

The relation between culture and Vietnamese entrepreneurship in Norway

Nhat, Le Minh

Supervisor: Professor Jarle Møen

NORGES HANDELSHØYSKOLE

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Foreword

I am fortunate to have much support from many students in NHH, and Vietnamese Norwegian in Norway. These people spend time to answer my online questionnaires and I even don't know who they are. Special thank to Professor Jarle Møen, my supervisor. Without him, I hardly finished this thesis. I am grateful for the assistance and support provided by NHH. The school gave me a chance to learn special things, meet special people and change my way of thinking. Finally, special recognition is given to my parents, my wife and my daughter with their constant understanding.

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Abstract

This study presents an exploratory and quantitative investigation of Norwegian Vietnamese in Norway to explain the Entrepreneurial Orientation and then Entrepreneurship of Vietnamese community in Norway with the emphasis on culture respect. A survey of 190 Norwegian students and 34 Norwegian Vietnamese was conducted online. A comparison between Vietnamese Norwegian and non-immigrant Norwegians was done with reference to the results of previous studies. And from that, the culture dimension values held by Vietnamese Norwegian culture were discovered and used to explain the Entrepreneurial Orientation and Entrepreneurship of the community. The finding is that the Vietnamese Norwegian community lacks some of cultural tendencies that will engender a strong entrepreneurship. Some implications are drawn for ongoing studies.

The relation between culture and Vietnamese entrepreneurship in Norway

1. Introduction

In this study I have tried to find measures to promote the entrepreneurship within the Vietnamese community in Norway. When I went abroad I was surprised that few papers target to Vietnamese immigrants. The reason could be that Vietnam is not strong in economics and not internationalized enough except its wars. So in this paper, I attempted to examine and discuss environment factors (more culture focused) that shape the rate of formation of – and the growth and expansion of - Vietnamese entrepreneurship in Norway.

I will focus more on the culture factor as it is the one that make one of the clear distinctions among ethnic groups. The paper also assesses some characteristics of the entrepreneurs. The findings of the paper may shed lights to making entrepreneurship policies for other ethnic groups in Norway.

The 1st Vietnamese came to Norway long time ago but those people, who make up one of the biggest non-Western immigrant groups¹ in Norway, the 2nd largest group in 2001 and the 3rd in 2005, were Vietnamese refugees and their next generation. Out of the 1680 refugees that arrived in Norway 1978-79, more than 1300 were from Vietnam². Until now the population in this minority group is around 18 000. Given the difficult conditions at that time, it is no doubt that most of them had struggled in the new context which is so different from their normal situation. Which may very likely makes them to be entrepreneurs as showed in many studies such as by Greenfield and Strickon (1999), Reynolds et al. (1994), Carree, Martin A., and A. Roy Thurik (2003) or Wennekers, A.R.M. and A.R. Thurik (1999).

¹ [Statistics Norway](#) (Published 11 May 2006)

² Statistics by The Norwegian Refugee Council

Entrepreneurship becomes increasingly important in our modern economies. Around 10 per cent of the workforces in most OECD economies are self-employed. The figure climbs to about 20 per cent when individuals who work for the self-employed are also included (Haber, Lamas and Lichtenstein, 1987). Two-thirds of people in the US labor force have some linkage to self-employment, by having experienced self-employment, by coming from a background in which the household head was self-employed, or by having a close friend who is self-employed (Steinmetz and Wright, 1989). The wealth and the innovativeness of a country depend on the capabilities of its entrepreneurs and managers. As analyzed by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – GEM – (2002), 25% of economic growth is explained by the rate of new firm creation. *However, the self-employment rate in Norway is among the lowest ones in OECD, even worse among the ethnic group in Norway, the rate of Vietnamese community one of the lowest.* Take a closer look, most of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs have chosen labour-intensive and low-skill industries like retail, restaurant and hotel (Statistics Norway). Consequently, the research on the entrepreneurship of the community is meaningful for its members and policy maker as well.

Many different theoretical aspects are suitable for the purpose of this study, and will be touched upon. A useful platform is the general definitions on entrepreneurship, factors that enable and encourage entrepreneurial activities. Because I will focus more on culture factor, more specific theories will be on inter-culture business environment and cultural values.

I have conducted in-depth interviews with some entrepreneurs and used secondary data retrieved from the articles or from databases website like OECD, Statistics Norway ...etc. The aim of the interviews is to gain ideas of what the people think and why he or she behaves in a certain way. I will use the result of some previous studies to culturally based characteristics for the formation and growth of entrepreneurial activities. However, most surveys from previous relevant papers were conducted either in Vietnam or USA so I may do another one which is directed to 1st generation of the Vietnamese immigrant in Norway. The results would be used to compare with the theory.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 presents the problem statement, purposes and the background of the study. Section 2 provides the overview about Vietnamese community in Norway, review Government policy for immigrant entrepreneurs. Section 3 reviews the key findings of literature on entrepreneurship policy and immigrant ethnic. Section 4 describes how I went along in the interviewing and research process. Section 5 summarizes the findings and withdraws the solutions.

2. Overview of Vietnamese community in Norway³

2.1 History

Source: National Geography⁴



First of all, I would like to say briefly about Vietnam. It is a South East Asian country, a side is contiguous with China, Laos and Cambodia, and the other side is a long beach of 3,260 km. A few months after the famous war in Vietnam ended 30 years ago, in 1975, many Vietnamese started escaping from the country in small and crowded boats. And this phenomenon had continued for about 15 years. The first

Vietnamese refugees came to Norway in June 1975.

Most Vietnamese refugees in Norway were rescued by Norwegian ships in international waters, an act that secured for them political asylum in this country. Before that, many of them had experienced scary trips on open sea, in danger of pirates, capture, starvation, thirst and death. These survivors were brought to one of the refugee camps in the region, and then transferred to a transit camp in Philippines, China, Hong Kong and Malaysia, where they had awaited departure for Norway. Other – a spouse, a parent, or a grandparent – who were

³ This part mainly built on 2 books written by Prof. John Chr. Knudsen, Associate Professor at Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen. These books are *Vietnamese Survivor* (1988) and *Capricious Worlds – Vietnamese Life Journeys* (2005) which is almost like the 2nd edition of the former one. Knudsen is a keen observer and narrator of Vietnamese refugees, especially the ones in Norway. His works about Vietnamese form “a record and reminder of the failure to consider the ‘meaning’ of violence, war, and poverty in their full pragmaticist/implications”. However, in this part, I am going to use his observation and comments for the purpose of describing the Vietnamese immigrant community in Norway.

⁴ http://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/0105/field/images/vietnam_map.jpg

granted family reunions with close relatives already in Norway, through a program, came straight from Vietnam.

In Bergen particularly and Norway in general, upon arrival, the Vietnamese were confronted with a situation where *there were no Asian people, physical and social conditions and events*. Living temporarily in a hotel, they tried to find a way into the Norwegian society. They acknowledged the help from the staff, but wanted to be as independent as possible.

2.2 Community structure

a. Social classes

At first, the community is homogeneous. People shared many characteristics: coming from middle-class background in the southern cities, having a generally high level of education and knowledge of at least one European language from Vietnam, and having had a career as functionaries or students.

During the period 1978 - 1979, gradually, persons from rural backgrounds entered the arena, the refugees could be categorized into 2 types: 1) several newcomers shared the urban middle-class background of those already settled. They were highly qualified, well educated, experienced white-collar workers, and were proficient in English or French. A few had been large-scale traders. The number of students also increased. Having these qualifications, their futures might be viewed optimistically, an impression borne out by their adaptational skill. 2) Other new comers had only a few years of schooling, no knowledge of European language and no experience as white-collar workers. Rather, they had worked as traders, mechanics, peasants, or fishermen. Remember that traditionally, there are four *hierarchically ordered classes*: *scholars, peasants, artisan, and merchants*. In this system, traditionally, merchants and entrepreneurs are not at 'high level' or not respected much as is scholars.

b. Demographic structure

Most of the refugees came here when they were still young, now they are in middle age. Most of the young people now were born in Norway, although children, both parent accompanied and unaccompanied, came to Norway during the mentioned time.

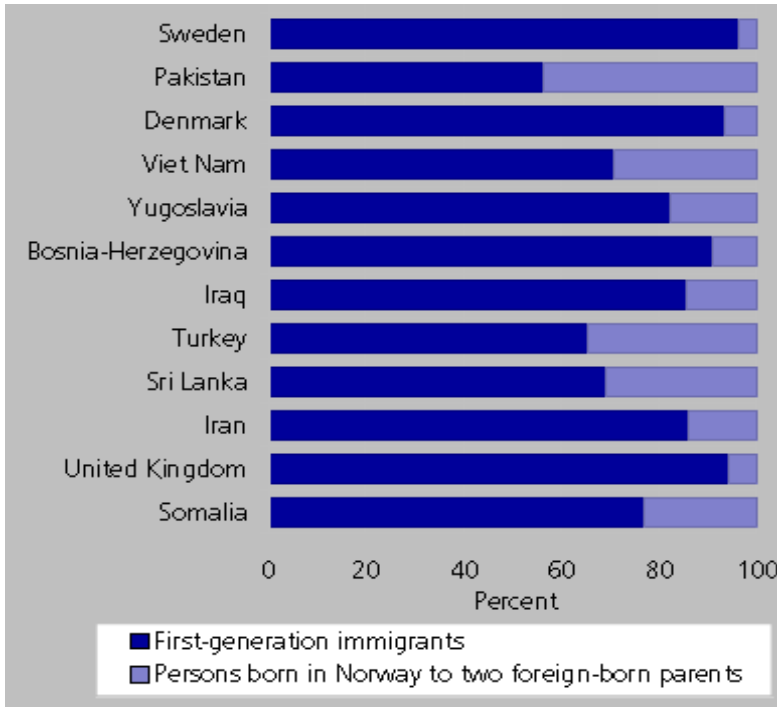


Figure 1: Portion of first-generation immigrants and persons born in Norway of two foreign-born parents, for some countries. Women. 1 Jan 2001. Percent

The gender ratio of women to men is 0.994⁵, while there are some groups in which men over-represent, such as Iraq or Somali, and women over-represent, such as Philippines or Russia. Around 28% live in Oslo. The fertility rate of the women among Vietnamese immigrant is 2.8% while those of women from western and non-western are 1.9% and 2.7%

respectively. Vietnamese immigrants in Norway get married earlier than western

immigrants but later than general non-western immigrants. 19% of the Vietnamese at the age of 20-24 get married while the rates are 35% and 6% for non-western and western immigrants respectively. Small number of the immigrants involve in cross-national marriages with Norwegian in comparison with other minority groups. In which immigrants from countries like Turkey, Morocco and India seem to be much more open to cross-culture marriages than Vietnamese⁶.

⁵ Statistics Norway 2005 (http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/02/10/ola_kari_en/innvandring_en/)

⁶ The demographic characteristics of immigrant population in Norway - Reports 2002/22 • Statistics Norway 2002

Multiple-family households are most common among persons from Pakistan, India and Vietnam. The number in a household of the Vietnamese is also one of the highest in Norway, around 3 persons⁷

2.3 Religion

Main religions in the community are Catholic, Buddhist, and persons who claim themselves Confucianism. In 1982, approximately 35% of the Vietnamese in Bergen were Catholic, 24 percent were Buddhist, 4% stated other religions, and 37 percent said little about religious affiliation. Among Vietnamese from the South, many are Catholics who escaped from the North in 1954, when almost a million people fled to the South to escape “brutally imposed land reforms, reprisals, and political and/or religious persecution”.

The area in and around the Catholic Church had always been one of the most important Vietnamese because this is a good place where they can communicate and make friend. It was lucky for them that, at least, they were not left completely alone. Being Catholic, they were warmly received by the Catholic congregation in Bergen. That gives them a sense of belonging to a religious fellowship that stretched back to Vietnam. At the same time, the strong Catholic congregation was where they could avoid hierarchical authority imposed by the established Vietnamese; the ones had stayed in Norway for several years.

However, in Norway, the Catholic Church has a marginal yet strong position. Most Norwegians are Protestants while the Catholic congregation has grown as refugees from Latin American, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka – as well as immigrants from Europe and a native minority.

In Vietnamese community, a person is defined within a society rooted in a religious-philosophical universe of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The structure of the society is based on a set of cardinal virtues. A person should do what is righteous rather than what is

⁷ Appendix 1

of immediate personal gain, and practice self-denial for the greater good. Men should behave with five virtues: *'benevolence'* (*nhan*), *'righteousness'* (*nghia*), *'ritual'* (*le*), *'knowledge'* (*tri*), and *'sincerity'* (*tin*). Women should be aware of 4 values: *work* (*housework*), *appearance*, (*beautiful or ugly*), *speech* (*palatable or unpalatable*) and *conduct* (*good or evil*). Buddhism and Taoism, in general, advice people to do the 'right and good things' and should not have too much ambition as that could make them fail. "One who never fails always succeeds. And he who always succeeds is all- powerful".⁸

2.4 Politics

In the early time of the community, to form a local Vietnamese community was a true challenge in an exile land where only a few compatriots exist, but not the few one needs because most of them need a sense of being identified. Relations with compatriots remain the most promising for refugee health and welfare. But this could be the most dangerous. With their experience of instability, one can never be certain that information given to strangers will not be used later as evidence against one. Even in their homeland, the Vietnamese did not typically trust official helpers. Here, the desire for respect and dignity was more accentuated, its lack felt more acutely for the ones who once were in 'high ranks' in Vietnam.

However, given the perpetual skepticism in their minds and the partition among the Vietnamese, it is hard to imagine that there could be a strong political organization representing for the community. That is the reason why most organizations are religious ones.

During this period, the first refugee organization emerged: the 'Association of the free Vietnamese in Norway'. The purpose was more cultural than political or religious. Thus, through such celebrations as the lunar New Year (Tet), the refugees sought to keep their traditions alive and display their culture for both their compatriots and Norwegians. However,

⁸ <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Philosophy/Taichi/lao.html>
<http://www.friesian.com/religion.htm>

the fact that the organization served as a necessary intermediary between the Norwegian bureaucracy and the Vietnamese, was not seen as its main objective.

Former boat-owners and fishermen, and even soldiers are considered by the established Vietnamese to be '*peasant or entrepreneur*' type. An unintended consequence of the formation of closed networks by the established Vietnamese – from which peasants and such entrepreneurs were excluded (p119, 2nd edition) – was that refugees from these backgrounds followed suit, establishing networks of their own in which they, too, could find strength in numbers. Some of them had come to Bergen through the program of family reunion from the camps, one family group totaling more than 60 members. (p119, 2nd edition)

Overall, the relative lack of political leadership among the Vietnamese in Norway is partly due to a general feeling of weariness with regard to leaders. Besides, the Vietnamese are fairly less concerned about politics than other minority groups. In the Municipal and County Council Election 2003, the electoral turnout for foreign citizens with western background was 64 per cent, for non-westerns was 36 per cent. Among Pakistanis and Vietnamese, the two largest groups of immigrants, the turnout was at 40 and 30 per cent respectively⁹.

Some of the young prefer to follow a career within Norwegian political parties, usually on the conservative side. Others lead cultural and religious organizations with the objective of ensuring better understanding between Vietnamese and the general population. They are all well educated in Norway, and master the two languages perfectly. Hence, they leave the older generation to perform their traditional roles in the exile milieu, and pay great respect to their age and merit.

2.5 Culture

Vietnamese culture is very similar to that of Chinese, but a bit more open toward Western culture since the French had dominated there for around 80 years until 1945. In general, their culture is communitarianism and male-centered. They prefer highly contexted interactions in

⁹ http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/01/20/vundk_en/

which the communicators commonly anticipate that what is not actually said is already understood (Trompenaars 1998). Having experienced too many uncertainties, the immigrants say “that silence and withdrawal is safer than talk and self-revelation”. There are many kinds of negative attention and, so they tend to be skeptical of all attention.

In Norway, the Vietnamese immigrants have faced with the equality and individualism, the values well appreciated in Norwegian culture while they prefer to play within the community, form their network based on similar culture, common history.. Most natives see them as a crowd rather than individuals. This is particular true for the first generation. They had experienced the difficulties that make them feel that “those who are excluded from the safety of these imported networks are vulnerable to attack.” At the same time, they keep distance from ‘strangers’ who are ‘unknown, untrusted’ to reduce the frustration and uncertainty until “individuals succeed in proving themselves non-threatening”. (p118, 2nd edition)

Within the family, relations are based upon a *hierarchical chain of authority* with the eldest, whether parents, husbands or older siblings. In contrast, relations between friends are horizontal. *Respect and dignity are particularly important*. Parents try to control their children in what they say, behave or even think. They want their children keep the traditional culture. In many cases, the parents fear that the children may get ‘spoiled’ in discotheques where there are rumors of sex and drugs.

In exile, the old system of *privilege of birth, merit, virtues and rank* is challenged by entrepreneurs e.g., merchants, small-scale traders, fishermen and boat-owners. Fisherman represents for the one who had boat and others had to ask for his service when they saw the chance of escaping from Vietnam. Fisherman in Vietnam has an equal social level as a peasant. But in Norway, they holds opportunities up against the social position he held in a past. But teacher (scholars), formerly of the comfortable middle class, “must not only keep the past alive, but also nourish it as more real than the uncertain present”. Re In general, among the first generation of Vietnamese in Norway, they perceived that status *is more ascribed rather than achieved* (p115 & p13, 2nd edition).

Moreover, according to Confucianism, “status-seeking through material display violates fundamental Confucian ethical principles and the model of hierarchy in which *kinship, age, and merit are critical signifiers*. Those in high position did not (should not) have to demonstrate their qualities through material display, but through rule”. An old Vietnamese proverb said that “one cannot get rich without engaging in trade” but entrepreneurs and merchants were still described as cheaters and illiterate people.

The Vietnamese see themselves *as self-cultivated picture is a hardworking, self-sustaining easygoing and modest people*. Compatriots who fall on hard times and accept relief are often accused of ‘tapping the system’ rather than fighting for their job (p119, 2nd edition). However, most refugees remain marginal to the larger Norwegian society. This is particularly true of the first generation of adults, who have limited contact with the local people. “The limited contact encourages stereotyping and divisiveness - from both sides”. (p118, 2nd edition). *The language is also not a strong advantage of the Vietnamese*; many first generation adults find difficulty in learning the new language. Consequently, in general, their integration in Norwegian society is even more challenging. Isolation from Norwegian society might even become a strategy in attempts to minimize the risk of losing face. “The same strategy might also apply for their contact with compatriots outside the family or close circle of friends”

The refugees from rural area and those who were less educated were less concerned about planning their futures than those originated from middle-class. But, in general, *they all try to regain what was lost in Vietnam*. The past of so many shocking events is always memorized and vivid in their mind. This point shows through the words by Knudsen about Vietnamese immigrants, which says: “who I am is who I was, and not who I have become”.

For conclusion of this part, the war ended 31 years ago (1975) but it seems that *they still keep fighting*. The battle originated from Vietnam, went on in refugee camp and now still continues in exile. (p16, 2nd edition)

2.6 Job and education

2.6.1 Early time

Most of Vietnamese immigrants were offered unskilled or perhaps semi-skilled jobs, working as laborers in various local factories, both women and men. A few men found works in a large shipyard, one of the few factories offering on the job training so their workers could qualify for a welder's certificate.

Qualifications from Vietnam proved to be of limited value, the main exception being the few who were later offered jobs as mother-tongue teachers and interpreters. Among former students, a few continued their studies, mainly within the natural sciences, medicine or dentistry. Still others tried to qualify for the local engineering college or, if possible, for the more prestigious Norwegian Technical College, at the University of Trondheim. Especially popular were courses in computer science and subjects related to the expanding Norwegian oil industry.

Vietnamese from more 'modest' background tried to find other openings like a job in fish-manufacturing plant. Social workers or resident compatriots were their links to job market. So somehow, the Vietnamese with 'modest' background were still dependent on those people.

Among the options of continuing professional study, working, learning Norwegian ...etc, the adult refugees most often prioritize the choices of work because an income will enable them to help their family. They have found membership in a network and contacts primarily among compatriots in the work place, to be the most important factors in recruitment and later job mobility, particularly in the blue-collar sector (p105, 2nd edition)

The people who came from middle class in Vietnam had to handle downward social mobility. Downward social mobility describes the movement or opportunities for movement from a 'high' social group to a 'lower' level group, and the disadvantages that go with this in terms of income, security of employment, opportunities for advancement etc (Stephen Aldridge 2001). Some of them had succeeded "in counteracting the downward trend that brings with it

an acute feeling of cultural dislocation and loss. While most of them had soon disappointed as it was not easy to find a job of the level expected by them. Here means the type of job that can fulfill the lost sense of theirs for respect from compatriots. Now, the young are aware of their parents' desires for social advancement; their hopes of regaining lost rank or simply defending the new status conferred by the exile reality. The most obvious route upward is through education, the child being a key to the parents' studies.

As the numbers of refugees increased, and the number of entry-level jobs decreased in the late 80s and the 90s, increasing unemployment hurt even the former middle-class, and their positions were becoming even more threatened.

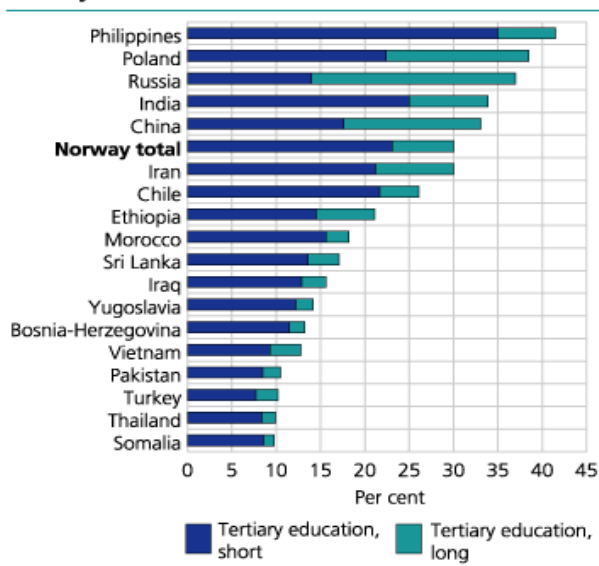
2.6.2 Present time

a. Education

Among people 30-44 years old, or the first generation, around 13% of the Vietnamese

Figure 2: Immigrant population with tertiary education

Immigrant population 30-44 years, with tertiary education as highest level of education, by country background. Selected non-western countries and Norway total. 2001. Per cent



Norwegians had completed some type of tertiary education (relating to education in colleges and universities), compared with the average of the whole Norway at around 23%, lower than that of whole immigrant population (18.8%), and of population else (23.5).

For the second generation, the situation is very much reversing. The percentage of persons, 16-24 years old, who had completed upper secondary and tertiary educations, are 70.6 and 4.4%, higher than those of most minority groups. Those rates of whole immigrant population are 54.7%

and 3.7%, of non-western countries were 56.7% and 3.3% respectively.

b. Employment, Unemployment and Self-employment

The number of employed persons in Norway in 2004 was 2 289 000 people¹⁰. The self-employment rate is about 7.4%¹¹, while the rate of Vietnamese immigrant group is lower but increasing for the last 4 years. Many of them over-represent in retail trade, restaurant and hotel industry as this is probably the employees in those industries do not need an official training. Self employment in retail trade accounts for 39% of Vietnamese employed people, 28% in restaurant and hotel, compared with that of average rates of Asian immigrant of 15.7% and 24.1%, and with those of the immigrant employment of 7.9% and 2.9%..

Table 1: Data of self employment among Vietnamese immigrant in Norway

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Employed people	10,834	11,127	11,526	12,091	12,599
Self-employed people	213	267	312	331	406
<i>Percentage</i>	1.96	2.40	2.70	2.73	3.22

Source: Supplied by Bjørn Olsen (Bjorn.Olsen@ssb.no) – Statistics Norway

Compared with the rates of other groups

Table 2: Data of self-employment of other groups

	Nordic countries	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	North America and Oceania	Asia	Africa	South and Central America	Total
Total employed people	33,376	22,264	31,408	4,266	56,071	13,369	7,062	167,816
Self employed people	2,766	1,895	1,247	431	3,974	650	370	11,333
Self employment rate	8.29%	8.51%	3.97%	10.10%	7.09%	4.86%	5.24%	6.75%

Source: Employment by immigrant background, region, 16-74 years and in absolute figures. Q4, 2005¹²

Among the other countries in OECD, Norway is one of the countries which have very low self-employment rate. In OECD, entrepreneurship and self-employment are used for the same

¹⁰ http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/06/01/innvregsys_en/tab-2006-06-22-02-en.html

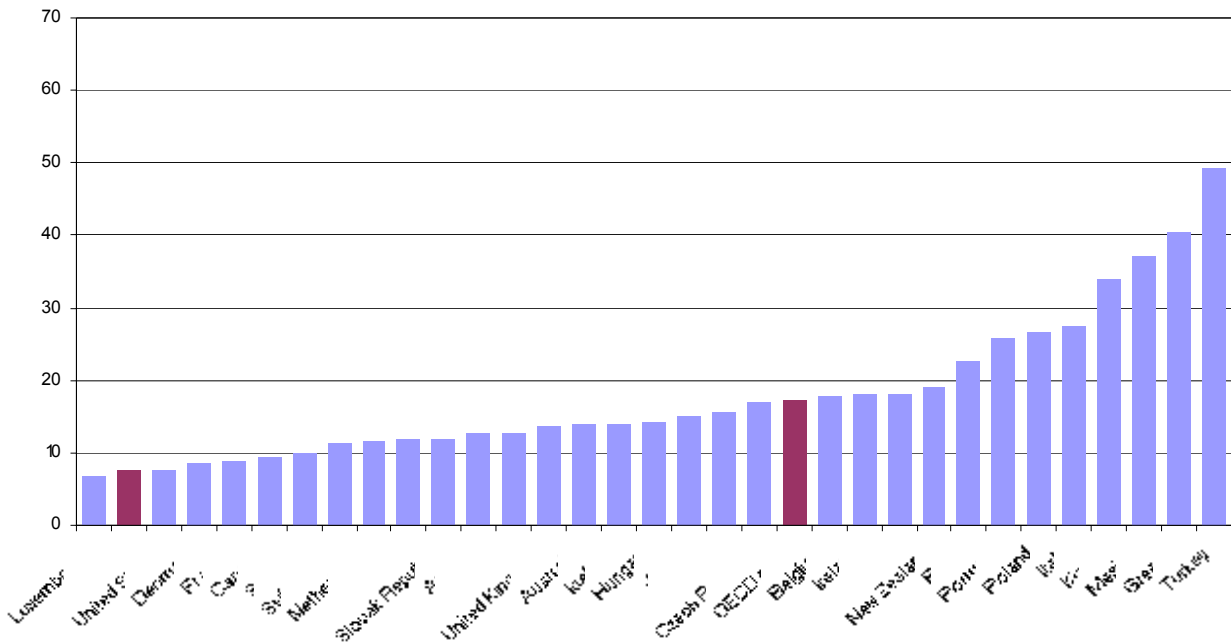
¹¹ OECE Factbook 2006

¹² http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/06/01/innvregsys_en/tab-2006-06-22-08-en.html

concept. And self-employment rates are defined as employers plus persons working on their own account, and a proportion of the total workforce.

Unemployment among Vietnamese is around 7.5%¹³ while those rates are around 9%, 3.9%, 12.2%, 17%¹⁴ for the whole 1st generation immigrants, Western Europe, Asia and Africa respectively. The rate looks good, and only lower than that of Western European. So far, I myself have not meet any Vietnamese who is unemployed in Norway. They are, or at least trying, to be hard working. During their leisure time, that would be nice for them if there is some extra job.

Figure 3: Self-employment rats. Total as a percentage of total civilian employment, 2004 or latest available year



Source: OECD Factbook 2006 - ISBN 92-64-03561-3 - © OECD 2006

2.7 Economics status

In Norway, opportunities for economic maneuvering are limited. Those searching for work have mainly 2 options: employment for a wage, or unemployment. The informal labor market

¹¹http://statbank.ssb.no/statistikbanken/Default_FR.asp?PXSid=0&nvl=true&PLanguage=1&tilside=selecttable/hovedtabellHjem.asp&KortnavnWeb=innvarbl

¹⁴ http://www.ssb.no/innvarbl_en/tab-2006-08-23-01-en.html

found in Vietnam and the refugee camps was lacking at that time. There are few if any niches for small trading establishment where seller and buyer are at least acquaintances.

Vietnamese entrepreneurs find that learning a foreign language was a difficult task. Their strategies are therefore geared toward sectors of the employment market where language competence is less important, which also happen to be sectors where job mobility is limited. Nevertheless, such employment represents upward social mobility, fulfilling the expectations of many a village refugee. Upward social mobility is defined as movement from ‘low’ social level to ‘higher’ social level with advantage of income, security of employment and opportunities of advancement etc (Stephen 2001).

Nowadays, compared to the (former) middle-class, peasants, the fishermen and entrepreneurs may enjoy relatively better life chances.

In comparison with other minority groups, Vietnamese immigrants seem to be in the upper – middle level in terms of income.

Table 3: Income accounts for immigrant married couples. 2003

	Denmark	Poland	Turkey	Somalia	India	Iran	Pakistan	Vietnam	Chile
After-tax income and interest payments-housing income	481,500	415,200	296,400	286,200	404,400	319,100	320,000	372,700	351,400

Source: Income Statistics for Persons and Families 2002-2003 (Statistics Norway 2005)¹⁵

2.8 Social life in general

Their social life are characterized by isolation and limited contact with Norwegians (p184). Their experience told them that the kind of contact they might establish with Norwegians would probably never compensate for the loss of family and friends in Vietnam. At this point, the initial period of extrovert behavior might easily be replaced by introspection (p183)

¹⁵ http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/05/01/nos_inntektpersoner_en/

“Over time, the isolation from Norwegians might prove less difficult to handle, socially as well as emotionally, than the loneliness which characterized their experience with their compatriots”.

Having tried so hard to learn a new language, and having had such high hopes of a brighter future, the (former) middle-class man remain unemployed, left with too much time to reflect, to speculate and worry about their lost families.

Within this community, we find more solid networks, grounded upon social relations of kinship and friendship from Vietnam. The contact established with the natives seems even more superficial, leaving the Vietnamese to struggle alone in their personal attempts to cope and adapt (p185)

The young are more Norwegian naturally as they were born there. But when asked about “what is weighing upon their hearts. The themes are the same as in earlier discussions: childhood, family life, school, the importance of success”. It means many of them still remain so Vietnamese. A ninth grade girl explained: “It isn’t easy when we go to a party. There is too much drinking, and the Norwegians have so much freedom, too much”. A contrast is implied to their own milieu, in which they feel safer than when among the young, out-of-control Norwegians. If alien behaviors make them uncomfortable, shared experiences bring the Vietnamese youth together (p142, 2nd edition)

The young more uneasy since they must struggle to defend not only their social lives outside the limits of the family circle, but also the educational system that is supposed to be their (and their families) path to social eminence.

In the community, every year, the most important celebration is Tet (Lunar New Year). In this event, the adult immigrants try to keep traditional heritage alive in their next generations. There are also some parties and celebrations are held for Vietnamese occasionally (off course the other minorities are welcome). Vietnamese can still be talked fluently by many young

people in the community. This is due to the parents' mind of preserving the language in exile and that it is taught in some main education programs as a foreign language option.

In general, these Vietnamese are still struggling to integrate into Norwegian community and try to be not alien. They enhance their images in working environment, education or even politics while still try to keep Vietnamese traditions (cultures). Young generation is influenced much by their parents and naturally preserves parts of their parents' behaviors and thinking.

3. Theory

3.1 Definition

The purpose of this chapter is: i) to define the concept

3.1.1 Inter-culture

a. Concept of culture

Culture is an abstract concept and distant from the core of this study, but this concept should be regarded first as it is a basic ground for the more academic terms coming. According to Hofstede (2001), *culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another*. The definition is based on the assumption of “mental programming” or “software of the mind”. Based on that, culture is described by some constructs which are values, symbols, heroes and rituals. Culture in this sense includes values; systems of values are a core element of culture. Since values are typically determined early in life, they tend to be “programmed” into individuals resulting in behavior patterns consistent with culture context and enduring overtime (Hofstede, 1980). Culture can be defined for variety of levels in society from individual level to groups, category and societies (Hofstede 2001). It is plausible that differences in national culture, in which these *values and beliefs* are imbedded, may influence a *wide range of behaviors* including the decision to become self-employed rather than work for others (Mueller et al. 2000)

b. Concept of values

The key construct here is values. Hofstede (2001, p.5) defined a *value as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over other”*. In a study in 1972, Rokeach concluded that *“to have a value” is to maintain an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-states of existence*. Schwartz (1992) defined values as *concepts or beliefs that pertain to desirable end states or behaviors and transcend specific situations in guiding selection or evaluation of behavior and events and are ordered by relative importance*. More specifically, as Hofstede (2001) explained that values are feelings with arrows to them: each has a plus and a minus

pole. Value deal with such things as the following: Evil versus Good, Dirty versus Clean, Ugly versus Beautiful, Paradoxical versus Logical... etc. Our values are programmed early in our lives; they are non-rational (although we may subjectively feel our own to be perfectly rational). Or as Trompenaars (1998) stated values give us a feeling of “this is how I aspire or desire to behave”.

c. Culture dimensions

When studying culture, societies should be studied. In studying “value”, individuals are compared. Culture dimensions represent fundamental problems of societies. The dimensions focus on similarities and differences between societies, the relations among societal variables of societies. The scores for each country on one dimension can be pictured as points along a line or points in a plot for 2 dimensions (Hofstede, 2001). Professor Geert Hofstede conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. From 1967 to 1973 while working at IBM as a psychologist, he collected and analyzed data from over 100,000 individuals from 50 countries and 3 regions. From the results of the research together with additional studies, Hofstede developed a model that identifies 4 Dimensions to assist in differentiating culture Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). Hofstede added a fifth Dimension after conducting a additional international study with Chinese employees and managers. The Dimension, based on Confucian dynamism, is Long-term Orientation (LTO)¹⁶.

Another model to analyze cultural differences, namely the "Seven Dimensions of Culture Model", is developed by Trompenaars. In this research, he examines cultures within 3 categories: 1) Relationship with people, 2) Attitudes to time and 3) Attitudes to the environment. The first category includes 7 fundamental dimensions of culture: Universalism versus Particularism, Individualism versus Communitarianism, Neutral versus Emotional, Specific versus Diffuse and Achievement versus Ascription. Comparing Dimensions proposed by these 2 professors, Individualism-Communitarianism is equivalent to

¹⁶ http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php?culture1=98&culture2=65#compare

Individualism-Collectivism, and Long-term Orientation is implied partly in ‘Attitude to time’ developed by Trompenaars. Other dimensions of culture were also proposed however, as they are described in Hofstede (2001), I realize that most of them are equivalent to the ones suggested by Hofstede and Trompenaar, some of them are not thoroughly examined or lack of theory support.

3.1.2 Entrepreneurship

a. Concept of entrepreneur

There are many definitions of entrepreneurship or entrepreneur. Baumol (1993) provided 2 definitions. One refers to the entrepreneur as someone who creates and then organises and operates a new firm, independent of whether there is anything innovative in the act, while the second one refers to the entrepreneur as an innovator, someone who transforms inventions and ideas into economically viable entities, independent of whether in the process he/she creates or operates a firm. Lowrey (2003) construct the entrepreneur as “economic man” and defines the entrepreneur as an individual who constantly push himself, reach for new heights and with a strong desire to succeed. The concept by Anders and Lois Stevenson (2005) adopted a process perspective. In which, first of all, the entrepreneur is associated with business start-up, ownership and management of an owned-business. Beyond that, the entrepreneurs are viewed as ones, “who, at different stages of life and at different stages of starting, managing and growing their own businesses. They move along a continuum that includes nascent entrepreneurs, solo-entrepreneurs, micro-entrepreneurs, lifestyle-entrepreneurs, technology-entrepreneurs, high-growth entrepreneurs, and innovative entrepreneurs. By having said that, the concept could be used for multiple purposes including policy making.

b. Entrepreneurship

There are also many definitions of entrepreneurship. What the definition should be is beyond the purpose of this thesis and time-wasting as the debate about that has been still continuing. However, from various definitions, we can understand what entrepreneurship is. In 1990, Gartner’s survey revealed that there are two groups, “each with a different basic concept of

entrepreneurship”. The first group is about the “*characteristics of entrepreneurship*”, the 2nd one is about “*outcomes of entrepreneurship*”. For example, the European Commission (2004) defines entrepreneurship as the mindset and process needed to create and develop economic activity, blending risk-taking, creativity and/or innovation with sound management within a new or an existing organization. While, in a study in 1999, Wennekers and Thurik stated that entrepreneurship is the manifest ability and willingness of individuals, on their own, in teams, within and outside existing organizations to perceive and create new economic opportunities (new products, new production methods, new organizational schemes and new product – market combinations), and to introduce their ideas in the market, in the face of uncertainty and other obstacles, by making decisions on location.

Reynolds et al (1999) define entrepreneurship as “any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individual, or an established business”. In Kizner’s study in 1992, he focused more in “processes”, giving the word “entrepreneurship” 2 meanings. First, entrepreneurship is the “alertness” to new opportunities. Second, entrepreneurship is the sequence of innovative actions following from the “discovery” of such an opportunity.

With the purpose relating to business environment and policy making, another type of the entrepreneurship concept should be considered. Lowrey (2003) defines entrepreneurship as an economic system that consists of entrepreneurs, legal and institutional arrangements, and governments. Gartner and Carter (2003) define it as “an organizational phenomenon, and more specifically, as an organizing process” and consider “the processes of organization formation to be the core characteristic of entrepreneurship”. Organizing processes are accomplished through interactions among people, continually re-accomplished and renewed overtime (Pfeffer, 1982).

However, in 2005, Stevenson and Ludström define that entrepreneurship is what entrepreneurs “do”, it is a social phenomenon that emerges within the context of a broader society and involves many actors.

3.1.3 Entrepreneurial orientation

Similarly to entrepreneurship, EO is critical for the survival and growth of the economic prosperity of nations (Morris, 1998). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) have provided five dimensions of EO consisting of autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness. EO is different from entrepreneurship itself. EO refers to the entrepreneurial process, namely how entrepreneurship is undertaken – the methods, practices and decision-making styles used to act entrepreneurially. The theory behind EO is applicable for both firm and society / country behaviors. Specifically, those societies / countries that act independently (autonomy), encourage experimentation (innovativeness), take risks, take initiative (proactiveness), and aggressively compete within their markets have a strong EO, whereas those lacking some or all of these have a weaker EO. From the culture respect, Lee and Peterson (2000) explained the dimensions of EO as below.

Autonomy

For the autonomy dimension of EO to be strong, entrepreneurs must operate within cultures that promote entrepreneurs to act independently, to maintain personal control, and to seek opportunities without societal constraints.

Innovativeness

The culture that supports new ideas, experimentation, novel solutions to problems, and the creative processes of entrepreneurs will determine the strength of the innovativeness dimension of EO.

Risk taking

Only societies with a cultural foundation that supports the proclivity of entrepreneurs to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty and to commit resources to risky venture will reap the benefits of those who are willing to engage in risk-taking behaviors. After all, zero risk equals zero change. Fear of failure leads to stagnant thinking.

Proactiveness

Cultures that emphasize entrepreneurial initiative by encouraging entrepreneurs to pursue and anticipate opportunities and to participate in new or emerging markets are classified as proactive. Proactive individuals do that is necessary to bring their concepts to fruition and gain an advantage by being the first to capitalize on new opportunities.

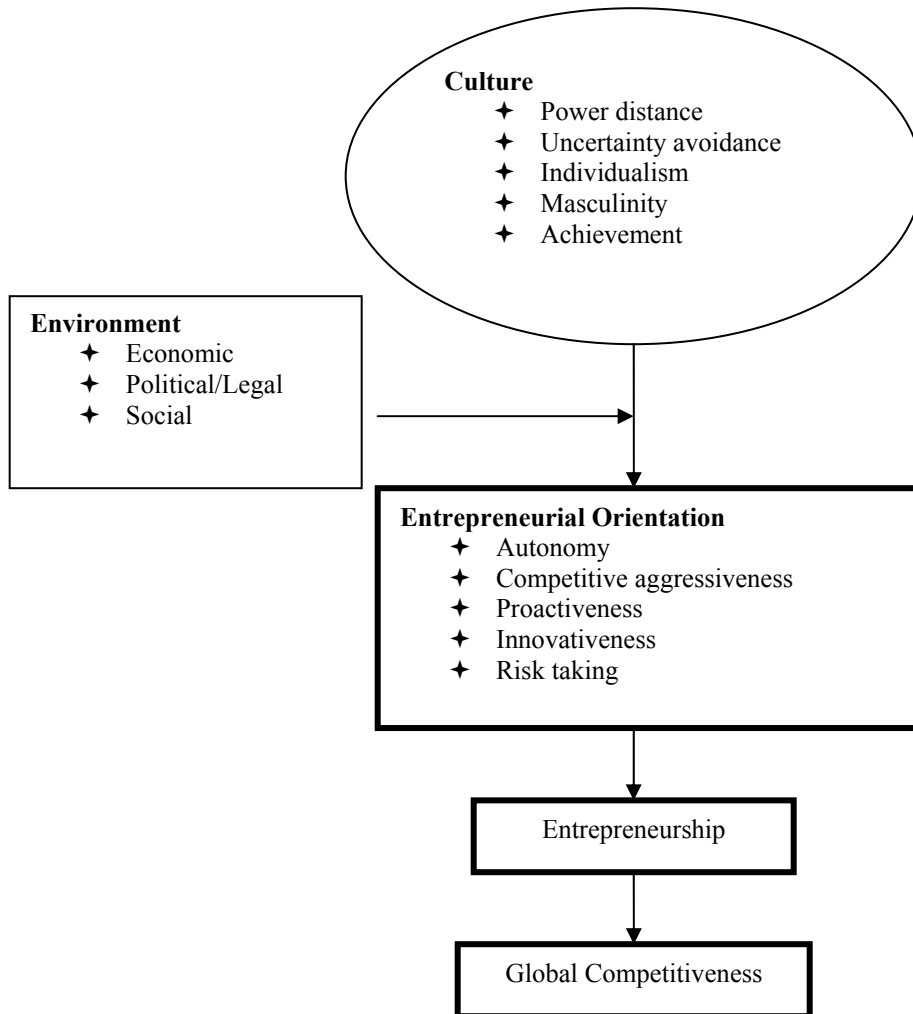


Figure 4: Model Depicting the Relationship between Culture and EO as it relates to Entrepreneurship and Global Competitiveness¹⁷

¹⁷ Lee and Peterson (2000)

Competitive Aggressiveness

This is an important component of EO because new ventures are much more likely to fail than established businesses. Thus, an aggressive stance and intense competition are critical to the survival and success of new start-ups. And that promotes entrepreneurs to be achievement oriented by challenging competitors or improving their position relative to other firms.

3.2 Literature review

3.2.1 Entrepreneurship policy

Alvaro Cuervo (2005) indicates that there are 3 explanations for the development of entrepreneurial activity. The first explanation links the emergence of entrepreneurs and the characteristics of individuals. The second explanation considers that the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities depends on the context in which the individuals live and work (Romanelli and Schoonhoven, 2001, p. 41). In which “entrepreneurial activity depends on *environmental factors* where the individual undertakes activities; factors such as the size and growth of markets, endowment of productive factors and natural resources, and the availability of human and technological capital”. A third explanation say about “the importance of the institutions and rules of the game prevalent in the political area, the defence of property rights, the working of market for labour, capital, and knowledge, and the culture and perceptions toward entrepreneurial activity”.

The 3rd explanation emphasizes on the responsibilities of institutions and government. To increase the level of entrepreneurial activity, institutions and government should understand what is critical to influence entrepreneurial actions of individuals. Stevenson and Ludström (2005) suggest that there will be higher of levels of entrepreneurial activity in economies (1) where people are aware of entrepreneurship as a feasible and viable option and willing to explore it (Motivation); have access to opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and ability to be able to pursue it (Skill): and can gain ready access to the start-up support they need,

such as information and ideas, counseling and advisory services, business contacts, capital and encouragement, in an enabling regulatory and policy environment (Opportunity).

Stevenson and Ludström (2005) also suggest that “to operationalize “Motivation” we include the social values placed on entrepreneurship and its desirability and feasibility” as a career and employment option. This could be done through “awareness, information, exposure, role models and actions to increase social legitimacy”.

Motivations for becoming an entrepreneur have generally been categorized as either push/pull situational factors or personal characteristics. Research has shown that new venture initiation often occurs as a result of situational pushes or pulls that include frustration with present lifestyle, childhood, family environment, education, age, work history, role models, and support networks (Hisrich 1990; Martin 1984; Moore 1986; Krueger 1993; Scheinberg and MacMillan 1988). Some individuals are *pushed* into entrepreneurship by negative factors such as dissatisfaction with existing employment, loss of employment, and career setbacks. A number of empirical studies support this view and characterize entrepreneurs as misfits, rejects from society, or displaced individuals (Brockhaus 1980; Shapero 1975; Kets de Vries 1977; Gilad and Levine 1986). Alternatively, individuals may be *pulled* into entrepreneurship by positive factors such as early training and exposure to business which encourages the search for business opportunities (Krueger 1993; Mancuso 1973; Gilad and Levine 1986; Scheinberg and MacMillan 1988). In addition to push and pull factors, personal characteristics (sometimes referred to as *personality traits*) also play roles in new venture initiation.

“Skill” is operationalized in terms of technical, business and entrepreneurial skills and know-how. This could come through “education, experience working in a small business, hands-on experience in starting and running an enterprise or through peer and professional networks”. “Opportunity” is operationalized in terms of the “environment for technical support and business ideas, as well as the ease of access to these resources”. In general, governments must reduce or eliminate obstacles and ‘barrier’ in the regulatory, administrative, legislative and

fiscal system that may act as inhibitors to business entry. They can also reduce the penalties associated with bankruptcy.

In a 2000-2001 study, Stevenson and Ludström categorize entrepreneurship policies that governments have been using into 6 areas:

- Entrepreneurship promotion
- Entrepreneurship education
- The environment for start-up
- Star-up and seed capital financing
- Business support measures for start-up
- Target group strategies

In target group strategy, the government's emphasis is very much on what can be done to increase business ownership rates and entrepreneurial activity levels among specifically targeted group, for example supporting youth entrepreneurship, abolishing barrier to female entrepreneurship, increasing the number of new businesses among under-represented ethnic minorities; increasing Aboriginal entrepreneurship, stimulating technology entrepreneurs, etc.

3.2.2 Culture

Why the rate of Vietnamese entrepreneur is lower than average rate of whole population? Economics explanation could be appropriate but I want to focus on culture issue, and see how much this factor is influencing to their motives to be entrepreneurs.

I realize that researchers mainly use economic or psychological factors to explain why some groups of people have more entrepreneurs than others. In this paper, I attempt to study the culture's influence on entrepreneurship. According to Hofstede (1980) culture is enduring and takes long time to change. In a study in 1992, McGrath et al came to the same conclusion to some values examined. As the result, it is ideal to compare some groups from different cultures in a country (here is Norway), since the other social variants are relatively eliminated and the same survey is rarely conducted here. This comparison is done with the assumption that the closer to 'entrepreneurship culture', the more entrepreneurs are generated.

McGrath et al. (1992b) proposed that there is a set of beliefs and values that drive the entrepreneurial behavior. And in which a core set exist across culturally different societies. McGrath contends that there are two different worlds of people who “choose careers in organizations with a civil-service flavor versus those who start business”. However, he further suggests that “it may for example be possible to transfer what has been learned from one setting to another, even if they do not share common cultural values. This could increase the chance of effective “technology transfer” in the area of fostering entrepreneurship”.

Holt (1997) reveals the similarities between Chinese and U.S. entrepreneurs in 2 dimensions: *Individualism* and *Uncertainty avoidance*; even they are from contrasting cultures. In the other hand, Holt (1997) found the Chinese entrepreneurs to be significantly different from non-entrepreneurial manager on a number of cultural dimensions. McClelland (1961) offers similar set of defining traits to explain entrepreneurial behavior.

In comparison between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs in 1992, McGrath, Mac Millan, and Scheinberg indicate that entrepreneurs give higher “Power Distance” score than career professionals, favor *individual* rather than *collective* actions; they prepared to take risks and tend to have a highly “Masculine” orientation.

Yetim (2006) found that in their relationships with their employees, entrepreneurs seem to lean more towards to increase the *power distance*.

In 2004 study, Wennekers et al agree that cultures of relatively poor countries can often be characterized by high *power distance* (PDI+) and low *individualism* (IDV-), and often also by low *uncertainty avoidance* (UAI-). The conclusion of this study by Wennekers is consistent with that of Mueller et al (2000). Alternative, high Power distance and Collectivism has been argued to retard entrepreneurial activity (Takyei-Asiedu 1993). Further, Takyei argues that modernity and ‘tradition’ cannot exist together.

Many researches conclude that male still dominates in entrepreneurship despite of the same other conditions such as education, legislation, politics etc. As concluded in Silvia (2004),

entrepreneurship is equated with Masculine. Robert et al, (1990) shows that women had stronger education and training aspirations for entrepreneurship than men however they need to overcome cultural barriers to take entrepreneurial career entry. McGrath (1992) also indicate that entrepreneurs score high on Masculinity (MAS+) values. Cultures high on the masculinity scale, argues Hofstede, are more likely to value *individual achievement*, *independent success*, and financial rewards.

One of the most widely cited personalities of entrepreneurs or entrepreneurship is the willing to assume risk. Individuals who are willing to accept the uncertainty associated with being self-employed as opposed to settling for jobs within organizations are often considered being entrepreneur. People who are extremely risk-averse are unlikely to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneur should therefore score low on uncertainty avoidance (UAI-) and McGrath et al, (1992) and Petrakis (2005) confirmed this argument. On the other hand, according to Moris (1994), it appears that entrepreneurship declines the more collectivism is emphasized.

The other personality that is also described much when regarding to entrepreneurs is the *achievement motivation*. Male entrepreneurs possess higher achievement orientation than male non-entrepreneurs. Even female entrepreneurs does not score higher in *Achievement* than female non-entrepreneurs (Richard et al, 2006), in general, entrepreneurs show higher achievement orientation than non-entrepreneurs. In 2004, Collin et al, used several methods such as statistics, projective and self-report measures and also come to a conclusion that achievement motivation is valid and significantly correlated with choice of entrepreneurial career and performance.

There are some contradicting hypotheses with respect to the influence of the culture dimensions on entrepreneurship or self-employment such as Shane (1992, 1993), Audretsch and Evans (1994). However, these researches investigate the relationship between cultures. Note that when doing entrepreneurship comparison with culture aspect, generally, there are 2 types of comparisons: 1) across cultures and 2) between entrepreneur and non-entrepreneurs. As Hofstede (2004) argues, ‘entrepreneurial’ individuals in the community with PDI+, UAI+, MAS-, and IDV- are dissatisfied in their situation and may choose for self-employment to be

as independent as possible. Those people who own ‘entrepreneurial values’ could not be satisfied with the culture system which has all or some dimensions opposite to theirs.

The findings of the mentioned articles are consistent with the ‘aggregate psychological traits’ perspective, therefore one might surmise that entrepreneurs score high on Power distance (PDI+), high on Individualism (IDV+), low on Uncertainty avoidance (UAI-), high on Masculinity (MAS+) and high on Achievement (ACH+). These traits are high need for achievement, moderate risk-taking propensity, preference for energetic and/or novel activity, and assuming personal responsibility for successes or failure (McClelland 1961).

Beley and Boyd found that entrepreneurs (founders) scored significantly higher than small business managers (non-founders) in need for achievement, risk-taking propensity, and tolerance of ambiguity (Begley and Boyd 1987). Brockhaus reviewed a number of trait studies and identified three consistent attributes associated with entrepreneurial behavior: need for achievement, internal locus of control, and a risk-taking propensity (Brockhaus 1982).

3.2.3 Theory of Planned behavior

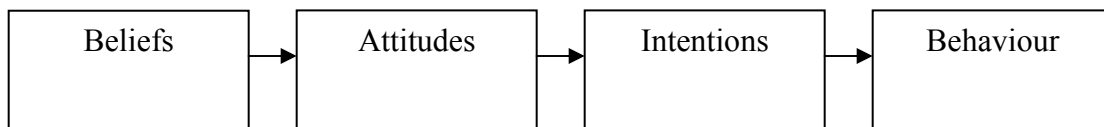


Figure 5: Theory of planned behaviour. Behaviour as a function of beliefs

Source: Ajzen. 1991:189

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991), attitude toward the act refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question. Social norms, on the other hand, refer to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior. These are tied to our perceptions of what important people in our lives would think about our launching a venture. The theory of planned

behavior, in its intent to explain human behavior deals also with the antecedents of attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms.

Based on this theory, the group which has culture closer to 'entrepreneurial culture' will tend to generate more entrepreneurs.

The following definitions are provided in Hofstede (2001), Gooderham & Nordhaug (2001) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2001).

Power distance, which is related to the different solution to the basic problem of human inequality. People in *high power distance* cultures accept larger status differences than people do in low power distance cultures

Uncertainty avoidance, which is related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future. *High uncertainty avoidance* cultures tend to prefer formal rules and predictable environment. Uncertainty about the future – including job security – give rise to stress

Individualism versus collectivism, which is related to the integration of individuals into primary groups. Individualistic cultures tend to give priority to personal advancement and individual development.

Masculinity versus Femininity. This dimension concerns about what emotional roles men and women have in society. The general idea is the expectation of gender roles in culture. 'Masculine' cultures have clear gender roles, 'feminine' cultures are less clear-cut in this respect

Achievement versus Ascription, which is related to how ones accord status. Achievement means that you are judged on your accomplishments, while ascription means that you get status by birth, kinship, gender, age, connection, educational record, etc.

4. Methodology

The underlying logic to this approach is as follows. First, I found out the common cultural dimensions of entrepreneurs then compare with those of non-immigrant Norwegian and Vietnamese Norwegian. Hypothesis is that non-immigrant Norwegian score higher in majority of dimensions.

Sample and Data Collection

This study has been conducted by using secondary data presented at the Introduction part, from relevant articles and primary data from an internet-based survey design and in-depth interview. Therefore, the paper here embodies both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

Exploratory research is to gain background information and clarify main characteristics of Vietnamese community in Norway. This research was conducted in last chapter with information a book or a record of Vietnamese refugee life in Norway and current information from Statistics Norway about the community.

2 versions of survey, one in English and the other in Vietnamese, were created and conducted on www.surveymonkey.com and through a forum of Vietnamese in Norway www.viet.no . I gave an notification that they were assured of anonymity and the usage aim of the survey results.

The survey for Norwegian was sent to students in NHH and Vietnamese Norwegian of 1st generation. Population of Bergen is 242,158 people, in which 8.1% of them are immigrants, 2.0 % are Western immigrants, and 6.0 % are non-immigrants. These ratios are very close to the average of the ratios of the whole Norway. So hopefully the context could be a good test environment that can represent for the whole Norway.

For Vietnamese immigrants, I have contacts with some of them, and have asked their help to send the survey to every Vietnamese of 1st generation immigrant in their networks. The data collection from Vietnamese immigrants took long time and not so many responses were

collected because the spreading the survey took time and people seems to be doubtful about such 'strange' invitation as this survey. Moreover, obviously the Vietnamese immigrant population is just a small part of Norwegian population so the number of responses is expected to be equivalent. In fact, the number of responses to Vietnamese survey is 34, far smaller than one to Norwegian survey.

The questionnaire will be divided into 5 groups of questions: Power distance, Masculine, Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance and Achievement, which are as follows in particular:

The questionnaire was taken from 2 studies about cross culture, Rita and William (1992) and Rita and Ian (1992), to operationalize cultural influence. A series of questions seeking to identify the values of the respondents on 14 cultural variables was developed, and each respondent answered on Likert-type scale. Possible answers were **5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree**. Each question requested that the respondent answer for himself or herself. There are also 3 supplemental questions asking gender, age and race (non-immigrant and other races such as Asian, Vietnamese, Western European, Eastern European, Latin American and American)

Power Distance (PDI)

- Equality is everyone's right (high score means low power distance PDI-)
- Power means controlling people (high score means high power distance PDI+)

Masculinity (MAS)

- I work for interest more than wages (high score means MAS-)
- Success means making a lot of money (high score means MAS+)

Individualism (IND)

- Work is preferable in a large organization (high score means IND-)
- The most important thing is to think and act in the ways that best suit the way you really are, even if you do not get things done (high score means IND+)

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

- Setting up a business means risk but also excitement (high score means UAI-)
- Money means retirement and security (high score means UAI+)

Achievement (ACH)

- Success means being well-educated (high score means ACH-)
- Success means owning a company (high score means ACH+)

Method of Analysis

The result of the survey will be verified with the conclusions given in the preceding works by some researchers as argued in part Literature review of this thesis. But for clear following, I restate briefly the argument that said entrepreneur type of people will score high on Power distance (PDI+), high on Individualism (IDV+), low on Uncertainty avoidance (UAI-), high on Masculinity (MAS+) and high on Achievement (ACH+).

The survey data obtained was analyzed using the statistical software package SPSS version 12.0 for Student. Statistical technique of independent-samples T test with 95% confidence was used. Actually, I do not want to make everything complicated but it seems that I have no choice but using this statistics techniques to support my findings. Some terms used in the online survey and this thesis are that Non-immigrant means his/her father is not immigrant; Vietnamese means immigrant from Vietnam or his/her father was from Vietnam, etc. I also included in the survey the options of races for European, Latin American, etc however they are not relevant to this thesis.

For the opened questions in in-depth interview, the information was generalized to reflect the community ideas.

The 2 interviews were conducted with 2 Vietnamese entrepreneurs in Bergen, one couple is retailers and the other couple is restaurant owners. They were chosen because majority of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs are retailers and restaurant owners, besides hotel

owners. In-depth interviews are to gain an idea of what the subject thinks about entrepreneurship policy and their business environment in Norway, their motivations to be entrepreneurs, why they decided to become an entrepreneur, and how they became business men, operational tactics such as choice of business type, location rationale and marketing strategies. In addition, the roles of local and transnational ethnic networks in facilitating their business and personal life will be discussed. The interviews were conducted in their working places and for around 2 hours. The questionnaire includes a list of topic, open-ended questions. They were encouraged to respond on their own words.

Measure

For Norwegians, most of the respondents are bachelor students, at age from 21-30 (probably 21-25). McGrath (1992b) and Hofstede (2001) argue that culture endures in very long time. So I assume that the information collected from young students could represent for Norwegian culture.

- c. (Ardichvili 2003) According to Hofstede's (n.d.) recommendations, the scales for the culture dimensions were calculated by weighing specific item means and adding constants to arrive at scales ranging from 1 (low) to 100 (high). This allowed for comparisons with previously published country scores (Hofstede 1984). But in this paper, I based on the result of Hofstede 1984 for Norway and compare Norwegian Vietnamese with non-immigrant Norwegian with the assumption that in 1984, there were few Vietnamese living in Norway that his study sample did not include Norwegian Vietnamese or include only a few of them.

5. Finding and discussion

5.1 *Interview with Norwegian Vietnamese entrepreneurs in Bergen*

I had interviews with a restaurant owner and Lien Mart in the centre of Bergen, Norway. The 1st interview with Lien Mart is below.

The husband came to Bergen 25 years ago. He felt happy in Norway and satisfied with government support. He started working as technician for Bergen Commune. He still preferred to make friends with Vietnamese. For Norwegian and other, he said that they are good and kind people but there was still some distance in relationship that, he felt, was not like total familiarity. After 10 years living in Norway, he came back Vietnam and got married with a girl there. Afterward, they came together to Norway. Then they established an Asian food retail shop. The idea came from the wife, the husband was the follower. The motivation was to earn for living and support their family members in Norway and Vietnam and to be independent. One more reason is that their working skills were not enough for higher salary jobs. The aim of shop is to serve Vietnamese who still can not forget their traditional food tastes. The procedure to found a food retail shop in Bergen was easy, there was little paper work. At first, not so many Vietnamese lived in Bergen and their profit was little. But after a while, the revenue was increasing together with increasing population of Asian people. Now, surprisingly, their main customers are not Vietnamese but other Asian people or even Norwegians. This is because Vietnamese customers are not profit-making people for the shop. When saying about obstacles, they emphasize on high import taxes that limit the number of customers visiting their shop. They complained about increasing transportation cost. Their main strategy is price competition and so this much depends on economics scale. Hard working is a must to them because they do not want to hire any employee and do everything related to the shop activity themselves. And so capital is another difficulty of theirs. They added that there is not any clear support from government except the training for tax description. Business education is mainly provided by private organizations. Their business ethics and motives are maintained and rooted from the fear of “losing face to other people”.

This is true since the Vietnamese community is small, so bad/good reputations of any members can be spread out quickly within it.

The 2nd interview was with a restaurant owner

The owner came to Norway around 20 years ago since he was 15. He faced problem with learning local language and so got difficulty in education then he could not get in any vocation school or university. He complained that doing manual labor was too hard for him. Similarly to the retail food shop owner, this man also found it difficult to totally integrate into new society, even he has so many Norwegian and international friends. Finally, he got married with a Norwegian Vietnamese girl who graduated from University of Bergen. Surprisingly, as the same in the previous interview, this woman was the one who came up with the idea of doing a restaurant. They named it Cyclo, a popular vehicle in Vietnam 15 years ago. He chose low price and low service strategy and luckily, this strategy works well and he has enough customers to profit. His dream is that he wants to do some big business in Vietnam. He feels his business career can not be better in Norway in terms of demand size and opportunities. He travel to Vietnam every year and keeps relationship with people there.

5.2 Online survey results

For clear explanation, I regenerated here a part of methodology and theory review part.

Power Distance (PDI)

- Equality is everyone's right (high score means low power distance PDI-)
- Power means controlling people (high score means high power distance PDI+)

Masculinity (MAS)

- I work for interest more than wages (high score means MAS-)
- Success means making a lot of money (high score means MAS+)

Individualism (IND)

- Work is preferable in a large organization (high score means IND-)
- Success means owing a company (high score means IND+)
- The most important thing is to think and act in the ways that best suit the way you really are, even if you do not get things done (high score means IND+)

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

- Setting up a business means risk but also excitement (high score means UAI-)
- Money means retirement and security (high score means UAI+)

Achievement (ACH)

- Success means being well-educated (high score means ACH-)

In the Table 5, mainly Significance level (Sig.) and Significance level (2-tailed) columns should be considered. The null hypothesis here is that there is no difference between the variances (standard deviations). If the probability (in the column Sig.) reported here is the probability that the 'equal variance' is assumed, so anytime the probability is greater than 0.05 (I used 95% confidence level), then the line 'equal variance assumed' should be used. If the probability associated with the F value is less than 0.05, the variances null hypothesis is not supported, and the line 'equal variance not assumed' should be used. After deciding which line should be used, if Sig.(2-tailed) is less than 0.05, the difference between 2 means is significantly. If not, the support for no difference is strong.

Table 4: The result of the online survey. Means. Mean difference

Dimension	Question	Non-immigrant		Vietnam		Mean difference
		Mean	N	Mean	N	
Individualism (IND)	Success means owning your own company	1.51	190	2.03	34	(0.52)
Masculinity (MAS)	Success means making lots of money	2.16	190	1.91	34	0.25
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	Setting up a business means risk but also excitement	3.25	190	2.68	34	0.58
Individualism (IND)	The most important thing in life is to think and act in the ways that best suit the way you really are, even if you do not get things done	1.98	190	2.74	34	(0.76)
Power Distance (PDI)	Power comes from controlling people	1.36	190	2.26	34	(0.90)
Masculinity (MAS)	I work for interest more than wages	2.44	190	2.74	34	(0.29)
Individualism (IND)	Work is preferable in a large organizations	1.93	190	1.79	34	0.13
Power Distance (PDI)	Equality is everyone's right	2.79	190	2.88	34	(0.09)
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	Money means retirement and security	2.88	190	2.68	34	0.20
Achievement (ACH)	Success means being well-educated	2.24	190	2.74	34	(0.49)

Table 5: Culture comparison between Vietnamese Norwegian and non-immigrant Norwegian

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
								(non-immigrant mean minus Vietnamese mean)	
IND***	Success means owning your own company	Equal variances assumed	1.88	0.17*	(2.65)	222.00	0.01**	(0.52)	0.20
		Equal variances not assumed			(2.66)	45.72	0.01	(0.52)	0.20
MAS	Success means making lots of money	Equal variances assumed	0.61	0.43*	1.30	222.00	0.19	0.25	0.19
		Equal variances not assumed			1.28	45.08	0.21	0.25	0.20
UAI***	Setting up a business means risk but also excitement	Equal variances assumed	30.80	0.00	5.05	222.00	0.00	0.58	0.11
		Equal variances not assumed			3.10	35.57	0.00**	0.58	0.19
IND***	The most important thing in life is to think and act in the ways that best suit the way you really are, even if you do not get things done	Equal variances assumed	1.13	0.29*	(4.32)	222.00	0.00**	(0.76)	0.18
		Equal variances not assumed			(3.93)	42.48	0.00	(0.76)	0.19

PDI***	Power comes from controlling people	Equal variances assumed	4.15	0.04	(4.63)	222.00	0.00	(0.90)	0.19
		Equal variances not assumed			(4.01)	41.18	0.00**	(0.90)	0.22
MAS	I work for interest more than wages	Equal variances assumed	0.62	0.43*	(1.75)	222.00	0.08	(0.29)	0.17
		Equal variances not assumed			(1.61)	42.79	0.11	(0.29)	0.18
IND	Work is preferable in a large organizations	Equal variances assumed	0.00	0.96*	0.96	222.00	0.34	0.13	0.14
		Equal variances not assumed			1.02	48.01	0.31	0.13	0.13
PDI	Equality is everyone's right	Equal variances assumed	0.00	0.99*	(0.49)	222.00	0.63	(0.09)	0.19
		Equal variances not assumed			(0.48)	45.09	0.63	(0.09)	0.19
UAI	Money means retirement and security	Equal variances assumed	9.18	0.00	1.36	222.00	0.17	0.20	0.15
		Equal variances not assumed			1.09	39.41	0.28	0.20	0.19
ACH***	Success means being well-educated	Equal variances assumed	2.45	0.12*	(2.48)	222.00	0.01**	(0.49)	0.20
		Equal variances not assumed			(2.23)	42.13	0.03	(0.49)	0.22

Note: *P-value > 0.05 (the line 'Equal variances assumed' is used), **P-value < 0.05 (Difference between 2 means is significant), *** means the significant difference found there. IND=Individualism, ACH=Achievement, PDI=Power Distance, UAI=Uncertainty Avoidance, MAS=Masculinity

The result of the survey will be verified with the conclusions given in the preceding works by some researchers as argued in part Literature review of this thesis. But for clear following, I restate briefly the argument that said entrepreneur type of people will score high on Power distance (PDI+), high on Individualism (IDV+), low on Uncertainty avoidance (UAI-), high on Masculinity (MAS+) and high on Achievement (ACH+).

Individualism

As is shown in Table 5, the results of the frequency analysis shows that the question “Success means owning your own company” about Achievement dimension, non-immigrant score less than Vietnamese (1.51 against 2.03 as shown in Table 4) and the mean difference is strongly supported as the P value (Sig. 2-tailed), 0.01, is less than 0.05 (in Table 5) .

In the 2nd question about Individualism, “The most important thing in life is to think and act in the ways that best suit the way you really are, even if you do not get things done”, the non-immigrants again score less again, 1.98 against 2.74 (shown in Table 4) and significant difference is strong, P-value, 0.00, is less than 0.05 again (in Table 5).

The 3rd question in this dimension, no significant difference (P value is more than 0.05) between means of Vietnamese scores and of non-immigrant was found. In general, I can conclude that Vietnamese people score higher in Individualism than Norwegian community *or they are IND+*.

This is a surprising result as Norwegian and other Western European communities are always considered to be more individual centered than Vietnamese. One explanation is that these Vietnamese is trying to enhance their self-images by exaggerating their real behaviors or at least they are trying to be more individual. The last point, the very low values for both communities suggest a predisposition toward collectivism.

Masculinity

In the 1st question for Masculinity dimension, “Success means making lots of money”, there is little support that the difference between non-immigrants (or Norwegian) and Vietnamese is significant, P value, equal to 0.19, > 0.05, shown in Table 5.

And it is the same for 2nd question of this dimension. So I can conclude that the masculinity between 2 communities is very little. However, both communities got low scores in this dimension, 2.16 for non-immigrant and 1.91 for Vietnamese Norwegian (Table 4). This result indicates a society toward femininity, and is consistent with Hofstede’s result that said Norwegian culture is toward femininity.

Uncertainty Avoidance

There is a strong support (P value less than 0.05 in the line ‘equal variance assumed’) that Vietnamese score less in the question “Setting up a business means risk but also excitement” (3.25 for non-immigrant against 2.68 for Vietnamese shown in Table 4), in *the other words they are UAI+*. This is not consistent with the history of Vietnamese here, in which people risk their life to find a new settlement place in Norway or elsewhere. The reason could be that it took Vietnamese overseas people a while to learn basic skills, such as language, food appetite, interactive behaviors, society structure, etc. Then they felt more satisfied with their situation since the support from Norwegian government in both job training and unemployment welfare is much. Moreover, now they are at the middle age and most of them feel more risk adverse. Another reason could be that after a dangerous journey and occurrences, they just want to be peaceful and no more risk taking. Again, the score of Vietnam is fairly low while Norwegian’s is fairly high.

Power distance

For the question “Power comes from controlling people”, Vietnamese get much higher score (2.26 against 1.36, the difference is 0.9). The significance level is 0.00, less than 0.05 (Table 5), which means they do agree with the sentence, or in the other words, *Vietnamese are PDI+*.

However, the 2nd question for this dimension, “Equity is everyone’s right”, there is little support that 2 means of 2 communities’ scores are different as P value is 0.63, more than 0.05.

The 2nd question is too familiar to everyone in Norway where people consider equality as a society standard, so it is expected that everyone answer the same. Finally it should be concluded that Vietnamese have higher score than Norwegian people in Power distance index (PDI+). This is possible because basically Vietnamese community favors hierarchy society structure strongly, and “upper” class or people benefit from this or they feel safer. In other words, this dimension of culture has a few reasons to last longer than the other dimensions.

Achievement

There is only 1 question for this dimension, “Success means being well-educated”, Vietnamese score higher in this dimension (2.74 against 2.24). The significant difference was found here (P value is $0.03 < 0.05$). As stated above, higher score in this question means *ACH-*. The mean of non-immigrant is less than 2.5 in the scale of 5, showing the trend toward Achievement. While Vietnamese Norwegian score higher than 2.5 or their culture is toward Ascription. Vietnamese dignifies education and ascribe it with success. As described in the former part, being a teacher (scholar) means being in upper class (traditionally there are four *hierarchically ordered classes: scholars, peasants, artisan, and merchants*).

In conclusion, Vietnamese Norwegian are more Individualism, more Uncertainty Avoidance, more Power Distance, less Achievement than native Norwegian. In Masculinity dimension, Vietnamese Norwegians score low. See the score table made by Hofstede (1980)¹⁸ below, we can infer the relatively values of Norwegian Vietnamese since we already compared them with native Norwegian.

¹⁸ <http://www.krannert.purdue.edu/faculty/akcurat/teaching/mgmt690/hofstede%20scores.htm>

Table 6: Cultural Dimensions of Various Countries/Regions based on Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars (1994)

	Individualism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Power Distance	Achievement ¹⁹	Masculinity
USA	91 (strong)	46 (weak)	40	Achievement	62
Norway	69	50	31 (low)	Achievement	8 (Feminine)
Taiwan	17 (weak)	69	58	Ascription	45
Brazil	38	76	69 (high)	Achievement	49
Japan	46	92 (strong)	54	Ascription	95 (Masculine)

So we can conclude that Vietnamese Norwegians are IND+, UAI+, PDI+, ACH- and MAS-. So in comparison with theory that said entrepreneur type of people will score high on Power distance (PDI+), high on Individualism (IDV+), low on Uncertainty avoidance (UAI-), high on Masculinity (MAS+) and high on Achievement (ACH+), we see that the culture studied would not support entrepreneurship. It is consistent with what is described about Vietnamese community in Norway. Older people or 1st generation in Norway are trying to hold on to traditional values and practices and more than satisfied with the security they have found in Norway. Traditional Vietnamese values are rooted in Confucianism – a sense of order with hierarchical relationship, of obligation to the group and the elder. This resulted in people who incline to value others through ascribed status rather than working performance. They also feel hesitated to change things around.

Their culture already shifts far from original one in Vietnam, but still a gap with Norwegian culture. Values of a culture would be very difficult to change. The first Vietnamese generation could never integrate into Norwegian society but the following ones will do. The culture is going to change faster and more close to Norwegian culture. However, the Norwegian culture itself is not a very entrepreneurial according to the result of the above survey and interviews. Noted that this culture is respected and kept for a very long time, it makes Norway (and those countries with similar culture in Scandinavia) unique to the rest of the world. With that, a

¹⁹ Trompenaars (1994)

huge public sector and number of large corporations managed to create wealth and economic success until the 1980s.

The creation about mechanism to increase social recognition of entrepreneur's values should be thought about. However, the challenge is to develop an intervention program that both promote the culture for entrepreneurship and still respect the original national values. Other measures should be concerned on other aspects like economics or structure or education.

Limitations

This study relies on random sampling rather than a more scientifically suitable sample. No previous study based on quantitative data to predict the influence strength of cultural dimension on entrepreneurship leads to tentative inference in this study.

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Appendix

Figure 6: The largest immigrant groups in Norway, 1.1.2006
The largest immigrant groups in Norway. 1.1.2006. Absolute numbers

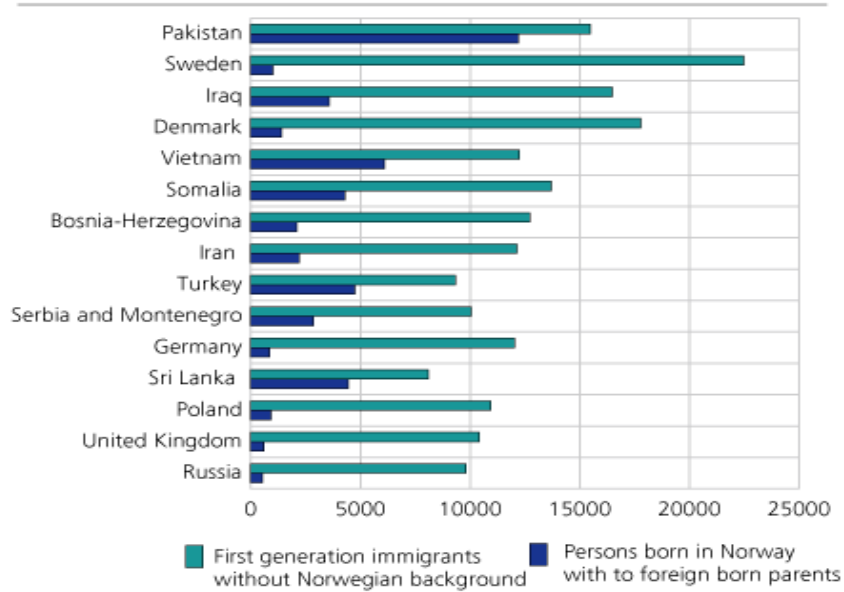


Table 7: Self-employment rates as a percentage of total civilian employment

OECD Factbook 2006: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics - ISBN 92-64-03561-3 - © OECD 2006

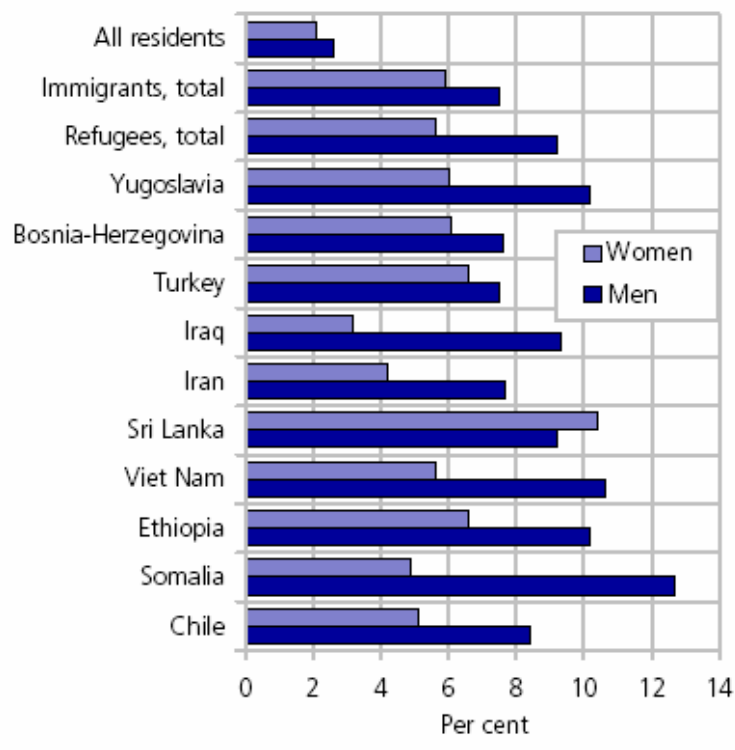
Labour market - employment - self-employment

Self-employment rates: total

As a percentage of total civilian employment

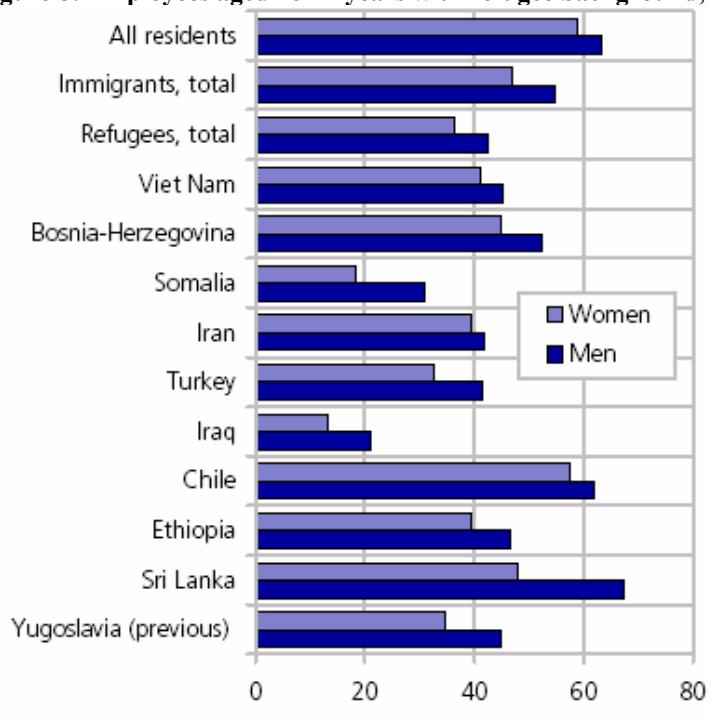
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Australia	16.5	15.9	14.9	16.0	14.5	15.6	14.5	14.2	14.3	13.4	14.0
Austria	13.8	14.4	14.0	13.6	13.7	13.4	13.1	13.2	13.1	12.8	..
Belgium	18.8	18.8	18.8	18.6	18.2	17.8
Canada	10.8	10.6	11.1	11.5	11.8	11.4	10.6	9.9	9.8	9.8	9.5
Czech Reput	10.6	12.0	12.3	12.4	13.8	14.5	15.2	15.2	16.1	17.3	16.9
Denmark	10.0	9.6	9.5	9.1	9.4	9.1	8.7	8.9	9.0	8.8	8.7
Finland	16.3	15.6	15.3	14.9	14.3	14.0	13.7	13.0	12.9	12.9	12.8
France	11.3	10.8	10.4	10.1	9.8	9.5	9.2	8.9	8.8	8.8	8.8
Germany	10.6	10.7	10.8	10.9	11.0	10.8	11.0	11.1	11.2	11.4	11.8
Greece	46.7	46.1	45.7	45.2	44.7	43.4	43.2	41.2	40.5	40.3	..
Hungary	17.8	18.0	18.1	17.4	16.1	15.7	15.2	14.5	13.9	13.5	14.3
Iceland	18.4	19.7	18.2	17.7	17.9	17.7	18.0	16.8	16.6	13.9	14.1
Ireland	22.7	22.2	20.9	20.8	20.3	19.2	18.9	18.1	17.8	17.5	18.0
Italy	29.0	29.3	29.3	29.1	29.1	28.6	28.5	28.2	27.7	27.5	..
Japan	18.6	18.3	17.7	17.5	17.3	17.2	16.6	15.9	15.4	15.1	14.9
Korea	37.1	36.8	36.7	36.8	38.3	37.6	36.8	36.7	36.0	34.9	34.0
Luxembourg	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.3	7.1	6.8	7.3	7.0	6.9	6.8	..
Mexico	43.7	40.9	40.4	39.9	38.8	37.9	36.4	36.8	37.2	37.1	37.0
Netherlands	12.3	12.4	12.5	12.6	11.8	11.3	12.0	11.5	11.6
New Zealand	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.1	20.4	21.2	20.8	19.9	19.4	19.4	19.2
Norway	9.7	9.3	8.7	8.2	8.3	7.8	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.4
Poland	30.9	29.7	29.5	28.3	27.2	26.9	27.4	28.0	28.1	27.3	26.7
Portugal	27.6	27.9	28.6	28.9	28.1	27.0	26.1	26.8	26.6	26.7	25.9
Slovak Reput	6.3	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.8	7.7	8.0	8.4	8.6	9.7	12.0
Spain	25.8	25.2	24.7	23.5	22.7	21.3	20.2	19.8	19.0	18.3	18.1
Sweden	11.1	11.2	11.0	10.8	10.6	10.6	10.3	10.0	9.8	9.6	9.9
Switzerland	12.7	12.7	13.4	13.8	14.0	14.0	13.2	12.9	12.4	11.9	11.3
Turkey	59.1	58.5	57.2	55.4	55.4	55.0	51.4	52.8	50.2	49.4	49.2
United Kingd	14.8	14.6	14.0	13.8	13.2	12.7	12.3	12.2	12.1	12.7	13.6
United States	8.8	8.5	8.4	8.2	7.9	7.7	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.6	7.6
EU15	17.2	17.1	16.9	16.7	16.4	15.9	15.7	15.6	15.4	15.5	15.7
OECD total	19.8	19.4	19.2	18.9	18.7	18.3	17.7	17.6	17.4	17.3	17.4
Brazil	..	22.0	21.4	22.1	22.5	22.8	..	22.5	22.6	22.6	..

Figure 7: Registered unemployed with refugee background, immigrants at large and residents at large, by sex. Q4 2000



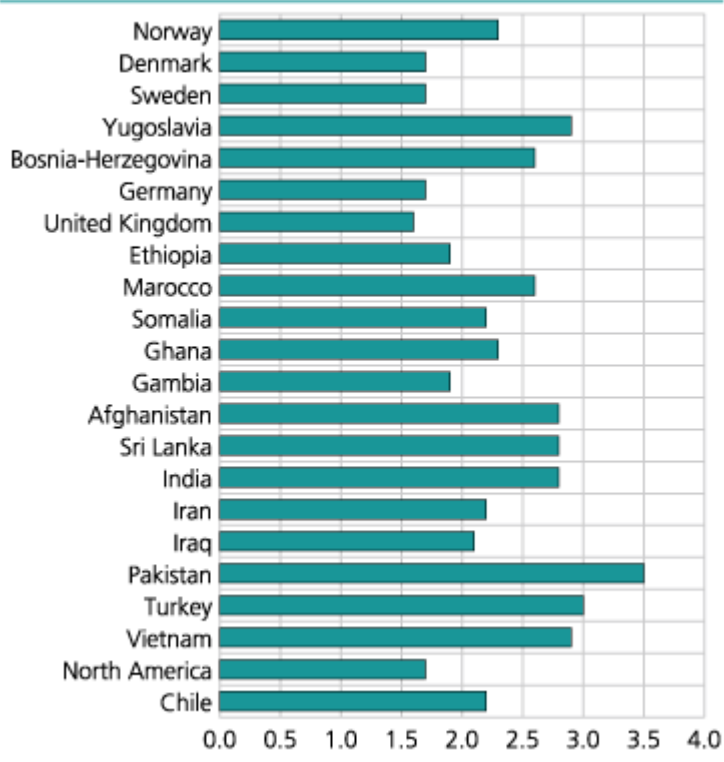
Source: Labour market statistics, Statistics Norway.

Figure 8: Employees aged 16-74 years with refugee background, by sex. Q4 2000



Source: Labour market statistics, Statistics Norway.

Figure 9: Number of person per private household
Number of persons per private household



2002@ Statistics Norway

http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/02/01/fobinv_en/

Table 8: Scoring of entrepreneurship policy comprehensiveness by country (percentages)

Entrepreneurship Policy Lines and Measures	Australia	Canada	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Ireland	Netherlands	Norway	Sweden	Taiwan	Uk	US	Avg
1. Promotion of entrepreneurship	62.5	43.8	56.3	68.8	12.5	37.5	37.5	12.5	50	87.5	100	87.5	56.3
2. Entrepreneurship in the education system	81.6	28.9	76.3	89.5	13.2	47.4	84.2	71.1	42.1	15.8	76.3	28.9	54.5
3. Easing entry, early-stage survival/growth, and exit (removing barriers)	77.3	65.9	93.2	65.9	34.1	70.5	79.5	61.4	65.9	47.7	93.2	100	72
4. Access to start-up, seed, and early-stage financing	60	90	80	86.7	76.7	83.3	90	66.7	80	90	90	100	83.6
5. Start-up and early-stage growth - business support	84.4	53.1	53.1	68.8	34.4	81.3	68.8	34.4	87.5	93.8	100	81.3	70.4
6. Policy for target groups	65	95	35	60	40	35	75	40	90	40	100	70	62.7
7. General policy approach/commitment	41.7	8.3	83.3	83.3	33.3	58.3	83.3	66.7	83.3	66.7	83.3	66.7	63.5
8. Policy structure for entrepreneurship	60	40	100	100	50	70	60	60	80	100	100	80	76.9
9. Performance tracking	58.3	50	91.7	83.3	16.7	25	100	16.7	100	58.3	100	83.3	64.7
Overall score: E-policy comprehensiveness (1-9)	70.6	56.5	73.8	76.6	35	60.7	77.1	51.9	73.4	61.2	92	77.1	67.5

Source: Stevenson and Ludström (2005)