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Navigating tensions between economic and social integration among immigrant family entrepreneurs: a paradox perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intricate dynamics of immigrant family entrepreneurship, examining how immigrant family entrepreneurs navigate tensions between economic and social integration for sustainability through three longitudinal case studies of immigrant family businesses. Utilizing paradox theory, we offer a multi-dimensional perspective that captures the complexity of immigrant family businesses in Sweden. Our research enriches existing theoretical frameworks on immigrant family entrepreneurship by considering both economic and social facets in tandem. Our findings underscore the pivotal role of the family in navigating the tensions of immigrant family entrepreneurship, with family members acting both as facilitators and inhibitors. Our insights can guide policymakers and practitioners in fostering more inclusive and sustainable immigrant entrepreneurial communities in practice. This study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainability challenges in immigrant family entrepreneurship, aligning with the goals of social and economic sustainability.

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Immigrant family entrepreneurship; sustainability; socioeconomic integration; Sweden; paradox theory; segregation-integration tension

Introduction

Immigrant entrepreneurship has gained the attention of both scholars and practitioners (e.g. Drori, Honig, and Wright 2009; Elo, Täube, and Servais 2022; Light et al. 1994; Ram, Jones, and Villares-Varela 2017; Sinkovics and Rebecca Reuber 2021). Recent studies have emphasized that family is prominent in immigrant entrepreneurial journeys (e.g. Q. V. Evansluong 2016; Vershinina et al. 2019; Zehra and Usmani 2023). However, little is known about how immigrant families influence the economic and social integration of immigrant entrepreneurs in general and of immigrant family business entrepreneurs specifically. For immigrants, the quest for economic and social integration into a host country is a complex endeavour; it often involves conflicting yet deeply interdependent processes, since immigrant entrepreneurship goes hand in hand with the development of coping strategies that depend on the host country and are therefore directly linked to integration (Elo, Täube, and Servais 2022, 35). As such, the tension between economic survival and social belonging is a challenge many immigrant family businesses face (Li and Johansen 2023; Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers 2023). Navigating the needs for economic success and social integration becomes a crucial task in which the family acts as both the central point and the balancing force. In this intricate

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interplay, families can be both facilitators and inhibitors, making the journey towards integration a nuanced and often conflictual experience. Therefore, we pose the following research question: How do immigrant family entrepreneurs navigate the tensions between economic and social integration, and what is the role of the family in this process?

To date, the literature on immigrant family entrepreneurship has mostly focused on the economic aspects of these ventures (e.g. Adendorff and Halkias 2014; Tata and Prasad 2015), overlooking the social dimensions and the tension between the social and economic components of integration. Even in the few notable exceptions that touch upon the social challenges that immigrant family businesses face (e.g. Q. Evansluong and Ramírez-Pasillas 2019; Zehra and Usmani 2023), scholars consider social and environmental aspects as ways to enhance economic outcomes, neglecting the contradictory yet interdependent nature of the tensions of economic versus social integration.

Understanding the immigrant entrepreneur's perspective on economic and social integration through their entrepreneurial process is important from theoretical and practical perspectives alike. Understanding the tension between economic and social integration can enrich existing theoretical frameworks on immigrant entrepreneurship by introducing a multi-dimensional perspective that captures the complexities of the relationship. Moreover, until now, the social and economic integration of immigrant family entrepreneurship has been explored without investigating the role of the family in this process (e.g. Zehra and Usmani 2023), even though the family influences immigrants at both the individual and business levels (e.g. Dabić et al. 2020; Elo, Täube, and Servais 2022).

The tension between social and economic integration is not an isolated issue; it is inherently linked to broader sustainability challenges for immigrant entrepreneurship (Dempsey, Brown, and Bramley 2012; Hutchins and Sutherland 2008). Sustainable development refers to development that 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, 16). As a strategic framework, sustainable development aims to integrate environmental, economic, and social goals within development policies, often tied to specific targets and initiatives. In this context, sustainability is a holistic principle guiding efforts to ensure sustainable development (Basiago 1995; Redclift 2005), and economic and social integration are crucial aspects of social and economic sustainability. For example, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 (UN General Assembly 2015) emphasizes the issues of economic integration in Goal 1 'no poverty' (with targets 1.2 'reduce the proportion of people living in poverty' and 1.4 'ensure that all people have equal rights to economic resources') and Goal 8 'decent work and economic growth' (with targets 8.2 'achieve higher levels of economic productivity' and 8.3 'promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship'. Meanwhile, social integration is closely considered and targeted in Goal 10 'reduced inequalities' (with targets 10.2 'empower and promote social, economic and political inclusion' and 10.7 'facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people').

In this paper, we examine how immigrant family entrepreneurs navigate the complex tension between social and economic integration, including the pivotal role that family plays in this process, by conducting three longitudinal case studies of immigrant family businesses in Sweden. To capture the contradictory yet interdependent nature of these relationships, we employ paradox theory as our analytical lens. This approach allows us to delve into the complexities of social and economic integration as key components of sustainability within the realm of immigrant family entrepreneurship.

Our study shows that immigrant family entrepreneurs face four stages of tension in the economic and social integration processes, and they deal with each stage differently. Transitions from one stage to another are complemented by entrepreneurs' specific responses to the paradoxical tension and reflect the crucial role of the family in the process: the family either mitigates or amplifies the tension and substantially affects the managerial choices of the entrepreneurs. Therefore, our study contributes to the family and immigrant entrepreneurship literature (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023; Randerson 2023; Vershinina et al. 2019) by developing a taxonomy of the tension between economic and social integration for immigrant family entrepreneurs and their corresponding responses to the tension. Our study also contributes to the sustainability literature by revealing how immigrant family

entrepreneurs navigate the social and economic demands of integration in host countries by unpacking the role of the family in this process.

The study is structured as follows: the second section provides a literature review leading to the integration of the paradox theoretical framework with sustainability and immigrant family entrepreneurship, and it justifies the research question. The third section describes the methodology, the techniques applied, and the sampling, data collection, and analysis methods. The fourth section presents the findings. The fifth section illustrates and discusses the theoretical model developed from the findings. The conclusion identifies the study's contributions, practical implications, and limitations, as well as opportunities for future research.

Literature review

Immigrant family entrepreneurship

Immigrant family entrepreneurship lies at the intersection of family entrepreneurship and immigrant entrepreneurship due to the unique dynamics and influences between the family and the business connecting to the home and host countries (Q. D. Evansluong, Ramírez-Pasillas, and Dana 2024). The immigrant family entrepreneurship phenomenon can be better understood when taking into account both the family entrepreneurship dimensions (Randerson 2023) and the immigrant entrepreneurship dimensions (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023; Vershinina et al. 2019). Adopting Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers (2023) and Randerson (2023), we define immigrant family entrepreneurship as a business established in a host country by a migrant from another (home) country, with the aid of family members in the home/host countries. This kind of entrepreneurial behaviour often involves employing other immigrants, and it demonstrates a unique blend of economic sustainability and potential challenges related to integration (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023; Randerson 2023).

In the field of immigrant and family entrepreneurship, research on immigrant family entrepreneurship is gaining significance, illuminating crucial family influences in terms of financial, human, and entrepreneurial capital (Chavan et al. 2023; Randerson 2023; Sanders and Nee 1996; Vershinina et al. 2019). Immigrant family entrepreneurs establish and sustain family ties in their host countries while maintaining contact with family members in their home countries (Dabić et al. 2020), and they draw on resources and advice from their family and peers in their home country while establishing contacts in the host country (Drori, Honig, and Wright 2009; Karayianni, Hadjielias, and Glyptis 2023; Li and Johansen 2023). Many immigrant entrepreneurs utilize their connections and knowledge of systems and markets from both countries to develop, expand, and support their businesses (Aaltonen and Akola 2019; Chen and Tan 2009; Q. Wang and Yang Liu 2015) as a path to social and economic integration. The literature suggests that these connections and knowledge are often provided by family members (e.g. Chavan et al. 2023; Q. Evansluong, Ramirez Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergström 2019); however, the role of immigrant entrepreneurs' families in social and economic integration has been under-researched. The field of immigrant family entrepreneurship thus remains fragmented, offering an opportunity for deeper insight into the family's influence on immigrant entrepreneurship (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023).

Social and economic integration as sustainability aspects in immigrant family entrepreneurship

The integration of immigrants via family entrepreneurship has explicit social and economic aspects (Lobo and Mellander 2020), which can be directly linked to social and economic sustainability (Dempsey, Brown, and Bramley 2012; Hutchins and Sutherland 2008). For example, scholars emphasize that social integration and related social interactions and senses (social and group cohesion, network interaction, sense of community and belonging) are essential aspects of social values and sustainability (Dempsey, Brown, and Bramley 2012). However, it is challenging to address the social

and economic aspects of integration simultaneously (Agius Vallejo and Keister 2020). The liability of foreignness and newness might hinder immigrants from entering the labour market and becoming socially embedded into the host country (Vershinina and Discua Cruz 2021). This creates challenges of balancing social and economic integration among immigrants (Q. Evansluong, Ramirez Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergström 2019); often, such imbalances between these two parts of integration create tensions that force immigrants to prioritize one over the other.

These tensions might be caused by the dynamic influences of the immigrant family in the host country and the home country on the immigrant business (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023). On the one hand, when immigrants are the breadwinners of their families in the host country (e.g. Q. V. Evansluong 2016), they might have to focus on economic integration instead of social integration. On the other hand, family members in the home country can provide immigrant entrepreneurs with resources to ease their economic integration (e.g. Zehra and Usmani 2023) – for instance, networks, emotional support, and unpaid family labour (Aldrich and Cliff 2003; Bates 2011; Dabić et al. 2020). In a similar vein, family social capital can provide a major contribution to immigrant entrepreneurs' economic integration in the initial stages of business (Q. Evansluong and Ramírez-Pasillas 2019).

Scholars have revealed various contradictions between the social and economic interests of sustainability (Hahn et al. 2015; Manzhynski 2021; Stadtler and Van Wassenhove 2016) and examined how immigrant family entrepreneurship promotes economic empowerment and social integration (Chababi, Chreim, and Spence 2017; Frederking 2004; Sinkovics and Rebecca Reuber 2021). However, there is little knowledge of how the social aspects of immigrant family entrepreneurship – such as integration or acculturation – interact with economic interests and how immigrant entrepreneurs navigate the potentially strong tension between these two demands. For example, immigrant entrepreneurs may have both social and economic integration goals while setting up and doing business in a host country (Elo, Zubair, and Zhang 2022; Y. Wang and Warn 2018). They may aim to assimilate into a host country's culture while simultaneously developing their business for economic gain to reach and sustain a level of economic security for themselves and their family members (e.g. Q. Evansluong, Ramirez Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergström 2019). These goals, however, can contradict each other. Social integration usually demands certain resources (e.g. time and educational costs) that might otherwise be spent on developing the business. Moreover, strong links with a home country (or other immigrants) can also hinder the process of social integration (Duan, Sandhu, and Kotey 2021; Schmich and Mitra 2023), as entrepreneurs have an opportunity to compensate for a lack of social integration or economic resources with assistance from the home/immigrant network (Eraydin, Tasan-Kok, and Vranken 2010; Kopren and Westlund 2021; Yamamura and Lassalle 2020).

Paradox theory

To explore the tension between social and economic integration in immigrant family entrepreneurship, we use paradox theory. This theory explores the 'contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time' (Smith and Lewis 2011, 382) and has been applied extensively in the domains of sustainability (Hahn et al. 2014) and family entrepreneurship (McAdam, Clinton, and Dibrell 2020). There are several reasons for our choice of theoretical lens.

First, the nature of the tension between social and economic integration in immigrant family entrepreneurship seems paradoxical because the poles (social and economic integration) are contradictory but also interdependent and persistent (Gamble, Parker, and Moroz 2020). Second, as immigrant family entrepreneurship exists between the home and host countries (e.g. Karayianni 2021), as well as between family members across borders (e.g. Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023), paradox theory is a suitable guiding lens for reflecting social constructionist philosophical assumptions (Gubbins and MacCurtain 2008), highlighting tensions that are likely to stem from implementing the principles of immigrant family entrepreneurship. Finally, given the extensive use of a paradox lens for exploring various aspects of sustainability and family entrepreneurship (Lewis and Smith 2022), we believe there is potential to effectively employ paradox theory to examine economic and

social integration in immigrant family entrepreneurship and provide promising managerial and theoretical implications. Scholars have started exploring the sustainability aspects of immigrant and family entrepreneurship through the paradoxical perspective, focusing on contradictory yet interdependent relationships in learning (Barrett and Moores 2020), embeddedness (Lin and Wang 2019), nepotism and meritocracy (Jaskiewicz et al. 2013), control and autonomy (Radu-Lefebvre and Randerson 2020), and the disclosure of information about socially responsible initiatives (Discua Cruz, Centeno Caffarena, and Vega Solano 2020). However, there is a dearth of knowledge about how entrepreneurs navigate the paradoxical tension of economic versus social integration and the role that family plays in this process.

Furthermore, while paradox scholars have accumulated considerable knowledge about managerial responses to paradoxical tensions applied by organizational actors and leaders – such as avoidance, separation, suppression, compromise, transcendence, and integration (Jarzabkowski and Lê 2017; Lewis, Andriopoulos, and Smith 2014) – we still know little about how these or other responses are formed or applied and how they evolve over time in immigrant family entrepreneurship. This knowledge is essential from a theoretical perspective – i.e. we could better understand the nature of paradox management in immigrant family entrepreneurship – and also has promising managerial implications, as such findings could help entrepreneurs develop effective strategies to address contradictory yet interdependent demands on their businesses.

Method

In this study, we employed an inductive multiple case study approach (Yin 1994), as it can suitably answer the how and why questions (Pratt 2009). Thus, we explored this social phenomenon through the subjective and socially constructed views of the study participants. We relied on longitudinal and qualitative data from three immigrant family businesses in Sweden, collected from interviews with the immigrant family entrepreneurs and their family members, to understand social life by studying targeted populations (Punch 2013).

We paid particular attention to the context of the entrepreneurial process (Welter 2011) – more specifically, the economic, social, spatial and temporal aspects (Zahra, Wright, and Abdelgawad 2014) and the presence of family members (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023). Therefore, the entrepreneurial process and the constructions of space in which family members participate can be suitably connected when examining the immigrant entrepreneurship phenomenon, since this type of entrepreneurship spans the host and home countries and social systems (Karayianni 2021; Zehra and Usmani 2023). Spatialization refers to the construction of abstract spaces of knowledge that can aid in visualization, pattern detection, and accumulation of scientific insight (Skupin and Irina Fabrikant 2003). As such, using a temporal approach to analyse our data provided more detailed information on the entrepreneurial processes taking place in the network of immigrant family-owned businesses (Linhares et al. 2023). We relied on these particular criteria to choose Sweden as the empirical context for our study.

Empirical context

Sweden presents a relevant and intriguing context for our research for several reasons. First, Sweden ranks highly in the Robeco Country Sustainability Ranking: it has placed in the top five of more than 150 countries for the last 10 years because of its high performance in areas such as climate action, energy use, and the protection of human and labour rights (RobecoSAM 2021). Further recognition of Sweden's commitment to sustainability comes from other global indices that list it among the world's foremost sustainable nations (Mansson 2016; Sachs et al. 2022). Second, businesses owned by immigrants have been essential in promoting the integration of immigrants into Sweden's labour market (Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers 2023; Zalkat 2024). There has been a notable increase in the number of immigrant-owned enterprises over the past decade, indicating their growing impact on the Swedish economy (Sweden Agency for Economic and Regional Growth 2016). Finally,

Sweden's welfare system and governmental policies provide a unique environment for family-run immigrant businesses.

Sampling and data collection

Adopting purposeful sampling as described by (Patton 1990), we selected our cases based on the following criteria. First, we chose immigrant family-owned businesses in Sweden's service sector, as it is one of the country's most representative sectors of immigrant entrepreneurs (Sweden Agency for Economic and Regional Growth 2014). Second, the service sector plays an important role in supporting and maintaining sustainability from environmental, economic, and social perspectives. From the economic perspective, the service sector dominates the economies of developed countries, constituting around 70% of GDP (Kalkanci, Rahmani, and Beril Toktay 2019). It also has significant social value by providing first job opportunities for many people, including insecure groups such as immigrants. Third, guided by Eisenhardt (2021) on theory building based on prominent similarities and differences across cases and the research design of polar cases, we selected immigrant family businesses that illuminate extremes as well as similarities in many dimensions to generate high-quality analytical generalization (Yin 2009).

To satisfy the former criterion, we selected businesses established by first-generation immigrants. In this study, the entrepreneurs' countries of origin include Lebanon, Syria, Cameroon, and Mexico, which all have similarly low levels of individualism, indicating that collectivism (e.g. in the form of family, neighbourhood, and community) plays an important role in their culture (Djamen, Georges, and Pernin 2020; Hofstede 1980). For the latter criterion, we chose businesses with different family configurations (e.g. extended family and nuclear family in different locations, inter-racial or intra-racial marriages), backgrounds, and conditions of social and economic integration into Swedish society (e.g. language proficiency, education obtained in the home and host countries, connections to the ethnic or local community in the host country) to explore the diversified roles of the immigrant's family in the integration process. We chose cases in which the presence of family is prominent and where family members play significant roles in the economic and social integration journey – for example, the immigrant's parents influenced their career choice, and the immigrant is responsible for the nuclear and extended family (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023).

Adopting Eisenhardt's (1989) suggestion of four to ten cases, the first author recruited nine cases through gatekeepers from local business support organizations and research institutions based on the above-mentioned criteria. To achieve a high level of comparability across cases (Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers 2023), the first author chose three of the nine cases to gain a deeper understanding of their circumstances. These three cases were the ones that had the most extensive longitudinal data and the richest details about their migration, integration, and entrepreneurial processes (Q. Evansluong and Ramírez-Pasillas 2019); different family compositions (e.g. nuclear family in the host country and extended family in the home country, both extended and nuclear family in the host country, intra- and inter-racial couples) (Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers 2023); and the most prominent involvement of family members (e.g. family members providing emotional support and labour, co-preneurs, family business in the home country supporting family business in the host country, or silent family partners) (Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023). The other six cases only provided snapshots instead of a holistic picture due to time constraints and the interrupted engagement of the business owners and other participants in their networks. The presence and roles of family members were not as prominent in these six cases as in the three in-depth cases, so they were excluded from the study.

Our data sample thus consists of three immigrant family-owned businesses (see Table 1). Case 1 is a Middle Eastern restaurant business co-founded by two male entrepreneurs, one Lebanese and one Syrian, who have resided with their nuclear and extended families in Sweden for over 30 years. Case 2 is an African convenience store established by a Cameroonian female entrepreneur who has lived in Sweden for almost 20 years and has a Swedish husband. She has family in both Sweden and

Table 1. Description of cases and data sources.

Business	Type of business	Year established	Family composition, ownership and family members involved in the business	No. of interviews & role in the family business	Archival data	Observations
Case 1	Lebanese restaurant	2004	Extended family and nuclear family in Sweden Owned by Entrepreneurs 1a and 1b, who are not related by blood but are as close as extended family to each other. Family members involved in the business: the wives of Entrepreneurs 1a and 1b acted as founding members of the business and have been working part-time; the daughter of Entrepreneur 1b has been working part-time.	Ten interviews 2014–2016: six in 2014, three in 2015, and one in 2016 with Entrepreneur 1a, Entrepreneur 1b, and the daughter of Entrepreneur 1b. Total: 360 minutes. Transcripts: 60 A4 pages	2014–2018: Fifty photos from the company's Facebook page, both old and new. Ten articles from local newspaper.	Five field visits 2014–2016: two in 2014, one in 2015, one in 2016, and one in 2018. Three informal meetings: one in 2014, one in 2015, and one in 2018. Field notes: 70 A5 pages.
Case 2	African convenience store and beauty salon	2009	Extended family in Cameroon and Sweden and nuclear family in Sweden. Owned by Entrepreneur 2. Family members involved in the business: the husband of Entrepreneur 2, a sister and cousin of Entrepreneur 2 who live in Sweden, and a sister living in Cameroon acted as founding members of the business.	Sixteen interviews 2013–2021: one in 2013, six in 2014, six in 2015, one in 2016, one in 2017, and one in 2021 with Entrepreneur 2, the sister and cousin of Entrepreneur 2, a friend of Entrepreneur 2, and a business mentor to Entrepreneur 2. Total: 731 minutes. Transcripts: 126 A4 pages.	2014-2021: Forty photos from the company's Facebook page. Two articles from the local newspaper. Two video clips. Thirty phone calls, emails and text messages.	Four field visits 2013–2021: one in 2013, two in 2014, and one in 2015. Two social events: one in 2014, one in 2015. Three informal meetings: one in 2016 and two in 2017. Field notes: 55 A5 pages.
Case 3	Software development and hardware repairs	2011	Extended family in Mexico and nuclear family in Sweden Owned by Entrepreneurs 3a and 3b who are as close as extended family members to each other. Family members involved in the business: Parents of Entrepreneur 3a and 3b through their family business in Mexico acted as founding members of the business, as business partners connecting the business in Sweden to potential clients in Mexico, and as investors financing part of the business in Sweden at the stage of expansion.	Twenty-three interviews 2014–2017: six in 2014, twelve in 2015, three in 2016, and two in 2017 with Entrepreneur 3a, Entrepreneur 3b, friends of Entrepreneur 3a, and an intern in the company. Total: 829 minutes. Transcripts: 160 A4 pages.	2014–2022: Fifteen photos from the company's Facebook page. Ten email and text messages.	Three field visits 2014–2022: one in 2014, one in 2015, and one in 2016. Four informal meetings: one in 2014, one in 2015, one in 2017, and one in 2022. Field notes: 120 A5 pages.

Cameroon. Case 3 is a software development and computer repair business co-founded by two male Mexican entrepreneurs who have lived in Sweden for over 10 years and have nuclear families in Sweden and extended families in Mexico.

Our longitudinal data (see Table 1), collected by the first author, consist of 49 face-to-face and pers. comm. with these entrepreneurs and their family members between 2014 and 2021 to capture both retrospective and real-time data. Each interview lasted for 40 minutes on average, for a total of 1,920 minutes of audio recording and 346 pages of transcripts. Informal meetings at social events took place between 2014 and 2022. During the first two rounds of interviews, the first author asked open-ended questions that centred on (1) the entrepreneurial process (e.g. 'How did you start your business?'); (2) the economic and social aspects of the entrepreneurial process and the individual entrepreneurs (e.g. 'How did the business perform during the first year?'). During the third and fourth rounds of interviews, the questions focused on the presence of actors involved in this process, including family members, friends, and collaborators in the host and home countries (e.g. 'How did you develop the business idea? Did you discuss it with anyone, your family, friends?').

The first author triangulated the interviews with field visits to the entrepreneurs' businesses, informal meetings, and social events with them and their networks, including family and non-family members. In addition, the first author collected secondary data from public sources, including public business web pages, press releases, and newspapers. The following section briefly describes the data sources for the three chosen cases.

Data analysis

We relied on inductive content analysis to maintain high-quality analytical generalization (Yin 2009), following Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013). This approach allowed us to capture the meaning of 'people living in that experience' (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013, 16) as close as possible – that is, to understand how immigrant family entrepreneurs experience the process in which they navigate the sustainability tension between economic and social integration and the roles of the family in such processes. We chose the Gioia method because it is particularly well-suited for exploring complex, nuanced phenomena like the tensions that immigrant family businesses face regarding sustainability practices. Additionally, it is widely recognized and respected by the qualitative research community for its ability to provide rich, in-depth insights while maintaining analytical rigour, specifically in family business research (e.g. Chavan et al. 2023; Jaskiewicz et al. 2016; Verver and Koning 2018).

Our inductive content analysis consisted of four steps. First, in each case, we adopted open coding to identify interview quotes related to family, business, and the social and economic integration aspects of both the business and the individual entrepreneurs. Next, we identified the connections between the social and economic aspects of integrating the business and the individual entrepreneurs and family. We found that the interactions between the social and economic interests of integration are paradoxical; that is, they are 'contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time' (Smith and Lewis 2011, 382). First, integration's economic and social interests contradict each other and act as oppositional elements. Second, while being oppositional, they are also interdependent, as they constitute integration as a whole. Finally, our analysis showed that the economic and social demands of integration persisted over time and could not be solved completely (Schad et al. 2016). Guided by paradox theory (Lewis 2000), we focused on the 'both/and' and 'either/or' logics of family influences. 'both/and' logic implies that both contradictory demands should be met simultaneously, while 'either/or' logic requires a choice to prefer and prioritize one demand over another in a specific situation. The latter is easier to implement but is lacking because it cannot simultaneously address both demands sufficiently (Lewis and Smith 2014). Applying 'both/and' (paradoxical) logic demands that actors accept and live with paradoxical tensions since paradoxes cannot be resolved fully (Smith and Lewis 2011). We assigned within-case conceptual codes (Corbin and Strauss 2015) to these connections. Next, we employed axial

coding to identify how these within-case conceptual codes are connected to generate the cross-case first-order codes (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). This step resulted in first-order codes reflecting the role of the family in the process of economic and social integration – for instance, family members acting as frontline employees to ease the language/cultural barrier between immigrants and customers.

In the second step, guided by the relevant literature (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013) and the 'both/and' and 'either/or' logics of paradox theory (Lewis and Smith 2022), we conducted the next round of axial coding to understand the relationships between the first-order codes. The first-order codes suggested some relationships between the roles of families and tensions between the social and economic aspects of integration. Overall, we revealed that family plays a crucial role in the process of navigating the tension between social and economic integration. In particular, the family can either help entrepreneurs mitigate the contradictions between social and economic demands or amplify the contradictions by exacerbating the conflicting nature of the integration process. Both mitigating and amplifying factors affect the dynamics of integration. As a result of this stage, we generated several second-order categories – for instance, family providing relational and cognitive support for launching the business and socialization (which reflects the mitigating logic) and family enhancing neighbourhood connections while keeping the status quo in the business (which illuminates the amplifying logic).

In the third step, guided by Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), we conducted the final round of axial coding to understand how the tensions between the economic and social aspects of integration and the role of the family in this process are illustrated across the cases. We examined the relationships between the second-order themes by going back and forth between the data and the literature while exploring the amplifying and mitigating logics of family roles. This process resulted in four theoretical abstracted aggregate dimensions reflecting four scenarios of (im)balance between the two aspects of integration and the role of the family in these scenarios. The data structure (see Figure 11(a)) depicts how we progressed from first-order codes to second-order themes and aggregate dimensions. Table 2 presents the aggregate dimensions, second-order categories, and representative data for first-order codes.

In the final stage, we proposed a theoretical model (see Figure 2) to explain our findings. Guided by paradox theory, we uncovered how immigrant family entrepreneurs navigate tensions between social integration as a part of social sustainability and economic integration as a part of economic sustainability. We also explored and illustrated how the family participates in the navigation process by influencing entrepreneurs' responses to sustainability tensions.

Findings

Our analysis suggests that the tension between economic and social integration for immigrant family businesses takes four different forms (Table 2). These four types of scenarios, namely, economic survival and social segregation, economic growth and social segregation, economic survival and social integration, economic growth and social integration, exist in three integration layers that work towards achieving a certain balance between the social and economic sustainability of the immigrant family business. In the first layer, the social versus economic integration tension is formed as an interaction of economic survival and social segregation, where addressing the demands of economic survival exacerbates potential conflicts with social demands. This is typical of the initial stage of immigrant entrepreneurship, when both social and economic demands manifest themselves sharply. Individual challenges among the family members in the business contribute considerably to the business-level challenges associated with social and economic integration. In such situations, the immigrant family primarily fosters economic growth while slowing down the process of social integration. Therefore, the demands of economic sustainability are prioritized over social sustainability, which is postponed.

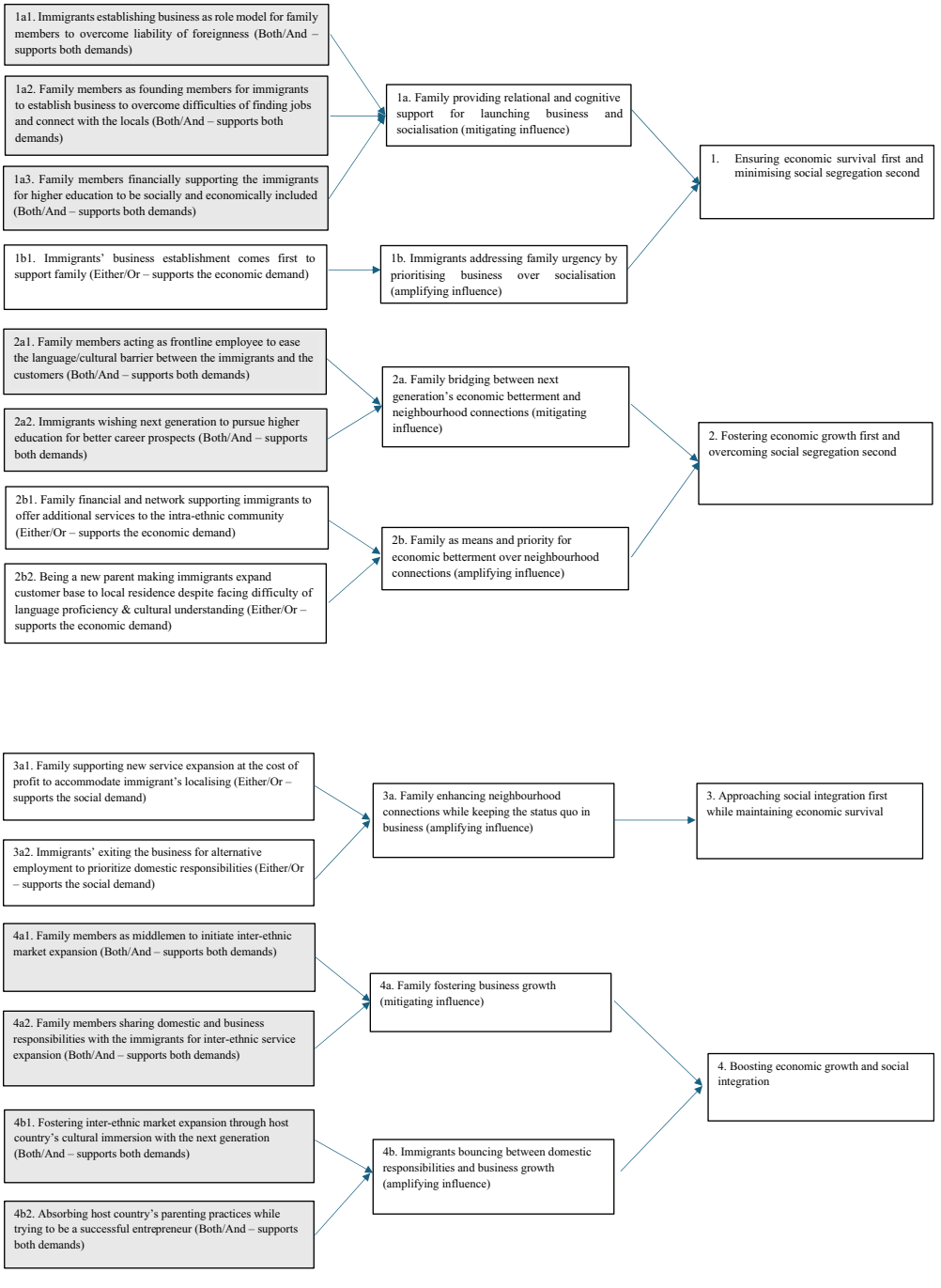

Figure 1. Data structure.

In the second layer, the social versus economic integration tension contains the opposing poles of economic growth and social segregation. Sustainability transforms economic demands from economic survival to growth, while segregation must be overcome to meet the social demands of sustainability. Here, socioeconomic sustainability surfaces from the family's response to compromising the business's economic growth in favour of social integration.

Table 2. List of aggregate dimensions, second order categories and representative data on first order codes.

Second-order categories	Representative data on first order codes
Aggregate dimension: Ensuring economic survival first and minimizing social segregation second	
Family providing relational and cognitive support for launching business and socialization (mitigating influence)	*Immigrants establishing business as role model for family members to overcome liability of foreignness* I want to show my children that it doesn't matter if you are a woman or a man, you can do what you are dreaming of, and [. . .] that I could start a business on my own despite not knowing much about the Swedish culture and the language. I wanted people to see that I did not live on social welfare. (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2014). When my daughter was born in Sweden, I wanted to show her the way my parents set example for me. I wanted to show her that I could be successful in Sweden [. . .] although I still had to improve my Swedish a lot (Entrepreneur 3b, case 3, interviewed in 2014). I'm Mexican but my daughter is Swedish, [. . .] and the moment that my girlfriend and I became a couple, it made me realize that I could not behave as a tourist anymore, instead I need to establish myself here, so I need to be part of this system. Running a company was my first step to establish in the Swedish system. At the beginning [. . .] while knowing very little about Sweden, I worked for clients in Mexico through my family business and consultancy there (Entrepreneur 3b, case 3, interviewed in 2015). *Family members as founding members for immigrants to establish business to overcome difficulties of finding jobs and connect with the locals* Discrimination in Sweden is indirect that you might feel from the way a person looks at you. Sometimes I was angry because some young (Swedish) guys said bad things to me because they had assumptions about me from the way I looked. When I completed my high school, there was no job for me, and I would like to work so I opened my business in town [. . .] when I was 19 years old [. . .] with my four brothers. We all work there together in this business. (Entrepreneur a, Case 1, interviewed in 2014). When she started working on her business, she needed money to stock the products on the shelf and the bank could not grant her a loan no matter how hard she tried. I gave her my savings (Cousin to entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2015). She had a very supportive husband, who was always by her side from the start of her business ideas. [. . .] He accompanied her to meet bankers, business developers and many other organizations to help her explain her business ideas as she did not speak much Swedish at that time (Cousin to entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2015). *Family members financially supporting the immigrants for higher education to be socially and economically included* My father was a priest, and he always emphasized the importance of education, especially when we moved to live in Sweden when I was 6 years old. I wanted to study engineering for a long time but could not do it since I started many businesses to earn money. When I was in my late 30s, I talked to my wife, she supported both the university study and the idea of running a restaurant again. She had a job so we would be able to cover our expenses (Entrepreneur 1b, case 1, interviewed in 2014). My parents helped me move to Sweden and financially supported me to study in the early 2000s. In the first year, I focused on my study and hoped to find a job based on my education (Entrepreneur 2, Case 2, interviewed in 2015). My parents always wanted me to pursue further education. They are very well-educated and have master's degrees. I applied for the master programme here in Sweden and arrived in Sweden in 2008. My business partner arrived here first in 2005, and he told me about Sweden, so I was interested in the engineering master programme (Entrepreneur 3b, case 3, interviewed in 2015).

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

Second-order categories	Representative data on first order codes
Immigrants addressing family urgency by prioritizing business over socialization	*Immigrants' business establishment comes first to support family* When I got married, it was difficult to commute to another city to run the business, so I sold that restaurant and established a new one here to be close to my family and to provide for them (Entrepreneur 1b, case 1, interviewed in 2014). Although I had good qualifications, but my name makes it difficult for the employer to accept me. I was advised by a case officer at the Unemployment Agency that I needed to work more on the Swedish language. However, at the same time, I needed to provide for my children [. . .] so I focused on the idea of starting something on my own. I told myself that I had to start my own business and employ myself if it's not possible to enter the job market by looking for a job (Entrepreneur 2, Case 2, interviewed in 2014). Swedish society is not open to foreigners. To exist in Sweden I needed to find a way to make money. I registered as a sole trader in Sweden in 2007, and I received customers from my parents' company in Mexico. When my girlfriend and I had our first child in 2009, we had more expenses to cover so I tried to find more customers in Mexico. I spoke to my father in Mexico because of work reasons almost every day from Monday to Friday. At that time we did not have any services in Sweden (Entrepreneur 3a, case 3, interviewed in 2015).
Aggregate dimension: Fostering economic growth first and overcoming social segregation second	
Family bridging between next generation's economic betterment and neighbourhood connections	*Family members acting as frontline employee to ease the language/cultural barrier between the immigrants and the customers* When we first opened the restaurant in 2004, we had to explain everything to the customers. My wife and my relatives worked here to help me go from one table to the next to explain (in Swedish) the ingredients we used in the food and to check if customers had any allergy to the ingredients (Entrepreneur 1a, case 1, interviewed in 2014). At the beginning it was not easy in 2009-2011, when Swedish customers spoke to me, I did not understand much and when I said something they didn't understand anything. I felt like I needed to learn the language because I didn't have any choice. I asked my husband to help me work in the cashier counter in my shop so that he could help me speak with Swedish ladies who came to my store (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2015). *Immigrants wishing next generation to pursue higher education for better career prospects* I also wanted to show my children, especially my daughter that it is possible to run a business because having difficulty to get a job [. . .] but I also wanted to show her that it is also good to find a good job with a good degree [. . .] so recently my daughter went to the USA to study (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2021). My daughter is just 5 years old, but I learned a lot from her. For instance, she expressed that Sweden was her home and she liked to do this and that. She questioned me about many things on a daily basis. For example, certain thinking that I took for granted such as leaving the company to the children in the future [. . .] or I wanted to show her the same way my parents did for me. Maybe there is another way of thinking: she could pursue higher education based on her passion and look for a job she wanted. It could be a better option for her. (Entrepreneur 3b, case 3, interviewed in 2015).

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

Second-order categories	Representative data on first order codes
Family as means and priority for economic betterment over neighbourhood connections	*Family members financial and network supporting immigrants to offer additional services to the intra-ethnic community* One of my best friends whom I considered as a sister as well as my cousin and my other siblings helped me even further to extend the business. It's still for the African community. I added the section of hair extension to my business after a year and a half running it. It's a new addition apart from the African food and hair care products that I offered them at the first place (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2015). When we first introduced the computer reparation service in 2011, we focused on the local customers. However, our first customers were international residents. Our office is located in the Park near the university though. We also offered them to instal software and other needs for the computers if they had. During this time, we still relied on the money from customers through our parents' companies in Mexico. In a way, they helped us grow here as they supported us in many ways, they could. We still focused on this market as the income was stable and good to support us in Sweden (Entrepreneur 3b, case 3, interviewed in 2015). *Being a new parent making immigrants expand customer base to local residence despite facing difficulty of language proficiency & cultural understanding* When I first got married, I ran a restaurant in another town, so I commuted between home and work. When we had our first child, my daughter, I decided to sell that restaurant (in another town) and opened a new one here in this town. Having experience in running restaurants in the past, made it easier to establish a restaurant here although the local customers were not the same as in another bigger town, for example, Stockholm (Entrepreneur 1b, case 1, interviewed in 2014). I delivered my youngest kid after running the business for a short while. I felt that I wanted to show my children that I could be a mother and I could be a successful businesswoman. However, I still had some difficulties in communicating Swedish at the start in 2009-2010 (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2015).
Aggregate dimension: Approaching social integration first while maintaining economic survival	
Family enhancing neighbourhood connections while keeping the status quo in business	*Family supporting new service expansion at the cost of profit to accommodate immigrant's localizing* After almost three years running the Lebanese restaurant in town, in 2007, we opened a restaurant on campus serving lunch. We tested something new, food that suited all students including Swedish and international as the university grew to attract many students. We were not sure how we would make profit as we needed to maintain the Lebanese restaurant. Again, my wife and relatives were very supportive of this idea. We have our whole family here in town, my children were born here, I was married here, we have been living here for many years. My wife and my children all supported this idea. (Entrepreneur 1b, case 1, interviewed in 2015). I thought that was fun that he was going to do something new. I remembered that he was studying as well. He was studying to become an engineer, and I thought that was brave to start something new that nobody has done before here in 2004. But I didn't think a lot because I was 11 (Daughter of entrepreneur 1b, case 1, interviewed in 2015). *Immigrants' exiting the business for alternative employment to prioritize domestic responsibilities* I was all alone, running the business and taking care of my children. They grew up so fast and I felt that I needed to spend more time with them. Before my husband died, he helped me so much and I relied on him so much too. I sold the shop to another lady, and I felt good about it. My children were happy (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2016). My business partner and I no longer run the company. Both of us have good jobs now. We questioned a lot for some time that what was the purpose of the business when we had so much to do, and we did not really make good money. We spent so much time there and other aspects of our lives were affected. Eventually we decided to look for something else. Right now, I'm quite happy with the job because I can spend more time with my daughter and my family (Entrepreneur 3b, case 3, informal meeting in 2022).

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

Second-order categories	Representative data on first order codes
Aggregate dimension: Boosting economic growth and social integration	
Family fostering business growth	*Family members as middlemen to initiate inter-ethnic market expansion* I wasn't there a lot, and my father didn't let me work there when I started high school. He wanted me to focus entirely on school. But now when I started studying at university, I wanted extra money [. . .] he let me work there, then I started helping in the restaurant [. . .] as cashier and waitress a couple of years ago [. . .] The restaurant is often crowded during some days per week. We had a lot of local Swedish customers. (Daughter of entrepreneur 1b, Case 1, interviewed in 2015). Since I started speaking more Swedish and communicating with customers in Swedish, I knew more about what they wanted. I have Swedish ladies who wish to have specific types of hair extensions. Whenever my brother travelled from Cameroon back to Sweden, I asked him to bring the samples of hair extensions (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2014). We also used the restaurant venue where my wife worked to promote our services. I also referred to my wife as a reference for my business whenever people recognized that I had a connection to the restaurant. I think if I had never spoken Swedish, I would have needed someone to be by the desk. I think I could have managed, but I would have never experienced the real feelings that they had. What I developed for the business might not be responsive to the market if I did not understand what customers said (in Swedish) (Entrepreneur 3b, Case 3, interviewed in 2015). *Family members sharing domestic and business responsibilities with the immigrants for inter-ethnic service expansion* Nowadays, compared to when I knew her, when she communicates with customers, her Swedish is much better. In the past, sometimes the husband would say something in Swedish and she couldn't understand it. Now she communicates fluently with the Swedish customers. Then I knew her language proficiency developed. It was at the beginning her proficiency was not good, during the business, she started getting some Swedish customers, she was forced to talk. At the beginning when some Swedish customers came, the husband would be there to help but later she was the one doing everything even though the husband was there, I really feel, the business really helped developing her language skills. When Swedish ladies, they came for the hair issues, they would be asking the products for the hair, and everything was in Swedish. They were comfortable that they could understand her during their conversations in getting what they wanted. (Cousin to entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2017). Many times, I had to work even double at the shop during the last few years. I realize that it was a little too much for my husband as well when I have many customers than I expected and I did not come home as early as I have planned so I realized that it was a little bit more burden to him when it comes to domestic, he tried to take care of the kids when they are still little. When I came back home, I rushed straight to my family to give them hugs [. . .] we must help each other in order to make the family succeed and I was very aware of it (Entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2021).

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (Continued).

Second-order categories	Representative data on first order codes
Immigrants bouncing between domestic responsibilities and business growth	*Fostering inter-ethnic market expansion through host country's cultural immersion with the next generation* Sometimes she had a lot to do when there were many customers, she took the children to the shop. I think the kids were happy about it at the beginning and not happy when the business went well. Because sometimes they did not have time to spend with her since she was very busy. They wanted her to read bedtime stories like other Swedish kids (cousin to entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2015). We started realizing that the computer reparation service had much potential as it opened a window for the software development services and other add-ons to attract the local customers, so we decided to launch our brand of software development since we had connections with potential customers based on the reparation service. I thought that I lived in Sweden, I needed to make my Swedish connection, I needed to make Swedish business [. . .] not only thinking about me but thinking about, well, my son, my daughter in the future. Therefore, [. . .] I started to get a little bit more involved with my Swedish as I saw myself there was a necessity speaking Swedish. I would not say my Swedish is perfect, but I feel comfortable speaking Swedish to the customers (Entrepreneur 3a, Case 3, interviewed in 2015). *Absorbing host country's parenting practices while trying to be a successful entrepreneur* At the start of the business, the children were happy. But then they received less attention as the business expanded so she did not have much time with them, they started reacting. They were angry sometimes. (Sister to entrepreneur 2, case 2, interviewed in 2015). As a business owner, I have been showing what technology can do to our lives, so the company keeps on developing services based on that idea. As a father now, I need to think how my job can benefit the children and help me grow as a parent. I understand my parents more now, why they did what they did to me. I understand the responsibilities. So, I questioned myself, what was the best for my daughter? After all, she is Swedish, so I need to learn about her Swedish side, what she wanted, what she needed, not forcing her to take my Mexican side (Entrepreneur 3b, case 3, interviewed in 2015).

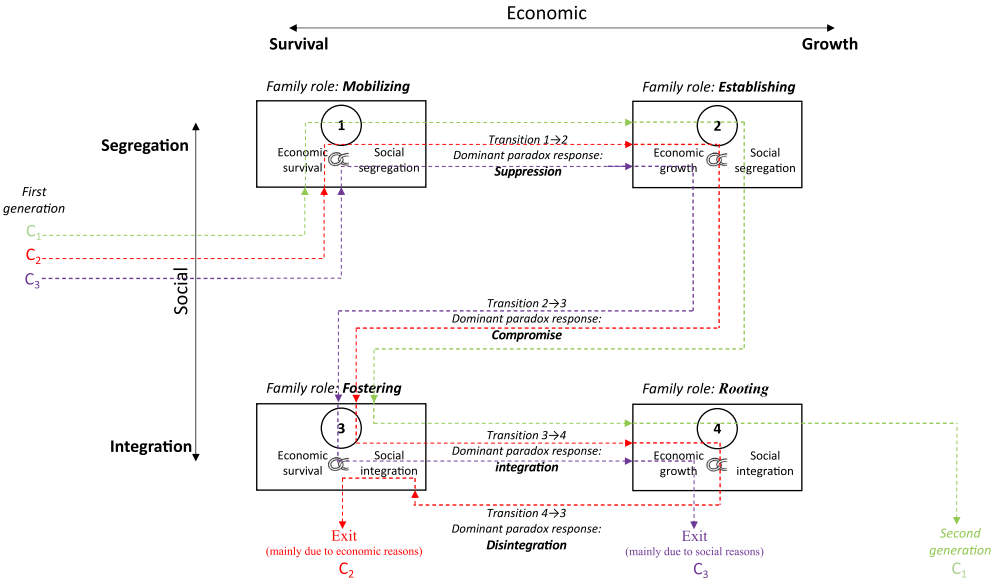

Figure 2. A taxonomy of the configuration for social-economic integration tension.

In the third layer, two types of tension formation exist: tension resulting from the demand for economic survival and social sustainability and tension resulting from economic growth and social integration demands. At this layer, social integration is prioritized and supported by the family, while in terms of economic integration, the immigrant-owned business is either growing or is merely maintaining economic survival.

Ensuring economic survival first and minimising social segregation second

At the start of the entrepreneurial journey, immigrant family business entrepreneurs often need to make ends meet; they might be socially excluded in many ways, no matter how long they have been in the host country. These entrepreneurs are often torn between prioritizing economic and social aspects. Thus, sustainability manifests contradictory yet interdependent economic and social demands. In this situation, entrepreneurs often mobilize family resources while taking responsibility to ensure economic survival as the first priority for the family. As a second priority, they try different ways to move away from social exclusion. In Case 1, the entrepreneurs mobilized family resources within both the extended and the nuclear family – but only in the host country, as their parents migrated with them to Sweden over 30 years ago. Such resources contributed to their success, and they were named Entrepreneurs of the Year in 2007 (archived data from a local newspaper).

The presence of family has both mitigating and amplifying roles in relation to the tension between social and economic integration. The former centres on providing relational and cognitive support for launching the business and for socialization, while the latter involves addressing family urgency by prioritizing the business over socialization in the host country. The mitigating role reveals how family provides relational and cognitive support for immigrants launching businesses through three main activities. First, immigrants act as role models for family members to overcome the liabilities of foreignness in the host country by establishing a business. Entrepreneurs in all three cases faced various foreignness-related liabilities in Sweden due to their non-Swedish-sounding names, ethnicity, and language proficiency. They all wanted to set good examples not only for their siblings but also for their children. For instance:

> In the early 2000s, I did not understand the Swedish language and the culture much. I had children to provide for [. . .] I had to do something to create a job for myself [. . .] In 2008, I started this business of African ethnic food and haircare. I was expecting the third baby too. I wanted to show my first daughter that it's okay to be pregnant and have a baby and still run a business [. . .] The business developed during my first daughter's teenage years. (Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2014)

Second, in the process of launching the business, when facing challenges – for example, experiencing difficulty connecting with the locals – immigrants often turn to their families for support. In all three cases, siblings, parents, and spouses acted as founding members to assist the entrepreneurs in setting up the business, from discussing business ideas to accompanying them to business meetings or financing their start-ups. In Case 2, the entrepreneur was barely connected to the locals; she relied on her husband for local connections, which were quite limited at the start of the business. The business required a considerable amount of her time (based on the first author's observations from field visits in 2013 and 2014), so she did not have time to invest in learning the Swedish language and interacting with locals:

> She often called us whenever she was being able to get a job or find support from local banks for her business ideas [. . .] After her university degree, she told us about what she wanted to do with African food and African hair care, as well as African clothes [. . .] We went back and forth on these ideas in several conversations [. . .] We connected her with our acquaintances who would help her to get the sample products. (A sister of Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2015)

The family supports immigrants in pursuing their entrepreneurial journey, but immigrant entrepreneurs also have certain responsibilities to the family – namely, taking care of both their nuclear and extended families financially. While the entrepreneurs in Cases 1 and 3 mainly had financial responsibility for their nuclear families, the entrepreneur in Case 2 bore responsibility for both the nuclear and the extended family:

> Many Swedes would rather employ other Swedes because there is less cultural clash [. . .] During the first years, the business did not make enough money to support me and my children, so I worked part-time during the day and ran the business in the afternoon [. . .] I did not have much time to learn Swedish. Every day, I noted ten Swedish words to learn. (Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2015)

This quotation indicates that family exercised an amplifying influence on the immigrant's business. Under this influence, immigrant entrepreneurs address family urgency by prioritizing the business over socialization. They devote most of their efforts to their business and neglect social activities.

Fostering economic growth first and overcoming social segregation second

Our study indicates that immigrant entrepreneurs establish home-grown connections for the family in the local environment to foster economic growth first and overcome social segregation second. On the one hand, the family exercises a mitigating influence that allows for the next generation's economic betterment and community integration. On the other hand, the family exercises an amplifying influence on the social versus economic integration tension by strengthening the contradiction between socialization and economic growth, as the family encourages the immigrant entrepreneur to focus on economic betterment over neighbourhood connections.

The family contributes to the next generation's economic betterment and neighbourhood connections when they act as frontline employees to ease the language and cultural barrier between the immigrants and the customers; this increases sales and helps the next generation pursue higher education for better career prospects. Language and cultural barriers might lead to increased difficulty in overcoming the liability of newness and earning legitimacy. This leads to a decrease in interest among potential customers due to communication barriers, which affects the company's profit. In all three cases, family members, such as spouses, acted as a communication bridge between immigrant entrepreneurs and potential customers to minimize the liability of newness and gain

legitimacy. For instance, in Case 2, the involvement of the Swedish husband in the business contributed significantly to creating a familiar environment to attract Swedish customers:

> In 2009, my Swedish customers did not understand my Swedish. So, I tried to bring my Swedish husband into the business [. . .] When my husband was there, my Swedish customers knew they could explain the problem to him [. . .] I had to show him different hair products in Swedish as he did not speak much English. By explaining to my husband different hair products in Swedish so that he could talk to my Swedish customers, I gradually taught myself how to speak better Swedish. Gradually, after 2012, I became more confident and fluent when communicating with customers in Swedish. (Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2015)

For many immigrants, economic betterment means that establishing a family-owned business would provide the necessary economic support for their children to pursue higher education and find good employment in the future. The business is the starting point of achieving economic betterment. Having their children attain good higher education – specifically, a local university degree – is the second step in achieving economic betterment and integrating into Swedish society professionally. For instance, Entrepreneur 1b shared this thought on the importance of education as a tool for social integration:

> When my father took my family to Sweden in the 1970s [. . .] we did not have a lot, so I focused on earning money as soon as I could [. . .] In the early 1990s, I established my first business, a restaurant, and then I established several other restaurants with my siblings in the 2000s. However, I tried to influence my siblings to get back to school to earn a degree in Sweden [. . .] I also encouraged my children to study at university to integrate into Swedish society in a different way. I do not want my children to take over my business [. . .] My parents always told us how important education was. (Entrepreneur 1b, interviewed in 2014)

Family, as a means of – and a priority for – economic betterment over neighbourhood connections, provides both support and responsibilities to encourage better economic performance. In our three cases, siblings and parents provided financial and networking support for immigrant entrepreneurs to offer additional services to the intra-ethnic community, allowing them to expand their market gradually to other regions and move out of their local enclave. Specifically, in Case 2, the entrepreneur's network of cousins and siblings in Malmö, Stockholm, and Småland (Entrepreneur 2 presented some of her relatives at a social event) provided her with potential customers of African origins, generating a significant profit for the business and expanding the customer base. The entrepreneur wanted to maximize the available resources from her ethnic network to grow the business, which slowed down the process of establishing connections to the community:

> From the start, I received a lot of support from the African community here as they provided me with their needs. I imported haircare products, as many African customers asked for these products [. . .] My cousin and my sister also connected me with African customers outside this town. During these early years, I mainly focused on African customers [. . .] For the local Swedish customers, I did not interact with them much because I spent most of my time on my business, my part-time job to support the business, and my children at home. (Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2015)

In Case 3, the spouses' network of immigrant residents provided the entrepreneurs with potential customers who worked and studied in the city. This generated a significant profit for the business and expanded the customer base. However, it also slowed down the process of establishing connections to the community.

Becoming a new parent makes immigrants realize that their residency in the host country and their connections to the local community might become more permanent, leading to the decision to expand their customer base to include local residents despite the challenge of language proficiency. In all three cases, all the entrepreneurs made business decisions to support being a parent. For example, upon becoming parents, the two entrepreneurs in Case 3 expanded their customer base to Swedish-speaking senior citizens (archived data from the company's website) who needed their computers repaired:

> After a few years, as our family grew from being a couple to being parents, our son and his future became our priority. We needed to have more income [. . .] I was enrolled in Swedish classes and gradually communicated in

> Swedish at work when we expanded our service to local clients who are over 50, as they are not that good at English. (Entrepreneur 3a, interviewed in 2015)

Approaching social integration first while maintaining economic survival

While prioritizing economic over social aspects, immigrant entrepreneurs realize that the growth of the business might stagnate with their limited proficiency in the local language, networks, and cultural knowledge. These limitations might also make immigrant entrepreneurs feel like they are not part of the local community. Recognizing the importance of being socially embedded in the host country, some immigrant entrepreneurs make it a priority to foster the family's attachment to their new home. In the short run, such a focus might cause the business to operate at the survival level, as attention is given to the social aspect. The family exercises an amplifying influence by enhancing neighbourhood connections while keeping the status quo in the business. This is realized through two main activities: the family supports new service expansion at the cost of profit to accommodate the immigrants' local embedding, and the immigrants exit the business in favour of local employment in order to prioritize domestic responsibilities. As an example of the first activity, the families of the entrepreneurs in all three cases acted as a source of encouragement and financial support in prioritizing embedding locally by channelling services to local customers, even if it might not be profitable in the short term. In Case 3, the entrepreneurs' parents in the home country supported the expansion of the business so that the entrepreneurs could create long-term connections in the local environment:

> During this process of Swedish language and citizenship acquisition [. . .] we wanted to focus on the local market to show that we existed in Sweden; therefore, we offered computer repair services to local clients and expanded to software development services for local companies [. . .] We needed to invest a lot for software development service, and our family company in Mexico supported us [. . .] Even if the new service was not successful, the family company in Mexico would actually keep working and doing things together. (Entrepreneur 3a, interviewed in 2015)

In the second activity, the family situation poses a trade-off between the social responsibilities and the business. The entrepreneur in Case 2 exited the business in favour of professional employment in order to prioritize domestic responsibilities while covering the basic needs of the family (archived data from allabolag.se). The passing of the entrepreneur's husband made it difficult for her to balance taking care of the business and taking care of her family:

> After 11 years living in Sweden [. . .] I succeeded in getting a Swedish driving license, completing nursing school, and working as a caregiver at an assisted living residence speaking Swedish [. . .] Unfortunately, my husband died two years ago, I did not make enough money running the shop [. . .] My husband helped me in the shop most of the time. I decided that I could sell the shop to somebody, and I focused on my children. (Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2016)

Boosting economic growth and social integration

As the immigrant entrepreneurs gradually become embedded in the local environment while the company focuses on exploiting the local market, the economic and social aspects synchronize and support each other towards co-development. Such co-development is achieved by the degree to which the immigrant entrepreneurs root the family's home-grown belongingness in the local environment. The family exercises a mitigating influence by providing support to foster business growth. At the same time, the family also exercises an amplifying influence by creating tensions for immigrant entrepreneurs between family matters and the business. In the three cases, the family members acted as middlemen to initiate market expansion to an inter-ethnic customer base:

> When I saw some good hair styles [. . .] I would provide her [the entrepreneur] with suggestions on types of hair extensions she can sell on the market to not only Africans but also Swedes, Asians, and other groups [. . .] She has adopted more Swedish traditions when we gathered instead of Cameroonian ones. In her store, the products

> became more tailored to Swedish customers, especially hair products, instead of for only Africans [. . .] She had more Swedish customers having hair extensions. (A sister of Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2015)

This amplifying influence also demonstrates how family members share domestic and business responsibilities with immigrant entrepreneurs as a way to facilitate the expansion of services to the inter-ethnic customer base. In all three cases, the entrepreneurs' children played a vital role in making them find a way to support both the business and the family. In Case 1, the children took over the business and developed a brand-new concept for the restaurant; the children are now the shared owners of the restaurant (data obtained from allabolag.se). For instance, the daughter of Entrepreneur 1b took some responsibility for running the restaurant:

> After almost forty years in Sweden [. . .] I'm very much Swedish. My children identify themselves as Swedish [. . .] We opened this restaurant to focus on the Swedish people [. . .] Then we opened another restaurant at the university too, addressing the needs of the locals and international students [. . .] After several years of running this restaurant since 2004 and the restaurant at the university since 2007, we needed more help from family, so my business partner's daughter also worked part-time in our restaurants. (Entrepreneur 1a, interviewed in 2015)

This amplifying influence also illustrates how immigrant entrepreneurs in all three cases absorbed the host country's parenting practices while trying to be successful entrepreneurs:

> If I worked very late, the children would come to the shop and spend time with me, and then they would go home. I also made a 15-minute rule that each of them would have that much time to spend with me when I came home [. . .] I gave every child their own time with me, just like other Swedish children. (Entrepreneur 2, interviewed in 2015)

Discussion

Our results suggest a theoretical model (see Figure 2) illustrating how immigrant family businesses experience the integration process by navigating different economic and social tensions and how the family shapes different outcomes in this process depending on the influences of the family dynamics. Our model of the social-economic integration tension is indicated by three types of immigrant family businesses: Case 1 (C1), Case 2 (C2), and Case 3 (C3). It depicts four transitions—suppressing social integration for economic growth, compromising economic growth for social integration, achieving socioeconomic balance through integration and social prioritisation at the expense of economic growth—across four stages that correspond with the patterns of the economic and social tensions in these three cases (Table 2). These four transitions showcase the entrepreneurs' dominant responses to the paradoxical economic versus social integration tension and illuminate the role of the family in this process.

Suppressing social integration for economic growth

This transition depicts the urgency of the immigrant entrepreneur family's economic situation and poses a challenge for the immigrant entrepreneurs to act upon while being aware of the interconnectedness between the economic and social aspects. Consistent with Zehra and Usmani (2023), these entrepreneurs often go through a stage of experiencing a significant level of social segregation and struggling to generate sufficient business income to take care of themselves and their families. This is typical for the initial stage of immigrant family businesses, when social and economic integration are equally lacking (e.g. Q. Evansluong, Ramirez Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergström 2019). To ensure economic survival and minimize social segregation, immigrant family entrepreneurs rely on family resources while embracing family responsibilities. Our evidence suggests that immigrant family entrepreneurs mobilize family resources. However, the types and degrees of family resources differ depending on the type of business and how dependent these entrepreneurs are on the family, as well as the location of the family (in the home or host country). For instance, Hu, Su, and Zhang (2021) suggest that immigrants use their family members' free labour, knowledge (human capital),

emotional support, and financial resources; other scholars suggest that these resources become available through family linkages (Berry 1997; Elo, Täube, and Servais 2022; Epstein and Heizler 2016; Q. Evansluong, Ramirez Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergström 2019; Thompson 2014) or through the knowledge that is created through the involvement of the family (Karayianni 2021).

In the second stage, immigrant entrepreneurs prioritize fostering economic growth while remaining socially segregated. During this stage, economic demands manifest more strongly than social interests. To foster economic growth, immigrant entrepreneurs rely on their families to establish home-grown connections in the host country. In line with Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. (2023) and Randerson et al. (2015), our findings show that the family exerts a mitigating influence by acting as a facilitator, bridging the next generation's economic betterment and neighbourhood connections. In this study, we also illustrate how the family exerts an amplifying influence by making the entrepreneurs prioritize the economic betterment of the family over establishing neighbourhood connections. Our findings further the knowledge of how cross-border family influences immigrant family businesses (e.g. Bagwell 2017; Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023; Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers 2023). In particular, some cases illuminate only the mitigating and amplifying influences of the nuclear family in the host country, whereas other cases depict the mitigating and amplifying influences of both the nuclear family in the host country and the extended family in the home country. This depends on the degrees of attachment between the immigrant entrepreneurs and their extended and nuclear families in the home and host countries.

From the first to the second stage of immigrant family businesses, there is a transition from economic survival to economic growth, while social segregation remains. This transition is supported by the following family activities, which we introduced in the previous section: *ensuring economic survival first and minimising social segregation second* and *fostering economic growth first and overcoming social segregation second*. We argue that these strategies indicate *suppression* as a response to the paradoxical tension between social and economic integration (Gamble, Parker, and Moroz 2020; Jarzabkowski and Lê 2017; Lewis 2000). More specifically, by exercising suppression, the actors (immigrant entrepreneurs and their families) try to dominate one element of the paradox (economic integration) while isolating or minimizing the negative impact of the other (social integration with regard to segregation). In doing so, the actors address the competing demands separately in time because while the demands of social and economic sustainability are interrelated, they also conflict (Hahn et al. 2014; McAdam, Clinton, and Dibrell 2020).

Our findings resonate with paradox theory, according to which such suppression – like other passive responses to paradoxes (Jarzabkowski and Lê 2017) – allows actors to save scarce resources (for example, the entrepreneurs' time and finances), works through the contradictions between different demands within their businesses, and mitigates the tension. However, this mitigation is temporally limited: the permanent prioritization of economic demands over social integration exacerbates socialization challenges in the future. Consequently, suppression is imperfect for navigating paradoxical tensions; it is used instead as a temporary relief and complemented by other 'remedies' (Jarzabkowski, Lê, and Van de Ven 2013).

Compromising economic growth for social integration

The transition from the second stage (economic growth and social segregation) to the third stage (economic survival and social integration) is typical for businesses; it is characterized by an imbalance between social and economic demands within the sustainability tension. Here, immigrant family entrepreneurs prioritize socialization over economic interests. In line with Karayianni (2021), Dabić et al. (2020), and Aldrich and Cliff (2003), our findings suggest that the family members – for instance, spouses in the host country and parents in the home country – exert amplifying influences by providing both financial and emotional support for immigrant entrepreneurs to focus on offering additional services to local residents at the cost of profit for the family business. We further our knowledge of the next generation's influences on immigrant entrepreneurship by suggesting that

the next generation, born in the host country, plays a core role in the entrepreneurs' decision to adjust or expand their business locally.

In the second stage, economic demands manifest more strongly, while socialization is prioritized over economic interests in the third stage. Because the role of the family transitions from establishing home-grown connections to fostering home-grown attachment, the degree of social integration becomes stronger when transitioning from the second stage to the third stage – moving from connections to attachment. As such, immigrant entrepreneurs compromise between economic and social aspects, as well as between the family and the business. According to paradox theory, this way of addressing the tension between social and economic integration indicates *compromise* as a response to paradoxes (Stål, Bengtsson, and Manzhynski 2022), which involves an attempt to deal with both competing demands (unlike with suppression) while being more inclined towards one of the demands (unlike with integration). In fact, *compromising* here is exercised via the family influence towards *approaching social integration first while maintaining economic survival*. At the same time, although social integration comes first, it is not separated from economic demands; rather, it is accompanied by them, as immigrant family entrepreneurs adopt a way of intensifying socialization that does not jeopardize economic survival. It is important to note that, in line with paradox theory, compromise is attributed as a passive response and could therefore provide temporally limited mitigation, similar to suppression (Jarzabkowski and Lê 2017). Consequently, compromise is considered as a temporary managerial remedy.

Achieving socioeconomic balance through integration

This transition illuminates the fourth stage of our process model; this combination of economic growth and social integration is less common. It occurs in the more advanced development stages of immigrant family businesses, when both economic and social demands are already largely addressed – although the contradiction between them can still manifest strongly. At this stage, immigrant entrepreneurs root for home-grown belongingness to boost economic growth and social integration. During this process, the family exerts both mitigating and amplifying influences: the family helps foster business growth and simultaneously poses challenges between domestic responsibility and business growth. Consistent with Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers (2023), Zehra and Usmani (2023), and Q. Evansluong, Ramirez Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergström (2019), our evidence shows that family members such as spouses, siblings, and parents act as initiators or middlemen to facilitate business growth by developing market expansion from intra-ethnic to inter-ethnic customer bases in the host country. Our findings also extend these studies by suggesting that family members – for instance, the children representing the next generation – can cause tensions between domestic responsibilities and business growth.

In the transition from the third stage (economic survival and social integration) to the fourth stage (economic growth and social integration), there is a shift from economic survival to economic growth, while social integration is strengthened as the role of the family changes from fostering home-grown attachment to rooting home-grown belongingness. This is associated with the aforementioned strategy of boosting economic growth and social integration, and it corresponds to integration as a managerial response to the paradoxical tension (Lewis and Smith 2014; Poole and Van de Ven 1989). According to paradox theory, integrating means addressing paradoxical demands simultaneously, even if this exacerbates potential conflicts between these demands. In our study, integration is made possible at the advanced stages, when immigrant family entrepreneurs have acquired sufficient resources and expertise to simultaneously embrace the social and economic demands of integration. However, such integration is not easy and comes with risks of failure or increased pressure from both demands (Berti and Simpson 2021; Jay 2013). Meanwhile, integration is also associated with synergistic effects when opposing demands mutually enrich and support each other (Jarzabkowski and Lê 2017). For example, the socialization activities of immigrants, which develop social sustainability, also help them find new customers for their businesses, thereby

addressing economic sustainability. At the same time, the increased intensity of the tension (i.e. pressure from the amplifying demands of both social and economic integration) can jeopardize businesses, making it difficult to balance the two demands further. Put differently, while integration is advisable, it brings about additional complexity in navigating paradoxical tensions. As we show below, this can lead to detrimental consequences for the business (Hahn et al. 2016; Manzhynski and Biedenbach 2023).

Social prioritisation at the expense of economic growth (disintegration)

This transition suggests the possibility of a regressive process. If economic and social integration cannot be maintained in an immigrant family business due to the high intensity of the tension, the business can revert from economic growth to economic survival or from social integration back to social separation. Indeed, as most paradoxical systems identify (Smith and Lewis 2011), achieving the highly intense equilibrium between economic growth and social integration (the fourth stage) is a dynamic rather than static process. For example, an entrepreneur who became a widow and a single parent while running the business (Case 2) was unable to continue focusing on maintaining economic growth for the business and decided to give more priority to the family. As a result, the business shifted back to economic survival mode. We label such a response to the paradoxical tension as *disintegration*, as it implies an opposite direction to integration. Put differently, it is a regressive movement to a less intense (but also less balanced) state of tension (pattern 3). Although we introduce disintegration as a novel type of managerial response to paradoxes, the prior paradox literature admits the possibility of such regressive shifts (e.g. Es-Sajjade, Pandza, and Volberda 2021; Jarzabkowski et al. 2022; Pradies et al. 2021). For instance, Jarzabkowski et al. (2022) show that critical external incidents can generate disequilibrium between previously balanced paradoxical demands. We thus argue that disintegration is a potential way of addressing paradoxes that appear as a response to increased intensity between competing demands (even balanced ones). It is also important to note that, as our data show, the family plays a central role in the disintegrating shift when there is a challenge in balancing between the family and the business.

Contributions

Our findings contribute to the debate on the dynamics of transnational family and immigrant entrepreneurship (e.g. Bagwell 2017; Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023; Vershinina et al. 2019). First, we contribute to the family and immigrant entrepreneurship literature by developing a taxonomy of how opposing demands can be juxtaposed when immigrant family entrepreneurs navigate the tension between economic and social integration. Our results add to the immigrant entrepreneurship literature by discussing the dynamics of immigrant family configurations and the roles of the family in economic and social integration. More specifically, it extends the results of Q. Evansluong and Ramírez-Pasillas (2019) and Zehra and Usmani (2023) by showing how the immigrant family influences the entrepreneurs' economic and social integration in the host country. Our work responds to the calls for further research on family across borders (Bagwell 2017; Q. V. D. Evansluong et al. 2023; Karayianni, Hadjielias, and Glyptis 2023; Ljungkvist, Evansluong, and Boers 2023) and a multiplicity of contexts (Shepherd et al. 2019; Welter 2011; Zahra, Wright, and Abdelgawad 2014) by showing how the dynamics of family across borders influence the two aspects of the integration process in the host country. Interestingly, we observe that family expansion – such as by becoming a parent – can motivate economic growth initially but later requires more focus on social integration, potentially hindering economic progress.

Second, we contribute to the sustainability literature by uncovering the process by which immigrant entrepreneurs navigate the social and economic demands of integration in their businesses. Based on our findings, we developed a process model that depicts four transitions that correspond with the patterns of economic versus social integration tensions in family businesses. We

show that depending on the type of tension configuration, immigrant entrepreneurs choose specific responses to this sustainability tension, trying to either prioritize certain demands at a time or simultaneously balance social and economic interests. Our findings resonate with the sustainability literature (Hahn et al. 2015, 2018; Stadtler and Van Wassenhove 2016) that calls for integrative and paradoxical perspectives on sustainability tensions to prevent oversimplification in addressing sustainability.

Conclusion

In this article, we explored how immigrant family entrepreneurs navigate tensions between economic and social integration and the role of family in this process. Our findings reveal that the tension manifests in four different types: (1) economic survival with social segregation, (2) economic growth and social segregation, (3) economic survival and social integration, and (4) economic growth and social integration. We demonstrate that entrepreneurs deal with the tension using several specific responses: suppression, compromise, integration, and disintegration. How immigrant family entrepreneurs respond to the tension depends on factors such as the entrepreneur's attachment to the host and home countries, the family configuration, and the business phase (start-up, expansion, growth, or exit).

This article has important practical implications. First, the responses to the social versus economic integration tension in our model can guide practitioners and policymakers in addressing socioeconomic sustainability in immigrant entrepreneurship. Suppression, compromise, and integration serve as practical examples of responses to the tension. Second, our study aids immigrant entrepreneurs in understanding how their families impact the navigation process – either mitigating or amplifying tensions – and how families can support social and economic sustainability. Finally, the findings inform policymakers in developing policy measures to support immigrant businesses, contributing to the SDGs Agenda 2030 (specifically, Goal 1 'no poverty', Goal 8 'decent work and economic growth', and Goal 10 'reduced inequalities').

We acknowledge several limitations of the study, which highlight avenues for further research. First, we investigated the issue of social and economic integration in immigrant family entrepreneurship by investigating the service sector. Different findings can be obtained in other sectors; hence, we encourage scholars to examine the issue of socioeconomic integration in other sectors and countries to provide more practical evidence. Second, in this article, we focus on only two specific aspects of social and economic sustainability – social integration and economic integration. However, social and economic sustainability includes other important issues that need further investigation, such as neighbourhood dynamics, gender equality, and social and economic innovation. Finally, we analysed social versus economic integration tension qualitatively, distinguishing between opposing poles. However, we acknowledge that a more rigorous and nuanced approach might be employed to evaluate the intensities of the tension. This might be evaluated quantitatively; indeed, recent work in paradox theory has started to apply such evaluations (Manzhynski and Biedenbach 2023). Studying the intensity of social and economic demands is important, as it can offer nuanced insights into how immigrant family businesses prioritize or balance social and economic goals under varying conditions. Therefore, we encourage scholars to explore the intensity of the social versus economic integration tension more thoroughly in future research.

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