Immigrant Entrepreneurship and the path through business life.

From a causational to an effectual logic of business support.
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Abstract: This article is about immigrant entrepreneurs and their way through business life in an unfamiliar business world. Focusing on the region of Växjö, Sweden the article presents different attitudes of immigrant entrepreneurs and shows common problems and barriers. The article investigates how immigrant entrepreneurs’ deal with their daily life and what they struggled with in the past. What kind of barriers do immigrants face when they leave their home country? The overall aim is to research what support is needed in order to help regional immigrant entrepreneurs with their business. Therefore this article highlights barriers which immigrant entrepreneurs struggle with. As the regional support programs influence the path of business life the article presents their perspective as well. These supporters have a lot of experience in dealing with immigrant entrepreneurs which can be used to investigate improvements. As the most outstanding result, this article presents the importance of overall integration in the host country. The way through business life for immigrant entrepreneurs is characterized by an effectual logic but the support to entrepreneurs is often based on a causation-logic. Therefore the support givers should consider focusing on the individual entrepreneurs and the surroundings that influence the integration.

Keywords: Immigrant Entrepreneurship, Immigrant Support, Integration, Causation and Effectuation, Entrepreneur Attitudes, Network
1. Introduction

During a project work within the Master Program ‘Entrepreneurship’ the author got in touch with Alev Jackson, who is a successful entrepreneur in Växjö and the surrounding area. Växjö is a town consisting of 100,000 inhabitants and is located in the south of Sweden. Alev was born in Bulgaria and came to Sweden 26 years ago. After implementing several small companies she is now working on a project called “The Business Hotel”. Alev recognized that there is a lack of support regarding immigrant entrepreneurs. With her experiences based upon her previous success in business life she would like to help others who are in a similar position. Therefore the offered services in the business hotel focus on a support regarding business growth. Within two years of organized and structured support the business hotel promises growth in terms of an increase in sales and profit. According to Collins (2013, p.138) “immigrant entrepreneurs play a significant role in the economy and society and are thus critical to economic growth and employment creation”. Therefore Alev wants to build up the business hotel in order to support and work together with immigrant entrepreneurs in the area of Växjö. The Business Hotel will be financed in the first years by the state and the EU because this project is also of political interest and important for the local economy. Additionally, numerous services will be offered regarding bookkeeping, marketing, PR, IT/technic, coaching, mentorship, network etc.. Another advantage will be the access to the network in Växjö, PR and events through Alev. Due to her working experiences she knows how to deal with common business problems.

Through her project work as a student together with Alev, the researcher got in touch with a lot of immigrant entrepreneurs which arouse an interest for those people and their business life. To improve the business strategy of the Business Hotel, the author of this paper and Alev Jackson carried out investigation. The question guiding this investigation was: how does a two year plan for the Business Hotel look like, which supports the participating entrepreneurs? To answer that question the investigation aimed gaining more information about immigrant entrepreneurs and their companies in Växjö. The overall goal was to investigate how to improve the offered services in the Business Hotel in order to support entrepreneurs to be more productive and more successful with their business ventures in the future. As there are already a few incubators and institutions (for example Almi, Växjö Municipality and Macken) which focus on the support of start-up companies in Växjö, Alev would like to focus more on entrepreneurs who already run a business since a few years and would like to grow. Behind the concept of these kinds of state financed support programs is the basic idea that newcomers get help with
their business ventures regarding marketing, communication, government, finances etc., in order to gain a foothold in business. Usually these supporting institutions are owned by the government because it is also of their interest that regional business is working well. Collins (2003, p. 147) conclude that there often are policy initiatives on national level regarding immigrant entrepreneurship promotion, but on the other hand “the policy response to immigrant entrepreneurship […] has been very underdeveloped. Much more research is needed into the way in which direct and indirect policies at different levels of government - and their different levels of enforcement - currently impact on immigrant minority entrepreneurs”. Also Alev Jackson discovered that there is still a lack of support in this area, regarding immigrant entrepreneurs and business growth. In the eyes of Alev Jackson some companies, especially entrepreneurs with immigrant background can get problems regarding growth, after a few years in business.

During this research process it was investigate that there are several common issues, which immigrant entrepreneurs in particular have to deal with. At that point the general phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurs arises. Due to the reason “that strategies designed specifically for immigrant entrepreneurs may well be more effective than general policies that hope that immigrant entrepreneurs will be caught up in the general policy net” (Collins, 2003, p.148) the author of this paper decided to investigate what can be done in order to support immigrant entrepreneurs. Based on that the author would like to have a local perspective the research approach is limited to a regional sample of Växjö. Since there are few investigations on a local level the researcher decided to highlight the micro level of the phenomenon. Within this research work it will be clarified how the business path of these immigrant entrepreneurs looks like and what kind of experiences they gained during their way. What do entrepreneurs, especially immigrants, need regarding their business life? What are they struggling with on their way? The author would like to emphasize common issues and restrictions in order to understand what is important to focus on regarding business support. Due to that reason the author presents the perspective of the support programs as well.

1.1. Research Aim and Objectives

This article focuses on the problems of immigrants and their path towards self-employment. As stated by Collins (2003, p. 139) “research on immigrant entrepreneurship shows that there is an increasing diversity of the paths that new immigrants take to entrepreneurship: unemployment, manual labor, professional labour (doctors, etc.), corporate primary sector jobs (glass and accent
ceiling) and business migrants (rich migrants who are already established as entrepreneurs)”.

Due to that reason the overall aim of this article is to investigate attitudes of immigrant entrepreneurs and what kind of support could be provided, so that they can deal with the future of their companies successfully. Therefore it is necessary to get to know and understand affected entrepreneurs and their problems, in order to find the appropriate support. Likewise it is important to investigate what goals and objectives they have for their business future. Do immigrant entrepreneurs struggle with other issues than native entrepreneurs? The author investigates potential hurdles and the complexity of business for. Due to the reason that regional support programs usually influence the business path and in order to gain a broader view, the author decided to include not only the experiences of the entrepreneurs themselves but to look at the support perspective as well.

2. Immigrant Entrepreneurs: What Do We Know?

This section presents a literature review in order to explore the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurs based on secondary data. What did the people experience, who are already supporting immigrant entrepreneurs? Therefore the first section presents a detailed insight about immigrant entrepreneurs and their experiences of business life in a different country followed by literature focusing on the support perspective.

In order to get to know the affected group, some general information like common characteristics and hurdles are presented, including different aspects and perspectives. Around 20 percent of the Swedish population has an immigrant background (Statistics Sweden Population, 2014). For some it is quite hard to find a job, therefore they decide to create their own business. Looking at all newcomers in Sweden, there are 20 percent of startup immigrant entrepreneurs (IFS, 2013). This number is quite high and the authors Abbasian and Yazdanfar (2014) assume that immigrant entrepreneurs are more daring compared to native-born people. These people are in a way forced in their decision to become an entrepreneur, because there is no other way to earn money (Ibid.). Therefore they are called ‘necessity entrepreneurs’ (Ibid.). The rare job offer for immigrants presses the immigrants in a very unpleasant situation (Ibid.). On the contrary, native born people learn the expected education, speak the language, know the culture and are aware of the system due to ages of application (Ibid.). For immigrants usually these attitudes are new, uncertain and don’t exist, therefore it is hard for them to integrate and to be accepted (Ibid.).
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They have to find other ways to feed their families (Abbasian & Yazdanfar, 2014). Moreover the probability to be an entrepreneur increases with the age and the level of education (Kim, 2007). Hjerm (2004) investigated why immigrants become entrepreneurs instead of being employed. Maybe entrepreneurship is a way of integration for immigrants? Can entrepreneurship be the most profitable decision for those people? Hjerm compared for example the income of an immigrant entrepreneur and an employed immigrant. It has been determined, that the income of an immigrant entrepreneur is a lot lower and that they only have a bit more earnings than unemployed persons (Ibid.). According to Hjerm (2004, p.740) “the risks for newcomers to end up in economic deprivation will be lesser, but the risk of not being able to access the labour market will be apparent. The extensive welfare state protects immigrants through redistribution of income even though access to the labour market is denied. All in all, it is clear that immigrants will face different problems depending on the type of welfare state that is implemented in the country of arrival”. Finally he suggests that the way of entrepreneurship seems to be more profitable (Ibid.). Due to the responsibility for the family one cannot take a risk to get fired one day (Ibid.). Therefore some people, whether they are native born or immigrants, choose the way of self-employment in order to be independent and free (Hjerm, 2004).

The phenomenon of Immigrant Entrepreneurs is an important political topic. Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013) highlight the immigrant entrepreneurship literatures focusing on what has already been researched and what kind of trends have developed. They investigate that immigrants are more interested to go to regions which are specifically demographic attractive and are located in the “metropolitan agglomerations of the developed world” (Ibid. p.819). Moreover Europe has become more and more attractive for immigrants. Consequently “it is noteworthy that immigrant entrepreneurship field of research has a wide variety of studies contributing in the understanding of this phenomenon” (Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013, p. 840). Therefore one can see the complexity of this topic and that this fact underlines the necessity that all countries should investigate the support of immigrant entrepreneurs.

Kloostermann and Rath (2010) discovered that it is important for immigrant entrepreneurs to offer them an easier way into the labor market. They screened several markets to investigate opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs. They looked at three markets: the neighborhood level; the regional/urban level and the national level. But in each level the opportunities are dependent to the individual situations. Especially regarding immigrant entrepreneurship it is essential to
offer enough opportunities. They have to be accessible in an easy way and be able to generate a sufficient income. (Kloosterman & Rath, 2010).

Abbasian and Yazdanfar (2014) investigated immigrant entrepreneurs and their attitudes, differentiated in characteristics of immigrant and native-born entrepreneur. Immigrant entrepreneurs need more help and support, therefore they use the option to participate in state financed support programs more often. Compared to native-born entrepreneurs, the immigrant entrepreneurs have to manage a bigger challenge, because of for example the language and culture. Overall, no matter if native-born or immigrant, more business administration is always good and may also increase the chance of business survival and growth. But on the other hand, a failure of business does not mean the end of life, it is a chance to stand up again and learn from the mistakes (Abbasian & Yazdanfar, 2014).

Batista and Umblijs (2014) researched common attitudes of immigrant entrepreneurs. They investigate what kind of motives immigrants have to become an entrepreneur and how important the attitude of risk taking is. The authors wanted to go deeper into the “relationship between risk aversion and entrepreneurship, looking specifically at a migrant population […] and the results suggest a positive relationship between the willingness to take risks and being an entrepreneur” (Ibid. p.8). Figure 1 presents the relationship between age and willingness to take risks measure regarding immigrant entrepreneurs. Additionally they discovered that the Visa benefits from several countries are quite attractive for immigrants regarding their economy. In conclusion it can be said that that immigrants are prepared to take a higher risk when conducting an entrepreneurial venture (Batista & Umblijs, 2014).

Another point is immigrants and their actual reasons to become an entrepreneur. Baptista, Karaöz and Mendonc (2013) differentiate between the necessity and opportunity driven entrepreneurs. Among other things necessity driven entrepreneurs operate as entrepreneurs because they have no other chance. For them it is hard to find a job and instead of being
unemployed they start their own business. They are most of the time less interested in business growth, on the contrary to opportunity driven entrepreneurs. These people decided to become self-employed because they have a vision and work continuously one realizing it (Baptista et al., 2013).

Carbonell, Hernandez and García (2011) focus thereby on the influences of education regarding self-employment. The authors discuss several common and important characteristics. In conclusion the level of education is in fact depending on the type of business. Furthermore, education is an important and effective point when it comes to successful business. Turnover as well is depending on the level of education, hence it can be specified that education is an important factor when it comes to efficient business (Carbonell, et al., 2011).

Lei and Chen (2014) investigated several barriers and ethnical belongings of immigrant entrepreneurs. They discuss what kind of experiences and opportunities immigrant people have in Sweden and analyze the associated impact of cultural differences. Barriers are for example age, gender, language, educational background, family and environment (Ibid.). Without the support and understanding of the family, such a step can be really hard. Additionally cultural differences, complex tax systems, social integration and homesickness can become a significant hinder to survive in a different country (Ibid.). But on the contrary, these barriers can be seen as opportunity as well. New cultures can make a market more attractive, so with the input of immigrant entrepreneurs the numbers of opportunities increase. Especially in Sweden, the tolerance for unusual behavior and different cultures is very high, consequently discrimination is very low (Ibid.). Cultural difference should not be seen as a barrier but rather as a great opportunity for everyone (Lei & Chen, 2014). In summary, immigrants usually have a reason to leave a country and therefore look for a region which is attractive regarding support and general lifestyle. Several barriers make their life and the entry into the market even harder than it is for natives who already live in the country. In general immigrant entrepreneurs are prepared to take a higher risk but nevertheless one should consider that each immigrant is different. This fact makes it impossible to put all immigrant entrepreneurs in the same bucket.

3. Support System: What Do We Know?

The researcher also considers the support perspective because they are also influencing the path of business life. According to de Vriesa (2015) it is essential to understand the overall impact of immigrants. The engagement and the beliefs are part of the immigrant ethnic minority
entrepreneurship. Furthermore the understanding of these factors are important “although the degree of importance and the influence of engagement and beliefs vary significantly at different stages of the entrepreneurial process” (Ibid., p. 78). Specific beliefs, backgrounds, experiences and surroundings do have an impact on the entrepreneurial actions and decisions. The understanding of these relations is significant in order to support these people in a right way (Ibid.). “The relevance of expanding our understanding of entrepreneurial research is highlighted by an ever increasingly global economy, where there are greater movements of products, services and labor worldwide” (de Vriesa, 2015, p. 72).

Continuing with the support offers in Växjö, there are a lot of institutions which help newcomers to establish themselves in the business world. Most of the time, these companies are owned by the government because it is also of their interest that regional business works well. The overall aim of the provided service is to supervise and support the entrepreneurs in questions regarding for example problems of marketing, communication, government, finances and so on.

One of the institutions is Almi in Växjö, which is owned by the Swedish government and is one of 40 offices across Sweden. Almi is interested in the welfare of immigrant entrepreneurs and would like to support their economic advancement. They think that success needs more than a strong will and a good business concept. Almi takes care of every new project no matter if the entrepreneur wants to develop a new product or service, launch a new business or enter a new market. Therefore they offer advisory services, financial support and teach management skills. Experienced mentors, advisors and consultants give advice to improve performance in a better way and try to develop new business goals and vision. The basic factor for entrepreneurs is to understand the language, culture and business environment in Sweden (Almi Företagspartner, 2015).

Another place to go for immigrant entrepreneurs is Växjö Municipality. They advertise that “Växjö is an exciting combination of idyllic small town, university town and center of entertainment - a strong regional center in the middle of the south of Sweden” (Växjö Kommun, 2014). Additionally the location of the town is in the center of Småland where the east, west and south coast are easy to reach. With these geographical advantages Växjö Municipality advertises that this is a good place for business. Furthermore Växjö is the location of 7,000 companies which are mixed in nationality, size and branch. They offer help regarding expansion and development and provide information about establishments, land, vacant buildings etc. With their support they would like to help entrepreneurs to get a foothold in the industry of the
municipality. Especially with their broad range of contacts they are able to connect organizations which can be useful for each other (Växjö Kommun, 2014).

Many immigrant entrepreneurs get support from Macken, which is a Local NGO (non-governmental organization) concentrating only on startup companies. They take care of people in a precarious social position and support them with several services. For instance they offer courses regarding general business topics like organization, marketing, and bookkeeping in order to increase the education of the entrepreneurs. Furthermore they offer language courses like “Swedish For Immigrants” (SFI), which is essential to do business in Sweden. Additionally they help to finance the start-up and take care of general problems, which come up when starting a business. Furthermore Macken is known for working with psycho-social support (social networking, mentoring, coaching, etc) and they organize little street markets where the learned theory can be applied (Macken Företagscenter, 2015).

Another research contribution is made by Collins (2003) who focuses on the policy response to immigrant entrepreneurs. Therefore Collins (2003) divides his outcomes into two levels, the macro and micro viewpoint. The macro level focuses on the settlement policy and taxation policy whereas the micro level addresses policy development regarding education, training and needs of ethnic entrepreneurs. In other words the micro level includes policies which are designed to attract unemployed immigrants in order to become self-employed and government strategies create to increase communication with ethnic entrepreneurs. The article presents that there are some policy initiatives regarding immigrant entrepreneurship promotion but on the other hand Collins (2003) investigates that there is a lot more to research about this topic in order to offer beneficial support. Furthermore the research shows that the policy should consider the diversity of paths of immigrant entrepreneurship and not focus on a general solution.

The authors Högberg et al. (2014) demonstrate that support institutions should not try to categories or even label immigrant entrepreneurs. In their eyes each immigrant entrepreneurs is an individual who needs individual support. According to them research support programs tend to automatically categories immigrants in order to simplify work. The authors mentioned that this action can cause damage for the individual.

To summarize this parte it can be specified that due to economic and political reasons Växjö should invest in the analysis of immigrant entrepreneurial beliefs and actions.
4. Applied Methodology: Going Deeper By Using Own Research.

With regard to the collected primary data the following section will outline the different research methods used for the dissertation at hand. Due to the cooperation with Alev Jackson and her business hotel one can say that the research approach is based on a practical project. The research process therefore starts with a concrete problem which is a feature of Engaged Scholarship. This form is a kind of inquiry in which the researcher includes other perspectives in order to learn more about the overall problem (van de Ven, 2008). This involvement allows negotiations and collaborations to achieve a learning atmosphere (Ibid.). Furthermore it includes studies regarding difficult problems with other practitioners and/or stakeholders. In the eyes of van de Ven (2008, p. 265) “Engaged scholarship is defined as a participative form of research for obtaining the different perspectives of key stakeholders (researchers, users, clients, sponsors, and practitioners) in studying complex problems. By involving others and leveraging their different kinds of knowledge, engaged scholarship can produce knowledge that is more insightful than when scholars or practitioners work on the problem alone”. Therefore the author of this paper involves several statements from specialists which influence the research process.

Another methodological choice which is necessary to take is whether you keep an eye on a quantitative or qualitative methods research design (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Since this article generally is based on a social constructivism perspective and the data collection involves interviews, the approach is qualitative. In contrary to a quantitative design one is able to include interpretations based on a combination of researcher perspective and data collected (Saunders et al., 2012).

Furthermore Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that the structure of this article reasons from a general viewpoint to a specific case study, which starts by collecting relevant data. Once an extensive sum of data has been collected, the researcher is able to present a bird’s eye view of the data (Ibid.). Afterwards the implementation of interviews starts in order to gain particular experiences. The collected data is qualitative based and the meaning of human affection to events is targeted to be explored (Ibid.). Therefore one can say that this article begins with an expected pattern which is later tested by several interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The nature of a research design can either be exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or a combination of all (Saunders et al., 2012). In the case of this particular study the qualitative research design of an exploratory nature will be used for the purpose of the thesis and to
understand the issue. Exploratory studies aim to gain an insight into research areas which have not yet been investigated or only rarely (Ibid.).

In this case, immigrant entrepreneurship has been investigated quite a lot, but few studies have been made in a local or micro level. By applying this method the researcher has the opportunity to get an appropriate understanding of the problem and its environment (Ibid.). A literature review and interviews are typical instruments used for an exploratory design (Saunders et al., 2012).

As the researcher is using as a qualitative approach several interviews have been conducted (Wübbenhorst, 2015). An interview can be described a conversation between a questioner (interviewer) and the respondent/s where questions are asked to elicit facts or statements (Ibid.). The overall aim of an interview is to identify the perspectives, beliefs, motions and experiences of individual persons. This method provides, in contrary to others, a deeper inside of the phenomena. On the contrary to surveys, interviews are more open and allow new thoughts in order to gain different perspectives (Wübbenhorst, 2015). Furthermore interviews are appropriate because little things are already known about the phenomenon whereas detailed insights from individual and affected participants are still necessary to collect (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In the eyes of the researcher, semi-structured interviews are the best choice regarding the research field. This method is usually used in the social sciences and allows open questions, which bring new ideas and broaden up the interview (Ibid.). As common, the researcher prepared a questionnaire framework in order to gain a kind of structure and to follow a red line during the interviews. Unlike the usual frameworks semi structured interviewing starts with more general questions regarding personal features like age, gender and family background (Ibid.). Afterwards relevant themes are identified and possible relationship between these themes and the overall concerns become the foundation for more precise questions which do not need to be prepared in advance (Ibid.). As a result, the majority of questions are created during the interview, allowing the interviewer and the respondent the opportunity to explore further details or discussions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). With regard to the overall handling the researcher started by contacting potential interviewees via Email and telephone. With a short summary of the research work and background the researcher asked for participation. After a positive response the researcher met the respondents personally starting by introducing themselves and talking about the overall aim of the interview. Once the researcher got the permission to record the interview started. On average the interviews lasted one hour while the researcher took some notes at the same time.
Afterwards the outcomes have been summarized and analyzed. All in all, the researcher interviewed the following ten immigrant entrepreneurs and one Swedish entrepreneur in order to compare similar attitudes and problems and to gain insight details about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the respondents. The names of the respondents have been anonymized throughout the text.

- Rabea Samet, Restaurant
- Amun Said, Travel Agency
- Matej Novak, Decorator
- Benicio Gonzalez, Elder Care
- Ahmad al-Hamid, Fruit Shop
- Sven Olson, Web Design (Swede)
- Lee Kumpai, Cleaning Service
- Eduardo Nilsson, Pet Shop
- Juan Rodriguez, Consultant
- Dorina Hansson, Consultant
- Alev Jackson, Consultant

Due to the reason that the researcher explores the entrepreneurs’ perspective and the support perspective, the researcher additionally interviewed people representing the support programs. The following three representatives have been interviewed:

- Gustav Karlsson, Växjö Municipality
- Viktor Olsson, Macken
- Isabelle Andersson, Almi

Regarding this research works there are limitations as well. As the target group is only focusing on some immigrant entrepreneurs of Växjö, this approach is limited to a regional sample. Other outcomes could be gained, if one includes a broader range of samples. For further research it could be interesting what immigrant entrepreneurs of other Swedish parts experienced or even other countries.

With the focus on the empirical sampling the author decided to use a narrative interpretation. The narrative interpretation is for this case suitable because the researcher used several interviews, which are seen as conversations (Riessmann, 2008). According to Bryman and Bell (2011) this type of empirical sampling helps to gain an understanding for a certain problem or situation and focus on a presentation of real-world events in a story telling way. Moreover it allows the researcher to interpret and to create a connection to the theoretical framework; hence
it is defined as an explanation or interpretation of happenings in accordance with a certain point of view or theory (Mcniff, 2013).

5. Empirical Research & Outcomes: What Has Been Researched?

In order to gain a view on the current situation in Växjö, the author of this paper interviewed several different persons. With regard to the entrepreneur perspective it can be said that they all have different backgrounds, which influence the way of business life a lot.

Starting with Rabea, a 55 year old woman, who was born in Lebanon and came to Sweden 15 years ago because of her Swedish husband. She became an entrepreneur because she could not find a job in Sweden since her education was not accepted. In order to not stay at home she started working in a little café where she learned a lot about management. She recognized that speaking Swedish was helpful for the business life and therefore she got to know the support programs Almi and Macken. At Macken she attended several courses regarding management and after a while she started her own business, a Lebanese restaurant in the Kulturparken in Växjö. One could feel that Rabea is absolutely happy to be independent and she was thankful for the help of the support companies but also for the support of her family.

Lee, a 49 year old Thai, came to Sweden 16 years ago because she fell in love as well. In Sweden she could not find a job in her branch as chef, consequently she took some little cleaning job and one day she decided to start her own cleaning business. With the help from her husband and the support program Macken she was able to build up her own business and earn enough money in order to survive. For the reason that she gets older she plans to start another business, which is not physically demanding. She never thought about searching for a job again because she feels free as an entrepreneur and is happy to live in Sweden.

A similar example represents Matej, a 32 years old Chechen, who had to leave his home country because of war. After years of waiting for the right of residence he could finally increase his education, due to the reason that he could not find a job and thus he got in contact with Macken. On the contrary to the other two Rabea and Lee, Matej still has some problems to be break-even but he just started his business as decorator one year ago.

Ahmad is 28 years old, came from Yemen to Sweden 12 years ago, at the age of 16. He completed high school in Sweden and speaks Swedish fluently. But still he had a tough start in business, as he could only find a job in a supermarket. After some years he had family plans and therefore he decided to change something in his life and started to build up his own company.
With some support from the Växjö Municipality he started a fruit delivery service, which is running quite well. Although Ahmad is the owner of his fruit shop he is not acting as an entrepreneur, he acts as supplier. He mentioned that due to his skin color, Swedes feel hesitant to interact with him. Hence he employed a Swedish woman who is in direct contact with the entrepreneurs and acts like the actual owner.

Dorina, who came to Sweden in 1990, has made similar experiences. She thinks that she was quite lucky to have a bright skin and blond hair. And after she married her Swedish husband, she changed her last name and things became even easier. Dorina was born in Romania and had to leave her home country because of the dictatorship. It took a long time to get the right of residence but during this time she started to learn Swedish, because without speaking the language she said one will have problems to understand the national culture and system. After she got the permission she attended high school in order to increase her education and simultaneously had some jobs, in which she learned a lot about how to start your own company. Therefore she decided to start her own business in 1994. In order to be successful she attended every business course from the support programs. For her it was important to be informed and to gain as much knowledge as possible. In her eyes the own enthusiasm is significant; without the willingness to work a lot and to find your own way, you will not go far.

With regard to cultural differences, Eduardo a human resources manager who left his home country Venezuela 2 years ago because of the critical political situation has a similar opinion to Dorina. He thinks that the Swedes were not that open to different cultural background. He investigates that during the time he was trying to find a job in his old branch. He got to know that there is a big difference in interpreting educational background and that it is not easy to stand out over natives. Along his way he investigates that speaking the language is of enormous importance because almost all support programs offer their information only in Swedish. Consequently he attended the SFI (Swedish For Immigrants) courses in order to learn Swedish. With the help of his wife, Almi and the Municipality he is now able to start his pet shop. When he talked about key success factors, Eduardo mentioned that one needs to love the work and that one should stand behind the idea. Moreover knowledge is of importance, in order to be informed about the market situation and to contact the right persons.

Another interesting way of business life represents Amun, who came from Egypt to Sweden around 10 years ago. With the help of his Swedish wife it was easier for him to find a job and to learn Swedish. One day he was driven by the idea to start up his own business, thus he combined
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job and working on the own business for the first years. With the help from Almi and the constant attendance of courses he managed to understand the Swedish system quite quickly. He said he is already quite successful with his travel agency and is even interested to extend.

Juan, a 34 year old Colombian estimates that he was lucky because he was able to grow up in Sweden and therefore knew already the language, the culture and the system. He came to Sweden at the age of 15 because the family wanted to leave the country due to criminal practices of others. Because they came to Sweden as refugees, they had to wait four years in total to get the right of residence. During and after high school he used the skills he gained through the years as refugee to make money. Over the years he built up several small businesses but at the moment he is partly employed because he needs a safe income in order to finance his own little family. In the eyes of Juan the most common barrier for refugees is the language. For him it is also significant to have an own business and to be free in some way. On the other hand a fixed job is something safe and secure, which is necessary if you have a family for instance. Nevertheless an entrepreneur has to be aware of the own resources and capabilities. One has to handle risk as well as be aware of the own weaknesses. It is also important to have a good network in order to create a win-win situation.

A comparable statement was made by Benicio, who was born in Argentina but came to Sweden when he was six month old. He grew up in Sweden so he gained a Swedish education, speaks fluent Swedish and knows the culture. Due to that reason it was easier for him to find a job. But after several part time jobs he decided to build up his own business focusing on elder care. With the help of friends and Almi he was able to start his business in 2011. Today he is doing so good that he is able to afford professional software for his operations and employ 30 part time workers. In the eyes of Benicio the challenging thing in his business life was to find efficient employees. He is satisfied with his business and interested in the project of Alev in order to broaden the network and to gain new advises and support.

As Alev is an immigrant entrepreneur on herself it is of course interesting to get to know her story as well. She was born in Bulgaria but her family is Turkish, consequently she became Turkish as well. She came to Sweden in 1989 when she was around seven years old, thus she grew up in Sweden and had the same advantages as Benicio. Almost directly after her studies in economics she became an entrepreneur because she recognized her talent for the job. So she started several businesses of which 3 are still running. In one of the businesses she works as consultant, focusing on management assistance and bookkeeping. Therefore the idea of the
business hotel in order to help especially immigrant entrepreneurs was created. She would like to use her experiences and knowledge to help others. With regard to her way of life she thinks that growing up in Sweden makes life easier. She already learned a lot about management and entrepreneurship in her studies so she did not need any help when she built up her business. Nevertheless due to her immigrant background the Swedish culture has been a huge problem and she still feels that the Swedes hesitate to be open for other cultures. In her eyes, besides the culture network and enthusiasm are important keys regarding business. Alev represents an experienced entrepreneur who seems to have several approaches to start a new business. She also has a certain mindset of an entrepreneur which maybe prevents the alternative to be employed. Being an employee has never been an opinion for her.

In the previous chapters the authors Abbasian and Yazdanfar (2014) and Hejm (2004) highlighted that native-born entrepreneurs do not have the barriers that migrants have. Therefore it is interesting to shortly introduce the perspective of a native born person. Some years ago, the 41 year old Swede Sven started his own business in Web design. He did not have any problems to get a job in Sweden but recognized an open niche within the marked. Therefore he built up his own business without bigger barriers. For him it is important to have fun at work and to be his own boss.

Furthermore in order to gain a different view on the theme the author of this paper interviewed several support programs, starting with the state financed support company Almi. Isabelle works as an advisor at Almi in Vaxjo since 2014 and worked as a coach for entrepreneurs before. According to her, Almi is the first step and interactive place for the startups. She thinks that the most important factor for entrepreneurs is coaching and counseling. When the people visit Isabelle, she first of all tries to determine background, strengths and weaknesses. If the entrepreneur already runs a business she tries to improve his strategies and skills. The common topics regarding coaching are risk management, time management, leadership, general management skills, investment possibilities, financial disciplines, accounts, tax systems, insurances etc. In the eyes of Isabelle, network is of huge importance as well. Due to that she tries to connect immigrant entrepreneurs with Swedish entrepreneurs to create new profitable connections, which are beneficial for both.

Another support perspective represents Viktor, who works as a business developer for Macken in Växjö. Viktor thinks that it is hard for people, who are coming from different countries, to find a job because of their missing education and the lack of openness of the Swedes. Most of the
entrepreneurs have a foreign background but they have native born entrepreneurs as well. The immigrants had to leave their home country due to political issues or war and therefore became refugees. But some are in Sweden because they fell in love and decided to live in Sweden. The people, who get support from Macken are in a quite tough financial situation because they cannot find a job in Sweden and need to find a way in order to earn some money. Viktor mentioned that racism can also be problem, in Swedish companies today. Therefore these immigrants decide to build up an own company in order to be free and earn money. Their biggest barriers in the eyes of Viktor are additionally language, money and the family support. The entrepreneurs familiarize quite fast with being an entrepreneur and at the end they like to be their own boss, be free and safe in terms of having a solution to feed the family and survive. During their time as entrepreneurs these people start to build up a quite strong connection to their offered services or products. They are proud of being an entrepreneur and take a stand for their products and services. When it comes to the business future, Viktor pointed out that the entrepreneurs are not interested to grow their business. They are entrepreneurs in order to survive in Sweden and are happy to have accomplished this challenge. These people are interested in a normal good live and to have a strong connection to their business. For them family is more important than business, therefore they are happy with their situation in order to earn enough to enjoy a good life in Sweden. They would be able to grow but most of the immigrant entrepreneurs are afraid to get a quality loss of their product in consequence.

The interview representative for Växjö Municipality is Gustav, who works as a business support manager and mainly focuses on growth for the entrepreneurs. According to him Växjö Municipality focuses on three key roles: startup companies; growth & development and further activities in Växjö. For the startup companies, they usually refer to Almi because they are better prepared for those cases. Växjö Municipality works more with entrepreneurs or companies who want to expand their businesses. Gustav and his colleagues connect them with strong networks out of the local business community. Moreover, if the entrepreneurs have global visions, Gustav is able to support them with training and educating, which focus for example on growth. Nevertheless the Municipality takes care of all kind of businesses and companies too. In the opinion of Gustav Växjö Municipality is interested in new and profitable enterprises and try to support the people with necessary and helpful information, because it is also of importance for their economy.
6. Discussions and Conclusions: What Have We Learned?

Due to the reason that the researcher chooses a qualitative method, the conclusion cannot be seen as certain. The collected cases are individual and do not represent the whole community. The overall aim was to investigate more about immigrant entrepreneurs and their path through business life.

First of all, one should recognize that there are different types of immigrants, which cannot be lumped together. Högberg et al. (2014) mentioned that each immigrant entrepreneur needs individual support and should not be categories.

There are the immigrants who did not leave their home country on a voluntary base and there are some immigrants who freely choose Sweden as their new home country. Then one has to distinguish between those who are highly educated and those who did not or could not enjoy a good education. The education standard is different in Sweden, which makes life even harder for example for those who already had a profitable job back home. Nevertheless it can be said that speaking the national language is of enormous importance no matter what kind of background one has.

Additionally, there is a huge difference if they came to Sweden as an adult or if they came to Sweden when they were a child. As the interview of Alev and Benicio demonstrates, growing up in a different country makes life easier because you learn the national language automatically and you already get to know the culture and system, which can be essential regarding life and business.

Another separation can be made due to the immigrants who become entrepreneurs because they have to earn money in order to survive, or those who are driven by a business idea and want to work on their business in order to be more profitable. This is the differentiation between necessity and opportunity driven people which the authors Baptista et al. (2013) already related to. Research has proven that immigrants driven by a business idea are hard to find in Växjö. Nevertheless this minority is interested in improving the business but for that reason they need a better network and platforms in order to reach new entrepreneurs and to get in touch with the Swedes.

Linked to the literature of Baptista, Karao and Mendonc (2013) it can be summarized that some entrepreneurs like Rabea and Matej can be seen as necessity driven entrepreneur. They both could not find a job and were kind of forced to find a different way.
The immigrant entrepreneurs of this research are of the opinion that without having adequate education the path will be quite rocky and one can make a lot of unnecessary mistakes. Furthermore the own enthusiasm is a very important factor and to learn from mistakes. One should be willing to work a lot and to find the own way; to love the work and always stand behind the representative idea. Learning by doing clarifies the own strength and weaknesses. In order to be successful an entrepreneur has to be aware of his/her own resources and capabilities. But because of the difficult social situation and the lack of education some are not willing to invest in business growth. Most of the immigrant entrepreneurs are quite happy with their life in Sweden and proud to be able to care for themselves.

Other cases represented the opportunity driven way. Eduardo and Amun decided to build up their own business driven by an idea. They already got some business experiences and decided to start a new business.

Nevertheless the theory of necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs is a complex one in reality. If one looks at the case of Eduardo for example one can interpret a mix of both, because the needed to leave his country and first of all could find a corresponding job in Sweden. One day he had the idea of the pet shop and from this time he was driven to become an entrepreneur.

If one looks at the case of Rabea it can also be said that she learned step by step, which for example not all of the support givers consider. Furthermore it can be estimated that the opportunity to apply the learned skills is helpful. With regard to the case of Dorina and the opinion of Viktor, Macken helps entrepreneurs in offering such opportunities which are seen as very beneficial because learning and applying the theory step by step is very beneficial. Kloosterman and Rath (2010) were of the same opinion that such opportunities will make the startup easier for immigrant entrepreneurs. Isabelle thinks that Almi could work on that kind of specific offer.

In terms of network Dorina and Juan represent suitable examples. Dorina had access to the Swedish network through her husband, which made thing easier for her. Due to that it can be assumed that several benefits come along with a native family member.

Additionally the case of Juan estimated that the effort to work with integration is an important factor as well. Juan got the chance to enter the Swedish society by visiting the school. Therefore it was easier for him to develop the language and the culture which is of importance to be successful in business. If one looks at the case of Benicio and Alev it can be said that the more integrated the person is, the more successful the path through business life will be.
The case of Ahmad and Dorina represent a kind of unspoken area – so to say discrimination. Ahmad noticed some discrimination while conducting his business; he thought that because of having a different color, Swedish feel hesitation to interact with him. That is why he decided to have a Swedish employee dealing with all the important client contacts. Also Dorina said that she was lucky because she has a bright skin and blond hair and things were easier after she married her husband and took his surname. The integration of migrants is hard but it is even harder if the native population is not willing to welcome them. Sweden is seen as a very open and social country but there are still some points they could work on. Especially the case of Ahmad shows that migrants are not as accepted in Sweden as they should be. This statement is contrary to what has been found in the literature. Lei and Chen (2014) investigate that Sweden is tolerant and open country and that the discrimination is very low. But with regard to the case of Ahmad it looks like there are still some lacks of acceptance. Due to that reason it is recommended that the Swedes should think about their own attitude regarding integration of migrants.

In summary the immigrants are of the opinion that they got a lot of help from the support programs in order to fill the gaps in business knowledge. But the biggest challenges are language, educational barriers and the Swedish system. But the participation in several seminars and speeches could already help to increase the business knowledge. Last but not least, no matter what kind of problems they have or which category they belong to, the support of the own family is always important. Being an immigrant is never easy and therefore one needs this family support because the rocky path in another country is challenging.

Looking now at the support perspective one can summarize that there is already a lot of support regarding immigrants. They help families facing difficult economic and social circumstances to find a way to survive in Sweden. But some things like information/brochures in English or courses focusing on the Swedish culture could still be improved. The outcomes also present that Macken focus also on a sense of pride which is important regarding the meaning in the new society. They help immigrant entrepreneurs to strengthen the self-confidence and created a sense of well-being.

The interviewed representatives mentioned that there is still a lack in knowledge about what makes integration for immigrants easier. The field of immigrant entrepreneurship is broader than one usually expects and with regard to the “lack of support” (Collins, 2013) it should be considered to work on that field and also include other influencing impacts. It is not only a
question of how to support them but also important to understand the individual situation and the surroundings which affect the person on their way. With regard to Collins (2013) and the interviewed representatives the support programs are interested to help. But there is more research needed in order to create suitable and beneficial solutions for all the individual cases. The “step by step” learning by doing and the importance of overall integration in the host country is linked to the causation and effectuation theory of Sarasvathy (2001). She mentioned that the way through business life for immigrant entrepreneurs is characterized by an effectual logic but the support to entrepreneurs is often based on a causation-logic. The outcome of this research underlines the statement of Sarasvathy (2001) that it is necessary to work more with an ‘effectuation-logic’ when supporting immigrant entrepreneurs. Looking especially on the micro level of immigrant entrepreneurship there is a need to go from causation to effectuation when designing support policies.

Additionally one can say that not only the support of the representative institution is important, moreover the immigrants have to work as well. If they are not willing to integrate themselves and learn the national culture and language, the overall process of integration will be quite hard. To sum up, it is necessary that both parties rework their attitudes and mindset in order to make the path a bit easier for immigrants.
Acknowledgements

Before and during the writing process of this thesis, several people have supported and encouraged me and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

First of all, I would like to thank my tutor Erik Rosell for all his guidance and support leading to the improvement of the quality of my thesis. Especially during the beginning stages he helped me patiently to find a project as well as to develop a topic for the article.

Special thanks also to the participants of my interviews for taking the time to provide me with interesting answers to my questions.

Very special thanks are due to the correctors of this piece of work. Thanks a lot for your valuable time and effort in correcting my thesis.

Finally, I would like to express my endless gratitude to my family for their continuous support and motivation throughout my life. Thank you for enabling me to do everything I wanted to do and everything you will make possible for me in the future.

Thank you.

Jil Riccarda Rudnick
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