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A Bridge to Sustainability: Influence of External Enablers on Immigrant Environmental Entrepreneurship Activities

The role of external enabler opacity and
agency-intensity

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AUTHOR: *Saule Zalyte and Mantas Sulinskas*

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Authors: S. Zalyte and M. Sulinskas
Tutor: Madeleine Meurer
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Abstract

Background: Environmental challenges faced by humankind are creating various changes in the business environment. These changes are facilitating entrepreneurial activities for environmental sustainability. However, some actors, such as immigrant entrepreneurs, might face difficulties in identifying and exploiting the external enablers of entrepreneurial action for sustainability.

Purpose: Considering the importance of sustainable development, the study aims to understand the role of external enablers for environmental sustainability in immigrant ventures. Thus, the study aims to investigate how ‘external enabler opacity and agency-intensity’ facilitate or hinder environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities among immigrant entrepreneurs.

Method: The study employs a qualitative approach and utilizes a multiple case study methodology, with the primary method of semi-structured interviews. Inductively building upon the External Enabler Framework, the study integrates insights from external enablers, environmental entrepreneurship, and immigrant entrepreneurship literature.

Conclusion: The study finds that low opacity and high agency intensity of external enablers limit immigrant ventures' involvement in environmental sustainability. Moreover, barriers immigrant entrepreneurs face compound these limitations, possibly leading to decreased competitiveness and missed opportunities. Contributing to the External Enabler Framework, the concept of enforcement is introduced as a novel cross-function of external enabler mechanisms, which facilitates immigrant ventures' engagement in environmentally sustainable activities.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to introduce an overview of research background, problem, purpose and introduce study design.

Over the last decades, humankind has been confronted with numerous environmental problems, such as climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss. These environmental challenges are disequilibrating business environments by initiating diverse socio-cultural, economic, natural environment, political, and regulatory changes. Such external changes, known as external enablers, possess the capacity to facilitate and significantly influence various entrepreneurial endeavors (Davidsson et al., 2020). Consequently, entrepreneurial activities that contribute to the global transition towards sustainability are also enabled by external changes (Dean & McMullen, 2007). Thus, through external enablers, entrepreneurship activities are not only positioned as a catalyst for environmental problems but also offer potential solutions to address them (Dean & McMullen, 2007). External enablers are proposed to exist objectively, but their beneficial nature depends on the agent's characteristics and capabilities to identify and activate external enabler mechanisms (Davidsson et al., 2020). This variance is measured based on how obvious the external enabler is, referred to as its opacity, and how resource-intensive the activation of the external enabler is for actors, known as its agency-intensity (Davidsson et al., 2020). Accordingly, certain actors may possess an advantage over others in identifying and exploiting benefits offered by external enablers, in this case, identifying and initiating environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities while leveraging associated benefits.

Among those less advantaged in the market, immigrant entrepreneurs face numerous challenges in developing entrepreneurial ventures. Some barriers include insufficient language proficiency, restricted access to resources, absence of relevant professional background, discrimination, and limited social embeddedness (Gurău et al., 2020). These difficulties are exacerbated when immigrant ventures face newly introduced sustainability requirements and concurrent macro-environmental changes. Consequently, unfamiliarity with the host country's requirements adds to the complexity, impeding immigrant entrepreneurs' ability to identify and exploit external enabler mechanisms for sustainability.

However, immigrants have become a driving force behind new business creation, often displaying a greater propensity for entrepreneurship than native individuals (Dabić et al., 2021). In this regard, immigrant entrepreneurs are equally vital in pursuing sustainable development as their native counterparts. Despite this, the existing literature on immigrant entrepreneurship does not evolve with current trends and overlooks environmental sustainability in immigrant ventures. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand how external changes can enable immigrant entrepreneurs to overcome preconditioned challenges and contribute to sustainable development.

Subsequently, the purpose of this paper is to investigate *what is the role of 'external enablement opacity and agency-intensity' in the facilitation of environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities among immigrant entrepreneurs*. To achieve this, the study will rely on a qualitative approach and employ a multiple case study methodology, thereby inductively building upon External Enabler Framework proposed by Davidsson et al. (2020). By integrating insights from external enablers, environmental entrepreneurship, and immigrant entrepreneurship literature, the study will conduct empirical investigations to validate initial findings. We will offer a theoretically novel perspective on how external enabler opacity and agency-intensity unfold in immigrant ventures and propose our contribution to External Enabler Framework by suggesting enforcement as another cross-function of external enabler mechanisms.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the systematic overview of theoretical background to the topic of external enablers of sustainability and immigrant entrepreneurship.

2.1 Systematic review method

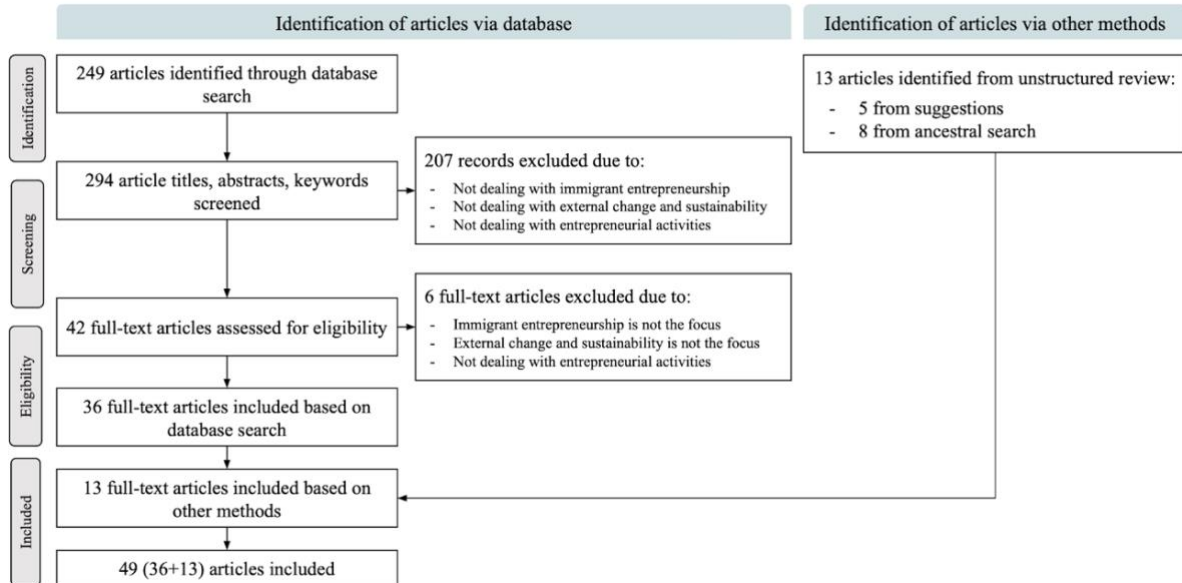
The following section outlines the structured process for conducting a systematic literature review to increase transparency and illustrate rigor. Due to several areas of research incorporated into our research question, we first developed five search term categories, including (1) external instances, (2) changes, (3) sustainable activities, (4) immigrants, and (5) entrepreneurship (see *Appendix 1*). Accordingly, we developed search terms primarily based on leading literature reviews in immigrant entrepreneurship (Dabić et al., 2020) and external enabler (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022) streams of literature. To maintain prime quality and consider the cross-disciplinary interest in the fields (Dabić et al., 2020; Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022), the literature review was conducted in the Financial Times 50 journals. Further, seventeen top entrepreneurship (5) and business ethics (12) journals from ABS 4*, 4, or 3 were included to capture the full coverage of entrepreneurship and sustainability (see *Appendix 2*). The search in Scopus electronic database was further limited to articles published between 2000 and 2023 to maintain relevance for the current globalizing and ever-changing business environment.

The database search resulted in 249 candidate articles. To identify the final set of articles, we underwent several steps of screening and eligibility assessment, which resulted in 36 articles included based on the database search (see *Figure 1*). Additionally, eight articles were included through the ancestral search. Lastly, we had to include five additional articles based on tutor suggestions to cover our chosen theoretical framework. Ultimately, the search resulted in 49 (36+13) full-text articles identified for the literature review.

The initial screening was done by both authors concurrently, yet no disagreements arose. The articles were carefully read for full-text assessment, then recorded and coded in Excel, including research details, briefings, comparisons, and main themes. The analysis mainly focused on themes developed from the research question (see *Appendix 3*); in the analysis process, authors regularly discussed inclusion criteria and main findings to ensure alignment among authors. This information from coded literature was utilized to develop three

key themes: external enablers of entrepreneurship, external enablers of sustainability, and immigrant entrepreneurship.

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram of the systematic literature review



Source: Adapted from Moher et al. (2009)

2.2 Theoretical framework: External Enablers of Entrepreneurship

Recently, the notion that objective favorable entrepreneurial ‘opportunities’ are pre-existent has been criticized, with researchers calling for a reconceptualization of entrepreneurial processes of venture creation as an interactive process stemming from external changes rather than objectively existing ‘as is’ (Davidsson, 2015; von Briel et al., 2018). Subsequently, external enablers emerged as a notion that aggregate-level environmental circumstances have “the potential of playing an essential role in eliciting and/or enabling a variety of entrepreneurial endeavors by several (potential) actors” (Davidsson, 2015, p. 683). Such disequilibrating circumstances can originate from technological, regulatory, demographic, sociocultural, macroeconomic, political, or natural-environmental changes (Davidsson et al., 2020). These changes create “external raw material” and, through enabling mechanisms, facilitate entrepreneurial activities by creating benefits throughout venture creation (Davidsson et al., 2020). Subsequently, mechanisms of external enablers specify how “they can facilitate the initiation, ongoing development, and success of new business ventures” (Davidsson et al., 2020, p. 317). For instance, digital technologies, through compression (reducing the amount of time needed for an activity) and substitution (replacing one resource with another) mechanisms, can enable entrepreneurial activity in the IT hardware sector (von

Briel et al., 2018). Subsequently, mechanisms connect the external environment and the agent in the agent-external enabler nexus - see *Appendix 4* (Davidsson et al., 2020).

While external enablers exist objectively, they might not be favorable overall, as their beneficial nature depends on the actor's characteristics (Davidsson, 2015). Thus, external enabler mechanism cross-functions specify how particular ventures' ability to benefit from mechanisms depends on the external enabler and the actor (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). In this context, actors are important because entrepreneurs' agency is needed to recognize, evaluate, and initiate entrepreneurial activities (Davidsson et al., 2020). Subsequently, the cross-functions explain why the ability to derive benefits, identify and activate external enabler mechanisms varies between actors (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). These external enabler cross-functions are referred to as opacity and agency-intensity (Davidsson et al., 2020). Opacity refers to how obvious the external enabler is, how hard it is to identify it, and if specialized knowledge or imagination is needed to recognize its beneficial nature (Davidsson et al., 2020). Agency-intensity is "the extent to which activation of an enabling mechanism requires tenacity, risk-bearing and resource investments" (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022, p. 647). In other words, after identifying the beneficial external enabler, how resource intensive is the realization of the mechanisms for the actor. Ultimately, cross-functions of external enablers create relational inequality between agents. Some are better than others at identifying beneficial mechanisms and require less risk-taking and resources to exploit them (Davidsson et al., 2020).

2.3 External enablement of environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities

Sustainable entrepreneurship research has been gaining interest as entrepreneurial action is observed as one of the major driving forces of sustainable development. Environmental entrepreneurship, a subset of sustainable entrepreneurship, is focused on recognizing potentially profitable prospects for entrepreneurial activities stemming from environmental degradation (Dean & McMullen, 2007). In the environmental entrepreneurship literature, the markets are assumed to be in a constant state of disequilibrium caused by external shocks (Dean & McMullen, 2007).

2.3.1 External enablers of environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities

External enablers facilitating environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities today are more relevant than ever. As the natural environment is experiencing a rapid shift in climate, causing natural disasters, wars, migration, and other disequilibrating circumstances,

businesses are forced to react (Romar, 2009). For instance, new policies, laws, and regulations are being created in response to climate change, eliciting businesses to partake in sustainable activities (Ansari et al., 2013; Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011) and responsible purchasing (Worthington et al., 2008). However, regulatory uncertainty remains in many industries, enabling businesses to move early and shape emerging sustainability rules (Kolk & Mulder, 2011). In addition, as people worldwide become aware of environmental challenges, socio-cultural change further shapes entrepreneurial activities. Businesses increasingly face customer, employee, partner, and other stakeholder pressures and rising expectations to act sustainably (Ansari et al., 2013; Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011). Correspondingly, emerging sustainability activists demand changes in organizational practices and expose unrealized promises (Buchter, 2021). As interest in sustainable solutions continues to rise, new technologies, such as renewable energy, are being developed to facilitate environmental sustainability activities (Ansari et al., 2013). Further, as immigration increases, companies can exploit demographic change by satisfying the sustainability needs of the newcomers (Worthington et al., 2008). Overall, various external regulatory, demographic, socio-cultural, natural-environmental, and technological changes have made environmental sustainability critical for every venture.

2.3.2 Mechanisms of external enablers for sustainability

The aforementioned external enablers, through various mechanisms, can benefit entrepreneurial ventures. For example, long-term economic resource expansion can result from attention to the natural environment (Kacperczyk, 2009; Worthington et al., 2008) and activists providing resources to help companies to implement sustainable change (Buchter, 2021). Further, through sustainable action, entrepreneurs can create demand for their products (Worthington et al., 2008) and stay competitive (Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011). Researchers argue that legitimization, enclosing, and uncertainty reduction are mechanisms most prevalent external enabler mechanisms in environmental sustainability changes (e.g., Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011; Romar, 2009). Firstly, external changes, such as climate change, create significant yet unpredictable risks for organizations that might result in a loss of reputation, profitability, or customer value (Romar, 2009). Thus, engaging in sustainable activities and satisfying stakeholder expectations can ensure long-term success (Romar, 2009), minimize reputational risks (Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011), or increase the acceptability and reputation of the venture (Ansari et al., 2013; Worthington et al., 2008). Further, sustainable activities can

conserve resources through resource efficiency and substitute resources through technological innovations (Ansari et al., 2013).

2.3.3 External enabler for sustainability mechanism cross-functions

Barriers, such as knowledge or resources, prevent some entrepreneurs from realizing and exploiting external enablers of environmental entrepreneurship (Dean & McMullen, 2007). For example, Kolk and Mulder (2011) argue that regulatory changes often need specialized knowledge for successful identification and leverage. While Kacperczyk (2009) and Luo et al. (2021) further argue that larger firms are more likely than smaller ones to cater to stakeholder needs due to a larger pool of available resources. It should be noted, however, that often-recognized enablers remain unrealized not because of a lack of resources but rather a denial of being part of the problem (Ansari et al., 2013) and short-termism (Kacperczyk, 2009).

2.4 Immigrant entrepreneurship and sustainability

Due to globalization and the increasing migration rate, scholars have shown a growing interest in immigrant entrepreneurship during the past decade. Immigrant entrepreneurs are individuals who reside and engage in entrepreneurial activities in a country other than their country of birth, while their offspring are second-generation immigrants (Dabić et al., 2020). Despite the highly contextual nature of immigrant literature and the context-dependence of the phenomenon itself, there is a consensus that immigrants are uniquely situated in the business environment (Dabić et al., 2020; Maalaoui et al., 2020). While some researchers position the ‘otherness’ of immigrants as hindering entrepreneurial agency (Neville et al., 2018; Sepulveda et al., 2011; Storti, 2014), others argue that immigrants operate within unique circumstances that can act as fostering entrepreneurial action (Gurău et al., 2020; Maalaoui et al., 2020; Schøtt, 2018). Nevertheless, specific subgroups of immigrants, such as those lacking an ethnic community, refugees, and women, are often positioned as being more disadvantaged than others (Al-Dajani et al., 2019; Harima, 2022). Despite the disadvantage, immigrant entrepreneurs are more entrepreneurial than their native counterparts, driving social development in their host societies (Lassmann & Busch, 2015).

In their entrepreneurial decisions, immigrant entrepreneurs are guided by their home and host country’s norms, values, and culture (Lassmann & Busch, 2015; Szkudlarek & Wu, 2018). Over time home country’s sociocultural influence diminishes as immigrants assimilate and integrate into host societies; however, not all integrate to the same extent (Storti, 2014).

Second-generation especially challenge their parent's way of doing business, creating new opportunities and resources (Verver et al., 2020).

Regarding business ethics, immigrants also undergo an assimilation process, gradually adopting new cultural and social norms, behaviors, and attitudes (Jaffe et al., 2018). Jaffe et al. (2018) found that the host country's national culture and environmental circumstances determine business ethics attitudes. Luo et al. (2021) estimate that highly-educated immigrants can become 'idea carriers' and gain sufficient knowledge about sustainability while residing in host countries with high business sustainability in the first two years. Despite possible internal acculturation and adoption of sustainability ideas, Worthington (2006) discovered that external influences had a limited impact on shaping immigrant enterprise attitudes and behaviors regarding social, ethical, and environmental sustainability. While entrepreneurs mostly cited time, resources, and business priorities as barriers to engaging in sustainability (Worthington, 2006). Another explanation could be that when faced with conflicting sustainability demands from the home and host country, agents prioritize external pressures with lower sustainability requirements (Marano & Kostova, 2018). Despite the growing number of immigrant entrepreneurs and the increasing interest in sustainability practices, the intersection of these two fields has not been extensively explored, highlighting the need for further research to be conducted.

While results on external pressures and environmental sustainability are mixed, several studies have found that immigrant entrepreneurs are particularly socially responsible towards their ethnic communities. Through altruism and community improvements, immigrants might support the community beyond what is expected because they rely on the communities for business resources and support (Marin et al., 2015; Ndofor & Priem, 2011). Second-generation immigrants, while less dependent on ethnic communities, might still feel a moral obligation to supportive ethnic members (Janjuha-Jivraj, 2003).

2.4.1 The role of market knowledge and business integration in host societies

Arriving at the host society, often from cognitive, normative, and regulatory distant home countries, immigrants are often 'pushed' to entrepreneurship by necessity and inability to find formal employment (Dabić et al., 2020). Some find a 'safe haven' within their ethnic market (Drori & Lerner, 2002). Nevertheless, most are forced to operate in institutionally and culturally unfamiliar mainstream markets with little to no knowledge (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012). Thus, most entrepreneurs operate in low-capital industries with low entry barriers

regarding financial, competition, and legal barriers (Jones et al., 2014; Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012; Leung, 2003; Storti, 2014). A lack of state assistance and information about host country policies significantly limits entrepreneurs' ability to integrate into the local business environment (Crick & Chaudhry, 2010; Harima, 2022; Leung, 2003). Even if institutional support is provided, immigrants show low uptake of such services due to unawareness and language constraints (Crick & Chaudhry, 2010; Sepulveda et al., 2011).

The research argues that socio-cultural and linguistic integration is the main challenge for immigrant entrepreneurs (Maalaoui et al., 2020; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017). Furthermore, when confronted with unknown customer requirements, immigrant entrepreneurs might lack basic market knowledge, for example, how to market a product or find customers (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012). This ties into their inability to access local advice, mentoring, and training (Jones et al., 2014) and minimal contact with the majority population (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012; Senthanaar et al., 2021). Possibly due to unwelcoming business environments rooted in exclusion and discrimination (Jones et al., 2014). Furthermore, despite dreams of post-racism societies, discrimination in business is still highly prevalent in Europe, with even 'white' immigrant entrepreneurs being racialized as different (Jones et al., 2014; Zanakis et al., 2016). To overcome discrimination, immigrants might, for example, send native spouses to formal meetings to act as representatives (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012).

Immigrant integration into the host business networks significantly advances the entrepreneur's ability to foresee, develop and exploit entrepreneurial prospects (Gurău et al., 2020). Nevertheless, most immigrants cannot integrate and access critical information needed to stay competitive and react to market changes (Schøtt, 2018; Senthanaar et al., 2021). However, in this seemingly hopeless situation, ethnic networks are where immigrant entrepreneurs can find access to market knowledge, information, and advice (Griffin-el & Olabisi, 2018; Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012; Sepulveda et al., 2011). It should be noted, however, that some ethnic communities are not as collaborative and willing to share information (Storti, 2014). Importantly, for the reasons mentioned above for difficulty integrating, immigrants often choose not to engage in any business change until it is essential and the competition is doing so (Janjuha-Jivraj, 2003; Szkudlarek & Wu, 2018). At the same time, second-generation immigrants have been widely proven to integrate well into host country business networks, work in promising industries, able to identify beneficial activities, initiate change, and better navigate mainstream markets (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013; Janjuha-Jivraj, 2003; Koning &

Verver, 2013; Wijaya, 2008). Further, the longer the immigrant stays in the country and the more business experience they gain, the easier it is for them to recognize and create value-adding activities in their enterprise (Sepulveda et al., 2011).

2.4.2 *The role of resources, risk-taking, and tenacity*

Immigrants are frequently portrayed in literature as challenged individuals who, upon arrival, lack the necessary social, human, and financial capital to succeed in formal employment. Consequently, many turn to entrepreneurship as the only option to sustain themselves and their family. Refugees are particularly disadvantaged, having experienced forced detachment and the loss of nearly all their resources, including devalued financial and human capital (Harima, 2022; Maalaoui et al., 2020; Senthanaar et al., 2021). In addition to migration hardship, entrepreneurs often have limited access to formal business resources readily available to natives, such as formal financing or expertise (Griffin-el & Olabisi, 2018; Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012; Neville et al., 2018; Sepulveda et al., 2011). As a result, they often resort to informal funding and resource access from their networks (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012; Leung, 2003). The excessive dependence on ethnic resources and family connections has been shown to influence entrepreneurs' risk-taking behavior substantially (Drori & Lerner, 2002), constraining the opportunity structures and ultimately compromising the success of their businesses (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013). However, Katila and Wahlbeck's (2012) empirical research indicates that this strategy does not necessarily have a significant effect on the financial performance of the entrepreneurial venture.

Due to cultural distance, immigrant entrepreneurs lack resources during the start-up process and face significant obstacles in integrating into mainstream markets. This constraint severely restricts their ability to partake in more value-creating activities and generate and accumulate resources (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013). Immigrant entrepreneurs often must work long hours to generate enough capital to sustain their businesses, leaving little to invest in further business development and changes (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012). Moreover, additional hurdles and costs incurred during business development significantly reduce immigrant entrepreneurial competitiveness (Gurău et al., 2020).

Concurrently, in addition to relying on ethnic network resources, immigrants possess distinct cultural resources that may facilitate business development. For example, their multicultural knowledge and expertise could enable them to become exceptional exporters to their country of origin (Schøtt, 2018), with an overall higher exporting rate than natives

(Morgan et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2021). However, empirical evidence on the financial performance of exporting remains mixed, possibly due to country-of-origin bias (Morgan et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2021). Moreover, immigrants can secure cheaper labor costs by hiring co-ethnics, which results in lower operating costs (Biggeri et al., 2022; Drori & Lerner, 2002). Additionally, network embeddedness in home and host country communities provide access to a broader customer base (Gurău et al., 2020). Finally, immigrants may offer unique products and employ business strategies typical of their country of origin, thus creating a relative competitive advantage (Efferin & Hopper, 2007; Leung, 2003).

As demonstrated, a substantial body of research has explored how environmental factors and immigrant resources can facilitate or impede entrepreneurial activities and achievements. Nevertheless, Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2017) contend that unfavorable circumstances can also act as an enabling factor because of the intrinsic immigrant traits of persistence, dedication, and ingenuity. According to recent studies, immigrant entrepreneurs, particularly refugees, demonstrate resilience in their entrepreneurial endeavors, embracing unfamiliar environments and exhibiting a willingness to operate under conditions of uncertainty (Harima, 2022; Senthanaar et al., 2021). Furthermore, immigrants are frequently characterized by strong work ethics and dedication not to give up when difficulties arise (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017). Research has revealed that persistence among immigrants emerges from a need to rapidly develop new skills that facilitate successful integration into their host society (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017).

The literature surrounding the risk-taking tendencies of immigrants so far has produced conflicting results. For instance, Al-Dajani et al. (2019) observed that displaced immigrant women exhibited unusual risk-taking behavior by defying the established norms of their social communities. According to the research, such risk tolerance among immigrants may be attributed to their challenging prior life experiences and build-up resilience to risk (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017). Conversely, Kushnirovich et al. (2018) discovered that immigrants are generally more risk-averse than natives, having already undertaken considerable risks during the migration process and, therefore, less willing to undertake additional risks. Moreover, challenging prior experiences also works against entrepreneurs. The awareness of inequalities shared by minorities may discourage them from pursuing important entrepreneurial tasks and opportunities, for example, securing formal financing (Neville et al., 2018). Subsequently, minorities might be deterred from action even when they recognize the

beneficial potential of entrepreneurial opportunity, as they perceive their ability to succeed significantly lower than that of natives (Kushnirovich et al., 2018; Neville et al., 2018).

Confronted with limited resources, immigrant entrepreneurs demonstrate creativity by seeking unique solutions, for instance, developing product substitutes, novel products, or business strategies (Leung, 2003). By leveraging multicultural ideas and resources, immigrants create a competitive advantage and customer value through innovation and creativity (Griffin-el & Olabisi, 2018; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017).

In recent times, a growing consensus among researchers of immigrant entrepreneurship posits that, despite the resource and knowledge deficiencies such entrepreneurs face, the global opportunity landscape for immigrants is transforming (Gurău et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2014; Kloosterman, 2010). Globalization, high-skilled migration, and technological advancements are increasingly facilitating immigrant access to global resources, information, and the opportunity to leverage transnational knowledge to their advantage, which might make immigrants better resourced (Jones et al., 2014; Kloosterman, 2010). Some scholars even suggest that the internationalization of business environments and networks allows immigrants to leverage their 'otherness' to mitigate associated disadvantages (Gurău et al., 2020). Nevertheless, Kloosterman (2010) maintains that these external enablers may demand significant social, financial, and human capital to activate - resources that many immigrants lack - rendering them unattainable for some.

As expected from emerging research fields, there is limited strategically actionable knowledge generated about external enablers of environmental entrepreneurship activities, with immigrant literature largely neglecting sustainability trends. Further, an empirically unexplored dimension of agent-level variance remains in how external enablers could be realized and exploited. Accordingly, we integrate external enablers, immigrant entrepreneurship, and environmental entrepreneurship literature to address these knowledge gaps.

3 Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to outline research design, methods of data collection and analysis. Further, it highlights ethical considerations, potential biases and limitations to trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Research design

Our study aims at the subjective interpretation of objectively existing external enablers by individual actors and how they are influenced by knowledge, personality, and resources. For this reason, our research is grounded in the constructivism paradigm, which emphasizes individuals' active interpretation of subjective reality based on their acquired knowledge and experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In line with the constructivism paradigm, the qualitative research methodology allows us to respond to the research question's call to explore contexts and individual-specific viewpoints (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Further, given the emerging nature of the empirical and theoretical background and the research question, we aim to inductively build upon theory rather than testing it, for which qualitative design is most appropriate (Patton, 2002). Subsequently, the qualitative design allowed us to generate in-depth findings not restricted by existing theoretical knowledge, as in quantitative research. Furthermore, our research is aligned with the call from entrepreneurship and external enabler researchers to employ qualitative design to advance theory, highlighting the individual and emerging nature of entrepreneurial 'opportunities' (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022; Packard, 2017).

To ensure qualitative rigor, the systematic methodological approach was guided by the combination of Eisenhardt (1989) and Gioia et al. (2013) processes for grounded theory building. Both approaches define the procedures from developing the research questions to the closure of the grounded theory model. While Eisenhardt (1989) additionally introduces some unique points for case-orientated methodologies, such as within-case analysis.

Based on the qualitative approach, multiple case methodology was adopted to address the variation in external enabler opacity and agency intensity across contexts (Davidsson et al., 2020) and the emerging nature of the theoretical framework (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). Partington (2002) describes case studies as best suited where the theoretical background is relatively underdeveloped, and the context is messy. A case study is "a research strategy which

focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). Thus multiple-case studies allowed us to compare common and contrasting patterns between cases. Therefore, a multiple case study allowed us to build on existing theory by identifying repeating or contrasting patterns on how opacity and agency intensity unfold across different agents and organizations (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 2013). This approach provided us with a rich and nuanced understanding of the subject matter that would not be achievable through a single case study or quantitative methodology.

The study employed multiple qualitative data collection methods, which allowed the triangulation of evidence, ultimately strengthening the grounding of theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013). According to Gioia et al. (2013), we employed in-depth semi-structured interviews as our primary data collection method. That is because it allowed us to gather rich data and gain a nuanced understanding of individual perspectives in real-time and retrospectively (Gioia et al., 2013). Moreover, it simultaneously allowed flexibility for unanticipated themes to arise, which would not have been possible with more rigid interviews (Gioia et al., 2013).

3.2 Empirical setting

Sweden became the global pioneer in environmental protection in 1967 by enacting its first environmental protection act (Sweden, n.d.). Since then, the country only strengthened its position as a leading country in sustainability and has increasingly been experiencing disequilibrating business environments fostering sustainability. In 2022, Sweden ranked 5 out of 180 countries in environmental sustainability (Environmental Performance Index, n.d.).

Among the most notable external changes for sustainability, technological, socio-cultural, and regulatory pave the way for entrepreneurship in Sweden. For instance, in addition to various sustainable technologies already employed in Sweden, the Swedish government, with universities and independent firms, is actively driving the development of cutting-edge technologies for environmental sustainability (Sweden, n.d.). Furthermore, Swedish society is renowned for its strong environmental consciousness and deep-rooted support for ecology. Swedish people actively prioritize sustainability in their work and lifestyle, leading to the emergence of globally recognized activists like Greta Thunberg. One of Sweden's most notable government regulations recently came into place, setting a goal to achieve complete fossil-fuel independence by 2045, relying solely on renewable energy sources (Sweden, n.d.). The government's long-term vision for a fossil-free country is a powerful catalyst for innovation,

research, and subsequential external changes in the business environment, creating favorable conditions for entrepreneurial action for environmental sustainability.

In addition to its environmental consciousness, Sweden has emerged as an appealing destination for migrants, experiencing a steady influx of immigrants since the 1960s, with the highest recorded numbers in 2016, with 102 thousand people immigrating to Sweden only in 2022 (Statistics Sweden, 2023). Sweden's immigration policies have facilitated substantial migration, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to establish their lives and open businesses. Furthermore, Sweden's welcoming attitude towards immigrants, with supportive policies and entrepreneurial prospects, has allowed individuals from different parts of the world to establish themselves as valuable contributors to the Swedish economy.

Empirical focus on Sweden is driven by its strong commitment to sustainability, a diverse and significant immigrant population, and a supportive everchanging entrepreneurial ecosystem. These factors create a unique and dynamic context for studying the intersection of sustainability, entrepreneurship, and immigrants.

3.3 Data collection

We employ theoretical sampling to identify valuable cases and systematically extend theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Theoretical sampling also allows for heightened generalizability and transferability of the study (Gioia et al., 2013). The study examines immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden who engage in behaviors consistent with environmental sustainability (Worthington & Jones, 2006). While this engagement might seem narrow, our aim is not to measure the engagement (Worthington & Jones, 2006) but rather the role of external enablers facilitating this engagement. Immigrant businesses were chosen based on additional criteria developed by analogous studies, that is, immigrant entrepreneurs: 1) who have been residing outside of their country of origin for at least three years, as to ensure sufficient exposure to the host country's macro-environmental culture (Mafico et al., 2021); 2) had their businesses no less than two years to ensure sufficient exposure to the external business environment, and if their business is 3) profit-seeking as well as 4) not a subsidiary (Lundberg & Rehnfors, 2018).

Based on the criteria, the initial sample of immigrant entrepreneurs was identified through personal contacts and business incubators. Later, the snowballing sample was used, which helped to overcome reliance on narrow personal networks and is especially suited when the focus of the study is a sensitive matter, such as migration (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

Our sampling process resulted in identifying four cases, that is, four immigrant businesses (see *Table 1*). Eisenhardt (1989) argues that 4 to 10 cases are optimal theory-building from case studies. In addition, the average business age in the sample was 7,5 years, and all companies were micro-enterprises with between 1 and 10 employees. The size is an advantage, as owner-managers are reported to have a dominant influence in micro enterprises (Parry, 2012) and allowed us to evaluate immigrant entrepreneurs as actors better. However, the findings are unlikely to be generalized for medium or large enterprises.

As for geographical focus, all businesses were established and primarily operating in Västra Götaland county in Sweden. Geographical limitation allowed us a “high degree of interrelation between the firms and their environment and the communities in which they operate” (Parry, 2012, p. 224). It was also driven by accessibility through snowballing, as entrepreneurs were familiar with others in the same region.

Table 1. Summary of businesses sampled

Case	Business age (years)	Primary offering	Main entrepreneurship feature	No. of employees
A	12	Hair styling services	Significant resource constraints	1
B	6	Cleaning services	Cheaper service than competitors	4 and 'rented' workforce (± 10)
C	8	Construction	Partnering for cost reduction	8 and 'rented' workforce (± 50)
D	4	Beauty services	Cheaper and better service than competitors	1

From the sample, we aimed to interview owners, upper-level management, and people most familiar with environmental sustainability activities in the company. It allowed us to widen our understanding beyond what immigrants observe and understand. The efforts resulted in 8 participants being interviewed, of which five were immigrant entrepreneurs (see *Table 2*). As for entrepreneurs', the average years in the host country is 11,25 years. Notably, they all originally come from Lithuania, which could limit the generalizability of the study. Further, to gain a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape in Sweden, we interviewed one business coach who helps entrepreneurs in the inception stage of business, focusing on sustainability.

Table 2. Summary of participants

Case	Name*	Immigrant entrepreneur	Age	Gender	Highest level of education	Time in the host country	Time in the company	Ethnicity	Job position
A	Nora	Yes	49	F	Trade school	13 yr.	12 yr.	Russian/ Lithuanian	Owner
	Adam	Yes	49	M	Trade school	13 yr.	12 yr.	Lithuanian	co-owner
B	Lydia	Yes	52	F	Trade school	12 yr.	6 yr.	Lithuanian	CEO
	Emma	No	42	F	Secondary school	-	6 yr.	Swedish	Administration manager
C	Robert	Yes	56	M	Trade school	15 yr.	8 yr.	Lithuanian	Owner
	Kaleb	No	22	M	High school	-	2 mo.	Swedish	Project manager
	Patrick	No	31	M	High school	5 yr.	4 yr.	Lithuanian	CEO
D	Isabella	Yes	41	F	Trade school	5 yr.	4 yr.	Lithuanian	Owner

*Names changed for anonymisation purposes

For ethical purposes, all participants gave informed consent to participate in the study verbally and written, including an agreement to be recorded and the right to withdraw responses at any time during the interview and research. Further, respondents were given the option to anonymize. They were informed about data handling per GDPR guidelines, including storing data on secure cloud services, not sharing data with third parties, and data being deleted after the research was finished. Company and participant names were also anonymized to ensure honest responses, that participants face no harm by participating, and to protect participants' privacy. Anonymization is especially relevant in migration research, as migration and migrant businesses are treated as sensitive matters (Sasse & Thielemann, 2005). However, we acknowledge that anonymization can limit the credibility of the research, as other researchers would not be able to replicate the study directly, and dependability, as it will be difficult to verify the information.

All participants were interviewed with an average length of 50 minutes, with interviews taking place in March and April of 2023. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. One of the significant possible downfalls of semi-structured interviews as data collection is 'going

native' and unintentionally adapting participants' views (Gioia et al., 2013). Thus, while both authors participated in the interviews and took notes, only one author conducted all interviews to ensure consistency and gain two perspectives of personal interaction and a more distant observer (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013).

All interviews took place in person, either in business headquarters or participants' homes, as chosen by participants. Elwood and Martin (2000) highlighted that, as our observations confirmed, interviewees at offices presented themselves as knowledgeable agents with valuable contributions, while at home, they expressed more anxiety toward if "right" answers were provided. However, respondents choosing a location and in-person interviews allowed us to make valuable observations and elicit in-depth responses due to respondents feeling comfortable (Elwood & Martin, 2000).

Each interviewee was asked what external enablers they were aware of, what environmentally sustainable activities they engaged in, and the role of knowledge, resources, and risk in the engagement. The interview guide (see *Appendix 5*) was designed to give voice to respondents. While grounded in theoretical constructs, the terminology was not used to create opportunities for interviewees to make sensemaking rather than impose existing concepts (Gioia et al., 2013). This ensured that respondents could express their experience without our underlying assumptions of their experience (Gioia et al., 2013). To further amplify this purpose, the interview questions were revisited and refined between the interviews when needed (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013).

Notably, all immigrants were interviewed in their native language, Lithuanian, while all business associates were interviewed in English. While this meant that data required translation, using respondents' native language can be influential in building rapport and avoiding linguistic challenges (Welch & Piekkari, 2006). When transcribing and translating, it is essential to draw from native speakers' expertise (Welch & Piekkari, 2006), which was done as both researchers have Lithuanian as a native language. Two bilingual translators familiar with research is a good practice to ensure the accuracy of translation and analysis (Regmi et al., 2010). Thus, both authors simultaneously transcribed and translated the interviews conducted in Lithuanian and discussed if variations arose. We employed the literal translation described by Regmi et al. (2010) to avoid information distortion.

Semi-structured interviews were supplemented and triangulated with other data sources. First, during interviews, we collected field and observation notes. Moreover, in each

instance, we conducted workplace observations of no less than one hour of business activities and work environments, recording our observations. Further, we thoroughly analyzed and collected public data on the businesses and their environmental sustainability activities, including websites, social media pages, and other documentary evidence, such as news articles and financial performance data.

3.4 Data analysis

Our data analysis is grounded in the assumption that individuals in organizations are ‘knowledgeable agents’ who can comprehend and articulate their thoughts, intentions, and actions. Our data analysis assumes that, as researchers, our primary role is to accurately depict the informants’ experiences, thereby highlighting their interpretations and insights (Gioia et al., 2013). To reach this purpose, we underwent an iterative data analysis process described by Eisenhardt (1989) and Gioia et al. (2013), which was closely linked to raw data, to develop a grounded theory. The inductive data analysis procedure consisted of 3-steps, as defined by Gioia et al. (2013). It included an additional step by Eisenhardt (1989) of the within-case and between-case analysis to gain initial familiarity with each case.

In the 1st-order analysis, we performed initial data coding, where possible, maintaining informants’ terms (Gioia et al., 2013). From that, we grouped the codes to develop more comprehensive categories for the 1st-order, reducing codes to a manageable amount (Gioia et al., 2013). Then, using 1st-order categories, we wrote up within-case analysis to identify distinct patterns for each case, a thorough understanding of cases, and, ultimately, aid in cross-case comparisons (Eisenhardt, 1989). From 1st-order codes, 2nd-order themes were then organized, this time treating ourselves as theoretically informed agents, looking for how emerging themes help us to explain the phenomena and what is the variance between and within cases (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013). From this stage, the iterative analysis occurred, moving ‘back and forth’ between empirical data and existing theory, which is necessary to develop a grounded theory model (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013). After that 2nd order themes were organized into overarching theoretical dimensions, concluding aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al., 2013).

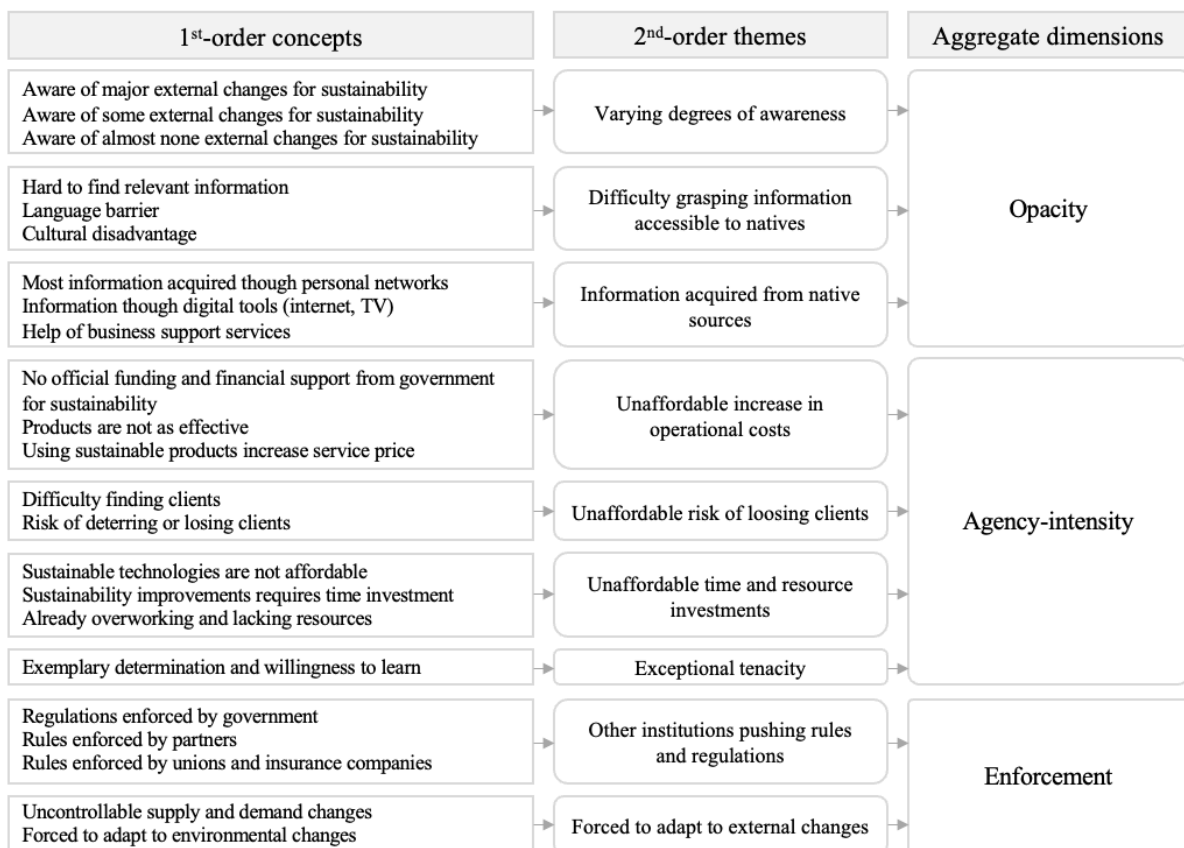
To ensure objectivity, the initial coding was conducted by co-authors working in parallel, and if agreements were low on specific parts, we revisited the data to develop mutual agreement (Gioia et al., 2013). However, later steps were conducted together while discussing

and looking at data through multiple perspectives, thus, avoiding premature or even false conclusions arising from biases (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The data analysis created the basis for the data structure (see *Figure 2*). The data structure acts as a visual aid and, for trustworthiness, illustrates the process of going from raw data to analysis and conclusions (Gioia et al., 2013). Further, we illustrate how raw data is linked to the three theoretical dimensions: opacity (*Appendix 6*), agency-intensity (*Appendix 7*), and enforcement (*Appendix 8*).

The data structure was then transformed into a dynamic grounded theory model, presented in the findings section, to illustrate emerging interrelations among aggregate dimensions (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013). The theory building was supplemented by examining extant literature, both conflicting and similar (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013). This allowed us to refine the articulation of emerging concepts (Gioia et al., 2013), sharpen or challenge generalizability and discover avenues for future theoretical investigations (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Figure 2. Data structure



3.5 Trustworthiness

We employed several provisions to ensure the rigor of the research based on Guba's (1981) four criteria for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

To ensure credibility, we employed data sampling, collection, and analysis methods widely used in qualitative research in general and comparable research (Shenton, 2004). Further, we developed initial familiarity with the participants and businesses through visits to organizations or phone calls to establish a relationship of trust before the first data collection (Shenton, 2004). Lastly, as mentioned before, we used data triangulation to get different perspectives, compensate for each method's shortcomings, had frequent discussions and reflections among ourselves and the supervisor, and employed several tactics to elicit honest responses (Shenton, 2004). Nevertheless, the credibility of our research may have been somewhat compromised, as we encountered constraints concerning conducting supplementary data and theory validation checks with informants (Shenton, 2004). These limitations were attributed to the language barrier and the participants' busy schedules.

We have provided necessary contextual information about sustainability and immigrants in Sweden to ensure transferability (Guba, 1981). Further, we highlighted the study's boundaries, including the number of participant organizations, their geographical location, restrictions and the number of participants, length, and data collection methods (Shenton, 2004). This allowed us to evaluate the extent of transferability to other contexts. Nevertheless, we acknowledge our limitations to generalization, as only one region in Sweden was examined, and most respondents are of the same nationality. Further, all ventures are micro-businesses, which might differ from small-medium enterprises in approaches to sustainability (Parry, 2012).

To address dependability, we have provided a detailed step-by-step methodological description, which should, in theory, allow the study to be repeated with similar results and allow the reader to assess if appropriate practices were adopted (Shenton, 2004). The detailed methodological description with 'audit trail' also ensured confirmability by allowing readers to determine whether data may be accepted (Shenton, 2004). To reduce investigator bias and accurately present participants' views, researcher triangulation was used throughout the research, but inevitably some prepositions might still be reflected (Guba, 1981).

4 Empirical findings and analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a descriptive reporting of empirical findings in relation to the research question of what role ‘opacity’ and ‘agency-intensity’ in the facilitation of environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities among immigrant entrepreneurs. Later, interpreting the findings in relation to the existing literature.

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Opacity

In the first section of the findings, we describe how the opacity of external enablers manifests between different agents and how it affects environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities in immigrant ventures.

4.1.1.1 Varying degrees of awareness

The extent of engagement in sustainable practices varies across ventures and agents and is contingent upon their understanding of external factors that enable sustainability. For example, in the case of venture D, the use of organic products and water-saving measures were reported; however, the venture’s limited knowledge about external changes in the business environment impeded further engagement in sustainable practices:

“Maybe it is because there is a language barrier and I myself do not have such a high interest. And because my products are clean, I contribute to the environmental sustainability. But I do not do research about how I could contribute more.” (Case D, Isabella)

In contrast, venture A displayed a nuanced understanding of external enablers across various domains such as political, socio-cultural, natural-environmental, and technological factors, allowing for more informed decision-making regarding sustainability. For instance, Adam’s quote illustrates how entrepreneurs were able to evaluate the opportunities and challenges of sustainable technologies:

“Let’s take electro-mobiles. So far, we haven’t had a problem with using up lithium batteries. First of all, we have enough of it, soon it won’t be a case, and what are they going to use then? Not clear. The disposal of it... you cannot reuse it. That problem. The third problem is... how do you acquire electricity... If you

wanted to service all the cars by using only solar panels and windmills then... it is not feasible. And manufacturing solar panels is very, very bad. And its disposal is... there are elements that stay in nature for hundreds of years.” (Case A)

As a result of their informed understanding of external enablers, venture A was able to implement a range of sustainability practices to the best of their abilities. These practices included, but are not limited to, recycling, energy conservation, and thoughtful selection of lighting and energy sources.

Ventures B and C demonstrated a moderate engagement in sustainability practices, with a varying degree of awareness towards different external enablers. For instance, while political and natural-environmental factors were recognized, socio-cultural factors were not. Therefore, each venture’s level of engagement in environmentally sustainable activities largely depended on their knowledge and recognition of various external enablers.

4.1.1.2 Difficulty grasping information accessible to natives

In the digital age, vast amount of knowledge is available but not equally accessible. Firstly, respondents unanimously agreed that although most information is readily available, it is not fully accessible to them due to various factors. One reason is the complicated nature of the information, as well as the time-consuming process of sifting through large amounts of data, as Nora noted: *“Very important, so I wouldn’t need to run around looking through massive amount of information. <...> I don’t have enough time to wonder and look for it...”* (Case A).

However, complex information was only one reason for not accessing information. Respondents in Cases A, B, and C expressed that despite interest, some information, both online and in personal networks, was hard to access due to the language barrier:

“I think so because first of all Swedish is not my native language for them [nationals] it is easier to find information, easier to call someone and talk with them get some information, write an email, it is much easier. My Swedish language is not one hundred percent and is limited.” (Case B, Lydia)

Even if the information is got, it is sometimes hard to comprehend: *“Maybe somebody is calling to me and saying something that is relevant to me, but I just simply can’t understand”* (Case B, Lydia). Alternatively, it goes over one’s head: *“Maybe if you hear about it*

accidentally it doesn't stay with you long enough to remember” (Case A, Nora). Further, with differing cultures and business systems, it takes more time and effort for immigrant entrepreneurs to gather all information intuitively understood by natives: “Well, maybe when you come here you look around and try to learn everything. So maybe this... But Swedes, since they have been living here their whole lives... So the difference is this.” (Case C, Robert)

In response to the issue at hand, participants put forward several potential solutions. One such solution was to provide translated information to reach a wider audience. Another suggestion was to offer industry-specific materials that are concise and easily digestible, akin to the journals and papers released by professional unions:

“In Sweden, unions release these small... papers or journals. Construction workers have their own and warehouse workers do too.... and those window workers... It would be nice if hair stylists had a journal like this where you can read up on the newest information and laws.” (Case A, Adam)

Respondents agreed that improving information accessibility would lead to better sustainability outcomes and stronger engagement in sustainability efforts. For example, one respondent said it would make it *“a little bit easier for us to work with this”* (Patrick, Case C).

4.1.1.3 Information acquired from native sources

Many immigrants rely heavily on digital sources to gather information on environmental sustainability. However, it is noted that a personal interest in the topic is required for one to accumulate enough knowledge. Case A's interviewee, Nora, stated, *“There people talk, and there are discussions. It is my hobby and my work. I love my work. And live in it. Because of that, I look for information everywhere. <...> I read a lot about my work.”*

Access to information can be challenging for immigrants, leading them to seek information through personal networks in the host country. For example, they may attend business events to receive hands-on knowledge. As Case B's Lydia stated: *“Well, it is different when you go to shows, where companies are promoting their products, you talk with them directly, and they show you the products, and demonstrate them. It is much simpler, much better.”* Additionally, immigrants can learn from native business partners or colleagues, as Case D's Isabella described:

“Then I found a place in a salon next to Swedes. And while working there I learned a lot. About how to work, and what kind of business I should open. What

are the requirements, what are the requirements for hygiene, and what permits do I need.”

Native business affiliates also expressed a desire to provide helpful information, as Case B’s Emma explained:

“I know because when we talk about, since I am a native and sometimes it’s easier for me to reach out to like a client or because, you know, the language and the... (pause) the way of talking in the same way it is sometimes easier. So, yes, absolutely. And they can learn. Like [immigrant entrepreneurs name] can learn from me sometimes with ‘Hah, this is typical Swedish thing bla bla bla...’ or whatever.”

In ventures B and C, entrepreneurs and their business partners noted how unions and insurance companies help implement environmental sustainability improvements by uncovering external enabler mechanisms. For example, unions can provide external consultation, as Case C’s Robert stated: *“Like external consultation... Those who are connected to the union, they are obligated to the system to gather the workers and talk about how things are run, and they are supposed to be run. What is what...”* Insurance companies can also provide information materials and help with the working environment, as Case B’s Emma explained:

“That kind of [insurance] companies will help you with the working environment. And it’s not just this sustainable products. It’s also the environment in total that, where you work. So yeah, that’s the kind of tool that that we had been able to be in contact with.”

Overall, respondents reported host country networks and business support networks as providing valuable and comprehensive information on the mechanisms of external enablers, reducing the barriers to acquiring information in foreign environments.

4.1.2 Agency-intensity

In the next section of the findings, we examine how the agency intensity of external enablers, that is, resources, time, and risk-taking needed to activate external enabler mechanisms, affects different agents and how it affects environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities in immigrant ventures.

4.1.2.1 Unaffordable increase in operational costs

In all cases, entrepreneurs expressed that some external enablers they observed could not be realized due to increased service costs. Various factors caused this cost increase.

First, new sustainable products were thought to be not as effective. For example, in the case of a cleaning service business (Case B), new sustainable products were thought to be less effective, meaning that it would take longer to clean or require more effort, resulting in the service provision taking up more valuable time for which the client has to pay. As Lydia explained:

“This has to be understood, but clients refuse to do it... Refuse to give us more time to clean, but still want the same good results. <...> As I mentioned before, the price increase comes not from the ecological materials but from the time it takes to clean with those materials.”

Similarly, in the case of a hair styling business (Case A), the lack of efficiency implied even more costs and was coupled with the product being considered more expensive. If the product did not work correctly, the entrepreneur said she could lose clients, referrals, and money, as clients would refuse to pay. As Adam explained: *“At her job, if it is not working nobody is going to pay you.”* Meanwhile, in Case D, the entrepreneur expressed that their environmentally sustainable products were as effective as others but were indeed more costly. Isabella noted: *“But not everybody can afford it, because one crème costs 800-1000 crowns.”*

In Case C, respondents noted that they often choose a cheaper option rather than a more environmentally sustainable one, as additional costs would not be acceptable for the business. As Kaleb explained: *“For our side, when we do that, often we don’t have a choice because the more material that is better for the environment is often it is more expensive.”*

In most cases (except Case D), the price increase is unacceptable for immigrant entrepreneurs as all businesses operate with a competitive advantage of providing lower-cost services than native businesses. Lydia from Case B, while comparing environmental practices between these two categories of businesses, said: *“And Swedish companies are more strict with these requirements. Ecological requirements... But it also affects the pricing.”* Thus, fully embracing sustainable innovations would also entail losing a competitive advantage. It should be noted that all entrepreneurs self-funded their businesses with their own and their family’s resources, not taking external investments, which means that any additional costs can directly

affect them. Adam explained, “*Well we are a family, and we share everything. It is both of our money and the only money*” (Case A).

Regarding solutions, respondents from Cases A and C expressed the need for official funding schemes to support the activation of external enablers for sustainability. Robert from Case C even suggested a whole system, saying:

“There could be grants for a company for trying to be a leader in sustainability. So automatically the government could give grants... So, it would be a motivation... Or projects, for example, if you take part in projects, let’s say your company is at the same level with another company then automatically they can look at the sustainability... Which one is at the higher level.”

Overall, immigrant entrepreneurs face unique limitations regarding additional costs to their services from sustainable activities, which could disrupt their unique propositions associated with being an immigrant. Furthermore, they are more personally sensitive to business risks, as their ventures are self-funded.

4.1.2.2 Unaffordable risk of losing clients

In the words of Adam from Case A, “*if it is not working nobody is going to pay you,*” and “*then she is forced to redo the work or they won’t be coming back,*” expressing the fear of losing clients due to the risk of using less effective sustainable products. This risk is further amplified for immigrant entrepreneurs who face language barriers and lack practice in building a client base in the host country. Adam shared his experience, “*you know in Sweden in the beginning you have to build up a clientele. Well, there was no... There was no possibility to start for me because an unhappy client would cost us too much.*”

Similarly, in Case C, Kaleb revealed that they choose cheaper, less environmentally sustainable options because they cannot afford to risk losing clients or future jobs. “*We have that things that are the better for the environment but that maybe cost us three thousand more to buy. We choose the cheaper ones because it’s for the customer and for the work,*” he said.

In Case B, Nora expressed that clients were initially unhappy with longer cleaning times and additional costs associated with using sustainable products. She explained:

“And there are some clients who complain about the house not smelling nice after the cleaning, but then we explain to them that it cannot smell nice because

our chemicals are odourless, so it would not harm workers, because they have to clean with it and smell it the whole day, and... Many understand..."

Entrepreneurs, particularly those who rely on customer trust and word-of-mouth to sustain their business, are worried about the risk of losing clients due to changes in service provision after beginning to engage in environmental sustainability. This concern is particularly significant for immigrant entrepreneurs already disadvantaged in the foreign market.

4.1.2.3 Unaffordable time and resource investments

Additionally, a lack of time and financial resources was reported as a significant challenge for immigrant entrepreneurs, preventing them from realizing all desired sustainable business activities. For instance, the most desirable external enabler identified by the entrepreneurs - technological changes for sustainability - was deemed too expensive to implement. Although most entrepreneurs were aware of various sustainable technological changes and their beneficial mechanisms, they were unaffordable. As highlighted by Adam, the cost of environmentally sustainable products and technology was significantly higher than alternatives, making it difficult for under-resourced immigrant entrepreneurs to invest in these solutions:

"When it comes to this work, everything [sustainability solutions] is very obvious. What is more economical or useful...It means more expensive. We are not a rich family that could invest and wait for it to pay off. We can't afford it."
(Case A)

With Lydia confirming the same idea: *"If you think you want an ecological mop you have to pay ten times more. Then you realize you simply can't afford it."* (Case B)

Noah also explained the struggles of trying to employ innovative sustainable products:

"For example, I saw some product in Asia for hair washing. They have this arch that make hair washing more economic because it saves water. And if they start selling it in Sweden, I think the price would be too much anyway. When it comes to environmentally sustainable products, if you buy it in Sweden then it is worth the price, but many products, until they reach Sweden... I recently tried buying one thing, and the price difference between Spain and Sweden is four times. Transporting it makes it four times more expensive. You want it, but you can't

afford it. We try to save money everywhere we can. You can still find cheap products somewhere on Spain's Amazon, but you have to constantly search and search for it."

In this case, the activation of technological external enablers is either too expensive or too time-consuming for an immigrant, who is already under-resourced and lacking help. In addition, testing the effectiveness of these products takes time, and many immigrant entrepreneurs lack the necessary support from families due to their migration status:

"Maybe there are good chemicals that are environmentally friendly, but I cannot try testing everything to find out which ones <...> When I worked in Lithuania, I used to try new products on my family, in order to avoid hurting my clients. But in Sweden it is harder, it is me and that is it!" (Case A, Nora).

In Case B, the time required to learn and adapt to sustainability changes was also a challenge in immigrant businesses. Kaleb noted, *"I think everything that's happened now, it's brand new for everybody, and we are in the beginning of something, and we learn together. It's hard..."* and his colleague Patrick confirming the same thing: *"I believe there is a lot of paperwork for this, I mean documents and everything, which is making the... Uh, everything harder to work on it."*

Overall, immigrant entrepreneurs face significant challenges in actualizing the potential of recognized external enablers, particularly those related to technology, due to the high costs and time requirements associated with these solutions.

4.1.2.4 Exceptional tenacity

The challenges of migration, running a business, retaining clients, and the constant worry about resources can be arduous for immigrants, yet they demonstrate remarkable resilience and motivation. This tenacity is exemplified by Robert's statement that *"when you immigrate, you have a higher motivation to learn, because you need to know everything"* (Case C, Robert). Additionally, Kaleb notes that his immigrant colleagues are *"working very hard. They are here for just work and work and work"* (Case C, Kaleb). These observations indicate that despite their obstacles, immigrants possess a relentless drive to persist and implement sustainable practices, even after experiencing setbacks. Robert describes:

"I see a lot of waste and every year I try to change something, but it is hard. <...> Well, for me, maybe, as a manager, it is very hard to implement... It is not

like you try and try, so that everyone does it, and after it just doesn't work. Then again you come back to... So, there are good ambitions, but it just doesn't work"
(Case C, Robert).

4.1.3 Enforcement

In this section, we analyze how the level of enforcement of external enablers affects agents in recognizing the beneficial nature and exploiting external enabler mechanisms for environmental sustainability. The level of enforcement refers to the extent to which external changes are imposed on agents, either voluntarily or through compulsion, in order to promote the exploitation of external enabler mechanisms.

4.1.3.1 Other institutions pushing rules and regulations

Without having to be aware of external enablers, entrepreneurs are often required to follow regulations and laws imposed by the government designed to protect the environment. This was especially apparent in case C, possibly because companies in the construction industry have the highest possibility from the sample to contribute to environmental unsustainability. For instance, in Case C, Robert for the major part, believed, that sustainability, by definition, is all about following regulations:

"Well, the company has to follow certain regulations. You can't do certain things... You have to take waste to the recycling centre and pay money for it, not to take it and throw it to the forest. That means that you follow regulations that come from the municipality, you do what you must, and that is it." (Case C, Robert)

Similarly, in Case A, Lydia explains how she has heard that *"the law came out that by the year 2035 will completely ban all the internal combustion engines"*, which might have an impact on businesses, forcing entrepreneurs to adopt more sustainable practices, in this case the use of electric vehicles. This illustrates how regulations can force entrepreneurs to adopt more sustainable practices, even if they might not have done so voluntarily.

Furthermore, in Case C, Kaleb describes how the government mandates that every company must have a 'kollektivavtal', a collective union agreement, without which you cannot work on construction sites. By requiring companies to join the union, the government pushes standards and rules for worker safety and environmental protection:

"So that would improve every company that is connected to the Union. Improve the environment and someone also would have a job which includes going around businesses and... Well, it is similar to [name of insurance company], they came to us, told us how things are supposed to be now, and we must follow it." (Case C, Robert)

In Case B, the same insurance company was also mentioned as imposing some sustainability rules. This suggests that insurance companies can also play a role in enforcing sustainability practices.

Environmental laws and regulations enforced on bigger companies in a supply chain can also have a chain reaction on smaller entrepreneurs. As Kaleb explains in Case C, they have recently partnered with one of the biggest construction companies in the country, and as bigger companies often face pressure from governments, they were immediately forced to quickly adapt to new sustainability requirements. Thus, due to governmental enforcement, bigger companies are forced to pass down their requirements 'down the chain', thus, companies working with them have no choice but to comply with these regulations or risk losing future business: *"So we have the chain, if you <...> not have the same thinking as them <...> then you're out of the picture"* (Case C, Kaleb). Robert confirms that in cases like this, they have no choice but to follow their partner's regulations: *"Maybe I don't really want to commit to their requirements but it is mandatory. Otherwise, you will not get any good projects."*

Overall, regulations and laws imposed by governments, unions, and insurance companies push entrepreneurs to adopt more sustainable practices, even if they may not have done so voluntarily. These regulations and laws leave entrepreneurs no other choice but to comply or risk losing their business.

4.1.3.2 Forced to adapt to external changes

One of the external factors that can strongly influence companies to adopt sustainable practices is the change in supply. Nearly all the cases discussed (except for Case D) highlighted at least one instance where they recalled a change in supply had occurred. For example, in Case A, Adam noted that the products offered to their business were changing, partly influenced by government decisions: *"distributors come to her work and offer environmentally friendly products, like now politicians are forcing..."* Likewise, in Case B, Lydia observed that

“environmentally harmful products are disappearing” from the stores. In this case, entrepreneur had no other choice but to adapt to the change in supply.

In Case C, Robert shared an example of how the price of environmentally unsustainable products had increased, prompting consumers to opt for more eco-friendly options:

“Before, plastic windows used to be very cheap. Maybe three times cheaper than wooden, really ecological and high-quality windows. People used to choose plastic windows because they last long, you don’t have to paint them and etc. Now they made it so that plastic windows cost the same as wooden windows. So, where people live, I would never recommend buying plastic windows because you spend a lot of money, and you have a non-ecological product.”

These changes in supply offerings inevitably impact the choices made by entrepreneurs when selecting products, even if they are unaware of beneficial mechanisms of external enablers.

All respondents noted that Swedish society is increasingly seeking out products and services that are more sustainable, and most projected that this demand will continue to grow. Emma from Case B believes that it is no longer viable for businesses to neglect sustainability and that everyone must contribute in some way, stating *“No one wants to buy something that's not well, people do buy things anyway, but it's a lot in their minds. So, I think everyone has to in one way or another.”* Despite this, it appears that this push for sustainability has not yet directly affected businesses. While immigrants acknowledged that increased demand for sustainability would incentivize them to strengthen their commitment, they noted that customers are not yet actively seeking out environmentally sustainable services from them. For example, Lydia expressed that only a greater demand from clients would lead to full commitment to sustainability, stating that, *“We are not completely committing to ecology yet, it is possible, but we are not doing it. Clients have to demand it first. If the client demand for it, then we will fully commit.”*

Another example of how external factors are affecting entrepreneurial practices can be found in Case C, where the entrepreneur reported that natural environmental changes are forcing him to adapt his working practices. Despite the challenges this creates, he has no choice but to adapt, as exemplified by his experience during heat waves, probably caused by climate change. According to Robert,

“The recent summers, the heat waves... we change the roof and men are working on the roof, then we have to be very attentive and talk with them. Follow the rules, they have to drink water, if they feel ill, they must stop working... And automatically these heat waves are a challenge.”

This illustrates how external environmental factors can impact entrepreneurial practices and necessitate adaptation. Overall, external factors are increasingly pushing sustainable entrepreneurial practices in Sweden, while entrepreneurs are left with no choice but to adapt.

4.1.3.3 Voluntary engagement

However, not all immigrant entrepreneurs are pushed to exploit external enablers' beneficial nature and engage voluntarily. All cases' responses highlight the importance of voluntary engagement in environmental sustainability. Despite not being pushed by external parties and having limited risk-taking capabilities, financial resources, and time, these entrepreneurs recognize the value of external enabler mechanisms and choose to engage in them voluntarily. They understand that sustainability is not just about complying with regulations but also about taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on the environment. For instance, in Cases A, B, and D, entrepreneurs voluntarily engage in sustainability beyond what is required by legal requirements and play a part in promoting sustainability stemming from ethical values. For instance, Nora explains how they are doing everything they can with 'small people capabilities':

“When it comes to obvious things there are conditions made for them, like sorting the waste, we try doing that as we have capabilities. <...> But we are small people, we cannot allow ourselves a lot. <...> When it comes to our 'small people' capabilities, we try to.... And I believe that everyone will do everything they can, the earth will be significantly cleaner.” (Case A)

Entrepreneurs who engage in voluntary sustainability practices are motivated by their moral and ethical values and a long-term perspective on the benefits of sustainable practices. In Case C, Kaleb sees proactive engagement in sustainability as an investment that will prepare them for the future. By anticipating the need for sustainable practices, he believes they will be well-positioned to comply with future regulations and attract partners who value sustainability.

Moreover, some entrepreneurs look to others for inspiration and guidance on sustainable practices. In Case C, the participants mention their competitors' practices as a

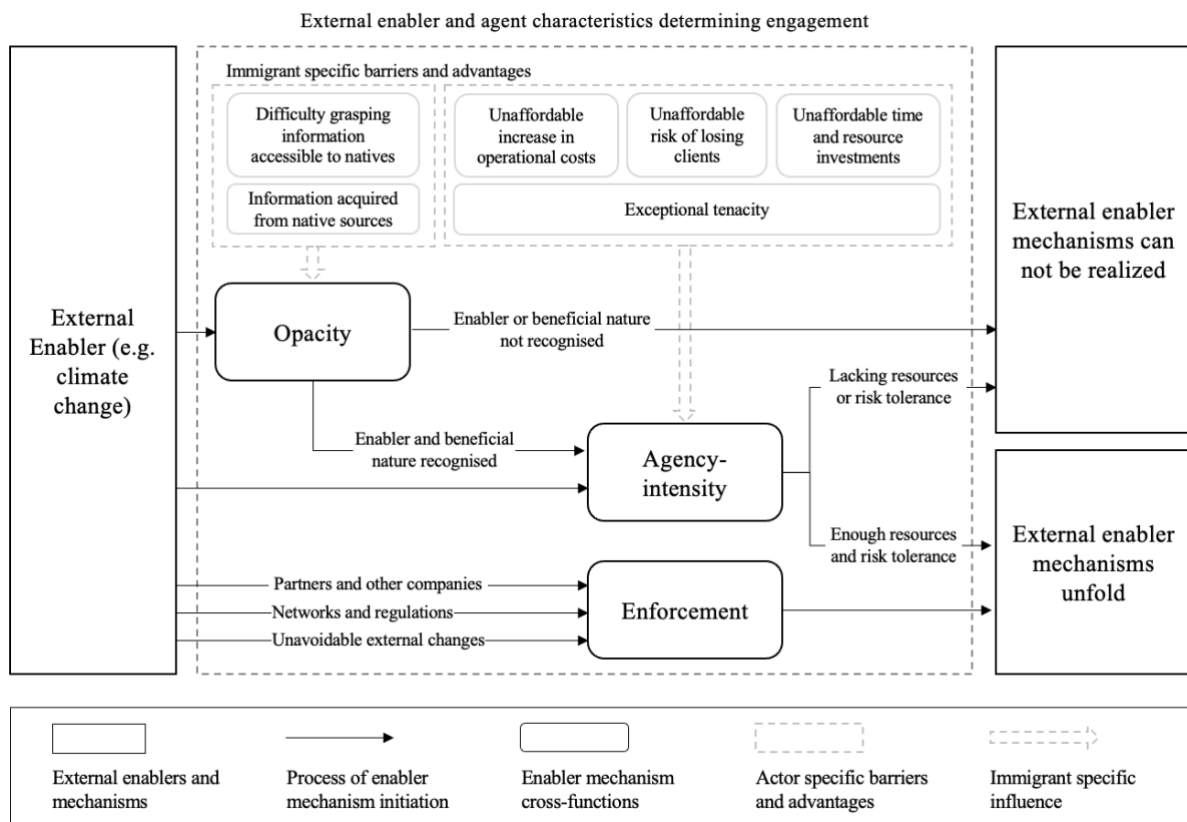
source of inspiration and learning, while in Case D, entrepreneurs cite industry colleagues as a source of inspiration.

Respondents expressed personal values, long-term benefits, and following by example as drivers to voluntary engagement in environmental sustainability.

4.2 Analysis

To answer the research question, we found that for immigrant entrepreneurs, as agents, opacity and agency intensity of external enablers can play a determining role in the facilitation of environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities and in business development overall. Further, we introduce enforcement as another cross-mechanism of external enabler mechanism and introduce how it positively influences entrepreneurs' engagement in environmental sustainability. The interpreted dynamic interrelations from the findings are presented in *Figure 3* and will be further developed in relation to the existing literature in the following sections.

Figure 3. Dynamic grounded-theory model: external enabler initiation



4.2.1 *Opacity*

While external enablers for sustainability exist objectively, the level of awareness among different actors varies, indicating that some enablers and mechanisms are less opaque than others. The findings suggest that the lack of recognition of external enablers among immigrants has constrained their participation in environmental sustainability. Thus, if actors did not recognize the beneficial nature of enablers, their engagement and exploitation of beneficial mechanisms of ecological sustainability were limited.

When gathering knowledge about external enablers and the beneficial mechanisms, entrepreneurs faced both ‘general’ difficulties that could be encountered by both native and foreign entrepreneurs and immigrant-specific barriers. For instance, most entrepreneurs were unaware of regulatory and policy changes for environmental sustainability, or their awareness was significantly limited. This finding is consistent with previous literature that argues that despite countless regulations being created and enabling businesses to move to sustainability (Ansari et al., 2013; Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011), they often need specialized knowledge to identify and leverage (Kolk & Mulder, 2011). Thus, this challenge is considered more general than exclusive to immigrant entrepreneurs. Similarly, the general challenge of locating relevant information online can be observed, hindering sustainability engagement and indicating that access did not always come with a greater understanding of external enabler beneficence. However, simultaneously, immigrants must deal with language and cultural barriers, further impeding the ability to observe external changes. A higher learning curve has also been explored in the literature, where entrepreneurs are depicted as operating in institutionally foreign markets with little knowledge of the language, customer needs, and systems, hindered their ability to fully service the mainstream market business environments (e.g., Beckers & Blumberg, 2012; Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012). Thus, our study suggests that immigrant entrepreneurs, compared to natives, face more barriers in acquiring specialized knowledge, which would enable them to recognize potentially beneficial external enablers, limiting their engagement in sustainability.

Research suggests that over time, immigrants are better able to integrate and assimilate into native business environments (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013; Morgan et al., 2021; Sepulveda et al., 2011) and adopt the business ethics attitudes of the host country (Jaffe et al., 2018). However, our study found no remarkable link between the length of stay in the host country and the ability to recognize external enablers, as many immigrants still reported difficulty

acquiring information about external changes. This difference in findings may be attributed to the low sample size in our study. Despite this limitation, our findings still suggest that even with increased assimilation and integration into host business environments, immigrants may face unique challenges in recognizing external enablers for sustainability.

Further, when it comes to information access, the study highlights how the digitalizing world is narrowing the information gap between immigrants and natives by facilitating access to global resources and information. According to the ‘mixed embeddedness’ framework by Kloosterman (2010), which was widely adopted by immigrant entrepreneurship researchers, greater access could have significant implications for immigrant entrepreneurs and their well-being as this new availability and reduced costs of information are transforming immigrant ‘opportunity’ structures. However, our study also illustrates how access does not always come with a better understanding of external enabler beneficence. These findings are consistent with the view that despite the apparent benefits of globalization, the ‘new wave’ of immigrants might be even more disadvantaged due to heightened discrimination (Jones et al., 2014).

The findings further highlight that immigrant business networks in the host country can play a significant role in providing knowledge about external enablers for sustainability and facilitation of environmentally sustainable business activities. These findings confirm previous studies that consider personal networks as one of the primary sources of information for immigrants (Sepulveda et al., 2011). However, we could not find any support for the often-cited claim that ethnic networks are an even more critical source of information than host country networks (Biggeri et al., 2022; Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012; Sepulveda et al., 2011). This might be because most studies investigate entrepreneurs from high-population countries (for example, China or Turkey) in regions with a high concentration of immigrants (e.g., England or United States), which create ethnic communities. In contrast, our sample investigated entrepreneurs from low-population countries in regions where such communities do not exist.

Lack of awareness of external enablers limited the extent to which entrepreneurs engage in environmental sustainability and business success. This constrained engagement can have far-reaching implications, mainly leading to missed chances for exploiting beneficial mechanisms connected to environmental sustainability. For example, immigrants might forgo cost savings or reputational increase (Ansari et al., 2013; Worthington et al., 2008), further limiting business environmentally sustainable activities and long-term success (Romar, 2009). Notably, all businesses in our sample can be considered low-capital, with little growth observed

over the years. Given their limited resources, these and similar businesses would significantly benefit from recognizing and activating external enabler mechanisms for environmental sustainability. Without recognizing the beneficial nature of external enablers, immigrants may be unable to escape the trap of under-resourcing, relying on low-value-creating activities (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013), and operating in low-capital industries (Leung, 2003). For instance, in our sample, all businesses engaged in environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities. However, due to a lack of awareness about the beneficial mechanisms of external enablers, such as legitimization (Ansari et al., 2013) and demand expansion (Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011), almost none of the businesses (except Case C) listed any environmental activities on their websites or social media. This finding illustrates how immigrant entrepreneurs, unaware of external enabler mechanisms, may fail to utilize mechanisms that could bring significant benefits to their business without requiring high agency-intensity to activate. However, the same trend of not communicating environmental practices, even with awareness of possible benefits, has been observed in other small businesses, mainly attributed to personal motivation to be sustainable rather than seeking business benefits (Revell et al., 2010).

Low external enabler opacity in our study resulted in overall low uptake of environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities and immigrant inability to exploit the beneficial nature of external enablers. Both factors can have far-reaching consequences on the business's success and ability to grow and stay competitive in the fast-changing business environment (Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011).

4.2.2 *Agency-intensity*

The findings propose that immigrants face more significant difficulties than natives in implementing environmental sustainability practices, even after acknowledging the advantageous effects of external enabler mechanisms. That is because immigrants face additional time and resources, family networks, and funding constraints – challenges associated with being a disadvantaged immigrant entrepreneur (Gurău et al., 2020). Worthington (2006) similarly reported that time, resources, and business priorities were the primary impediments that hindered immigrant-owned businesses from engaging in activities that promote environmental sustainability. For immigrants, these obstacles, coupled with pre-existing difficulties in building clientele due to cultural and market unfamiliarity (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012), create unacceptable risks of losing clients and incurring increased costs. Our study

highlighted that additional costs were particularly critical in immigrants' decision-making regarding whether to engage in environmental sustainability. Costs are crucial because all businesses have the primary competitive advantage of offering better prices. Thus, they perceived that leveraging external enablers to promote sustainability would lead to higher costs and compromise their pricing strategy.

The findings suggest that in environmental sustainability activities, immigrants are more risk-averse than native individuals due to additional resources and cultural constraints, further limiting immigrant engagement in environmental sustainability. Previous research on immigrant risk-taking attitudes has yielded contradictory findings. While some scholars posit that immigrants are more likely to withstand risks (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017), others assert that they tend to be more cautious (Kushnirovich et al., 2018).

Because of not recognizing some or all external enabler mechanisms (due to low opacity), some immigrant entrepreneurs exhibited biased assessments of risks, which created additional barriers to engaging in environmental sustainability. For example, immigrant entrepreneurs in our sample were convinced that even a slight price increase would adversely affect their businesses because customers would not be willing to pay. However, this perception may not be based on definite evidence, as they may not have overlooked the potential benefits of promoting environmental sustainability in business operations. For instance, previous research has shown that customers may be willing to pay more for environmentally sustainable products and services (Rosa & Milne, 2021), and such practices could lead to increased customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and improved reputation (e.g., Falkenberg & Brunsæl, 2011; Romar, 2009). However, our findings revealed that immigrant entrepreneurs did not consider these potential benefits. Instead, they perceived sustainability efforts only as an additional cost to their business, indicating a biased evaluation of risks. This bias may stem from a lack of market knowledge, as suggested in previous literature (Katila & Wahlbeck, 2012), or low opacity of external enabler mechanisms, which further undermines their ability to evaluate beneficial mechanisms and engage in environmental sustainability. In previous studies, costs are cited as the primary barrier to engaging in environmental sustainability for small businesses because the firm's owner observes no clear 'business case' (Revell et al., 2010).

Further, we found that despite apparent disadvantage in the business environment, immigrants were willing to constantly learn and not give up despite failures. This illustrates

the exceptional tenacity of immigrant entrepreneurs, which is beneficial when trying to overcome high agency-intensity. Challenged entrepreneurs being more dedicated, persistent, and creative has been reported in other studies, indicating that encountering disadvantages can initiate responses that enable entrepreneurship activities (Miller & Brendon-Miller, 2017).

High agency intensity, in the same manner of opacity, can significantly impact business participation in environmental sustainability, potentially jeopardizing market viability and success. Our study found that despite their interest and awareness of environmentally sustainable practices, immigrant entrepreneurs faced substantial obstacles trying to implement environmental sustainability. Further, we found that the current economic downturn has led to an increased sensitivity among consumers and businesses toward spending resources. This has resulted in a higher agency-intensity needed to activate external enablers for environmentally sustainable practices.

To increased agency-intensity, in terms of increased risks and resource use, immigrants are more sensitive than natives, which hinders the activation of external enabler mechanisms for sustainability. This may result in compromised well-being and competitiveness of immigrant entrepreneurs in the market.

4.2.3 Enforcement

We introduce enforcement as an external enabler mechanism cross-function, suggesting that the level of enforcement creates another reason why actors have a different ability to identify and derive benefits of external enabler mechanisms for environmental sustainability. The level of enforcement refers to the extent to which external changes are imposed on agents, on the scale of voluntary to compulsion, to promote the exploitation of external enabler mechanisms.

We have presented two opposing levels of enforcement; on the one hand, we found the overarching voluntary nature of exploiting external enabler mechanisms in some businesses, while in others, enforcement by other institutions, partners, or unavoidable external changes, such as supply and natural-environmental. These findings are consistent with previous studies which categorize ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors as motivations for environmental sustainability activities in small businesses (Revell et al., 2009). Where ‘pull’ factors stem from recognizing beneficial factors and initiating external enabler mechanisms, sometimes driven by personal values, and ‘push’ factors come from enforcement, for example, through legislations or

monetary incentives (Revell et al., 2009). The literature on the topic has mainly focused on how large firms get affected by such ‘push’ forces (e.g., Kacperczyk, 2019; Luo et al., 2021). While Worthington et al. (2006) study on small immigrant business sustainability attitudes found that external influences had minimal power in shaping organizational activities. Uniquely, this study finds that external entities and unavoidable changes also have significant power over smaller businesses, including immigrant entrepreneurs, and force compulsory adoption of sustainable practices. The difference in findings could be attributed to the intensification of regulations and pressures for sustainability in recent years.

Furthermore, the study suggests that in some cases, external pressure to adopt sustainable practices is inevitable for small businesses looking to expand their operations by partnering with larger organizations or joining work unions. Previous studies have also highlighted the high impact of sector-specific networks and regulations in fostering environmental sustainability (Campbell, 2007; Revell et al., 2010). Therefore, entrepreneurs cannot achieve significant growth and long-term financial sustainability in the current business environment without embracing environmentally sustainable practices. As such, enforcement entails that every company may eventually be forced to adopt sustainable practices to stay afloat, whether directly through government or partner institutions or indirectly through changes in supply and demand in the business environment. Additionally, findings highlight that, like construction company in our sample, industries with a significant environmental impact will likely feel the effects of enforcement first; however, other industries are also not immune to enforcement.

The study further underscores the importance of developing strategies for businesses to adapt to external pressures before they are enforced and proactively integrate sustainability into their operations. In this case, voluntary engagement can help to overcome the big adaptation gap that comes with enforcement when businesses are forced to adapt quickly to new requirements. Moreover, sustainability proactiveness is especially relevant for immigrants, who react slower to market changes and implement adjustments in their businesses (Szkudlarek & Wu, 2014).

Further, the study suggests that when external enablers are enforced on entrepreneurs, activating external enabler mechanisms is less resource and time intensive. As enforcing institutions provide specific guidelines tailored to the company's needs and offer a more efficient way for the company to engage in sustainable practices or more limited choices (in

terms of supply) are given. Consequently, the company saves time, resources, and effort that would have been used to seek specialized knowledge and initiate sustainability practices. Furthermore, the guidelines reduce the risk of working with inefficient products or losing clients. Risk reduction results from receiving legitimate information tested and filtered by the institutions, making them more reliable than knowledge obtained elsewhere. As a result, companies are more likely to adopt sustainable activities when enforced by governmental institutions, contributing to sustainable development and businesses gaining benefits from external enabler mechanisms. While regulations are sometimes be considered inefficient as environmental degradation persists (York & Venkataraman, 2010), these findings underscore the importance of governmental institutions in promoting sustainable development and the role they can play in enabling businesses, including small immigrant businesses, to engage in sustainable practices. However, other studies have highlighted that enforced regulations on small businesses might limit their more strategic approach to moving to sustainability instead encouraging a reactive approach with ad hoc measures (Revell, 2010). Overall, the study suggests that institutional actors and regulations can positively influence immigrant businesses in the pursuit of environmental sustainability by narrowing the gap in knowledge of external enablers between immigrant and native businesses, lowering agency-intensity, and, subsequently, fostering sustainable development and immigrant inclusion in the market.

5 Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the empirical findings concerning the contribution to the existing literature, further providing limitations, recommendations for studies and, practical implications.

By integrating external enablers and immigrant entrepreneurship research, the study aimed to investigate the role of ‘external enablement opacity and agency-intensity’ in facilitating environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities among immigrant entrepreneurs. The data analysis of qualitative multiple-case studies discovered three external enabler mechanism cross-functions concerning their influence on immigrants’ ability to initiate environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities. The cross-functions uncovered are opacity, agency-intensity, and enforcement. Our findings further highlighted how the cross-functions of mechanisms and immigrant-specific barriers could be detrimental to immigrants’ ability to leverage external enabler mechanisms for environmental sustainability and affect immigrant entrepreneur competitiveness. Through our research, we contribute to external enabler framework and immigrant entrepreneurship research.

5.1 Contributions to External Enabler Framework

The analysis of immigrant entrepreneur ventures constitutes a valuable addition to the external enabler framework by examining the unfolding of agency-intensity and opacity and the process of external enabler initiation concerning environmental sustainability. This research addresses a significant gap in the existing literature on external enablers, necessitating further investigation, particularly at the level of agents and ventures (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). Our findings align with the proposition made by Davidsson et al. (2020) that the mere presence of external enablers and enabling mechanisms does not guarantee their activation and successful utilization. Instead, agents often play a pivotal role in deliberately activating beneficial mechanisms. The framework currently primarily focuses on what enablers can do and how, specifying types, roles, and mechanisms on external enablers (Davidsson, 2015; Davidsson et al., 2020; Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). However, we suggest that the framework and subsequent research more heavily emphasize the strategically significant divergence in opacity and agency-intensity, as these factors give rise to significant variations among actors and ventures. By elucidating the detrimental effects of such variations on entrepreneurial

activities, we underscore the importance of generating actionable knowledge that specifically addresses agent-specific differences (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022).

Moreover, our study sheds light on the critical need for future research on external enablers to focus on disadvantaged entrepreneurs, intending to evolve the approach to entrepreneurship to be more inclusive and up-to-date. Recognizing the significance of these entrepreneurs within the broader entrepreneurial landscape, they assume a particularly vital role during societal and technological change, thus presenting a fruitful avenue for future investigations (Kloosterman, 2010; Maalaoui et al., 2020).

Moreover, our study diverges from the standard practice observed in other studies by not restricting external changes to a singular aggregate change (Davidsson et al., 2020; Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). Instead, focusing on investigating the interactions between various external factors offers a more nuanced understanding of their influence on entrepreneurial action (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). For instance, we found that natural-environmental climate change contributed to regulation changes, highlighting the combined and influential nature of external changes on one another. This underscores the significance of external enablers in future research to move beyond examining isolated types of change and exploring unique interrelations among external factors. Subsequently, researchers would contribute to developing the theoretical framework (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022).

The overarching contribution of our analysis to the external enabler framework is the introduction of enforcement as a novel cross-function of external enabler mechanisms, resulting in variance among ventures in their ability to foresee and realize external enabler mechanisms. The concept of enforcement is not groundbreaking in itself and has been extensively studied within the institutional theory, including when explaining the variance in engagement with environmental sustainability (Campbell, 2007). Although Davidsson et al. (2020) draw on institutional theory to support some external enablers, they also express reservations and criticize the theory for its perceived constraints. However, we recommend that researchers integrate insights from institutional theory to explain not only external enablers but also the variations in exploitation potential between agents. It is possible that the skepticism surrounding institutional theory may have led to the inadvertent oversight of valuable insights developed by researchers over the decades. For instance, Chalmers et al. (2021) have also advocated for integrating institutional theory within the external enabler framework to examine how institutions shape external enablers. Incorporating insights from institutional or other

theories into the external enabler framework holds promise for future research, as it can reveal additional cross-functions that enable or hinder the exploitation of external enablers in different types of ventures operating in various industries. By bridging the gap between institutional theory and the external enabler framework, perhaps through a comprehensive review of the literature of applications of institutional theory, researchers could enrich their understanding of how external enablers are influenced by and interact with institutional factors and thereby enhance framework's practical applicability in diverse entrepreneurial contexts.

5.2 Contributions to immigrant entrepreneurship research

Applying the external enabler framework to immigrant entrepreneurs and environmental sustainability provides valuable insights into the field. Firstly, by drawing upon the external enabler framework derived from general entrepreneurship literature, our study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of immigrant entrepreneur's position compared to native entrepreneurs within general entrepreneurship models (Dabić et al., 2020). Although previously unused for immigrants, this framework yielded fruitful results by distancing itself from the commonly discussed social and cultural factors while integrating the often-overlooked demand side of 'opportunity' structures (Kloosterman, 2010). As a result, we recommend that future research further explores and applies this framework from various perspectives and in different contexts. This will deepen the theoretical understanding of the immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon and generate strategically valuable knowledge for researchers, managers, and policymakers.

Secondly, our study contributes to the literature by examining immigrants' relationship to barriers in environmental sustainability activities, an area largely neglected in the immigrant literature (Dabić et al., 2020). Despite its growing size, we argue that the lack of emphasis on sustainability within the field of immigrant entrepreneurship prevents the evolution of research in line with current trends. We illustrated that processes of sustainable entrepreneurship vary between immigrants and the general population. Thus, a stronger focus on sustainability thus would yield fruitful results and enhance our understanding of the contemporary challenges immigrants face, rather than the field's current over-concentration on topics and details that may not be crucial (Dabić et al., 2020).

Lastly, our study contributes to confirming the propositions put forth by other researchers that immigrant 'opportunity' structures are evolving with the emergence of new external enablers, such as technological or socio-demographic change (Gurău et al., 2020; Jones et al.,

2014; Kloosterman, 2010). Our empirical finding, thus, points out that the structure of how immigrant entrepreneurship emerges is shaped and organized to be different than previously examined (Dabić et al., 2020; Gurău et al., 2020). Due to the emergence of external enablers, immigrants may face fewer constraints than previously believed, which calls for future studies, for instance, investigating how various external changes, such as globalization and digitalization, have impacted the unfolding of immigrant entrepreneurship, or examining how various types of immigrant entrepreneurs are impacted, especially groups that were previously considered more advantaged, such as transnational entrepreneurs (Dabić et al., 2020), or more disadvantaged, such as refugees (Harima, 2022; Maalaoui et al., 2020; Senthanar et al., 2021). Such studies could inform the theoretical emergence of new experiences and structures that were non-existent before, deepening the understanding of complexities within immigrant entrepreneurship and informing policy decisions.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Our study is subject to several limitations that should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the use of a small sample size limits the generalizability of our findings to broader populations, and it cannot guarantee that data saturation has been achieved. Despite the limitations associated with our small sample size, we believe that our study yielded valuable results. Additionally, the research was conducted in a specific geographic location and focused on a particular nationality and business size, further restricting its generalizability. Therefore, readers must critically evaluate whether the outcomes can be applied to other contexts. Yet, to enhance the replicability of the study, we provided transparency regarding underlying assumptions, context, and research design. Furthermore, relying solely on qualitative data diminishes the generalizability of the findings, as it does not allow for definitive conclusions. Hence, future studies should explore whether similar findings hold in different contexts and employ quantitative methods to confirm or refute our findings more confidently.

Moreover, the primary use of semi-structured interviews in our study means that we rely on post-hoc data, which may lead to partial inaccuracies or subjectivity in participants' recollections. For instance, the interviewer's questioning style or tone might have unintentionally influenced participants' responses, while participants themselves may have exhibited various biases. Social desirability bias, where participants tend to provide socially acceptable responses (Dalton & Ortegren, 2011), and confirmation bias, where participants validate their pre-existing attitudes or beliefs, are potential concerns (Yin et al., 2016).

Although we employed techniques to minimize investigative bias, it is challenging to completely avoid biases inherent to both participants and investigators. The use of alternative methodologies, such as longitudinal studies that involve real-time data collection over an extended period, could be explored in future research to mitigate participant biases. Yet, multiple case study particularly suitable for analogous studies and theory-building, enabled us to delve deeply into the subject matter and generate in-depth insights. Nonetheless, using diverse data source, with less reliance on interviews, would enhance the robustness of the findings in future studies.

Lastly, our research predominantly focuses on environmental sustainability, neglecting the importance of social and economic sustainability. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of sustainability activities, it is crucial to consider all dimensions – environmental, social, and economic. Future studies would be fruitful in exploring how the same principles manifest in other sustainability areas or across all sustainability areas, as well as exploring the trade-offs that arise in the process.

5.4 Practical implications

Our research has significant practical implications for immigrant entrepreneurs and other stakeholders concerned with sustainable development and immigrant integration. Firstly, despite facing apparent disadvantages, immigrants possess distinct advantages for engaging in environmental sustainability, such as accessing native sources and displaying personal tenacity. In light of this, we recommend that immigrant entrepreneurs actively participate in industrial unions, invest in business networking, and cultivate persistence. These practices not only serve as beneficial for engaging in environmental sustainability but also, through external enabler mechanisms, can have the potential to enhance immigrant venture competitiveness, contribute to integration into the host society, and foster sustainable development for the benefit of the planet and people.

Secondly, addressing the lack of resources and information available to immigrants who wish to engage in environmental sustainability is crucial, especially as immigrants already possess internal motivation. Further, immigrant entrepreneurship is one of the most important forces behind local economic development (Kushnirovich et al., 2018). Therefore, industry associations, governments, and other immigrant-supporting institutions should carefully consider how immigrants can access these resources, particularly considering the marginal costs associated with their provision and the potential high impact they can have. For instance,

based on feedback from entrepreneurs, we have identified the need for publishing condensed industry-specific information regarding changes in the business environment concerning sustainability. Such resources would greatly assist immigrants in actively participating, or considering participating, in environmental sustainability efforts. Moreover, implementing these measures can lead to various positive outcomes, including increased movement towards sustainable development, improved immigrant integration into host country markets, and enhanced well-being – critical strategic directions of governmental institutions.

Finally, the study suggests that in light of the current economic downturn, collaboration among immigrant entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders becomes even more critical. Increasing agency-intensity needed to activate external enablers posed by the economic climate, is creating risks for global sustainability goals, these groups can overcome barriers and develop strategies, partnerships, and innovations to address immigrant entrepreneurs' unique challenges.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the main findings and contributions of the study.

The study aimed to investigate the role of external enabler opacity and agency intensity in facilitating environmentally sustainable activities in immigrant ventures through a combination of immigrant entrepreneurship, environmental entrepreneurship, and external enabler research. Our findings indicate that low opacity and high agency-intensity of external enablers can significantly limit the involvement of immigrant ventures in environmental sustainability efforts. Specific barriers faced by immigrant entrepreneurs further compound these limitations. Importantly, this limited engagement can result in immigrants' inability to effectively utilize external enabler mechanisms, which, in turn, can lead to decreased competitiveness in the market and missed opportunities for business development and access to resources. In addition, we introduced the novel concept of enforcement as a cross-function of external enabler mechanisms, thereby contributing to the external enabler framework. We suggested that enforcement plays a crucial role in making external enabler mechanisms more recognizable and accessible to immigrant entrepreneurs. Consequently, the enhanced accessibility and enforcement facilitate the engagement of immigrant ventures in environmentally sustainable entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, as one of the few studies to explore the intersection of immigrant entrepreneurship and sustainability, our research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of environmental sustainability within immigrant businesses. These insights pave the way for further research and practical interventions in this domain with the potential of fostering environmentally sustainable practices for immigrant businesses and the broader society.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Search terms for paper selection

External change		Sustainable activities	Immigrant	Entrepreneurship
Aggregate - level instance	Change			
External or environment* or institution* or tech* or digit* or econom* or financ* or demograph* or population or migrat* or immigrat* or emigrat* or law or leg* or regulat* or deregulat* or natural or climate or global warming or hurricane or cyclone or typhoon or eruption or tsunami or wildfire or flooding or earthquake or weather or soci* or cultur* or infrastructure or poli*	Shock or crisis or disrupt* or chang* or jolt or new or develop* or trans* or upheaval or novel or break* or shift or swing fluct* or *up* or *down* or collapse or depression or boom or recession or growth or flourish* or thriving or development or expansion or recovery or liberali* or reform* or shift* or trend or refine* or disaster or degradation or pollution or move* or advance*	sustain* or CSR or {corporate social responsibility} or responsib* or environment* or ecolog* or social* or natur* or inclusive or ethic* or SDG* or {triple bottom line} or {value creation} or {shared value} or {blended value} or green or circular* or *equality or pollution or {resource efficiency} or biobased or {life cycle assessment} or {life cycle analysis} or {life cycle analyses} or {life-cycle analysis} or {life-cycle analyses} or climate or emission* or bioeconom* OR bio-econom* or restor*)	immigr* or ethnic or migr*or emigr* or transnation* or refugee* or diaspora or minority or disadvantage	Venture or business or firm or organization* or organisation* or “start-up” or entrepreneur* or “self-employment”

Appendix 2. Journals included in systematic literature search

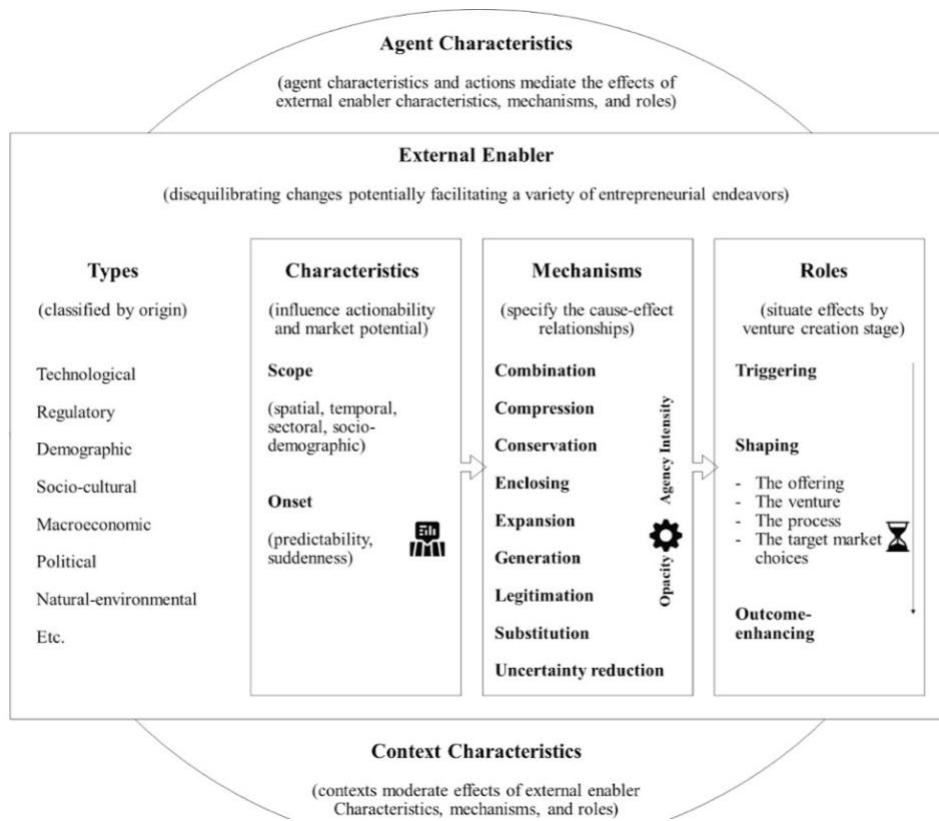
Financial times 50	Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Accounting Organizations and Society, Administrative Science Quarterly, American Economic Review, Contemporary Accounting Research, Econometrica, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Harvard Business Review, Human Relations, Human Resource Management, Information Systems Research, Journal of Accounting and Economics, Journal of Accounting Research, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Finance, Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis, Journal of Financial Economics, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Information Systems, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Operations Management, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Management Science, Manufacturing and Service Operations Management, Marketing Science, MIS Quarterly, Operations Research, Organization Science, Organization Studies, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Production and Operations Management, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Research Policy, Review of Accounting Studies, Review of Economic Studies, Review of Finance, Review of Financial Studies, and Sloan Management
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	Review, Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, Strategic Management Journal, The Accounting Review.
Top 5 entrepreneurial journals	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development, Family Business Review, International Small Business Journal, Journal of Small Business Management, Small Business Economics.
Top 12 business ethics journals	Academy of Management Annals, British Journal of Management, Business Ethics Quarterly, Academy of Management Perspectives, Business and Society, California Management Review, European Management Review, Gender and Society, Gender, Work and Organization, International Journal of Management Reviews, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Management Inquiry.

Appendix 3. Information for analysis selection criteria for literature review

<i>Opacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are immigrants affected by having/not having specialized knowledge?
<i>Agent intensity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do immigrants react to risk-taking? Are they likely to take risks? • Do immigrants have more/fewer resources (time, social, financial, etc.)? • Do immigrants have more/less imagination/originality/persistence?
<i>Immigrants and sustainable activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sustainable activities/ethics do they engage in? • What are the motives? • What do they think about it? How do they understand it?
<i>External environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are immigrants affected by various external changes? • How are immigrants affected by external forces in the home and/or the host country (institutional, political, cultural, etc.)?

Appendix 4. External Enabler of Entrepreneurship framework visualization



Appendix 5. Interview guide

<p>Technical details</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your age? 2. What is your gender? 3. What is your ethnic or racial identity? 4. What is your highest level of education completed? 5. What is your occupation or field of work? 6. In what country were you born? 7. In what country do you currently reside? 8. What language(s) do you speak at home?
<p>Business and immigrant introduction</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you shortly tell me about yourself and your migration to Sweden? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Country of origin. 1.2. Reasons for migration. 1.3. Length of stay in Sweden. 2. After moving to Sweden, when did you decide to start a business? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Age (stage) of business. 3. Can you shortly describe what your company does? 4. How many employees do you have?
<p>Environmental sustainability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does environmental sustainability mean to you?

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Does your business engage in environmental sustainability? If so, what activities are you engaging in? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. When and how did you decide to engage in these activities? 3. Compared to competitors in your industry, how environmentally sustainable do you perceive your company? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. In your experience, have you noticed any differences in that aspect compared to immigrant and native-owned businesses? 4. How engagement by businesses in environmental sustainability varies between Sweden and your home country?
Role of opacity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When it comes to environmental sustainability, did you notice any external changes occurring in the Swedish business environment that are creating business opportunities? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Do you know any laws in Sweden that support environmental sustainability? What about other supportive institutions? 1.2. Do you think that Swedish society and your customers are changing the way of looking at sustainability? (Importance of sustainability to stakeholders) 1.3. Do you know any changes in the natural environment (e.g., climate change, biodiversity loss) influencing business engagement in sustainability? 1.4. Do you know any technological changes creating opportunities for businesses to engage in environmental sustainability? 2. What changes did you notice specifically in your industry? 3. In general, how aware are you of solutions for environmental sustainability? 4. In your opinion, do you think you have enough knowledge about external changes pushing businesses to sustainability? If so, what knowledge would you like to have more of? 5. Do you think that you possess specific knowledge that helps you to partake in sustainability? 6. As an immigrant, do you think it is harder for you to recognize opportunities to become more sustainable? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1. Do you think other immigrants are faced with similar challenges?

<p>Role of agent-intensity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once you decided that sustainability should be part of your business, how did you go about implementing it? 2. What seemed challenging when implementing environmental sustainability? Did you encounter time, resources, or other constraints? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. How did your environmental sustainability efforts evolve over time, and what role did resource limitations play in that evolution? 2.2. Can you share an example of a time when you had to get creative in order to pursue sustainability initiatives despite resource constraints? 3. Have any specific internal resources, skills, or expertise within your organization been particularly helpful in enabling you to pursue environmental sustainability? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. How have these helpful internal resources affected your approach to sustainability? 4. What would motivate you to make your business more environmentally sustainable (in the future)? For example, more resources, higher demand, or more time on your hands. 5. Are there any opportunities concerning environmental sustainability that you were able to recognize but, however, unable to realize? If so, what are the reasons behind that?
<p>Final questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How important is environmental sustainability in your business? 2. What is the motivation behind engaging in environmental sustainability? 3. What benefits does sustainability bring to your business? 4. What recommendations would you give to other immigrants on how to successfully implement environmental sustainability in their businesses?

Appendix 6. Exemplar data representing analytical code – overarching dimension: opacity

1. Varying degrees of awareness	
Aware of major external changes for sustainability	“For example, it came to be so that they refused a lot... politically they decided to discontinue gas as an energy source, which in Sweden was used a lot, and then what happened? We live in the countryside, I walk my dog a lot and see that nobody has any timber, maybe a little for a fireplace. Now I walk my dog around the village, and I see huge mountains of timber stacked [<i>shows with hands</i>].” (Case A, Adam)
Aware of some external changes for sustainability	“When you do manufacture maybe, and you do... in the McDonalds there used to be as many straws as you want, but now you must ask. And they even ask if you actually need it. Because it is plastic. So, things must be changing.” (Case C, Robert) “Probably there are many. Because there should be many because the environment changes a lot, so it should be many. But I cannot sit here and tell you right now that I can think of one. But I should probably know one.” (Case B, Emma)
Aware of almost none of external changes for sustainability	“Maybe it is because there is a language barrier and I myself do not have such a high interest. And because my products are clean, I contribute to the environmental sustainability. But I do not do research about how I could contribute more.” (Case D, Isabella)
2. Difficulty grasping information accessible to natives	
Hard to find relevant information	“We can only achieve better results if we educate people at schools, even at work, it should be mandatory to speak with people and explain them, show them... Talking, talking, and talking... Because on your own finding information to read is not for everyone.” (Case “Very important, so I wouldn’t need to run around looking through massive amount of information. <...> I don’t have enough time to wonder and look for it...” (Case A, Nora) “I believe there is a lot of paperwork for this, I mean documents and everything, which is making the... Uh, everything harder to work on it. I think it should be... Simplify simplify side, simplified? <...> think it's about these... supposed to make it a little bit easier for us to work with this.” (Case C, Patrick)
Language barrier	“You know our Swedish reading skills are not that... You understand yourself... And they are not translating laws to Lithuanian or Russian usually.” (Case A, Adam) “I think so because first of all Swedish is not my native language for them it is easier to find information, easier to call someone and talk with them get some information, write an email, it is much easier. My Swedish language is not one hundred percent and is limited. Maybe somebody is calling to me and saying something that is relevant to me, but I just simply can’t understand.” (Case B, Lydia)
Cultural disadvantage	“Well, maybe when you come here you look around and try to learn everything. So maybe this... But Swedes, since they have been living here their whole lives... So, the difference is this.” (Case C, Robert) “But I’m thinking it’s the same thing for a Swede to be working in USA or something. We have our system and they have them system. And it take a time to get into that one.” (Case C, Kaleb)
3. Information acquired from native sources	

Most information acquired through personal networks	<p>“Then I found a place in a salon next to Swedes. And while working there I learned a lot. About how to work, and what kind of business I should open. What are the requirements, what are the requirements for hygiene, and what permits do I need.” (Case D, Isabella)</p> <p>“Well, it is different when you go to shows, where companies are promoting their products, you talk with them directly, and they show you the products, and demonstrate them. It is much simpler much better.” (Case B, Lydia)</p>
Information through digital tools (internet, TV)	<p>“There people talk, and there are discussions. It is my hobby and my work. I love my work. And live in it. Because of that I look for information everywhere. <...> I read a lot about my work.” (Case A, Nora)</p>
Help of business support services	<p>“Like external consultation... Those who are connected to the union, they are obligated to the system to gather the workers and talk about how things are run, and they are supposed to be run. What is what... How you supposed to handle bills and such things...” (Case C, Robert)</p> <p>“That kind of [<i>insurance</i>] companies will help you with the working environment. And it's not just this sustainable products. It's also the environment in total that, where you work. So yeah, that's the kind of tool that that we had been able to be in contact with.” (Case B, Emma)</p>

Appendix 7. Exemplar data representing analytical code – overarching dimension: agency-intensity

4. Unaffordable increase in operational costs	
No official funding and financial support from government for sustainability	<p>“Well, we are a family, and we share everything. It is both of our money and the only money.” (Case A, Adam)</p> <p>“There could be grants for a company for trying to be a leader in sustainability. So automatically the government could give grants... <...> So it would be a motivation... Or projects for example if you take part in projects, let's say your company is at the same level with another company then automatically they can look at the sustainability... Which one is at the higher level.” (Case C, Robert)</p>
Products are not as effective	<p>“This has to be understood, but clients refuse to do it... Refuse to give us more time to clean, but still want the same good results.” (Case B, Lydia)</p> <p>“At her job, if it is not working nobody is going to pay you.” (Case A, Adam)</p>
Using sustainable products increase service price	<p>“But the client has to understand that it will cost them more money. As I mentioned before, the price increase comes not from the ecological materials but from the time it takes to clean with those materials.” (Case B, Lydia)</p> <p>“But not everybody can afford it, because one crème costs 800-1000 crowns.” (Case D, Isabella)</p> <p>“For our side, when we do that, often we don't have a choice because the more material that is better for the environment is often it is more expensive.” (Case C, Kaleb)</p>
5. Unaffordable risk of losing clients	
Difficulty finding clients	<p>“It was planned that I will work as well, and the barbershop has space for two people. But because there is no practice and clients... You know in Sweden in the beginning you have to build up a clientele. Well, there was no... There was no possibility to start for me because unhappy client would cost us too much.” (Case A, Adam)</p>

Risk of deterring or losing clients	<p>“And her clients... And then she is forced to redo the work, or they won’t be coming back. They think that she works badly.” (Case A, Adam)</p> <p>“We have that things that are the better for the environment but that maybe cost us three thousand more to buy. And then we choose the cheaper ones because it's for the customer and for the work...” (Case C, Kaleb)</p> <p>"I talk a lot with my clients during my work, and it is very apparent that until it starts hurting their pockets, everyone is for sustainability. When environmental sustainability starts costing you, very quickly people start changing their opinion about it. This year it is especially apparent. <...> How to save money! Nobody cares how, timber or coal, as long as they can save money.” (Case A, Nora)</p>
6. Unaffordable time and resource investments	
Sustainable technologies are not affordable	<p>“When it comes to this work, everything [<i>sustainability solutions</i>] is very obvious. What is more economic or useful...It means more expensive. We are not a rich family that could invest and wait for it to pay off. We can’t afford it.” (Case A, Adam)</p> <p>“And if you think you want an ecological mop you have to pay ten times more. Then you realize you simply can’t afford it.” (Case B, Lydia)</p>
Sustainability improvements requires time investment	<p>“Maybe there are good chemicals that are environmentally friendly, but I cannot try testing everything to find out which ones. If I acquire some, I try using them as much as I can. <...> You can still find cheap products somewhere on Spain’s Amazon, but you have to constantly search and search for it.” (Case A, Nora)</p> <p>“I think everything that's happened now, it's brand new for everybody, and we are in the beginning of something, and we learn together. It's hard...” (Case C, Kaleb)</p>
Already overworking and lacking resources	<p>"She wanted to employ me but, in the beginning, there was no practice, and she was lacking help..." (Case A, Adam)</p>
7. Exceptional tenacity	
Exemplary determination and willingness to learn	<p>“But when you immigrate, you have a higher motivation to learn, because you need to know everything.” (Case C, Robert)</p> <p>“I can see as much that the guys in our company, they working very hard. They are here for just work and work and work.” (Case C, Kaleb)</p>
Appendix 8. Exemplar data representing analytical code – overarching dimension: enforcement	
8. Other institutions pushing rules and regulations	
Regulations enforced by government	<p>“Well, the company has to follow certain regulations. You can’t do things certain things... You have to take waste to the recycling centre and pay money for it, not to take it and throw it to the forest. That means that you follow regulations that come from the municipality, you do what you must, and that is it.” (Case C, Robert)</p> <p>“And I think the law came out that by the year 2035 will completely ban all the internal combustion engines. We heard that.” (Case A, Lydia)</p> <p>“You don't even get your foot in to another building, construction site without this “kolektivavtal” and this card to register. <...> But that's also a thing that the government pushes on every single company that's been working and I'm not meaning in just construction. <...> And we need to pay this, and we need to following the rules and the laws about that.” (Case C, Kaleb)</p>

Rules enforced by partners	<p>“Now we're going back to the chain again. They in their turn, have that pushes on them, to get them, more works in the future. And then for all the companies under them needs to stay as well there... So, we have the chain if you're not thinking to... if you're not have the same thinking as them have then you're out of the picture.” (Case C, Kaleb)</p> <p>“Maybe I don't really want to commit to their requirements but it is mandatory. Otherwise, you will not get any good projects.” (Case C, Robert)</p>
Rules enforced by unions and insurance companies	<p>“So that would improve every company that is connected to the Union. Improve the environment and someone also would have a job which includes going around businesses and... Well, it is similar to [<i>name of insurance company</i>], they came to us, told us how things are supposed to be now, and we must follow it.” (Case C, Robert)</p> <p>“That kind of [<i>insurance</i>] companies will help you with the working environment. And it's not just this sustainable products. It's also the environment in total that, where you work.” (Case B, Emma)</p>
9. Forced to adapt to external changes	
Uncontrollable supply and demand changes	<p>“It is not possible nowadays. No one wants to buy something that's not well, people do buy things anyway, but it's a lot in their minds. So, I think everyone has to in one way or another.” (Case B, Emma)</p> <p>“And it is because there is demand for it, many who chose it nowadays. And environmentally harmful products are disappearing.” (Case B, Lydia)</p>
Forced to adapt to environmental changes	<p>“The recent summers, the heat waves... And automatically when there is a heatwave, we change the roof and men are working on the roof, then we have to be very attentive and talk with them. Follow the rules, they have to drink water, if they feel ill, they must stop working... And automatically these heat waves are a challenge.” (Case C, Robert)</p>
10. Voluntary engagement	
Investment into future	<p>“And now I think that y'all should call that an investment, you know, to have you were there as well to take care of everything about the rules that we need to have, and the rules that we need to have from the companies that hire us, and everything around that.” (Case C, Kaleb)</p>
Doing everything you can	<p>“When it comes to obvious things there are conditions made for them, like sorting the waste, we try doing that as we have capabilities. <...> But we are small people, we cannot allow ourselves a lot. <...> When it comes to our 'small people' capabilities, we try to.... And I believe that everyone will do everything they can, the earth will be significantly cleaner.” (Case A, Nora)</p>
Following what others are doing	<p>“Everybody knows almost everything about everyone and if they choose to do something because of that and that, often the other companies used following them as well to do like that. So, for example, [<i>Competitor 1</i>] and [<i>Competitor 2</i>], they are two big companies and everybody around wants to, you know, following their leads a little bit as well and learn from their good jobs and their bad jobs.” (Case C, Kaleb)</p>