

October, 18th 2024

9.00 – 17.00 h

TU Berlin, Room
H1035



Conference: The Impact of Gendered Migration Cycles on the Labour Market Integration of Female Migrants in European Welfare States – Developing Pathways towards Gender-responsive Policies

Presentation: Breaking Boundaries: The Entrepreneurial Journey of Female Immigrants in Sweden

Presenters: Ghazal Zalkat and Henrik Barth
Halmstad University



Paradigm shift_new Outlooks

Breaking Boundaries: The Entrepreneurial Journey of Female Immigrants in Sweden

Ghazal Zalkat and Henrik Barth

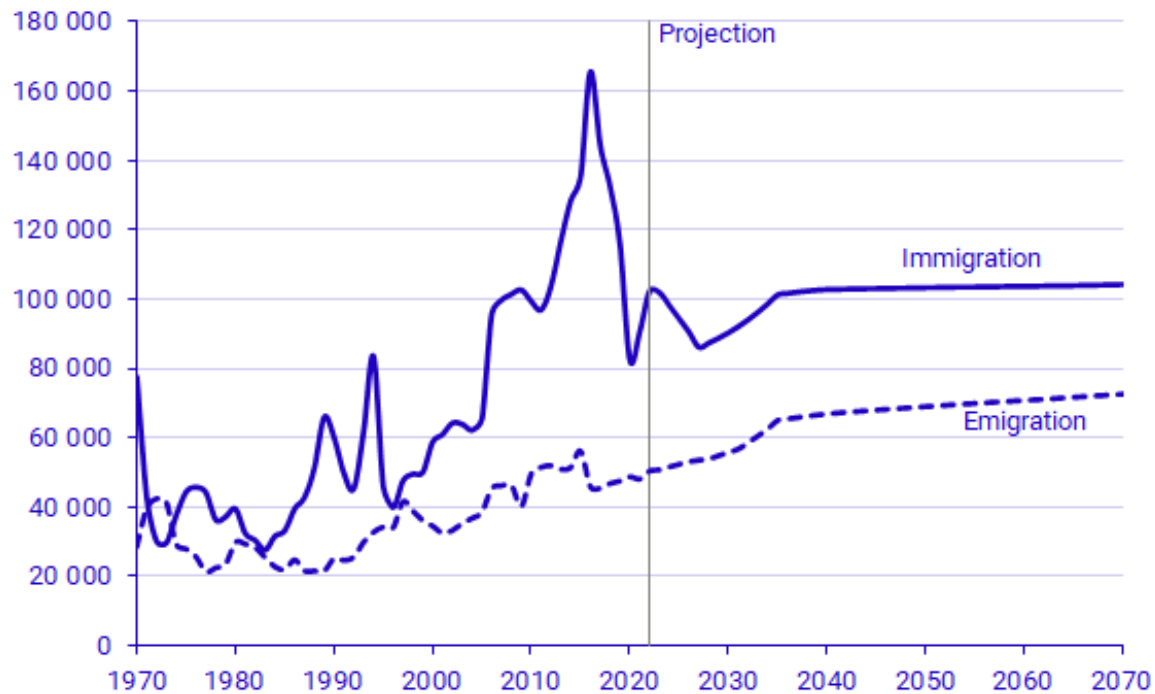
School of Business, Innovation and Sustainability

Halmstad University



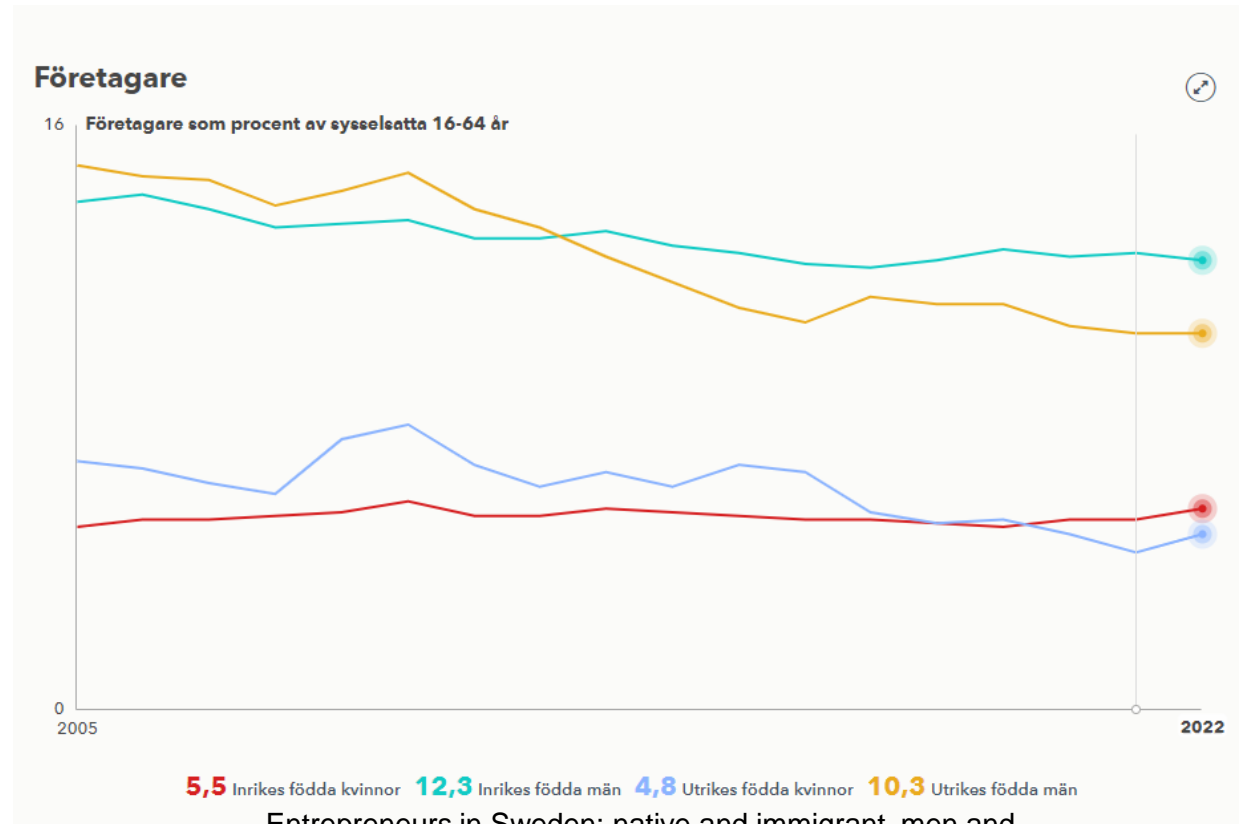
PLOUTOS

The migration crisis and entrepreneurship in Sweden



Immigration and emigration 1970–2022 and projection 2023–2070

Source: SCB Statistics Sweden



Entrepreneurs in Sweden: native and immigrant, men and women

Source: Statistics Sweden (AKU)

SDG 1: No Poverty., Immigrant entrepreneurs often create businesses that generate employment opportunities, reducing poverty in the host and home countries.

SDG 5 Gender Equality, immigrant and refugee female entrepreneurs, in particular, contribute to gender equality by challenging traditional roles and promoting women's economic empowerment.

SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, immigrant entrepreneurs drive economic development by initiating businesses, generating employment, and fostering innovation within host countries.

SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, immigrant entrepreneurs bring diverse perspectives and innovative ideas, advancing technological progress and economic development.



SDG 10, Reduced Inequality, by assisting immigrants in overcoming socioeconomic barriers and contributing to a more equitable society.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, immigrant entrepreneurs contribute to urban development, establishing businesses that support the growth and sustainability of cities.

SDG 13 Climate Action, some immigrant entrepreneurs also focus on sustainable practices, contributing to environmental conservation through eco-friendly business models.

SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, immigrant entrepreneurs foster social cohesion by actively participating in community development, promoting intercultural understanding, and creating inclusive environments

Introduction

- Female immigrant entrepreneurs (FIEs) represent a critical and growing segment of the entrepreneurial landscape globally, including Sweden.
- FIEs contribute not only to economic growth but also foster diversity and enhance social integration.
- Despite their potential, female immigrants often find themselves in a disadvantaged position when they become entrepreneurs in their host countries.
- The challenges faced by FIEs in Sweden are deeply influenced by the cultural, social, political, and historical contexts in which these women are embedded (Haseki et al., 2020)
- The existing literature tends to focus either on immigrant entrepreneurship or female entrepreneurship, often overlooking the compounded challenges faced by those who navigate both identities simultaneously (Poggesi, 2024; Poggesi & Mari, 2024).
- The strategies they employ to overcome these challenges have not been systematically mapped or analyzed in the literature (Chreim et al., 2018).

Thus, this paper aims to:

examines female immigrant entrepreneurship challenges and coping strategies while accounting for intersecting factors in a host country context by answering the following research question:

How do female immigrant entrepreneurs experience and respond to the challenges in Sweden as a host country?

Theoretical Framework

- Institutional Theory: Examines how formal (laws, regulations, policies) and informal institutions (cultural norms, societal expectations) influence behavior and outcomes.
- Intersectionality: Addresses multiple layers of disadvantage, including race, migration status, ethnicity, and gender.
- While intersectionality provides a framework for understanding the compounded effects of multiple identities, this research seeks to explore how these effects are further shaped by regulatory frameworks, cultural norms, and support systems.
- Utilizing Institutional Theory and Intersectionality, this research investigates the various forms of marginalization encountered by FIEs, including challenges related to labor market participation, family responsibilities, societal stereotypes, and the attitudes of the host community.

Research Design & Methods:

- A qualitative research design was employed to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of FIEs.
 - The study utilized purposive sampling to select participants based on specific criteria.
 - Conducted 37 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with FIEs from diverse backgrounds.
 - Hard-to-reach population, Virtual Networks Sampling, trust...
-
- **Demographics:**
 - Aged 20 to 50, primarily from Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt.
 - Most participants arrived during the 2015 migration crisis and hold university degrees.
 - Their businesses are mainly small, home-based, in sectors like food, catering, sales, and professional services.



Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the 37 female immigrant entrepreneurs

	Age	Marital state*	Country of origin	Time in Sweden	Educ* *	Background	Entre. Exp	Type of business	Working Part/full time
1	38	D	Tunisia	1 year	High	Project manager	Yes	Tourism	Unemployed
2	26	M	Morocco	8 years	Middle	-	No	Beauty salon	Employee
3	29	M	Syria	5 years	High	Teacher	No	Clothes sales/ trading	unemployed
4	29	M	Iraq	9 years	Low	Nurse	No	Cake and candy	Employee
5	22	M	Syria	1 year	High	Student	No	Catering	unemployed
6	25	M	Syria	5 years	Low		Yes	Catering	Entrepreneur, not registered yet
7	27	M	Syria	8 years	High	Teacher	No	Florist	Entrepreneur, SC
8	26	M	Syria	6 years	Middle	Marketing	No	Art	Entrepreneur, not registered yet
9	54	M	Syria	5 years	Low	Sewing	No	Catering	Entrepreneur, SC
10	31	M	Syria	6 years	High	Programmer	Yes	Cake	Entrepreneur, SC
11	41	M	Syria	4 years	Middle	-	Yes	Environment friendly bags	Entrepreneur, LC
12	34	S	Syria	5 years	High	Marketing	No	Art and hand made	Entrepreneur, not registered yet
13	34	M	Palestine	6 years	High	Teacher	No	Party planner	Entrepreneurs, SC
14	34	S	Jordan	7 years	High	Teacher	No	Tourism and integration	Employee and entrepreneur SC
15	21	M	Syria	5 years	Low	Restaurant chef	Yes	Restaurant and catering	Employee/student/entrepreneur SC then LC
16	36	M	Syria	5 years	High	Teacher	No	Education and service center	Student and entrepreneur, SC
17	40	D	Lebanon	9 years	Middle	Beauty services	Yes	Beauty and Spa	entrepreneur, SC
18	24	M	Palestine	7 years	Middle	-	No	Furniture and presents	Entrepreneur, LC
19	20	S	Syria	5 Years	Middle	-		Beauty cosmetics and services	Entrepreneur, SC
20	30	M	Syria	6 years	Low	Trad/marketing	Yes	Boutique	Entrepreneur, SC
21	29	M	Syria	7 years	High	-	No	Beauty salon	Entrepreneur SC then LC
22	31	D	Palestine	5 Years	Middle	Beauty services	Yes	Beauty salon	Entrepreneur, LC
23	40	D	Iraq	5 Years	High	Beauty services	Yes	Beauty salon	Entrepreneur, LC
24	43	M	Palestine	7 years	Middle	Teacher	No	Cleaning company	Entrepreneur, SC
25	34	M	Syria	6 years	High	IT engineer	No	Boutique	Entrepreneur, SC
26	30	M	Syria	6 years	High	Architect	No	Beauty cosmetics/services	Employee and entrepreneur SC
27	22	S	Syria	9 years	High	HR	No	Clothes sales and trading	Student and entrepreneur, SC
28	22	M	Egypt	8 years	High	Dentist	Yes	Cafeteria	Student and entrepreneur, LC
29	33	M	Syria	4 years	High	Trad/marketing	Yes	Curtains company	Student and entrepreneur, SC
30	33	M	Palestine	6 years	High	Business manag.	Yes	Restaurant and catering	Entrepreneur SC then LC
31	35	M	Palestine	6 Years	High	HR	No	Coffee shop and candy	entrepreneur, SC
32	30	M	Syria	5 years	High	Teacher	No	Clothes sales and trading	entrepreneur, SC
33	46	M	Syria	6 Years	High	Restaurant chef	Yes	Cake and sweets	Employee and entrepreneur, SC
34	36	M	Palestine	6 Years	High	HR	No	Translating and consultancy	Student and entrepreneur, SC
35	45	M	Egypt	6 Years	High	Marketing	No	Marketing/consultancy services	Student and entrepreneur, LC
36	40	D	Syria	5 Years	High	Chemist	Yes	Carpet cleaning services	Employee and entrepreneur, SC
37	21	S	Syria	6 Years	High	Student	No	Art	Student and entrepreneur, UF

Note: *M: married- S: single-D: divorced** Education level: Low – fewer than 12 years in school, Middle – 12 years in school, High - university study. SC: sole company. LC: limited company. UF: Ung Företagsamhet.

Results

Identification and categorization of challenges

1: Regulatory and Institutional Challenges

- Navigating Legal Frameworks and Bureaucratic Complexities
- Lack of Information and Support:

2: Cultural and Social Challenges

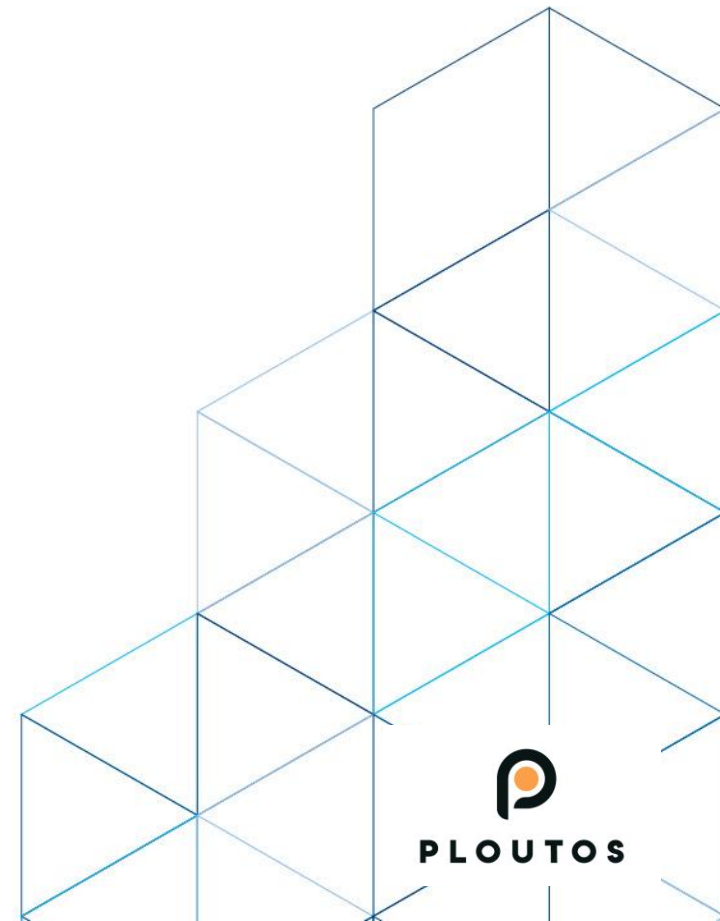
- Social Discrimination and Trust Issues
- Socio-Cultural Differences
- Balancing Multiple Roles

3: Economic challenges

- Access to Resources
- Market Entry and Competition
- Taxation System

4: Communication and information challenges

- Language Barriers
- Access to Information and Networks



FIEs Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

	Regulatory and Institutional Challenges	Cultural and Social Challenges	Economic Challenges	Communication and Information Challenges
Strategies For Overcoming Challenges	<p>Leveraging Personal Networks</p> <p>Partnerships with Swedish Nationals</p> <p>Hiring Professional Services</p> <p>Men's Partnership (Husbands)</p>	<p>Leveraging Ethnic Community Support</p> <p>Online Business and Social Media Marketing</p> <p>Targeting Niche Ethnic Markets</p> <p>Family Support</p> <p>Personal Characteristics</p>	<p>Private Savings and Part-Time Jobs</p> <p>Family Financial Support</p> <p>Adopting Online Business Models and Digital Technology</p> <p>Social Media Marketing</p>	<p>Utilizing Online Resources</p> <p>Accessing Social Media for Networking</p> <p>Continuous Learning and Adaptation</p>

Contribution & Value Added:

- Provide a nuanced understanding of the compounded challenges faced by FIEs and the innovative strategies they employ to succeed.
- While they face significant challenges, their resilience and innovative strategies demonstrate their potential contributions to the economy and society.
- This research is critical not only for enhancing the participation of FIEs in the entrepreneurial ecosystem but also for developing interventions that can support this demographic more effectively.
- Policymakers should develop tailored support and policies that address the unique needs of FIEs.

Future Research Directions

- Longitudinal studies to track the progress of FIEs.
- Comparative studies between different countries.
- Research on diverse immigrant groups and sector-specific analyses.



**THANK
YOU!**