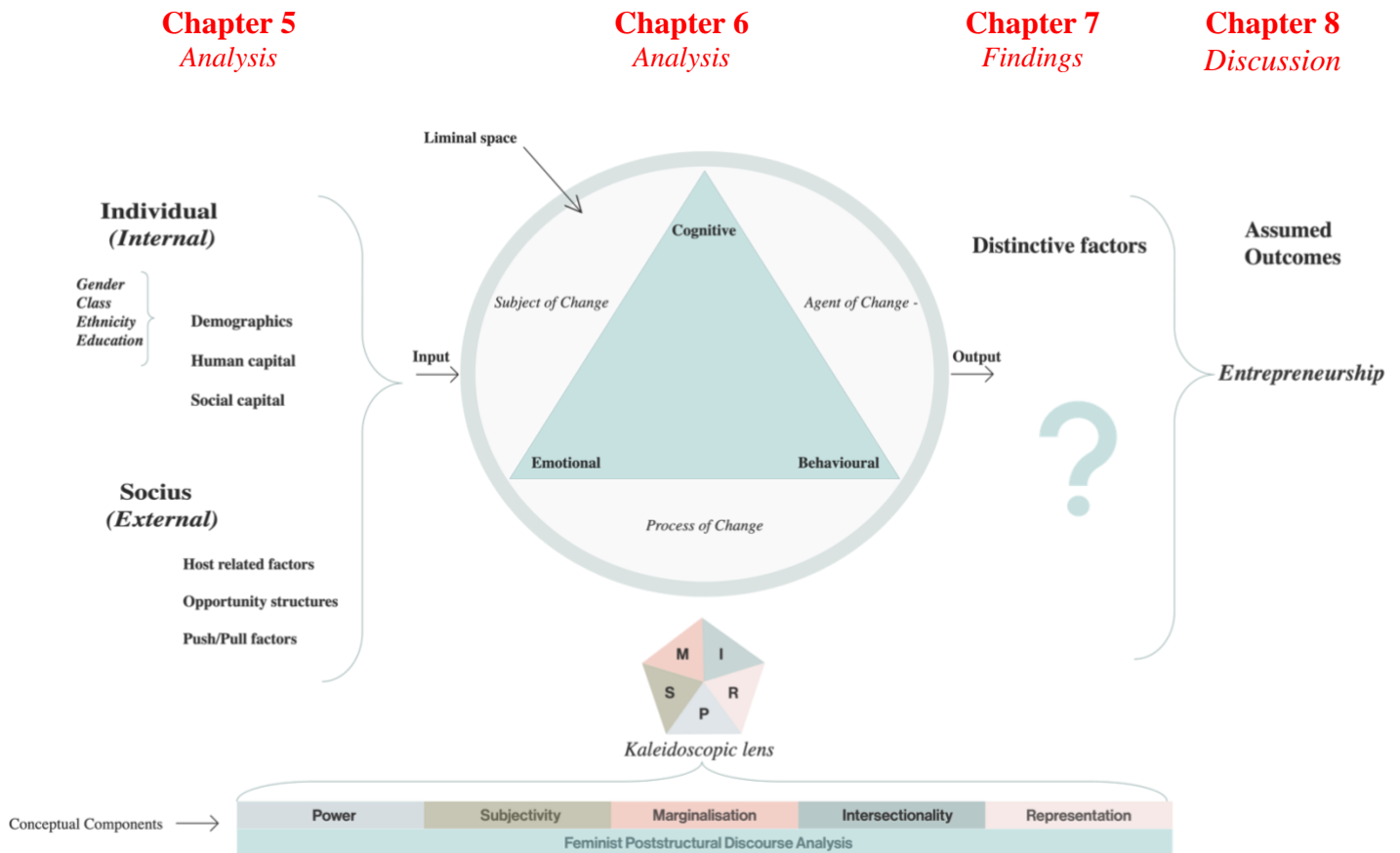


Figure 20. *Mapping the Framework to Empirical Chapters* (Author's own)

The framework presents a sophisticated analysis of refugee entrepreneurship that unfolds across four key chapters (5-8), each examining distinct but interconnected aspects of the entrepreneurial journey.

Chapter 5 (Analysis) focuses on the foundational elements shown on the left side of the framework. It examines two crucial categories: Individual (Internal) factors and Socius (External) factors. The Internal factors include detailed analysis of demographics (gender, class, ethnicity, education), human capital (skills and knowledge), and social capital (networks and relationships). The Socius (External) factors encompass host-related factors

(conditions in the new country), opportunity structures (available business possibilities), and push/pull factors (forces that either compel or attract entrepreneurs).

Chapter 6 (Analysis) examines the complex interplay between being a *subject of change* and an *agent of change* through cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. Within the liminal space depicted in the framework, refugees oscillate between these positions rather than following a linear progression. This oscillation occurs as individuals navigate and negotiate their entrepreneurial experiences through cognitive processing, emotional responses, and behavioural adaptations. The chapter analyses how this dynamic movement between subject and agent positions manifests within the entrepreneurial context, shaped by both structural conditions and individual agency.

Chapter 7 (Findings) corresponds to the right side of the framework, marked by the question mark symbol. This chapter investigates the distinctive factors that emerge from the interaction between individual characteristics and the liminal space. These findings reveal how *cyclical entrepreneurship* manifests as an outcome of this complex interplay.

Chapter 8 (Discussion) synthesises all the various elements presented in previous chapters to critically analyse the relationships between individual factors, external conditions, and the liminal space in refugee entrepreneurship. This chapter questions and probes the initial assumptions about entrepreneurial outcomes, examining the empirical evidence for how and whether entrepreneurship manifests in refugee contexts. By interrogating the complex interactions between structural conditions and individual agency, the discussion explores the tensions, contradictions, and unexpected patterns that emerged through the research process. The chapter maintains a critical perspective on claims of transformation, instead focusing on how the evidence supports or challenges existing theoretical frameworks and what this reveals about the nature of refugee entrepreneurship. This approach allows for a complex and intricate examination of both enabling and constraining factors, while avoiding

predetermined conclusions about entrepreneurial processes or outcomes. The framework is anchored by a 'Kaleidoscopic lens' at the bottom, which incorporates five critical conceptual components: Power, Subjectivity, Marginalisation, Intersectionality, and Representation. These elements form part of the Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis, providing a theoretical foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of female refugee entrepreneurship.

This mapping shows how the research moves from examining structural conditions (Chapter 5), through navigating entrepreneurial mindset (Chapter 6), to outcomes and implications (Chapters 7 and 8), creating a comprehensive analysis of refugee entrepreneurship.

4.7.7 A triangulation of sorts

In Poststructural studies, there is no direct equivalent to '*triangulation*', as it is typically used in social science research. This is because poststructuralism challenges the notion of objective reality and questions the possibility of objective knowledge (Edkins, 2007; Posselt and Seitz, 2020; Bazancir, 2023) Instead, poststructuralism emphasises the role of language and discourse in shaping our understanding of the world. It highlights how language use is contingent on power relations and contextual factors that influence the production and interpretation of meaning. Therefore, poststructuralists aim to deconstruct dominant discourses and reveal the power relations underpinning them rather than triangulating data to arrive at a single objective truth. They may use various methods, such as discourse analysis and deconstruction, to explore how language constructs and reflects societal power relations.

During my research on refugee women entrepreneurship discourse, I recognised the limitations of using the notion of 'triangulation' to ensure the validity and reliability of my findings. As a feminist poststructuralist, I understood that knowledge is constructed through

language and discourse, which are always situated within specific historical and cultural contexts. Ciourel (1974) described what he termed an indefinite triangulation as a way to demonstrate the practicality and inherent reflexivity of everyday accounts that accounts are always formulated for a purpose and in a way that is sensitive to the particular occasion rather than simply reflecting the world around them.

Hammersley (2008) contends that there is no one absolute truth about the relevant aspects of a situation that different accounts relate to. He asserts that there cannot be a single definitive statement regarding the relevant aspects of the situation to which different narratives have reference. Additionally, he emphasises that social science should not assess the accuracy of individuals' narratives, which is considered even more significant. Therefore, I needed to approach my research reflexively, acknowledging my positionality and the power dynamics shaping my data interpretation. Instead of relying solely on 'triangulation' to establish the credibility of my findings, I used multiple methods or approaches to analyse the same data, including FPDA and Derridean Deconstruction. I recognised that using these different methods allowed for a more complex understanding of the power relations and discourses at play within the studied phenomenon of female refugee entrepreneurship (Bularafa and Haruna, 2022).

Furthermore, I used multiple data sources, such as interviews, field notes, and policy documents, to contribute to the richness and complexity of my analysis. However, I also recognised that my own positionality as a researcher shaped my interpretation of these data sources and that my analysis was always contingent on the historical and cultural contexts in which they were produced.

As a result, I approached my research as a reflexive process involving ongoing critical reflection on my positionality and the power dynamics that shape the production and interpretation of discourse. Rather than seeking to establish an objective truth through

triangulation, I aimed to reveal the multiple, contingent, and often contradictory meanings that emerged through the production and interpretation of discourse.

Ultimately, my research helped uncover the complex and varied meanings that emerged from refugee women's entrepreneurship discourse. By using a reflexive process that acknowledged the limitations of 'triangulation' and the role of power and positionality in shaping knowledge production, I was able to provide a thorough and critical analysis of the power relations and discourses at play within this marginalised and vulnerable population.

4.7.8 Limitations

While Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis and Derridean deconstruction offer valuable tools for analysing discourse and uncovering hidden power dynamics and assumptions, these methodologies also have criticisms and limitations. One potential limitation is their subjective nature, as interpretations are heavily influenced by the researcher's values, beliefs, and experiences (Baxter, 2020).

Critics argue that FPDA and deconstruction lack objectivity and that the researcher's biases and assumptions may influence the analysis and interpretation of the data (Rorty, 1989, Benhabib, 2013). Additionally, some argue that these approaches can be overly complex and challenging to apply in practice, leading to a lack of clarity and precision in the analysis

However, defenders of these methodologies (Baxter, 2003; St Pierre, 2018) argue that the subjective nature of interpretation is an inevitable part of any research process and that acknowledging this subjectivity can lead to a more refined critical analysis. They also point to examples of successful applications of these methodologies in various fields, such as literary studies, cultural studies, and social sciences.

For instance, in a study using FPDA to analyse the discourse surrounding women's positioning to the male gaze, the researcher found that the methodology allowed for a more

detailed and critical analysis of culturally available discourses to reveal ambiguous sites of agency and submission (Glapka, 2018). Citing Baxter (2003, pp.69), she reiterates that FPDA makes ‘*visible the non-official viewpoint, the marginalised, the silenced and the oppressed from other, more dominant viewpoints*’.

Similarly, in a study using Derridean deconstruction to analyse the discourse surrounding health promotion in nursing, the researcher found that the approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying assumptions and power dynamics shaping the discourse, thereby revealing a number of binary oppositions and tensions.

One way to address the potential complexity and challenge of using FPDA and Derridean deconstruction is to ensure that the research design is straightforward and focused from the outset. This involves developing a clear research question and conceptual framework that outlines the key themes and concepts to be examined and a transparent methodological approach for data analysis.

Additionally, it is essential to provide clear definitions and explanations of key concepts and theories and examples of how they can be applied to specific data (Allan, 2019). In doing so, the analysis remains precise and focused while remaining flexible and responsive to the unique complexities of the analysed data (Rantala, 2019). It is also essential to recognise that some degree of complexity and ambiguity may be inherent in the data being analysed and may require a layered and context-specific approach to analysis (Linstead, 2003).

Ultimately, while both FPDA and Derridean deconstruction come with challenges and criticisms, a thoughtful and rigorous approach can make their application clear and conceptually strong. Using Derridean deconstruction is especially valuable despite its challenges. It prompts researchers to shift from traditional methods and delve into the text’s intricacies, focusing on how meanings continuously evolve and shift, rather than pinpointing

a singular, clear interpretation. This aligns perfectly with the entrepreneur's journey, where instead of a singular, clear pathway, multiple avenues of opportunity, challenge, and change continuously evolve and emerge. Such an analytical approach offers deeper insights into the dynamism and fluidity inherent in the entrepreneurial experience.

4.8 Ethical considerations

This section of the thesis addresses the ethical principles and challenges encountered in a case study involving female refugees using ethnographic methods. Research ethics in this context are particularly complex due to the vulnerabilities of the participant group (Mackenzie, McDowell, and Pittaway, 2010; Block et al., 2013; Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015; Davidson, Hammarberg, and Fisher, 2024). The ethical framework for this study was grounded in established guidelines, including the University Ethics Policy for Research Using Human Participants (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018), the Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice (Refugee Studies Centre, 2007), and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) principles (BERA, 2018). These frameworks emphasise participants' autonomy, transparency, and harm minimisation.

A comprehensive ethical strategy was implemented and formalised by completing The Ethics Review Checklist (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2021). The approach focused on a) informed consent, b) confidentiality, c) minimising risk, d) data processing, and c) maintaining research integrity. Conducting ethnographies requires building trust with participants, which can influence the data collected.

Initially, I intended to remain as neutral as possible and not adopt a friendship-as-method approach (Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014). However, in common with many ethnographies (Eglinton, 2013; Brooks, Te Riele and Maguire, 2014), as the research progressed, the development of friendships with participants both strengthened the relationships and introduced specific challenges.

The rationale for this approach is rooted in negotiated knowledge construction principles (Ross, 2005), ensuring participants retained the right to approve the interpretation and use of their data. This not only enhanced transparency and mutual respect but also provided participants autonomy, making the process more ethical and reflexive (Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014). Building trust was essential due to the significant vulnerabilities refugees often face, and traditional one-time written consent was insufficient to safeguard their rights and comfort throughout the study (Walliman, 2016; Krause, 2021). The ongoing consent process used here, comprising initial participant information and written consent form (stage 1), continued consent throughout (stage 2), and final approval on data use (stage 3), empowered participants by ensuring they remained aware of what was being collected and could opt out or modify their input at any point. This iterative consent process was not just a formality but a means of safeguarding the integrity of both the data and the participants' autonomy.

4.8.1 Informed Consent Process

Obtaining informed consent is crucial in research involving human participants, particularly vulnerable populations such as refugees. It ensures that participants have a clear understanding of both the data collection process and the ways in which their data will be used, and the findings shared (Block et al., 2013). Atem and Higgins (2024) emphasise the importance of participants' voluntary agreement to their involvement, highlighting that this is essential for promoting agency. Ensuring that participants fully comprehend the research process and consent willingly is critical to maintaining ethical integrity. Informed consent is about communicating information about the study, which should be done in a way that allows the participants time to deliberate, which enhances the validity of the data gathered during the research and the participant's autonomy (Sandu and Frunza, 2019). Ensuring participant's autonomy also ensures the maintenance of participants' right to withdraw. Securing informed

consent, particularly with potentially vulnerable populations, requires a reflexive and continuous process where the researcher actively reassesses consent throughout the study (Krause, 2021).

In this study, informed consent was not treated as a one-time formal procedure but as an ongoing dialogue with participants, reflecting Fisher's (2022) framework of 'People First, Data Second'. This approach ensured that the participants' autonomy and well-being were prioritised over the research objectives. Building friendships with participants enhanced rapport and trust, but it also required careful attention to shifting power dynamics, as these relationships could affect data collection and improve internal validity by encouraging more authentic and honest responses. As Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014) noted, the friendship dimension can cause participants to become more unguarded over time, thus creating challenges in maintaining clear boundaries between informal interaction and data collection. Additionally, Ross's (2017) insights into empowering methodological choices support my iterative consent process, emphasising participant control and agency throughout the research process.

The ethical considerations surrounding informed consent are paramount when conducting research with vulnerable populations, such as refugees. It is not enough to simply obtain consent at the outset; the process must be ongoing and adaptive, ensuring that participants are continuously informed and comfortable with their involvement. This reflexive approach to consent is crucial, as the dynamics between the researcher and participants can evolve, particularly in qualitative research settings where conversational methods are used. Trust is built over time, and the relationship may shift, making it necessary to regularly reaffirm participants' understanding and agreement.

Therefore, in this study, the informed consent process was designed to go beyond the traditional one-time consent, encompassing three key stages: initial participant information

and written consent (stage 1) before the research started, continued consent (stage 2) throughout the process, and final consent (stage 3) regarding how the data was interpreted, what was included, and what was ultimately published.

I. Stage 1 - Prior Written Consent

The first stage of consent involved formal written consent. Participants were provided with a detailed participant information sheet and a consent form, including information about the study's aims, methods, and their rights as participants. These forms were designed following Canterbury Christ Church University (2018, 2020) guidelines and ethical best practices, ensuring participants were fully informed before agreeing to participate. They were given sufficient time to review the documents, ask questions, and express concerns before signing. Each participant signed the consent form electronically, a process necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Detailed contact information for my PhD supervisors was also included for verification purposes.

II. Stage 2 - Ongoing Verbal Consent

The second stage was a constant verbal reminder of their rights and the nature of their participation. Fisher (2022) emphasises that given the potential vulnerabilities of refugee participants, consent should be ongoing, involving ongoing communication. Ethnographic research often involves long-term engagement, and participants may become less guarded over time, potentially forgetting the boundaries of data collection (Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014). Ethnographies are immersive processes, and even when informed consent is given, participants may forget that data collection is ongoing and that even their body language and informal utterances can be construed as data (DePalma, 2013). To address this, I verbally reminded participants at regular intervals whenever significant data was being collected, that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw or decline to answer any questions without consequence (Salam, Nouvet, and Schwartz, 2021). This

ongoing consent ensured that the participants remained aware and in control of their involvement throughout the research process.

In line with this, before and during each interview and informal conversation, I verbally ensured participants fully understood all aspects of the study, including their rights, the purpose of the research, and the methods employed. This verbal consent process mirrors the principles of reflexive consent discussed in refugee research by Mackenzie, McDowell, and Pittaway (2007), ensuring that participants retained control over their involvement and the use of their contributions. By reinforcing participants' rights verbally, particularly during informal exchanges, the research remained ethically sound and avoided any risk of participants feeling pressured to disclose more information than they intended.

III. Stage 3 – Consent for Publication

The third stage of consent occurred after data collection when participants were given the opportunity to review the final version of the analysed data. This stage involved sending the participants transcripts and notes from interviews or conversations to review to ensure that the data accurately reflected their intended contributions (Rowlands, 2021). Participants could also approve the use of specific information or request that certain data be removed from the analysis, thus giving them control over the inclusion of their responses. This aligns with the ethics of care approach that prioritises participant autonomy and trust in the research relationship (Tiidenberg, 2018). Finally, they were asked to provide their final verbal consent regarding how their data would be represented in the final thesis, any subsequent publications, or potential future research.

4.8.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Allen (2017) advises that participants may be more comfortable engaging with the interview process if they are assured that their information is protected; heading this advice, anonymity and confidentiality are made clear via the informed consent form (stage 1)

Protecting participant privacy was a fundamental part of the ethical considerations at every stage of this study. For instance, after each interview, observation, and informal interaction, any identifying information, such as names, titles, locations, and references to other individuals, was either removed or replaced with pseudonyms in the notes and transcriptions.

In qualitative research involving vulnerable populations, such as refugees, the risk of participant identification due to unique characteristics is a significant ethical challenge. As noted in the literature, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity often requires more than just assigning pseudonyms; researchers must carefully consider how unique aspects of a participant's story or demographic details might inadvertently reveal their identity (Wiles et al., 2008; Saunders et al., 2015). This is particularly true in small, specific populations where anonymity can be difficult to maintain, even with traditional anonymisation techniques.

To address these risks, I implemented a three-stage consent process designed to give participants agency and control over their data. This approach aligns with ethical principles that emphasise participant empowerment and the need for flexibility throughout the research process (Kasstan et al., 2023). First, participants were provided with detailed information, and written consent was obtained before the research commenced, ensuring clarity about the research aims and processes (stage 1). Second, continued consent was actively sought throughout the research process, allowing participants to reassess their involvement as the study progressed (stage 2). Third, and perhaps most crucially, participants were given the opportunity to review and approve the final data files (stage 3), ensuring they were comfortable with how their contributions were interpreted and represented in the final analysis.

This iterative consent process not only mitigated the risk of participant identification but also aligned with the recommendations for enhancing participant autonomy and ethical

practice in research with vulnerable groups. By involving participants in these final stages, I adhered to the principle of ‘de-personalisation’ without over-promising confidentiality, as discussed by Wiles et al. (2008) and Kasstan et al. (2023). This careful negotiation of confidentiality ensured that the integrity of the data was preserved while minimising the risk of inadvertent disclosure.

4.8.3 Harm and Risk

As suggested in the Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice (Refugee Studies Centre, 2007), researchers should be sensitive to their work’s possible consequences and endeavour to guard against predictably harmful effects. These guidelines complement the principles laid out by Mackenzie, Mcdowell, and Pittaway (2007, pp. 299) who similarly emphasise ‘beneficence, integrity, respect for persons, autonomy and justice’ as ethical cornerstones for refugee research. Additionally, the Canterbury Christ Church University Ethics Policy (2018) underscores institutional expectations to avoid harm and maintain participants’ autonomy. Together, these guidelines create a robust ethical framework for this study, ensuring that participants are not exposed to undue risk while respecting their rights and dignity.

According to Valji, De La Hunt and Moffett (2003), adult female refugees are considered one of the most vulnerable groups. However, the predominant guidance on refugee research focuses on recently traumatised refugees, including those in refugee camps. These specific issues are not entirely relevant to this study, as all participants have already been awarded refugee status and settled in the UK for some time. The participant group may include women who lack language skills, have low educational attainment, or are politically marginalised, thereby making them vulnerable due to what Stevenson and Willott (2006, pp. 382) describe as ‘an inherent condition, previous experience or current circumstances.’

However, it is essential to distinguish that my participants do not fit this specific category of extreme vulnerability. In the first instance, this research did not involve asylum-seekers who are particularly at risk and extremely vulnerable. Secondly, the research is not inherently risky, as it concerns entrepreneurship and the process of new venture creation. Thirdly, whilst acknowledging that the refugee participants may have experienced, or been in danger of experiencing, persecution, violence, or other trauma to have been granted refugee status, they are, in the main, ‘settled’ refugees with recognised status and rights, with the majority having been in the UK for several years.

The most significant point is that most of the refugee women interviewed for this research are highly educated and professionally qualified in their country of origin or the United Kingdom. They are neither unemployed, do not suffer housing issues, nor experience any language difficulties. For the purposes of this research, refugee participants are further defined as adults without serious mental or physical health conditions (Refugee Studies Centre, 2007; University of Oxford, 2024, p.1) who:

- are not currently detained in a refugee camp (closed, waiting or detention camps).
- are not currently asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers or currently in the appeals process.
- are not homeless.
- have been in the UK for at least two years
- are not a patient detained under the UK Mental Health Act at special hospitals or other psychiatric secure units.
- are not aged under 18.
- are able to give voluntary and fully informed consent.

According to the Canterbury Christ Church University Ethics Review checklist, this research was classified as medium risk following a required risk assessment. While it involves settled adult refugees, who are considered a vulnerable population, the topic of entrepreneurship itself is not inherently risky. By opting for an unstructured conversational interview style and aligning with Pinsky’s (2015) recommendation for a flexible qualitative

approach that draws on the full spectrum of researcher-participant interactions, the power dynamics are further minimised, creating a more comfortable and open space for dialogue.

The participants were treated with a duty of care and in an ethically responsible manner. Interview questions focused on current new venture endeavours and entrepreneurship, avoiding sensitive or controversial issues. However, as the questions were unstructured and open-ended, there may have been the possibility of resurfacing trauma through a recollection of past events. Participants were signposted to relevant refugee support organisations. These support resources were also highlighted during the debriefing. The Refugee Studies Centre's guidelines (2007, p. 164) stressed that 'consent from subjects does not absolve researchers from their obligation to protect research participants as far as possible against the potentially harmful effects of research.'

Conducting the pilot study made me realise that the richest insights often came from the conversations outside of formal recorded interviews and observations. However, it also made me acutely aware that the openness and frankness participants displayed in these informal settings could lead to unintentional disclosure of sensitive information. This understanding prompted me to recognise the need for heightened sensitivity when navigating these interactions in the full ethno-case study. I became more attuned to the ethical challenges of managing informal conversations, ensuring that I maintained a clear boundary between casual interactions and formal data collection and consistently reaffirmed participants' consent. Insights from the pilot study allowed me to establish safeguards for handling potentially sensitive information while still capturing the depth and authenticity that informal exchanges offered.

When participants disclosed sensitive information in informal settings, such as one instance where a participant revealed that marijuana had been smoked in her home, I employed a reflective ethical decision-making process to determine whether such details

were necessary for the analysis. This process was grounded in the principle of beneficence, ensuring that participants were not exposed to any risk of harm from my research (Mackenzie, McDowell, and Pittaway, 2007). As Tolich and Fitzgerald (2006) discuss, unforeseen risks can emerge during the research process, and researchers must be prepared to make decisions about what information should remain confidential in order to protect participants from potential harm. To address this, I considered whether the information was pertinent to the research questions and if including it might have unintended legal or social consequences for the participant. If any doubt existed, the welfare of the participant took precedence, and the data was omitted. There were also ethical dilemmas regarding informal disclosures, and I decided not to include this detail in my analysis to protect her from any unintended consequences. This approach reflects the guidelines of Mackenzie, McDowell, and Pittaway (2007), who emphasise that safeguarding participants from potential harm should override the researcher's desire to collect complete data.

4.8.4 Ethical Boundaries and Ongoing Consent in Ethno-Case Research

Pinsky's (2015) research, which examined the social construction of Jewish feminist identities through life history interviews, offers valuable insights into the complexities of managing informal ethnographic encounters. Her methodology included interacting with participants outside formal interviews, such as during home visits or shared meals, and treating these 'incidental ethnographic encounters' as potential sources of data (Pinsky, 2015, p. 282). This unstructured approach to participant observation allowed her to capture a fuller range of human experiences. Still, it also introduced challenges regarding how to ethically incorporate these interactions into formal research analysis. Pinsky acknowledges the lack of clear methodological guidance on integrating field notes from informal encounters, revealing the ethical ambiguity surrounding these interactions.

My own research mirrored Pinsky's in that I also engaged with participants in informal settings, including cafés, home visits, and even during their stays at my house. Like Pinsky, I navigated these blurred boundaries with a reflexive and structured approach. However, as O'Connell Davidson (2008) argues, securing initial consent does not necessarily mean participants are always aware of or comfortable with being part of the research process, particularly during informal or intimate interactions. This is especially pertinent in cases where participants stay at the researcher's home, as the power dynamics inherent in the researcher-participant relationship can inhibit their ability to say no, even when given the option. This ethical ambiguity, as Pinsky highlights, reflects broader challenges in distinguishing personal interactions from formal research data collection. To address this, I adopted the concept of 'ongoing consensual decision-making' (Halse and Honey, 2005), ensuring that participants retained control over what was considered research data by continuously reiterating their consent. I mirrored O'Donnell Davidson's (2008) reflexivity by recognising that even with formal consent, the vulnerability of participants necessitates heightened ethical sensitivity.

This approach reflects contemporary feminist critiques of power dynamics in qualitative research, which emphasise the need for clear ethical boundaries and the minimisation of potential harms in informal, often ambiguous, research settings (McCormick, 2012). The dual role of researcher and participant in these settings, as McCormick suggests, presents significant ethical challenges. Through transparent communication and reflexive practice, I was able to maintain a distinction between personal interactions and formal data collection. I reiterated participants' autonomy to withdraw consent at any time, creating a space where they felt empowered to refuse participation without consequences, in alignment with feminist critiques of power dynamics in qualitative research (Liamputtong, 2007; Clark-

Kazak, 2021). This reflexive, participant-centred approach ensured I maintained ethical boundaries, especially during informal, often ambiguous, research encounters.

4.8.5 Differentiating Personal Space from Research Space

To ensure that participants felt comfortable and understood when data collection was taking place, I made it a point to clearly distinguish between personal and non-research moments and times when I was actively gathering data. This was particularly important during homestays or informal settings, such as cafés, where the boundaries between personal interactions and research could easily blur.

At the beginning of each interaction, whether a homestay or an informal meeting, I explicitly informed participants about when I would be recording or making notes for research purposes. For example, before each homestay, I explained that while I would be present as both a researcher and host, they could relax and treat personal interactions as ‘off the record’ unless I specifically requested permission to gather information. In informal settings like shared meals or casual conversations, I verbally signal when we transitioned from non-research moments to data collection by clarifying, ‘This is for the research,’ or, conversely, ‘This is just a casual conversation, nothing will be recorded.’ This approach allowed participants to differentiate between research and relaxation time, ensuring they knew when they could let their guard down.

Furthermore, if sensitive or unexpected disclosures emerged in informal moments, I would pause and ask participants whether they wanted the information to be included in the research. For instance, during a casual conversation with RE4 in a café, she shared her experiences with claiming universal credit. I paused the conversation to clarify whether she wished this information to be part of the research. This helped reinforce the distinction between personal and research conversations, giving participants explicit control over what constituted research data.

In another instance, during a conversation about dating and personal relationships, I reassured one participant (RE1) that the details of the discussion would remain confidential as they were outside the scope of the research. This moment highlights my awareness and iterative approach to maintaining boundaries and ensuring participants' comfort. This approach aligns with Swain and King (2022), who suggest that informal conversations can offer valuable insights and richer, more naturalistic data. However, they also require careful ethical management to ensure participants are fully aware of the boundaries between formal and informal interactions.

The friendship dynamic in ethno-case studies undoubtedly played a role in strengthening rapport, yet I was mindful of the ethical implications that could arise from these relationships. To prevent participants from feeling obligated to contribute more than they were comfortable with, I constantly emphasised voluntary participation. For example, after spending several days with one participant, I reminded her at the end of the visit that she was free to review or retract any parts of our conversation if she later felt uneasy about them being used in the research. Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014) discuss how building close, trust-based relationships with participants can increase the depth of data, but they also highlight the ethical responsibility to avoid exploiting these relationships, something I took care to manage by regularly re-emphasising participants' control over their contributions.

Throughout their stay at my home and during other informal moments, I maintained an ongoing verbal consent process (stage 2), regularly reminding participants that they could withdraw from the study at any point and that they were not obligated to provide information outside formal data collection sessions. In informal settings, such as homestays or café meetings, ongoing verbal consent was not a one-time event but a continuous process. At the beginning of each interaction, whether informal or during structured data collection, I verbally reiterated the voluntary nature of the study and reminded participants of their right to

withdraw or withhold information. I took care to observe their responses to sensitive topics and regularly checked in, especially if the conversation ventured into areas that might evoke past trauma or discomfort. On occasions where participants disclosed personal or sensitive information not directly relevant to the study, I made it clear that such disclosures would not be included in the research data unless they explicitly consented. This helped to maintain their autonomy and ensure that boundaries between personal interaction and formal data collection were respected.

As highlighted by Liamputtong (2007), ongoing verbal consent should be integrated into every stage of data collection, not just at the start of the study, allowing participants to reassert their autonomy at any point in the research process. For example, in one instance, RE2 disclosed information that she initially hesitated to share. I reassured her that this was not necessary for the research, but she insisted that her thoughts on the topic should be included. As Davidson, Hammarberg, and Fisher (2024) emphasise, protecting vulnerable populations, such as refugees and asylum seekers, from undue influence and ensuring their autonomy is critical in research settings. This moment further illustrates how I upheld these ethical standards, particularly in migration contexts where power imbalances can complicate the notion of truly voluntary consent (Clark-Kazak, 2021).

In another case, I encountered a power imbalance when RE3 hesitated during a conversation. Noticing her discomfort, I reminded her of her right to withhold information, which reassured her and allowed her to make an empowered choice. This instance demonstrates the importance of reiterating participants' autonomy, especially in informal or emotionally charged contexts where the power dynamics between researcher and participant can shift. Ross (2017) highlights that such moments of empowerment occur when methodological choices actively disrupt traditional power imbalances, allowing participants to assert greater control over their involvement in the research process.

Additionally, there were times when informal consent needed to be clarified in real-time. During a casual conversation with RE4 in a café, she shared her experiences with claiming universal credit. I paused the conversation to clarify whether she wished this information to be part of the research. This clarification illustrates my commitment to maintaining clear ethical boundaries, even during informal interactions and ensuring that participants were always aware of what constituted data collection, an approach aligned with Schwarz's (2010) emphasis on ensuring real-time clarity in data collection processes during informal settings.

This process reflected the iterative and reflexive consent framework, where participants were empowered to shape their involvement, as described by Ross (2017). Additionally, the friendship dimension of the research, while strengthening rapport, was carefully managed to avoid participants feeling pressured to contribute beyond their comfort level, as discussed by Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014). The friendship dynamic in ethno-case studies undoubtedly played a role in strengthening rapport, yet I was mindful of the ethical implications that could arise from these relationships. To prevent participants from feeling obligated to contribute more than they were comfortable with, I maintained a constant emphasis on voluntary participation. For example, after spending several days with one participant, I reminded her at the end of the visit that she was free to review or retract any parts of our conversation if she later felt uneasy about them being used in the research.

Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014) discuss how building close, trust-based relationships with participants can increase the depth of data, but they also highlight the ethical responsibility to avoid exploiting these relationships. This iterative and reflexive consent framework empowered participants to shape their involvement in the research, as described by Ross (2017). Although friendship played a role in building rapport, I took care

to manage this dimension ethically to ensure that participants did not feel obligated to contribute beyond their comfort levels.

4.8.6 Guarding Against Over-Disclosure

By employing three stages of consent, I guarded against participants unknowingly disclosing too much or feeling pressured to continue in the study. My process ensured that they were actively involved in decisions about their participation at every critical point. At every significant data collection interval, such as informal collection points, recording interviews, observations, or any salient moments, I reminded them of their rights and allowed them to withdraw data if necessary.

Over time, participants in such ethno-case studies might say things more candidly and unguarded, potentially disclosing more than they initially intended (Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014). The ongoing consent process used in this study was designed to mitigate this risk by ensuring they remained aware of what was being collected and could opt out or modify their input at any point. This iterative consent process was not just a formality but a means of safeguarding the integrity of both the data and the participants' autonomy.

This detailed, ongoing consent framework ensures that participants' rights are respected, and their autonomy is preserved throughout the study. By combining written consent (stage 1), ongoing verbal reminders (stage 2), and a final data review (stage 3), my research adheres to ethical standards while fostering a trust-based relationship with participants. Additionally, recognising the potential complexities of friendship in research relationships, I maintained a balance between rapport and ethical boundaries, ensuring participants remained aware of their rights and the scope of data collection throughout the study. Furthermore, by integrating empowering methodological choices, as outlined by Ross (2017), my approach disrupted traditional power imbalances and fostered participant agency at every stage of the research process.

4.8.7 Data processing

Consent, storage and processing of data.

Interviews were either video or sound recorded after gaining verbal and signed consent before each online interview. If consent to record could not be obtained, manual notes were taken. All participant identification within the data was kept anonymous. Raw data, including video and audio recordings, was transcribed and coded to protect anonymity. Data was encrypted and stored in a password-protected folder to which only the researcher (myself) had access. The predominant documentation was digital, including the consent forms and any manual notes. These digital documents allow for more secure storage as they could be encrypted and stored in a password-protected folder. Participants were informed via the information sheet and debriefing material on how to access their data. They could request transcripts of interviews from the researcher. The participants could ask for all personal data to be erased, and any inaccurate data rectified. The participants could also request the restriction or objection to the processing of any data. Withdrawal requests would be effective immediately without question. Withdrawal could be requested via email to the researcher.

Protecting participant privacy was intrinsic to the ethical considerations at each stage of this study. For example, any form of participant identification, names, titles, names of places, and references to other people were removed or replaced with pseudonyms after each interview transcription. Using this approach to ensure that research participants are non-identifiable to readers and strengthening personal data security aimed to protect participants' anonymity (Toy-Cronin, 2018; Surmiak, 2018). To further ensure strict data security, only four people will have access to the full transcripts: my three supervisors and myself.

All personally identifiable data was removed in the final transcripts to safeguard personal data protection. Raw data, including video and audio recordings, was encrypted and stored in a password-protected digital folder to which only I (the researcher) had access.

4.8.8 Quality and integrity of research

Weller (2017) reminds us that rapport is imperative to ethical practice, specifically regarding a considered research relationship built and established on respect. Connection is crucial in the relationship between a researcher and a case study participant. When rapport is established, it creates a sense of mutual respect and trust, which is essential for effective communication and data collection. To build and maintain rapport, researchers must be empathetic, non-judgemental and listen to their participants. They should also establish clear boundaries, such as maintaining confidentiality and obtaining informed consent to respect participants' autonomy. Building and maintaining rapport is crucial for ensuring the participants feel heard, understood and appreciated, which is essential for ethical research practice.

I understand rapport building is not a neutral process but embedded in power relations. In recognising my biases and power dynamics in the research relationship, I strive to establish trust and mutual respect with the participants while recognising their valid and valuable experiences and perspectives. Additionally, I realise the different power dynamics that may exist for the participants as refugees and entrepreneurs and work to create a safe space for them to share their experiences without fear of judgement. Furthermore, obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality is crucial for respecting the participants' autonomy, and I strive to be an active listener and respectful partner in this research.

In terms of the quality of research, as a qualitative researcher, I pay attention to the rigour and credibility of the study. This includes using an appropriate research design, sampling method, data collection and analysis, and data interpretation sensitive to the participants' specific context and experiences. I try to be transparent and reflexive in my approach, recognising the potential for researcher bias and use techniques such as member

checking, triangulation, and reflexivity to mitigate it. I also pay attention to the findings' trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability.

Regarding the integrity of the research, I am reflexive in my approach and ensure that the investigation is conducted ethically and responsibly. This includes being aware of any potential harm from the research and taking steps to minimise it. Additionally, I ensure that the participants are not exploited. The autonomy and dignity of the participants must be respected, and their rights to privacy and confidentiality protected, taking into account the specific vulnerabilities and needs of refugee women entrepreneurs. Overall, my objective is to conduct the research with integrity, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of the participants are accurately and respectfully represented in the findings and recognise the limitations of my position as a researcher in this field.

Chapter 4 Summary

This chapter presented the methodological choices underpinning the research on how refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset within liminal spaces. The chapter critically justified the adoption of an ethno-case study methodology, a hybrid approach integrating ethnographic methods with case study analysis (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). This methodological choice addressed the limitations of traditional research approaches in capturing the gendered and contextual complexities of entrepreneurship, particularly in contexts of displacement (Marlow, 2020; Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). By focusing on four refugee women entrepreneurs, the approach facilitated longitudinal and immersive insights into how the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset development interact within the liminal space (Kuratko, Fisher & Audretsch, 2021; Kelly & McAdam, 2022).

The rationale for this methodology was supported by insights from the pilot study (2019–2020), which revealed that structured methods often failed to capture the fluid and

dynamic nature of mindset evolution. The ethno-case study approach proved particularly effective for examining how participants transitioned from subjects of change, through processes of change, to agents of change (Manning et al., 2019). This temporal perspective provided a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurial mindset as a developmental phenomenon shaped by uncertainty and complexity.

The chapter also introduced Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) (Baxter, 2003, 2008) as a critical lens for exploring the power dynamics, intersectionality, subjectivity, marginalisation, and representation influencing participants' entrepreneurial journeys. FPDA, combined with Derridean Deconstruction, facilitated the analysis of dominant discourses, binary oppositions, and embedded societal norms, illuminating how refugee women construct entrepreneurial identities while navigating systemic constraints (Weedon & Hallak, 2021; Frost & Elichaooff, 2013). This kaleidoscopic framework enabled the identification of multiple and intersecting power relations, providing a sophisticated analysis of how refugee women reproduce and resist dominant entrepreneurial narratives.

The chapter highlighted the evolving relationships between the researcher and participants, with trust and rapport developed over four years of consistent engagement. Ethnographic techniques, including participant observation and conversational interviews, were critical for capturing the nuanced interplay between individual agency and structural barriers (Whitehead, 2005; McLean & Campbell, 2003). Reflexivity and ethical considerations were central to the research process, particularly in managing power imbalances and ensuring authentic representation of participants' voices (Kaaristo, 2022; Sapkota, 2024).

Challenges of translation and interpretation were addressed by integrating participants with varying levels of English proficiency, ensuring inclusivity while recognising the complexities of interpreter-mediated communication (Senthanar et al., 2020). This

methodological refinement enhanced the study's capacity to explore how entrepreneurial mindset is shaped across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. Additionally, document analysis complemented primary data collection by contextualising participants' entrepreneurial activities within broader structural and institutional frameworks (de Carvalho, 2022).

Finally, the integration of ethnography with Feminist Poststructuralism underscored the methodological commitment to capturing the fluid, relational, and context-specific nature of participants' entrepreneurial journeys (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000). This synthesis provided tools for examining the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset as they develop within the liminal space, shaped by intersecting structures of power and identity.

The next two empirical chapters are structured to follow the logic of the conceptual model, offering a comprehensive and layered response to the research question, *How do refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset in a liminal space?* Chapter 5 lays the foundation by examining the structural inputs and contextual conditions, including social capital, human capital, demographics, and socio-political factors, that influence refugee women's entrepreneurial engagement. This chapter adopts a critical lens to analyse how these external forces act as both enabling and constraining elements within the liminal space.

Building on this foundation, Chapter 6 moves to interrogate the internal processes of mindset development, examining how refugee women navigate cognitive, emotional, and behavioural shifts. However, this analysis resists portraying entrepreneurship as a linear or progressive trajectory of empowerment. Instead, it reveals a more fragmented and oscillatory process, where refugee women repeatedly confront systemic barriers, recalibrate their aspirations, and negotiate the persistent tensions between constraint and agency.

While some feminist scholarship often celebrates entrepreneurship as a transformative pathway (Cardella, Hernández-Sánchez and Sánchez-García, 2020; Carretero-García and Serrano-Pascual, 2022), gendered entrepreneurship studies remain more critical of such claims, particularly for marginalised groups (Huq and Venugopal, 2021; Al Dajani, 2022; Adeeko and Treanor, 2022). This research aligns with the latter perspective, emphasising the fragile, contingent, and often ambiguous nature of agency within liminal spaces. Far from being inherently liberatory, entrepreneurial activities for refugee women frequently reproduce existing structural inequalities, with agency remaining precarious and constrained by intersecting power relations.

By challenging the idealised and linear narratives of entrepreneurship, these chapters expose its contradictory nature, at once offering moments of possibility while simultaneously reinforcing systemic constraints. This critical analysis contributes to broader discourses on gendered entrepreneurship, unsettling, simplified assumptions about transformation, agency, and empowerment within the entrepreneurial journey.

Chapter 5. Analysing the Socius and the Self

This analysis section is structured into two empirical chapters that are closely aligned with the conceptual model underpinning this study. Together, these chapters address the central research question: 'How do refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset in a liminal space through three dimensions, as a *subject of change*, through a *process of change*, to an *agent of change*?'

Figure 21(below) presents the complete conceptual framework guiding this research. This chapter focuses specifically on analysing the elements shown on the left-hand side of the framework, encompassing both Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors. These structural and contextual conditions - including demographics, human capital, social capital, host-related factors, opportunity structures, and push/pull factors - form the foundational inputs that shape how refugee women engage with entrepreneurship. While these external and internal elements do not determine the entrepreneurial mindset in a deterministic sense, they act as enabling or limiting forces that influence cognitive, emotional, and behavioural shifts. The kaleidoscopic lens shown at the bottom of the framework enables examination of these elements through five key theoretical perspectives: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation. A thorough understanding of these structural conditions creates the necessary foundation for analysing how they influence entrepreneurial mindset development in Chapter 6.

At the core of the model is the liminal space, which serves as the contextual setting where refugee women negotiate between externally imposed subjectivities and internally driven aspirations.

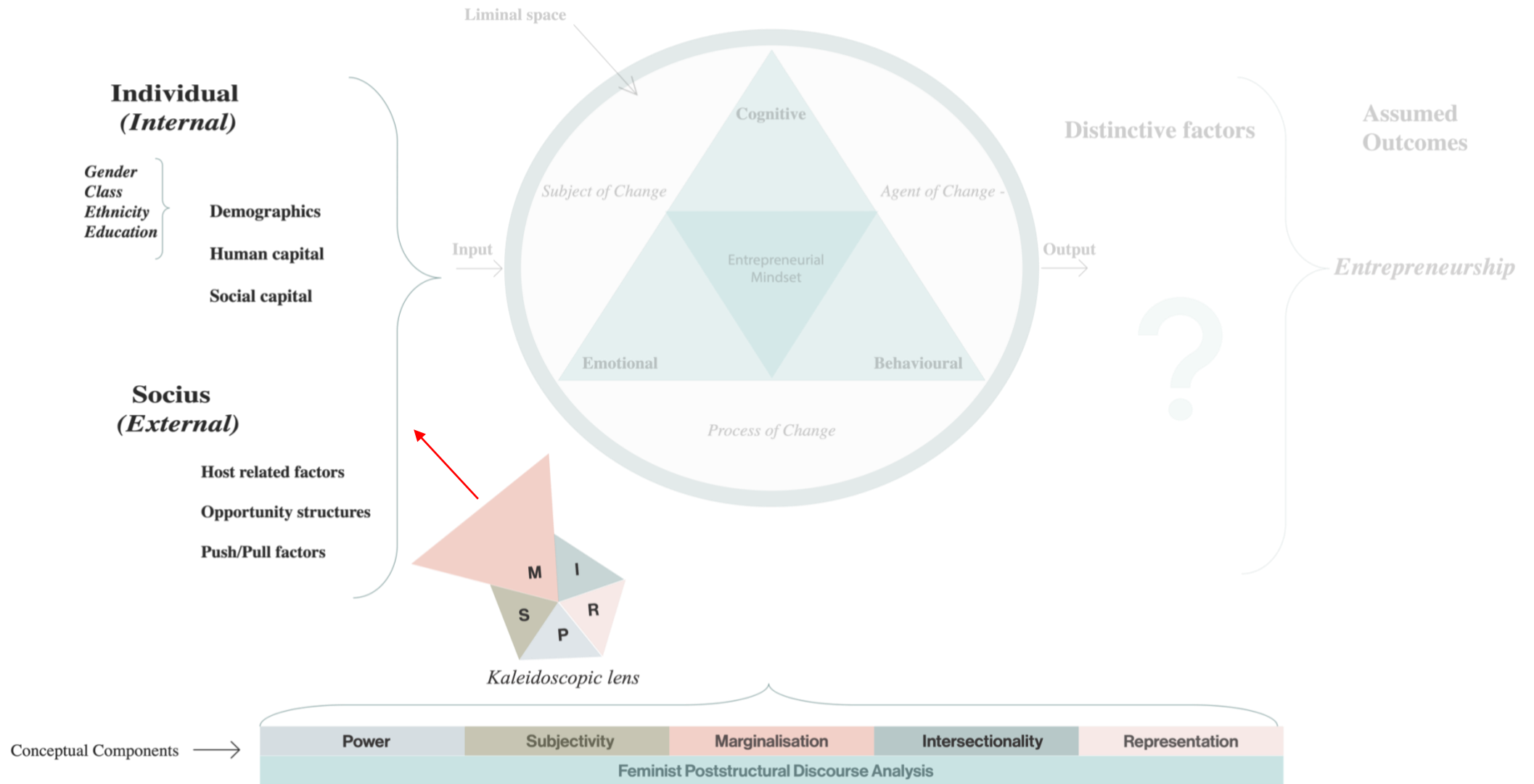


Figure 21. Chapter 5 Focus Areas of Analysis: The Kaleidoscopic Lens exploring Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) (Author's Own)

Within this context, the entrepreneurial mindset triad functions as the conceptual device, capturing the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of these negotiations. This transition is conceptualised as a fluid and oscillatory process. Women may embody the role of *subjects of change*, shaped predominantly by external pressures and structural barriers, but can also assert themselves as *agents of change*, active participants in shaping their entrepreneurial futures. However, this progression is neither linear nor straightforward. Refugee women frequently shift between these positions as they confront structural constraints, such as marginalisation, intersectional power dynamics, and limitations in social and human capital. Over time, they adapt and adjust, reflecting the ongoing and evolving nature of entrepreneurial mindset development within a liminal space.

Chapter 5 critically engages with the left-hand side of the model, analysing the structural and contextual conditions through the theoretical lenses of Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) and Derridean deconstruction. This chapter focuses on the influence of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation on the conditions refugee women encounter. By unpacking these structural dynamics, the chapter explains how social capital, human capital, and broader socio-political contexts (such as host-country environments and opportunity structures) shape the initial conditions for entrepreneurial engagement. While Chapter 5 does not directly analyse entrepreneurial mindset development, it provides a foundation for understanding why refugee women may move between agency and subjugation, often as a response to the constraints and opportunities embedded within these structural realities. These patterns, often shaped by structural constraints and opportunities, provide crucial insights for the subsequent analysis in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 extends this analysis to the centre of the model, focusing on the liminal space where entrepreneurial mindsets are navigated and negotiated. Drawing on the structural

conditions detailed in Chapter 5, this chapter examines how refugee women engage in cognitive, emotional, and behavioural oscillations as they shift through aspects of mindset development. The analysis highlights how women shift between being acted upon by external circumstances and asserting greater agency through processes of learning, adaptation, and innovation. The chapter also incorporates a temporal dimension, underscoring that entrepreneurial mindset development is not a linear trajectory but an ongoing process shaped by the interplay of internal capacities and external conditions.

Together, these empirical chapters closely follow the logic of the conceptual model, addressing the research question in a comprehensive and layered manner. Chapter 5 focuses on the structural ‘inputs’ and the socio-political and economic environments that frame refugee women’s entrepreneurial journeys. Chapter 6 delves into the internal processes of mindset development, demonstrating how entrepreneurial agency emerges through iterative cycles of adaptation, reflection, and regrouping. By articulating the interdependence of structural conditions and internal processes, this analysis advances a detailed understanding of how refugee women navigate entrepreneurship in a liminal space, contributing to the broader discourse on gendered entrepreneurship and feminist perspectives on agency and change.

5.1 Introduction

This analysis chapter employs a dual-level analytical approach, combining micro-level and meso-level analyses to provide a comprehensive understanding of female refugee entrepreneurship. The micro-level analysis, presented in the Appendix (1), uses FPDA and Derridean Deconstruction to examine individual discourses, revealing the binary oppositions, dominant terms, and underlying assumptions and contradictions embedded in participants’ language. Building upon this methodological foundation, the chapter's meso-level analysis

employs a systematic analytical structure to examine how structural conditions shape entrepreneurial experiences.

The analysis progresses through five interconnected kaleidoscopic lenses, each revealing distinct aspects of how structural conditions influence entrepreneurial mindset development. Beginning with Power, the analysis examines fundamental forces that create enabling or constraining conditions. This foundation enables exploration of Subjectivity, revealing how refugee women interpret and internalise these conditions. The Marginalisation lens then demonstrates how systemic exclusion shapes these interpretations, leading to an Intersectionality analysis of how multiple identities create unique patterns of constraint and opportunity. Finally, the Representation lens illustrates how these experiences are reflected in and shaped by broader societal narratives. This progressive analytical approach creates a comprehensive understanding of how structural conditions influence entrepreneurial mindset development.

By examining these discourses, the micro-level analysis uncovers how systemic structures manifest in the lived experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs and informs the broader meso-level analysis in this chapter. However, due to the level of detail and complexity involved, presenting both the micro and meso analyses in the main body was not feasible in terms of space and word count. Therefore, the meso-level analysis is prioritised in this chapter to synthesise and highlight the broader systemic patterns, dynamics, and structures shaping female refugee entrepreneurship. This analysis identifies how societal pressures, institutional barriers, and intersecting identities influence the entrepreneurial mindset and agency of female refugee entrepreneurs. It draws on the insights from the micro-level analysis to ensure that the broader patterns are informed by detailed, contextually rich findings.

This dual approach creates a balance between depth and breadth, enabling a multidimensional exploration of the data. The kaleidoscopic lens (as illustrated in Figure 17, page 240) structures the analysis of key tenets, power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation. These tenets align with the left-hand side of the framework, which highlights structural and contextual conditions shaping female refugee entrepreneurship. This alignment ensures a cohesive analytical approach throughout the chapter.

By presenting the micro analysis in the Appendix (1), provides readers with an opportunity to engage with the granular findings in more detail without disrupting the systemic focus of the meso-level analysis in the main body. This structure allows for a complex understanding of how discursive and structural factors shape the entrepreneurial experiences of female refugees while accommodating the practical constraints of academic writing.

The analysis of structural and contextual conditions on the left-hand side of the framework requires methodological tools capable of revealing both overt and subtle power dynamics. Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) provides an ideal approach for examining how these structural conditions manifest through language and discourse, particularly in revealing how power relations shape refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences. Combined with Derridean deconstruction, these methods illuminate the binary oppositions and hierarchical relationships embedded within these structural conditions. FPDA's focus on power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation aligns directly with the need to understand how both Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors create enabling or constraining conditions for refugee women entrepreneurs. This methodological combination allows for a rigorous examination of how

structural barriers and opportunities emerge through institutional practices, social interactions, and individual experiences.

This chapter prioritises the meso-level analysis, focusing on structural and contextual conditions as outlined in the left-hand side of the framework. The analysis is organised around the five themes of the kaleidoscopic lens: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation. Each theme is explored in dedicated sections (e.g., Section 5.2 examines power), highlighting how systemic patterns shape female refugee entrepreneurship. The micro-level findings, detailed in Appendix (1), provide foundational insights that support this systemic exploration.

By focusing on the structural and contextual conditions shaping entrepreneurial opportunities, this chapter lays the groundwork for Chapter 6, which explores how these conditions inform cognitive, emotional, and behavioural shifts within the liminal space. Together, these chapters provide a comprehensive understanding of female refugee entrepreneurship by linking structural constraints and opportunities to internal mindset development.

5.2 Extent of the data analysis

To begin with, I applied Derridean deconstruction (as defined and explained in Chapter 4, pages 260–270) to 56 quote extracts drawn from interviews, a focus group, and ongoing observations conducted with four refugee women as part of a focused ethno-case study over a four-year period. The decision to analyse these 56 extracts was intentional and methodologically sound, as it allowed me to engage deeply with data that was directly relevant to the study's research question. This approach aligns with feminist poststructuralist methodologies, which emphasize that detailed and contextually rich analyses are more effective in identifying structures of power, hierarchical relationships, and dominant narratives within discourse (Simmons, 2020).

As Gavey (1989) highlights, feminist poststructuralist analysis is not about exhaustive representation of all data but about engaging meaningfully with specific discourses to examine how subjectivities are constructed within particular contexts. Similarly, Davies et al. (2006) argue that focusing on carefully selected narratives enables researchers to critically analyse the discursive processes shaping individual and collective identities. Kaufmann (2010) further supports this approach by asserting that poststructural analysis is not about discovering universal truths but instead about constructing new meanings through targeted, conceptually rich engagements with empirical matter. Attempting to deconstruct a larger volume of data would have diluted the analysis and risked including narratives that bore no meaningful connection to the core themes of this research. By concentrating on this carefully curated set of extracts, I was able to uncover the binary oppositions, dominant terms, and underlying assumptions and contradictions within the discourse. This selective approach enabled a theoretically rich and contextually situated analysis, consistent with the ethos of feminist poststructuralist research.

Then, I subjected the same quote extracts to a Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA). Using a kaleidoscopic lens as illustrated in (Figure 17, page 238), I analysed how power is exercised through language (Baxter, 2003), examined how subjectivity is constructed and negotiated (Weedon, 1997), investigated how marginalisation shapes social dynamics (Davies and Harré, 1990), explored how multiple dimensions of identity intersect and interact (Lather, 1991), and studied how individuals and groups are represented (Gavey, 1989). Through this analysis, I examined the linguistic construction and negotiation of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation (Baxter, 2010)

Ethnographic research requires researchers to critically reflect on their positionality and acknowledge how their own perspectives and biases might influence the interpretation of

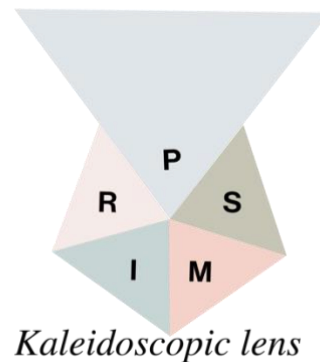
data (Pillow, 2015). In alignment with this, both FPDA and Derridean Deconstruction call for reflexivity, encouraging researchers to interrogate their assumptions, question entrenched frameworks, and remain open to alternative interpretations of the discourse (Weedon, 1997; Baxter, 2003). In my study, participatory methods were also employed to enhance collaboration and include participants as active contributors to the research process (Collins et al., 2018). These methods supported an inclusive approach that acknowledged the lived experiences of refugee women while maintaining critical rigour.

The subsequent section provides a meta-level synthesis of the data analysis, which is grounded in the micro-level analysis detailed in Appendix 1. This dual structure aims to ensure both clarity and accessibility for the reader. While the meta-level summary presents the key findings succinctly, Appendix 1 offers an in-depth exploration of the application of Derridean Deconstruction. This structure balances brevity with depth, providing an overarching view while enabling a deeper investigation for those seeking more detailed insights into the analytical process.

5.3 Data Analysis

This section examines the structural and contextual conditions shown on the left side of the conceptual framework through five analytical lenses: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation. Each lens reveals different aspects of how Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors influence the foundation for entrepreneurial mindset development. These factors shape opportunities and constraints, but refugee women actively navigate and respond to these conditions rather than being purely determined by them. The analysis begins with power dynamics as these fundamentally shape how refugee women engage with entrepreneurial opportunities.

Power



Power is the first lens in this kaleidoscopic analysis, which also examines subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation in the context of refugee entrepreneurship. This section focuses on how power operates at both systemic and individual levels, shaping and constraining the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. Guided by Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA), power is understood as relational, fluid, and enacted through language and discourse (Baxter, 2003). Systemic barriers, such as limited access to funding and societal discrimination, highlight institutionalised power imbalances, while individual resilience and creativity demonstrate how agency is negotiated within these constraints. This analysis examines how power structures are reproduced and challenged through the discursive practices of refugee entrepreneurs.

The analysis of structural conditions from the left-hand side of the conceptual framework is organised through the kaleidoscopic lens components. Power, as the first analytical lens, reveals how both Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors create enabling or constraining conditions for refugee women entrepreneurs. This examination encompasses several key elements from the framework's left side, including host country factors, opportunity structures, and push/pull factors, demonstrating how these structural conditions shape entrepreneurial trajectories.

Host Country Factors

Host country factors, positioned within the Socius (External) elements of the conceptual framework, represent crucial socio-political contexts that shape refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences. These factors manifest through societal expectations, institutional structures, and cultural norms that create both opportunities and barriers.

Host Country Pressures

'The expectation that I would come, I would need to start a business at some point, and I think for me as well, which is something that, I think, it is basically people's expectations.' - RE1

RE1's statement highlights the perceived societal expectation for refugees, especially her, to venture into entrepreneurship as a means of integration and success in the host country. The prevalent view suggests that business ownership is both a desirable and feasible endeavour for refugees, overshadowing potential barriers such as discrimination, limited resources, and weak social networks. This dominant mindset potentially leans towards an assimilationist approach, emphasising capitalist values over the rich cultural diversity that refugees can offer. RE1 feels the tension between her personal aspirations and external expectations, underscoring the power of societal pressures on individual choices. The emphasis on *'people's expectations'* reveals the external influences that might not necessarily align with a refugee's unique journey or aspirations. By understanding and challenging these dominant narratives, refugees like RE1 can seek paths more suited to their needs and values.

Push and Pull factors

The conceptual framework's identification of push/pull factors as key external elements becomes evident through refugee women's narratives about their entrepreneurial motivations. These factors, situated within the Socius dimension, demonstrate how external pressures and opportunities interact with individual aspirations.

Pushed by Challenges, Pulled by Ambition

'Uh, because you know, we've come from an unprivileged background in a lot of sense, like we don't get support from our countries or anything like that, so it feels like I can't just stop here. I have to continue. And you've got another part of expectations where you've got people interested in investing, or they're giving you ideas and telling you what they think is the next step.' - RE2

RE2's narrative underscores the intricate dynamics of entrepreneurial pursuits, particularly for those from marginalised backgrounds. Originating from an unprivileged background without support from her homeland, RE2 is driven to overcome systemic challenges. This backdrop paints a picture of the push factors that shape her journey. At the same time, the entrepreneurial landscape presents its own set of challenges. Potential investments and outside advice are attractive, but they also bring added expectations and stress. RE2's story contrasts her personal ambition against societal expectations and emphasises the external and internal forces that concurrently push and pull her along her entrepreneurial path.

Navigating the Push and Pull of Entrepreneurial Success

'You know everybody is looking at you to succeed because ultimately that kind of floods down, doesn't it? But that was something that I really enjoyed at the time, and it started to, gain a certain level of popularity. Being me, the competitive person, I always had to be ahead of everyone else. So, by the end of it, I had to have my pop up all my tickets like sold out, blah blah blah.' - RE1

RE1's narrative delves into the intricate balance of personal ambition, societal expectations, and the dynamics of the entrepreneurial journey. The prevailing societal viewpoint often positions success in a hierarchical manner, suggesting a race where one's progress is often measured against others. RE1's competitive spirit drives her to stay '*ahead of everyone else*', exemplifying the overarching competitive ethos in the entrepreneurial world. While she thrives under pressure and enjoys the limelight, there's also a hint of disdain towards the relentless demands of success, hinted at by her casual '*blah blah blah*'. Simultaneously, her aspiration to have her pop-up restaurant tickets '*sold out*' underscores

her unwavering determination to succeed in a challenging landscape. This ambition, compounded by her refugee status, showcases the challenges she navigates, emphasising the intersections of identity, ambition, and societal pressures in pursuing entrepreneurial success.

The Drive to Contribute

'I am claiming universal credit from the job centre. I don't like to be a person who just takes. I want to be a productive person.- RE4

RE4's statement provides a window into the prevailing societal perceptions around benefit recipients. The underlying notion suggests that those on universal credit are often stigmatised as being less productive or merely 'takers' of the system. RE4's sentiments reflect her desire to transcend this stereotype, aiming to be seen as a productive individual rather than someone solely dependent on benefits. This narrative not only reveals her personal ambition but also alludes to the broader societal dynamics, where beneficiaries often struggle with feelings of guilt or shame. Moreover, her aspirations signify a wish for financial independence and a hope to redefine her identity beyond the bounds of benefits. This dialogue underscores the larger discourse on benefits and societal contributions, emphasising the need to acknowledge the challenges and aspirations of those within the system.

Opportunity Structures

Opportunity structures, a key Socius (External) element in the conceptual framework, represent the institutional and systemic conditions that either facilitate or hinder refugee women's entrepreneurial activities. These structures encompass access to funding, market conditions, and regulatory environments that shape entrepreneurial possibilities. The analysis reveals how these structural conditions intersect with individual circumstances to create unique patterns of constraints and opportunities for refugee women entrepreneurs.

Limited Funding Opportunities

'It's been really hard to get funding, so anything that I have invested in the business has been through my own money, so working and anything that I could spare over in terms of cash at

the end of the month because literally in terms of my position being a single mother, I'm living paycheque to paycheque.' - RE2

RE2's account shows the challenges faced by marginalised entrepreneurs, particularly single mothers, in accessing necessary funding. While external funding is often viewed as the ideal means of supporting businesses, RE2's experiences expose the systemic barriers that limit their access to such resources. Instead of relying on outside investment, RE2 has had to personally fund her venture, highlighting the gendered nature of entrepreneurial risk-taking and the lack of support from financial institutions. Her sacrifices, such as using whatever is left from her paycheque, emphasise her determination and commitment. Her position as a single mother adds an additional layer of complexity, revealing the intersecting challenges women face in similar situations. Furthermore, RE2's financial situation, living paycheque to paycheque, underscores the economic insecurity that plagues many, pointing to larger systemic issues that lead to unequal opportunities for marginalised groups.

Individual Potentials

'I know I'm creative in that sense. I know none of my competitors will think about anything like this, so for me, it's like, yes, let's have a conversation.' - RE1

RE1 emphasises her distinct creativity in the entrepreneurial landscape, positioning herself as unique compared to her competitors. She believes that her innovative thinking sets her apart, and she embraces this as a core strength. Interestingly, RE1 sees entrepreneurship not just as a competition, but as a potential platform for collaboration. Her approach defies traditional business paradigms where competition is fierce, suggesting instead that there is room for collective growth and mutual success. By signalling her openness to conversation and collaboration, she highlights the value of partnership and shared progress. This perspective may stem from RE1's background and the barriers she faces, suggesting that collaboration can be a tool to address and overcome systemic challenges. Her approach

brings attention to the diverse experiences and identities in the entrepreneurial world, emphasising the importance of inclusivity and joint effort.

Capitalising on opportunities

'She can't just be that stupid and not look into all these opportunities 'cause she's one of the first to start doing this. Then, if she continues, she's going to make great success. So, everyone is calculating success in a way that they think is right.' - RE1

RE1 contrasts the notion of being '*stupid*' with seizing early opportunities in entrepreneurship, implying that missing out on these early chances equates to a lack of intelligence. However, this perspective is anchored in the belief that entrepreneurial success is primarily achieved by being a pioneer. While RE1 concedes that success is a complex concept and varies among individuals, she retains a strong inclination towards the merits of early market entry. This disposition suggests a belief that pioneering efforts inherently lead to success. Furthermore, RE1 feels external pressures to exploit all available avenues for success, hinting at societal judgments for potentially missed opportunities. She highlights her leading role in her field, possibly to justify her choices. Yet, there is an underlying tone of risk and uncertainty about future outcomes. By recognising the fluidity of success definitions, RE1 challenges imposed standards, emphasising her individual agency and values in defining her success.

Financial Barriers

'The only worry is money; how can I get enough, where can I get a loan from? That is the only thing stopping me from starting. I know I can cook and do a lot of different things.' - RE4

RE4 emphasises the primary financial barrier hindering her from initiating her entrepreneurial endeavours. She perceives money as the single obstacle, hinting at potential financial struggles faced by refugee women. While she acknowledges her capabilities, such as cooking, the dominant narrative suggests a primary focus on financial constraints, sidelining other challenges or supports like networks or skill training. The narrative

showcases the intersectionality of her identity as a refugee woman, indicating systemic financial discrimination against such marginalised groups. Her reliance on traditional funding, like loans, highlights a lack of awareness of alternative financial resources. The situation underscores the systemic financial barriers faced by refugee women entrepreneurs, suggesting the need for structural changes in the financial ecosystem to enhance their economic inclusion and empowerment.

Monetary Myths

'I don't feel it because, for me, entrepreneurship is always related to money' - RE3

RE3 perceives entrepreneurship primarily as a financial endeavour, emphasising the role of money as its main objective. This viewpoint might cause her to undervalue other aspects of entrepreneurship, such as creativity or societal impact. By prioritizing monetary outcomes, RE3 contrasts common narratives that depict entrepreneurship as driven by passion. Her perspective underscores the material challenges faced by marginalised entrepreneurs who might prioritise financial stability. Furthermore, RE3's association of entrepreneurship with financial success critiques its capitalist motives, focusing on profit rather than empowerment.

Bias Towards Product-Based Entrepreneurship

'So how is he able to turn that into money? We didn't know, so is it seemed more practical for people who are trying to sell a product. As opposed to a service, so make things and we will help you sell.' - RE3

There is a prevailing bias favouring product-based over service-based entrepreneurship. RE3's statement indicates a perception that tangible products are more valuable and easier to monetise than services. This could stem from traditional business models prioritising physical goods over intangible services. The language used suggests a power dynamic, where those in positions to assist or mentor favour product creators. RE3's

query about converting skills into profit signals a need for clearer guidance on monetising services. The emphasis on product-centric entrepreneurship in mentorship programs might mirror society's broader value placements. This suggesting a lack of inclusive support structures in entrepreneurship to address existing imbalances and biases.

Social Capital

Social capital, explicitly identified on the left-hand side of the conceptual framework as a key structural condition, emerges as a critical resource that refugee women must navigate. This element bridges both Individual and Socius dimensions, showing how personal networks intersect with broader societal structures

Navigating Social Introductions

'But exactly what do I do with the introduction? And those introductions are huge for me. And I felt so much guilt, held onto so much guilt for a long time because I felt like I was not providing any value. You know, and you've been given this opportunity, and you haven't taken it. Run with it. You know, like you're expected to do yes. But nobody's telling you what. What do you do and then, and how do you even maintain these. Then knowing how to network these leads. These people do it from a very young age. In going to your school, to your private schools, your taught and you're leading the country you're taught, this is natural. The alumni of all these schools have rich people in all of these places. I mean, how do you network and then put your, you are taught to have confidence from day one. But when you come from a community that doesn't have any confidence at all, is told to be quiet, don't stand out, just get on with it, it takes a lot of work to change your mindset, to overcome those barriers to understand I have value that I can provide and give as well.' - RE2

RE2 points out the complexities of navigating social introductions and the intrinsic value placed on networking within professional and entrepreneurial environments. She underscores the immense weight introductions hold for her, compared to the guilt of not utilising them fully. These sentiments stem from systemic biases favouring certain communities, as networking skills and opportunities are often more readily available to privileged groups. As a refugee woman entrepreneur, RE2 sheds light on the distinct challenges she faces in this realm, from lacking guidance to the internal struggle of overcoming societal expectations. This account amplifies the deeper discourse on the

significance of social capital, its unequal distribution, and the need to recognise the barriers marginalised individuals face in leveraging it.

Human Capital

The conceptual framework positions human capital as a crucial Individual (Internal) factor that influences entrepreneurial engagement. This element encompasses not only formal education and skills but also tacit knowledge, professional experience, and adaptability, all of which shape an individual's capacity to recognize and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Analysis of human capital is particularly important as it reveals how refugee women leverage their existing capabilities while developing new ones in response to host country contexts.

Harnessing Human Capital

'I would never accept to be behind and be the person who is still figuring. Figuring things out. So yeah, that's just this part of me, but I, I'm not. I'm not patient at all. I think as well like being an entrepreneur means taking it slow, really doing your research and, you know, allocating like all your resources and coming up with a strong plan before launching.' - RE1

RE1 emphasises the tension between her personal traits and societal expectations in entrepreneurship. She speaks to her impatience and unwillingness to lag behind, reflecting a desire for rapid success and decision-making. However, she also notes the importance of a methodical approach to business, implying a need for research, planning, and resource allocation. RE1's insights reveal the complexities of navigating entrepreneurship, especially when influenced by societal norms. Her statements hint at broader issues in entrepreneurship, including the balance between risk-taking and planning and the challenges faced by marginalised entrepreneurs.

Evolution of Human Capital

'When you work for someone, you never upgrade yourself. But if you work for yourself, you're more independent, a more powerful you. You make your own plan.' - RE3

The quote by RE3 emphasises the value of autonomy and personal growth that comes with entrepreneurship, contrasting it with working for someone else. The underlying message

is that self-employment leads to empowerment, independence, and personal control. RE3 believes that having the autonomy to make one's own plans is a major benefit of being an entrepreneur. This perspective champions individualism and self-reliance, potentially overlooking the advantages of teamwork or shared efforts. While the quote promotes the idea that entrepreneurship is empowering, it might also gloss over the inherent challenges and risks associated with it.

Gender

Gender, positioned within the Individual (Internal) demographics of the conceptual framework, fundamentally shapes how power operates in refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences. This analysis reveals how gendered power dynamics influence access to resources, decision-making autonomy, and entrepreneurial identity formation. By examining these dynamics, the analysis develops understanding of how gender-based power structures create conditions that shape entrepreneurial mindset development.

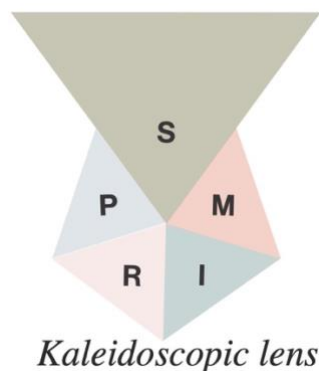
Family Support to Entrepreneurial Aspiration

'I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business soon, within the next year. My husband has done a lot up until now with his business, and I know how tired he is.' – RE4

RE4's statement sheds light on the balance between societal expectations and personal ambitions. With her expressed desire to support her husband, she underscores the gendered roles prevalent in her community. But her ambition to initiate her own enterprise also challenges these conventions. The story contrasts her husband's business stability with her own financial ambitions. Her mention of her husband's fatigue hints at her empathy and desire to share familial economic responsibilities. This shows how refugee women balance supporting their partners and pursuing their own dreams and suggest this deficit motivates RE4 to pursue her dreams.

This analysis of power dynamics reveals how structural conditions create patterns of constraint and enablement that refugee women must navigate. These patterns form the foundation for understanding how entrepreneurial mindsets develop through engagement with power structures. As the analysis turns to Subjectivity, it examines how refugee women interpret and navigate the structural conditions and contextual environments presented on the left-hand side of the framework. This lens reveals how individual meaning-making processes shape entrepreneurial identity formation within these broader contexts.

Subjectivity



Subjectivity, the second lens in the kaleidoscopic analysis, reveals how refugee women's sense of self and identity is shaped through entrepreneurial experiences. This lens, drawing from both Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) elements of the conceptual framework, exposes the dynamic interplay between societal expectations and personal identity formation. Through this lens, the analysis examines how refugee women navigate between externally imposed identities and their own evolving sense of self as entrepreneurs. Their narratives reveal the complex ways they construct, negotiate, and sometimes resist various subject positions from 'refugee' to 'entrepreneur' to 'business owner' within a liminal space. This analysis demonstrates how subjectivity is not merely passive acceptance of external definitions but involves active negotiation of identity within structural constraints.

Opportunity Structures

The analysis of opportunity structures through the subjectivity lens reveals how external structural conditions shape refugee women entrepreneurs' understanding of themselves as business owners. Drawing from the Socius (External) dimension of the conceptual framework, this analytical theme examines the critical role of structural conditions in identity formation. Through analysing how entrepreneurs interpret and respond to opportunities, the investigation advances theoretical understanding of how external structures influence internal self-conception. The entrepreneurs' narratives demonstrate that opportunity structures are not merely external conditions but become internalized elements that shape self-perception and capabilities. This analytical perspective builds upon the model by showing how the subjective interpretation of opportunities contributes to the change from 'refugee' to 'entrepreneur.'

Navigating Uncertainty

'I just want to know how to start how do I start from scratch I just don't know how to take that first step?' - RE4

The narrative from RE4 captures the struggle of taking the initial steps in entrepreneurship. The phrase *'take that first step'* underscores a proactive mindset and the essence of venturing out. Yet, *'how to start'* portrays a feeling of being lost and needing guidance. RE4 expresses a keen desire to understand and navigate the unknowns of starting a business, emphasising the challenges of beginning without any background. The statement underscores the significance of having the right resources and guidance in entrepreneurship. It highlights the importance of mentorship, resources, and knowledge for new entrepreneurs, challenging the conventional belief of innate entrepreneurial spirit. This highlights the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship, with a blend of courage to start and the necessity for appropriate guidance.

Push and Pull Factors

Push and pull factors through the subjectivity lens investigates how external forces that drive or attract individuals to entrepreneurship influence identity formation. Situated within the Socius (External) component, this analytical theme demonstrates how push and pull factors become integrated into entrepreneurs' self-narratives. The analysis of how refugee women make sense of entrepreneurial motivations enhances understanding of how external pressures and opportunities are internalised. This analytical perspective reveals the subjective processes through which necessity and opportunity are transformed into entrepreneurial identity markers, illuminating the dynamic relationship between external circumstances and internal identity construction.

From Job Seeker to Entrepreneurial Vision

'It's really difficult to get a job and if I was to start my business I would be able to run it myself. I want to be my own boss to be in control of what I do, I want to do my own thing.' - RE4

RE4 conveys a challenging job market experience, highlighting difficulties in obtaining traditional employment. Facing challenges in traditional jobs pushes one towards the appeal of starting a business for more freedom and control. The narrative showcases a clear preference for entrepreneurship over conventional employment, emphasising the perceived freedom and individual agency that come with entrepreneurial pursuits. RE4's statements reflect a broader societal view that romanticises entrepreneurship as an escape from the potential constraints of regular employment and as a direct response to job market challenges. The overarching theme is the push from difficult job scenarios and the pull towards the independence of entrepreneurship.

Navigating Entrepreneurial Decisions

'But I think. Uhm, it could be because maybe I didn't push for that idea as much, and it's because I didn't think that I could make a business out of it.' - RE1

RE1 doubts her entrepreneurial decisions, suggesting she might not have pursued her idea due to a perceived lack of potential for business success. She implies that success might hinge on individual effort, possibly overlooking external factors. Her statement *'But I think'* indicates a self-awareness that her views are subjective. This self-doubt is further emphasised when she mentions not pushing for her idea enough, possibly due to internal reservations or societal expectations. The underlying narrative is that broader societal perceptions can influence entrepreneurial decisions and self-worth, with RE1 highlighting the role of external narratives in shaping her choices.

Reflections and Momentum

'Just before I had left, because restaurants had started to call me in, so there was I, I just, I just thought you know, I've only been doing it for like six months before I had left, but somehow because I was the first who did something like this. I just got invites from restaurants and I kept thinking to myself. Oh yeah, so when you go back to Yemen. I will I resume with all of this because I had some, you know, I had some other posts in like in my archive, so I was like I'm just gonna download. I'm just going to upload stuff for like maybe twice a month or something and then just so that they can keep the momentum and then as soon as I'm back I'm just going to go on fire and then I was just going to get restaurant. Restaurants inviting you left right and centre, so it now that I think about it.' - RE1

RE1 highlights her entrepreneurial journey, emphasising the innovative approach that made her stand out. She was recognised and approached by restaurants because of her novelty, even though she was relatively new to the business. While she believed being the first to introduce something unique would guarantee success, she later reconsidered the challenges of entrepreneurship. She believed that occasional updates during her absence would ensure her return's success. However, RE1's plans are shadowed by the challenges of displacement from her home country. Looking back, she understands that her success was not just due to her innovation but was influenced by cultural narratives and societal structures.

Inner Motivations vs. External Expectations

'Saying to myself OK, (name removed), do you really want to do it because you really want to do it? Or do you want to do it because you want to keep up with everyone's expectations just

so that you can have the answer when they ask when is your next pop up? And I'll be like, yeah, I'm doing a very small scale once a month for six people. So, is it meaning for people or is it for me?' – RE1

RE1 is torn between her genuine reasons for entrepreneurship and society's expectations. RE1 struggles with the weight of external opinions, questioning if she is driven by genuine passion or the need to satisfy others' inquiries about her next business move. This contemplation reveals the underlying challenge faced by refugee women entrepreneurs, where they often find themselves torn between personal aspirations and the pressures of representing their community positively. The narrative underscores the nature of entrepreneurship, particularly for those navigating both personal objectives and broader societal perceptions.

From Imposed Images to Entrepreneurial Ambition

'So, like there's this image of me and I'm still trying to break out of it in a sense, but you know, I am an entrepreneur cause I'm thinking of other ways that I can make money with my services or even like, I don't know, selling merchandise when I'm famous.' - RE2

RE2 discusses the struggle of navigating preconceived perceptions while simultaneously pursuing her entrepreneurial goals. She touches on the pressure of imposed images, feeling the need to redefine herself beyond societal constraints. By identifying as an entrepreneur, RE2 showcases her determination to achieve financial autonomy and gain recognition, hinting at aspirations of future fame. This narrative captures her pursuit of self-agency, ambition, and the challenges of societal expectations.

Human Capital

Human capital explores how refugee women entrepreneurs' understanding of capabilities shapes entrepreneurial identity. Located within the Individual (Internal) dimension of the conceptual framework, this analytical theme reveals the subjective processes through which entrepreneurs evaluate and reconstruct professional self-concept. The analysis of how skills and experiences are negotiated in a new context advances

theoretical understanding of how human capital contributes to identity formation. This analytical perspective demonstrates how internal assessments of capability influence entrepreneurial self-efficacy and authenticity.

Authenticity and Self-Acceptance

'What do I need to change myself? To be less judgemental to be a better person and then freeing myself from those things makes you be a bit more authentic and content with who you are. Not to care of what someone else thinks of you. It is very liberating; that's a journey to get there, and it's an ongoing journey. I am not there fully, but I am much more confident in who I am. Still, it's a challenge.' – RE3

RE3 delves into the complex interplay between societal expectations and personal growth.

The narrative focuses on three main dichotomies: being '*judgmental*' versus '*authentic*', personal growth versus contentment, and the balance between external perceptions and self-confidence. Central to her introspection is the ongoing journey of self-improvement and the quest to be a 'better person'. Society often pushes for constant change, but RE3's story highlights the freedom of being genuine and rejecting outside opinions. The discourse begins with personal reflection, where RE3 evaluates the aspects, she wishes to change about herself, emphasising the value of authenticity. Her desire to be '*less judgemental*' and '*freeing myself from those things*' reflects an urge to discard societal or self-imposed burdens. Her narrative is riddled with the idea of a journey, emphasising that personal growth and self-awareness are continuous endeavours.

Although RE3 admits she has not reached her goal, she also says she is more confident, showing her growing self-awareness despite outside pressures. This interplay between societal norms, self-acceptance, and the pursuit of authenticity embodies the challenges many women face today. RE3's story highlights the challenges of personal growth in a world full of expectations, emphasising the importance of the journey to find oneself.

Defining Identity

'At this point, yes, because and I don't blame anyone for thinking that way. So, for my following on social media, people still call me the chef. Oh yeah, (name removed), shit. They started expecting me to have all the answers and know all the tricks. Or how to perfect certain recipes, I'm like. I'm not a chef I am a content creator, and I am.' - RE1

RE1, previously known for her pop-up restaurant ventures, wrestles with the public's perception of her as a chef, particularly among her social media followers. She acknowledges the assumptions and does not resent them but seeks to clarify her professional identity. RE1 is assertive in differentiating her past from her present, emphasising her current identity as a content creator rather than a chef. This highlights the challenges individuals face when trying to rebrand or redefine their image in the public eye, especially when prior associations remain strong in the audience's minds. The narrative underscores the dynamics of representation, identity assertion, and the journey from public perception to self-definition.

Balancing Financial Pursuits with Entrepreneurial Identity

'Yes, I could make some money out of that, and then maybe that's the entrepreneur side. But at this point, I still, yeah, I, I still don't identify myself as an entrepreneur first.' - RE3

RE3's statement highlights the balance between making money and personal identity in entrepreneurship. While recognising the potential for monetary success, RE3 offers a perspective by highlighting her hesitance to primarily identify as an entrepreneur. This introspection hints at a broader societal narrative where entrepreneurship is often equated solely with financial success. The use of the term '*still*' underscores a journey, suggesting that she might be in a transition phase, grappling with the societal pressures and expectations of what it means to be an entrepreneur. Her journey mirrors many entrepreneurs balancing personal identity, societal expectations, and the true worth of their efforts. This narrative resonates particularly with the experiences of female refugee entrepreneurs. Their identity, marked by resilience and adaptability, often transcends the conventional boundaries of

entrepreneurship. Thus, while they might venture into the entrepreneurial world, their identity as entrepreneurs might not always take precedence, reflecting a deeper introspection about their roles, values, and aspirations in a multifaceted world.

Social Capital

Social capital through the subjectivity lens examines how social relationships influence entrepreneurial identity formation. This analytical theme reveals how entrepreneurs' self-conception is shaped through social interactions. The investigation of how refugee women position themselves within various social contexts deepens understanding of how social capital contributes to identity construction. This analytical perspective demonstrates the role of social relationships in validating and reinforcing entrepreneurial identity, showing how personal narratives are constructed through social engagement.

Entrepreneurial pigeonholing

'No, I would say just generally, like I had supporters, yes. But then, even the few supporters that were there was, they still kind of believed in me as (name removed) the food entrepreneur. Oh, let's help (name removed) by giving her opportunities with this food company.' (Talking about people supporting her as a food entrepreneur even though she had doubts and wanted to pursue content creation.) – RE1

RE1's entrepreneurial journey reflects a recurring theme where external perceptions can inadvertently limit an entrepreneur's self-perception and growth trajectory. Even with supporters, her ambition to branch into content creation was overshadowed by her established identity as a food entrepreneur. The narrative highlights the potential pitfalls of pigeonholing, where supporters, despite their good intentions, may unintentionally stifle growth by confining entrepreneurs to specific niches. This narrative shows the challenge of navigating one's evolving personal aspirations against the backdrop of external expectations. It underscores the complexities of redefining oneself in entrepreneurial spaces, especially when external supporters, albeit well-meaning, have rigid notions of one's capabilities and roles.

This is a poignant reflection on the limitations and challenges of growth within entrepreneurial ecosystems and the continuous effort to break free from pre-existing moulds.

Empowering Through Heritage

'I would like to share and spread my skills and knowledge to the others, and I hope that they would like it mainly in terms of Syrian cooking.' - RE4

RE4's statement embodies the essence of cultural preservation and empowerment through heritage. Her intent to 'share and spread' Syrian cooking is not merely an act of imparting culinary skills but also a profound endeavour to bridge cultural divides and challenge stereotypes. Despite her genuine intent, there is a subtle undertone of vulnerability, hoping for acceptance and appreciation in foreign landscapes. Central to this narrative is the idea of representation. RE4, as a Syrian refugee, is not just sharing a cuisine; she is unfolding stories, traditions, and a rich tapestry of her homeland. By promoting Syrian cooking, she challenges marginalisation, amplifying the voice of her community and shaping a positive narrative for Syrian women.

Her actions resonate with themes of empowerment and agency. Taking charge of her narrative, she leverages her culinary prowess to foster connections, build social capital and foster community engagement. Yet, intertwined with this agency is her quest for validation, a universal desire to be acknowledged and respected. In her journey of cultural exchange, RE4 emphasises the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and the recognition of diverse skills and stories. Through the act of sharing, she hopes to change perceptions, nurture relationships, and ultimately empower both herself and her community.

Gender

Gender through the subjectivity lens investigates how gendered experiences shape entrepreneurial identity formation. This analytical theme reveals how gender influences self-perception and business approach. The investigation of how refugee women navigate

gendered expectations in entrepreneurship expands understanding of how gender intersects with identity construction. This analytical perspective demonstrates how gendered experiences contribute to the formation of complex, layered entrepreneurial identities.

The Gendered Dynamics of Entrepreneurial Guilt

'I know, I well, I still feel guilty about it because I'm like, well, you know all entrepreneurs struggle to make money, so why are you complaining about all the struggles?' – RE2

RE2's experience as an entrepreneur sheds light on the internal conflicts stemming from societal expectations and personal struggles. Feeling guilty about expressing her hardships suggests that RE2 believes there is an unspoken rule where entrepreneurs, especially women, must endure challenges silently. The sentiment, *'Why are you complaining?'* captures the essence of societal pressures that invalidate genuine concerns and struggles faced by entrepreneurs. Such dynamics are further complicated when considering gendered expectations. Women, particularly refugee women, are often expected to remain grateful for opportunities, making them less likely to voice out their challenges. This expectation creates a silent burden, where many might suppress their feelings to appear strong and resilient.

Furthermore, the universal understanding that all entrepreneurs face financial challenges adds another layer of complexity. While this struggle is real for most, the inability to discuss it, especially for women and marginalised groups, exacerbates the feeling of isolation and guilt. In essence, the narrative underscores the pressing need to reassess societal norms that discourage open dialogue about entrepreneurial struggles and challenges, especially for women and marginalised communities.

Gendered Pressures in Entrepreneurial Decisions

'Maybe someone could learn from the entrepreneurship journey is not being or not saying yes to absolutely everything because you feel obliged. Or you're too nice to say no, which I feel was part of the reason why I actually went for it.' – RE3

RE3's journey into entrepreneurship is deeply influenced by her inclination to appease others, a behaviour arguably influenced by societal expectations that women should be accommodating and submissive. This prevalent mindset, especially when directed towards refugee women, implies that they should be grateful for any opportunity and refrain from turning them down, overshadowing their agency and right to make decisions aligning with their individual aspirations. She emphasises the risks of always agreeing, especially in an entrepreneurial context. Consistently saying 'yes' can lead to overwhelming situations and divert from one's genuine interests. This urge to constantly agree is rooted in societal pressures that demand women to be 'too nice' or appear obliging, which could result in individuals taking on more than they can handle, compromising their well-being and the quality of their work.

Reflecting on her personal experiences, RE3 realises that her accommodating nature played a significant role in her decision to step into entrepreneurship. It suggests that her choices were more influenced by external pressures rather than her own passion or interest. This insight underlines the importance for entrepreneurs, especially women, to evaluate opportunities based on personal passion and capability rather than just external expectations.

A Woman Entrepreneur's Dilemma

'At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it, yeah. So even with the business that I have at the moment, I keep trying to tell people or referring to it as a project because I feel like it's something on the side that I do. Saying to myself OK, (name removed), do you really want to do it because you really want to do it? Or do you want to do it because you want to keep up with everyone's expectations just so that you can have the answer when they ask when is your next pop up? And I'll be like, yeah, I'm doing a very small scale once a month for six people. So, is it meaning for people, or is it for me?' - RE1

The narrative underscores RE1's internal challenges as a woman entrepreneur, balancing societal expectations with her personal aspirations for her business. She grapples with defining her venture, either as a small-scale 'project' or a more established 'business'. There is evident tension between societal expectations and personal fulfilment. She

constantly questions her motivation: is she in the business for herself or to meet others' expectations? RE1's self-reflection illustrates the intertwined nature of internal desires and external pressures, painting a picture of entrepreneurship fraught with introspection and societal pressure.

Education

Education through the subjectivity lens examines how educational experiences influence entrepreneurial self-conception. Positioned within Individual (Internal) demographics, this analytical theme reveals how formal education shapes business confidence and capability beliefs. The investigation of how refugee women reconcile educational background with entrepreneurial aspirations enhances understanding of how learning experiences contribute to identity formation. This analytical perspective demonstrates how educational experiences influence entrepreneurial self-efficacy and development.

Fear in the Face of Entrepreneurship

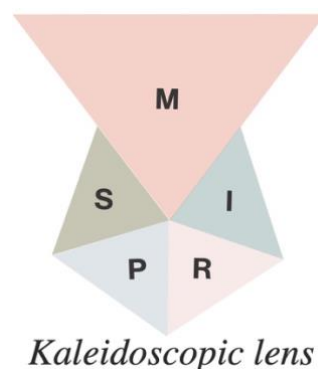
'I was more focused on education, never thought of, or I did think of having my own business. But I never gave it much thought because of fear.' – RE3

RE3's narrative shows the tension between the perceived security of formal education and the uncertainties of entrepreneurship. Emphasising her commitment to education, RE3 unwittingly positions it against business ownership, suggesting an underlying belief that they might be conflicting paths. While she acknowledges considering the entrepreneurial route, this is shadowed by fear, pointing to the internal and possibly societal pressures deterring her from business ventures. The contrast between *'thinking'* about a business and being held back *'because of fear'* underlines the influential role of societal conditioning and personal apprehensions. This narrative mirrors broader societal narratives where formal education is perceived as the predominant, safer route to success, while business endeavours are seen as

fraught with risks. The essence of RE3's statement emphasises the importance of understanding and addressing the underlying fears and barriers that marginalised groups might face when considering paths outside of traditional norms.

The analysis now moves to the Marginalisation lens, examining how systemic barriers and exclusionary practices shape refugee women's engagement with the structural conditions outlined in the framework's left side. This lens illuminates how both Individual (Internal) factors, such as education and human capital, and broader contextual elements create patterns of disadvantage and opportunity. Through analysing these patterns, this section reveals how marginalising forces influence refugee women's capacity to access and leverage entrepreneurial resources and opportunities.

Marginalisation



Marginalisation is the third kaleidoscopic lens within the conceptual framework. As illustrated in Figure 21 (page 313), it is explored through both Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors. This lens examines the systemic and interpersonal mechanisms that exclude and exploit refugee women while also highlighting their resilience and creativity in navigating these challenges.

The analysis underscores how marginalisation shapes entrepreneurial motivations, decisions, and practices. For many refugee women, entrepreneurship serves as both a means

of survival and a space for self-expression, with ventures often driven by passion as much as necessity. However, marginalisation also exacerbates vulnerabilities, such as exploitation, social exclusion, and limited access to opportunity structures. By examining these dynamics, this section provides insights into how marginalised positions are simultaneously imposed and resisted within the entrepreneurial landscape.

Opportunity Structures

Opportunity structures, situated within the Socius (External) dimension of the conceptual framework, represent the systemic and institutional conditions that shape refugee women's access to entrepreneurial resources and opportunities. Viewed through the lens of Marginalisation, these structures are often revealed as double-edged—providing avenues for entrepreneurial activity while simultaneously embedding systemic inequities. For refugee women, marginalisation amplifies the challenges inherent within opportunity structures, such as limited access to funding, market networks, and institutional support. This lens highlights how structural constraints intersect with social exclusion, shaping entrepreneurial decisions and practices while necessitating resilience and adaptability to navigate these barriers.

More Than Money: Passion Projects in Entrepreneurship

'But it still feels like a project. Maybe I'll make a little bit of money out of it, but it still feels like. A project so.' – RE1

RE1's reflections bring to the fore the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in entrepreneurial pursuits. Through the portrayal of her venture as a *'project'*, RE1 underscores its personal and experimental dimensions rather than strictly commercial ones. While there is a nod to potential financial benefits, the emphasis is distinctly on the project's non-monetary value, a sentiment encapsulated by *'it still feels like'*. This narrative provides insight into the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship, especially among those from marginalised backgrounds. For RE1, the venture is not just about profit; it is about passion,

exploration, and self-expression. This perspective challenges the conventional business-centric narrative and underscores the significance of personal motivations in entrepreneurial undertakings.

Exploitation and Resilience

'I think that at this day and age and after being after going through a lot of struggle myself and really learning things the hard way, like offering my services for free when they shouldn't be for free. And people and people exploiting you and taking advantage of the fact that you're a refugee, so they expect a lot of things from you there at no cost, no money.' - RE2

The narrative provided by RE2 offers an account of the challenges tied to her identity as a refugee. Key elements like *'struggle'*, *'learning'*, and *'exploitation'* serve as anchors to understanding the hardships and resilience embedded in her experiences. RE2's journey has been marked by personal growth, stemming from hardships like being undervalued, as she candidly admits to *'offering services for free'*. The repeated instances of exploitation highlight the stark reality many refugees confront, where their background becomes a pretext for unfair treatment. This story underscores the journey of a refugee entrepreneur navigating a complex landscape of adversity and resilience, facing discrimination based on identity, yet persistently advocating for the value of her work. The narrative as a whole paints a picture of determination, self-worth, and an ongoing battle against external exploitative forces.

Entrepreneurial Side Hustle

'So, just like so many artists out there, I have a full-time job that that pays for my bills.' – RE1

RE1's statement underscores the dichotomy faced by many refugee women entrepreneurs: the desire to chase after entrepreneurial aspirations versus the practical need to secure a stable income. By comparing herself to *'many artists'*, RE1 paints a picture of shared struggles amongst marginalised communities, where passion often takes a backseat due to pressing financial constraints. The mention of a *'full-time job'* is emblematic of the

sacrifices and strategic decisions many such entrepreneurs make in their quest for economic stability amidst the larger challenges of displacement. This narrative casts light on the broader entrepreneurial terrain, marked by dreams, ambitions, and the stark realities of survival and representation.

Gender

Gender, situated within the Individual (Internal) dimension of the conceptual framework, intersects with Socius (External) elements to shape the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. Through the lens of Marginalisation, gender is revealed as a critical axis of systemic inequality and societal expectations, influencing how refugee women perceive and navigate their entrepreneurial journeys. This lens highlights how patriarchal norms, gendered responsibilities, and societal stereotypes create additional barriers, while also offering opportunities for empowerment through entrepreneurial agency. By analysing the interplay between fear, empowerment, and resilience, this section explores how gendered experiences shape the ways in which refugee women balance external expectations with personal ambition in their pursuit of entrepreneurship.

Between Fear and Empowerment

'I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment.' – RE3

The sentiment expressed by RE3 encapsulates the internal battle refugee women entrepreneurs face between the paralysing fear stemming from their marginalised status and the empowering potential of entrepreneurship. RE3's mention of being *'always conflicted'* conveys the constant emotional turbulence experienced by such individuals. This struggle symbolises the broader challenges of displacement and the quest for agency in the host country. RE3's narrative brings to light the intricate dynamics of fear, empowerment,

surrender, and action, revealing the resilience required by refugee women entrepreneurs in their journey of both personal and professional growth.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity, as situated within the Socius (External) dimension of the conceptual framework, underscores the intricate ways in which cultural identity and societal norms influence entrepreneurial pathways. Viewed through the lens of Marginalisation, ethnicity reveals both the systemic barriers and community-specific dynamics that shape entrepreneurial experiences. The analysis highlights how cultural heritage, access to role models, and collective perceptions of risk intersect with broader socio-political structures to either hinder or facilitate entrepreneurial activity. By examining the contrasting entrepreneurial attitudes of Eritrean and Somali women, this section delves into the cultural and structural factors that reinforce or challenge marginalisation within refugee entrepreneurship. This lens invites a deeper exploration of how ethnic identity both constrains and empowers women navigating the entrepreneurial landscape.

Contrasting Entrepreneurial Spirits: Eritrean Caution and Somali Hustle

'Coming from an Eritrean background, there is a lack of entrepreneurs but also a lack of women role models. There was one older lady who was very entrepreneurial and started an internet café, but other than that, they seem risk-averse. Do you know that it was actually the Somalian women who are kick-arse, who are amazing, they are so entrepreneurial, they have a hustle about them, I found that really inspiring. But I asked myself, why are Eritrean women so afraid to try new things?' – RE2

RE2's narrative provides an exploration of the entrepreneurial spirits among Eritrean and Somalian women, revealing stark contrasts in their attitudes towards business ventures. Her observations delineate a clear dichotomy: Eritrean women are portrayed as risk-averse and hesitant, whereas Somalian women are heralded for their entrepreneurial zeal and 'hustle'. At the heart of this discourse is a conspicuous absence of Eritrean entrepreneurs, accentuated by the glaring lack of female role models from the same community. This dearth

suggests possible systemic barriers, such as limited access to entrepreneurial resources and opportunities, which may further perpetuate Eritrean women's marginalisation. Yet, there is a beacon of hope in the form of an older Eritrean woman whose success in establishing an internet café stands out as a counter-narrative to the prevailing risk-averse attitude. In contrast, Somali women, described with admiration for their entrepreneurial prowess, defy dominant stereotypes that often marginalise women from African backgrounds. Their representation as *'kick-arse'* and *'hustling'* challenges the usual narratives and reframes them as empowered individuals. However, RE2's contemplative question regarding the perceived reluctance of Eritrean women to embrace entrepreneurial pursuits underscores a broader inquiry into societal and cultural factors. In essence, the narrative delves deep into the interplay of ethnicity, cultural norms, and entrepreneurship, inviting introspection into the structural and societal impediments Eritrean women face in their entrepreneurial journey.

Human Capital

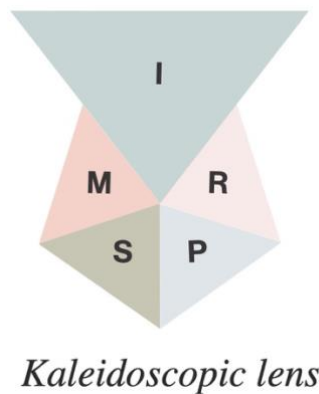
Human capital, positioned within the Individual (Internal) factors of the conceptual framework, highlights the role of skills, education, and emotional resilience in shaping entrepreneurial engagement. Viewed through the lens of Marginalisation, this section explores how systemic barriers and interpersonal power dynamics interact with an individual's capabilities and perceptions of self-worth. The analysis underscores the emotional and psychological dimensions of human capital, particularly for refugee women navigating professional hierarchies and societal expectations. Anxiety, self-doubt, and fear of judgment emerge as significant factors that marginalise individuals within entrepreneurial and professional spaces, exacerbating feelings of vulnerability. By addressing these challenges, this section sheds light on the intersection of emotional resilience, professional skills, and structural marginalisation, offering a layered perspective on how human capital shapes the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women.

Navigating Anxiety: Power Dynamics and the Fear of Perception

'I had such anxiety and panic attacks; I literally couldn't do it. The vulnerability, those people are more senior, am I saying the right thing, have I messed up, are they thinking I am stupid...all these different thoughts.' – RE2

RE2's reflections delve deep into the emotional and psychological challenges inherent in professional environments, particularly when facing power dynamics. The dominant narrative centres on the intense anxiety and panic attacks experienced by RE2, shedding light on the often under-discussed emotional toll of navigating hierarchical structures. Phrases like 'am I saying the right thing?' and 'have I messed up?' highlight the internalised pressures and fear of missteps in front of superiors. This constant self-doubt and fear of judgment indicate Imposter Syndrome, where individuals feel like they are not truly qualified and are deceiving others about their competence. The recurring concern of being perceived as 'stupid' not only magnifies the intense self-scrutiny but also exacerbates the feeling of being an imposter. This is particularly acute in RE2's case, where her marginalised background might contribute to heightened sensitivity to how she is perceived in these professional settings. RE2's sentiments offer a poignant insight into the emotional labyrinth that many individuals, especially from marginalised backgrounds, must traverse in professional settings

Intersectionality



Intersectionality is the fourth kaleidoscopic lens in this study's conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 21(p.313). It examines how multiple axes of identity, such as gender, ethnicity, refugee status, and socio-economic background, intersect and interact with broader systemic structures and societal norms. Through this lens, the analysis highlights the layered and multifaceted experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs, shaped by the interplay of internal identities and external contexts.

By exploring factors like host-country environments, gender expectations, and social capital, the lens of intersectionality reveals the compounded challenges and opportunities refugee women navigate. This section focuses on the overlapping dimensions of disadvantage and privilege, showing how the intersections of identity, both constrain and enable entrepreneurial possibilities. The lens of intersectionality underscores the complexity of their lived experiences, advancing a deeper understanding of how intersecting identities shape access to resources, networks, and agency within entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Host Country Factors

Situated within the External (Socius) dimension of the conceptual framework (Figure 21, p. 313), host-country dynamics underscore how overlapping identities—such as refugee status, gender, and ethnicity—interact with systemic structures to shape entrepreneurial

experiences. This intersectionality lens illuminates the dual role of societal perceptions, where structural barriers often marginalise refugee women, yet certain contexts provide strategic openings for leveraging these identities. By examining these dynamics through the Socius perspective, the framework highlights how host-country policies, institutional attitudes, and cultural norms simultaneously constrain and enable entrepreneurial agency. This analysis situates refugee women's navigation of barriers and opportunities within broader socio-political and economic systems.

Dual Edge Identity

'But if I say that I was a refugee, that could potentially mean that. At least I mean, even if I don't get that opportunity, at least my application is going to be looked at. Because I'm in a minority, I'm different.' - RE3

RE3's narrative underscores the multifaceted nature of refugee identity within host countries. She articulates an interplay between terms like *'refugee'* and *'non-refugee'*, illustrating both the marginalisation and unique opportunities that may arise from such labels. By potentially leveraging her refugee status, she contemplates accessing benefits, suggesting an awareness of how certain identities can be valued or devalued in specific contexts. This dual-edged identity reveals a balancing act between the inherent disadvantages refugees may face and the strategic advantages they might utilise. However, behind these strategies lies a poignant understanding that such tactics arise from necessity in navigating systemic biases. The tale captures the intricate dance between identity, societal perceptions, and structural barriers, underscoring how refugees must often become adept at negotiating the manifold dimensions of their identity within host nations.

Gender

Gender, as explored through an intersectional lens, examines how societal expectations and cultural norms interact with individual identities to shape entrepreneurial opportunities and constraints. Within Individual (Internal) dimensions of the conceptual

framework, gender intersects with other factors such as refugee status and ethnicity, creating unique challenges and opportunities for women. This lens highlights how gendered responsibilities, such as caregiving and financial obligations, intersect with broader systemic barriers, influencing entrepreneurial pathways. By situating gender within these intersecting structures, the framework provides a way to understand how refugee women navigate and negotiate their roles as entrepreneurs amidst overlapping external and internal influences.

Navigating Dual Responsibilities

'I don't really know what to do. Do I send money home, and that means I can't move, or should I be selfish and stop sending money? They are getting old; my dad is sick and my mom...' - RE1

RE1's words illuminate the tension between individual aspirations and familial obligations, particularly accentuated by her role as a woman and a refugee entrepreneur. Facing the moral quandary of financial support versus personal mobility, she confronts societal and self-inflicted expectations surrounding family duty, especially amidst the pressing concerns of ageing and health within her family. This narrative emphasises the dynamics of gender roles, cultural expectations, and the responsibilities thrust upon those at the crossroads of multiple marginalisation. It underscores the multifaceted challenges such individuals face, where the demands of personal entrepreneurship intertwine with deeply rooted familial ties and responsibilities.

Empowering Women in Business

'The thing is, this is the goal that I have, and I really want to help others. For example, if I have my business, I can employ other women as well. ...we can make and sell for more and make some money to share through wages, and we can spread the profits.' - RE4

RE4 emphasises the idea of a sustainable business model that not only generates profits but also ensures equitable distribution among stakeholders. This reflects an inclusive approach to business, where the goal is not just personal wealth accumulation but also broader community upliftment. Through this vision, RE4 exemplifies the modern concept of

social entrepreneurship, wherein the dual objectives of financial gains and societal betterment are intertwined. In essence, RE4's perspective bridges the world of business with community development, championing a model that seeks shared prosperity for all involved.

Social Capital

Social capital, as an Individual (Internal) element within the conceptual framework, emphasises how refugee women entrepreneurs draw on personal networks and relationships to navigate their entrepreneurial journeys. These internal resources often intersect with their identities and experiences, shaping their capacity to identify and leverage opportunities.

Social capital serves as an essential buffer against external constraints, allowing individuals to adapt, connect, and create pathways for entrepreneurial activity. Through the lens of intersectionality, this internal dynamic reveals how personal relationships and networks are shaped by and respond to broader systemic conditions, highlighting their role in building resilience and fostering empowerment.

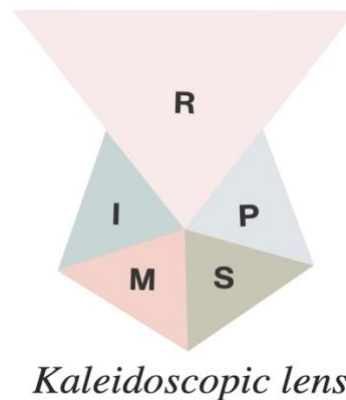
Bridging Opportunities

'So, some had a friend of mine who works with refugees in Liverpool and Doncaster. I don't know how she got the ad, but then she sent it to me because I'm a refugee. To me. No, because she ever knew that I wanted to start a business or try it, even she said, oh look, I've come across this. You know, if you're interested in just apply. So, she sent it to me, and I applied.' - RE3

RE3's narrative offers a perspective on the role of personal networks and the serendipity of opportunities, especially for marginalised individuals like refugees. The dominant thread revolves around the unexpected provision of an opportunity through a friend, despite the friend being unaware of RE3's entrepreneurial aspirations. This account reflects the unpredictable nature of opportunities and how they often emerge from seemingly unrelated connections. Furthermore, RE3's identification as a refugee became a conduit for this chance, highlighting the dual role of personal identities, both as potential barriers and as gateways to specific opportunities. The friend's uninformed gesture to share the information

underscores the essence of community support, even without complete knowledge about one's aspirations. The story highlights how unexpected chances and personal relationships shape life paths, especially for individuals with complex identities like refugees.

Representation



Representation is the fifth kaleidoscopic lens of the conceptual framework. This lens explores how societal narratives, media portrayals, and institutional discourses shape the visibility and perception of refugee women entrepreneurs. It highlights the interplay between externally constructed stereotypes and the lived realities of these individuals. Representation not only influences how refugee entrepreneurs are perceived but also how they navigate opportunities and assert their identities within constrained socio-political contexts. By focusing on this lens, the framework underscores the importance of societal context in shaping entrepreneurial trajectories and the tension between imposed narratives and self-representation.

Opportunity Structures

Opportunity structures, situated within the Socius (External) dimension of the conceptual framework, highlight how systemic and institutional factors shape the visibility and access to economic opportunities for refugee women entrepreneurs. Through the lens of representation, this section examines how external narratives, shaped by media, societal expectations, and institutional frameworks, interact with the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. These structures reveal the dual role of representation as both a barrier and an enabler, influencing how refugee women navigate their entrepreneurial journeys, assert

their identities, and challenge externally imposed stereotypes. This focus on opportunity structures underscores the importance of external socio-political contexts in shaping entrepreneurial trajectories.

Paid work

'And since, well, I think it started in, last year 2020. So, the the first time that I got paid for creating content up. It was part of a of a COVID-19 campaign. For Yemenis, yes, so it's like an awareness campaign. And so that was the first time ever that I was paid to take part in in making a video. And I was like Oh my God, this is so cool, and I wasn't paid that much either. It was around I think £400. There were others because they had a larger following. Who made more money? But it was fine for me. And then a couple of months later I was hired by the same organisation and then I was. I was paid an almost £900, which felt amazing and I'm like, whoa, look at me. I'm making money from making content.' – RE1

RE1's narrative captures the significance of economic opportunity and its direct impact on one's self-worth, especially in the media industry for marginalised creators. Starting her journey in 2020 with a COVID-19 awareness campaign for Yemenis, the elation of her first paid gig, albeit a modest sum, underscores the prior lack of access to such opportunities. She compares her earnings with those of more popular creators, implying the potential undervaluation of work by newcomers or those from specific backgrounds. A subsequent opportunity with the same organisation sees her earning more than double, instilling a sense of empowerment and progression. This progression not only reflects her increasing value in the industry but also emphasises the pivotal role of consistent and fair financial compensation in boosting an individual's confidence and validating their efforts, especially for those from marginalised communities.

Class and Ethnicity

Class and ethnicity, as situated within the Individual (Internal) dimension of the conceptual framework, examine how personal identities intersect with external perceptions to shape the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. Through the lens of representation, this section highlights the internal challenges that arise from navigating societal stereotypes

ted to class and ethnicity. These identity markers influence how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others, affecting their confidence, decision-making, and ability to access resources. By focusing on these internal dimensions, the framework underscores the importance of identity in shaping how refugee women negotiate societal biases and assert agency within entrepreneurial spaces.

Navigating Assumptions in Business Conversations

'... and the same time its like. I may not be. But sometimes I feel like maybe some of them are a bit out of touch, like with reality, you know. Like I remember speaking to one investor and he asked what would your family think about this, yeah? So, dude, would you ask somebody else that you know that? I just told him they were very supportive. They're really supportive, you know, but would you ask that to somebody else why are you asking me that, you know?' - RE2

RE2 recounts an encounter with an investor who inquired about her family's stance on her entrepreneurial pursuits, suggesting underlying biases. The narrative highlights contrasting elements such as being 'in touch' vs. 'out of touch' and personal independence vs. seeking familial consent. There is an implicit insinuation by the investor that RE2, potentially because of her ethnic background or gender, might require familial approval for her endeavours. This prompts RE2 to challenge such assumptions, questioning whether other entrepreneurs would face similar inquiries. The narrative underscores the challenges entrepreneurs from marginalised backgrounds face when dealing with stereotypical perceptions and biases. RE2's story is emblematic of the broader issues of class and ethnicity in entrepreneurship, where certain queries and assumptions are directed towards those seen as 'different'. Her proactive response emphasises the need to confront and address these prejudices professionally.

Human Capital

Human capital, viewed through the Representation lens, examines how refugee women entrepreneurs' skills, confidence, and self-perceptions are shaped by and respond to

external narratives. Situated within the Individual (Internal) factor of the conceptual framework, this analytical theme highlights how societal discourses and stereotypes influence entrepreneurs' evaluations of their capabilities and professional identities. By focusing on how women navigate and rebuild their sense of worth in the face of societal expectations, the analysis reveals how representation impacts entrepreneurial self-efficacy and authenticity. This perspective provides insight into the processes through which refugee women redefine their professional identities and assert their agency within constrained socio-political contexts.

Rebuilding Confidence

'I had got divorced. I really had no confidence, I remember volunteering for a race equality charity, the task given to me was to make phone calls, I couldn't do that. I physically couldn't make the phone call; I was so nervous. But I was so grateful for that opportunity. I learned and I grew, and I built up my confidence.' - RE2

RE2's narrative revolves around her personal journey from a lack of confidence stemming from her divorce to personal growth achieved through volunteering. The emphasis on '*confidence*' reflects societal expectations, especially in entrepreneurship. While confidence is valued, the narrative shows that there's more to personal growth than just this trait. The impact of personal experiences, like a divorce, can profoundly affect one's self-esteem, but opportunities, such as volunteering, can aid in healing and growth. The story also touches upon the subtle power dynamics in societal structures, suggesting that issues like race and gender might compound challenges. Despite her initial struggles, RE2 expresses gratitude for her volunteering experience, underlining the idea that personal growth often arises from challenging situations. The narrative concludes by highlighting the importance of self-determination in overcoming obstacles and agency's role in personal development.

Social Capital

Social capital, viewed through the Representation lens, highlights the role of networks and shared narratives in shaping the entrepreneurial experiences of refugee women. Situated under the Individual (Internal) factor of the conceptual framework, this lens examines how digital and interpersonal connections contribute to visibility and influence. It underscores the importance of representation in fostering inclusion and challenging stereotypes, while also revealing the ways in which societal perceptions can shape access to resources and opportunities. By focusing on this lens, the framework emphasizes the critical role of social capital in navigating both constraints and possibilities within entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Digital Representation

'On Facebook, I saw a refugee woman from Syria who went to Germany and just started a new business. I felt inspired by this.' - RE4

The provided quote from RE4 offers a striking juxtaposition of the terms *'refugee'* and *'started a new business'*, underscoring the inherent tensions between vulnerability and empowerment. The former, often associated with passivity and dependence, stands in stark contrast to the latter, evoking notions of autonomy and enterprise. Through this digital encounter on Facebook, RE4's perception of a refugee is redefined from one trapped in victimhood to one embodying resilience and drive. This shift challenges the widespread narrative of refugees as mere beneficiaries, spotlighting them as contributors and innovators. The platform of Facebook plays a pivotal role in curating diverse stories that can mould societal perceptions. It is through such platforms that marginalised voices find representation, and audience reactions, like RE4's inspiration, indicate the profound impact of these narratives. However, while the story is uplifting, it subtly veers towards a neoliberal perspective that may inadvertently eclipse the systemic obstacles refugees grapple with. RE4's revelation underscores the power of digital storytelling in reshaping pre-existing

biases. The mention of Germany suggests that the West is seen as a hopeful place for ambitious refugees. In essence, the quote underscores the dimensions of refugee narratives in the digital age.

Language and Shared Origins

'Language would make the process easier like when I met (name removed) although there's a big age difference, she's from Iraq'- RE4

RE4's reflections highlight the intricate dynamics of language and its role as a unifier or potential barrier in interpersonal interactions. She postulates that having a common language serves as an effective bridge in communication, emphasising its pivotal role in mutual understanding. However, her experiences underline potential biases, suggesting that the same language may mistakenly equate to a uniform cultural experience. RE4's mention of age underscores how it may influence relational dynamics, hinting at age-related preconceptions that might either facilitate or hinder communication. Her identification of the individual as being from Iraq accentuates the weight of geographical origins in shaping perceptions, hinting at an underlying consideration of potential shared socio-political histories or experiences. Overall, the narrative delves into the intricate interplay of language, age, and cultural background in shaping interpersonal interactions, reflecting broader societal perspectives on identity and communication.

The meso-level analysis through the kaleidoscopic lens reveals the complex interplay between Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors identified in refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship literature. These structural conditions and contextual environments, drawn from existing scholarship in both fields, create both enabling and constraining forces that refugee women must navigate. The examination of power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation demonstrates how these established factors manifest in various ways - from access to funding and social networks to

the navigation of identity and cultural expectations. While the detailed micro-level analysis of individual narratives is presented in Appendix 1, this meso-level analysis of the framework's left-hand side elements provides crucial insights into the foundational conditions that influence entrepreneurial mindset development. These conditions form the basis for understanding how refugee women negotiate their entrepreneurial identities and opportunities within the liminal space, which will be examined in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 Summary

This chapter has employed a meso-level analysis to examine the structural and contextual conditions on the left-hand side of the conceptual framework, derived from established literature in refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship. Through a systematic analysis using five kaleidoscopic lenses - power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation - the chapter has revealed how both Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors identified in previous research create the foundation for entrepreneurial engagement. While the detailed micro-level deconstruction of individual narratives is presented in Appendix 1, this meso-level analysis demonstrates that these theoretically established conditions do not deterministically dictate outcomes but rather create patterns of constraint and enablement that refugee women actively navigate.

Key findings reveal several critical insights about how structural conditions shape entrepreneurial experiences. The analysis shows how limited access to funding intersects with gender and refugee status, often forcing women to self-fund ventures while managing competing family obligations. Cultural expectations and host country pressures create complex dynamics where entrepreneurship is simultaneously viewed as a path to integration and a source of additional pressure. Social capital emerges as particularly crucial, with

refugee women having to navigate unfamiliar networking practices while dealing with the challenges of building new connections in their host country.

The analysis uncovered significant tensions in how refugee women construct their entrepreneurial identities, often struggling between viewing their ventures as 'projects' versus established businesses and navigating societal expectations while pursuing personal aspirations. Issues of exploitation emerged, with many women reporting pressure to provide services for free due to their refugee status. The research also revealed how digital platforms and social media create new opportunities for representation and identity formation, while simultaneously presenting challenges in managing public perceptions and professional image.

Gender emerged as a particularly significant factor, with women experiencing unique pressures around balancing family responsibilities with entrepreneurial ambitions. The analysis revealed patterns of entrepreneurial guilt, where women felt constrained in expressing their struggles due to gendered expectations of gratitude and resilience. Educational background and formal qualifications were found to interact with confidence levels and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, often creating barriers to pursuing business opportunities despite possessing relevant skills and experience.

The analysis also revealed significant contrasts in entrepreneurial engagement across different ethnic communities, highlighting how cultural backgrounds influence risk perception and business approaches. These structural conditions create varying patterns of marginalisation yet also reveal refugee women's resilience in transforming constraints into opportunities through strategic adaptation and identity negotiation.

These insights into how refugee women engage with structural conditions provide essential context for Chapter 6, which examines how these foundational elements influence the development of entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space. The next chapter will analyse how refugee women navigate cognitive, emotional, and behavioural transitions as

they move between being subjects and agents of change, building upon the understanding of structural conditions established here.

Chapter 6. Entrepreneurial Mindset

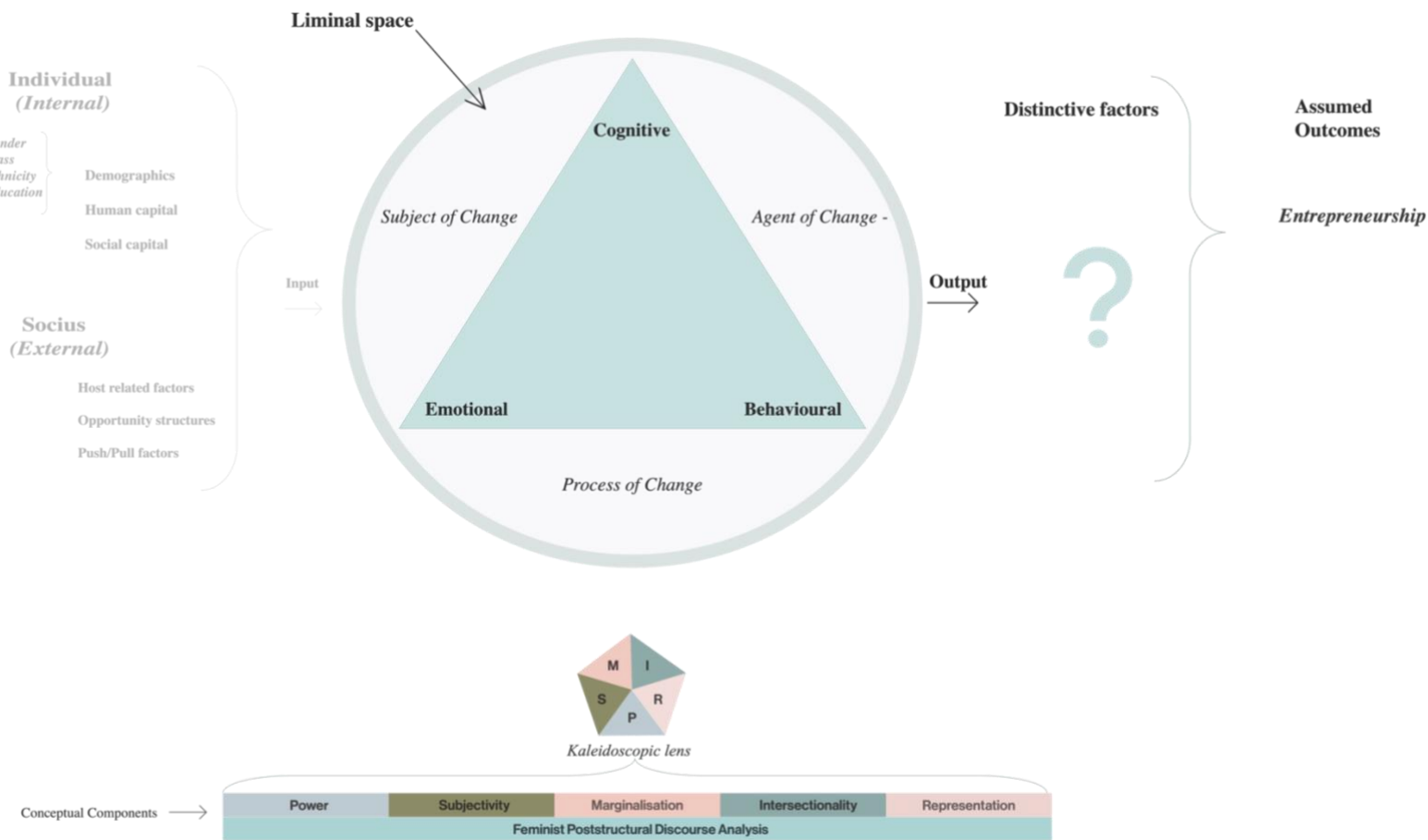


Figure 22. Navigating the Entrepreneurial Mindset within the Liminal Space (Author’s own)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset. The analysis is situated within the liminal space of new venture creation, which provides the contextual setting for understanding mindset navigation. As illustrated in Figure 22, the entrepreneurial mindset is analysed using a conceptual triad of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. This triad serves as the primary conceptual device for examining how these elements influence and affect one another.

Building upon the structural and contextual conditions analysed in Chapter 5, the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 22 (p.362) shows how these previously examined individual (internal) and socius (external) factors create a foundation that both enables and constrains mindset navigation. The circular representation of liminal space establishes the temporal and social context within which the entrepreneurial mindset exists during new venture creation. At the framework's core, the triangular relationship between cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions enables analysis of their interaction and influence, without suggesting any predetermined sequence.

The analysis uses five kaleidoscopic lenses - power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation - shown at the bottom of Figure 22. These lenses, grounded in feminist poststructural discourse analysis, enable examination of how refugee women entrepreneurs navigate experience, reflection, and adaptation. The chapter demonstrates how these dimensions exist and interact simultaneously.

The chapter's organisation addresses this multifaceted understanding. While cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects are examined separately for clarity, the discussion shows their interconnected nature. The case studies demonstrate how these dimensions function together, showing patterns in mindset navigation across different time periods.

Through examining entrepreneurial mindset using this conceptual triad within the liminal space context, the research presents evidence about entrepreneurial navigation and shows how refugee women entrepreneurs navigate mindsets during new venture creation.

6.2 Cognitive Aspect

6.2.1 Cognitive Dynamics within the *Subject of Change*

The journey of refugee women entrepreneurs, as narrated in Case Studies 1, 2, 3, and 4, (see Table 6, p.387) begins with confronting the labels imposed by society, often feeling at odds with their own self-perception. A poignant sentiment from Case Study 3 encapsulates this struggle for identity, *'I hate being called a refugee entrepreneur.'* [INT-032] This sentiment marks the beginning of the cognitive journey, where the tension between the societal label of *'refugee'* and the personal identity of *'entrepreneur'* is most acute.

In understanding the cognitive aspects of these entrepreneurs, it is essential to consider the barriers they face, particularly in securing finance. Case Study 4 exemplifies this cognitive burden, *'The only worry is money, how can I get enough, where can I get a loan from? That is the only thing stopping me from starting.'* [INT-040] The worry about funding reflects a practical barrier and a significant cognitive preoccupation.

Cultural narratives and backgrounds greatly influence these cognitive processes. As expressed in Case Study 2, *'Coming from an Eritrean background, there is a lack of entrepreneurs but also a lack of women role models.'* [INT-022] This statement illustrates how cultural expectations, and the absence of role models shape entrepreneurial aspirations and self-perception. Gender dynamics further complicate this cognitive landscape. Case Study 2 brings this to light: *'I remember speaking to one investor, and he asked what would your family think about this... As if to say that I would seek permission from my family to move ahead with this.'* [INT-021] Such interactions highlight the gendered nuances and societal assumptions that refugee women entrepreneurs often navigate. Self-reflection is critical to these entrepreneurs' journeys, as shown in Case Study 3: *'What do I need to change about myself? To be less judgemental and to be a better person and then freeing myself from those things makes you be a bit more authentic and content with who you are.'* [INT-033] This

introspection reveals the internal cognitive processes involved in striving for authenticity and self-improvement.

Professional challenges bring additional cognitive pressures. Case Study 2 reveals, *'I had such anxiety and panic attacks; I literally couldn't do it. The vulnerability, those people are more senior, am I saying the right thing...'* [OBS-021] These concerns underscore the anxiety associated with power dynamics in professional settings. Furthermore, systemic structures often unconsciously add cognitive barriers, as also noted in Case Study 2: *'I understand, like you know, the mentors had other jobs, you know, and then this is the time that they could give, but this doesn't make it very accessible to mothers.'* [INT-023]

These narratives from the case studies highlight the complex cognitive dimensions of refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences. Societal perceptions, deeply ingrained cultural backgrounds, pervasive gender dynamics, and systemic barriers intricately intertwine, profoundly shaping their entrepreneurial cognition. This complexity underscores the transformative cognitive journey these women undergo, navigating and reconciling their entrepreneurial aspirations within a context rife with challenges and expectations.

6.2.2 Subjective Realities: Unravelling the Cognitive Mindset

As refugee women entrepreneurs advance in their ventures, the implications of labels continue to resonate, shaping their cognitive mindset. The statement from Case Study 3, *'I hate being called a refugee entrepreneur,'* [INT-023] resurfaces not just as a rejection of a label but as a challenge to the psychological constraints it imposes. This ongoing aversion underscores how persistent labels can continue to influence their self-concept and perceived potential, even as their entrepreneurial identity matures *'We won't be seeing any brown refugee entrepreneurs anymore,'* [INT-013] underlines the profound impact of policies like the Nationality and Borders Act on refugee entrepreneurs of colour. Such policies critically shape their self-perception and role within the community. Case Study 1 also delves into the cognitive tension between familial obligations and

personal aspirations, articulated through the dilemma, *'I don't really know what to do. Do I send money home...'* [INT-012] showcasing the ongoing struggle between external expectations and intrinsic motivations.

Despite the challenges associated with the refugee identity, there is a narrative of resilience and proactive agency, as illustrated in Case Study 2: *'So she sent it to me, and I applied.'* [INT-021] This is reinforced by the entrepreneur's acknowledgement of her Eritrean background and its influence on her entrepreneurial approach and representation. The financial dimension of their entrepreneurial journey is crucial, as noted in Case Study 4: *'The only worry is money, how can I get enough...'* [INT-041] This concern underscores the cognitive preoccupation with monetary challenges. Conversely, Case Study 1 shows an evolution in recognising and valuing one's work: *'And since, well... I'm making money from making content.'* [INT-012]

Perceptions and self-identification play significant roles in shaping these entrepreneurs' cognitive landscapes. As seen in Case Study 1, *'Yes, I could make some money out of that... still don't identify myself as an entrepreneur first,'* [INT-012] this reflects the intricate process of self-identification and how external perceptions intersect with self-perception. Growth and resilience are central to their narratives. The exploration of potential and self-awareness in Case Study 4, *'But I think... make a business out of it,'* [INT-031] and the determination to carve one's path, as voiced in Case Study 1, *'Screw you, I don't care about your expectations...'* [INT-012] are testaments to this.

A poignant reflection from an entrepreneur in Case Study 3 captures this internal struggle: *'But I think. Uhm, it could be because maybe I didn't push for that idea as much, and it's because I didn't think that I could make a business out of it.'* [INT-033] This acknowledgement highlights the cognitive barriers of self-doubt and the undervaluation of personal potential, which are critical in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. It showcases the challenge of overcoming internalised limitations to embrace the possibility of success in the entrepreneurial landscape.

6.2.3 Cognitive Constructs: Representation Shaping Mindset

The entrepreneurs' narratives reveal various forms of cognitive challenges. For instance, Case Study 1 discusses the balancing act of passion and full-time work and the experience of exploitation due to refugee status: *'... And people exploiting you and taking advantage of the fact that you're a refugee...'* [OBS-011] Additionally, prejudices encountered in professional interactions are highlighted in Case Study 2: *'Like, I remember speaking to one investor, and he asked what would your family think about this, yeah?'* [INT-021] This reflects the societal biases these entrepreneurs face.

Internal conflicts also shape cognitive dissonance. As Case Study 2's entrepreneur introspectively remarks, *'I know, I well, I still feel guilty about it because I'm like, well, you know all entrepreneurs struggle to make money, so why are you complaining?'* [INT-022] This showcases the internal battle of reconciling personal struggles against societal expectations.

Support systems are crucial, yet they can sometimes unknowingly reinforce limited roles. Intersectional factors such as culture and gender can pigeonhole entrepreneurs into specific roles, as experienced by an entrepreneur from Case Study 1 who reflects on this dilemma: *'No, I would say just generally, like I had supporters, yes. But then even the few supporters that were there, they still kind of believed in me as the food entrepreneur. Oh, let's help [name removed] by giving her opportunities with this food company.'* [INT-012] This quote underscores the cognitive dissonance faced when support does not align with one's entrepreneurial vision, particularly when seeking to transition from one business identity to another. It highlights the complicated challenges of expanding beyond initial success in a specific industry and the need for a support network that embraces and encourages an entrepreneur's growth and diversification of interests.

Efforts to break free from stereotypical perceptions are evident in Case Study 2, where the entrepreneur grapples with being seen solely as a food entrepreneur. She also addresses the challenges of entrepreneurship for mothers: *'One of the challenges that I really struggled with... this doesn't make it very accessible to mothers.'* [INT-023]

The journey of self-identity and its evolution is a central theme. In Case Study 1, the entrepreneur reflects, *'Yes, I could make some money out of that... I still don't identify myself as an entrepreneur first,'* [INT-012] highlighting the dynamic nature of self-perception. This introspective journey culminates in Case Study 2 by reflecting on personal growth: *'What do I need to change myself? To be less judgmental to be a better person and then freeing myself from those things makes you a bit more authentic...'* [INT-033]

6.2.4 Converging Paths: Intersectionality and Cognition

Entrepreneurship, inherently a journey of cognitive adaptation and resilience, takes a distinctive path when seen through the lens of a refugee woman entrepreneur. Her entrepreneurial mindset is not shaped in isolation but is significantly influenced by the intersections of her multiple identities, including race, gender, class, and nationality. This concept of intersectionality crucially impacts the cognitive aspect of her entrepreneurial experience, making it uniquely sophisticated based on these overlapping identities.

By delving deeper into how the complex interplay of multiple intersecting identities, not just cultural and gendered, but also educational backgrounds and refugee status shapes the entrepreneurs' cognition and influences their risk-taking and problem-solving abilities. The same entrepreneur from Case Study 3, who grappled with her identity in 6.2.3, now reflects on the impact of fear on her cognitive development, *'I was more focused on education, never thought of, or I did think of having my own business. But I never gave it much thought because of fear...'* [INT-032] At this stage, intersectionality is an internal cognitive process, where the entrepreneurs' various identities interweave to form a complex mindset that influences every aspect of their entrepreneurial behaviour.

This cognitive apprehension might be more pronounced for refugee women, affecting their willingness to engage in risk-taking activities. Intersectionality here is not just about overlapping social categorisations but also about the conflict between an individual's past, present, and potential

future self. Fear can thus be a substantial barrier, preventing entrepreneurs from realising their full potential and exploring the breadth of their capabilities.

Cognitive tension between external expectations and internal goals is portrayed in Case Study 3's reflection: '*Saying to myself... is it for me?*' [INT-032] This captures the cognitive dissonance from societal pressures amplified by the individual's overlapping identities. The multifaceted challenges of being a female refugee entrepreneur are further illustrated in Case Study 1: '*...and also being a woman.*' [INT-012] This statement encapsulates the cognitive complexities of navigating entrepreneurship amidst entrenched gender biases. Intersectionality profoundly influences the cognitive dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset. It adds unique layers and challenges shaping how refugee women entrepreneurs perceive and navigate their entrepreneurial journeys.

6.2.5 Cognitive Journeys: The Interplay of Marginalisation and Resilience

The entrepreneurs' paths are not linear but are marked by continual growth and self-discovery. One entrepreneur eloquently captures this evolution: '*It's an ongoing journey. I am not there fully, but I am much more confident in who I am. Still, it's a challenge.*' [INT-033] This statement, from Case Study 3 reflects the progressive nature of their cognitive development. Despite the setbacks and marginalisation, they face, these women persist, demonstrating an increasing confidence in their identities and business acumen. Each step on their journey, while fraught with challenges, contributes to a stronger sense of self and a firmer grasp on their entrepreneurial aspirations. This ongoing process of overcoming doubt and societal barriers underscores the dynamic interplay between the entrepreneurs' internal resilience and the external forces of marginalisation.

6.3 Emotional Aspect

6.3.1 Power, Emotion and the Entrepreneurial Mindset: Becoming an Agent of Change

The onset of an entrepreneurial journey, especially for refugee entrepreneurs, is laden with emotional challenges that are both personal and systemic. The foundational stages involve battling for self-validation amidst a landscape that often questions their worth and potential. Such an emotional battle is captured in the candid words of an entrepreneur from Case Study 2, who admits to a deep-seated guilt: *'I still to this day have guilt when I speak to...'* [INT-023] This internal conflict is not merely about self-worth but also reflects the pervasive emotional toll of trying to meet or challenge societal expectations.

Research, such as that by Aly, Audretsch, and Grimm (2021), underscores the importance of emotional skills, which resonate with the findings of this study where entrepreneurs from Case Studies 1 and 3 express the weight of not wanting to be *'behind and still figuring things out'* [INT-012] and the dichotomy between *'fear and empowerment'* [INT-032] These sentiments lay bare the emotional turmoil involved in the early decision-making processes, where fear can inhibit action and empowerment is yet to be fully harnessed.

Systemic challenges such as access to funding often compound these emotional difficulties, testing the entrepreneurs' resilience from the get-go. The experience of investing personal finances due to barriers in obtaining funding, as expressed in Case Study 2 [OBS-021], underscores the additional pressures that can exacerbate the emotional strain during the nascent stages of business development.

In this initial phase, the entrepreneurs' emotional journey is marked by a search for identity and a reconciliation of their new role with their past experiences. They grapple with societal labels and their introspection, often feeling the emotional weight of being seen as outsiders within the entrepreneurial community. This stage sets the stage for their emergence as *agents of change*, as they

begin to navigate the complex interplay of power and emotion in their pursuit of entrepreneurial success.

6.3.2 Subjective Echoes: Navigating the Emotional Depths of Entrepreneurial Mindset

As refugee entrepreneurs advance beyond the initial stages of their business ventures, they delve into deeper emotional territories, marked by intense personal subjectivities and internal conflicts. This phase is characterised by a more profound exploration of their inner emotional landscape, where they confront and navigate through a spectrum of feelings.

Case Study 2 provides a poignant insight into this phase with an entrepreneur's reflection on enduring guilt during challenging times: *'You know for a long time, especially during lockdown, having guilt...'* [INT-023]. This statement echoes similar sentiments from Case Study 1, where another entrepreneur confesses to feeling significant guilt for not providing perceived value: *'I felt so much guilt, held onto so much guilt for a long time because I felt like I was not providing any value.'* [INT-012]. These narratives highlight the internal struggle with self-criticism and the pressure to meet both self-imposed and external expectations.

Amidst these emotional challenges, inspiration often emerges as a critical coping mechanism, especially when derived from shared experiences within marginalised communities. For instance, Case Study 3's entrepreneur finds motivation in connecting with others who share similar backgrounds: *'Being able to meet other refugee women is super inspirational... I want to give back to those communities because that is where I come from.'* [INT-021]. This sentiment underscores the power of community bonds and shared experiences in providing emotional support and inspiration.

This stage of the entrepreneurial journey reveals the ongoing tension in decision-making processes, infused with emotional complexities. The entrepreneurs frequently find themselves at a crossroads between fear and empowerment, constantly evaluating their choices. The struggle to balance these emotions is aptly described by the entrepreneur in Case Study 3: *'I am always*

conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment.' [INT-032].

This perpetual negotiation of emotional states illustrates the depth of their internal conflicts, and the effort required to navigate these emotions.

Personal aspirations and external expectations also continue to impose significant emotional strain. Entrepreneurs must reconcile their desires with societal pressures, often questioning their motives and decisions. This emotional dialogue is captured in Case Study 1, where the entrepreneur grapples with the dichotomy of personal fulfilment versus societal expectations: *'Saying to myself OK, do you really want to do it because you really want to do it? Or do you want to do it because you want to keep up with everyone's expectations?'* [INT-013].

6.3.3 Emotional Resonance: Representation and Process Shaping Mindset

In the later stages of the entrepreneurial journey, the focus shifts to how representation and the process of evolving into an entrepreneur shape the emotional experiences of refugee women. This phase is marked by a transition from internal struggles to confronting external challenges, leading to significant emotional growth and the solidification of their identities as agents of change.

The importance of representation in this stage cannot be overstated. As the entrepreneurs begin to see themselves reflected in successful figures within their community, their emotional landscape shifts. For instance, in Case Study 3, the entrepreneur's introspection reveals the impact of representation: *'You know, for a long time... I don't know why?'* [INT-022]. This reflection echoes the emotional weight of internalised expectations and the accompanying guilt. However, it also illustrates a turning point where the entrepreneur starts questioning these ingrained beliefs, signifying a shift towards empowerment.

The emotional journey is further influenced by the process of accepting and embracing the entrepreneurial identity. This is particularly evident in Case Study 1, where the entrepreneur grapples with their self-perception: *'But it still feels like a project.'* [INT-012]. This sentiment highlights the

transition from viewing their venture as a temporary endeavour to accepting it as a legitimate business, illustrating the emotional complexities involved in this identity shift.

Financial challenges continue to play a significant role, as they represent both a practical obstacle and an emotional hurdle. The struggle for funding, discussed in Case Study 2, [OBS-021], exemplifies the resilience required to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape. This resilience is born from a combination of facing financial hardships and the emotional growth that comes from overcoming these challenges.

Networking and building social capital, essential elements of business success, often amplify feelings of inadequacy, particularly for those who are unaccustomed to such environments. The disparity in networking abilities, noted in Case Study 2, [INT-022], highlights the emotional challenges associated with bridging this gap. However, it also marks a stage where entrepreneurs begin to recognise and address these disparities, contributing to their emotional development.

Amid these challenges, moments of inspiration and growth emerge. Case Study 2's narrative, '*I had got divorced. I had no confidence...*' [INT-021], describes an emotional journey from vulnerability to empowerment. The emotional impact of seeing successful peers is captured in Case Study 4: '*On Facebook, I saw a refugee woman from Syria...*' [INT-041] highlighting the power of positive representation. The importance of shared linguistic backgrounds is touched upon in '*Language would make the process easier...*' [INT-040] from Case Study 4, underscoring the desire for connection. The tension between societal demands and personal aspirations resonates in Case Studies 1 and 2 statements: '*Maybe someone could learn from the entrepreneurship journey...*' [INT-012] and '*At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it, yeah.*' [INT-013] Despite the uncertainty, there is an underlying quest for guidance and connection, as illustrated in Case Study 4 '*I just want to know how to start...*' [OBS-040].

This emotional journey is summarised in Case Study 4: '*When I see people fighting for their dreams, I think I have to be more like them*' [INT-043] capturing the uplifting feeling derived from

others' perseverance. The case studies underscore how representation profoundly influences the emotional dimensions of refugee women's entrepreneurial mindset, from initial guilt and inadequacy to eventual empowerment and determination. The role of representation, both in its positive and negative aspects, is pivotal in shaping these emotional experiences throughout their entrepreneurial endeavours.

6.3.4 Emotional Crossroads: Intersectionality Influences on Mindset

Entrepreneurship, often associated with success, innovation, and determination, reveals its deeper complexities when viewed through the experiences of marginalised groups. Intersectionality, which considers the interplay of various social identities, offers a profound understanding of these complexities, especially in the emotional realm of entrepreneurship. The case studies reveal a spectrum of emotions, from guilt and fear to inspiration, deeply interwoven with the multifaceted identities of refugee women entrepreneurs.

In Case Study 2, the entrepreneur's contemplation, *'I feel she has invested so much time in me, and I haven't proved myself in terms of business...'* [INT-023] delves into the emotional impact of intersectionality. It highlights how emotional burdens stem not just from business challenges but also from the unique barriers linked to her refugee status and Eritrean heritage. Similarly, Case Study 3's statement, *'I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment,'* [INT-032] epitomises the emotional struggle between empowerment and marginalisation. The complex nature of networking is underscored in Case Study 2: *'These people do it from a very young age... But when you come from a community that doesn't have any confidence at all, is told to be quiet, don't stand out, get on with it, it takes a lot of work to change your mindset...'* [INT-022] This reveals how intersectional identities can influence the ease of networking and confidence-building.

Case Study 1's reflection, *'But then that's not the first thing that I identify myself as...'* [OBS-011] sheds light on how entrepreneurs prioritise their identities. While entrepreneurship is significant, other aspects, such as their refugee background or role as a content creator, often take precedence. This ordering shapes their emotional approach to business decisions.

Furthermore, the emotional motivation to support and uplift their community is evident in Case Study 2: *'Being able to meet other refugee women is super inspirational... I want to give back to those communities because that is where I come from.'* [INT-021] This sentiment highlights how the intersection of being a woman, a refugee, and an entrepreneur amplifies the drive to effect change within their communities.

Understanding the emotional landscape of entrepreneurship through the lens of intersectionality reveals that the entrepreneurial journey is far from a straightforward path of business decisions. It is a complex maze influenced by personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and societal perceptions. Recognising and embracing this intersectionality can lead to more comprehensive support systems for entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, acknowledging their business acumen and layered emotional experiences.

6.3.5 Emotional Tides: The Entrepreneurial Mindset Shaped by Marginalisation

Marginalisation significantly impacts the emotional landscape of the entrepreneurial mindset, acting as both a structural and cognitive barrier. This impact is particularly noticeable as the mindset evolves amidst transformative experiences. The emotion of guilt is a recurring theme, highlighting internal conflicts related to self-worth and external validation. In Case Study 3, the entrepreneur's admission, *'You know, for a long time, especially during lockdown, having guilt...'* [INT-023] reflects this struggle, questioning whether the challenges are due to the business model or personal dedication.

Conversely, finding strength in community connections provides a substantial emotional uplift. The sentiment from Case Study 3, '*Being able to meet other refugee women is super inspirational...*' [INT-021] emphasises the emotional support derived from such communal bonds. These interactions fortify emotional resilience and foster a sense of belonging, anchoring the entrepreneurial journey in shared experiences. The emotional journey is fraught with dilemmas. Case Study 3's reflection, '*I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment,*' [INT-032] captures the tension between embracing the unknown in entrepreneurship and clinging to familiarity. Similarly, Case Study 1's entrepreneur describes her venture as '*a project*' [INT-012], indicating hesitancy to fully commit to the entrepreneurial identity, possibly due to past experiences of marginalisation.

The challenge of accessing resources and resulting emotional frustration is a recurrent theme. In Case Study 1, the question, '*So how is he able to turn that into money? We didn't know...*' [OBS-012] conveys feelings of being an outsider in the entrepreneurial world. Financial limitations heighten these emotional complexities, particularly for refugee entrepreneurs. Case Study 2's statement, '*It's been really hard to get funding...*' [INT-022] paints a picture of the multifaceted struggles faced beyond sustaining a business venture to contending with societal prejudices. Navigating social networks without prior knowledge can lead to feelings of inadequacy, as shown in Case Study 2, '*But exactly what do I do with the introduction?*' [INT-022] This reveals the emotional intricacies of networking from a disadvantaged starting point. Case Study 1's entrepreneur's impatience, '*I would never accept to be behind and be the person who is still figuring...*' [INT-012] reflects a strong desire to challenge stereotypes and assert her presence.

The link between entrepreneurship and monetary success is deeply ingrained. Case Study 3's observation, '*I don't feel it because for me entrepreneurship is always related to money,*' [INT-032] illustrates a mindset influenced by societal norms equating success with financial gain. Case Study 1's entrepreneur's statement, '*But then that's not the first thing that I identify myself as...*' [OBS-011]

reveals the cognitive effort to align with societal expectations while avoiding marginalisation. Case Study 2's narrative, '*I had got divorced. I really had no confidence...*' [INT-021] and Case Study 1's remark, '*At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it...*' [INT-013] highlights an entrepreneur's emotional highs and lows, intensified by societal pressures and intersectional marginalisation.

Finally, the uncertainty and overwhelming nature of starting a venture is vividly captured in Case Study 4's statement, '*I just want to know how do I start...*' [INT-040] This epitomises the daunting prospect of embarking on an entrepreneurial path, amplified by systemic marginalisation. Each narrative from these case studies uncovers aspects of the mindset shift, marked by a spectrum of emotions profoundly shaped by the experience of marginalisation.

6.4 Behavioural Aspect

6.4.1 Empowering Change: Behavioural Dynamics of the Entrepreneurial

Mindset

As evidenced in the case studies, the entrepreneurial mindset is deeply informed by an awareness of societal inequities. Entrepreneurs actively recognise and respond to societal power imbalances, shaping their strategies accordingly. This is vividly illustrated in Case Study 1, where the entrepreneur shares, '*But if I say that I was a refugee, that could potentially mean that... I'm different,*' [INT-012] revealing the intricate relationship between identity and entrepreneurship.

This recognition is paired with a strong personal drive, often fuelled by societal pressures and inherent ambition. This drive positions entrepreneurs as proactive figures in competitive environments. Case Study 2 captures this ethos, with the entrepreneur stating, '*You know everybody wants to succeed... I always had to be ahead of everyone else.*' [OBS-022] This ambition reflects a desire to outperform and a deep-seated aspiration for autonomy and agency. Similarly, Case Study 4's perspective, '*I am claiming universal credit from the job centre. I don't like to be a person who just takes,*' [INT-042] demonstrates a preference for self-reliance.

Entrepreneurs view their journey as an opportunity for self-improvement and empowerment. As expressed in Case Study 4, *'When you work for someone, you never upgrade yourself. But if you work for yourself, you're more independent, a more powerful you.'* [INT-043] This belief underscores the transformative potential of entrepreneurship. Understanding and leveraging one's unique market value is crucial. Case Study 3's entrepreneur highlights this: *'I know I'm creative in that sense. I know none of my competitors will think about anything like this...'* [INT-032] underlining the importance of self-worth in entrepreneurship.

Navigating business landscapes often involves managing personal relationships and power dynamics. In Case Study 4, the entrepreneur reflects, *'I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business soon... My husband has done a lot up until now...'* [INT-041] This reveals the ongoing recalibration of identities influenced by external perceptions and internal aspirations.

At the heart of these behaviours lies a longing for control and autonomy. Case Study 4's statement, *'It's really difficult to get a job... I want to do my own thing,'* [INT-041] encapsulates this quest for independence. Yet, the entrepreneurial vision often transcends individual success, aiming for broader societal impact. Case Study 3's goal of redistributing profits to uplift communities exemplifies this expansive approach: *'The thing is, this is the goal that I have... and we can spread the profits.'* [INT-031] These narratives from the case studies illuminate the multifaceted nature of the entrepreneurial mindset among refugee women, grounded in personal aspirations and a commitment to broader societal change.

6.4.2 Subjective Nuances: Mindset as an Agent of Change

The behavioural mindset of entrepreneurs, when viewed through the lens of feminist poststructuralism, reveals a tapestry of individual experiences shaped by societal expectations and power dynamics. This is clearly seen in Case Study 1, where the entrepreneur's comment, *'But if I say that I was a refugee, that could potentially mean that...'* [INT-012] reflects the fluid nature of identity. Her struggle with self-identification is further highlighted when she says, *'...people still call*

me the chef... I'm not a chef, I am a content creator...' [INT-013] illustrating the challenge of defining oneself amidst external labels.

These narratives from the case studies represent more than just passive stories; they are active embodiments of broader behavioural patterns integral to entrepreneurship. The pressure of societal expectations is palpable in Case Study 2, with the entrepreneur stating, '*You know everybody is looking at you to succeed...*' [OBS-023] This illustrates the delicate balance between external pressures and personal ambition. Case Study 4's entrepreneur, expressing a desire to support her family and start a business, '*I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business soon...*' [INT-041] demonstrates personal motivations driving her entrepreneurial path. An inherent desire for autonomy and self-growth permeates these stories. The belief that working for others limits personal development is captured in Case Study 4's assertion, '*When you work for someone, you never upgrade yourself...*' [INT-043] This drive for independence is further echoed in their expression of job market challenges and a yearning for agency, '*It's really difficult to get a job...I want to do my own thing.*' [INT-041]

The strategic mindset of entrepreneurs is evident in Case Study 1, where the entrepreneur recognises and leverages unique opportunities, as shared in, '*Just before I had left, because restaurants had started to call me in...*' [OBS-012]

These insights from the case studies illuminate the behavioural aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset as a catalyst for change. It's not only about individual pursuits but also about resonating with broader societal dynamics, particularly highlighting the experiences of marginalised groups. These narratives emphasise the transformative nature of entrepreneurial ventures, shaped by and shaping personal experiences and subjective realities.

6.4.3 From Image to Action: Representation's Influence on the Mindset

Representation significantly influences perceptions, shaping behaviour, particularly in the entrepreneurial domain. The narratives from the case studies reveal how representation impacts the behavioural aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset, underscoring the entrepreneur's role as an agent of change.

In Case Study 1, the entrepreneur's awareness of her unique societal position is evident: *'Because I'm in the minority, I'm different.'* [INT-012] This awareness leads to concrete actions, such as leveraging uniqueness or challenging societal narratives, thus carving unique entrepreneurial paths. As seen in Case Study 2's statement, *'Everybody is looking at you,'* [OBS-022] intense pressure to succeed can ignite an intrinsic competitive spirit, driving the entrepreneur to *'be ahead of everyone else.'* [OBS-022] This societal expectation fosters a drive towards consistent achievement. Moreover, Case Study 4's sentiment, *'I want to be a productive person,'* [INT-042] when contrasted with references to welfare, reflects a strong desire to defy stereotypes, showcasing adaptability and a shift from a passive role to an active contributor.

The decision to *'work for yourself,'* [INT-041] as mentioned in Case Study 4, and the expressed desire to support a spouse indicate a proactive stance against traditional gender roles, challenging established perceptions of entrepreneurship. Case Study 3's entrepreneur demonstrates a proactive approach: *'I know none of my competitors will think about anything like this.'* [INT-032] This attitude reflects not just adaptability but also the leveraging of unique insights to stand out in the market.

However, the journey involves internal struggles. Case Study 1's entrepreneur admits, *'There's this image of me, and I'm still trying to break out of it,'* [INT-013] highlighting the challenge of reconciling self-perception with societal views. Cultural representation also plays a role. Case Study 4's desire to showcase Syrian cooking represents an effort to highlight cultural heritage, positioning the entrepreneur as an ambassador of their culture. [OBS-042] Despite evolving external

labels, the entrepreneurial spirit remains resilient, as seen in Case Study 1's determination to '*resume with all of this*' despite new public tags like '*the chef*'. [OBS-012]

Entrepreneurs from marginalised backgrounds often focus on reshaping societal representations, depicting their communities as active contributors rather than passive beneficiaries. In conclusion, the interplay between perceptions and behaviours is deeply embedded in the complexities of entrepreneurship. The stories of refugee women entrepreneurs demonstrate that while societal representation can sometimes be a barrier, it more often serves as a motivational force, inspiring them to challenge norms, innovate, and establish their unique narratives as agents of change.

6.4.4 Intersecting Identities: The Behavioural Dynamics of Mindsets

Entrepreneurial mindsets, particularly among marginalised individuals, are marked by a behavioural drive to recognise and utilise intersectional advantages. This is exemplified in Case Study 1's reflection, '*But if I say that I was a refugee, that could potentially mean that... I'm in a minority, I'm different,*' [INT-032] showcases a strategic harnessing of their multifaceted identity. This approach embodies a proactive stance, where challenges are identified and transformed into potential advantages. Success for these entrepreneurs transcends the personal realm, symbolising the potential achievements of their entire intersectional group. Such behaviour stems from societal pressures linked to their identity, instilling a deep sense of responsibility and accountability.

Autonomy is a significant aspect of the entrepreneurial mindset within intersectionality. For instance, Case Study 2 in a related discussion articulates the nuances of engaging with investors unfamiliar with the Muslim market, a \$2.2 trillion sector. She says, '*I'm having conversations with investors, but because they're not, I think they're wary because firstly, they do not have a good understanding of the market... But I don't come from a background where I could be like, go to a rich relative and be like, can you give me a few thousand pounds?*' This narrative reveals the gaps in

conventional funding pathways and the innovative approaches marginalised entrepreneurs must take, such as crowdfunding, to navigate these gaps [INT-021].

However, the entrepreneurial journey has challenges, particularly in reconciling perceived identity with self-identity. Case Study 1's entrepreneur admits, '*At this point, yes, because... I'm not a chef, I am a content creator...*' [INT-013] highlighting the ongoing struggle to balance societal perceptions with personal authenticity. This influence manifests in various ways, from leveraging unique aspects of their identity to striving for autonomy and empowering their communities while navigating the complexities of their personal and societal identities.

6.4.5 Behavioural Resilience: Voices of Female Refugee Entrepreneurs

In the tapestry of female refugee entrepreneurship, the struggle to reconcile imposed images with authentic self-identity is a recurring motif. For instance, Case Study 2's expresses this tension: '*So like there's this image of me and I'm still trying to break out of it in a sense, but you know, I am an entrepreneur 'cause I'm thinking of other ways that I can make money with my services or even like, I don't know, selling merchandise when I'm famous.*' [INT-023] This sentiment encapsulates the essence of behavioural resilience in the face of marginalisation and agency.

A profound interplay of marginalisation and agency marks the entrepreneurial mindset of female refugee entrepreneurs navigating through liminal spaces. In Case Study 1, the entrepreneur's reflection, '*But if I say that I was a refugee, that could potentially mean that...*' [INT-012] illustrates a strategic use of her refugee status. This duality positions her identity as both a barrier and a catalyst for unique opportunities, especially in challenging environments. Case Study 2's entrepreneur echoes this sentiment: '*You know everybody is looking at you to succeed...*' [OBS-022] This statement underscores the behavioural expectations and pressures stemming from their marginalisation, compelling them to excel against societal odds.

These entrepreneurs exhibit transformative behaviours influenced by their past experiences. For instance, Case Study 4's comment, '*I am claiming universal credit from the job centre...*' [INT-042] highlights the societal stigmas they confront. Yet, their determination '*to be productive*' demonstrates a strong resolve to transcend these conditions. Case Study 1's entrepreneur's belief in her creativity, '*I know I'm creative in that sense...*' reflects a resolve to distinguish herself in adversity. Similarly, '*I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business...*' from the same case study portrays their intent to challenge traditional roles and overcome multiple layers of marginalisation.

Their struggles often become internalised, subtly influencing their self-perception and societal image. Case Study 1's thoughtful observation, '*So like there's this image of me...*' captures these internal conflicts and the underlying impact of marginalisation. Their entrepreneurial paths are fraught with uncertainties, as revealed in Case Study 1: '*Just before I had left, because restaurants had started to call me in...*' This highlights the unpredictable nature of their journeys. Yet, their tenacity shines through, with Case Study 4's statement, '*It's really difficult to get a job and if I was to start my business...*' showcasing how systemic barriers shape a self-reliant entrepreneurial spirit.

Case Study 1's statement reflects similar themes of identity, expectation, and resilience: '*At this point, yes, because I don't blame anyone for thinking that way. So, for my following on social media, people still call me the chef. Oh yeah, (name removed) shit. They started expecting me to have all the answers and know all the tricks. Or how to perfect certain recipes, I'm like. I'm not a chef; I am a content creator.*' [INT-013] This quote highlights the complex interplay between societal perceptions and personal identity.

6.5 Temporal Analysis of Mindset Oscillations in Refugee Entrepreneurs

Early Stage (2019): Formation of Entrepreneurial Identity

During the initial stages of their entrepreneurial journeys, refugee entrepreneurs began to form their entrepreneurial identities, often grappling with the tension between self-perception and external labelling. The cognitive-to-emotional transition is evident in their early recognition and rejection of imposed labels, such as the sentiment expressed by one participant: *'I hate being called a refugee entrepreneur'* (INT-032). This illustrates an early stage of cognitive processing about their identity, which triggers an emotional response rooted in discomfort and rejection of stereotypes.

As emotional uncertainty emerged, it often drove initial business behaviours, exemplified by one entrepreneur's statement: *'I'm having conversations with investors, but because they're not, I think they're wary'* (INT-021). Here, emotional responses such as apprehension and doubt translated into behavioural attempts to secure funding and credibility. This emotional-to-behavioural transition demonstrates how early-stage emotions served as a catalyst for action.

Conversely, the behavioural-to-cognitive transition reveals how initial actions, such as deciding on financial priorities, spurred deeper reflection and reassessment. A participant reflected, *'I don't really know what to do. Do I send money home and that means I can't move'* (INT-012), showing how early decisions prompted strategic thinking. These oscillations between cognition, emotion, and behaviour during this formative phase illustrate the iterative development of an entrepreneurial identity in the context of displacement and uncertainty.

Development Stage (2021–2022): Growth and Learning

As refugee entrepreneurs progressed into the developmental phase, their mindset oscillations reflected greater maturity and strategic orientation. The cognitive-to-behavioural transition is evident in their understanding of the need for patience and deliberate action. For instance, one participant acknowledged, *'I'm not patient at all. I think as well like being an entrepreneur means taking it slow,*

really doing your research' (INT-012). This highlights how an evolved understanding of entrepreneurial demands influenced their behaviour and decision-making processes.

Emotional challenges during this stage significantly affected cognitive processes, as illustrated by one participant's account: *'I had such anxiety and panic attacks; I literally couldn't do it. The vulnerability, those people are more senior'* (OBS-021). This emotional-to-cognitive transition demonstrates how heightened emotional states, such as anxiety, shaped their business thinking and strategic adaptations.

Additionally, behavioural decisions during this stage often elicited emotional responses. For example, the sentiment, *'You know for a long time, especially during lockdown having guilt, I still to this day have guilt when I speak to [name removed] because I feel she has invested so much time in me'* (INT-023), reflects the emotional repercussions of their actions. This behavioural-to-emotional transition underscores the weight of responsibility and the impact of decision-making on their emotional well-being.

Later Stage (2022–2023): Complex Integration

In the later stages of their entrepreneurial journeys, refugee entrepreneurs demonstrated a more complex and integrated mindset, where cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements interacted in a sophisticated manner. The cognitive-to-emotional transition is evident in reflections such as, *'But it still feels like a project. Maybe I'll make a little bit of money out of it'* (INT-012). This statement reveals a mature cognitive processing of their entrepreneurial activities, leading to nuanced emotional responses about the potential and limitations of their ventures.

Emotional growth during this stage increasingly drove strategic planning and purposeful actions. One participant articulated, *'The thing is, this is the goal that I have, and I really want to help others. For example, if I have my business, I can employ other women as well'* (INT-032). This emotional-to-behavioural transition highlights how emotional maturity fostered broader, community-oriented entrepreneurial goals.

Finally, the behavioural-to-cognitive transition at this stage involved a deeper level of introspection and strategic reassessment. A participant reflected, '*I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment*' (INT-032). This demonstrates how their actions, informed by lived experiences, prompted ongoing reflection and strategic thought, illustrating the iterative nature of their entrepreneurial mindset.

This temporal analysis captures the dynamic and cyclical nature of mindset oscillations in refugee entrepreneurs as they navigate various stages of their entrepreneurial journeys. From initial identity formation to strategic learning and complex integration, their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural transitions highlight the interplay between personal growth and external challenges. This progression underscores the iterative and adaptive processes through which refugee entrepreneurs navigate the liminal spaces of entrepreneurship, balancing individual aspirations with systemic constraints.

6.5.1 Case Study of female refugee 1 (Coded as RE1)

RE1, a modern Muslim woman living in a capital city, possesses significant social capital, which has been both an asset and a source of tension in her entrepreneurial journey. Educated to a master's level and living as a young urban professional, she enjoys a wide and diverse social circle, including Yemeni and multicultural friends. Active within the refugee community, she has founded a Yemeni charity and has engaged with initiatives such as TERN. Despite her middle-class background and robust network, RE1's entrepreneurial aspirations have faced systemic and personal challenges. When I first met her in 2019, RE1 wore a headscarf and actively embodied her identity as a refugee entrepreneur. By 2022, she had chosen to stop covering her hair—a decision unknown to her mother, who remains in Yemen. This change symbolised a broader evolution in how she negotiated her identity in her host country, navigating cultural expectations and personal agency.

Early Ventures and Public Perception (2019-2020)

RE1's initial ventures, particularly her Yemeni pop-up restaurants, were well-received, with sold-out events and significant community support. She was heralded as a success story, often featured in media and research studies on refugee entrepreneurship. Despite this public recognition, RE1 admitted that these ventures never turned a profit. Reflecting on the dual-edged sword of visibility, she said:

“You know everybody is looking at you to succeed because ultimately that kind of floods down, doesn't it? But that was something that I really enjoyed at the time, and it started to gain a certain level of popularity. Being me, the competitive person, I always had to be ahead of everyone else.”

Her wide network and public persona created external pressures to maintain an entrepreneurial identity, even as she grappled with systemic barriers such as class-based exclusion. For instance, she reflected on her challenges securing funding:

“I’m having conversations with investors... but I don’t come from a background where I could be like, go to a rich relative.”

At this stage, she was working full-time while trying to build her business. She admitted feeling pressured into decisions shaped by external expectations, such as participating in an incubation programme that encouraged her to focus on pop-up restaurants. However, this trajectory clashed with her personal preferences. As she confided:

“I didn’t want to be stuck in the kitchen—I wanted to be outside engaging with people.”

Navigating Financial Stability and Strategic Decisions (2021-2023)

By 2021, RE1 began to confront the financial realities of her entrepreneurial pursuits. Despite her strong support network, she struggled to secure sustainable funding for her business. This period highlighted the tension between her aspirations and her obligations, including sending money home to her mother in Yemen. She described this internal conflict:

“I don’t really know what to do. Do I send money home and that means I can’t move, or should I be selfish and stop sending money?”

This financial strain, combined with the need for stability, prompted her to step back from entrepreneurship. By 2023, she decided to return to full-time employment as a Senior Social Media Manager. This role provided the stability she needed to achieve significant personal milestones, such as purchasing a property in London. Reflecting on this decision, she framed it not as a failure but as a strategic adaptation:

“So just like so many artists out there, I have a full-time job that pays for my bills.”

Ongoing Aspirations and Reflections on Success

Throughout her journey, RE1 maintained her entrepreneurial mindset, often reflecting on her identity as a “*serial entrepreneur*.” She continued to conceptualise new ventures, embodying the idea of *cyclical entrepreneurship*, oscillating between entrepreneurial activity and employment as a strategic response to systemic constraints. Her reflections reveal both her drive and the weight of societal expectations:

“She can’t just be that stupid and not look into all these opportunities. ‘Cause she’s one of the first to start doing this. Then if she continues, she’s going to make great success. So, everyone is calculating success in a way that they think is right.”

Interestingly, she also critiqued her own approach, acknowledging the challenges of balancing ambition with the need for patience and strategic planning:

“I would never accept to be behind and be the person who is still figuring things out. But I’m not patient at all. I think being an entrepreneur means taking it slow, really doing your research and allocating all your resources before launching.”

RE1’s journey underscores the complexities of refugee entrepreneurship, where robust social capital and public visibility coexist with systemic barriers and personal sacrifices. Her experience reflects the cyclical nature of entrepreneurship for marginalised women, where *resource regrouping* and strategic employment become necessary survival strategies rather than markers of failure. By navigating these challenges, RE1 demonstrates resilience and adaptability, embodying the realities of what it means to act entrepreneurially within constrained circumstances.

6.5.2 Case Study of female refugee 2 (Coded as RE2)

RE2, is a conservative Muslim woman living in a capital city. Educated to a graduate level and living as a young, divorced mother with two daughters. She grew up looking after her siblings whilst both her parents worked. She told me that when she got a promotion at work, she went home to tell her mother who commented, “do they know you have children.” She is active within the

refugee community; she worked at an Eritrean charity becoming their COO she has also engaged with TERN but found the evening hours sometimes difficult to attend because of childcare responsibilities. She remarked that she has been very lucky as her parents have helped with childcare that she would otherwise not have been able to afford. Despite her middle-class background and robust network, RE1's entrepreneurial aspirations have faced systemic and personal challenges.

Early Ventures and Public Perception (2017-2019)

RE2's entrepreneurial journey began with the launch of a STEM-themed clothing line for girls, which she later pivoted to an eco-friendly lifestyle brand catering to the Muslim community. Her second venture was inspired by her personal struggles preparing for the Hajj pilgrimage, leading her to create Hajj gift boxes. Despite her innovative ideas, she faced significant challenges accessing funding and resources.

She reflected to me that she was a recipient of the Founders Programme in 2019 but lacked the confidence to pitch for funding:

"I felt intimidated by these men, so I never pitched my idea, and I never got the funding."

She also experienced recurring anxiety and feelings of guilt, particularly during the COVID-19 lockdown, as she balanced family responsibilities with entrepreneurial aspirations:

"You know, during lockdown, I still to this day have guilt because I feel she [a mentor] invested so much time in me, and I haven't proved myself in terms of business."

Despite these struggles, RE2 demonstrated a strong sense of agency, leveraging opportunities sent her way, such as applying for a business programme forwarded by a friend working in refugee networks:

“She sent it to me and said, ‘If you’re interested, just apply.’ So, I did.”

Navigating Employment (2020-2023)

By 2020, RE2 recognised the limitations of her ventures and the pressure of sustaining her family as a single mother. This realisation led her to pursue formal employment while continuing to develop professionally. She reflected on the gendered dynamics of mentoring and networking:

“One of the challenges I really struggled with... mentors had other jobs and sessions were in the evening. This doesn’t make it very accessible to mothers.”

Her position as a Project Officer at a race equality charity became a platform for personal growth, as she gained confidence through public speaking, mentoring, and participating in conferences. This period marked her transition from vulnerability:

“I physically couldn’t make a phone call.”

To empowerment:

“Throughout my journey, I’ve taken part in various conferences, pitch competitions, and events, fuelled by my passion for refugee issues, women’s empowerment, and sustainability.”

She also encountered systemic biases in professional spaces. When asked by an investor how her family would feel about her business idea, she recalled:

“Would you ask somebody else that? Why are you asking me that? Like I had to seek permission from my family to move ahead with this.”

Return to Entrepreneurship (2024)

In 2022, RE2 travelled to Dubai, where she felt an unprecedented sense of empowerment as a Muslim woman. This experience planted the seeds for her eventual return to entrepreneurship. By 2024, she launched a consulting firm in the UAE, leveraging her leadership skills, community engagement, and entrepreneurial mindset. She described the shift as a culmination of her professional and personal development:

“It was the first time I had been somewhere where I felt empowered as a Muslim woman.”

Reflections on Success and Resilience

Throughout her journey, RE2 grappled with the tensions between societal expectations, personal ambition, and systemic barriers. She often reflected on her own challenges, critiquing the pressures of entrepreneurship:

“I know all entrepreneurs struggle to make money, so why are you complaining about the struggle?”

Her story demonstrates how refugee entrepreneurs, particularly women, navigate constrained environments, resource regrouping, and cultural biases to redefine success on their own terms

6.5.3 Case Study of female refugee 3 (Coded as RE3)

RE3, is a Palestinian woman living in a university city in southeast of England, she is quiet with a small circle of friends mostly international students from her university days. Educated to a PhD level and living in shared accommodation. She is Active within the Palestinian activist community and is an independent researcher publishing her work. Despite her education, RE3’s has faced systemic and personal challenges which have made her entrepreneurial pursuits incredibly difficult.

Early Ambitions and Cognitive Challenges (2019-2020)

RE3's entrepreneurial aspirations were deeply rooted in her experiences mentoring artists in Palestine. Her initial vision focused on creating a social enterprise to empower women through employment and profit-sharing. She articulated this vision with enthusiasm:

"We can make beautiful things, sell them, and share the profits. It's not just about me; it's about helping others."

However, her background in an unprivileged, conflict-ridden environment instilled a pervasive fear of risk, which significantly influenced her approach to entrepreneurship:

"When you live with fear, you can never take risks. You can never improve."

RE3 also grappled with societal expectations and the weight of her past:

"I don't feel it because for me entrepreneurship is always related to money. Uh, because you know, we've come from an unprivileged background in a lot of sense, like we don't get support from our countries or anything like that, so it feels like I can't just stop here. I have to continue. And you've got another part of expectations where you've got people who are interested in investing, or they're giving you ideas and telling you what they think is the next step."

This cognitive tension between ambition, fear, and external expectations marked the early stages of her entrepreneurial journey.

Inner Conflict and Redirection (2021-2022)

By 2021, RE3 began to question the viability of her entrepreneurial goals. Balancing her aspirations with the weight of past trauma and systemic barriers led to moments of deep self-reflection:

"I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment."

She reflected on how her inclination to please others, and societal expectations shaped her entrepreneurial choices:

"Maybe someone could learn from the entrepreneurship journey—it's not about saying yes to everything because you feel obliged. Or being too nice to say no, which I feel was part of the reason why I actually went for it."

This period also highlighted her struggle to align her entrepreneurial activities with her values. Her decision to step back from business pursuits was not a rejection of entrepreneurship but a redirection towards channels where she felt more confident and authentic.

Embracing Education and Spirituality (2023-2024)

By 2023, RE3 had fully transitioned from entrepreneurship to a focus on teaching and independent research. Her reflections reveal a profound journey of personal growth:

"What do I need to change in myself? To be less judgmental, to be a better person, and then free myself from those things. It makes you more authentic and content with who you are. It's a journey to get there, and it's an ongoing journey."

Her work mentoring Palestinian artists and teaching functional skills exemplifies a form of social entrepreneurship grounded in education. While she no longer identifies as an entrepreneur, her contributions to her community reflect the essence of entrepreneurial impact.

Reflections on Fear, Growth, and Authenticity

RE3's journey illustrates the interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of entrepreneurship. Her decision to prioritise education and spirituality over business creation reflects her adapted ambition to effect change through familiar and meaningful channels. Reflecting on her

path, she emphasised the importance of authenticity:

"I am much more confident in who I am. Still, it's a challenge."

Her experience underscores that entrepreneurship is not the only pathway to empowerment. By redirecting her efforts, RE3 demonstrates the transformative potential of aligning one's goals with personal values and lived realities.

6.5.4 Case Study of female refugee 4 (Coded as RE4)

RE4, a Christian Syrian refugee, resides in a cathedral town in the southeast of England. Having moved to the UK six years ago, she lives in shared accommodation with her husband and children. Her aspirations are deeply influenced by her passion for Syrian cooking and her desire to support her family. Despite systemic and personal challenges, RE4 remains committed to her entrepreneurial ambitions while navigating significant language and cultural barriers.

Initial Ambitions and Early Challenges (2019-2020)

RE4 joined the pilot study in 2019 as a mentee in the early start-up phase of her food truck business. Her aspirations were motivated by a desire to create an independent source of income while supporting her husband, who was running a taxi business:

"I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business soon. He has done a lot, and I know how tired he is."

Her participation in the focus group and subsequent workshops demonstrated her diligence and enthusiasm. However, RE4 encountered significant challenges when formalising her business, primarily due to her limited English proficiency. These barriers hindered her ability to complete the necessary paperwork and obtain the hygiene certification required for her food truck. She reflected on the difficulties:

"I just want to know how to start from scratch. I don't know how to take that first step."

Despite these setbacks, RE4's interactions with mentors and peers, including RE1, helped her gain insights into the food business. She drew inspiration from examples of other refugee women:

"On Facebook, I saw a refugee woman from Syria who went to Germany and started a new business. I felt inspired by this."

Building Social Capital and Confronting Barriers (2020-2021)

Throughout this period, RE4 worked to build her network and develop her skills. She connected with individuals in the food industry and sought opportunities to improve her social capital. Her determination to overcome language barriers remained a central focus. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought additional challenges. Contracting long COVID further delayed her entrepreneurial plans, forcing her to put her business aspirations on hold.

While claiming universal credit, RE4 reflected on her struggles and aspirations:

"It's really difficult to get a job. If I was to start my business, I would be able to run it myself. I want to be my own boss, to be in control of what I do."

Despite these challenges, she remained focused on her long-term goal of sharing her skills and knowledge through her cooking:

"I hope they would like it mainly in terms of Afghani cooking. The things we make are very beautiful, and we can make and sell them for more."

Adaptation and Strategic Decisions (2022-2024)

By 2022, RE4 had made the pragmatic decision to work for an established food business. This shift allowed her to build her skills, gain experience, and improve her spoken English while maintaining her goal of eventually starting her own venture:

"I realised that until I could overcome these barriers, I needed to work for someone already doing it, so I could learn and improve my skills."

Her decision to pursue formal employment was not a deviation from her entrepreneurial ambitions but a strategic step towards achieving them. Working in a customer-facing role helped her enhance her language proficiency and gain practical experience in the food industry.

Reflecting on her journey, she acknowledged the ongoing nature of her learning process and the importance of perseverance:

"When you work for yourself, you're more independent, a more powerful you. You make your own plan."

Resilience and Future Aspirations

RE4's journey highlights the complexities of navigating systemic barriers while pursuing entrepreneurial aspirations as a refugee. Her decision to temporarily step back from entrepreneurship to build skills and social capital reflects her resilience and strategic thinking. By leveraging her experiences, RE4 continues to work towards her long-term goal of creating a business that not only supports her family but also empowers others in her community.

Chapter 6 Summary

This chapter delved into the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women as they navigate the liminal space of new venture creation, providing a comprehensive analysis through the triad of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. The interplay of these dimensions was explored within the temporal framework of early, developmental, and later entrepreneurial stages, highlighting how identity formation, personal growth, and external challenges shape their entrepreneurial journeys.

Initially, the chapter examined cognitive aspects, focusing on the internal struggles and societal perceptions that influence the participants' understanding of themselves as entrepreneurs. The narratives demonstrate how deeply ingrained labels, and cultural narratives intersect with financial constraints, gendered expectations, and systemic barriers, shaping the cognitive dynamics of their entrepreneurial mindset. The chapter then transitions to the emotional aspects, presenting how

emotions such as guilt, fear, and empowerment interact with systemic inequities and personal aspirations. It highlights the emotional challenges faced at different stages of the entrepreneurial process and the resilience these women develop through community connections and shared experiences.

Finally, the behavioural dimensions underscore the proactive steps taken by refugee women to assert agency and redefine societal norms. These actions reflect an ongoing negotiation between personal autonomy and external pressures, illustrating a dynamic behavioural resilience that adapts to evolving circumstances. Through these analyses, the chapter presents a complex understanding of how refugee women entrepreneurs navigate the interconnected dimensions of cognition, emotion, and behaviour within the liminal space of entrepreneurship. The findings underscore the iterative and adaptive nature of their entrepreneurial journeys, offering valuable insights into the complexity of marginalised entrepreneurship.

Chapter 7 builds on the analysis in Chapter 6 by critically engaging with the research findings through the conceptual framework developed earlier. It examines how refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset in liminal spaces across three dimensions: as subjects of change, through processes of change, and as agents of change.

The chapter refines the conceptual framework by integrating empirical findings, highlighting individual (internal) and socius (external) determinants of refugee entrepreneurship. These insights advance theoretical debates on systemic barriers, cultural constraints, and entrepreneurial resilience within the broader gendered entrepreneurship literature.

It introduces the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*, showcasing their iterative, non-linear nature. By connecting these ideas to refugee women's narratives, the chapter challenges traditional entrepreneurial models and offers new perspectives on systemic barriers shaping entrepreneurial trajectories.

Finally, Chapter 7 positions the findings as significant contributions to gendered entrepreneurship studies, advancing understanding of how individual agency interacts with systemic inequalities and offering insights into adaptive entrepreneurial pathways for marginalised populations.

Chapter 7 Findings

7.1 Introduction

This chapter critically examines the research findings through the lens of the conceptual framework developed earlier, addressing the research question: *How do refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset in the liminal space, in three dimensions: as a subject of change, through a process of change, and as an agent of change?* By integrating the findings with the existing literature and conceptual framework, the discussion identifies both similarities and distinctions, while revealing distinctive factors that contribute to advancing knowledge in gendered entrepreneurship studies.

The discussion begins with an analysis of how the findings develop the conceptual framework. It focuses on the Socius (external) and Individual (internal) determinants of refugee entrepreneurship, unpacking key themes such as power dynamics, representation, marginalisation, subjectivity, and intersectionality. These findings refine the conceptual framework by embedding cognitive, emotional, and behavioural insights into the understanding of entrepreneurial journeys in liminal spaces. By connecting these narratives with the conceptual framework, this section highlights how the empirical data contributes to theoretical advancement.

The chapter then explores the distinctive factors revealed within each dimension of the liminal space: as a *subject of change*, through a *process of change*, and as an *agent of change*. These factors include capability barriers, cultural constraints, funding challenges, and emotional struggles such as fear, guilt, and societal expectations. The narratives demonstrate how these factors intersect with systemic barriers and challenge traditional entrepreneurial models, offering a nuanced perspective on the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women. This exploration underscores how cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions are deeply entangled with systemic inequalities, shaping the entrepreneurial mindset in complex ways.

Finally, the chapter introduces the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*. These concepts emphasise the iterative nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial pathways, disrupting the linear models of entrepreneurship often presented in the literature. By illustrating how refugee women navigate recurring phases of recalibration, resource-building, and re-engagement with entrepreneurial activities, the findings present a dynamic understanding of how systemic barriers shape entrepreneurial trajectories. These adaptive strategies highlight both the resilience and structural constraints faced by refugee women as they move between agency and subjection in their entrepreneurial journeys.

This chapter positions the findings as a significant contribution to the field of gendered entrepreneurship studies, advancing understanding of how refugee women navigate the entrepreneurial mindset within the liminal space. By analysing their narratives through the dimensions of *subject*, *process*, and *agent*, this chapter expands on theoretical debates and provides a richer understanding of the dynamic interplay between individual agency and systemic barriers. Through these discussions, the findings challenge conventional entrepreneurial frameworks and offer new insights into the iterative, adaptive nature of entrepreneurial pathways for marginalised populations.

7.2 How do the findings develop the conceptual framework?

The conceptual framework (Figure 23, p.403) was grounded in existing literature, which highlighted both Socius (External) and Individual (Internal) determinants influencing refugee entrepreneurship. Externally, the framework identified factors such as the host country, opportunity structures, push and pull and government policy. Internally, it looked at demographics, as well as human and social capital.

To integrate the research findings into this framework, narratives were first categorised based on the aforementioned factors. Through Derridean deconstruction and FPDA, themes such as power dynamics, subjectivity, representation, marginalisation and intersectionality, which emerged from the

literature were brought forth from the narratives. These conceptual components offered a refined understanding of the narratives, including biases and assumptions.

Next, a further layer of analysis was added by viewing the narratives through the lens of the entrepreneurial mindset, specifically within the context of the '*liminal space*'. This brought cognitive, emotional, and behavioural insights into the framework.

In the initial conceptual framework (Figure 8, p.115), the research began by identifying the overarching idea of the liminal space as the contextual setting where the entrepreneurial mindset of an individual occurs. The framework was conceptualised from the literature and centred on defining and understanding the liminal space. Inputs, such as demographics, human capital, and social capital, feed into this space, and through a dynamic process, an output emerges, which could manifest as entrepreneurial actions.

The study then focused on the Female Refugee, aiming to understand the entrepreneurial mindset through the liminal phases of separation (*subject of change*), transition (*process of change*), and incorporation (*agent of change*) (Figure 10, p.132). This refined framework (Figure 12, p.136) deconstructed the three dimensions of change into cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects, offering a more detailed exploration of the process.

Exploring further into the complexities, the investigation identified *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* as critical concepts. *Cyclical entrepreneurship* reflects how refugee women entrepreneurs often transition back to formal employment after entrepreneurial endeavours, using such phases to recalibrate resources and strategies. *Resource regrouping* highlights this recalibration process, where individuals withdraw temporarily from entrepreneurship to accumulate essential financial, social, and human capital before re-engaging with entrepreneurial activities.

The analytical framework (Figure 23, p. 402) was developed to address Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) influences on the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women. This framework

incorporates distinctive factors that shape entrepreneurial trajectories, including systemic barriers and opportunities such as funding availability, cultural expectations, and the exhaustion of viable options. The findings also acknowledged the non-linear nature of these pathways, which include possibilities of transitions into unemployment, formal employment, or renewed entrepreneurial activities. By recognising these adaptive strategies, the study underscores the significance of understanding refugee women entrepreneurs' journeys as dynamic and iterative rather than linear.

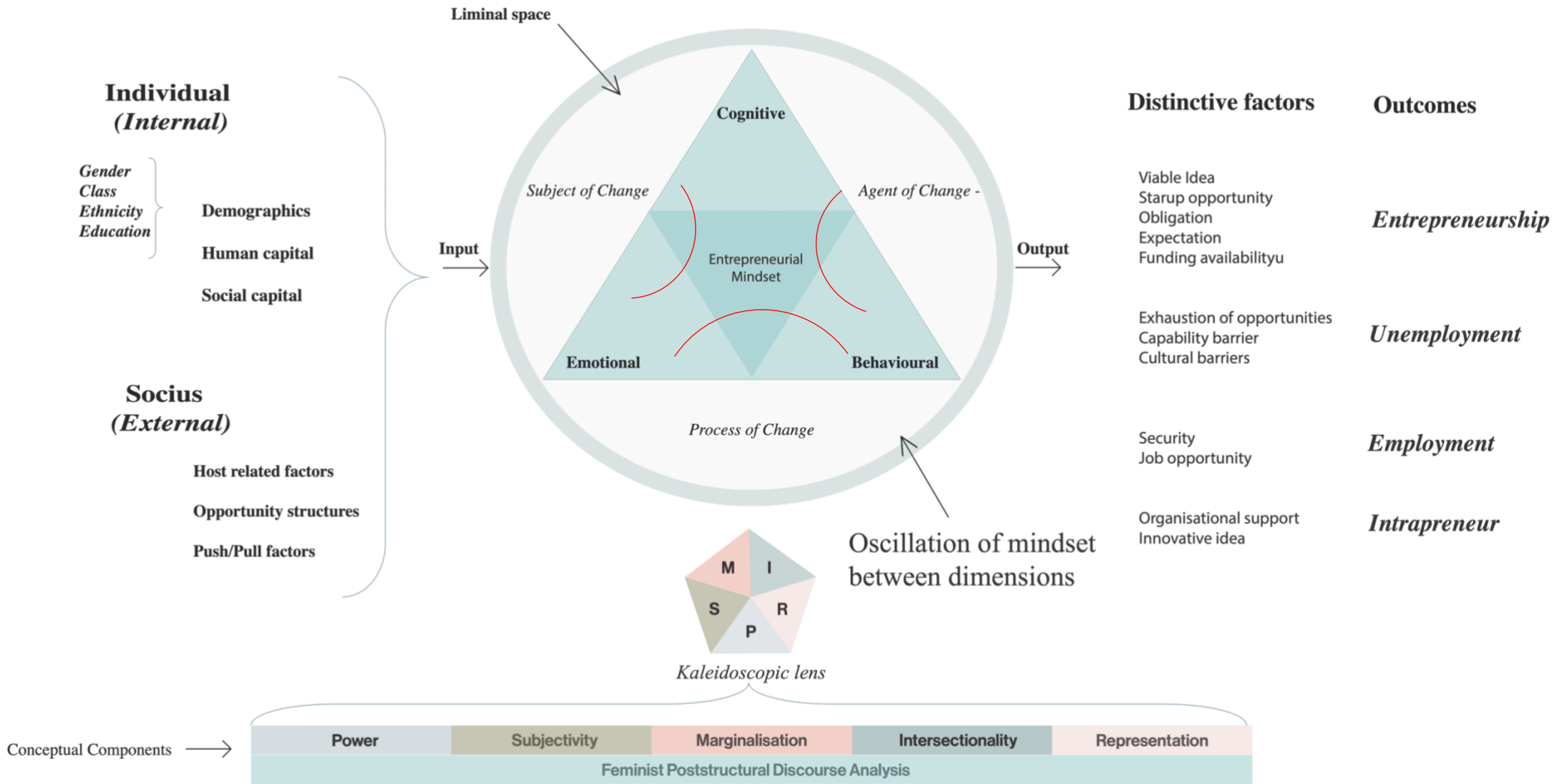


Figure 23. *Conceptual Framework: The Entrepreneurial Mindset of the Refugee Woman Entrepreneur in the Liminal Space.* (Author's own)

7.3 Synthesising the findings with the literature

Socius/External Factors

Host Country

Both the literature and the findings highlight that refugees face challenges and barriers in starting a business in a new country. This includes access to physical resources, discrimination, lack of access to resources, limited social networks, and societal expectations (Turner, 2010 as cited by Kwong et al., 2019). Correspondingly, the recent findings underscore similar sentiments with narratives such as *'The expectation that I would come...'*, suggesting that lived experiences resonate with the documented academic discourse.

Refugees are not merely passive receivers of aid but are potential contributors to the host nation's economic landscape. Scholarly research accentuates that they carry a repertoire of invaluable skills, showcasing resilience, adaptability, and a unique cultural acumen (Baranik, Hurst and Eby, 2018; Harima et al., 2021). These notions align with the findings where narratives like *'The assumption behind 'start a business'...'* echo the sentiment of refugees' potential contributions.

The idea of leveraging one's refugee identity, as mentioned in the findings, *'But if I say that I was a refugee...'* aligns with the literature's discussions around the shifting perceptions of refugees from seeing them as vulnerable victims to potential economic contributors (Easton-Calabria and Omata, 2018).

Opportunity Structures

A critical aspect of the entrepreneurial journey for refugees is deconstructing dominant narratives around money; as one stated, *'for me, entrepreneurship is always related to money.'* Steyaert and Katz (2004) suggest that entrepreneurship transcends just economic gain; it is about creating value, which may or may not always be financial.

The reality faced by refugee entrepreneurs, particularly women, often hinges on financial constraints. One stated, *'It's been really hard to get funding... I'm living paycheque to paycheque.'* This sentiment underscores the challenges highlighted by (Fong, 2007; Rashid, 2019; de Lange et al, 2021) regarding accessing capital in traditional entrepreneurial environments. The constraints are even more pronounced for female refugee entrepreneurs. The challenge of navigating investor biases and accessing funding was evident, *'I'm having conversations with investors, but because they're not [... she is]raising Angel investment.'* This resonates with Verduijin and Essers's (2013) work on the intersectional barriers faced by marginalised entrepreneurs. Many refugee entrepreneurs find themselves balancing their entrepreneurial ventures with stable income sources, a sentiment echoed by one refugee, *'I have a full-time job that pays for my bills.'* This dual pursuit underscores the challenges highlighted in Embiricos' (2020) work on barriers to self reliance.

The challenges faced by refugee women in entrepreneurship align with existing research. Their struggles to access and utilise opportunity structures reflect wider trends documented in academic studies (Kloosterman, 2010; Barberis and Solano, 2018). The consistency between the findings and previous research emphasises the need to address these barriers.

Distinctive to this study on female refugee women, while opportunity structures encompass a broad range of factors, financial opportunities emerged as a particularly significant finding. This suggests that, for refugee women, barriers to entrepreneurship are not solely defined by access to knowledge, networks, or societal support but also critically hinge on the availability of financial resources and opportunities. Moreover, their ability to capitalise on these opportunity structures is paramount to their success in entrepreneurial endeavours (Kuratko and Morris, 2018).

Within the conceptual framework, this discovery repositions financial constraints from a mere subcategory under opportunity structures to a distinctive factor directly influencing

entrepreneurial actualisation for refugee women. This adjustment underscores the weight of financial challenges in their entrepreneurial journey, calling for greater emphasis and solutions tailored to address this specific barrier.

Push and Pull

The concept of push and pull factors, acting as both opportunities and barriers to entrepreneurship, has been extensively discussed in the literature. Scholars such as Shneikat and Alrawadieh (2019), Zighan (2021), Mehtap and Al-Saidi (2019), Desai, Naudé and Stel (2021), Mawson and Kasem (2019), and Alrawadieh, Karayilan, and Cetin (2019) have all contributed significantly to this discourse.

RE2 expressed sentiments such as, *'I came from an unprivileged background,'* and *'We never got the support from our countries we hoped for.'* These quotes align with the literature by Desai, Naudé and Stel (2020). They mention that refugees are not primarily moving for economic reasons, but their enforced movement plays a significant role in their choice of economic activity. These choices manifest as obligations, often felt in the host country setting. The feelings of obligation to continue and exceed expectations echo the influence of *'push'* and *'pull'* dynamics present within the host country.

RE4 stated, *'I don't want to just take. I want to be productive.'* This mirrors the findings of Bikorimana and Nziku (2023). Their research indicates that necessity entrepreneurs, like refugees, are driven to establish ventures due to a lack of employment opportunities in the labour market and the inherent desire to contribute and survive.

The narrative about everyone expecting success and the pressure that accompanies that expectation can be traced back to power dynamics highlighted in Desai, Naudé and Stel's (2020) work. The control dominant groups exert over resources, like funding and mentorship, can lead to heightened expectations and pressure on refugee entrepreneurs, especially women.

'At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it, yeah. So even with the business that I have at the moment, I keep trying to tell people or referring to it as a project because I feel like it's something on the side that I do.' This echoes Gower et al.'s (2022) findings. They found that negative stereotypes and prejudices against refugee women can lead to barriers like lack of access to capital, lack of peer support, and general difficulties in turning ideas into successful businesses.

Government Policy

Government policy, as a reflection of UK priorities and values, exerts a significant influence on the experiences and outcomes of female refugee entrepreneurs. Through an analysis of selected sections from the Nationality and Borders Bill 2021 employing the methodologies of text deconstruction and feminist poststructural discourse analysis (FPDA), multiple insights have emerged. These insights, centred on themes of power dynamics, subjectivity, representation, intersectionality and marginalisation unveil the depth and complexity of government policy's impact on this particular group. The bill's provisions, although framed in the language of national security and order, carry significant implications for the agency, rights, and opportunities of female refugee entrepreneurs.

The EU's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan (European Economic and Social Committee, 2020) aims to foster start-up potential by identifying best practices in the entrepreneurial realm. Simultaneously, the UK's Nationality and Borders Act (2022) stands as a testament to the challenges faced by migrant and refugee entrepreneurs on a national level. The Act has drawn significant attention due to its tight provisions for granting asylum, notably affecting refugee women.

Jordan (2018) aptly points out the contrast between the EU's goals and national policies that seem to challenge these objectives. The Nationality and Borders Act 2022, which aims to deter illegal entry and refine asylum processes, inadvertently impacts the perception and role of refugee entrepreneurs in the community.

In the contemporary neoliberal era, there's a growing emphasis on empowering refugees. However, scholars like Loescher (2001) and Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) underscore challenges rooted in the neoliberal framework, including the limited legal avenues for refugees to work. RE1's remark, *'We won't be seeing any brown refugee entrepreneurs anymore,'* encapsulate these multifaceted challenges. It points to societal structures and policies, such as the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, that hinder refugees, especially those from regions like the Middle East and Africa.

The Act's controversial provisions, such as offshoring and detaining asylum seekers, have a heightened impact on refugee women. These women often flee from circumstances like gender-based violence and forced marriages, and the Act's provisions can exacerbate their vulnerabilities. The trauma of such policies can be amplified for those who've already encountered adversities in their home countries. Historically, refugees have demonstrated entrepreneurial resilience in host countries. However, the Act has shifted the conceptual framework regarding government policy's influence on entrepreneurial outcomes. While previously acknowledged as an indirect factor, the Act has brought policy implications to the forefront of entrepreneurial discussions. This shift, coupled with barriers like access to capital, language issues, discrimination, and intricate business regulations, as noted by Cheung and Kwong (2017), pose heightened challenges for refugee entrepreneurs, particularly women.

Kloosterman et al. (1999) assert that government regulations play a pivotal role in shaping the opportunities for migrant entrepreneurs. The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 stands as a testament to this, potentially curtailing opportunities for refugee entrepreneurs in the UK. Further complicating the landscape is the criticism from global bodies. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has voiced concerns about the UK's migration stance, indicating that the Act could potentially breach international law, especially in the treatment of women and children.

Individual/Internal Factors

Demographics

Gender

The literature, underscored by studies from Potocky-Tripodi (2003), Khawaja and Hebbani (2018), and Lee et al. (2020), identify demographic characteristics, predominantly gender, as significant determinants in obtaining and maintaining employment. Specifically, evidence suggests that refugee women encounter greater obstacles in securing jobs compared to their male counterparts (as seen in studies by Bloch, 2008; Ivlevs and Veliziotis 2018; Khawaja and Hebbani, 2018; Knappert et al. 2018; Lee et al., 2020). Such disparities arise from a combination of limited career histories, systemic discrimination, and deep-rooted gender-based prejudices. Often, these challenges are exacerbated due to inadequate childcare facilities or the apprehension of attending mixed gender classes (as documented by Casimiro et al. 2007, Lee et al, 2020, Street, Ng and Al Dajani, 2022). Illustratively, RE2 remarked [that this was], *‘One of the challenges I genuinely grappled with. Yet, I’m immensely fortunate to have had family support in childcare. I was employed during that period... which isn’t always accommodating for mothers.’*

Importantly, Romero and Valdez (2016) further elucidate that the impact of gender in these scenarios should not be viewed simply as an additive or secondary consequence. Instead, their work suggests a more complex interplay of gender dynamics, where gender significantly shapes the experiences and opportunities of refugee women uniquely and substantially. This perspective encourages a deeper examination of gender as a critical, rather than peripheral, factor in understanding the employment challenges faced by refugee women.

Human Capital

Ashourizadeh et al. (2014) underline the importance of an entrepreneur’s human capital in the realm of entrepreneurial success. This aligns with RE1’s statement, *‘I would never accept to be behind and be the person who is still figuring things out... being an entrepreneur means taking*

it slow, really doing your research and, you know, allocating all your resources and coming up with a strong plan before launching.’ This direct quote resonates with the idea that human capital is not just about formal education but also about the innate drive, diligence, and planning ability that can critically shape entrepreneurial outcomes.

Kwong et al. (2019) point out the growth of an entrepreneur’s human capital post-displacement, particularly through local know-how. This is echoed in the sentiment by RE4, *‘When you work for someone, you never upgrade yourself. But if you work for yourself, you’re more independent, a more powerful you. You make your own plan.’* This testimony mirrors the literature’s emphasis on the empowerment that can arise when displaced individuals tap into their human capital, transforming challenges into entrepreneurial advantages.

While Çifçi and Atsiz (2021) discuss the significance of language proficiency for refugee entrepreneurs, the findings broaden the scope to include personal growth and self-identity. RE3’s introspection, *‘What do I need to change myself?... I am much more confident in who I am. Still, it’s a challenge,’* illustrates that the journey of a refugee entrepreneur is as much about internal growth and confronting personal insecurities as it is about business.

The challenge of identity and societal perception also emerges from the literature. As RE1 revealed, *‘At this point... people still call me the chef... I’m like, I’m not a chef; I am a content creator,’* this highlights the intricate balance between personal identity, societal expectations, and professional roles, which could be seen as an extension of how human capital evolves and is perceived in different contexts.

Lastly, the personal traumas and challenges faced by refugee entrepreneurs add a layer of complexity to their human capital. As RE2 shared, *‘I had got divorced. I really had no confidence... I learned and I grew, and I built up my confidence.’* and, *‘I had such anxiety and panic attacks; I literally couldn’t do it...’* These testimonies underscore the idea that human

capital is not static; it's shaped by personal experiences, challenges, and the resilience displayed in overcoming them.

Social Capital

Social capital plays a pivotal role, particularly for refugees. RE2's statement, '*But exactly what do I do with the introduction? And those introductions are huge for me...*' aligns with Bizri's (2017) structural dimension of social capital, emphasising the importance of networks, ties, and configurations. This sentiment echoes the profound impact of networking in unlocking entrepreneurial avenues.

Furthermore, societal norms and self-confidence are significant factors in leveraging these networks. The interviewee's insight, '*...when you come from a community that doesn't have any confidence at all, is told to be quiet, don't stand out, just get on with it,*' resonates with the cognitive dimension of social capital as defined by Bizri (2017), emphasising shared narratives and values within communities.

Trust and reputation, hallmarks of the relational dimension, are highlighted when RE1 identifies as a '*food entrepreneur.*' This perception and its accompanying opportunities are a testament to the power of one's standing within the community.

The intent to '*share and spread my skills and knowledge to the others,*' as RE4 articulates, is reminiscent of Sandberg et al.'s (2019) emphasis on the importance of information exchange in entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, RE4's acknowledgement of encountering an '*inspiring*' refugee story on Facebook underscores the growing importance of digital platforms in shaping and harnessing social capital.

Lastly, the significance of meaningful relationships is evident in the remark, '*Because I'm a refugee, my friend shared with me the business opportunity.*' This reflects findings by Abebe and Moog (2018) and others, accentuating the role of bonding social capital through strong ties.

7.4 Distinctive Factors Revealed within each Dimension

This discussion will now delve further into the entrepreneurial mindset of refugee women entrepreneurs during the process of change, with a particular focus on the distinctive factors that emerged from the findings.

7.4.1 *Subject of Change*

Capability Barriers

Capability barriers, as found in this study, go beyond obstacles. They encapsulate a junction of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional barriers that influence entrepreneurial actions and decisions. Cognitive barriers are marked by challenges in perceiving opportunities, understanding markets, or conceptualising strategies (Savolainen, 2015, Harima, 2022; Lee, Viller and Vyas, 2023).

The narrative, when closely analysed, shines a light on a critical and often overlooked factor deterring entrepreneurship among marginalised communities: deeply embedded capability barriers (Villares-Varela, Ram and Jones, 2022). This factor stands apart in the myriad of challenges facing refugee women entrepreneurs.

The emphasis on introductions and networking is not just about knowing people but knowing how to leverage these connections. RE2's acknowledgement that '*those introductions are huge for me*' underscores that while she recognises the significance of these connections, she is unequipped to actualise their potential. This inequity in terms of social capital is a distinctive factor that deters many from embarking on or sustaining their entrepreneurial journey.

A hallmark deterrent in this narrative is the weight of unseized opportunities. Phrases like '*held onto so much guilt*' and '*you haven't taken it, run with it*' do not just depict missed opportunities but underline the mindset. This sense of wasted potential, accentuated by a lack of knowledge or direction, can deter individuals from persisting in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

The narrative's allusion to private schools and alumni networks reveals a salient point, the advantage of institutionalised mentorship and guidance that privileged classes receive. This structured training, which refugee communities often lack access to, emerges as a distinctive barrier to their entrepreneurial aspirations. Arguing that the absence of institutionalised mentorship is a capability barrier, not merely a social capital deficit, aligns with Sen's (1997) framework, where capabilities define an individual's freedom to achieve well-being. Access to private schooling transcends social networking to encompass the cultivation of entrepreneurial capabilities like innovation, business management, and market understanding. For refugee communities lacking this access, the gap in their entrepreneurial skill set is not just about missing connections but a deeper deficiency in the necessary capabilities for entrepreneurship (Lee and Wechtler (2023). This gap directly affects their ability to identify opportunities and mobilise resources central to entrepreneurial functions. Hence, the lack of structured mentorship fundamentally restricts individuals' entrepreneurial freedom and potential, marking a clear capability, not just social capital, barrier.

Beyond skill and resources, entrepreneurship thrives on confidence. The narrative's revelation that confidence is institutionally cultivated in privileged classes, '*you are taught to have confidence from day one*', while marginalised groups are '*told to be quiet, don't stand out,*' presents a profound capability barrier. This crisis of confidence, rooted in societal and cultural contexts, emerges as a significant deterrent. The battle is not merely against external barriers but against deep-seated societal norms and self-perceptions. Overcoming the mindset of being undervalued, as depicted by '*takes a lot of work to change your mindset,*' is a distinct challenge that many from marginalised communities battle with.

While several factors influence entrepreneurship, the capability barriers, as highlighted in this narrative, emerge as a critical and distinctive deterrent for refugee women entrepreneurs.

'Uh, because you know, we've come from an unprivileged background in a lot of sense... so it feels like I can't just stop here. I have to continue,' deeply resonates with poststructural dialogues surrounding knowledge's fluidity. This cognitive wrestle invites a re-evaluation and redefinition of entrepreneurial success and value, urging a broader societal introspection.

Whilst Mawson and Kasem (2019) shed light on the entrepreneur's perception of their own capabilities, this study's findings on capability barriers underscore the discrepancies that might exist between perceived and actual capabilities. Where Mawson and Kasem provide a surface, capability barriers delve deeper, revealing the deficits that could hinder entrepreneurial progress.

The triad of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional aspects (Shepherd and Saade, 2020) offered a comprehensive perspective on entrepreneurial readiness. However, mapped against capability barriers, there is an evident counter-narrative. Even with when equipped with mental traits like creativity and problem solving, emotional traits like stress management and empathy, action oriented traits like persistence and initiative, female refugee entrepreneurs can still face barriers, thus emphasising the dynamic nature of their entrepreneurial journey. Shepherd and Saade (2020) articulate the dimension of resilience, especially within adversity-prone landscapes like those faced by refugee women entrepreneurs. While they underscore the proactive building of resilience, capability barriers present the very challenges that resilience seeks to address (Yeshi, 2022). Essentially, without recognising and addressing these barriers, resilience remains incomplete.

The emphasis on capability barriers brings an intricate layer to entrepreneurial research. It acts as a mirror reflecting the multifaceted challenges entrepreneurs encounter, many of which might remain unarticulated in traditional entrepreneurial discourse. Comparatively, this factor accentuates gaps in the literature, presenting avenues for both scholars and practitioners to recalibrate entrepreneurial support mechanisms.

From a feminist poststructuralist perspective, this discussion is not just about the barriers to entrepreneurship but about contesting and renegotiating spaces of power, representation, and knowledge. It calls for a critical examination of deeply embedded structures and discourses that shape entrepreneurial identities, especially for refugee women.

Cultural barriers

The influence of cultural barriers on entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of refugee entrepreneurs, has been an area of burgeoning research interest. Various studies, (Harima, Freudenberg, and Halberstadt; 2019; Alrawadieh, Karayilan, and Cetin; 2019; Meister and Mauer; 2019) have highlighted how these barriers interplay with entrepreneurial aspirations and activities, impacting both the process and outcome of entrepreneurship endeavours.

One of the most striking features evident from this study's findings is the profound cultural interplay underpinning the emotions and cognitive processes associated with entrepreneurial intentions. The participant's reflection on the lack of Eritrean women role models in entrepreneurship vis-à-vis the entrepreneurial spirit of Somalian women is insightful. Such contrast reveals a deep-rooted cognitive process where individuals assess, compare, and seek comprehension of variances between cultural groups, and this indeed aligns with cognitive facets of the entrepreneurial mindset, including perception, problem-solving, and opportunity recognition. The statement, *'But I asked myself why are Eritrean women so afraid to try new things?'* captures this cognitive struggle and the inherent cultural nuances impacting entrepreneurial aspirations.

Further compounding the influence of culture, another participant's testimony underscores the mindset and cultural challenges: *'But when you come from a community that doesn't have any confidence at all, is told to be quiet, don't stand out, just get on with it, it takes a lot of work to change your mindset, to overcome those barriers to understand I have value that I can provide and give as well.'* This sentiment delves deep into the societal constructs and collective cultural

beliefs that mould individual perceptions, impacting not just entrepreneurial intentions but also self-worth and value.

The highlighted findings align well with the extant literature. Studies by Desai, Naudé, and Stel (2021); Shneikat and Alrawadieh (2019); and Yeshi, Harima, and Freiling (2022) have consistently highlighted the significance of cultural barriers in refugee entrepreneurship. These barriers range from societal expectations, traditional gender roles, and community norms to past traumas and societal perceptions of refugees.

The findings not only echo previous studies but also offer a distinctive understanding of the role of culture in the entrepreneurial mindset, especially among refugee populations. The rich narratives from the study participants spotlight the complex interlacing of cultural heritage, societal norms, and individual aspirations, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by refugee women entrepreneurs.

7.4.2 Process of Change

Funding Constraints

Financial constraints, when examined through the emotional entrepreneurial mindset, reveal a distinctive angle of understanding that goes beyond existing literature. While much of the current research concentrates on the tangible barriers due to limited funding (Easton-Calabria and Omata, 2016; Steenbrink, 2022), this study's emphasis on the emotional repercussions provides a refined layer to the narrative.

Freiling and Harima (2019) have indicated the stress and anxiety resulting from funding constraints, but the current study delves deeper, exposing the intricate web of emotions from self-doubt, feelings of exploitation, and inadequacy to resilience and adaptability, particularly among refugee women entrepreneurs. Such emotional layers are often overshadowed in conventional finance-focused discourses.

Notably, the intersection of gender, refugee status, and economic positionality, as highlighted by statements like *'I'm living paycheque to paycheque'* and *'offering my services for free when they shouldn't be'*, intensifies the emotional turmoil. Baluku et al. (2022) touch upon these intersections but rarely bridge the gap to their emotional implications on the entrepreneurial mindset. The emotional entrepreneurial mindset as a lens uncovers these implicit emotional dynamics, which traditional literature might overlook.

For instance, phrases such as *'Getting funding has been challenging, forcing me to invest my own money...'* depict not just an economic reality but an emotional battlefield. The societal pressures and inherent challenges of being a refugee compound these emotions, revealing the unique struggles of female refugee entrepreneurs, who find themselves at the nexus of societal prejudice and financial constraint. While the pain of economic hardship is universal, the emotional experiences, as this study emphasises, can be vastly different and multifaceted. Edwards et al. (2018) cite inadequate funding as a critical shortfall.

This study's focus on the emotional repercussions of financial constraints offers a fresh perspective, adding depth and breadth to the discourse. It bridges the gap between the tangible economic challenges and the intangible emotional barriers that female refugee entrepreneurs face. Such an approach invites scholars and policymakers to reconsider financial constraints not just as economic roadblocks but as intertwined with the emotional well-being of entrepreneurs.

Expectations, Obligation and Guilt

The challenges of guilt, obligation, and societal expectations are pervasive among women entrepreneurs, and the narratives of refugee women entrepreneurs introduce distinctive nuances that merit attention.

While scholars like Jamali (2009), Kuschel et al. (2019), and De Simone et al. (2022) have explored guilt in female entrepreneurship, their focus has predominantly revolved around work-family interference. This framing resonated in RE1's account: *'I don't really know what to do. Do*

I send money home and that means I can't move, or should I be selfish and stop sending money. They are getting old, my dad is sick and my mom...' This account vividly demonstrates the emotional turmoil of trying to balance personal entrepreneurial ambitions with familial obligations back home. It reveals the heightened intensity of such dilemmas for refugee women, who must grapple with transnational responsibilities.

Ahl's (2006) critique of focusing on individual solutions and overlooking extraneous variables becomes especially pertinent when examining the narratives of refugee women entrepreneurs. The weight of societal expectations can limit risk-taking and stifle innovation, crucial ingredients for entrepreneurial success. As one entrepreneur shared, *'You know, and you've been given this opportunity and you haven't taken it. Run with it.'* Such reflections underscore the paralysing effect of not meeting perceived standards.

Furthermore, societal roles and expectations can constrain refugee women entrepreneurs to specific niches or sectors, even if they desire to branch out. Being labelled as a chef when identifying as a content creator reveals the boxes they're often placed into. *'Oh yeah, (name removed) shit. They started expecting me to have all the answers... I'm not a chef I am a content creator.'* Such restrictive labelling and expectations also become evident when they are advised towards tangible products rather than services. As one entrepreneur reflected, *'So how is he able to turn that into money? We didn't know, so it seemed more practical for people who are trying to sell a product. As opposed to a service, so make things and we will help you sell.'* This not only hampers their growth but can also result in an identity crisis, further eroding their entrepreneurial confidence.

The obligation, particularly for refugee women entrepreneurs, can manifest in multifarious ways. The responsibility to provide financial support to families back home, as expressed in the dilemma of *'sending money home,'* presents a tangible obstacle to reinvesting in their business. Moreover, the pressure to conform to certain societal roles or meet mentors' expectations can

deter them from pursuing innovative paths. This is evident in the sentiment, *'I still to this day have guilt when I speak to (name removed) because... I haven't proved myself in terms of business.'* Adding to this constraint is the perception of their supporters. RE1 articulated, *'No, I would say just generally, like I had supporters, yes. But then even the few supporters that were there, they still kind of believed in me as (name removed) the food entrepreneur. Oh, let's help (name removed) by giving her opportunities with this food company.'* This illuminates how supporters, despite their positive intentions, can unintentionally impose their own visions on the entrepreneur. Being recognised for a particular role, in this case, as a *'food entrepreneur'*, while trying to transition or evolve into another, like content creation, can compound the internal and external challenges faced. Such feelings and perceptions can inhibit the bold moves often required in entrepreneurship.

Fear

The emotional landscape navigated by refugee women entrepreneurs manifests intricacies when viewed against the backdrop of existing literature on entrepreneurial emotion, particularly the emotion of fear. This research is pivotal in unearthing several distinct factors that enhance the understanding of female refugee entrepreneurial mindset. Cacciotti et al. (2016) pinpoint fear as a significant inhibitor in entrepreneurial pursuits, theorising its profound impact on decision-making processes. Evident from the narratives of refugee women entrepreneurs is the salience of this fear.

Expressions like *'I never gave it much thought because of fear'* and *'When you live with fear, you can never take risks'* poignantly encapsulate the paralysing implications of fear in entrepreneurial contexts. Aly, Audretsch, and Grimm (2021) outline the emotional challenges faced by entrepreneurs, notably during the nascent stages, ranging from self-doubt and work-life imbalance to pervasive anxiety. The testimonials from the participants in this study echo these sentiments. Phrases such as *'What do I need to change myself?'* underscore the emotional mindset within the liminal space.

Most literature, including insights from Carter et al. (2006), emphasises emotions such as fear of failure and the inherent challenges of start-ups. Carter et al. (2006) also posited that men, regardless of their education, generally felt more equipped for entrepreneurship and less daunted by fear than women. This study delves deeper, capturing the internal conflicts of the participants, exemplified by, *'I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment,'* and the candid exclamation, *'Screw you I don't care about your expectations, so it's just trying to manage that and also being a woman.'* These revelations accentuate the complex interplay of self-identity, societal norms, and entrepreneurial aspirations.

While this research aligns with prevalent academic narratives on fear in entrepreneurship, it significantly expands the dialogue. It introduces an enriched perspective, illuminating the confluence of culture, gender, and entrepreneurship and emphasising the unique challenges refugee women entrepreneurs confront.

7.4.3 Agent of Change

Exhaustion of opportunities

RE1 initially pursued her pop-up restaurant, but as her self-identification evolved, she remarked, *'But then that's not the first thing that I identify myself as; it would normally be the last thing. So, I would just say to people, yes, I mean I am a content creator.'* As her social media presence grew, so did external expectations, with many addressing her as a chef. She mused, *'People started expecting me to have all the answers and know all the tricks. But I'm not a chef; I am a content creator.'* With introspection, she stated, *'At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it. I feel it's more a side project.'* Her ambition to sustain the pop-up restaurant dwindled, and she channelled her passion into content creation on her YouTube channel while also working full-time for a government department.

RE2 transitioned her energy and skills into a pivotal role within a charity, leveraging her experiences to aid a broader cause.

RE3, confronted with the realities of her entrepreneurial dream, redirected her journey and found her calling as a functional skills teacher. Her experience further illuminates the challenges faced by female refugees on their entrepreneurial journeys. While some of her peers dreamed of businesses and pursued entrepreneurial aspirations, RE3's path was distinctly shaped by her prioritisation of education. She recalls *'I was more focused on education, never thought of, or I did think of having my own business. But I never gave it much thought because of fear.'*

This apprehension, deeply rooted in her experiences and traumas, became a formidable barrier to taking risks, a fundamental element of entrepreneurship. She reflects, *'When you live with fear, you can never take risks. You can never improve.'*

However, RE3's introspection did not stop at recognising her fears. She embarked on a journey of self-awareness and personal growth. Questioning her own internal barriers, she pondered, *'What do I need to change myself?'* The answer lay in confronting her judgments and biases. *'To be less judgemental to be a better person and then freeing myself from those things makes you be a bit more authentic and content with who you are. Not to care of what someone else thinks of you. It is very liberating; that's a journey to get there,..'* Yet, she acknowledges the complexity of this transformative journey, and its ongoing nature. *'I am not there fully, but I am much more confident in who I am. Still, it's a challenge.'*

RE3's narrative underscores the internal struggles entangled with external challenges. For some, the journey may not result in a tangible business but evolves into a profound quest for self-discovery and empowerment. Her story reiterates that the entrepreneurial mindset, in its essence, is as much about confronting and overcoming personal barriers as it is about business ventures.

In contrast, RE4, who once dreamed of launching her own food truck, now works with her husband, managing a food truck owned by a Syrian businessman. Her struggle with learning the language, exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic and a long-term illness meant she was not able to pursue her entrepreneurial dreams.

These individual trajectories underscore the complexities that female refugees face in entrepreneurship. Their journey often intersects with challenges related to displacement and gender-specific barriers, including societal prejudices, cultural biases, and resource constraints, coupled with internal struggles like past traumas and cultural adaptation pressures. This often leads to a sense that their entrepreneurial aspirations could be attainable. Romero and Valdez (2016) complement this view, highlighting that female refugees' experiences in starting and managing businesses need to be uniform. They point out that these experiences are intricately tied to gender, impacting everything from the initial decision to start a business to the barriers they face and their definitions of success. This insight underlines the significant role gender plays in shaping the entrepreneurial pathways of these women, suggesting a layered understanding of their challenges and resilience in the face of adversity.

Yet, the essence of entrepreneurship is not solely in business success. Its true value may lie in the transformative journey it offers. RE2's story is a testament to this transformative power. Initially held back by self-doubt and anxiety, *'I had no confidence. I remember volunteering for a race equality charity. I couldn't do the task given to me to make phone calls. I physically couldn't make the phone call; I was so nervous.'* her later reflections *'Throughout my professional career and entrepreneurial journey, I've had the opportunity to take part in various conferences, pitch competitions, and events, each fuelled by my passion for refugee issues, women's empowerment, and sustainability and innovation.'* depict a confident individual advocating passionately for causes close to her heart, such as refugee issues, women's empowerment, and sustainability. Her journey underscores that while the entrepreneurial end-goal might not be achieved by all, the process can foster empowerment and resilience, invaluable traits that spill over into all facets of life.

Security

Economic security, a distinctive factor within the conceptual framework (see Figure 11), emerges as pivotal dictating the professional trajectories of refugee women. Specifically, it underpins their shift from entrepreneurial endeavours to seeking formal employment. Refugee women, attracted by the prospect of autonomy and potential prosperity, initially gravitate towards entrepreneurship. However, the hurdles they encounter, from capital constraints and diminished opportunities to capability barriers, make this journey increasingly challenging. The unpredictability associated with establishing a business, exacerbated under refugee status, contrasts sharply with the predictable nature of formal employment.

In the context of displacement, the allure of regular employment and a consistent paycheque becomes almost irresistible. Such stability is not merely financial; it imparts psychological security, grounding them amidst tumultuous circumstances. This is evident in the experiences of refugee women, such as RE2, who, despite nurturing entrepreneurial ambitions, chose steady employment to ensure immediate economic security.

Collins (2017) aptly notes that while entrepreneurship is a touted ideal, the real challenge for many refugees is securing a job. This sentiment echoes across various scholarly works, including Toivonen (2023), who highlights the complexities of economic vulnerability faced by refugees, accentuated by constraints like restricted employment avenues and limited access to capital (Bhagat, 2022). This academic consensus underscores a critical observation: while refugee assistance initiatives advocate for entrepreneurship, they often overlook the pressing economic insecurities that refugee women grapple with.

The shifting professional trajectories of refugee women, from entrepreneurial aspirations to prioritising employment, are not arbitrary. Economic security, as a distinctive factor within the conceptual framework, profoundly influences these decisions. As refugee women navigate the

labyrinth of economic challenges, the stability offered by formal employment becomes a beacon of hope, guiding their choices in a world marked by uncertainty.

Individual trajectories highlight the liminal spaces inhabited by refugee women, characterised by both exhaustion of opportunities and the pressing need for economic security. The concept of liminality represents a state of transition where individuals are in between established categories or stages of life. When examined in the context of refugee women's professional trajectories, both these dimensions play a significant role.

For instance, the term 'exhaustion of opportunities' isn't merely an external impediment but a deeply personal realisation. As demonstrated by the narratives of RE1, RE3, and RE4, the challenges aren't just about finding the right entrepreneurial opportunity but also about personal identity, confronting fears, and acknowledging limitations. RE1's shift from being a pop-up restaurant organiser to a content creator highlights how her evolving self-perception led to a re-evaluation of her entrepreneurial ambitions. Similarly, RE3's journey from aspiring businesswoman to educator underscores the personal barriers, such as fear, that can profoundly influence career trajectories. Meanwhile, RE4's challenges, ranging from language barriers to health issues, showcase how external circumstances can curtail entrepreneurial dreams.

In these narratives, the exhaustion of opportunities does not represent defeat. Instead, it underscores the resilience of these women in finding new avenues and reinventing themselves. Their stories highlight that the entrepreneurial spirit is not just about creating a business but about personal growth, resilience, and adaptability.

On the other hand, the dimension of economic security reflects a more pragmatic aspect of the liminal space. The unpredictable nature of entrepreneurship, especially for refugee women who already grapple with a host of challenges. The need for economic stability, both financial and psychological, often takes precedence over entrepreneurial dreams.

When categorised under the liminal dimension as agents of change, both exhaustion of opportunities and economic security offer a deeper understanding of the transitional phases experienced by refugee women. These phases are not linear but are intertwined with personal growth, societal challenges, and economic imperatives. Recognising them as such allows for a more nuanced understanding of the entrepreneurial journey, one that appreciates not just the destination but also the complexities of the journey itself.

7.5 Cyclical Entrepreneurship

This study introduces the concept of ‘*cyclical entrepreneurship*’ as a significant finding, capturing how refugee women navigate and adapt to periods of *resource regrouping* within their entrepreneurial journeys. Rather than viewing shifts away from active entrepreneurship as failures, the findings illustrate how these oscillations between entrepreneurship, employment, and regrouping are strategic adaptations, forming part of a broader, recurring entrepreneurial cycle.

Drawing directly on Al-Dajani and Marlow’s (2013) use of the term ‘cyclical’ in their framework for conceptualising empowerment in entrepreneurship, this study refines and extends the concept to describe the recurring and adaptive phases of entrepreneurial activity among refugee women. Al-Dajani and Marlow’s work identifies empowerment as a dynamic and evolving process, and this research builds on their terminology to illuminate how refugee women engage in entrepreneurial cycles shaped by structural and systemic constraints.

The concept of *cyclical entrepreneurship* is central to understanding the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women, who must navigate recurring phases of entrepreneurial activity and recalibration in response to systemic barriers. This study demonstrates how these women strategically transition between phases of venture creation and resource-building to sustain their entrepreneurial aspirations in the face of structural inequalities. The case of FE2 exemplifies this process.

The conceptual framework developed in this research (Figure 23, p.405) illustrates the pressures placed on refugee women by the interaction of individual factors, such as demographics, human capital, and social capital, with external structural forces, including opportunity structures, host-related factors, and systemic push/pull dynamics. These intersecting pressures shape the precarious context within which refugee women operate, often forcing them out of the liminal space of venture creation and into formal employment to regroup resources. The framework positions these oscillations as integral to understanding cyclical entrepreneurship, wherein refugee women must continuously adapt and recalibrate their strategies to navigate persistent structural barriers.

FE2's journey exemplifies this interplay between individual and socius factors. As a single mother, her demographic realities amplified her financial precarity, leaving her entirely reliant on personal resources to sustain her entrepreneurial activities:

"It's been really hard to get funding, so anything that I have invested in the business has been through my own money, so working and anything that I could spare over in terms of cash at the end of the month because literally in terms of my position being a single mother, I'm living paycheck to paycheck."

This precarious state reflects how refugee women are systematically excluded from formal funding networks, necessitating a recalibration of entrepreneurial activity. For FE2, this meant transitioning into formal employment as a strategic response to accumulate financial stability and professional networks. At the same time, her lack of access to elite entrepreneurial networks further exacerbated the challenges of sustaining a venture. Despite being introduced to a venture capitalist, she lacked the social and cultural capital to navigate these spaces effectively:

"But exactly what do I do with the introduction? And those introductions are huge for me. And I felt so much guilt, held onto so much guilt for a long time because I felt like I was not providing any value. You know, and you've been given this opportunity, and you haven't taken it. Run with it."

You know, like you're expected to do yes. But nobody's telling you what. What do you do and then, and how do you even maintain these?"

She contextualised these struggles further, reflecting on how systemic inequalities shape the entrepreneurial ecosystem:

"These people do it from a very young age. In going to your school, to your private schools, you're taught and you're leading the country you're taught, this is natural. The alumni of all these schools have rich people in all of these places."

Faced with these challenges, FE2 transitioned into formal employment, becoming the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of an Eritrean charity. This role enabled her to regroup financially and develop the professional skills and social capital necessary to return to entrepreneurial activity. As the conceptual framework highlights, employment in this context is not an endpoint but a recalibrative phase within the cyclical entrepreneurial process. FE2 described how this phase allowed her to rebuild her confidence:

"It takes a lot of work to change your mindset, to overcome those barriers to understand I have value that I can provide and give as well."

Eventually, FE2 returned to entrepreneurship, co-founding a consulting firm in the UAE. Her entrepreneurial journey underscores the cyclical nature of the process, wherein refugee women oscillate between phases of resource-building and venture creation as they contend with structural barriers and systemic constraints. The conceptual framework captures this recurring movement, emphasizing how refugee women must revisit liminal spaces repeatedly while engaging in recalibration strategies that involve financial, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural shifts.

The conceptual framework also shows how liminal spaces are not temporary or transitional phases, but recurring contexts shaped by systemic inequalities. For refugee women, these spaces demand continuous recalibration as they oscillate between agency and subjection.

While they may act as agents of change, their pathways are simultaneously shaped by external pressures that necessitate repeated resource-building phases, such as formal employment. In the case of FE2, her eventual re-entry into entrepreneurship was made possible by the financial stability, human capital, and professional networks she developed during her employment phase. However, the precariousness of her position as an entrepreneur persists, as systemic barriers continue to limit sustainability and access to resources.

This reconceptualisation of *cyclical entrepreneurship* shifts the focus from static or linear understandings of the entrepreneurial journey to a model that reflects ongoing interaction with structural barriers. Unlike traditional perspectives that treat liminality as a transitional state, this research shows how refugee women re-enter the liminal space of entrepreneurship repeatedly, often compelled by systemic constraints to oscillate between entrepreneurial activity and periods of recalibration.

Furthermore, this study highlights the dual dimensions of agency and subjectivity within cyclical entrepreneurship. Refugee women demonstrate their ability to act as agents of change, yet their entrepreneurial pathways are simultaneously shaped by systemic barriers and power dynamics. This oscillation between agency and subjection underscores the complexity of navigating liminal spaces, where entrepreneurs constantly recalibrate their strategies in response to external pressures.

During the exploration of this concept, I came across Koellinger and Thurik's (2012; Thurik, 2015; van der Zwan and Thurik, 2017) work, which discusses the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic cycles. While they did not explicitly use the term *cyclical entrepreneurship*, their discussions of economic cycles provided some context that supported the framing of these findings. This broader perspective highlighted how power dynamics within gendered contexts interacted with economic cycles, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how refugee women entrepreneurs navigated and transformed liminal periods.

Finally, by extending Al-Dajani and Marlow's (2013) term 'cyclical' and integrating it with insights from the conceptual framework, this research highlights the iterative and dynamic processes that characterise refugee women's cyclical entrepreneurial. These findings disrupt traditional, linear models of entrepreneurship, emphasising the interplay between individual and socius factors as refugee women adapt their strategies within highly constrained environments.

7.5.1 Resource Regrouping

Resource regrouping emerges as a pivotal concept within cyclical entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women, capturing the strategic recalibration periods they undertake in response to systemic barriers. These phases, often characterised by temporary withdrawals from entrepreneurial activities, are traditionally framed as adaptive strategies enabling the accumulation of financial, social, and human capital essential for future entrepreneurial endeavours. This framing positions regrouping as an integral component of a cyclical entrepreneurial process, challenging linear models of entrepreneurial progression that dominate traditional narratives. However, upon closer examination, the concept of *resource regrouping* reveals a more troubling reality. While these phases may appear as strategic recalibrations, they frequently reflect systemic failures that compel refugee women to oscillate between precarious entrepreneurial ventures and formal employment. The narrative of resilience or adaptability often masks the deeper structural inequalities that necessitate these regrouping phases, exposing the entrenched inequities embedded within entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The longitudinal nature of this analysis study uncovers the multilayered nature of resource regrouping, which reflects a confluence of economic necessity, skill development, and identity recalibration. Participants often relied on formal employment as a means to stabilise their economic situation, providing a critical foundation for re-engagement with entrepreneurial activities. One participant, RE4, attempted twice to obtain a hygiene certificate as a prerequisite for starting her own food truck but was unable to do so due to language barriers and complications

arising from her limited English proficiency. Her efforts were further hindered by the long-term effects of COVID-19, which left her unable to sustain progress toward her goal of business ownership. Consequently, the decision to transition into working in a Syrian food truck became inevitable. This move provided a source of steady income and allowed her to continue developing her practical skills and experience, albeit under conditions shaped more by necessity than by choice. This decision highlights how formal employment often serves as a temporary stabilising mechanism rather than a chosen path, reflecting the precarious nature of entrepreneurial ventures. RE3 was unable to fulfil her entrepreneurial aspirations due to the enduring impact of her refugee experience. The psychological burden of displacement, compounded by recurring episodes of deep depression, constrained her ability to pursue business ownership. Instead, she transitioned into teaching functional skills and undertaking sessional lecturing roles at a university in London. This period marked an attempt to stabilise her professional life through the utilisation of her academic qualifications, reflecting a form of human capital deployment. During this regrouping phase, she also redirected her focus toward spiritual growth and academic engagement, culminating in the publication of a scholarly paper. These actions represent a strategic recalibration of her resources and priorities, with the intention of eventually returning to her entrepreneurial goals once she has re-established a sense of stability and clarity.

The recalibration of entrepreneurial identity during these regrouping phases further underscores the tensions within this concept. These periods, ostensibly framed as opportunities for self-reflection and strategy refinement, often expose the internalisation of structural failures. Participants described shifts in their self-perception that reflect broader societal expectations of stability and conformity, such as RE1's redefinition of herself from a "serial entrepreneur" to a "So just like so many artists out there, I have a full time job that that pays for my bills." This evolution of identity highlights the fluidity of entrepreneurial self-conception within the liminal space, but it also illustrates how systemic constraints shape these recalibrations.

Specifically, the concept of *resource regrouping* emerged as a strategic response, where individual entrepreneurs adapted to both personal and structural constraints. The cases revealed instances where refugee women, initially acting as agents of change, encountered systemic hurdles that necessitated resource regrouping, focusing on recalibration and resource accumulation rather than pursuing uncertain entrepreneurial actions immediately.

This integration allowed for a clearer exploration of the mechanisms underlying gendered entrepreneurial adaptation, highlighting how individual agency and structural forces combined to shape specific entrepreneurial paths for refugee women.

The findings of this research advance two interconnected concepts that challenge existing assumptions in refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literature: *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*. Rather than celebrating these patterns as evidence of resilience or adaptability, these concepts expose the systemic failures and structural inequalities that compel marginalised entrepreneurs into perpetual cycles of adaptation.

Cyclical entrepreneurship captures how refugee women are forced to navigate between entrepreneurial activity and formal employment due to persistent structural barriers.

While traditional entrepreneurship models assume linear progression, this concept reveals the reality of entrepreneurship under systemic constraints, a pattern of repeated attempts, retreats, and returns that reflects the precarity of marginalised positions rather than genuine choice or agency. This oscillation between entrepreneurial ventures and employment represents not strategic adaptation but rather the inevitable response to entrenched structural inequalities that render sustained entrepreneurial engagement untenable.

Resource regrouping emerges as the mechanism through which refugee women temporarily withdraw from entrepreneurial activities to accumulate critical resources before re-engaging with entrepreneurship. While conventional narratives frame such withdrawals as failures, this concept exposes how these periods of disengagement reflect systemic barriers rather

than individual shortcomings. The need for constant *resource regrouping* reveals the fundamental instability of entrepreneurship as a pathway for marginalised groups, where entrepreneurial ambition becomes an exhausting negotiation with systems that remain indifferent to their precarity.

These concepts advance theoretical understanding by challenging celebratory narratives that frame entrepreneurship as inherently empowering while obscuring the structural inequalities that necessitate such adaptations. Rather than viewing *cyclical* patterns and *resource regrouping* as evidence of entrepreneurial innovation, these concepts expose how systemic failures force refugee women entrepreneurs into perpetual cycles of effort and withdrawal, their aspirations continuously deferred by the very systems meant to support them.

Chapter 8 provides a comprehensive discussion of these concepts, examining their theoretical implications for both refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literature. The chapter critically analyses entrepreneurship as a proposed solution for refugee economic integration, explores how these concepts challenge existing assumptions in the field, and considers their implications for policy and practice. Through this analysis, the discussion demonstrates how these findings advance understanding of entrepreneurial agency, the structure agency dynamic, and the intersectional challenges faced by refugee women entrepreneurs.

Chapter 7 Summary

This chapter examined how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset across three key dimensions: as subjects of change, through processes of change, and as agents of change. Through a four-year ethno-case study methodology combining Derridean deconstruction and Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA), the analysis revealed distinctive factors within each dimension. As subjects of change, capability barriers and cultural barriers emerged as critical constraints. The process of change dimension highlighted funding constraints, expectations, obligations, guilt, and fear as key factors influencing entrepreneurial engagement. Within the agent of change dimension, the exhaustion of opportunities and need for economic security emerged as decisive factors driving entrepreneurial decisions.

The chapter introduced two interconnected theoretical concepts that challenge existing assumptions in refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literature: *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*. *Cyclical entrepreneurship* captures how refugee women navigate between entrepreneurial activity and formal employment due to persistent structural barriers. This pattern reveals entrepreneurship under systemic constraints as a series of attempts, retreats, and returns that reflects the precarity of refugee women's positions rather than strategic choice. *Resource regrouping* emerged as the mechanism through which refugee women temporarily withdraw from entrepreneurial activities to accumulate critical resources before re-engaging with entrepreneurship. While often framed as adaptive strategy, these concepts expose how systemic failures compel refugee women entrepreneurs into perpetual cycles of adaptation.

Chapter 8 builds on these findings by first critiquing entrepreneurship as a universal solution for refugee economic integration. The discussion examines how entrepreneurship often reinforces structural inequalities and gendered expectations rather than addressing systemic barriers. The chapter then details the theoretical and methodological contributions of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*, examining their implications for both scholarly

understanding and practical implementation. Through this analysis, Chapter 8 demonstrates how these findings advance understanding of entrepreneurial agency, the structure/agency dynamic, and intersectional challenges faced by refugee women entrepreneurs. The chapter concludes with recommendations for policy and practice, considering how support structures can better align with refugee women's actual experiences and needs, while acknowledging research limitations and suggesting directions for future investigation.

Chapter 8 Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter synthesises the findings from a four-year ethno-case study examining how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial mindset in the liminal space across three dimensions: as subjects of change, through processes of change, and as agents of change. The research advances significant theoretical contributions to both refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship literatures, while introducing methodological innovations in qualitative research (Ahl, 2006; Baxter, 2016; Marlow, 2020).

This chapter foregrounds two key concepts *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*, that offer new perspectives on assumptions in refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literatures. These concepts challenge dominant narratives in refugee entrepreneurship by advancing longstanding conversations about necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurship. They illustrate how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial pathways not solely through economic compulsion but by exercising adaptive agency within systemic constraints. Additionally, this research advances the structure/agency debate by demonstrating how refugee women strategically adapt to structural barriers while leveraging entrepreneurial opportunities in constrained contexts. Finally, the findings reconceptualise what it means to act entrepreneurially, particularly for marginalised women, by revealing the cyclical and adaptive nature of entrepreneurial engagement and highlighting how such engagement intersects with gendered expectations and systemic inequalities

The longitudinal ethno-case study methodology enabled deep engagement with participants' lived experiences, revealing how gender and displacement intersect to shape opportunity-driven entrepreneurial pathways and outcomes for refugee women (Verduijn and Essers, 2013; Senthanar et al., 2021). The applying liminality as a contextual setting, the study

draws on Van Gennep's (1909) conceptualisation of rites of passage and Kuhlman's Refugee Integration model (1990), while employing the entrepreneurial mindset as the conceptual tool to examine cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of opportunity identification and resource mobilisation, even within constrained circumstances (Kuratko et al., 2020). This framing was further underpinned by feminist poststructuralist tenets, power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation (Davies and Gannon, 2011).

Through sustained ethnographic observation and case analysis, this research identified two key theoretical contributions: the concept of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and the process of *resource regrouping* within entrepreneurial journeys (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013).

The ethno-case study's findings demonstrate that refugee women's entrepreneurial pathways frequently diverge from linear progression models (Marlow, 2020), instead following *cyclical* patterns where individuals move between entrepreneurial activity and formal employment. This *cycling* serves as a strategic approach to *resource accumulation* and capability development (Al-Dajani et al., 2015). Such adaptations reflect the non-linear nature of entrepreneurial trajectories for marginalised women, highlighting the dynamic interplay between agency and structural constraints (McNay, 2013).

The research further revealed how gender-specific constraints, including cultural expectations, family obligations, and structural barriers, influence these *cyclical* patterns (Shneikat and Alrawadieh, 2019; Romero and Valdez, 2016). As demonstrated in the findings, capability barriers and economic security needs emerged as pivotal factors shaping decisions to move between entrepreneurship and formal employment (Kloosterman, 2010; Romero and Valdez 2016; Villares-Varela, Ram, and Jones, 2022). *Resource regrouping* emerged as a critical process through which refugee women strategically leverage periods of formal employment to build capital, skills, and networks that strengthen their entrepreneurial foundation (Dean et al., 2019).

The ethno-case study contributes to refugee entrepreneurship literature by challenging established assumptions about necessity entrepreneurship and the structure/agency dynamic (Kloosterman, 2010). Through sustained ethnographic observation, the research reveals how refugee women exercise strategic agency within structural constraints, deliberately moving between entrepreneurship and employment (Anthias, 2013). This finding reconceptualises refugee entrepreneurship beyond necessity-based frameworks, demonstrating how entrepreneurial mindset enables opportunity identification and resource mobilisation even within constrained circumstances (Kuratko and Morris, 2018). The research advances theoretical understanding of how refugee entrepreneurs navigate structural barriers by introducing two key concepts: *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*.

For gendered entrepreneurship literature, the research contributes to fundamental debates about whether entrepreneurship serves women's interests and what constitutes entrepreneurial action (Marlow, 2020; Huq and Venugopal, 2021) through the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*. The findings challenge binary conceptualisations of entrepreneurial success and failure by revealing how women's apparent exits from entrepreneurship represent strategic phases of *resource regrouping* rather than failure (Jamali, 2009). By documenting how refugee women engage in *cyclical entrepreneurship*, strategically moving between entrepreneurial activity and employment, the research expands theoretical understanding of what it means to act entrepreneurially in constrained circumstances (Henao-Zapata and Peiró, 2018).

These ethnographically-grounded insights contribute to gendered entrepreneurship literature by demonstrating that entrepreneurship's value for women cannot be evaluated through traditional linear development and success metrics (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000). Rather than accepting entrepreneurship as inherently beneficial or detrimental for women (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Dean et al., 2019; Serrano-Pascual and Carretero-García, 2022), the findings reveal how

refugee women exercise agency through cyclical patterns of entrepreneurial engagement and *resource regrouping* based on their circumstances and available resources. This reconceptualisation of entrepreneurial trajectories through the lens of *cyclical entrepreneurship* provides a framework for understanding how marginalised women navigate structural constraints while pursuing economic independence, contributing to theoretical debates about the relationship between gender, agency, and entrepreneurial action (Romero and Valdez, 2016).

The ethno-case study findings demonstrate that refugee women's entrepreneurial pathways frequently diverge from linear progression models, instead following cyclical patterns where individuals move between entrepreneurial activity and formal employment. This cycling serves as an adaptive approach to resource accumulation and capability development (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Manning et al., 2019; Kelly and McAdam, 2022). *Resource regrouping* emerged as a critical process through which refugee women leverage periods of formal employment to build capital, skills, and networks that strengthen their entrepreneurial foundation (Ghanem, 2020; Bizri, 2017). Through these concepts, the research advances theoretical understanding of how refugee entrepreneurs navigate institutional voids and structural barriers within the opportunity driven response to structural barriers within the entrepreneurial landscape (Kloosterman, 2010; Mawson and Kasem, 2019; Romero and Valdez, 2016).

Methodologically, the research introduces an innovative conceptual framework that applies a kaleidoscopic feminist poststructural lens to examine refugee women's entrepreneurship. This framework advances theoretical understanding by integrating five critical tenets of feminist poststructuralism: power, subjectivity, marginalisation, intersectionality, and representation (Baxter, 2016, Davies and Gannon, 2011; St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000;). Building on these tenets, the study employs a layered analytical approach that combines Derridean deconstruction with Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA), as established by Baxter (2010; 2016). This integration moves beyond traditional applications by structuring the analysis in layers, enabling a

complex interrogation of entrepreneurial discourse and its intersections with gender, displacement, and agency.

This chapter proceeds by first critiquing entrepreneurship as a universal solution for refugee economic integration. Scholars such as Carter (2011), Ahl and Marlow (2021), and Serrano-Pascual and Carretero-García (2022) argue that entrepreneurship often reinforces structural inequalities and gendered expectations rather than addressing systemic barriers. These critiques highlight the limitations of viewing entrepreneurship as inherently beneficial, particularly for marginalised groups such as refugee women.

Following the critique, this chapter introduces the new theoretical concepts developed in this research, *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* which challenge existing assumptions in refugee and gendered entrepreneurship scholarship. These concepts are examined in relation to longstanding debates around necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurship, the structure/agency dynamic, and linear entrepreneurial trajectories. By offering a more complex understanding of entrepreneurial pathways under systemic constraints, the chapter highlights how refugee women exercise adaptive agency within liminal spaces.

The chapter then details the theoretical and methodological contributions, examining implications for both scholarly understanding and practical implementation. The discussion considers the broader theoretical significance of these concepts, particularly their potential to advance debates on entrepreneurial identity, marginalisation, and agency. Recommendations for policy and practice are also addressed, focusing on how support structures can better align with refugee women's actual experiences and needs (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018; Serrano-Pascual and Carretero-García, 2022). The chapter concludes by acknowledging research limitations and suggesting directions for future investigation, offering a comprehensive understanding of how gender intersects with refugee status to shape entrepreneurial possibilities and constraints (Anthias, 2013). The following section critiques entrepreneurship as a universal solution for

refugee women's economic empowerment. It examines how dominant entrepreneurial discourses can obscure systemic inequalities and perpetuate marginalisation, drawing on participant narratives to highlight the interplay between agency and constraint. The discussion introduces the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* to offer new theoretical insights into refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys.

8.2 Critique of Entrepreneurship as a Solution

Cyclical Entrepreneurship and Internalised Failure

A central theme emerging from this research is the way dominant entrepreneurial discourses can function to obscure and perpetuate the marginalisation of refugee women, even as they promise empowerment. This finding contributes to gendered entrepreneurship debates by critiquing narratives that frame entrepreneurship as inherently empowering for women. Instead, it reveals how such narratives often obscure systemic barriers, shifting responsibility for economic precarity onto individuals while perpetuating marginalisation. Drawing on the work of Ahl (2006), Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018), and Marlow and McAdam (2015), it becomes evident that individualistic narratives of entrepreneurship shift the burden of overcoming systemic inequality onto marginalised individuals. By celebrating resilience and self-transformation, these discourses position women as responsible for "fixing" their circumstances while failing to interrogate the broader socio-political structures that constrain their opportunities.

The voices of participants provide poignant illustrations of this dynamic. RE1 reflects on her struggles with self-doubt, internalising the idea that hardship is an entrepreneurial norm:

'I still feel guilty about it because I'm like, well, you know all entrepreneurs struggle to make money, so why are you complaining about all the struggle?'

This sentiment reflects how individualistic entrepreneurship narratives lead women to question their own legitimacy rather than the structural conditions that create struggle. Similarly, RE2 expresses guilt for perceived personal failure despite substantial external support:

'I still to this day have guilt when I speak to [mentor] because I feel she has invested so much time in me and I haven't proved myself in terms of my business.'

These narratives extend Ahl and Marlow's (2019) critique of postfeminist entrepreneurial discourses, which saddle women with the dual burden of striving for transformation while simultaneously absolving oppressive systems of responsibility.

The concept of *cyclical entrepreneurship* introduced in this study offers a novel framework for grasping both the material and psychological impacts of this internalised failure narrative. As refugee women continue to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations in the face of ongoing challenges, their journeys take on a cyclical quality marked by periods of attempt, retreat, and re-entry. Employment becomes a form of temporary respite and identity protection, a way to regroup resources before the next entrepreneurial endeavour. RE1 encapsulates this dynamic when describing her business:

'At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it, yeah. So even with the business that I have at the moment, I keep trying to tell people or referring to it as a project because I feel like it's something on the side that I do.'

By minimising her venture as merely '*a project...something on the side,*' RE1 engages in a form of identity downplaying that serves as a bulwark against perceived failure. This aligns with the findings of Huq and Venugopal (2020), who highlight the pressures marginalised women face to meet external entrepreneurial norms even when structural conditions render such success unattainable. This theoretical insight captures the lived realities of marginalised women striving within an entrepreneurial landscape that relentlessly privatises responsibility for success while erasing the public structures that produce inequality.

The implications of this are significant. *Cyclical entrepreneurship* reflects both agency and constraint, as refugee women adapt to systemic limitations by moving between entrepreneurial engagement and resource regrouping. This concept challenges the dominant

binary between entrepreneurial agency and constraint by revealing how refugee women's actions are shaped by a constant negotiation of structural barriers and adaptive strategies. It advances the structure/agency debate by demonstrating how entrepreneurial decisions are simultaneously constrained by systemic inequities and informed by strategic recalibration.

However, this *cycle* is not empowering, it is a reflection of structural precarity that leaves women caught in repetitive loops of effort, exhaustion, and deferred success. RE3's reflections capture the demands of perpetual self-improvement embedded in dominant entrepreneurial discourses:

'So, it's been a journey over the past few years in terms of building confidence, having awareness and understanding of who I am, what characteristics I have, are they positive or negative. What do I need to change myself?'

Building on the work of Huq and Venugopal (2020) and Yeshi, Harima and Freiling (2022), these findings illuminate how the demands of entrepreneurial discourse compel women to strive to meet external norms and expectations, even as that striving is fundamentally constrained by the socio-political realities they inhabit. RE2's uncertainty exemplifies this struggle:

'I know I have the potential, but I am just not moving ahead, and I don't know why?'

In the face of structural barriers, refugee women like RE2 often end up questioning their own capabilities rather than the systemic constraints they navigate. These narratives enrich our understanding of the contradictions and challenges inherent in the entrepreneurial identities available to refugee women.

Ultimately, the findings challenge the framing of entrepreneurship as a panacea for refugee women's economic empowerment. By centring individual responsibility and resilience, dominant entrepreneurial discourses obscure the structural inequalities that shape refugee women's experiences. As the findings compellingly demonstrate, when systemic barriers are reframed as individual deficits, entrepreneurial 'failure' is not only personalised but potentially

intensified, trapping women in cycles of effort and exhaustion that deepen their marginalisation. This sobering conclusion issues a powerful challenge to scholars, policymakers, and entrepreneurial support programmes to approach entrepreneurship more critically and holistically, centring the voices and lived realities of those most directly impacted.

This study challenges dominant assumptions in refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literature by demonstrating the non-linear, adaptive, and constrained nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys. It argues that entrepreneurial narratives, while promising empowerment, often obscure the structural inequalities that perpetuate marginalisation. By introducing *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*, this research provides new theoretical tools to understand how refugee women exercise agency under conditions of systemic constraint.

8.3 New Concepts Developed

This research advances two interconnected theoretical concepts that emerged from the ethnographic data: *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*. These concepts offer new frameworks for understanding how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial pathways under structural constraints, challenging dominant assumptions in both refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literature.

8.3.1 Cyclical Entrepreneurship

The concept of *cyclical entrepreneurship* emerged from observing how refugee women are often forced to navigate between entrepreneurial activity and formal employment due to persistent structural barriers. While traditional models assume linear progression (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013), these women's fragmented journeys reveal the reality of entrepreneurship under systemic constraints, a pattern of repeated attempts, retreats, and returns that reflects the precarity of their position rather than genuine choice or agency.

Cyclical entrepreneurship represents a distinctive pattern where refugee women move between periods of entrepreneurial activity and formal employment, not as a strategic choice but

as a necessary response to structural constraints. This concept challenges dominant assumptions in refugee entrepreneurship literature that frame entrepreneurial engagement as linear or static. By revealing how refugee women alternate between entrepreneurship and formal employment, *cyclical entrepreneurship* reframes opportunity entrepreneurship as an ongoing negotiation of systemic constraints rather than a purely linear pursuit of opportunity. Furthermore, it advances debates on structure/agency by demonstrating how refugee women exhibit constrained agency, where their decisions reflect a balance between structural limitations and adaptive strategies.

From a gendered entrepreneurship perspective, this concept highlights how gendered expectations and systemic inequalities intersect with displacement to shape entrepreneurial trajectories. It challenges the notion that entrepreneurship is inherently beneficial for women by revealing how refugee women navigate entrepreneurial action as a means of survival rather than empowerment. This reconceptualisation broadens theoretical understandings of entrepreneurial action, showing that women's engagement in entrepreneurship is often shaped by cyclical and adaptive strategies to mitigate compounded gendered and structural barriers.

This concept emerged from longitudinal observation of how participants navigated entrepreneurial mindset in a liminal space between. The pattern typically involves three phases: entrepreneurial attempt, forced withdrawal into employment, and eventual re-entry into entrepreneurial activity, often with accumulated resources but facing similar structural barriers.

This concept directly challenges dominant assumptions in both refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literature. While scholars like Kloosterman (2010) and Romero and Valdez (2016) have explored how structural barriers shape entrepreneurial opportunities, *cyclical entrepreneurship* reveals a more complex dynamic where apparent resilience masks systemic inequality. The concept extends beyond traditional understandings of opportunity entrepreneurship by showing how refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys are shaped by an ongoing negotiation between aspiration and constraint. It challenges the binary distinction

between entrepreneurship and employment (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018) by showing how refugee women move between these positions in response to systemic limitations, not as evidence of resilience but as a survival strategy.

As evidenced in the participant narratives, this cyclical movement, though framed as 'strategic' in entrepreneurial discourse, often represents a survival response to structural limitations (Easton-Calabria and Omata, 2018). This aligns with Huq and Venugopal (2020), who argue that structural inequalities compel marginalised women to navigate precarious entrepreneurial systems, undermining their capacity for long-term stability." RE1's diminishment of her business as merely '*a project...something on the side*' illustrates how refugee women internalise and minimise their entrepreneurial identities as a protective mechanism against failure. Similarly, RE2's oscillation between entrepreneurship and employment demonstrates not empowered choice but the necessity of securing stable income when entrepreneurial aspirations are repeatedly thwarted by systemic barriers.

Building on this critique of systemic constraints, the concept of *cyclical entrepreneurship* contributes to theoretical debates in several ways. First, it further advances debates on the structure/agency dynamic within refugee entrepreneurship. While scholars such as Wauters and Lambrecht (2008) and Heilbrunn (2021) have examined how structural barriers shape refugee entrepreneurship, *cyclical entrepreneurship* reveals how refugees actively navigate these constraints rather than being passively shaped by them. This offers a more complex understanding of refugee agency as strategic adaptation to systemic limitations, rather than empowered choice.

Second, it reveals how structural barriers create patterns of forced adaptation rather than genuine strategic choice, contributing to debates about agency and structure in entrepreneurship (McNay, 2013). Finally, it demonstrates how gender and refugee status intersect to shape entrepreneurial possibilities, advancing intersectional perspectives in entrepreneurship research (Anthias, 2013). *Cyclical entrepreneurship* emerges from structural barriers and reflects

constrained agency, whereas conventional entrepreneurial pivots are strategic and reflect empowered agency (Sadeghiani et al., 2024). *Cyclical entrepreneurship* highlights systemic inequities, while pivots are celebrated as markers of adaptability and strategic success within relatively privileged entrepreneurial ecosystems.

This concept makes significant theoretical contributions to refugee entrepreneurship literature by challenging established assumptions about necessity entrepreneurship and the structure/agency dynamic. While scholars like Kloosterman (2010) have characterised refugee entrepreneurship primarily through necessity-based frameworks, *cyclical entrepreneurship* reveals a more complex reality. The findings demonstrate that refugee women exercise strategic agency even within structural constraints, deliberately moving between entrepreneurship and employment based on careful assessment of opportunities and barriers. This challenges the traditional binary between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship that has dominated refugee entrepreneurship literature.

Drawing on Kuhlman's (1991) refugee integration model, which emphasises economic adaptation, *cyclical entrepreneurship* provides new insights into how refugees navigate institutional voids and structural barriers. This concept extends Kuhlman's integration model by showing how *cyclical entrepreneurial* patterns are not merely responses to institutional voids, but strategic recalibrations driven by systemic exclusion. It reconceptualises refugee entrepreneurship by highlighting the interplay between structural barriers and the entrepreneurial mindset, offering a more dynamic understanding of refugee agency. For instance, when RE2 transitions between entrepreneurial ventures and employment, she exemplifies how refugees exercise agency within the liminal space.

While this research initially aimed to challenge frameworks that privilege linear entrepreneurial progression (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013), the findings reveal a more troubling reality. What appears as adaptive behaviour (Marlow, 2020) may instead represent the perpetual

instability forced upon marginalised women by structural inequalities (Huq and Venugopal, 2020). Rather than celebrating *cyclical entrepreneurship* as evidence of agency, this concept exposes how refugee women become trapped in recurring patterns of effort and withdrawal, their entrepreneurial aspirations continuously deferred by the very systems meant to support them (Romero and Valdez, 2016).

Furthermore, *cyclical entrepreneurship* bridges theoretical conversations in refugee and gendered entrepreneurship literature. It demonstrates how gender and displacement intersect to shape entrepreneurial possibilities, aligning with Romero and Valdez's (2016) work on intersectionality in entrepreneurship. However, these 'possibilities' often reflect constrained choices rather than genuine opportunities. For refugee women, cyclical patterns expose not only responses to barriers common to all refugees but also the compounded burden of gendered expectations and responsibilities that further restrict their options.

This concept particularly enhances understanding of how refugee entrepreneurs navigate institutional voids and systemic barriers within entrepreneurial landscapes. While previous research often adopts deficit models that emphasise what refugees lack, *cyclical entrepreneurship* shifts the focus to what may appear as 'sophisticated strategies' for resource accumulation and opportunity creation. Yet, these strategies are, in reality, survival mechanisms born of necessity rather than empowered choice. While these adaptive behaviours demonstrate remarkable resilience, framing them as entrepreneurial innovation risks obscuring systemic failures that force marginalised women into perpetual cycles of adaptation.

Ultimately, this theoretical contribution calls for a fundamental reconsideration of how refugee entrepreneurship is conceptualised and supported. It challenges scholars and policymakers to move beyond celebrating adaptive resilience and to instead address the structural inequalities that compel marginalised groups to continuously adapt, rather than dismantling the barriers themselves. In summary, this concept advances the understanding of refugee entrepreneurship by

challenging linear entrepreneurial models and reconceptualising agency under systemic constraints. It further contributes to gendered entrepreneurship debates by revealing how gendered and structural barriers shape *cyclical entrepreneurial* trajectories.

While *cyclical entrepreneurship* reveals the adaptive strategies refugee women employ to navigate systemic barriers, it also underscores the critical role of resource accumulation in sustaining entrepreneurial engagement. The repeated movement between entrepreneurial activity and formal employment not only reflects systemic constraints but also highlights how these women leverage periods of withdrawal to regroup and build the resources necessary for re-entry into entrepreneurship. The following section introduces the concept of *resource regrouping*, exploring how this process enables refugee women to strategically accumulate capital, skills, and networks despite the systemic inequalities they face.

8.3.2 Resource Regrouping

The concept of *resource regrouping*, a key finding that emerged from this 4 year ethno-case study encapsulates the strategic process by which refugee women entrepreneurs temporarily withdraw from entrepreneurial activities to gather critical resources before re-engaging with entrepreneurship. This novel concept challenges linear success trajectories by reframing these periods of apparent disengagement not as failures, but as deliberate phases of recalibration in response to systemic barriers. *Resource regrouping* encapsulates the strategic process by which refugee women entrepreneurs temporarily withdraw from entrepreneurial activities to gather critical resources before re-engaging with entrepreneurship. This novel concept challenges linear success trajectories by reframing these periods of apparent disengagement not as failures, but as deliberate phases of recalibration in response to systemic barriers.

This concept advances the structure/agency debate by demonstrating how periods of withdrawal reflect constrained agency rather than failure. *Resource regrouping* challenges binary narratives of entrepreneurial success and failure by reframing withdrawal as a strategic

recalibration in response to systemic barriers. From a gendered entrepreneurship perspective, this concept also highlights how intersecting gendered expectations, and systemic inequalities shape entrepreneurial engagement for marginalised women. It challenges the assumption that entrepreneurial withdrawal signals inadequacy, revealing instead that women's re-engagement with entrepreneurship reflects adaptive agency in response to compounded structural and gendered constraints. By doing so, it contributes to opportunity entrepreneurship literature by illustrating how marginalised women identify and mobilise resources while navigating the intersection of economic precarity and gendered barriers.

It shows how refugee women adapt to economic precarity and structural limitations. But this *resource regrouping* exposes a sobering reality, these 'strategic' recalibration phases are not evidence of empowered choice but a survival response to entrenched structural barriers. In this context, the much-lauded entrepreneurial ambition of refugee women becomes an exhausting negotiation with systems that remain indifferent to their precarity.

Participants' decisions to enter formal employment, often framed in mainstream discourse as stable, strategic moves, are more accurately reflective of systemic failures that render entrepreneurial progression untenable.

For example, RE1 initially identified as a '*serial entrepreneur*' and pursued ventures such as pop-up restaurants and content creation. Despite being celebrated publicly as a model of success, invited to speak on panels and held up as an exemplar of refugee entrepreneurship, the economic reality of her situation told a different story. The inconsistent income from her entrepreneurial activities left her unable to achieve financial goals like homeownership in London's competitive property market. Seeking stability, RE1 transitioned into formal employment as a Senior Social Media Manager with the Home Office, a position that enabled her to secure a mortgage. Through analysis of RE1's discourse, it was evident that her entrepreneurial mindset persists despite these challenges. Positioned within the '*agent of change*' dimension of

the entrepreneurial mindset, RE1 continues to conceptualise new entrepreneurial ideas while strategically leveraging formal employment to accumulate resources. This recalibration demonstrates how formal employment functions not as a departure from entrepreneurship but as a means of strengthening her entrepreneurial foundation.

RE2's reflections on her journey highlight the complexities of *resource regrouping* as well as evidence of *cyclical entrepreneurship*. While stepping away from her initial entrepreneurial ventures, RE2 engaged in high-profile opportunities, including speaking on panels alongside influential figures and pitching her business to Venture Capitalists despite systemic funding inequities. These activities allowed her to accumulate critical social capital, redefine her entrepreneurial identity, and develop confidence as a leader. This *resource regrouping* phase not only enabled her to strategically recalibrate but also facilitated her segue back into entrepreneurship. By leveraging the skills, networks, and visibility gained during this period, RE2's journey exemplifies how refugee women oscillate between employment and entrepreneurship as a response to entrenched gendered and structural barriers.

RE2's journey reveals additional dimensions of *resource regrouping* while further illustrating the cyclical nature of entrepreneurial engagement for refugee women. Unable to sustain her business, RE2 transitioned into formal employment and high-profile engagements, including speaking alongside influential figures and pitching to venture capitalists. However, these experiences must be critically examined. Despite her participation, the systemic inequities of the funding landscape—where women-led startups receive less than 3% of all global venture capital funding (Brush et al., 2019) meant that her efforts, while symbolically significant, did not translate into material transformation. Instead, RE2's engagements represent the additional labour required to 'prove' entrepreneurial worth within systems that remain structurally exclusionary. Her eventual re-entry into entrepreneurship, marked by the launch of a consulting firm, reflects not linear progress but a cyclical pattern of forced adaptation rather than empowered choice. This

duality highlights the labour, resilience, and precarity embedded in refugee women's entrepreneurial pathways.

These examples illuminate the theoretical crux of *resource regrouping*: it challenges dominant assumptions of linear entrepreneurial progress and reframes periods of withdrawal as deliberate recalibration phases in response to systemic barriers. This reconceptualisation of entrepreneurial withdrawal also contributes to gendered entrepreneurship debates by illustrating how marginalised women leverage adaptive strategies to navigate intersectional constraints, including gendered expectations and systemic inequities. *Resource regrouping* enriches our understanding of entrepreneurial action by showing how agency manifests in contexts of compounded precarity.

While Kloosterman (2010) highlights how immigrant entrepreneurship is shaped by structural inequalities, similar dynamics are evident in refugee entrepreneurship, where systemic barriers place disproportionate burdens on marginalised individuals (Ram et al., 2017; Romero and Valdez, 2016). *Resource regrouping* exposes how these burdens manifest, compelling refugee women to retreat into formal employment, only to re-emerge with recalibrated aspirations.

Moreover, *resource regrouping* nuances the structure/agency dynamic explored in Chapters 2 and 5. While formal employment may appear as a strategic choice, it is fundamentally a survival response dictated by systemic constraints. This reframing, building on McNay's (2013) insights into how systemic power structures constrain individual agency and compel marginalised groups into complex negotiations with precarity, positions refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys as responses to power imbalances, rather than straightforward narratives of resilience.

The theoretical contributions of *resource regrouping* are significant. First, it challenges the dominant binary between entrepreneurial success and failure. In contrast to conventional narratives that equate withdrawal with inadequacy, *resource regrouping* reframes these exits as structural inevitabilities rather than individual shortcomings. As Easton-Calabria and Omata

(2018) argue, the systemic challenges faced by refugees often necessitate adaptive responses, underscoring the disproportionate barriers that marginalised groups must navigate in entrepreneurial contexts. *Resource regrouping* exposes how these burdens manifest, compelling refugee women to retreat into formal employment as a survival strategy, only to re-emerge with recalibrated aspirations. Second, *resource regrouping* advances debates on the structure/agency dynamic (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018) by demonstrating how refugee women's entrepreneurial decisions are shaped more by external constraints than by empowered agency. While formal employment may appear strategic, it is fundamentally a survival response dictated by systemic barriers. This reframing positions refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys as complex negotiations with power and precarity, rather than straightforward narratives of resilience.

Third, *resource regrouping* reveals the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurial precarity. As Romero and Valdez (2016) highlight, intersectional barriers, rooted in gender, displacement, and economic marginalisation, create additional layers of constraint for refugee women. RE1 and RE2's experiences underscore how gendered expectations and systemic inequalities compound to restrict their entrepreneurial agency. Far from representing empowered recalibration, their decisions to regroup reflect the labour and negotiation required to sustain entrepreneurial ambitions in deeply exclusionary systems.

Critically, *resource regrouping* dismantles celebratory narratives that valorise entrepreneurial resilience while obscuring the systemic failures necessitating such recalibration. While refugee women's capacity to adapt is remarkable, framing these cycles as 'strategic' risks glorifying survival mechanisms that exist only because of entrenched structural inequalities. Marlow and McAdam (2013) underscore the importance of interrogating these dominant narratives, which shift the burden of adaptation onto marginalised groups while failing to address the systemic barriers that constrain their entrepreneurial possibilities.

Ultimately, *resource regrouping* calls for a fundamental shift in how we understand and support refugee women's entrepreneurial trajectories. The cycles of withdrawal and re-engagement documented in this study are not evidence of individual shortcomings, but indictments of structural failures. As argued throughout this thesis, celebratory narratives framing entrepreneurship as a panacea for refugee economic self-reliance risk obscuring the entrenched systemic inequities that make such resilience necessary in the first place. Policymakers and scholars should critically assess the structural barriers that undermine the sustainability of entrepreneurship as a pathway for refugee women. By addressing these entrenched inequalities, it becomes possible to facilitate more equitable opportunities for refugee women to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Resource regrouping, as conceptualised in this study, offers a novel perspective on how refugee women strategically withdraw from entrepreneurial activity to accumulate essential resources. This lens challenges traditional narratives of entrepreneurial success and failure by reframing these phases as systemic responses to structural inequality rather than individual choice or inadequacy. Overall, *resource regrouping* expands refugee entrepreneurship literature by reframing entrepreneurial withdrawal as adaptive rather than failure. It also enhances gendered entrepreneurship scholarship by illustrating how intersecting gendered and systemic barriers compel strategic recalibrations.

Building on the concept of resource regrouping, the subsequent section expands the discussion by examining how this and related concepts, such as *cyclical entrepreneurship*, contribute to advancing theoretical understanding. It highlights how these insights challenge conventional assumptions within refugee and gendered entrepreneurship scholarship. The next section outlines the broader implications of this research for understanding entrepreneurial agency, the structure/agency dynamic, and the intersectional challenges faced by refugee women entrepreneurs.

8.4 Theoretical Implications

This section examines how the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* advance our understanding of critical issues in refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship studies, challenging conventional assumptions and expanding theoretical perspectives.

Advancing Refugee Entrepreneurship Literature

The introduction of *cyclical entrepreneurship* redefines entrepreneurial pathways in refugee contexts, moving beyond the dichotomy of necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurship. This conceptualisation acknowledges that entrepreneurial journeys are rarely linear but instead reflect adaptive strategies influenced by structural constraints and systemic barriers. Building on Bizri's (2017) exploration of social capital in refugee entrepreneurship, *cyclical entrepreneurship* highlights how refugees navigate these barriers by oscillating between formal employment and entrepreneurial activities, using employment as a strategic phase to accumulate resources. This reframing contrasts with linear progression models often assumed in traditional entrepreneurship theories (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

Resource regrouping further contributes by contextualising periods of withdrawal from entrepreneurial activity as recalibrations rather than failures. This aligns with findings from Heilbrunn (2021), who identifies the necessity of adaptation in navigating refugee entrepreneurship. Unlike deficit-based models, *resource regrouping* positions these periods as essential for building capital—whether financial, social, or human—to support re-entry into entrepreneurship. By documenting these adaptive strategies, the research expands the structural understanding of entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts (Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008; Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013).

These contributions challenge the uncritical optimism often associated with entrepreneurship as a universal solution for refugee integration. Scholars such as Sepúlveda et al.

(2011) and Heilbrunn (2021) critique the framing of entrepreneurship as inherently empowering, particularly when structural inequities remain unaddressed. This study builds on such critiques by demonstrating that the systemic constraints faced by refugee entrepreneurs necessitate cyclical and adaptive approaches rather than straightforward trajectories of success.

Advancing Gendered Entrepreneurship Literature

Cyclical entrepreneurship and *resource regrouping* also contribute significantly to debates within gendered entrepreneurship scholarship. These concepts challenge the notion of entrepreneurship as inherently beneficial for women, particularly when viewed through the lens of intersectionality (Anthias, 2013; Romero and Valdez, 2016). By illustrating how refugee women adapt their entrepreneurial strategies to navigate gendered expectations and systemic inequities, this research broadens our understanding of how agency and structure intersect in entrepreneurial contexts.

Through the lens of intersectionality, *resource regrouping* illuminates how gender, displacement, and economic marginalisation compound to create unique challenges for refugee women. Building on Essers and Tedmanson's (2014) research on the liminality of entrepreneurship for migrant women, this concept highlights how refugee women use formal employment not as an escape from entrepreneurship but as a deliberate strategy to recalibrate their resources. These findings resonate with critiques from Ahl and Marlow (2006, 2021), who argue that dominant entrepreneurial narratives often obscure the structural barriers women face.

The research also advances discussions around the structure/agency dynamic, offering a nuanced perspective that demonstrates how refugee women's entrepreneurial decisions are simultaneously constrained by systemic inequities and informed by strategic recalibration (McNay, 2013). By framing periods of withdrawal as resource regrouping, this study reveals the adaptive agency exercised by women navigating intersecting barriers.

Challenging Convention Assumptions

The findings challenge conventional assumptions about entrepreneurial success and failure. Traditionally, withdrawal from entrepreneurial activity is perceived as failure. However, the concept of *resource regrouping* reframes this as a strategic phase within *cyclical entrepreneurship*. This aligns with Romero and Valdez's (2016) critique of binary success/failure metrics, highlighting the need for more complex evaluations of entrepreneurial trajectories.

Moreover, the research contests the celebration of resilience in entrepreneurial discourse. While resilience is often lauded as a hallmark of successful entrepreneurship, this study reveals the cost of such resilience for marginalised women, specifically refugee women entrepreneurs. Similar to the findings of Huq and Venugopal (2020), the narratives of refugee women demonstrate that resilience often masks the systemic inequities that necessitate adaptive strategies like *resource regrouping*. By foregrounding these systemic barriers, the research calls for a critical reassessment of resilience as an entrepreneurial virtue for marginalised women.

8.5 Methodological Contribution & Limitations

The development and application of a kaleidoscopic lens to FPDA and Derridean deconstruction represents a significant methodological innovation in this research. By operationalizing theoretical principles into a structured yet flexible framework, the study addresses critiques of feminist poststructuralism, particularly its tendency toward abstraction and limited empirical application (Colebrook, 2011; Williams, 1990). This methodological advancement extends the relevance of FPDA to research on refugee and gendered entrepreneurship while navigating the limitations and complexities of these approaches.

The application of FPDA and its integration with Derridean deconstruction presents several methodological challenges that warrant critical examination. Concerns have been raised about theoretical abstraction limiting practical applicability (Colebrook, 2011), with critics arguing that FPDA's reliance on abstract constructs potentially distances it from tangible research

outcomes. However, the strategic incorporation of complementary approaches, as evidenced in the conceptual framework's evolution from Figure 8 (p.118) to Figure 23 (p.406), effectively addresses this limitation. The framework demonstrates how theoretical insights are grounded in concrete realities by positioning the entrepreneurial mindset triad within the liminal space as a contextual setting.

The question of interpretative subjectivity in FPDA has been highlighted as a significant concern (Baxter, 2020), particularly regarding researcher positionality and its influence on analytical outcomes. This methodological challenge is systematically addressed through the kaleidoscopic lens illustrated in both figures, which enables multiple interpretative perspectives through its five dimensions (M, I, S, P, R). The integration of FPDA with Derridean deconstruction, visually represented in the conceptual components underpinning both frameworks, enables a multi-layered analytical approach that strengthens the credibility of the research findings.

A persistent critique of FPDA centres on its perceived overemphasis on discourse at the expense of non-discursive elements, particularly structural and material constraints (Williams, 1990). However, this study demonstrates how such limitations can be overcome by framing the research within a broader conceptual framework that positions liminal space as the central contextual setting. As shown in Figure 23, this approach effectively captures the intersection of systemic barriers through the detailed mapping of Individual (Internal) and Socius (External) factors, revealing how refugee women strategically navigate these constraints while negotiating their agency.

The complexity and specialised language associated with FPDA and Derridean deconstruction have been identified as potential barriers to accessibility (Linstead, 2003). This methodological challenge is addressed through the visual representation in the conceptual framework, which clearly maps the relationships between theoretical concepts and lived

experiences. The progression from Figure 8 (p.118) tentative "Assumed Outcomes" with its questioning stance to Figure 23 (p.406) detailed outcome specifications demonstrates how complex theoretical concepts can be made accessible through careful visual mapping.

While the conceptual framework was initially developed as part of this research, its applicability has extended beyond the current study. It has been successfully trialled in other scholarly contexts, including an article and a book chapter (Street, Ng, and Al Dajani, 2022; Street and Ng, 2023). These applications demonstrate its utility as a flexible and effective analytical tool. However, as a novel conceptual and methodological contribution, the framework will undoubtedly benefit from further refinement and adaptation in future research. Its experimental nature reflects a commitment to advancing scholarly debates while remaining open to iterative development.

These methodological strategies, visually represented in the framework's evolution, demonstrate that while FPDA and Derridean deconstruction face notable challenges, these limitations can be effectively mitigated through rigorous methodological design, reflexive practices, and interdisciplinary integration. The research framework not only addresses traditional critiques but also advances FPDA's utility in *analysing* the complex dynamics of power, discourse, and agency in refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys.

This study opens several promising avenues for methodological and theoretical exploration. First, the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* can be extended to examine entrepreneurial processes among other marginalised populations. Investigating whether similar patterns of engagement and recalibration emerge in different socio-economic and institutional contexts would deepen our understanding of entrepreneurial resilience under structural constraints.

Future research could also explore how policy environments and socio-economic inequalities interact with discursive constructions to shape entrepreneurial trajectories. Building

on this study's intersectional approach, refined methodologies could be developed to analyse the interaction of multiple marginalising factors, such as race, class, and disability, in entrepreneurial contexts. Continued application and refinement of the kaleidoscopic lens can further develop FPDA as a rigorous and adaptable analytical tool, contributing to its evolution in theoretical and empirical contexts.

In conclusion, this research makes significant theoretical and methodological contributions to the fields of refugee entrepreneurship and gendered entrepreneurship. It challenges existing paradigms, develops new concepts such as *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*, and creates an innovative kaleidoscopic lens for applying FPDA. By reconceptualizing the entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women within liminal spaces, the study advances our understanding of the complex interplay between structure, agency, power, and discourse in shaping marginalised entrepreneurship.

The conceptual framework developed in this research has demonstrated its utility as a flexible and effective analytical tool, with successful applications in other scholarly contexts. As the kaleidoscopic lens is further refined and adapted in future research, it has the potential to make a lasting impact on methodological practices in entrepreneurship and gender studies. The experimental nature of this framework reflects a commitment to advancing scholarly debates while remaining open to iterative development.

This study opens up promising avenues for future research, including extending the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* to other marginalised populations, exploring the interaction of policy environments and socio-economic inequalities with discursive constructions, and refining methodologies to analyse the intersection of multiple marginalising factors in entrepreneurial contexts. As the field of entrepreneurship continues to evolve, this research provides a solid foundation for understanding the complex dynamics that shape the experiences of marginalised entrepreneurs, particularly refugee women.

This research, however, is not without its limitations, which require careful consideration. The small sample size, focusing on four refugee women, inevitably raises concerns about representativeness and generalisability. Nevertheless, the extended ethnographic engagement over a four-year period fostered deep, trusting relationships with participants, enabling the collection of exceptionally candid and transparent data. These insights might not have been achievable with a larger sample or shorter engagement period, underscoring the trade-off between depth and breadth inherent in qualitative research.

The decision to focus on these four women was informed by findings from the pilot study, which revealed significant challenges among participants in articulating their entrepreneurial mindset, even when conversing in their native languages. Many participants conflated the term ‘entrepreneur’ with general notions of working women, despite clarification through translators. Consequently, the research concentrated on participants who could provide deeper, more meaningful engagement with the study’s questions, prioritising the richness of data over broader coverage.

Additionally, the study’s scope was limited to refugee women entrepreneurs in the start-up or early stages of their ventures. While this focus allowed for an in-depth exploration of the entrepreneurial mindset at this critical juncture, it inherently excluded insights into the challenges and adaptations faced by entrepreneurs in later growth or maturity stages. Future research could extend this focus to capture the evolving nature of entrepreneurial journeys, offering a more comprehensive understanding of these trajectories.

Further limitations emerged from language and conceptual barriers, which complicated the interpretation and translation of entrepreneurial concepts across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. Addressing these challenges could involve future studies that examine how refugee women from various backgrounds understand and articulate entrepreneurship, enhancing the cross-cultural validity of entrepreneurial frameworks.

Geographical specificity also constrained the study, which was conducted primarily in the UK. This limits the generalisability of findings to refugees in different geopolitical settings. For example, pathways to citizenship in the Global North contrast starkly with the indefinite non-citizen status often experienced by refugees in the Global South. Comparative studies could examine how such differences in refugee status and labelling influence entrepreneurial trajectories, offering a richer understanding of global refugee entrepreneurship.

Finally, while the kaleidoscopic lens and conceptual framework developed in this research mark significant methodological contributions, they remain experimental and would benefit from further refinement. These tools have already demonstrated utility in other scholarly contexts, but their iterative development continues to be a critical process, ensuring they remain adaptable and effective across various research scenarios.

Future research could address these limitations by broadening the sample size to encompass a more diverse range of refugee entrepreneurs, including those at later stages of business development. It could also explore how systemic inequalities shape entrepreneurial processes across distinct socio-economic contexts, particularly in the Global South. Refining the kaleidoscopic lens to incorporate multiple intersecting marginalisations—such as race, class, and disability—would further enrich the analysis of entrepreneurship among marginalised populations. Moreover, investigating the metrics of entrepreneurial success, tracing trajectories from start-up to growth stages, could provide deeper insights into how refugee entrepreneurs navigate and sustain their ventures. Together, these avenues offer exciting opportunities for building on the foundational contributions of this research.

8.6 Future Research Directions

This study opens several promising avenues for methodological and theoretical exploration. First, the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping* can be extended to examine entrepreneurial processes among other marginalised women. Investigating

whether similar patterns of engagement and recalibration emerge in different socio-economic and institutional contexts would deepen our understanding of entrepreneurial resilience under structural constraints.

Future research could also explore how policy environments and socio-economic inequalities interact with discursive constructions to shape entrepreneurial trajectories. Building on this study's multilayered approach, refined methodologies could be developed to analyse the interaction of multiple marginalising factors, such as race, class, and disability, in entrepreneurial contexts. Continued application and refinement of the kaleidoscopic lens can further develop FPDA as a rigorous and adaptable analytical tool, contributing to its evolution in theoretical and empirical contexts.

8.7 Implications for Policy and Practice

The prevailing methods aimed at supporting refugee women entrepreneurs often fail to address the intrinsic barriers they face, particularly in relation to their entrepreneurial mindset. This mindset, essential for navigating entrepreneurial challenges, is shaped by their refugee status and systemic inequities, often leaving them in a state of precarious entrepreneurial activity (Lee, Viller, and Vyas, 2023). Refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys frequently exhibit characteristics of *cyclical entrepreneurship*, where phases of growth and retreat are influenced by the dynamic interplay of external structural constraints and internal psychological responses. These cycles reflect the challenges of sustaining ventures while managing resource constraints, societal pressures, and personal resilience.

Cyclical entrepreneurship highlights the reality that refugee women entrepreneurs often alternate between periods of entrepreneurial activity and withdrawal due to barriers such as funding limitations, policy restrictions, and capability gaps. During these withdrawal phases, *resource regrouping* becomes a critical strategy. This process involves reallocating and adapting limited resources to sustain entrepreneurial aspirations, even in the absence of stable structural

support. *Resource regrouping* demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of refugee women but also underscores the need for more comprehensive and supportive policies that facilitate continuity rather than interruption in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

As these women navigate the challenges of transformation, their experiences frequently align with Kunz's (1973) *Kinetic Model for Displacement*, which describes their situation as being '*midway to nowhere*.' Contrary to the often-romanticised notion of liminality as a purely creative or transformative space, the experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs reveal significant structural and psychological obstacles that hinder their progress. Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis (FPDA) has proven effective in dissecting these experiences, shedding light on the barriers they face at various stages of their entrepreneurial journeys.

Within the FPDA framework, the dimensions of power and agency reveal how structural limitations, such as restrictive policies, limited funding access, and cultural biases, impede refugee women's entrepreneurial pursuits. These limitations often force women to adopt *cyclical* approaches to entrepreneurship, pausing and *regrouping resources* to manage these constraints. This cyclical dynamic reflects their perseverance but also signals the inadequacy of current systems in providing sustainable pathways for success.

The concept of subjectivity highlights the ongoing process of identity formation as refugee women respond to the fluctuating conditions of the liminal space. They continually adapt their roles and identities, engaging in a process of renegotiation to reconcile their past, manage present constraints, and envision future opportunities (Harima, 2022; Ram et al., 2022). This dynamic process often coincides with periods of withdrawal from active entrepreneurship, during which *resource regrouping* plays a vital role in sustaining their aspirations.

Representation, or the lack thereof, further compounds the challenges faced by refugee women. Their narratives are often excluded from dominant entrepreneurial discourses, which perpetuates harmful stereotypes and marginalises their potential contributions. As Adebbe (2023)

asserts, refugee entrepreneurs must be equipped to navigate the stereotypes and biases they encounter. This study extends that analysis by examining how these biases influence entrepreneurial cycles, emphasising the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural impacts of such challenges. The findings underscore that while entrepreneurship can be a significant pathway, it should not be the sole measure of success. Broader socio-economic participation, such as access to education, stable employment, and community engagement, must also be recognised and valued.

To address these issues, policies need to move beyond a top-down approach that prioritises external solutions and instead adopt a strategy that integrates both external support and internal capacity-building. Refugee women require not only access to financial resources and mentorship but also guidance on developing the mindset necessary to navigate the cyclical nature of their entrepreneurial journeys. Policies should address the structural barriers that perpetuate these cycles, ensuring that refugee women have the resources and opportunities to sustain continuous entrepreneurial activity (Obschonka and Hahn, 2018; de Lange et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurial training should focus on equipping women with skills that are not only applicable to business ventures but also transferable to other areas of economic and social participation. The cyclical nature of entrepreneurship among refugee women underscores the need for policies that provide flexibility and recognise the value of regrouping as a legitimate phase of the entrepreneurial process. *Resource regrouping* should be supported through initiatives that enhance access to capital, mentorship, and skill-building programs designed to sustain entrepreneurial aspirations during periods of retreat.

In conclusion, effective policy interventions must consider the *cyclical* nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys and the role of *resource regrouping* in sustaining their efforts. Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that integrates structural support with strategies to strengthen entrepreneurial mindset development. Such interventions should aim to

create a supportive environment where refugee women can thrive, not only as entrepreneurs but also as active contributors to their communities and economies.

8.8 Recommendations

8.8.1 UK Government

The UK government should develop policies and support mechanisms that account for the cyclical nature of refugee women's entrepreneurial journeys. Rather than assuming a linear progression from business idea to successful venture, policies should recognise that refugee women often cycle between periods of active entrepreneurship and phases of resource regrouping, such as returning to formal employment to build financial stability and professional networks.

Funding schemes and business support programmes should be structured to accommodate these cyclical patterns. This could involve allowing for gaps or pauses in business activity without penalising entrepreneurs or providing funding and resources to help refugee women navigate transitions between entrepreneurship and employment. Training and mentoring should equip women with strategies to manage these cycles and maximise *resource regrouping* phases.

Additionally, policies need to address the systemic barriers and structural inequalities that make *cyclical entrepreneurship* necessary for many refugee women. This includes improving access to startup capital, networks, and markets, as well as confronting discrimination and constraining sociocultural expectations. Initiatives should focus on creating a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Critically, entrepreneurship should not be promoted as the only or default pathway to economic inclusion for refugee women. Policies must support multiple avenues, including employment, education and training. The goal should be to expand refugee women's economic opportunities and agency, rather than limiting them to entrepreneurship alone.

8.8.2 Recommendations for Entrepreneurial Training and Support Programmes

Entrepreneurial training and support programmes need to be adapted to the realities of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and resource regrouping. Curricula should cover strategies for managing business transitions, maintaining entrepreneurial identity and ambition through periods of employment, and leveraging employment experiences to build business-relevant skills and networks.

Programmes should provide targeted support during *resource regrouping* phases, recognising these periods as strategic recalibrations rather than failures. This could include ongoing mentoring, network-building opportunities, and skill development workshops to help women prepare for re-entry into entrepreneurship.

Critically, training should also equip women to recognise and navigate the systemic barriers they face as refugee entrepreneurs. This includes building awareness of structural inequalities, developing strategies to confront discrimination and exclusion, and cultivating resilience and adaptability.

Support programmes should also foster peer networks among refugee women entrepreneurs to facilitate shared learning, emotional support, and collective advocacy. These networks can be vital spaces for women to process their experiences, maintain motivation, and develop new strategies for navigating entrepreneurial challenges.

Ultimately, entrepreneurial training and support must be grounded in the lived experiences and voiced needs of refugee women. Programmes should be co-created with refugee women entrepreneurs to ensure relevance, cultural sensitivity, and a sense of ownership. Feedback mechanisms should be built-in so that programmes can continuously adapt to women's evolving needs and the shifting entrepreneurial landscape.

By centring the concepts of *cyclical entrepreneurship* and *resource regrouping*, these recommendations aim to create policies and support structures that are more responsive to the

actual entrepreneurial journeys of refugee women. The goal is to build an enabling environment that expands economic opportunities, confronts systemic barriers, and supports refugee women's agency and aspirations throughout all phases of their entrepreneurial endeavours.

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Appendix 1: Data Coding and Analysis Process - From Raw Data to Micro Analysis

Figure A. Sample Extract from Primary Coding Database (screenshot)

Reference	Data Category	Quote Extract	Entrepreneurial Mindset	Aspect	Dimension of Change	Binary oppositions	Dominant term	Assumptions & Biases	Socius (External)	Individual (Internal)	Power	Representation	Intersectionality	Subjectivity	Marginalisation
D1	INT-013	We won't be seeing any brown refugee entrepreneurs anymore. (In response to Nationality & Borders Act, 2022)	Cognitive Aspect	Perceptions	Subject of Change	brown refugee entrepreneurs	'brown refugees' is a binary signifier (brown and refugee carry binary opposition within themselves)	The binary opposition is 'we won't be seeing brown refugee entrepreneurs'. This phrase suggests that there has been a significant change that will affect the visibility of brown refugee entrepreneurs in the future. By using the phrase 'won't be seeing', the speaker implies that there has been a deliberate attempt to exclude or marginalise brown refugees. The phrase 'brown refugee entrepreneurs' is also significant because it highlights the intersectional identity of these individuals. The use of the term 'brown' implies that these entrepreneurs are not white, which is often associated with privilege and power. By identifying them. This quote shows the dominant binary opposition between 'refugee' and 'entrepreneur'. The term 'refugee' is the dominant term as it carries connotations of displacement, vulnerability, and lack of agency. The term 'entrepreneur', on the other hand, connotes power, success, and agency. By rejecting the term 'refugee entrepreneur', the speaker challenges the assumption that being a refugee defines her identity and limits her potential. She may be implying that her entrepreneurial identity should be seen as separate from her status as a refugee and that she wants to be recognised for her skills and achievements as an entrepreneur rather than solely as a refugee.	Government policy	Race	The Nationality and Borders Act reinforces power imbalances between different groups of people. The quote suggests that the Act will have a negative impact on 'brown entrepreneurs', implying that people of colour will be disproportionately affected by the Act.	The Nationality and Borders Act reinforces the representation of refugees and people of colour as 'others' who do not belong in the UK. This representation perpetuates negative stereotypes and reinforces power imbalances between different groups of people.	The Nationality and Borders Act intersects with other forms of oppression, such as race and refugee status. The Act creates additional barriers for refugees and entrepreneurs of colour, who may already face discrimination and marginalisation based on these intersecting identities.	The quote suggests that the Nationality and Borders Act may further marginalise refugees and entrepreneurs of colour. The Act creates distinctions between different types of refugees, which can contribute to a sense of marginalisation and exclusion for those deemed less deserving.	The Nationality and Borders Act may further marginalise refugees and entrepreneurs of colour. The Act creates distinctions between different types of refugees, which can contribute to a sense of marginalisation and exclusion for those deemed less deserving.
D3	INT-032	I hate being called a refugee entrepreneur	Cognitive Aspect	Perceptions	Subject of Change	refugee vs entrepreneur	refugee	The quote shows the dominant binary opposition between 'refugee' and 'entrepreneur'. The term 'refugee' is the dominant term as it carries connotations of displacement, vulnerability, and lack of agency. The term 'entrepreneur', on the other hand, connotes power, success, and agency. By rejecting the term 'refugee entrepreneur', the speaker challenges the assumption that being a refugee defines her identity and limits her potential. She may be implying that her entrepreneurial identity should be seen as separate from her status as a refugee and that she wants to be recognised for her skills and achievements as an entrepreneur rather than solely as a refugee.	Host country	Demographics	The quote shows power imbalances between 'refugee entrepreneurs' and entrepreneurs who are not refugees. The discourse surrounding entrepreneurship reinforces these power imbalances by marginalising refugee entrepreneurs.	The quote raises questions about how entrepreneurs are represented in society and the media. The quote suggests that the discourse surrounding entrepreneurship can reinforce power imbalances and marginalise certain groups of entrepreneurs.	The quote highlights the intersectionality of identity categories, such as refugee status and entrepreneurial identity. The quote suggests that being labelled as a 'refugee entrepreneur' can be stigmatising and limiting, particularly for refugees who are people of colour.	The subjective experience of being a 'refugee entrepreneur.' The quote suggests that being labelled as a 'refugee entrepreneur' can be stigmatising and limiting.	The discourse surrounding entrepreneurship can contribute to this marginalisation by reinforcing power imbalances and stigmatising refugee entrepreneurs.
I1	INT-021	I'm having conversations with investors, but because they're not, I think they're wary because firstly, they do not have a good understanding of the market, although it's a \$2.2 trillion market like the Muslim market in general. So it's huge, there's huge potential, but they're very much like raising Angel investment. But I don't come from a background where I could be like go to a rich relative and be like, can you give me few 1000 pounds? Yeah, and then I don't have that. Yeah, if it doesn't work like in terms of going to pitch events to contact individual angels, then I might just crowdfund a little.	Behavioural Aspect	Investment	Agent of Change	they (investors) do not have a good understanding of the market vs \$2.2 trillion market	they (investors) do not have a good understanding of the market	To deconstruct the dominant term in the first opposition, which is 'investors not having a good understanding of the market', the questioning of why investors are not knowledgeable about the market. It is because they lack the necessary information or expertise, or it is because they have preconceived notions or biases about the Muslim market? This binary opposition reveals a hidden assumption that investors are expected to have a good understanding of the market before investing, but the entrepreneur in the text feels that this is not the case for her due to her Muslim background. In the second opposition, 'raising Angel investment' is the dominant term, which implies a traditional way of raising funds through personal connections and wealthy relatives. However, the entrepreneur acknowledges that she does not have access to such resources, revealing an underlying bias that assumes entrepreneurs should have a wealthy and well-connected background to be successful.	Government policy, opportunity structures & host country	Social capital	The investor has power in the situation, as they are the ones who can potentially provide funding for the entrepreneur's venture. However, the entrepreneur feels that the investor lacks understanding of the market and may be wary due to this lack of understanding.	The entrepreneur represents herself and her venture to the investor but also feels frustrated by potential misunderstandings or assumptions made by the investor.	The mention of the Muslim market highlights a potential intersectional factor, as the entrepreneur may face additional barriers or discrimination based on her religious identity.	The entrepreneur is sharing her personal experience of not coming from a background where she has access to wealthy relatives who can easily provide funding. She also mentions her potential plan to crowdfund as an alternative.	The entrepreneur mentions her lack of access to wealthy relatives, which could be seen as a form of marginalisation or lack of privilege compared to others who may have easier access to funding.
I5	INT-023	You know for a long time, specially during lockdown having guilt, I felt to this day have guilt when I speak to (name removed) because I feel she has invested so much time in me and I haven't proved myself in terms of business. And every time everytime I tried to, make it successful in the way I want to, I know I have the potential but I am just not moving ahead and I don't know why? I don't know whether it is the business idea or how much time I have given to it.	Emotional Aspect	Resilience	Process of Change	guilt vs successful potential vs not moving ahead business idea vs time	successful potential business idea	The dominant term here is 'successful', which is associated with positive outcomes and achievements, while 'guilt' is seen as negative and suggests that the speaker has failed to meet certain expectations. Potential vs not moving ahead: The dominant term here is 'potential', which suggests that the speaker has the ability to succeed, while 'not moving ahead' implies a lack of progress or growth. Business idea vs. time: The dominant term here is 'business idea', which suggests that the success of the venture depends on the quality of the idea, while 'time' suggests that the amount of effort or dedication put into the venture is also important. By deconstructing the dominant term in each of these pairs, we can reveal some hidden assumptions and biases in the speaker's words: Success is often associated with financial gain and status, while guilt may be tied to societal expectations or personal beliefs about what it means to be successful. The concept of 'potential' implies a certain level of privilege, as not every one has access to resources or opportunities that would allow them to succeed. The idea	Opportunity structures, government policy & host country factors & push and pull factors	Demographic, human capital, social capital	The quote highlights the power dynamics at play in the entrepreneur's relationship with (name removed), who has invested time in her. The entrepreneur feels guilty for not being able to prove herself in terms of business, which implies a power imbalance where the investor holds some authority over the entrepreneur's success.	The quote also sheds light on the discourse and representation of refugee women in entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur's struggle to make her business successful may reflect broader systemic issues in how refugee women are represented and supported in entrepreneurship discourse.	The quote also touches upon intersectionality as the entrepreneur mentions her struggle to make her business successful and the potential barriers that may be hindering her progress. These barriers may be linked to her refugee status and her Iranian background, impacting her access to resources and opportunities.	The quote also reveals the entrepreneur's subjectivity as she reflects on her guilt and potential reasons for not being able to move ahead with her business. This personal perspective highlights the importance of considering marginalised group/individual experiences and perspectives.	The quote speaks to the experience of marginalisation that the entrepreneur may feel as a refugee woman starting a business in a new country. This marginalisation can be seen through the lens of her struggle to access resources and opportunities that are often more easily available to those who hold privilege in society.

The analytical process began with an intensive examination of each interview extract through the theoretical framework of Derridean deconstruction. This initial phase involved identifying binary oppositions within the text, examining dominant terms that shaped meaning, and uncovering hidden assumptions and biases embedded within the narratives. This deconstructive approach provided the foundation for understanding how language both reflects and constructs the experiences of refugee women entrepreneurs.

Following this initial deconstruction, each extract underwent what I term 'kaleidoscopic analysis,' where the text was systematically reexamined through five distinct yet interconnected tenets of Feminist Poststructural Discourse Analysis. Through the lens of power relations, the analysis revealed how institutional structures, social hierarchies, and economic relationships shaped entrepreneurial experiences. The subjectivity lens illuminated how participants constructed their identities and exercised agency within constraining circumstances. Examination through the marginalisation lens exposed systemic mechanisms of exclusion and strategies of resistance. The intersectionality lens revealed how multiple identities intersected to create unique challenges and opportunities. Finally, the representation lens uncovered how participants represented themselves and were represented by others within broader cultural narratives.

The translation from micro to meso-level analysis emerged through systematic aggregation of these granular insights. Patterns began to emerge as binary oppositions recurred across multiple extracts, power dynamics manifested in similar ways, and experiences of marginalisation echoed throughout different narratives. These patterns were then synthesised into broader theoretical categories that illuminated overarching narratives about refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences. This process involved connecting individual experiences to structural patterns.

The analytical process can be demonstrated through examination of the raw data presented in the accompanying Excel extract. At the micro-level, each quote revealed specific binary

oppositions, particular manifestations of power, individual experiences of marginalisation, personal intersectional challenges, and unique forms of self-representation. These granular insights, when examined collectively, contributed to broader theoretical understanding about structural power relations, collective experiences of marginalisation, shared patterns of resistance, common intersectional challenges, and dominant representations in refugee women's entrepreneurship.

While the main thesis presents findings at the meso level for theoretical clarity and impact, it is crucial to understand that each insight emerged from multiple instances of this detailed micro-analysis. This appendix thus provides methodological transparency, demonstrating the rigorous analytical process that supported the development of broader theoretical insights. This approach ensures that the theoretical contributions are firmly grounded in detailed empirical analysis while allowing for theoretical abstraction that advances understanding of refugee women's entrepreneurship.

Micro Analysis - FPDA (Derridean Deconstruction)

Power

Host Country Factors

Host Country Pressures

'The expectation that I would come, I would need to start a business at some point, and I think for me as well, which is something that, I think, it is basically people's expectations.' - RE1

The assumption behind *'start a business'* is that it is a necessary and desirable goal for refugees, specifically, in this case, for RE1. This assumption implies that entrepreneurship is the best way for refugees to integrate into a new society and succeed. However, this assumption is biased and overlooks the challenges and barriers that may prevent refugees from starting a business, such as discrimination, lack of access to resources, and limited social networks. This assumption assumes that refugees should assimilate into the dominant culture by adopting capitalist values rather than recognising and valuing the diversity of cultures and experiences that refugees bring to society. The dominant term *'start a business'* reinforces a narrow and biased perspective on refugee integration and success and ignores the complexities of the refugee experience. The quote suggests that there is tension between

RE1's personal needs or desires and the expectations that others have for her.

The dominant term is *'people's expectations,'* implying that she is subject to external pressures and influences that may not align with her goals or aspirations. This dominant term may also carry certain assumptions or biases, such as the assumption that refugees or individuals from certain backgrounds are expected to start businesses or the belief that entrepreneurship is the only or best path to success. By deconstructing this dominant term, RE1 may be able to question and challenge these assumptions and carve out her own path based on her individual needs and values.

Push and Pull factors

Pushed by Challenges, Pulled by Ambition

'Uh, because you know, we've come from an unprivileged background in a lot of sense, like we don't get support from our countries or anything like that, so it feels like I can't just stop here. I have to continue. And you've got another part of expectations where you've got people interested in investing, or they're giving you ideas and telling you what they think is the next step.' - RE2

The dominant term implies that there are systemic issues that prevent individuals from marginalised backgrounds from accessing resources and support that could help them succeed as entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the term *'investing/giving ideas'* suggests that there are people or institutions that have the power and resources to support entrepreneurs, but they may have their own agendas or biases that influence the type of support they offer.

This could reveal hidden assumptions and biases around who has access to resources and power in the entrepreneurial world.

Unprivileged background and lack of support: *'Uh, because you know, we've come from an unprivileged background in a lot of sense, like we don't get support from our countries or anything like that'*

In this segment, the RE2 acknowledges the fact that she comes from an unprivileged background and that her country does not offer her support. This highlights the unequal distribution of power and resources within society and suggests that some individuals are more disadvantaged than others. This segment also highlights the intersectionality of her identity, as her experiences are shaped by both her gender and her refugee status. Their discussions delve into the emergence of entrepreneurship due to the absence of alternative pathways, painting a clear picture of the substantial push factors at play.

Feeling obligated to continue: *'so it feels like I can't just stop here. I have to continue'*

In this segment, RE2 feels obligated to continue pursuing her goals despite her challenges. This suggests that she knows the power structures at play and recognises the need to push back against them. It also highlights her agency, as she is actively shaping her future.

Expectations and Pressure from investors: *'And you've got another part of expectations where you've got people who are interested in investing, or they're giving you ideas and telling you what they think is the next step.'*

In this segment, she acknowledges the presence of external pressure and expectations from others. This suggests that the speaker is not only navigating her own personal struggles but also contending with the expectations and demands of others. It also highlights the power dynamics at play, as she is not in complete control of the situation and is subject to the influence of others.

Concurrently, RE2's narrative unveils another layer of push factors: external pressures and expectations. The mention of external actors, particularly investors influencing her journey, illustrates the complex maze of expectations that refugees must navigate, further pushing them in specific directions.

Navigating the Push and Pull of Entrepreneurial Success

'You know everybody is looking at you to succeed because ultimately that kind of floods down, doesn't it? But that was something that I really enjoyed at the time, and it started to, gain a certain level of popularity. Being me, the competitive person, I always had to be ahead of everyone else. So by the end of it, I had to have my pop up all my tickets like sold out, blah blah blah.' - RE1

The term *'ahead of everyone else'* assumes that there is a linear and hierarchical order of progress, where some people or businesses are ahead of others, and being ahead is desirable. This assumption privileges certain ways of measuring success and progress over others and reinforces a competitive mindset. This assumption also implies that success is a zero-sum game, where there are winners and losers, and being ahead means that others are falling behind. This reinforces a scarcity mindset, where resources are limited, and competition is necessary to get ahead.

It mistakenly equates success solely to individual merit, ignoring the roles of privilege, access, and luck, thus upholding the myth of meritocracy.

This dominant term *'ahead of everyone else'* reveals hidden assumptions and biases that reinforce a competitive and individualistic mindset while ignoring the role of privilege and systemic factors in determining success.

The Pressure of Success: *'You know everybody is looking at you to succeed because ultimately that kind of floods down, doesn't it? But that was something that I really enjoyed at the time, and it started to, gain a certain level of popularity.'*

RE1 reflects on the pressure she feels as an entrepreneur to succeed, noting that others are looking to her as an example. She highlights the pressure to succeed and the expectations placed upon entrepreneurs by society. The use of the phrase *'everybody is looking at you'* implies that there is a certain level of surveillance that entrepreneurs face.

The reference to success *'flooding down'* suggests the trickle-down effect that success can have on those around the entrepreneur. The speaker acknowledges the pressure but also enjoys the attention and popularity of being a successful entrepreneur.

Competitive Drive: *'Being me, the competitive person, I always had to be ahead of everyone else. So by the end of it, I had to have my pop up all my tickets like sold out, blah blah blah.'*

This segment reveals the discourse of subjectivity and power in the entrepreneurial context. Her competitive nature drives her to strive for success and to outdo her competitors. The phrase *'had to be ahead of everyone else'* implies a sense of competition among entrepreneurs. The use of the phrase *'sold out'* suggests that the speaker successfully achieved her goal and satisfied the expectations placed upon her as an entrepreneur. The repetition of *'blah blah blah'* at the end of the segment suggests a dismissal of the expectations and pressures that come with being an entrepreneur, perhaps indicating a desire to be seen as more than just a successful businessperson.

Striving for Success: *'I had to have my pop up all my tickets like sold out, blah blah blah.'*

She notes that she wanted to sell out all her pop-up restaurant tickets, demonstrating her desire to be successful and make a name for herself. This segment touches on themes of intersectionality and marginalisation, as the speaker is a refugee woman trying to establish herself in a competitive industry. Her drive for success can be seen as a response to her challenges due to her intersectional identity.

The Drive to Contribute

'I am claiming universal credit from the job centre. I don't like to be a person who just takes. I want to be a productive person.' - RE4

The hidden biases and assumptions in the quote may include the assumption that people who claim universal credit are seen as *'takers'* and not productive members of society. The implication is that RE4 wants to be seen as a productive member of society rather than being stigmatised as dependent on welfare benefits.

This assumption is based on the societal belief that those who receive welfare are somehow less valuable or productive than those who don't. It also assumes that she controls her ability to be productive without considering factors such as access to resources, social support networks, or systemic barriers that may prevent her from achieving her goals.

Claiming Universal Credit: *'I am claiming universal credit from the job centre.'*

This segment highlights the RE4's current financial situation and their reliance on the state for support. It reveals her status as a beneficiary of the welfare system and their need for financial assistance.

Self-sufficiency: *'I don't like to be a person who just takes.'*

This segment reveals her attitude towards her current situation. It suggests that she feels a sense of shame or guilt for receiving financial support from the state. The use of the word 'just' implies that she does not want to be solely defined by their reliance on welfare.

The desire for productivity: *'I want to be a productive person.'*

This segment highlights her desire to contribute to society and be viewed as productive. It reveals her aspirations to move beyond her current situation and become financially independent.

The quote reflects the broader societal discourse around welfare and productivity, where individuals receiving support may be stigmatised and viewed as 'takers' rather than 'productive' members of society.

Opportunity Structures

Funding Opportunities

'It's been really hard to get funding, so anything that I have invested in the business has been through my own money, so working and anything that I could spare over in terms of cash at the end of the month because literally in terms of my position being a single mother, I'm living pay check to pay check.' - FE2

The assumption behind 'get funding' is that it is a necessary and desirable means of financing a business. This assumption implies that external funding sources, such as loans or investments, are the best way to support entrepreneurship. However, this assumption is biased and overlooks the challenges and barriers that may prevent entrepreneurs, particularly single mothers, from accessing funding.

Furthermore, this assumption assumes that entrepreneurship should be self-sufficient and self-funded rather than recognising the systemic barriers that may limit the financial resources available to marginalised entrepreneurs. The dominant term 'getting funding' reinforces a narrow and biased perspective on entrepreneurship and ignores the challenges faced by marginalised entrepreneurs, particularly single mothers.

Personal investment: *'so anything that I have invested in the business has been through my own money'*

This segment reveals the RE2's personal sacrifices and financial investments, exposing the gendered nature of risk-taking and investment in entrepreneurial ventures. This could also reflect the absence of support from financial institutions or other sources, leaving the speaker with few options for funding her business.

Sacrifice: *'so working and anything that I could spare over in terms of cash at the end of the month'*

This segment shows RE2's efforts to allocate her limited financial resources towards her business, a common challenge for women entrepreneurs who often have additional responsibilities such as caring for children. This could also reveal the RE2's commitment and determination to succeed despite these challenges.

Position as a single mother: *'because literally in terms of my position being a single mother'*

The fact that the RE2 identifies as a single mother is an important aspect of her lived experiences and how she may face unique challenges and discrimination in her personal and professional life. It depicts her multiple identities and how they intersect.

Living pay check to pay check: *'I'm living pay check to pay check.'*

This segment highlights RE2's financial insecurity and difficulties in maintaining a stable income. The phrase 'living pay check to pay check' speaks to the reality of economic insecurity for many individuals and the constant struggle to make ends meet. This segment also exposes the broader systemic issues of unequal distribution of resources and opportunities that contribute to financial insecurity for marginalised groups.

Individual Opportunities

'I know I'm creative in that sense. I know none of my competitors will think about anything like this, so for me, it's like, yes, let's have a conversation.' - RE1

The dominant term in this binary opposition is *'I'm creative,'* which suggests that creativity is a desirable and important trait for an entrepreneur and that RE1 believes she possesses this trait in contrast to her competitors. However, this dominant term also carries assumptions and biases. It assumes that creativity is the primary factor that sets successful entrepreneurs apart from their competitors and overlooks the importance of other factors such as market research, planning, and execution. Additionally, it assumes that creativity is an innate talent or gift rather than a skill that can be learned and developed through practice and experience.

The term *'my competitors'* is the contrasting term in this binary opposition. It implies that the RE1 sees entrepreneurship as a competition, where success is measured by being better than others. This assumption overlooks the potential for collaboration and cooperation in business and reinforces a competitive and individualistic mindset that can limit innovation and growth.

Furthermore, this term assumes that RE1's competitors are all similar in their thinking and approach to business, which overlooks the diversity and complexity of the entrepreneurial landscape. The binary opposition of *'I'm creative'* versus *'my competitors'* reveals her beliefs and biases about entrepreneurship and highlights the importance of recognising the complexity and diversity of the field.

Asserting Creative Agency: *'I know I am creative in that sense.'*

RE1 asserts her own creative agency and positions herself as a unique and innovative thinker by suggesting that her competitors would not have thought of the same collaboration idea. This highlights the importance of individual subjectivity in entrepreneurship and challenges the dominant narrative of business success as solely dependent on objective measures of skill and knowledge.

Challenging Competitor Power Dynamics: *'I know none of my competitors will think about anything like this.'*

By expressing her confidence in her own creativity and suggesting that her competitors are less likely to come up with similar ideas, the RE1 is positioning herself as innovative and potentially more powerful than her competitors. This challenges the traditional power dynamic of competition, where competitors are often seen as equal in their abilities and opportunities.

She challenges the power dynamics between competitors by suggesting a collaborative approach rather than a competitive one. This challenges the dominant narrative of competition as the only means of business success and highlights the potential for alternative power structures.

Defying Stereotypes of Competitive Entrepreneurship: *'I know none of my competitors will think about anything like this.'*

RE1's willingness to collaborate with her competitors challenges the dominant narrative of cut-throat competition in entrepreneurship and defies stereotypes of business owners as solely focused on individual success. This challenged cultural representations of entrepreneurs and highlights the potential for alternative modes of business success.

Overcoming Structural Barriers: *'so for me, its like yes, lets have a conversation.'*

Her willingness to collaborate with competitors can reflect the structural barriers that marginalised groups, such as refugees, face in business. Collaboration can be a means of overcoming these barriers and building collective power. This highlights the importance of addressing systemic marginalisation in entrepreneurship.

RE1's collaboration with her competitors can also reflect the intersections of identity, such as gender, race, and refugee status, and the potential for collective action across these intersecting identities. This highlights the potential for intersectional collaboration in entrepreneurship and the importance of recognising and valuing diverse perspectives and experiences.

Capitalising on opportunities

'She can't just be that stupid and not look into all these opportunities, 'cause she's one of the first to start doing this. Then if she continues, she's going to make great success. So everyone is calculating success in a way that they think is right.' - RE1

By positioning *'stupid'* against being *'one of the first,'* RE1 suggests that if she doesn't take advantage of the opportunities presented, she is foolish and lacking in intelligence. However, this assumption is based on the idea that success in entrepreneurship is solely dependent on being the first to enter a market or industry, which may not necessarily be true.

Additionally, by using the phrase *'everyone is calculating success in a way that they think is right,'* she acknowledges that success is subjective and can be defined in different ways by different people, yet still seems to place value on being *'one of the first.'* This reveals a potential bias towards the importance of being an early mover in entrepreneurship and a potential assumption that success is solely determined by being the first to do something.

Challenging assumptions: *'She can't just be that stupid and not look into all these opportunities.'*

In this segment, she is responding to pressure from others to explore all available opportunities for success. The word *'just'* suggests that there may be reasons beyond her control that prevent her from pursuing all opportunities, but she is still being judged harshly for not doing so.

Early adoption and advantage in entrepreneurship: *'cause she's one of the first to start doing this.'*

Here, RE1 highlights her position as an early adopter of a particular activity or business idea. This could justify her choices or suggest that she has some expertise or advantage in the area.

Optimal risk and the pressure to succeed: *'Then if she continues, she's going to make great success.'*

In this segment, she expresses optimism about her future success. The use of *'if'* suggests that there may be some uncertainty or risk involved, but she is still motivated by the pressure to be successful.

Negotiating subjective definitions of success: *'So everyone is calculating success in a way that they think is right.'*

Here, RE1 acknowledges that the pressure to succeed is subjective and can be calculated differently. This could be seen as a way of pushing back against external expectations and asserting her agency and values.

Financial Barriers

'The only worry is money; how can I get enough, where can I get a loan from? That is the only thing stopping me from starting. I know I can cook and do a lot of different things.' - RE4

The first binary opposition is *'worry about money,'* which carries the assumption that having enough money is necessary to start a business. This assumption implies that the lack of financial resources is the most significant barrier to entrepreneurship and overlooks other potential challenges, such as access to markets, networks, or training. It also assumes that traditional funding sources, such as loans, are the only means to secure capital rather than recognising the importance of alternative financing models, such as crowdfunding or microloans.

The second binary opposition is *'stopping me from starting,'* which implies that the lack of financial resources is a significant obstacle that prevents the woman from pursuing her entrepreneurial aspirations. However, this dominant term overlooks the agency and creativity that the woman demonstrates by recognising her own skills and abilities to cook and do different things. It also assumes that entrepreneurship is an individualistic pursuit, rather than recognising the importance of community support and collaboration in building successful businesses.

Entrepreneurial Intention and Financial Barriers: *'The only worry is money; how can I get enough, where can I get a loan from?'*

The quote introduces the discourse on the challenges faced by RE4 who has an entrepreneurial intention but is hindered by financial barriers. She expresses her concern about not having enough money and not knowing where to obtain a loan, preventing her from starting her own business.

Money as a Barrier to Entrepreneurial Agency: *'the only thing stopping me from starting'*

The word *'only'* in the quote reveals RE4's perception of money as the sole obstacle to realising her entrepreneurial intention. This language reinforces the idea that money is the only factor determining success in entrepreneurship, neglecting other significant factors such as skills, networks, and resources. Furthermore, the mention of obtaining a loan indicates that she is already in a disadvantaged position, where she relies on external sources for financial support.

Refugee Women and Financial Exclusion

The quote highlights the intersectional identity of the RE4 as a refugee woman who is already marginalised due to her status as a refugee and is further excluded from financial opportunities due to her gender and economic status. This intersectionality of identities creates a power dynamic that restricts her agency to pursue her entrepreneurial intention.

Navigating the Financial Landscape

The quote also sheds light on the structural barriers that refugee women face when navigating the financial landscape. Due to systemic discrimination, refugees and women face significant obstacles in accessing financial resources and support. This structural exclusion results in her limited agency to pursue her entrepreneurial goals.

Structural Barriers for Refugee Women Entrepreneurs

The quote underscores the challenges faced by refugee women in pursuing entrepreneurship due to financial exclusion and structural barriers. To overcome these obstacles, there is a need for structural changes in the financial system that address the systemic exclusion of marginalised groups. By challenging these barriers, refugee women can gain agency and pursue their entrepreneurial goals, contributing to economic empowerment and social inclusion.

Monetary Myths

'I don't feel it because, for me entrepreneurship is always related to money' - RE3

The binary opposition in the quote is *'entrepreneurship'* versus *'money'*, and the dominant term is *'money'*. This suggests that the RE3's perception of entrepreneurship is heavily influenced by financial concerns and that the goal of entrepreneurship is primarily seen as a means to make money. It also implies that she may not see herself as a successful entrepreneur unless she is making a significant amount of money. This bias towards financial success may lead her to overlook other important aspects of entrepreneurship, such as innovation, creativity, and social impact.

Challenging Dominant Narratives: *'I don't feel it because, for me, entrepreneurship is always related to money.'*

RE3 challenges the dominant narrative of entrepreneurship as a pursuit driven by passion and creativity. Instead, she highlights the material and economic realities that often shape entrepreneurial ventures for marginalised individuals who may not have the luxury to focus on their passion projects solely. This highlights the intersectionality of identities and how they shape experiences of power and marginalisation.

Deconstructing the Ideology of Entrepreneurship:

Her statement also deconstructs the notion of entrepreneurship as an inherently positive or empowering pursuit. By associating it primarily with money, she reveals the capitalist underpinnings of the entrepreneurial discourse and its narrow focus on profit and economic gain. This highlights the ways in which language and discourse can shape and reproduce power dynamics.

Recognising Alternative Forms of Economic Participation:

RE3's statement ultimately shows the limitations of the dominant discourse of entrepreneurship and the need to recognise and value alternative forms of economic and social participation. By emphasising the role of money in entrepreneurship, she also sheds light on the economic disparities and power imbalances that exist within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Bias Towards Product-Based Entrepreneurship

'So how is he able to turn that into money? We didn't know, so it seemed more practical for people who are trying to sell a product. As opposed to a service, so make things and we will help you sell.' - RE3

The dominant term *'product'* implies that selling a tangible, physical item is more valuable and practical than offering a service. This assumption may reflect a bias towards the traditional business model of producing and selling goods rather than the newer service-based economy. Additionally, the use of *'we'* in *'we will help you sell'* suggests a potential power dynamic, with the RE3 or company offering their assistance to those who produce goods, potentially reinforcing the idea that the value lies in the product rather than the service provided. The statement also implies a lack of understanding or knowledge about how to monetise a service, which could reflect a lack of experience or familiarity with service-based business models.

Seeking Clarity and Guidance on Monetisation Segment: *'So how is he able to turn that into money?'*

This segment implies a sense of confusion or lack of knowledge about how to turn a skill or talent into a profitable venture. It suggests that RE3 may seek guidance or mentorship to understand better how to monetise her abilities.

Limitations of Knowledge and Resources in Entrepreneurship: *'We didn't know, so it seemed more practical for people who are trying to sell a product.'*

This segment highlights the limitations of her knowledge or resources about entrepreneurship. It suggests that she may not have received adequate guidance for individuals interested in offering services rather than products.

Product-Centric Entrepreneurship: *'As opposed to a service, so make things and we will help you sell.'*

This segment reveals a bias towards product-based entrepreneurship in the mentorship programme, which may reflect a broader societal emphasis on tangible goods as a measure of success. It suggests that services may be undervalued or underrepresented in the programme and that the speaker may face challenges in promoting their services.

This quote highlights the challenges faced by individuals seeking to enter entrepreneurship, particularly when their skills or offerings do not fit within dominant narratives of success or profitability. It also suggests the importance of mentorship and support tailored to diverse entrepreneurs' unique needs and goals.

The power dynamic exposes how the emphasis on product-based entrepreneurship may privilege certain offerings over others and the challenges service-based entrepreneurs face to navigate this bias. It also reflects the broader societal power dynamics around what types of entrepreneurship are valued or seen as successful and how resources and support are distributed.

Finally, it highlights the importance of recognising and addressing power imbalances and biases in entrepreneurship programmes to promote equitable access to resources and support for all types of entrepreneurs.

Social Capital

Navigating Social Introductions

'But exactly what do I do with the introduction? And those introductions are huge for me. And I felt so much guilt, held onto so much guilt for a long time because I felt like I was not providing any value. You know, and you've been given this opportunity and you haven't taken it. Run with it. You know, like you're expected to do yes. But nobody's telling you what. What do you do and then, and how do you even maintain these. Then knowing how to network these leads. These people do it from a very young age. In going to your school, to your private schools, your taught and you're leading the country you're taught, this is natural. The alumni of all these schools have rich people in all of these places. I mean, how do you network and then put your, you are taught to have confidence from day one. But when you come from a community that doesn't have any confidence at all, is told to be quiet, don't stand out, just get on with it, it takes a lot of work to change your mindset, to overcome those barriers to understand I have value that I can provide and give as well.' - RE2

The assumption behind *'having introductions'* is that it is a key factor for success and advancement in professional and social settings. This assumption implies that access to social networks and connections is essential for individuals to succeed, particularly in industries or communities where these networks are dominant. However, this assumption is biased and overlooks individuals' challenges and barriers in accessing these networks, particularly if they come from marginalised communities or lack social capital. The assumption that networking and social skills are innate or easily acquired rather than recognising the systemic inequalities and biases that can impact one's ability to network and build relationships.

The dominant term *'having introductions'* reinforces a narrow and biased perspective on success and social mobility and ignores the challenges faced by individuals from marginalised communities in accessing and navigating social networks.

The weight of introductions: *'But exactly what do I do with the introduction? And those introductions are huge for me.'*

This quote segment demonstrates the importance of introductions and networking in accessing opportunities and resources. As a refugee woman entrepreneur, the RE2 recognises the value of introductions but is unsure how to leverage them to advance her business.

The burden of guilt: *'And I felt so much guilt, held onto so much guilt for a long time because I felt like I was not providing any value. You know, and you've been given this opportunity, and you haven't taken it.'*

RE2 feels guilty for not being able to provide value despite being given an opportunity. This guilt may stem from societal pressures to succeed and contribute to society, which can be particularly strong for individuals from marginalised communities who may face additional obstacles to success.

Lack of guidance: *'But nobody's telling you what. What do you do and then, and how do you even maintain these.'*

This quote segment reveals a lack of guidance and support for individuals, particularly those from marginalised communities, navigating the intricacies of networking and maintaining connections. RE2 recognises that this skill is often taught in privileged communities and schools but may not be accessible to everyone.

The role of background: *'In going to your school, to your private schools, your taught, and you're leading the country you're taught, this is natural. The alumni of all these schools have rich people in all of these places. I mean, how do you network and then put your, you are taught to have confidence from day one.'*

This quote segment indicates the role of privilege and access to resources in developing networking skills and confidence. RE2 notes that individuals from privileged backgrounds may have an inherent advantage in networking due to their education and social connections.

Overcoming barriers and changing mindsets: *'But when you come from a community that doesn't have any confidence at all, it's told to be quiet, don't stand out, just get on with it, it takes a lot of work to change your mindset, to overcome those barriers to understand I have value that I can provide and give as well.'*

The quote emphasises the need to overcome societal barriers and change one's mindset to recognise and value one's abilities and contributions. RE2 acknowledges the challenge of breaking out societal norms that may discourage individuals, particularly women from marginalised communities, from standing out and asserting themselves. Her perspective also challenges the dominant narrative that success is based solely on individual merit rather than on access to social capital and systemic advantages.

Human Capital Harnessing Human Capital

'I would never accept to be behind and be the person who is still figuring. Figuring things out. So yeah, that's just this part of me, but I, I'm not. I'm not patient at all. I think as well like being an entrepreneur means taking it slow, really doing your research and, you know, allocating like all your resources and coming up with a strong plan before launching.' - RE1

The assumption behind *'taking it slow'* is that it is necessary and desirable for entrepreneurs to take a cautious and deliberate approach to launching a business. This assumption implies that rushing into entrepreneurship without proper planning or preparation is unwise and likely to lead to failure. However, this assumption is biased and overlooks the importance of agility, risk-taking, and resilience in entrepreneurship.

This assumption is that there is a singular *'right'* way to approach entrepreneurship rather than recognising the diversity of experiences, skills, and resources that entrepreneurs bring to their work. Overall, the dominant term *'taking it slow'* reinforces a narrow and biased perspective on entrepreneurship and ignores the value of experimentation, learning, and innovation in building successful businesses.

Balancing Identity and Expectations in Entrepreneurship: *'I would never accept to be behind and be the person who is still figuring. Figuring things out.'*

This segment reflects the RE1's agency and desire to be proactive and decisive in entrepreneurship. The phrase *'accept to be behind'* implies a sense of urgency and a need to keep up with the fast-paced nature of entrepreneurship. However, it also reflects cultural narratives around entrepreneurship that prioritise quick success and overlook the value of learning and experimentation.

The Pressure to Conform to Entrepreneurial Norms: *'I'm not patient at all.'*

This segment reflects the RE1's personal trait of impatience, which can both drive and hinder her entrepreneurial pursuits. It also reflects societal expectations of entrepreneurship as a fast-paced and high-risk endeavour, which can contribute to a culture of impatience and quick decision-making.

Gendered Expectations of Patience in Entrepreneurship: *'Being an entrepreneur means taking it slow, really doing your research and allocating all your resources and coming up with a strong plan before launching.'*

This segment reflects a conflicting view with the previous segments, where the RE1 acknowledges the importance of taking a slower and more deliberate approach to entrepreneurship. It highlights the tension between the pressure to move quickly and the need to invest time and resources in planning and research. This segment also reflects cultural narratives around entrepreneurship that emphasise the importance of strategic planning and risk management, which can be more challenging for marginalised entrepreneurs with limited resources.

RE1's statements reveal the power dynamics at play in the field of entrepreneurship and how cultural narratives around entrepreneurship and business success can shape perceptions of viability and success, particularly for marginalised individuals such as refugees. Additionally, her reflection on her impatience and desire to not be *'behind'* can reflect the power dynamics in society and the pressure to conform to certain norms and expectations.

Evolution of Human Capital

'When you work for someone, you never upgrade yourself. But if you work for yourself, you're more independent, a more powerful you. You make your own plan.' - RE3

There is a hierarchy in terms of power and independence between working for someone else and working for yourself. *'Working for someone else means you never upgrade yourself'*, implying that personal and professional growth is not possible in that context.

The quote assumes that making your own plan is always preferable to having someone else make it for you. The quote also assumes that being independent and powerful are desirable qualities. There is a bias towards individualism and self-reliance rather than considering the potential benefits of collaboration or collective action.

Benefits of entrepreneurship: *'But if you work for yourself, you're more independent and powerful.'*

RE3 suggests that working for oneself is more empowering and independent than working for someone else. This segment also implies that working for oneself leads to personal growth.

Autonomy and self-determination: *'You make your own plan'*

The segment implies that working for herself will give her complete control over her own work and life. She suggests that making her own plan is a benefit of being self-employed.

The quote reflects a broader discourse around work and entrepreneurship. It suggests that working for oneself is a desirable and empowering option, which aligns with the discourse around entrepreneurship as a means of achieving success and independence. The language used in the quote also reflects a discourse around personal growth and self-improvement as important aspects of work.

The assumption that self-employment is inherently empowering can be seen as an overly romanticised view of entrepreneurship. It ignores potential challenges like financial instability, lack of work-life balance, or the isolation that can come with entrepreneurship.

Gender

Family Support to Entrepreneurial Aspiration

'I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business soon, within the next year. My husband has done a lot up until now with his business, and I know how tired he is.' - RE4

The hidden assumption that supporting her husband financially is the primary goal suggests that the woman's own aspirations or potential success in entrepreneurship may be overlooked or devalued. Additionally, the assumption that financial support for her husband is necessary and desirable may overlook other forms of support or empowerment that she may seek for herself and her family through entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial Intention and Gendered Roles: *'I want to help my husband, and I want to start my business soon, within the next year.'*

This segment highlights the RE4's entrepreneurial intention to start a business. Significantly, she mentions wanting to help her husband first, indicating the gendered roles and expectations that may exist in her culture or society. It is possible that she feels a sense of obligation to contribute to her husband's business or support him in some way. However, her desire to start a business shows she is challenging traditional gender norms and asserting her agency.

Women's Economic Empowerment: *'My husband has done a lot up until now with his business.'*

The mention of the husband's business suggests that the family may have some level of economic stability or security. However, the RE4's interest in starting her own business indicates a desire for further economic empowerment and independence. Moreover, as a refugee woman, she may face additional barriers to accessing resources and opportunities, making it all the more important for her to pursue her own entrepreneurial ambitions.

Entrepreneurial Ambitions and Personal Goals: *'I know how tired he is.'*

This segment reveals the RE4's consideration of her husband's well-being and workload. It suggests that she may be motivated by a desire to alleviate some of his burdens or achieve personal goals and ambitions outside her role as a wife. The mention of her husband's tiredness also highlights the importance of balancing personal aspirations with family responsibilities, which may be particularly challenging for refugee women facing multiple forms of marginalisation.

This quote demonstrates her desire to challenge traditional gender norms and assert her agency as an entrepreneur. She recognises her husband's contributions to the family's economic well-being but also wants to pursue her own ambitions and goals. The quote underscores the importance of empowering refugee women to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations, challenge traditional gender norms, and contribute to their household and community economies.

In addition, this quote illustrates the complex and intersecting factors that shape refugee women's economic empowerment and highlights the need for policies and programmes that support their entrepreneurial efforts.

Subjectivity

Opportunity Structures

Navigating Uncertainty

'I just want to know how to start how do I start from scratch I just don't know how to take that first step?' - RE4

In this quote, the dominant term in the binary opposition is *'take that first step,'* which implies a certain level of action or initiative. By contrast, *'how to start'* suggests a lack of knowledge or guidance in the beginning stages of entrepreneurship.

Deconstructing *'take that first step'* reveals the speaker's assumptions and biases about entrepreneurship, including the idea that success in entrepreneurship requires a willingness to take risks and make decisions and that taking action is necessary to make progress. Additionally, the emphasis on *'taking'* a step suggests a proactive and assertive approach to entrepreneurship, which may not be equally accessible to all individuals or groups due to various social and economic factors.

On the other hand, *'how to start'* highlights the challenges and obstacles that new entrepreneurs may face, such as a lack of resources or information. It also suggests that RE4 may feel overwhelmed or unsure about where to begin, possibly due to a lack of prior experience or support. By foregrounding the importance of starting from scratch and seeking guidance, she may acknowledge entrepreneurship's complex and multifaceted nature, which may require knowledge, skills, and resources to succeed.

A desire for Knowledge and guidance: *'I just want to know how to start'*

This quote segment expresses a desire for knowledge and guidance on beginning a specific task or project. RE4 seeks information to help her overcome a perceived barrier to entry or initiation.

Starting from scratch: *'how do I start from scratch'*

This segment emphasises her lack of prior experience or knowledge in the area she wishes to pursue. She sees herself as starting from the beginning, with no prior knowledge or resources to draw upon.

Uncertainty and apprehension: *'I just don't know how to take that first step?'*

This segment highlights her sense of uncertainty and apprehension about taking action. She may feel overwhelmed by the task ahead of her or unsure of her ability to succeed.

RE4 positions herself as lacking in knowledge and experience and seeks guidance from a perceived authority figure or expert.

However, the statement can also be read as challenging dominant narratives of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency, emphasising the need for support and resources to succeed. The discursive elements in the statement reflect how language use can construct and challenge subjectivities and power relations and how these discursive practices intersect with broader social, political, and economic structures.

Push and Pull Factors

From Job Seeker to Entrepreneurial Vision

'It's really difficult to get a job and if I was to start my business I would be able to run it myself. I want to be my own boss to be in control of what I do, I want to do my own thing.' - RE4

The binary oppositions are evident in *'employment'* vs. *'entrepreneurship,'* *'dependency'* vs. *'autonomy,'* and *'external control'* vs. *'self-direction.'* Within these contrasting pairs, the dominant terms that emerge are *'control,'* *'own boss,'* and *'my own thing.'* The narrative strongly alludes to the assumptions and biases associated with conventional employment and the allure of entrepreneurial autonomy.

The initial sentiment, *'It's really difficult to get a job,'* foregrounds the challenges faced by many in the contemporary job market, possibly hinting at systemic issues or personal experiences that have led to this perception. This is juxtaposed with the desire to *'start my business'* and *'be able to run it myself,'* suggesting an inclination towards self-reliance and a proactive response to perceived employment barriers.

The expressed aspiration to be *'my own boss'* and to be *'in control of what I do'* underscores a deeper yearning for autonomy and self-determination, a counter-narrative to the potential subjugation experienced in traditional employment structures. The bias here is evident in the contrast between passive job-seeking and active self-employment, with the latter painted in a more favourable light.

Furthermore, the phrase *'I want to do my own thing'* encapsulates a pursuit of individualism and the rejection of conventional pathways. It speaks to the broader cultural paradigm where entrepreneurial endeavours are often romanticized as the ultimate expression of personal agency and freedom from the confines of standard employment.

Difficulty in getting a job: *'It's really difficult to get a job'*

This segment highlights the RE4's struggles and challenges in getting a job. It suggests she has likely faced various obstacles, such as discrimination, lack of opportunities, or other forms of systemic barriers.

Possibility of running own business: *'If I was to start my business, I would be able to run it myself'*

This segment highlights her desire for self-employment and entrepreneurship. It suggests she sees starting their own business as a viable alternative to traditional employment.

Control and independence: *'I want to be my own boss to be in control of what I do'*

This segment highlights her desire for autonomy and control over their work. It suggests that she values independence and agency in their professional life.

Autonomy and Entrepreneurship: *'I want to do my own thing'*

This segment reiterates her desire for independence and control over her professional life. It suggests that she has a strong sense of self-determination and may have specific goals or interests she wants to pursue.

Navigating Entrepreneurial Decisions

'But I think. Uhm, it could be because maybe I didn't push for that idea as much, and it's because I didn't think that I could make a business out of it.' -RE1

'Push for that idea' implies that the entrepreneur has control over pursuing her ideas,

and that the lack of success results from her not putting enough effort into it. This assumes that success in entrepreneurship is solely based on the individual's actions and abilities.

'Didn't think that I could make a business out of it' suggests that the decision not to pursue the idea as a business was rational based on its perceived feasibility. However, this assumption relies on existing beliefs and assumptions about what is feasible and profitable in the market, which may not necessarily reflect the idea's true potential.

These binary oppositions reveal a bias towards individual agency and a narrow understanding of what constitutes a viable business idea.

Shaping Perspectives: *'But I think.'*

This segment is a self-reflexive statement that positions the RE1's forthcoming comments as a subjective perspective or interpretation rather than an objective fact. She acknowledges the potential for her analysis to be contested or challenged.

Overcoming Self-Doubt: *'Uhm, it could be because maybe I didn't push for that idea as much...'*

This segment reflects her self-reflection on her agency and role in shaping her entrepreneurial choices. She suggests that she may not have pursued a particular idea as much as she could have, potentially due to self-doubt or lack of confidence.

Challenging Dominant Narratives: *'...and it's because I didn't think that I could make a business out of it.'*

This segment reflects the broader cultural narratives around entrepreneurship and business success, which often privilege certain forms of knowledge and expertise over others. RE1 suggests that her self-doubt may have been shaped by these cultural narratives, which may have made her doubt the viability of her idea. Her statement reflects the complex ways language use can construct and challenge subjectivities and power relations. She positions herself as a reflective and self-aware agent but acknowledges the influence of cultural narratives and power structures in shaping her perceptions and choices.

Reflections and Momentum

'Just before I had left, because restaurants had started to call me in, so there was I, I just, I just thought you know, I've only been doing it for like six months before I had left, but somehow because I was the first who did something like this. I just got invites from restaurants and I kept thinking to myself. Oh yeah, so when you go back to Yemen? I will I resume with all of this because I had some, you know, I had some other posts in like in my archive, so I was like I'm just gonna download. I'm just going to upload stuff for like maybe twice a month or something and then just so that they can keep the momentum and then as soon as I'm back I'm just going to go on fire and then I was just going to get restaurant. Restaurants inviting you left right and centre, so it now that I think about it.' - RE1

The dominant term in the first part of the opposition, *'being the first who did something like this,'* implies a sense of novelty and originality, which suggests that the entrepreneur is innovative and creative in her approach to her business. The subordinate term in the second part of the opposition, *'resuming with all of this,'* implies a sense of continuation, which suggests that the entrepreneur plans to pick up where she left off and continue the success she had before leaving her home country.

However, upon deconstruction, it can be revealed that the assumption underlying the first part of the opposition is that being the first to do something automatically leads to success and recognition. This assumption may be problematic as it ignores the various other factors that contribute to success, such as access to resources, networks, and support systems.

Additionally, the assumption underlying the second part of the opposition is that the entrepreneur can easily resume her success without considering the potential challenges she may face, such as adjusting to a new market or re-establishing relationships with previous clients.

Innovation and Expertise in Entrepreneurship: *'Just before I had left, because restaurants had started to call me in, so there was I, I just, I just thought you know, I've only been doing it for like six months before I had left, but somehow because I was the first who did something like this.'*

This segment highlights the RE1's agency and innovation in her previous freelance work in her home country. However, the mention of being *'the first who did something like this'* also reflects the impact of cultural narratives and power relations in shaping perceptions of innovation and expertise in entrepreneurship.

Maintaining Momentum and Coping with Marginalisation: *'I just got invites from restaurants and I kept thinking to myself. Oh yeah, so when you go back to Yemen? I will I resume with all of this because I had some, you know, I had some other posts in like in my archive, so I was like I'm just gonna download. I'm just*

going to upload stuff for like maybe twice a month or something and then just so that they can keep the momentum and then as soon as I'm back I'm just going to go on fire and then I was just going to get restaurant.'

This segment highlights the RE1's strategies for maintaining momentum in her business while away from her home country. However, the mention of *'going back to Yemen'* reflects the impact of displacement and marginalisation on entrepreneurial opportunities and the uncertainty and challenges that can arise as a result.

Reflections on Success and Cultural Narratives in Entrepreneurship: *'Restaurants inviting you left right and centre, so it now that I think about it.'*

She reflects with hindsight and reflection on her previous success in entrepreneurship and how this success was tied to cultural narratives and power relations that privilege certain forms of expertise and innovation.

Inner Motivations vs. External Expectations

'Saying to myself OK, (name removed), do you really want to do it because you really want to do it? Or do you want to do it because you want to keep up with everyone's expectations just so that you can have the answer when they ask when is your next pop up? And I'll be like, yeah, I'm doing a very small scale once a month for six people. So is it meaning for people or is it for me?' – RE1

The dominant term of *'business'* assumes a certain level of success and growth, while the term *'project'* implies something temporary or small-scale. This reflects the societal expectation of entrepreneurship to be a successful and profitable venture, which can lead to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy when one's business does not meet those expectations.

In the second binary opposition of *'everyone's expectations'* vs *'for me'*, the dominant term of *'everyone's expectations'* suggests that the entrepreneur is prioritising the needs and desires of others, perhaps to the detriment of her own goals and motivations. The subordinate term of *'for me'* reveals a concern for personal fulfilment and satisfaction. This can reflect the pressure that refugee women entrepreneurs may feel to succeed for themselves and their community or to prove their worth in a new country.

The hidden assumption is that entrepreneurship must serve a larger purpose beyond personal fulfilment, which can be a limiting factor for some individuals.

Balancing Personal Motivations and External Expectations: *'Saying to myself OK, (name removed), do you really want to do it because you really want to do it? Or do you want to do it because you want to keep up with everyone's expectations just so that you can have the answer when they ask when is your next pop up?'*

This segment highlights the subjectivity of her experience and how external pressures and expectations can impact her decision-making. She is questioning her motivations for continuing with her start-up and wondering if she is only doing it to meet others' expectations or if it is truly something she wants to pursue for her own reasons. This segment also touches on the theme of power, as the expectations of others can exert a certain power over the refugee woman's choices.

The Dual Nature of Entrepreneurial Meaning-Making: *'And I'll be like, yeah, I'm doing a very small scale once a month for six people. So is it meaning for people or is it for me?'*

This segment highlights the intersectionality of the refugee woman's experience and the potential tensions between meeting her own personal goals and fulfilling the expectations of others. She is grappling with the question of whether her start-up is meaningful for her personally or if it is solely for the benefit of others. This segment also touches on the theme of representation, as the refugee woman is considering the ways in which her actions and choices represent herself and her community.

The quote seems to touch on several themes. RE1 is reflecting on her motivations and desires and questioning whether she is creating her business for herself or meeting external expectations. She is also considering the meaning and purpose of her entrepreneurship and whether it is more important to satisfy her own goals or those of her potential customers.

These themes speak to the subjectivity of her experience as an entrepreneur and her business representation within the larger context of entrepreneurship and society.

From Imposed Images to Entrepreneurial Ambition

'So like there's this image of me and I'm still trying to break out of it in a sense, but you know, I am an entrepreneur cause I'm thinking of other ways that I can make money with my services or even like, I don't know, selling merchandise when I'm famous.' - RE2

Constrained Representation: *'So like there's this image of me and I'm still trying to break out of it in a sense,'*

This segment highlights the concept of representation, as RE2 discusses an image of herself that she feels constrained by. The use of the phrase *'break out of it'* also suggests a power dynamic, as she is attempting to challenge the dominant image of herself and establish her own agency.

Entrepreneurial Subjectivity: *'but you know, I am an entrepreneur'*

This segment relates to the theme of subjectivity, she defines herself as an entrepreneur. This implies a sense of self-awareness and agency, as she takes control of her identity and financial situation through her entrepreneurial endeavours.

Financial Autonomy: *'cause I'm thinking of other ways that I can make money with my services or even like, I don't know, selling merchandise when I'm famous.'*

This segment relates to the theme of subjectivity, as she discusses ways to generate income through her own resources and abilities. The use of the phrase *'make money'* implies a sense of financial agency and independence. The reference to potentially selling merchandise when famous also suggests the speaker's ambition and desire for recognition and success. This quote highlights her agency and self-awareness in defining herself as an entrepreneur and attempting to break out of a dominant image or representation. The emphasis on generating income through her own resources and abilities also suggests a desire for financial independence and self-determination.

Human Capital

Authenticity and Self-Acceptance

'What do I need to change myself? To be less judgemental to be a better person and then freeing myself from those things makes you be a bit more authentic and content with who you are. Not to care of what someone else thinks of you. It is very liberating; that's a journey to get there, and it's an ongoing journey. I am not there fully, but I am much more confident in who I am. Still it's a challenge.' – RE3

The binary oppositions of *'judgmental'* vs. *'authentic,'* *'self-change'* vs. *'contentment,'* and *'external perceptions'* vs. *'self-confidence'* stand out. Among these dichotomies, the dominant terms that resonate are *'authentic,'* *'liberating,'* and *'journey.'* Delving deeper into the narrative, there's a clear assumption that self-improvement is a continuous process, one that requires shedding judgment and embracing authenticity to achieve a sense of liberation.

The statement *'What do I need to change myself?'* underscores a personal introspection about growth and transformation. It hints at an underlying societal expectation wherein self-worth is often tied to personal evolution and the pursuit of becoming a *'better person.'* The phrase *'freeing myself from those things'* connotes a desire to break away from societal constraints or self-imposed limitations, suggesting a bias that judgment and inauthenticity are burdens to one's true self. The repeated emphasis on the journey *'that's a journey to get there'* and *'it's an ongoing journey'* — highlights the notion that self-awareness and personal growth are enduring endeavours, not finite destinations. The acknowledgement that *'I am not there fully'* juxtaposes with *'I am much more confident in who I am,'* indicating an acceptance of personal imperfections while celebrating the progress made. This tension between self-acceptance and the quest for self-improvement encapsulates the inherent challenges faced by individuals striving for authenticity in a world often clouded by external judgments and expectations. The narrative eloquently captures the nuances of personal evolution, emphasising the complexities of the journey towards self-assured authenticity.

Personal Transformation and Authenticity: *'What do I need to change myself? To be less judgemental to be a better person and then freeing myself from those things makes you be a bit more authentic and content with who you are.'*

This segment reflects the discursive element of subjectivity. RE3 is reflecting on her journey of personal growth and transformation, highlighting her agency in shaping her identity and becoming a better person. She is also emphasising the importance of authenticity and being true to oneself.

Challenging Social Expectations and the Ongoing Struggle for Self-Confidence: *'Not to care of what someone else thinks of you. It is very liberating; that's a journey to get there, and it's an ongoing journey. I am not there fully but I am much more confident in who I am. Still it's a challenge.'*

This segment reflects the discursive element of power. She challenges the power dynamics in society, particularly around the pressure to conform to social norms and expectations. She also highlights this struggle's ongoing nature and challenges in resisting external pressures and staying true to herself.

Defining Identity

'At this point, yes, because and I don't blame anyone for thinking that way. So for my following on social media, people still call me the chef. Oh yeah, (name removed), shit. They started expecting me to have all the answers and know all the tricks. Or how to perfect certain recipes, I'm like. I'm not a chef I am a content creator, and I am.' - RE1

Assumed Identity: *'At this point, yes, because I don't blame anyone for thinking that way.'*

In this segment, RE1 acknowledges that people assume she is a chef because of her previous pop-up restaurant ventures. She does not blame people for making this assumption, but it is clear that she wants to clarify her identity and dispel any misunderstandings.

This segment reflects the power of representation, and the assumptions people make based on limited information or prior experiences. She knows how others perceive her and how this perception shapes their expectations of her. However, she also has agency in how she defines herself and wants to assert her own identity and expertise.

Constrained Representation: *'So for my following on social media, people still call me the chef. Oh yeah, (name removed), shit. They started expecting me to have all the answers and know all the tricks. Or how to perfect certain recipes, I'm like...'*

Here the speaker talks about how her online following still refers to her as a chef, which has led to certain expectations about her knowledge and skills. She feels constrained by this representation and wants to clarify her identity and expertise.

She feels that she is being defined by her past experiences as a pop-up restaurant owner, limiting her ability to assert her true identity as a content creator.

Subjectivity and Identity: *'I'm not a chef I am a content creator, and I am...'*

In this segment, the speaker defines herself as a content creator and asserts her true identity and expertise. She wants to be recognised for her current work and not be constrained by past experiences or assumptions. This segment reflects the theme of subjectivity and how she defines herself based on her own experiences and perspectives. She has agency in asserting her identity and expertise and wants to be recognised for her current work as a content creator. However, it also highlights individuals' agency in defining their own identity and expertise.

Balancing Financial Pursuits with Entrepreneurial Identity

'Yes, I could make some money out of that, and then maybe that's the entrepreneur side. But at this point, I still, yeah, I, I still don't identify myself as an entrepreneur first.' - RE3

The dominant term *'making money'* implies a social narrative where financial accomplishments are the ultimate goal of entrepreneurship, overshadowing the subjective experience of self-identity and introspection as *'identifying as an entrepreneur'*. By placing more importance on making money, there is a hidden assumption that financial success is the only measure of success in entrepreneurship, which may overlook other important aspects of entrepreneurial experiences such as personal evolution, societal contribution, or innovation. The word *'still'* before *'don't identify myself as an entrepreneur first'* suggests a normative expectation that entrepreneurs should prioritise their identity as entrepreneurs over other aspects of their identity or interests.

This statement underscores the intricate balance female refugee entrepreneurs, like RE3, grapple with, juggling their subjective sense of identity and the external world's expectations. Her reluctance to place *'entrepreneur'* at the forefront of her identity might stem from feelings of insufficiency, apprehension, or questioning her footing in the entrepreneurial landscape.

Social Capital

Entrepreneurial pigeonholing

'No, I would say just generally, like I had supporters, yes. But then, even the few supporters that were there there was, they still kind of believed in me as (name removed) the food entrepreneur. Oh, let's help (name removed) by giving her opportunities with this food company.' (Talking about people supporting her as a food entrepreneur even though she had doubts and wanted to pursue content creation.) – RE1

The binary oppositions presented, the terms *'supporters'* and *'food entrepreneur'* notably overshadow *'doubters'* and *'content creator.'* Despite her aspirations towards content creation, the predominant external recognition was geared towards her identity as a food entrepreneur. This sheds light on a broader assumption: supporters seemingly held a rigid, predefined notion of her potential, primarily anchored in her current or past roles. While there's an undertone of appreciation for the opportunities provided, a palpable tension emerges from the misalignment of this support with her evolving aspirations. The narrative underscores the challenges of reconciling external perceptions with intrinsic ambitions, particularly when they diverge from conventional trajectories.

Limited Support for Entrepreneurial Identity: *'No, I would say just generally, like I had supporters, yes.'*

This segment establishes the presence of supporters, presumably people who believe in and support the RE1's work as a food entrepreneur. However, it is worth noting that the speaker's use of the phrase *'just generally'* suggests that these supporters may not have been particularly strong or numerous.

Narrow Perception of Entrepreneurial Identity: *'But then even the few supporters that were there there was, they still kind of believed in me as (name removed) the food entrepreneur.'*

In this segment, she elaborates on the nature of her supporters. The use of the word *'even'* suggests that these supporters were in some way unexpected or unusual. The phrase *'kind of'* implies that while these supporters believed in the speaker, their support may not have been complete or unconditional. Additionally, the fact that they believed her *'as a food entrepreneur'* suggests that they may have been less interested in supporting her as an individual with broader interests or aspirations.

Limitations of Opportunity: *'Oh, let's help (name removed) by giving her opportunities with this food company.'*

This segment suggests that her supporters may have been more interested in helping her advance her work as a food entrepreneur rather than supporting her in a more general sense. The phrase *'this food company'* implies that there may have been a particular company or set of opportunities that her supporters focused on. Additionally, her name mentioned in parentheses suggests that her identity as an individual may be somewhat secondary to her identity as a food entrepreneur.

While offering some support, they were ultimately limited in their ability to see her as an individual with varied interests and aspirations beyond her work in the food industry. By focusing on her identity as a food entrepreneur rather than a broader individual, the speaker's supporters may have inadvertently reinforced the limitations and constraints she hoped to move beyond.

The way RE1's supporters talk about her (i.e. as a food entrepreneur) is shaping the way she sees herself and her potential. Additionally, the fact that the speaker is expressing her doubts and desires about her work suggests that she is engaging with and potentially challenging the dominant discourses surrounding entrepreneurship and identity.

Empowering Through Heritage

'I would like to share and spread my skills and knowledge to the others, and I hope that they would like it mainly in terms of Syrian cooking.' - RE4

This statement shows the binary opposites of *'sharing'* vs. *'withholding'* and *'acceptance'* vs. *'rejection'*. The speaker's desire to *'share and spread'* emphasises a dominant inclination towards openness and generosity. However, this juxtaposes the underlying uncertainty captured in the phrase *'I hope that they would like it,'* indicating vulnerability and the desire for validation, particularly concerning *'Syrian cooking.'* This reflects the broader dynamics where cultural or regional cuisines seek acknowledgement and appreciation in diverse settings. The narrative underscores the aspiration to both share one's heritage and receive positive acknowledgement for it in return.

This quote highlights RE4's desire to share her cultural heritage and knowledge with others, specifically in terms of Syrian cuisine. This speaks to themes of representation and intersectionality, as her identity as a refugee and Syrian woman is tied to her cultural heritage. By sharing this knowledge, she is also pushing back against marginalisation and working to represent her community in a positive light.

This quote speaks to themes of power and subjectivity, as she takes agency and uses her skills and expertise to create opportunities for herself and others. 'Share' also speaks to community and social capital themes, as she is looking to connect with others and build relationships through her expertise. Here her desire for validation and acceptance from others is evident. This speaks to themes of power and subjectivity as she seeks recognition for her skills and expertise. Additionally, this quote speaks to the importance of cultural exchange and representation, as she is looking to bridge cultural gaps and build connections with others through her sharing of cultural knowledge.

Gender

The Gendered Dynamics of Entrepreneurial Guilt

'I know, I well, I still feel guilty about it because I'm like, well, you know all entrepreneurs struggle to make money, so why are you complaining about all the struggle?' – RE2

In this quote, RE2 feels guilty about complaining despite her struggles as an entrepreneur. This implies that there is an assumption that complaining is not a valid or acceptable response to these struggles. The dominant term in this binary opposition is *'feel guilty,'* which suggests that the act of complaining is associated with a negative emotion and, therefore, should be avoided or suppressed. By deconstructing this dominant term, we can reveal hidden assumptions and biases contributing to this negative association with complaining.

One assumption may be revealed that the dominant discourse around entrepreneurship values self-sufficiency and resilience, which can stigmatise those who ask for help or express their struggles. Another assumption may be that women, particularly refugees, are expected to be grateful for their opportunities and should not complain or express dissatisfaction.

The opposition between *'feel guilty'* and *'why are you complaining'* suggests a tension between personal feelings and societal expectations, which may contribute to the marginalisation of refugee women entrepreneurs. By deconstructing these hidden assumptions and biases, we can begin to challenge the dominant discourse around entrepreneurship and support the experiences and needs of marginalised groups.

Entrepreneurial Struggles: *'...you know all entrepreneurs struggle to make money...'*

This segment sheds light on the widespread belief that entrepreneurship involves significant difficulties, particularly regarding financial stability.

Guilt about Expressing Struggles: *'I still feel guilty...complaining about all the struggle.'*

RE2 feels guilty about complaining about her difficulties as an entrepreneur, suggesting that she feels as though she should not express her struggles. This guilt stems from the speaker's internal sense of obligation and the desire to conform to societal norms and expectations.

Gendered Pressures in Entrepreneurial Decisions

'Maybe someone could learn from the entrepreneurship journey is not being, or not saying yes to absolutely everything because you feel obliged. Or you're too nice to say no, which I feel was part of the reason why I actually went for it.' – RE3

The dominant term implies that RE3 is overly concerned with pleasing others and is willing to put aside her own desires and needs to accommodate them. This assumption may stem from societal expectations that women should be accommodating and submissive. Deconstructing this dominant term reveals a hidden assumption that women, particularly refugee women, should be grateful for opportunities presented to them and should not question authority or refuse opportunities. This assumption ignores the fact that women have the right to make their own choices and follow their own desires, even in the face of pressure from others. RE3 notes that not saying no was part of why she went for entrepreneurship in the first place, implying that she may not have followed her desired path had she been more assertive. This highlights the importance of agency and the ability to make one's own choices in entrepreneurship.

Consequences if saying yes to everything: *'Maybe someone could learn from the entrepreneurship journey is not being, or not saying yes to absolutely everything because you feel obliged.'*

This segment highlights the RE3's realisation that being overly obliging or saying yes to everything can lead to taking on more than one can handle, especially in the context of entrepreneurship. She suggests that someone could learn from this experience that it's important to consider one's own limitations and not feel compelled to agree to everything.

The reason behind saying yes: *'...because you feel obliged. Or you're too nice to say no...'*

This segment further emphasises the RE3's point from the first segment, suggesting that the reason she took on too much was that she was too nice to say no. She implies that this tendency to avoid saying no can come from a desire to be seen as polite or accommodating and may lead to taking on more than one can handle.

Personal experience: *'Which I feel was part of the reason why I actually went for it.'*

This segment shows her reflection on her own experiences, linking her obliging nature to her decision to embark on the entrepreneurship journey. She suggests that her tendency to say yes to everything played a role in her decision to become an entrepreneur.

A Woman Entrepreneur's Dilemma

'At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it, yeah. So even with the business that I have at the moment, I keep trying to tell people or referring to it as a project because I feel like it's something on the side that I do. Saying to myself OK, (name removed), do you really want to do it because you really want to do it? Or do you want to do it because you want to keep up with everyone's expectations just so that you can have the answer when they ask when is your next pop up? And I'll be like, yeah, I'm doing a very small scale once a month for six people. So is it meaning for people, or is it for me?' - RE1

The dominant term of *'business'* assumes a certain level of success and growth, while the subordinate term of *'project'* implies something temporary or small-scale. This reflects the societal expectation of entrepreneurship to be a successful and profitable venture, which can lead to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy when one's business does not meet those expectations.

In the second binary opposition of *'everyone's expectations'* vs *'for me'*, the dominant term of *'everyone's expectations'* suggests that she is prioritising the needs and desires of others, perhaps to the detriment of her own goals and motivations. The subordinate term of *'for me'* reveals a concern for personal fulfilment and satisfaction. This can reflect the pressure that refugee women entrepreneurs may feel to succeed for themselves and their community or to prove their worth in a new country. The hidden assumption is that entrepreneurship must serve a larger purpose beyond personal fulfilment, which can be a limiting factor for some individuals.

Self-doubt and uncertainty: *'At this point, maybe I'm not ready for it, yeah. So even with the business that I have at the moment, I keep trying to tell people or referring to it as a project because I feel like it's something on the side that I do.'*

In this segment, the RE1 expresses her uncertainty about her business and her readiness to pursue it as a full-fledged venture. She describes her business as a *'project'* and suggests that it is something she does *'on the side'*. This could indicate that she is not fully invested in her business or that she sees it as a secondary or less important pursuit.

Motivations for Entrepreneurship: *'Saying to myself OK, (name removed), do you really want to do it because you really want to do it? Or do you want to do it because you want to keep up with everyone's expectations so that you can have the answer when they ask when your next pop up is?'*

Here, she questions her motivations for pursuing her business. She wonders if she is doing it because she genuinely wants to or if she is doing it to fulfil others' expectations. This suggests that her subjectivity is shaped not only by her desires and goals but also by external factors such as social expectations and norms.

In addition, using self-talk and questioning reflects RE1's subjective struggle with motivation and external pressure. She is questioning her own desires and intentions for the business and the influence of others' expectations on her decision to continue with it.

Purpose of the Business: *'And I'll be like, yeah, I'm doing a very small scale once a month for six people. So is it meaning for people, or is it for me?'*

In this final segment, she reflects on the purpose of her business. She questions whether it is meaningful for others or if it is only meaningful for herself. This could indicate that she is seeking validation or approval from others for her business or that she is struggling to define the value of her work for herself.

This quote illustrates how subjectivity is constructed through a complex interplay of internal and external factors. Her motivations and goals are shaped by her desires, external expectations, and norms. By questioning her motivations and reflecting on the purpose of her work, the speaker engages in the process of self-discovery and self-definition that is central to the development of subjectivity.

Entrepreneurship as a Woman

'Screw you I don't care about your expectations, so it's just trying to manage that and also being a woman.' – RE3

The dominant term *'trying to manage that'* assumes that external expectations are being placed on RE3 and that she needs to navigate them to be successful. The dominant term suggests a need to conform to or at least acknowledge those expectations to manage them effectively. However, the phrase *'Screw you'* suggests resistance to those expectations, implying that they may be unfair or unrealistic. By prioritising external expectations, the dominant term overlooks the possibility of challenging or resisting them.

'Being a woman' assumes that specific challenges or expectations come with being a female entrepreneur. This dominant term suggests a need to navigate or manage those challenges, including sexism, gendered expectations, or bias. However, the binary opposition implies that being a woman is a limitation or disadvantage rather than a valuable perspective or identity. The dominant term overlooks the potential strengths and advantages of being a woman entrepreneur and reinforces the idea that women face additional barriers in entrepreneurship.

Resistance to external expectations: *'Screw you I don't care about your expectations'*

This segment reflects a sense of agency and resistance against the pressures and expectations of entrepreneurship. The use of *'screw you'* expresses a disregard for the expectations of others, which could be seen as a form of resistance against dominant power structures. This can also be seen as a form of subjectivity, as RE3 asserts their own agency and identity.

Struggle to manage expectations: *'so it's just trying to manage that'*

This segment highlights the challenges and complexities of navigating the pressures of entrepreneurship. Using *'manage'* suggests a sense of struggle and difficulty in dealing with these pressures. This can be seen as an intersectional issue, as the speaker deals with the expectations of entrepreneurship and the intersectional challenges of being a refugee woman.

Intersectional identity as a woman: *'and also being a woman'*

This segment brings attention to the additional challenges and expectations of being a woman in the world of entrepreneurship. This can be seen as a form of marginalisation, as women are often underrepresented and undervalued in this field. It also highlights the importance of representation, as the speaker is navigating a field that lacks diversity and representation.

Education

Fear in the Face of Entrepreneurship

'I was more focused on education, never thought of, or I did think of having my own business. But I never gave it much thought because of fear.' – RE3

Several binary oppositions emerge, specifically the distinction between *'education'* and *'owning a business'* and the tension between *'thought'* and *'fear.'* At the forefront of this discourse, *'education'* and *'fear'* emerge as dominant terms, guiding RE3's choices and perspectives. The narrative conveys a foundational assumption that education and entrepreneurship are mutually exclusive pursuits, with the former being a safer or more conventional path. This delineation indicates a broader societal expectation or bias wherein formal education is often championed as the primary avenue for success, while entrepreneurial endeavours might be perceived as riskier ventures. RE3's admission that she did contemplate business ownership but was deterred *'because of fear'* reveals the underlying anxieties associated with venturing outside of traditional or prescribed paths. Such anxieties may be exacerbated by socio-cultural expectations, potential lack of role models in entrepreneurship, or personal experiences of marginalisation. The word *'fear'* in this context not only conveys apprehension about the uncertainties of business ownership but also, potentially, the fear of challenging societal norms or stepping outside predetermined roles. The dichotomy between what is contemplated, *'I did think of having my own business'*, and what is acted upon due to fear underscores the impact of internal and external pressures on decision-making processes, emphasising the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals navigating both personal aspirations and societal expectations.

Education as a Priority: *'I was more focused on education'*

This segment reveals RE3's priorities and values. The focus on education indicates that she values knowledge and academic achievement.

Ambivalence towards Entrepreneurship: *'never thought of, or I did think of, having my own business.'*

This segment shows her ambivalence towards entrepreneurship. The use of *'never thought of'* and *'or I did think of'* suggests that she has considered starting a business but is not fully committed to the idea.

Fear as a Barrier: *'But I never gave it much thought because of fear.'*

This segment reveals that fear is a significant barrier for the speaker. The use of *'never gave it much thought'* implies that fear has prevented the speaker from seriously considering entrepreneurship. This fear could stem from various factors, such as financial insecurity or lack of experience.

These segments suggest that she values education, is ambivalent towards entrepreneurship, and is hindered by fear. The quote highlights individuals' challenges when considering entrepreneurship and the importance of addressing the barriers preventing marginalised communities from accessing economic opportunities.

Representation Opportunity Structures Paid work

'And since, well, I think it started in well at last year 2020. So the the first time that I got paid for creating content up. It was part of a of a COVID-19 campaign. For Yemenis, yes, so it's like an awareness campaign. And so that was the first time ever that I was paid to take part in in in making a video. And I was like Oh my God, this is so cool and I wasn't paid that much either. It was around I think £400. There were others because they had a larger following. Who made more money? But it was fine for me. I was like Oh my God, this is the first time someone ever pays me for a video that's so cool. And then a couple of months later I was hired by the same organisation and then I was. I was paid an almost £900, which felt amazing and I'm like, whoa, look at me. I'm making money from making content.' – RE1

With the dominant term, *'first time ever I was paid'* we can see that it implies a certain level of privilege and opportunity. The fact that it was the *'first time ever'* that she was paid to make a video suggests that she may not have had the same level of access to resources or opportunities as others who may have had more experience or been paid for their work before. Additionally, the excitement she expresses at being paid for her work suggests that this opportunity was particularly meaningful and valuable to her.

The binary opposition, *'I wasn't paid that much either'*, suggests she is aware of the value of her work and that she did not receive a high amount of compensation for it. This may imply that the media industry undervalues the work of creators, particularly those from marginalised communities. It may suggest that there is a lack of transparency in the compensation process, which may lead to exploitation of creators.

Overall, the binary oppositions in this quote highlight some of the challenges faced by refugees in the media industry, including limited opportunities to create content and receive payment, as well as the undervaluing of their work.

Contextualisation: *'And since, well, I think it started in well at last year 2020. So the the first time that I got paid for creating content up. It was part of a of a COVID-19 campaign. For Yemenis, yes, so it's like an awareness campaign.'*

In this segment, RE1 introduces the topic of her getting paid for creating content. She specifies that it started in 2020 and provides context by explaining that it was part of a COVID-19 campaign for Yemenis. This sets the stage for discussing her experience making money from content creation.

Excitement and Gratitude: *'And so that was the first time ever that I was paid to take part in in in making a video. And I was like Oh my God, this is so cool and I wasn't paid that much either. It was around I think £400. There were others because they had a larger following. Who made more money? But it was fine for me. I was like Oh my God, this is the first time someone ever pays me for a video that's so cool.'*

Here, she expresses her excitement and gratitude about getting paid for creating content for the first time. She exclaims, *'Oh my God, this is so cool'*, and expresses her surprise at being paid, even though it wasn't a large amount. She also acknowledges that others made more money because they had a larger following, but she is still grateful for the opportunity.

Empowerment & Achievement: *'And then a couple of months later I was hired by the same organisation and then I was. I was paid almost £900, which felt amazing and I'm like, whoa, look at me. I'm making money from making content.'*

In this segment, she continues to discuss her experience with making money from content creation. She mentions being hired by the same organisation a couple of months later and being paid almost £900, which she describes as feeling *'amazing.'* She expresses a sense of empowerment and achievement, saying, *'look at me; I'm making money from making content.'* This highlights the importance of economic empowerment for her and how it contributes to her sense of agency and self-worth.

Class & Ethnicity

Navigating Assumptions in Business Conversations

'... and the same time its like. I may not be. But sometimes I feel like maybe some of them are a bit out of touch, like with reality, you know. Like I remember speaking to one investor and he asked what would your family think about this, yeah? So, dude, would you ask somebody else that you know that? I just told him they were very supportive. They're really supportive, you know, but would you ask that to somebody else why are you asking me that, you know? As if to say that I would seek permission from my family to do this, I thought that's what he was insinuating. Like I had to seek permission from my family to be able to move ahead with this.' – RE2

A series of binary oppositions are evident here. These include the dichotomies of being *'in touch'* versus *'out of touch,'* the contrasting perspectives of *'me'* versus *'them'* (referring to investors and authoritative figures), the juxtaposition of a *'supportive family'* against a *'restrictive family,'* and the tension between making an *'independent decision'* and *'seeking permission.'* Central to this discourse are dominant terms such as *'out of touch,' 'supportive,'* and *'permission.'* Delving into the assumptions and biases in the narrative, the entrepreneur's characterisation of some investors as *'out of touch'* unveils an implicit bias wherein certain influential figures might operate from a limited or privileged understanding, potentially marginalising diverse entrepreneurial experiences.

Furthermore, the investor's inquiry about the RE2's family's perception intrinsically suggests assumptions regarding her familial and cultural dynamics, possibly alluding to stereotypes that some individuals, particularly from specific backgrounds, are bound by familial consent in their entrepreneurial endeavours. This bias is further exacerbated by gendered expectations, as evidenced by RE2's sense that she was being subtly probed about needing familial *'permission,'* underscoring societal preconceptions where women might be perceived as more subservient or dependent. RE2's assertive defensiveness, evident in her repeated clarifications and challenges to the investor's queries, showcases her cognisance of and resistance to such biases.

Significantly, her rhetorical query about whether such a question would be posed to other entrepreneurs underscores a perceived bias in which certain inquiries are reserved for those perceived as *'different'* or *'othered,'* amplifying the complexities of navigating the entrepreneurial landscape as a marginalised individual.

The investor's question: *'Like, I remember speaking to one investor, and he asked what would your family think about this, yeah?'*

This segment presents RE2's experience of being asked about her family's opinion in a professional context. The word *'dude'* shows her frustration and disbelief at being asked this question.

RE2's reaction: *'So, dude, would you ask somebody else that you know that?'*

This segment indicates her response to the question, challenging the investor's assumption that she would need her family's permission to make a professional decision.

The implication of family permission: *'I just told him they were very supportive. They're really supportive, you know, but would you ask that to somebody else why are you asking me that, you know?'*

This segment further emphasises her point that the investor's question was inappropriate and out of line. She also highlights that her family is supportive, but that's not the point of the situation.

The reflection on reality: *'As if to say that I would seek permission from my family to do this, I thought that's what he was insinuating. Like I had to seek permission from my family to be able to move ahead with this.'*

This segment demonstrates her interpretation of the investor's question, seeing it as an insinuation that she would need permission from her family to pursue her goals. This can be seen as an example of marginalisation and othering, as she feels that the investor is making assumptions about her based on her background and identity as a black, Muslim woman from a refugee background.

Human Capital

Rebuilding Confidence

'I had got divorced. I really had no confidence, I remember volunteering for a race equality charity, the task given to me was to make phone calls, I couldn't do that. I physically couldn't make the phone call; I was so nervous. But I was so grateful for that opportunity. I learned and I grew, and I built up my confidence.' – RE2

Deconstructing the dominant term, the idea of *'confidence'* is often valorised and seen as a positive attribute, especially in entrepreneurship. However, the fact that RE2 had *'no confidence'* initially does not necessarily mean that she was lacking in other important qualities or skills. The pressure to be confident can sometimes create a barrier for those who struggle with anxiety or self-doubt. Therefore, by focusing solely on the idea of *'confidence'*, one can risk overlooking the complexity of the RE2's journey and the other valuable experiences and skills she gained along the way. It is important to recognise that everyone's journey to entrepreneurship is different and that success is not solely dependent on having confidence.

Personal Experience: *'I had got divorced.'*

This segment reflects the discursive element of personal experience. RE2 shares a personal experience that has led her to where she is today, highlighting the importance of acknowledging the intersections of identity and how they can impact one's opportunities and challenges.

Building confidence: *'I really had no confidence,'*

She shares her perspective and emotions about her lack of confidence, highlighting how personal experiences and societal structures can impact one's self-esteem and sense of agency.

Power dynamics: *'I remember volunteering for a race equality charity, the task given to me was to make phone calls, I couldn't do that. I was so nervous, I couldn't make.'*

This segment exposes the discursive element of power dynamics. She describes a situation in which she was unable to complete a task due to her anxiety and nervousness, potentially influenced by power dynamics related to race and gender.

Gratitude: *'But I was so grateful for that opportunity.'*

This segment shows the discursive element of gratitude. RE2 expresses appreciation for the opportunity to volunteer and learn from her experiences, highlighting the importance of recognising and valuing opportunities for growth and development.

Agency: *'I learned and I grew, and I built up my confidence.'*

This segment reflects the discursive element of agency. She describes how she could take control of her own growth and development, emphasising the importance of agency and self-determination in overcoming challenges and achieving success.

RE2 describes how she had no confidence after her divorce and struggled with simple tasks like making a phone call. However, through her experiences volunteering for a race equality charity, she was able to learn and grow, ultimately building up her confidence. This process of growth and self-discovery involved redefining how she saw herself and her capabilities.

Social Capital

Digital Representation

'On Facebook, I saw a refugee woman from Syria who went to Germany and just started a new business. I felt inspired by this.' – RE4

Using the binary opposites *'refugee'* vs *'started a new business'* in the quote extract, we can see how these terms are constructed in opposition to each other, creating a hierarchy of value and power. On one hand, the term *'refugee'* implies a sense of vulnerability, displacement, and

lack of agency. It suggests a person who has been forced to leave their home and seek protection in another country due to war, persecution, or other forms of violence. This term often carries a negative connotation, particularly in media discourse, which portrays refugees as a burden on host countries, potential terrorists, or economic migrants.

On the other hand, the term *'started a new business'* implies a sense of agency, creativity, and entrepreneurship. It suggests a person who is able to take control of their own destiny, create their own opportunities, and contribute to the local economy. This term often carries a positive connotation, particularly in neoliberal discourse, which celebrates the virtues of self-reliance, innovation, and risk-taking.

By constructing *'refugee'* and *'started a new business'* as binary opposites, the quoted extract reinforces a particular narrative of refugee success, which emphasises individual achievement, resilience, and integration into the host society. However, this narrative also obscures the structural barriers, inequalities, and power relations that refugees face in accessing education, employment, finance, and legal protection. It also reinforces the stereotype that refugees are passive recipients of aid and charity rather than active agents of change and innovation.

RE4's feeling of inspiration is what is being emphasised and is the driving force behind the statement. She assumes that refugees, particularly female refugees, are not expected to start their own businesses and that this Syrian woman's success is exceptional. There is a bias towards Western societies, particularly Germany, as a place of opportunity for refugees.

There is an assumption that social media, particularly Facebook, is a platform for positive and inspiring stories. This quote reflects how societal biases and assumptions shape our understanding of success and opportunity for marginalised groups such as refugees. The term of *'inspired'* highlights the power of representation and how seeing someone from a similar background succeed can inspire others to pursue their own goals. However, it is important to recognise and challenge the hidden assumptions and biases that underlie these narratives of success.

Social Media and the Perceptions of Refugees: *'On Facebook, I saw a refugee woman from Syria'*

This segment provides context for how RE4 came to know about the refugee woman. It suggests that she saw the woman's story on social media, highlighting the role of technology and social media in shaping our perceptions of refugees and migration.

Agency and Entrepreneurship in the Face of Adversity: *'who went to Germany and just started a new business'*

This segment highlights 's agency and entrepreneurship. She is portrayed as someone who has taken control of her situation and started a new business despite the challenges of being a refugee in a new country. It also suggests the role of entrepreneurship in empowering refugees and promoting their integration into host societies.

Emotional Response to Empowerment: *'I felt inspired by this.'*

This segment reflects the RE4's emotional response to the refugee woman's story. The use of the word *'inspired'* suggests that the speaker was motivated by the woman's success and that the story may have challenged her preconceptions about refugees and their potential for success.

The quote highlights the role of agency, entrepreneurship, and technology in shaping our perceptions of refugees and migration. It also suggests the potential for refugee entrepreneurship to empower refugees and promote their integration into host societies while challenging stereotypes and biases about refugees.

Language and Shared Origins

'Language would make the process easier like when I met (name removed) although there's a big age difference, she's from Iraq.'

RE4 assumes that sharing a language with someone else would make communication easier, implying that there may be shared cultural or linguistic experiences that would facilitate communication. This assumption may be biased towards the idea that people of the same language share a common culture or language and may overlook the diversity within nationalities. Additionally, the reference to the age difference may imply a bias towards age as a factor that could impede communication or create differences between people.

Language as a Facilitator Segment: *'Language would make the process easier'*

RE4 acknowledges the importance of language in the process. This implies that some communication barriers may exist without the shared language. Additionally, this may suggest that language is a resource or a form of capital necessary for success in this situation.

Personal Connection: *'like when I met (name removed)'*

She references a specific example where the language was important in a meeting with someone. This suggests that the speaker has had personal experience with communication challenges without a shared language.

Age Difference and Intersectionality: *'although there's a big age difference'*

RE4 notes that there is a big age difference between herself and the person she met. This may suggest that age is a factor in the interaction dynamics or the perceived power dynamic between the two individuals.

Identification: *'she's from Iraq'*

RE4 notes the person she met is from Iraq. This may suggest that she uses this information to make assumptions about the person's background, experiences, or cultural context. Additionally, this may suggest that she is considering the socio-political factors that could impact the individual's situation as a refugee or immigrant. The quote suggests that language and age may be important factors in the interaction between the speaker and the person she met. Additionally, she notes the person's country of origin, which may suggest considering socio-political factors.

The quote reflects the broader cultural and social discourses around language, communication, and identity. The cultural and linguistic norms that shape the speaker's perceptions of others are part of a larger discursive framework that shapes the ways in which we think about and interact with others.

Intersectionality
Host Country Factors
Dual Edge Identity

'But if I say that I was a refugee, that could potentially mean that. At least I mean, even if I don't get that opportunity, at least my application is going to be looked at. Because I'm in a minority, I'm different.' - RE3

The binary oppositions like *'refugee'* vs. implicit *'non-refugee,'* *'minority'* vs. *'majority,'* and *'different'* vs. *'same'* highlight societal dichotomies. Historically, terms like *'non-refugee'* and *'majority'* have held dominance, indicating power imbalances. This suggests that refugees may face disadvantages but could also benefit in specific situations, perhaps due to diversity goals or empathy. The term *'different'* underscores that marginalised identities, like refugees, deviate from societal norms, emphasizing their marginalised position. This reflects a societal trend where such identities can be viewed as either burdens or assets for diversity.

Leveraging Refugee Identity for Funding: *'But if I say that I was a refugee, that could potentially mean that.'*

In this segment, the speaker introduces the topic of potentially using her refugee identity as a means to access funding. The use of the word *'potentially'* suggests that there is no guarantee that leveraging her refugee identity will result in funding but that it is a possibility worth considering. This segment sets the stage for the rest of the quote, which explores the complexities of using one's identity in this way.

The Power Dynamics of Minority Status: *'At least I mean, even if I don't get that opportunity, at least my application is going to be looked at. Because I'm in a minority, I'm different.'*

This segment highlights the intersectionality of the RE3's identity as a refugee and the power dynamics associated with being a member of a minority group. The speaker acknowledges that her refugee identity sets her apart and makes her *'different,'* which could potentially work in her favour regarding having her application looked at. However, this segment also suggests that being a member of a minority group can be a disadvantage and that leveraging one's identity in this way is a strategy born out of necessity rather than choice.

Negotiating the Potentiality of 'Refugee': *'Because I'm in a minority, I'm different.'*

This segment focuses on the language used to describe the speaker's identity as a refugee. The use of the word *'minority'* highlights how language is used to categorise and label individuals based on their perceived differences. This segment also suggests that the term *'refugee'* is imbued with potential meanings that may or may not accurately reflect the RE3's experience. The speaker is negotiating the potentiality of this label to leverage it for her own benefit.

Navigating a Biased System: *'At least my application is going to be looked at.'*

This segment highlights refugees' structural barriers when accessing funding or other opportunities. She suggests that her application is more likely to be looked at because of her refugee status, which implies that this may not be the case for other applicants who do not have this particular identity. This segment also suggests that the speaker is navigating a biased system that may not recognise the value of her experience or expertise without the additional 'benefit' of her refugee identity.

Complexities of Identity and Opportunity: *'Because I'm in a minority, I'm different.'*

This segment highlights the complexities of leveraging one's identity to access funding or other opportunities. The speaker recognises that her refugee identity sets her apart and may provide a potential advantage in certain situations, but she also acknowledges the potential disadvantages associated with being a member of a minority group. This segment suggests that identity is a multifaceted construct that can both facilitate and hinder access to opportunities and that negotiating the potentiality of identity is a necessary strategy for those facing structural barriers.

Gender

Navigating Dual Responsibilities

'I don't really know what to do. Do I send money home, and that means I can't move, or should I be selfish and stop sending money? They are getting old, my dad is sick and my mom...' – RE1

In this statement, the binary oppositions of *'duty'* vs. *'self-preservation'* and *'altruism'* vs. *'perceived selfishness'* emerge strongly. RE1's internal conflict between *'sending money home'* and its implications for personal mobility underscores the dominant pressures of familial obligation. Furthermore, mentioning ageing parents, especially a *'sick dad,'* intensifies the weight of responsibility. Contrarily, the use of *'selfish'* when considering not sending money elucidates societal or self-imposed expectations about familial duties. This sentiment reveals the complexities of navigating individual desires and collective familial expectations, particularly when faced with the vulnerabilities of ageing and illness within one's family.

Balancing Personal and Family Responsibilities: *'I don't really know what to do. Do I send money home, and that means I can't move, or should I be selfish and stop sending money.'*

This segment uncovers the intersectionality of the RE1's marginalisation as a refugee woman entrepreneur. She is faced with a difficult decision that highlights the intersection of her multiple marginalised identities. She must balance her responsibility to her family, which is particularly relevant to her identity as a woman and a member of her community, with her desire to achieve personal and professional success, which is particularly relevant to her identity as an entrepreneur.

Family Health and Ageing as Barriers to Accessing Resources: *'They are getting old, my dad is sick and my mom...'*

This segment further reveals the intersectionality her marginalisation as a refugee woman entrepreneur. Her family's ageing and her father's illness add an additional layer of responsibility to her decision-making process. Furthermore, the intersection of her marginalised identities creates multiple barriers to accessing resources that could support her family, such as financial resources or healthcare, which further exacerbates the intersectional nature of her marginalisation.

Empowering Women in Business

'The thing is, this is the goal that I have, and I really want to help others. For example, if I have my business, I can employ other women as well. ...we can make and sell for more and make some money to share through wages, and we can spread the profits.' - RE4

The binary oppositions of *'individual goals'* vs. *'collective benefits'* and *'resource conservation'* *'value creation'* are evident. The emphasis on *'this is the goal that I have'* signifies personal ambition juxtaposed with the dominant aspiration of wanting to *'help others.'* The aspiration to *'employ other women'* further highlights the entrepreneurial spirit, underscoring the collective benefits envisaged. This sentiment conveys the complexities of merging personal entrepreneurial ambitions with broader societal benefits, notably in the realm of social entrepreneurship, where profit-making and social impact coalesce.

Entrepreneurial Goal and Altruism: *'The thing is this is the goal that I have, and I really want to help others.'*

In this segment, RE4 expresses her goal of starting her own business and helping others. This indicates her motivation to create something that benefits herself and her community. Her desire to help others may stem from her personal experiences and the challenges she has faced as a refugee.

Employment and Empowerment: *'For example, if I have my business, I can employ other women as well.'*

Here, she highlights her intention to create job opportunities for other women through her business. This demonstrates her commitment to empowering other women and promoting gender equality. By employing other women, she is providing them with an income and a sense of purpose and independence.

Social Capital Bridging Opportunities

'So some had a friend of mine who works with refugees in Liverpool and Doncaster. I don't know how she got the ad, but then she sent it to me because I'm a refugee. To me. No, because she ever knew that I wanted to start a business or try it, even she said, oh look, I've come across this. You know, if you're interested in just apply. So she sent it to me and I applied.' - RE3

The quote delineates the binary oppositions between *'personal connections'* vs. *'impersonal opportunities'* and *'explicit desires'* vs. *'unsaid aspirations.'* The dominant theme underscores the pivotal role of personal networks, as seen from the reference to *'a friend of mine who works with refugees,'* whose inadvertent discovery culminates in a prospective business venture. The unexpected nature of this information, highlighted by *'I don't know how she got the ad,'* is juxtaposed against the lack of prior disclosure: *'she never knew that I wanted to start a business.'* The friend's casual suggestion to consider the opportunity, *'oh look, I've come across this,'* underscores the unpredictability in professional trajectories, more so for individuals in specific situations, such as refugees. This dynamic underscores the nuanced balance between unspoken ambitions and fortuitous events in determining career pathways.

Networks: *'So some had a friend of mine who works with refugees in Liverpool and Doncaster.'*

RE3 introduces the source of her knowledge about the entrepreneurial programme for refugees, which is her friend who works with refugees in Liverpool and Doncaster. This highlights the importance of social networks and the role of the community in providing access to resources and opportunities for marginalised individuals.

Challenging assumptions: *'I don't know how she got the ad, but then she sent it to me because I'm a refugee.'*

She acknowledges the role of her refugee status in being considered for the entrepreneurial programme. This highlights the intersectionality of her identities as a refugee and a potential entrepreneur and how her marginalised identity played a role in accessing the opportunity.

Agency and resistance: *'To me. No, because she never knew that I wanted to start a business or try it, even she said, oh look, I've come across this. You know, if you're interested in just apply.'*

She emphasises that her friend did not send her the ad for the programme because she knew about her interest in entrepreneurship but rather as a general opportunity for refugees. This highlights the power dynamics at play in accessing resources and opportunities and the role of allies and advocates in providing access to marginalised individuals.

Marginalisation Opportunity Structures

More Than Money: Passion Projects in Entrepreneurship

'But it still feels like a project. Maybe I'll make a little bit of money out of it, but it still feels like. A project so.' – RE1

The binary oppositions of *'business'* vs. *'project'* and *'financial gain'* vs. *'personal endeavour.'* The dominant narrative revolves around the speaker's perception of her entrepreneurial venture as *'a project,'* suggesting its nascent or experimental nature. Despite potential financial benefits, as hinted by *'Maybe I'll make a little bit of money out of it,'* the endeavour retains an intangible, perhaps emotional or exploratory, value for her, repeatedly emphasised by *'it still feels like.'* The duality expressed here reflects the complexities many entrepreneurs face, especially from marginalised backgrounds, where ventures can oscillate between being means of livelihood and deeply personal undertakings.

Entrepreneurship on the fringes: *'But it still feels like a project.'*

RE1 frames her venture as a project rather than a business, highlighting their subjective understanding of the new venture. This can be seen as a way to resist the dominant discourse around entrepreneurship and business, which often prioritises profit and success over other values.

Financial gain: *'Maybe I'll make a little bit of money out of it.'*

RE1 acknowledges the potential for financial gain from their new venture but frames it as a small possibility rather than a primary goal. This challenges the dominant discourse around entrepreneurship as solely a means for financial gain and highlights the speaker's alternative perspective.

Overall, these segments highlight the subjective and alternative perspectives that individuals can bring to discussions of entrepreneurship and business and how these perspectives can challenge dominant discourses and norms.

Exploitation and Resilience

'I think that at this day and age and after being after going through a lot of struggle myself and really learning things the hard way, like offering my services for free when they shouldn't be for free. And people and people exploiting you and taking advantage of the fact that you're a refugee so they expect a lot of things from you there at no cost, no money.' – RE2

The quote unveils binary oppositions such as *'struggle'* vs. *'learning'* and *'value'* vs. *'exploitation.'* The dominant narrative hinges on the speaker's experiences of undervaluation, as indicated by phrases like *'learning things the hard way'* and *'offering my services for free.'* The repeated mention of *'people exploiting you'* highlights a recurring theme of external entities capitalising on the vulnerability of her refugee status, as evidenced by *'taking advantage of the fact that you're a refugee.'* This exploitation is further emphasised by the expectation of services *'at no cost, no money.'* Such reflections provide a poignant insight into the unique challenges faced by refugee entrepreneurs, where their social identity can both inform their resilience and become a point of undue advantage for others.

Learning the hard way: *'I think that at this day and age and after going through a lot of struggle myself and really learning things the hard way...'*

This segment highlights the RE2's personal experience and challenges as a refugee woman. The phrase *'going through a lot of struggle'* suggests that her experiences have been difficult and possibly traumatic. The phrase *'learning things the hard way'* implies that she has gained knowledge through trial and error.

The value of work: *'...like offering my services for free when they shouldn't be for free.'*

This segment suggests that RE2 has provided services to others without receiving compensation. The use of the phrase *'they shouldn't be for free'* implies that she has come to recognise the value of her work and the importance of being compensated for it.

Identity and exploitation: *'And people exploiting you and taking advantage of the fact that you're a refugee so they expect a lot of things from you there at no cost, no money.'*

This segment highlights the discrimination and exploitation that RE2 has faced as a refugee woman. The phrase *'taking advantage of the fact that you're a refugee'* suggests that people have used her identity and vulnerability to exploit her. The phrase *'expect a lot of things from you there at no cost, no money'* implies that RE2 has been expected to provide services without receiving payment, which is a form of exploitation.

Overall, the quote highlights the struggles and challenges faced by the speaker as a marginalised refugee woman. The use of phrases such as *'learning things the hard way'* and *'exploiting you'* suggests that the RE2 has experienced significant trauma and adversity. The quote also highlights the importance of recognising the value of one's work and not allowing others to exploit or take advantage of one's vulnerability.

Entrepreneurial Side Hustle

'So, just like so many artists out there, I have a full-time job that that pays for my bills.' – RE1

The quote illustrates the binary oppositions of *'artistry'* vs. *'practicality'* and *'passion'* vs. *'necessity.'* The speaker identifies with *'so many artists out there,'* signifying a shared experience where pragmatic endeavours often supplement personal passions. The reference to *'a full-time job'* that pays the bills underscores the balance between pursuing entrepreneurial dreams and meeting immediate financial needs. It accentuates the reality many refugee women entrepreneurs face – the dual challenge of navigating their entrepreneurial journey amidst the backdrop of displacement and resettlement. This narrative highlights the tension within the entrepreneurial landscape, where dreams and aspirations are often intertwined with the pressing needs of daily survival.

Comparing Struggles: *'So just like so many artists out there,'*

RE1 compares herself as a refugee woman entrepreneur and artist who often has to balance her passion projects with paid work. This suggests recognising a shared struggle for marginalised individuals who may have to work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

Entrepreneurship as a side hustle: *'I have a full-time job that pays for my bills.'*

RE1 acknowledges the reality that her new venture is currently a side hustle and that her main job is what financially sustains her. This highlights the power dynamics and economic disparities for marginalised individuals who may not have the resources or support to focus on their entrepreneurial pursuits solely.

Overall, this quote highlights the intersectionality of power, subjectivity, and marginalisation as the speaker navigates the challenges of being a refugee woman entrepreneur who must balance her passion with financial stability. The comparison to artists also brings in the theme of representation, as it suggests a common narrative of struggling to make a living while pursuing creative endeavours.

Gender

Between Fear and Empowerment

'I am always conflicted; I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment.' – RE3

The quote illustrates the binary oppositions of *'fear'* vs. *'empowerment'* and the implicit *'surrender'* vs. *'action.'* Within the context of a refugee woman entrepreneur, this sentiment echoes the profound internal struggles many face when navigating their personal and professional journeys. The reference to being *'always conflicted'* underscores the continuous tension between succumbing to the challenges and adversities of being a refugee and seizing the empowerment of entrepreneurship. The juxtaposition between *'surrender'* and *'take the empowerment'* highlights the resilience and determination required to overcome the daunting barriers that come with displacement and resettlement. Through this narrative, RE3 gives voice to the myriad emotions and decisions refugee women entrepreneurs grapple with, emphasising the complexity of their lived experiences.

Internal Struggle: *'I am always conflicted'*

In this quote segment, RE3 expresses her internal struggle between conflicting emotions about her new venture. She feels pulled in different directions and is unable to reconcile her feelings. This inner turmoil is a characteristic of marginalisation, as individuals who occupy a marginalised position often experience feelings of uncertainty, doubt, and emotional instability. The conflicting emotions experienced by her can be seen as a manifestation of her marginalised position as a woman, refugee and entrepreneur in the liminal space. The act of being in a state of conflict, constantly having to navigate and reconcile multiple emotions and experiences, further highlights the marginalised status of the entrepreneur.

The Tension between Fear and Empowerment: *'I keep asking whether I should surrender to the fear or take the empowerment.'*

Here, RE3 asks herself whether she should surrender to the fear that she is feeling or take the empowerment offered to her. This struggle between fear and empowerment is a common experience for those who occupy marginalised positions. Fear is prevalent for individuals who are part of marginalised groups and face various forms of discrimination, prejudice, and disadvantage.

On the other hand, empowerment can be seen as a way for these individuals to resist and overcome their marginalised position. The conflict between these two emotions can be seen as a manifestation of the ongoing struggle for agency and resistance against marginalisation. The quote highlights the complexities and challenges that arise when individuals occupy a marginalised position and try to assert their agency and resist their marginalised status.

Ethnicity

Contrasting Entrepreneurial Spirits: Eritrean Caution and Somali Hustle

'Coming from an Eritrean background, there is a lack of entrepreneurs but also a lack of women role models. There was one older lady who was very entrepreneurial and started an internet café, but other than that, they seem risk-averse. Do you know that it was actually the Somalian women who are kick-arse, who are amazing, they are so entrepreneurial, they have a hustle about them, I found that really inspiring. But I asked myself, why are Eritrean women so afraid to try new things?' – RE2

This quote reveals the binary oppositions of 'Eritrean women' vs. 'Somalian women,' 'lack' vs. 'abundance,' 'risk-averse' vs. 'entrepreneurial,' and 'fear' vs. 'inspiration.' Through the lens of a refugee woman entrepreneur, the narrative sheds light on cultural distinctions in attitudes towards entrepreneurship, focusing on Eritrean and Somalian women. The quote underscores the challenges women face in this community by emphasising the lack of Eritrean entrepreneurs and female role models. This contrasts with the RE2's admiration for Somalian women, who are described as entrepreneurial, driven, and inspiring. This dichotomy prompts a reflective inquiry into the root causes of these disparities, especially regarding the perceived risk-aversion of Eritrean women. The rhetorical question, 'why are Eritrean women so afraid to try new things?' invites deeper introspection into societal, cultural, and individual barriers that might hinder entrepreneurial pursuits among Eritrean women.

Absence of Eritrean Women Entrepreneurs: *'Coming from an Eritrean background, there is a lack of entrepreneurs.'*

This segment highlights the absence of entrepreneurs within the Eritrean community. This could be seen as an example of how the marginalisation of Eritrean people can limit their access to opportunities, resources, and networks that are crucial for entrepreneurial success. The absence of entrepreneurs in the Eritrean community may also contribute to a lack of role models and a sense of hopelessness, further perpetuating the cycle of marginalisation.

Lack of Women Role Models: *'and also a lack of women role models.'*

The absence of women role models can limit the potential of women entrepreneurs, as they are less likely to see entrepreneurship as a viable career option. This lack of representation can also contribute to a lack of confidence and a sense of isolation, further perpetuating the marginalisation of women in the Eritrean community.

Exceptions to the Rule: *'There was one older lady who was very entrepreneurial and started an internet café, but other than that, they seem risk-averse.'*

This segment introduces an exception to the rule of a lack of entrepreneurs and role models in the Eritrean community. The woman who started an internet café can be seen as an example of how individual agency can challenge the dominant discourse of marginalisation. However, the comment that 'other than that, they seem risk-averse' highlights the continued marginalisation of Eritrean people, who may be less likely to take entrepreneurial risks due to their experiences of marginalisation and lack of resources and support.

Somalian Women as Entrepreneurial and Daring: *'Somalian women who are kick-arse, who are amazing, they are so entrepreneurial, they have a hustle about them'*

This segment of the quote highlights Somali women's representation as strong and empowered, with qualities such as being *'kick-arse'* and *'amazing.'* This representation challenges dominant discourses that often stereotype women from African backgrounds as passive, submissive, and powerless. Using language to describe Somali women's entrepreneurial spirit as *'having a hustle'* reinforces the idea that they are determined and confident in their abilities, which can be seen as a form of resistance against the marginalisation they may experience due to their race and gender. This representation of Somali women as entrepreneurial, confident and capable challenges the negative stereotypes often associated with women of African backgrounds and the ways in which these discourses shape their experiences and subjectivities.

Fear: *'I asked myself why are Eritrean women so afraid to try new things?'*

This quote segment highlights the RE2's questioning of the cultural and societal norms surrounding entrepreneurship among Eritrean women. She reflects on why Eritrean women may be perceived as *'afraid to try new things'* compared to the seemingly more entrepreneurial and risk-taking Somali women. This disparity may result from multiple intersecting identities and experiences, including cultural background and gender, that contribute to the marginalisation of Eritrean women and the limitations placed on their entrepreneurial potential.

Human Capital

Navigating Anxiety: Power Dynamics and the Fear of Perception

'I had such anxiety and panic attacks; I literally couldn't do it. The vulnerability, those people are more senior, am I saying the right thing, have I messed up, are they thinking I am stupid...all these different thoughts.' – RE2

The mention of *'those people are more senior'* suggests an underlying bias that seniority equates to superiority or heightened value. This could be perceived as a bias rooted in societal hierarchies where seniority or experience is automatically associated with better knowledge, capability, or value.

RE2's fear of not *'saying the right thing'* or the thought *'have I messed up'* indicates an implicit bias that there is no room for mistakes in the entrepreneurial world, particularly for her as a refugee woman. This can be traced back to societal expectations, where marginalised individuals often feel pressured to perform flawlessly due to the additional scrutiny they face.

The fear *'are they thinking I am stupid?'* reveals an assumption that making mistakes or being vulnerable equates to a lack of intelligence. This also highlights a bias that intelligence and capability are judged based on singular interactions or moments of vulnerability.

The dominant term *'vulnerability'* juxtaposed with *'anxiety'* and *'panic attacks'* suggests a bias that vulnerability is inherently negative. In many cultures and professional settings, vulnerability is often viewed as a weakness rather than a strength.

The entrepreneur's use of singular first-person pronouns (*'I'*, *'me'*) versus the plural third-person pronouns (*'they'*, *'those people'*) emphasises her feeling of isolation or being *'othered'*. This not only reflects her internal struggle but also mirrors societal biases where refugees or marginalised individuals might feel isolated or differentiated from the *'majority'*.

Subjectivity and Vulnerability: *'I had such anxiety and panic attacks; I literally couldn't do it.'*

This segment reflects the discursive element of subjectivity. RE2 describes her experiences and emotions related to her anxiety and panic attacks, which are subjective and personal. However, she also reveals her vulnerability and its impact on her ability to function in certain situations.

Power Dynamics and Inferiority: *'The vulnerability, those people are more senior, am I saying the right thing, have I messed up are they thinking I am stupid...all these different thoughts.'*

This segment reflects the discursive element of power. She is expressing her feelings of inferiority and the power dynamics in the situation. She is questioning her competence and fearing negative judgment from those with more power or authority than her.