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Refugee entrepreneurship motivations in Sweden and Germany: a comparative case study

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Abstract Refugee entrepreneurs can make a significant contribution to sustainable growth and development in host countries. However, comprehensive comparative studies of refugee entrepreneurial motivations are scarce, particularly in the absence of a theoretical framework on entrepreneurship motivation that is suitable for such contexts. This is a research topic that is increasingly of interest to scholars and policymakers working with refugee workforce integration, particularly in light of forecasted increases in global forced displacement over the next years. This paper tests and extends newly constructed entrepreneurship motivation measures, comparing person-related factors and the perceptions of environmental-related factors for Syrian refugee entrepreneurs in Sweden and Germany. The results indicate that their motivations differ between the two countries with respect to market conditions, the educational environment, dissatisfaction, and know-how. However,

refugee entrepreneurs in both countries have similar levels of entrepreneurial ambition and attitude and are motivated by similar perceptions of social environments and cultural norms. This paper identifies how entrepreneurship motivation differences could be considered by governments to better shape and inform host countries' programs and policies to improve refugee entrepreneurship and subsequent integration.

Plain English Summary Syrian refugees in Germany and Sweden differ in their motivation to pursue entrepreneurship, as evidenced by our comparative study, emphasizing the role of country context in shaping refugees' perception of environmental factors that influence their entrepreneurial motivation. We find that Germany-based refugee entrepreneurs are more motivated by market structures and educational offerings, have more know-how, and were less prone to negative motivation resulting from experiencing dissatisfaction (e.g. due to discrimination or lack of opportunities) compared with Sweden-based refugee entrepreneurs. The results emphasize the importance of policy reforms and initiatives that provide financial, administrative, and legal assistance to refugee entrepreneurs as they start and establish their businesses, as well as specialized entrepreneurship training and education programs. We call for future research on inter-country evaluations of institutional differences and migrant integration programs as well as trans-border exchange of lessons learned

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and success stories, particularly in-light of prognosed increases in global forced displacement over the next years.

Keywords Refugee entrepreneurship · Entrepreneurial motivation · Migration · Socioeconomic integration · Sweden · Germany

JEL Classification L26 · D91 · M13 · F22 · J15 · J24 · O57

1 Introduction

The arrival of large numbers of refugees in Europe in 2015 and 2016 created significant pressures on the domestic asylum systems in many European Union (EU) countries. Most of those refugees arrived primarily in Germany, with more than one million arrivals, and Sweden which had the highest number of asylum applications per capita (Chliova et al., 2018; Eurostat, 2019). This Syrian “refugee crisis”, as it was often called, resulted in renewed discussions among politicians and scholars as well as the public on the costs and impacts of this crisis (Naimo, 2016), particularly in light of the most recent wave of refugee arrivals from Ukraine and projections of increased global forced displacement rates over the next years, for instance due to climate change (Danish Refugee Council, 2023). Researchers have found that the employment of refugees has positive and long-term economic and social effects with high returns (e.g., Bach et al., 2017; Fratzscher & Junker, 2015). Thus, supporting the early integration of refugees into the labor market is vital (Brell et al., 2020). Both Germany and Sweden have promoted entrepreneurship among refugees because of the positive contribution such entrepreneurs can make to the labor market (OECD, 2019a; Rashid, 2018). In general, entrepreneurial ventures offer significant contributions to local economies, owing to the positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth (Schumpeter, 1934). For example, when integrated as entrepreneurs in host countries, refugees often create employment opportunities for other refugees (Hammarstedt & Miao, 2019). Moreover, entrepreneurship can help refugees develop a sense of social belonging and a stronger identity in new communities (Alrawadieh et al., 2018). Thus, supporting refugee

entrepreneurship may produce valuable socioeconomic benefits both for the refugees and for their host countries (OECD, 2019a).

Refugee entrepreneurship has received growing academic and political attention as a topic of its own (Abebe, 2023; Bizri, 2017; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020; Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Sandberg et al., 2019; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008). However, this field is still underdeveloped, and it is often studied together with immigrant entrepreneurship (Abebe, 2019; Freiling & Harima, 2019; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020), bearing in mind that the distinction between economic (voluntary) migrants and refugee (involuntary) migrants is often unclear (Francesco et al., 2022; Lee & Nerghes, 2018; Sajjad, 2018; Sasse & Thielemann, 2005). Part of the problem lies in the broad definition of a migrant (Lee & Nerghes, 2018; Sajjad, 2018), for instance defined as any person who has been outside the country of birth or of citizenship for 12 months or longer (Sasse & Thielemann, 2005). Economic, refugee, and family migrants all fall within this definition. The crux of the issue is the migrant’s motivation for leaving the country of origin – whether involuntary or voluntary (King & Lulle, 2016).

Additionally, the process of starting a new business can vary significantly amongst countries (Desai et al., 2020; Rashid, 2018; Terjesen et al., 2016), and what applies in different countries may vary substantially – based on personal, regional, and institutional factors (Kone et al., 2020). Thus, a country’s environment is expected to influence refugee entrepreneurial motivation, and more research is needed to explain those motivations in different contexts (Motoyama & Desai, 2021). This includes, for example, research on how a host country’s specific business environment influences refugee entrepreneurship (Kerr & Kerr, 2016) and research that addresses personal drivers of refugee entrepreneurship in the broader socioeconomic context (Desai et al., 2020). Studies on the impact of the heterogeneity of country-level factors on entrepreneurs, although previously conducted for entrepreneurship in general, are rare for refugee entrepreneurs (Desai et al., 2020). Of the studies available, many are insufficiently thorough as they are limited to simple, descriptive quantitative measures such as comparing the percentage of entrepreneurs in immigrant populations (Glinka, 2018). Indeed, analyses involving first-hand, quantitative data on refugee entrepreneurship

are limited (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2020) and quantitative comparative studies across different contexts are almost non-existent (Abebe, 2019). Therefore, comprehensive quantitative studies and focused analyses on everyday strategies for refugees' labor market integration are needed, especially intercountry studies that can inform and inspire political action and cross-country learning.

Progress in this research field has been moreover limited by the lack of a theoretical lens through which to assess entrepreneurship motivation in contexts of violence, which includes refugee and conflict entrepreneurship. The majority of entrepreneurship motivation studies in such environments have shallowly described, or even dismissed, the refugee entrepreneurship phenomena as “survivalist” or “necessity-driven”, building on context-irrelevant and/or highly descriptive theoretical constructs (Abdelnour & Abu Moghli, 2021). However, entrepreneurship cannot be explained only by single individual or environmental factors (Shane, 2003; Verheul et al., 2001). Wahlgrén and Virtanen (2015) conclude that entrepreneurship motivation is a mix of psychological, economic, and social factors. Even immigrants from the same ethnic group and country of origin may have different entrepreneurial motivations in the same host country (Kone et al., 2020). Thus, more studies are needed that address and incorporate various research positions (Dabić et al., 2020) as well as perspectives from other disciplines, such as psychology, where human motivation and behavior have been comprehensively studied and theorized as a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2015; Deci et al., 2017). Refugee entrepreneurs are motivated to start new businesses by opportunities and resources in their institutional, economic, cultural, and social environments, which need more thorough identification and validation to enable differentiated and targeted support mechanisms (Rashid, 2023). Influential factors for their business decisions include, besides resource availability, their spatiotemporal specific opportunity structures (Kloosterman, 2010). Given the unique conditions and circumstances surrounding (the emergence of) refugee entrepreneurship, studying the nuances pertaining to their motivation is necessary.

Thus, to understand and compare refugee entrepreneurship in Sweden and Germany, the two European countries which have received the largest numbers

of refugees in the EU since the refugee crisis of 2015 (POMEPS Studies 25, 2017), we compare person-related and environmental motivational factors for Syrian refugees in those two countries, addressing the following research question: “how does the motivation of refugees to become entrepreneurs differ between the host countries of Sweden and Germany?”. We therefore validated and extended the application of entrepreneurship motivation constructs that were first introduced in Rashid (2023). The adopted empirical and theoretical angle builds on the general theory of entrepreneurship (Shane, 2003) and the eclectic theory of entrepreneurship (Verheul et al., 2001). The general theory of entrepreneurship provides a conceptual framework that describes the entrepreneurial phenomenon as the nexus of the individual, opportunities, and favorable environmental conditions (Shane, 2003). The eclectic theory draws upon insights from psychology and sociology, focusing on the country level of analysis, and links to personal occupational choice (Verheul et al., 2001). In addition, we combine these two theories with Kloosterman's (2010) analytical framework, which allows us to compare different patterns in refugee entrepreneurship between countries, systematically combining the micro-level of the individual entrepreneur with the meso-level of the local opportunity structure, and then linking the result to the macro-institutional framework (Abebe, 2019; Kloosterman, 2010). The institutional framework is useful for international comparisons as it refers primarily to national differences (Klofsten & Jones-Evans, 2000).

This paper contributes to entrepreneurial policies and programs for better integration of refugees. As EU countries differ in their integration policies and institutional programs, analyses of their similarities and differences can highlight the key characteristics of refugee entrepreneurship in these countries (Levent & Nijkamp, 2009). Such studies can help EU national governments learn how other EU countries have addressed the labor market integration of refugees (Sak et al., 2017) and can be used as a reference in other global locations.

2 Refugee entrepreneurship between theory and practice

Social science scholars have produced much of the immigrant entrepreneurship research. However, refugee entrepreneurs were not in the focus of these

literatures (Romero & Valdez, 2016) and just a few studies address refugees' entrepreneurial decisions and actions (Abebe, 2019). Details on refugees' entrepreneurial motivations, challenges, and experiences are therefore needed (Embiricos, 2020). Entrepreneurship researchers in recent years have begun to turn their attention to the topic of refugee entrepreneurship. However, empirical evidence on the topic is limited – especially evidence from recent refugee crises in the EU (Embiricos, 2020). As a result, few conclusions have been drawn that can provide specific decision-making guidance. This lack of empirical research on refugee entrepreneurship means that decision-makers look for guidance from general immigrant entrepreneurship research (Bevelander, 2011; Naudé et al., 2017; Ruist, 2015). A comprehensive framework that incorporates the effects of refugee entrepreneurship on the individual as well as on social, economic, and political areas is needed (Barth & Zalkat, 2020; Dabić et al., 2020; Wagner & Sternberg, 2004).

Many refugees wish to facilitate or expedite their integration into their host countries by becoming entrepreneurs (Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006). They are more likely to become entrepreneurs than other kinds of migrants (e.g., economic or family migrants) and their native-born counterparts, often because they find fewer employment opportunities (e.g., Francesco et al., 2022; Kone et al., 2020; Levent & Nijkamp, 2009) and because of the entrepreneurial culture and ambition that many refugees bring with them. Syrian refugees, for example, bring a long history of entrepreneurial experience from a country with a high level of entrepreneurship (Haddad et al., 2010). Unresolved, however, is the extent to which refugees are pushed disproportionately into entrepreneurship – as is sometimes suggested (Desai et al., 2020). Thus, Desai et al. (2020) found that refugee entrepreneurship research requires a unique understanding of, and approach to, issues that immigrant entrepreneurship research does not satisfactorily address. According to Wauters and Lambrecht (2006) and Dabić et al. (2020), separate analyses of refugee entrepreneurs are therefore justified by the additional challenges and barriers they encounter in establishing their businesses. For example, refugee entrepreneurs are more likely to fail because of various barriers (e.g., the lack of local knowledge,

language skills, and experience with the complexity of host countries' business rules and regulations (Rashid, 2018; Rath & Swagerman, 2015)). Additionally, refugee entrepreneurs may have very different sources of human and social capital compared with other immigrant entrepreneurs (Bizri, 2017; Dabić et al., 2020; Roth et al., 2012; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006, 2008). Refugee migrants who emigrate in forced circumstances typically bring fewer resources with them, having left all or most of their assets and networks behind (Andersson & Jutvik, 2018). Their lack of resources means that they likely encounter greater challenges and barriers than other immigrants (Bevelander, 2011; Brell et al., 2020; Connor, 2010; Roth et al., 2012; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008) in obtaining credit as well as navigating bureaucracy and formal procedures (Freiling & Harima, 2019; Naudé et al., 2017). Moreover, they are more likely to have experienced psychological trauma before and/or during the migration experience (Brell et al., 2020; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008).

Desai et al. (2020), for example, present an overview of future directions in refugee entrepreneurship research which focuses on refugee movement trends, refugee entrepreneurs' lived experiences, and the research opportunities that can produce a refugee entrepreneurship knowledge base. Such contextualized research on refugee entrepreneurial motivations, characteristics, and outcomes can better inform a wide variety of stakeholders. Desai et al. (2020) emphasize the need to address refugees' choices and economic behavior in different institutional contexts, including in governance frameworks that influence their economic engagement. Researchers have found significant differences amongst entrepreneurs based on context, specifically among necessity-driven entrepreneurs (Rubach et al., 2015). Differences in institutional arrangements are associated with variations in both the rate and type of entrepreneurial activity in different countries (Jang et al., 2020; Klofsten & Jones-Evans, 2000; Stenholm et al., 2013). Entrepreneurial activities can also differ between regions within countries (Audretsch et al., 2019; Wagner & Sternberg, 2004). Government policies and programs that support entrepreneurship influence how potential entrepreneurs perceive business environments.

3 Refugees and refugee entrepreneurship in Sweden and Germany

The European Commission (the Commission) recognizes the significant contribution that refugee entrepreneurs can make to sustainable employment growth, economic development, and social integration (Rath & Swagerman, 2015). The Commission views entrepreneurship in general, and migrant entrepreneurship especially (including refugee entrepreneurship as the recent immigrants in European countries were largely refugees (Rath & Swagerman, 2015)), as an economic growth vehicle that can reduce labor market scarcity (European Commission 2016). Numbers vary, but by most accounts, several million refugees in recent years have fled Asia, the Middle East and (North) Africa seeking residency, safety, and work in the EU. Between 2011 and 2016, approximately one million Syrians applied for asylum in the EU (UNHCR, 2017) – the largest numbers in Germany (522,275) and Sweden (111,199) (Statista, 2023; POMEPS Studies 25, 2017). Germany, Sweden, France, and the UK were their preferred destinations. Many EU countries have made considerable efforts to ‘fast-track’ the workforce integration of the Syrian refugees who arrived during the recent refugee crisis (Chliova et al., 2018).

According to a 2019 United Nations report (Migration Policy Institute 2019), the share of the total population with refugee status in that year was 2.9% in Sweden and 1.7% in Germany. In 2016, most of the refugees entering Sweden and Germany came from Syria (Konle-Seidl, 2018). Sweden and Germany were attractive to these refugees as destinations for various reasons. For example, a common refugee comment (quoted in a focus group study with 456 respondents who had applied for asylum in Sweden during 2015–2016) was the following: “*This country has been at peace for a long time, and it is a good country for children to grow up in*” (Rojas, 2016). There are significant differences among both host countries (Brell et al., 2020). For example, with initial, strong public support, Germany relatively quickly adapted its political and administrative framework to integrate refugees into its labor market (Degler et al., 2017). In general, however, civil society in Germany has been more involved in refugee integration than civil society in Sweden (Joyce, 2018). Thus, there is large individual heterogeneity in EU immigration and

refugees’ development outcomes (Naudé et al., 2017). Slavnic (2013) called for more research that studies the differences between Sweden and other industrialized countries and how opportunity structures influence entrepreneurs with immigrant backgrounds.

Refugees migrate involuntarily to escape, for example, violence, political unrest, and natural disasters. Thus, they differ from voluntary immigrants who migrate, for example, in the hope of merely improving their economic and social conditions (OECD, 2019b). For both groups, labor market regulations and legal frameworks influence their economic participation in their host countries (Schuster et al., 2013). For example, refugees in Germany could work legally after three months of residency (Bochanan, 2015). In 2013, Sweden was the first EU country to offer Syrian refugees fleeing civil war permanent residency rather than temporary residency (although subsequently, the Swedish national government ended this policy). Nevertheless, refugees in Sweden with a temporary residency permit had higher employment rates in the short-term than refugees with a permanent residency permit (Andersson & Jutvik, 2018). Such country-specific differences influence the economic activities of refugee entrepreneurship in many ways (Desai et al., 2020). Countries have different labor market policies, legal and financial institutions, and laws and regulations which influence refugee entrepreneurship directly and indirectly. These contextual factors at the country-level have inspired many researchers as well as policymakers to call for the establishment of conditions more favorable to entrepreneurial success. This heterogeneity among countries has not been studied closely in refugee entrepreneurship research (Desai et al., 2020).

Other analyses of refugees and refugee entrepreneurship, in several EU countries, reveal both similarities and differences in their policies and programs (Blanchflower, 2000; Johnson & Shaw, 2019; Levent & Nijkamp, 2009; Verheul et al., 2001). Western European countries have strongly regulated market economies in which their welfare systems have rather different effects on the opportunity structures available to refugee entrepreneurs (Kloosterman, 2010) than in some other European countries. Differences are also found between Southern and Northern European countries as well as among Northern European countries themselves (Levent & Nijkamp, 2009). For example, the share of non-Western entrepreneurs is

higher than the share of native-born entrepreneurs in Denmark and Sweden although not in Germany. Some research suggests that geography is a relevant factor when examining refugee entrepreneurship (Desai et al., 2020; Eriksson & Rataj, 2019), especially when entrepreneurial efforts and successes differ amongst countries (Baltaci, 2017; Middermann & Rashid, 2019; Rashid, 2018).

However, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2019), Sweden ranks above Germany when a variety of employment and entrepreneurship opportunities are considered. In fact, Germany has one of the lowest early-stage social entrepreneurial activity rates in the EU. Germany also ranks last amongst EU countries in terms of the new-business-ownership rate (Bosma et al., 2016). According to Levent and Nijkamp (2009), Germany presents quite a different picture compared to the Nordic countries with its strong native-born entrepreneurial activity and its low percentage of refugee entrepreneurs. By contrast, companies led by foreign-born entrepreneurs in Sweden are more growth-oriented than companies led by native-born entrepreneurs (The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth 2020). The Sweden-Germany comparison presents a mixed picture when refugee employment in Sweden is closely examined. A report from 2018 found that on average, after only one year of residency only 40% of male refugees and 20% of female refugees in Sweden were employed, while in Germany about 20% of refugees had found employment within the same timeframe (Joyce, 2018). According to The Economist (2017), in 2015, foreign-born individuals founded 44% of newly registered businesses in Germany, and 20% of people involved in entrepreneurial activity in Germany were born abroad. Nevertheless, refugees generally represent only 1% of the German workforce whereas refugees generally represent 2.2% of the Swedish workforce (Konle-Seidl, 2018).

Germany appears to have been more proactive than Sweden in developing and offering refugees training and education programs (Trines, 2019) and in setting targeted refugee employment goals (Konle-Seidl, 2018). As many as 17% of refugees in Sweden start their own businesses because they are unable to secure other employment (Backman et al., 2020). Few studies (Barth & Zalkat, 2020; Hammarstedt, 2010) found that several factors in Sweden explain the obstacles to entrepreneurship. Some obstacles – the

language barrier, minimal familiarity with Swedish institutions, and limited knowledge of business rules and regulations – are not unique to Sweden. However, these researchers also found that Sweden's integration and public services are not sufficiently adaptive to the needs of refugees. In Germany, by contrast, the use of business incubators has had a positive influence on refugee entrepreneurs' economic embeddedness, thus contributing to their social integration (Meister & Mauer, 2019). In addition, social enterprises in Germany have also played important roles in refugee inclusion efforts (Embiricos, 2020). For example, in Berlin, local aid organizations and action groups staffed by volunteers supported refugees who planned to start their own businesses though supporting with financial resources, early-stage information, and connections with professional networks of other entrepreneurial ventures, thus increasing new entrepreneurs' social capital (Ager & Strang, 2008; Bizri, 2017; Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016; Ssewamala & Sherraden, 2004; Trauner & Turton, 2017). This activity has instructional value for other EU countries (Engström, 2020). According to Joyce (2018), Sweden has much to learn from the German experience with refugees' integration.

4 Entrepreneurial motivation

Entrepreneurial motivation, which is a prominent topic in entrepreneurship research, addresses the factors that drive entrepreneurs to start their own businesses (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Those include personal as well as environmental factors. The former include individual-level characteristics and human capital assets (e.g., attitude, skills, education, experience, and psychological states and traits) that influence entrepreneurial decisions (e.g., Obschonka et al., 2018; Sahin et al., 2009). On the other hand, environmental factors consider how the perception of and experience with institutional structures and social, economic, and political climates influence these decisions through shaping available opportunities (e.g., Wagner & Sternberg, 2004). Indeed, research has shown that opportunity structures are influenced by institutions, social norms, and direct State intervention in labor markets and the enactment of businesses regulations (e.g., Ben-Hafaïedh et al., 2023; Karim et al., 2023). Therefore, the opportunity structure

theory can be used to explain comparative entrepreneurial patterns (Kloosterman, 2010).

Researchers have long studied human motivation in numerous ways and under various conditions. Such research aims to understand what drives the individual, why an individual acts in a certain way rather than another, and why different individuals respond differently to similar stimuli or changes (Deci & Ryan, 2015; Maslow, 1943). However, entrepreneurship researchers have historically over-simplified motivation for the dichotomy of necessity versus opportunity. This has had dangerous implications in terms of disregarding the role and contribution of entrepreneurs operating in disadvantaged contexts and shedding less light on their experiences and activities (Welter & Smallbone, 2011; Welter et al., 2017). Other scholars have traditionally either focused on individual-level or environmental factors that influence entrepreneurial motivation. However, in parallel, few scholars established more nuanced frameworks to study entrepreneurship motivation, such as the general theory of entrepreneurship (Shane, 2003) or the eclectic theory of entrepreneurship (Verheul et al., 2001).

Shane (2003) explains that the entrepreneurial phenomenon originates at the nexus of the individual, the opportunity, and favorable environmental conditions, while Verheul et al. (2001)'s work examines the interplay of individual-level and environmental-level factors (supply and demand) on entrepreneurship. Shane (2003) and Verheul et al. (2001) claim that entrepreneurship cannot be explained merely by individual or environmental factors or by the absence of either. Hence, an individual's decision to engage in entrepreneurial activity is the result of environmental factors that are perceived differently depending on the influence of person-related factors. The reasons people become entrepreneurs (rather than employees) depend on supply and demand as factors that influence the individual's risk-profile. Hence, Shane's and Verheul et al.'s theories conclude that differences in environmental conditions and entrepreneurs' personal attributes influence their decision-making processes, including the decision to pursue entrepreneurship. However, those theories have been rarely tested outside of highly stable, wealthy country contexts or in minority and disadvantaged populations.

Combining this approach with Kloosterman's (2010) analytical framework allows us to compare

different patterns in refugee entrepreneurship between countries. The mixed embeddedness approach combines two actors – the individual entrepreneur and the opportunity structure – in a comprehensive analytical framework. The framework explains different patterns in migrant entrepreneurship in countries by combining the micro-level of the individual entrepreneur with the meso-level of the local opportunity structure, and then linking the result to the macro-institutional framework (Kloosterman, 2010; Meister & Mauer, 2019; Ram et al., 2008).

Thus, entrepreneurship motivation is a mix of several factors, including psychological, economic, and socio-normative ones (Wahlgrén & Virtanen, 2015). For example, refugees in the same host country who belong to the same ethnic group and country of origin may differ in their entrepreneurial motivations (Kone et al., 2020). Refugee entrepreneurs are motivated by opportunities and resources in their institutional, economic, cultural, and social environments (Rashid, 2023). The following two sections explain those factors in more detail.

4.1 Person-related motivational factors

Much research deals with the topic of refugee and immigrant entrepreneurial motivation at the individual level. Rashid (2023) cites 59 scholarly publications on entrepreneurship motivation and determinants that identify attitude, ambition, dissatisfaction, and know-how as person-related factors (see Table 1). According to Baltaci (2017), motivational factors in entrepreneurship ('entrepreneurial tendencies,' in their words) can be classified into five themes: achievement, independence, creativity, risk taking, and self-control. Other researchers have identified income security, financial success, recognition and status, family and roles, dissatisfaction, and community and social position as key motivational factors (Di Vita et al., 2019; Fayolle et al., 2014; Sandberg et al., 2019; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006). Mawson and Kasem (2019), in a study of Syrian refugees in the UK, identified a range of human push and pull factors that influence entrepreneurial decisions: autonomy, flexibility, personal satisfaction, and economic self-sufficiency. Obschonka et al. (2018), in a study of refugees, point to certain personality factors that

Table 1 Motivational factors measured by the 42-item questionnaire

Person-related Factors			Environmental-related Factors		
Motivation-al Factors	Questionnaire Measures	Cronbach's α	Motivational Factors	Questionnaire Measures	Cronbach's α
Attitude	Confidence	0.80	Social Influence	Entrepreneurial Social Circle	0.77
	Innovativeness			Social Support	
	Passion			Social Obligations	
	Risk Taking			Family Tradition	
	Perseverance			Role Model	
Ambition	Self-Improvement	0.74	Market Conditions	Informal Financial Support	0.80
	Accomplishment			Networks	
	Autonomy			Regulatory Benefits	
	Control			Legal Structures	
	Flexibility			Safety and Security	
	Need for Challenge			Economic Stability	
	Financial Gain			Formal Financial Support	
Dissatis-faction	Discrimination	0.67	Educational Environment	Expansion Opportunities	0.81
	Unemployment			General Market Demand	
	Family Need			Ethnic Market Demand	
	Financial Difficulties			Education System	
Know-How	Talent	0.70	Cultural Norms	Training Availability	0.68
	Entrepreneurship Training Experience			Programs for Community	
	Formal Education			Entrepreneurial Origin Culture	
	Employment Experience			Entrepreneurial Host Culture	
	Start-up Experience			Cultural Acceptance	

are characteristic of entrepreneurs, namely proactivity and resilience, as well as entrepreneurial cognition. Bullough et al. (2014) and Odoardi et al. (2018) describe entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a motivational factor. Given the contextual differences between Sweden and Germany, it is expected that individual-level attributes of refugee entrepreneurs would therefore differ between the two countries. This is due to the fact that personal attributes are highly shaped by the environment (Welter & Smallbone, 2011) and that the expression of even once-thought stable psychological traits can be influenced (promoted or suppressed) by contextual factors (Judge & Zapata, 2014; Tett and Guterman, 2000; Yasir et al., 2017).

4.2 Environmental-related motivational factors

Other research focuses on environmental conditions (as perceived by individuals) as important motivational factors for human entrepreneurial behavior. Researchers posit that the entrepreneurial environment is shaped by cultural factors (Kreiser et al., 2010), social factors (Stephan & Uhlaner, 2010), economic factors (Wagner & Sternberg, 2004), and political factors (Muhammad et al., 2016), as well as financial structures and the educational landscape (see Table 1). The claim is that these environmental-related motivational factors are largely country-level determinants of entrepreneurial activity (García, 2014; Peren Arin et al., 2015; Thai & Turkina, 2014;

Velilla & Ortega, 2017). Busenitz et al. (2014) call for more research on the environmental influences on the emergence and development of new entrepreneurial opportunities. Other researchers propose that variations in the environmental context influence various individual-level characteristics of entrepreneurs (e.g., Felício et al., 2016; Middermann & Rashid, 2019; Motoyama & Desai, 2021; Rashid et al., 2020; Tett & Burnett, 2003). According to the aforementioned literature on the differing institutional and societal environmental conditions between Germany and Sweden, we study if refugee entrepreneurs in Sweden and Germany differ in their environmental-related entrepreneurship motivation factors.

Neither person-related nor environmental-related motivational factors alone explain the refugee immigrant's entrepreneurial decision. Therefore, research on this decision-making process should combine both angles. Because of the many variations between refugee entrepreneurs and in their environments, we may expect to identify a wide range of person-related and environmental-related motivational factors influencing their entrepreneurial decisions (Desai et al., 2013; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2008). That expectation fuels our research design, which empirically examined how the motivation of refugees to become entrepreneurs differs between the host countries of Sweden and Germany at a deeper level, as explained in the following section.

5 Data and methodology

Qualitative research approaches dominate in refugee entrepreneurship research (Abebe, 2019; Harima et al., 2019; Mawson & Kasem, 2019; Shneikat & Alrawadieh, 2019), while quantitative and mixed-method research approaches are less common. Only a few studies have primarily obtained quantitative data directly from refugee entrepreneurs through surveys (Obschonka et al., 2018; Wauters & Lambrecht, 2006). Additional quantitative studies are needed that develop themes from earlier studies in new settings (countries, industries, and communities) (Alrawadieh et al., 2018). Thus, we analyzed the entrepreneurship motivations of 125 Syrian refugees in two host countries: 60 individuals in Sweden and 65 individuals in Germany. We collected personal and background data on the participants: gender, education, and type

of business. We explained the aim of our research to the participants and guaranteed their anonymity in all aspects of the research, including publications.

5.1 Questionnaire design

In our study, which builds on previous research by Rashid (2023), we compared eight motivational factors categorized into two broad groups: environmental-related motivational factors relating to the individual's perception of their (institutional) surroundings and person-related motivational factors relating to (psychological) human capital (see Table 1). Those motivational factors were constructed following a multi-step process developed by Rashid (2023). First, she conducted a comprehensive systematic review of entrepreneurship motivation literature, with a particular focus on studies on entrepreneurship in conflict and forced migration, resulting in a dataset of 82 peer-reviewed papers. Then, she identified 42 specific personal and environmental motivational drivers of entrepreneurship, guided by the eclectic theory of entrepreneurship (Verheul et al. 2001) and Wagner and Sternberg's (2004) model of entrepreneurial activity determinants. A 42-item questionnaire in both the Arabic and English language was then created to test those motivational drivers on a sample of 139 Syrian entrepreneurs in Damascus and Berlin. Those were carefully analyzed to identify patterns and categories, resulting in eight overarching motivational dimensions/factors.

Those eight factors have been constructed as follows. *Attitude* involves personal characteristics such as passion, perseverance, and confidence, backed by literature such as Canedo et al. (2014) and Sepulveda & Bonilla (2014). *Ambition* refers to motivational drivers pertaining to goal achievement, building on Langevang et al. (2012); Kungwansupaphan and Leihaothabam (2016), and many others. *Dissatisfaction* refers to motivational drivers related to (the fear of) negative experiences (e.g. Masurel et al., 2002; Thompson, 2016), while *know-how* concerns the aspiring entrepreneur's professional experience and qualifications (e.g. Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2011; Yiu et al., 2014). With respect to factors relating to the entrepreneurs' environment, *Social Influence* concerns social norms arising from the entrepreneur's community embeddedness, for instance drawing on Noguera et al. (2013) and Giulietti et al. (2012).

Market Conditions concerns the entrepreneur's evaluation of economic opportunities and market challenges, drawing for instance on Bozzoli et al. (2013) and Simón-Moya et al. (2014). The *Educational Environment* refers to the entrepreneur's perception of external opportunities to accumulate and harness human capital resources (e.g. Lim et al., 2016; Méndez-Picazo et al., 2015), while *Cultural Norms* refers to the role of macro-level social norms and cultural trends that may shape an entrepreneur's motivation, both in the entrepreneur's culture of origin and that of the host context (e.g. Castaño et al., 2015; Urbano et al., 2011). These factors do not only validate the value of the eclectic theory of entrepreneurship (Verheul et al. 2001), the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2015), and Wagner and Sternberg's (2004) model value in the refugee context, but also extend the mixed embeddedness approach of Kloosterman (2010). We do this through detailing specific variables pertaining to the micro-, meso-, and macro-level motivational scape, uncovering interactions amongst those specific motivational drivers, and providing a comparative extension to the refugee context.

Thus, to research the participants' entrepreneurial motivations in Sweden and Germany, we used the same 42-item questionnaire developed by Rashid (2023) with a subset of the German sample from Rashid (2023), in addition to data collected separately from Sweden. Responses to the questionnaire were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). Each factor, which consisted of three to eight questionnaire items, was validated by the calculation of Cronbach's α values. The test computes the correlations between different components of a construct, "splitting data in two in every possible way and computing the correlation coefficient for each split. The average of these values is equivalent to Cronbach's alpha." (Field, 2007, p.674). Table 1 presents the eight entrepreneurial motivational factors and their constituting variables/questionnaire items.

5.2 Data collection

To compare refugee entrepreneurial motivations in Germany and Sweden, we studied refugees who came from a similar background and have the same reason for migration in the same migration timespan.¹

In other words, these were all Syrian citizens who left Syria in 2015–2016 in the aftermath of the Syrian civil war, mostly crossing the Mediterranean to the European continent, and continuing their journey to western Europe before applying for asylum in the final country of destination (in this case Germany or Sweden). We sent the questionnaire electronically and in hard copy to refugee entrepreneurs in both countries. Using Google Docs, we provided the questionnaire in the following languages: Arabic, Swedish, and English for the refugee entrepreneurs in Sweden; Arabic and English for the refugee entrepreneurs in Germany. Data for the Swedish participants was collected between August and December 2018; data for the German participants was collected between July and December 2017.

For the Swedish phase of the data collection, we began by contacting business incubators and integration projects. As the EU's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) posed some obstacles to this method of data collection and because we study hard-to-reach groups who are unwilling to share their experiences (Glinka, 2018), we then turned to our personal networks and relationships in the Syrian refugee community (Bullough et al., 2014). Using snowball sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; McKenzie & Mistiaen, 2009; Williams & Krasniqi, 2018), we identified potential participants. We also used social media to contact potential participants (Fenner et al., 2014; Kayam & Hirsch, 2012; Merolli et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2012). We provided information and the link to the survey to groups that include refugees, other immigrants, and new arrivals to Sweden.

The Internet today permeates all facets of daily life—professional, individual, family, and society (Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). Therefore, we posted a link to the survey on various Facebook pages used by Syrian refugees. They and other immigrant groups in Sweden use Facebook to provide/seek various kinds of assistance in their host country and to market their products and services. We found that with Facebook, we could reach many potential study participants with minimum cost and effort. However, it should be mentioned that this approach could have potentially been a source of

¹ Please refer to the report "Syrian refugees during the migration crisis 2015 (Eurostat, 2019)" for more details on the

Footnote 1 (continued)
demographics and migration trajectories of asylum seekers from Syria in Europe.

respondent-related common method bias (Kock et al, 2021). For example, the respondent's experience as a refugee may have affected the ability to retrieve the information needed to answer the questionnaire. It is not without difficulty to control for respondent-related sources of bias when addressing refugees as respondents, which is important to acknowledge with regards to data integrity and sensitivity. However, the participants who responded appeared at ease with this online format in which their anonymity was guaranteed. Researchers have observed that online (e.g., Facebook) surveys seem to elicit responses that are more honest and less edited than face-to-face (researcher-to-respondent) surveys (e.g., Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). Although an online survey cannot be representative of an entire community or group, we attempted to increase accessibility and representativeness as much as possible. We had no restrictions on respondent participation if the basic qualifying criteria were met. This data collection procedure is considered valid in settings of fragility and vulnerability where random sampling is unrealistic or simply not possible (Bullough et al., 2014). Our initial sample included 85 responses. After removing non-Syrian entrepreneurs from the sample, we had 60 usable responses (c. 70% of responses received) for the study.

For the German phase of the data collection, we assembled a random sampling of entrepreneurs identified by the network of the LOK-STARTupCAMP International refugee entrepreneurship support organization. This organization is one of the largest and most well-known refugee integration support initiatives in Berlin. Accordingly, a more systematic sampling approach was possible in Germany due to the existence of relevant networks and institutions, although it was limited to the capital city of Berlin. From a list of 153 refugee entrepreneurs supported by the network, 65 Syrian refugee entrepreneurs responded to the questionnaire (c. 42%) and were included in our study. The reason for the unusually high response rate may be that the participants were contacted by personal email, WhatsApp messages, and in-person meetings at community networking events. In both locations, we acknowledge the potential of social desirability bias (Nederhof, 1985), where respondents may have provided more favorable responses given the nature of the topic.

Although the data collection method differs between the two countries, both approaches have chosen the same target group (Syrian refugees who

arrived in Sweden and Germany during the refugee crisis in 2015–2016). Following a pragmatist philosophy, it was not possible to employ the same sampling strategy in both contexts, but we nevertheless expect the samples to be similar enough to allow for a valid statistical comparison.

5.3 Data analysis

We used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the questionnaire responses. We followed the methodology used by Middermann and Rashid (2019) for this analysis. After basic descriptive statistics were computed, a Pearson Chi-Square test was conducted to assess the potential variation of demographic factors (i.e., gender and education level) between the two samples. We then conducted a means comparison (Independent Sample T-Test) to compare the mean scores on the motivational factors – Swedish responses vs. German responses (see Field, 2007). The tested variables largely showed a normal distribution, which justifies the employment of the Independent Sample T-Test. However, because the sampling procedure in Sweden did not take the traditional random approach, it may be argued that some bias is present in the normality of the sample. Therefore, a non-parametric comparative analysis was conducted to confirm the Sample T-Test results. The results of the Mann–Whitney-U Test closely reflected the results of the Independent Sample T-Test, further strengthening our results.

6 Findings

6.1 Demographic statistics for the participants

The 60 Sweden participants are Syrian (63% women, 37% men). Most of these participants have a university degree. They started their businesses in different sectors. The 65 German participants are Syrian (10% women, 90% men). Most of these participants have a university degree. They also started their businesses in a variety of sectors. Table 2 presents the demographic statistics for the 125 participants in the study. The Pearson Chi-Square test indicated significant gender differences ($p < 0.001$) but no differences at the educational level. This may indicate that the results are influenced by the impact of gender, which

Table 2 Demographic statistics for the Swedish and German participants

Demographic Statistics						
Gender						
	Men			Women		
Sweden	37%			63%		
Germany	90%			10%		
Education						
	University study		High school	Elementary school		No school
Sweden	59%		35%	6%		0%
Germany	69%		24%	5%		0%
Type of business						
	IT	Healthcare	Food and agri-business	Social business	Construction and engineering	Other
Sweden	10%	6%	27%	3%	10%	44%
Germany	5%	0%	20%	5%	7%	30%

Table 3 T-Test results for the eight motivational factors

Motivational Construct	Significance (T-Test, 2-tailed)		Mean Difference
Attitude	Equal variances assumed	0.11	-0.33
	Equal variances not assumed	0.11	-0.33
Ambition	Equal variances assumed	0.40	-0.15
	Equal variances not assumed	0.40	-0.15
Dissatisfaction	Equal variances assumed	0.03*	0.55
	Equal variances not assumed	0.03*	0.55
Know-How	Equal variances assumed	0.00**	-0.80
	Equal variances not assumed	0.00**	-0.80
Social Influence	Equal variances assumed	0.70	-0.09
	Equal variances not assumed	0.70	-0.09
Market Conditions	Equal variances assumed	0.05*	-0.44
	Equal variances not assumed	0.05*	-0.44
Educational Environment	Equal variances assumed	0.00**	-0.97
	Equal variances not assumed	0.00**	-0.97
Cultural Norms	Equal variances assumed	0.17	-0.38
	Equal variances not assumed	0.17	-0.38
Person-Related Factors	Equal variances assumed	0.26	-0.18
	Equal variances not assumed	0.25	-0.18
Perception of Environment	Equal variances assumed	0.03*	-0.45
	Equal variances not assumed	0.03*	-0.45

** : $p < 0.01$, * : $p < 0.05$

warrants further investigation that is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the two samples are otherwise highly homogeneous and similar in composition and demographic characteristics, despite the different data collection methods, which implies that the differences detected in the analysis of variance testing are largely due to contextual impacts.

6.2 Statistical testing of the eight motivational factors

The T-Test analysis revealed some differences between the motivations of the Syrian refugee entrepreneurs in the two countries, as seen in Table 3. Specifically, we find significant differences in the degree of dissatisfaction (coefficient = 0.55, $p = 0.03$),

level of know-how (coefficient = -0.80, $p = 0.00$), the perception of market conditions (coefficient = -0.44, $p = 0.05$), and the perception of the educational environment (coefficient = -0.97, $p = 0.00$), with overall significant differences in the perception of the environment as a whole (coefficient = -0.45, $p = 0.03$). We observe that refugee entrepreneurs in both countries are motivated by certain aspects of their personal characteristics and their environments. However, context-specific factors appear to differ more clearly between the two countries, which is consistent with our expectation that a country's environment influences refugee entrepreneurial motivation.

In Sweden, the refugee entrepreneurs appear more motivated by their dissatisfaction in areas such as discrimination and financial difficulties than the refugee entrepreneurs in Germany. On the other hand, The Swedish refugee entrepreneurs are less motivated than the German refugee entrepreneurs by know-how and their perception of the educational support received. We also find that entrepreneurs in Sweden were less motivated than those in Germany by their perceptions of environmental-related factors such as market conditions. Meanwhile, we found no significant differences in the other motivational factors between the two countries. In other words, no significant differences were found between refugee entrepreneurship motivation in both countries with respect to ambition, attitude, and the influence of the community, social circles, and culture.

Our findings are consistent with some previous research. Aidis et al. (2008) found that the environment influences entrepreneurship development either by promoting or constraining entrepreneurial decisions and actions. Stenholm et al. (2013) found that variances in both the rate and type of entrepreneurial activity across countries are associated with differences in institutional arrangements. Jang et al. (2020) found that optimistic entrepreneurs often seek assurance from a positive regulatory environment before they act. A deep dive into those findings and their discussion and implications is presented in the following section.

7 Discussion and conclusions

With the aim of uncovering how the motivation of refugees to become entrepreneurs differs between

the host countries of Sweden and Germany, this research analyzed entrepreneurial motivational factors at the personal level as well as the environmental level for a sample of 125 refugees in both countries. We built on the eclectic theory of entrepreneurship (Verheul et al. 2001) and Wagner and Sternberg's (2004) model of entrepreneurship determinants as well as extended the work of Kloosterman (2010). In this study, we also validate Rashid's (2023) newly constructed quantitative tool to analyze entrepreneurship motivation in challenging contexts, which is particularly relevant in cases of refuge and conflict. We employ motivation theories that have traditionally been tested in stable, wealthy contexts and shed light on entrepreneurship motivation for groups that have been historically dismissed as "necessity entrepreneurs" (Abdelnour & Abu Moghli, 2021). We also follow Abebe (2023, p.339)'s recommendation, namely that "understanding refugees' entrepreneurial journey requires theoretical frameworks that place equal emphasis on personal agency and the societal structure".

We conclude that refugee entrepreneurs in Sweden differ from those in Germany with respect to certain person-related and environmental-related factors that relate to their entrepreneurship motivation. As Wauters and Lambrecht (2008) and Rashid (2018) explain, refugee entrepreneurs often face obstacles pertaining to the institutional, economic, and societal environments of their host countries, and our analysis indeed shows a difference in how those environmental aspects are perceived between refugees in the two countries. The severity of these obstacles varies country-to-country and even region-to-region as national, and local refugee integration policies widely differ concerning qualification systems, employment requirements, and political structures (Konle-Seidl, 2018).

Our results indicate the Germany-based refugee entrepreneurs were more motivated by market structures and educational offerings, have more know-how, and were less prone to negative motivation resulting from experiencing dissatisfaction (e.g. due to discrimination or lack of opportunities) compared with Sweden-based refugee entrepreneurs. This difference may signal that German governmental and social efforts that have had greater success in facilitating and supporting refugee entrepreneurship in comparison with Sweden (see for e.g. Jürgens et al., 2020), although

this inference is merely a potential explanation for the results that is not directly evidenced by our analysis.

This suggests a potential direction for future research which zooms in on specific inter-country policy and institutional differences and evaluates their impacts on refugee entrepreneurship outcomes. Indeed, over the past few years, Germany has worked diligently to promote targeted workforce integration policies and programs that combine language instruction, workplace skills testing, and labor market counseling and guidance (Konle-Seidl, 2018), perhaps inspired by its dark history towards minorities and its evolving political landscape. For example, Germany has 1300 immigration counseling centers staffed by volunteers (Engström, 2020). By contrast, Sweden's workforce integration policies and programs are less proactive and less coordinated (Konle-Seidl, 2018; Dustmann, 2000). We think that Swedish governmental authorities, with the German experience as an example, would benefit from increasing their efforts to promote and support refugee entrepreneurship. According to Desai et al. (2020) and Embiricos (2020), host countries should provide a support system that prepares refugees for labor market entry, either as employees or as entrepreneurs. Thus, policy reforms are needed that provide financial, administrative, and legal assistance to refugee entrepreneurs as they start and establish their businesses. The benefits accrue not only to the entrepreneurs but also to their host countries and extended communities.

National and local governments can also support refugee entrepreneurs with training and educational programs that provide initial and ongoing assistance in these areas. Williams and Krasniqi (2018) argue that specific business training in the host country has a positive impact on migrant entrepreneurship as many refugee entrepreneurs have insufficient knowledge of the governance systems and market norms in their host countries. Formal educational programs that focus on entrepreneurship can support refugees as they later engage in more opportunistic, growth-oriented, and innovative entrepreneurial activities (Rashid, 2019). Such programs may be especially beneficial for refugee entrepreneurs who are motivated by dissatisfaction and necessity. Entrepreneurial education that is customized, sustainability-oriented, and culture- and trauma-sensitive is needed. This is a promising area of pedagogic research in which specific approaches, standards, and success measures can

be investigated. The OECD (2019a) has stated that more approaches are needed to increase refugees' knowledge of labor markets and to increase their awareness of entrepreneurship support initiatives.

Interestingly, psychological person-level motivational factors such as attitude and ambition did not significantly differ between the refugees in both countries, similarly to motivation associated with social and culture norms. Their pre-migration backgrounds and experiences may partially explain the lack of significant differences. In pre-war Syria, the population was known for its high entrepreneurial intention rate (54% compared to the global average of 18%) (Haddad et al., 2010). Additionally, refugee entrepreneurs who have experienced civil war and conflict have high levels of resilience that support their entrepreneurial ambitions in host countries (Obschonka et al., 2018). Furthermore, the Syrian refugees in question may have not been in their host countries long enough to have had their personal characteristics largely shaped by the new contextual environment. Also, the lack of difference in the impact of *Social Influence* or *Culture Norms* may indicate a larger embeddedness of the refugees in networks relating to their country of origin rather than the host country at the time of the analysis (see Kloosterman, 2010). This calls for longitudinal analyses that follow refugees over time, or studies that compare the entrepreneurial motivational structures of newly arrived versus more established and integrated refugees. Additionally, future research can give particular attention to motivational differences pertaining to the impact of social and cultural norms between refugees in different contexts and of different origins. For instance, refugees with a larger cultural distance between their culture of origin and their host culture may differ in such entrepreneurial motivations compared with those from more similar cultural backgrounds (e.g. Syrians and Ukrainians in Europe).

Moreover, we call for specific attention to the male/female distribution of the refugee entrepreneurs in our study. Research generally concludes that immigrant entrepreneurship is mainly dominated by men (Brieger & Gielnik, 2020). Research also suggests that female entrepreneurs learn differently than male entrepreneurs, have different personal attributes that impact their entrepreneurial goals and strategies, and have different definitions of success (e.g., Ettl & Welter, 2012; Gatewood et al., 1995; McGowan et al., 2011). In our

German sample, only 10% of the refugee entrepreneurs are women; in our Swedish sample, 67% of the refugee entrepreneurs are women. This stark gender difference may also be due to the different sampling strategies between the two countries, which may constitute a limitation to our study that warrants further research. However, gender should be considered by policymakers and researchers formulating apt strategies to promote refugee entrepreneurship, though the “how” remains open for discussion and investigation. The mechanisms in which gender particularly impacts and shapes refugee entrepreneurship motivation also remain unclear, which calls for future research on the topic.

Future studies could also focus on other demographic characteristics besides gender. We think such studies would benefit from the use of regression analyses. For example, researchers could examine country-specific migration policies as well as specific macro-level initiatives, regulations, and systematic differences as independent variables to predict refugee entrepreneurial outcomes. In this context, the Syrian refugee crisis has provided many lessons about immigrant entrepreneurship and how national policies and guidelines can play an important role in fostering entrepreneurial motivation. Unfortunately, these lessons and implications are currently being tested again due to the evolving Ukraine refugee crisis. Hopefully, this and other studies addressed here provide insights into the importance of fostering entrepreneurial motivation in the early stage of the immigration process, as one of several facilitators of refugee workforce integration.

Additionally, it would be of interest to deepen our understanding of the steps and decision-making processes preceding the entrepreneurial journey of refugees. For instance, scholars could pay particular attention to those who have failed or closed their businesses soon after launch, or decided against starting a business in the first place, particularly when having had previous experience of successfully starting and running a business elsewhere (Gottschalk & Müller, 2022). This would shed light on the contextual barriers to refugee entrepreneurship in host countries and potentially lead to improved policymaking and strategy development.

We admit to certain limitations in our research. Firstly, the EU GDPR law which protects personal privacy in data collection and transfer has restricted our digital access to refugee-specific data in Sweden, particularly in the absence of organized civil society networks and databases. Indeed, many legal and

administrative restrictions limit research on politically and culturally sensitive matters related to the status of refugees in host countries. This led to our Swedish data being more purposefully than randomly sampled as we used social media to identify our participants. In online social group research studies, participants were contacted through specific channels. Thus, participants are members of a specific group rather than a community per se. However, this kind of social media research, despite its limitations, is considered environmentally friendly, cost effective, protective of the participants' anonymity (Kayam & Hirsch, 2012), and sometimes inevitable. Similar data collection approaches have been used by other researchers working with vulnerable populations (Bullough et al., 2014). This also resulted in the Swedish data being spread out across the country, while the German sample is concentrated in the capital.

Our findings may have also been skewed by the male/female distribution anomaly between the two samples. Furthermore, our study applies and validates newly constructed measures of entrepreneurial motivation that have not yet been extensively used and verified across various samples, which may limit the accuracy and generalizability of our findings. Finally, we used the terms “refugee” and “refugee entrepreneurship” in this paper because this is the commonplace terminology in many forms of social, cultural, and political discourse as well as scientific and scholarly discussions. However, we acknowledge the potential harm that may result from the use of such labels when they are associated with certain biases and power dynamics (Högberg et al. 2016). We disassociate ourselves from the advertent use of these labels in harm-causing ways, while we encourage future researchers to reflect on such terminology and carefully consider the sociopolitical and cultural context when engaging with research participants from more vulnerable and (historically) underprivileged social groups (Rashid, 2022).

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Data Availability The data for this research can be available upon request from the corresponding author.

Declarations

Conflicts of interest The authors have no potential conflicts of interest.

Appendix 1. Questionnaire Items (English version)

What Drives Individuals to Pursue Entrepreneurship?

Research Questionnaire

So, you're starting a new company - Great stuff! Please tell us more!						
1	What is the highest level of education you enrolled for?					
High School	Technical College/Training	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate Degree	Other (Please Specify)	
2	What is the highest educational degree you obtained?					
High School	Technical College/Training	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate Degree	Other (Please Specify)	
3	When did you first start working on your startup idea?					
> 5 years ago	>4 - ≤5 years ago	>3 - ≤4 years ago	>2 - ≤3 years ago	>1 - ≤2 years ago	>6 - ≤12 months ago	≤6 months ago
4	Please briefly describe the service or product your company provides					
5	Please rate your agreement with the following statement: My company offers a service or product that contributes positively to a social and/or environmental cause					
Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
6. Awesome! Now tell us why you're doing what you're doing in the first place!						
Please rate your agreement with the following statements:						
I wanted to start a company...						
<i>Personal Development:</i> ... to improve my personal skills and knowledge						
<i>Confidence in Success:</i> ... because I am confident in my success as an entrepreneur						
<i>Sense of Achievement:</i> ... to feel that I have accomplished something						
<i>Passion for Topic:</i> ... because I am passionate about my startup idea and/or field of work						
<i>Talent:</i> ... to make the best use of my natural talent in this field						
<i>Creativity:</i> ... because I am innovative and enjoy working with original concepts						
<i>Desire to Help Others:</i> ... because I want to make a positive contribution to the lives of people whom I care about						
<i>Individualism/Autonomy:</i> ... to be my own boss and make money independently						
<i>Locus of Control:</i> ... to have more control over my circumstances, decisions, and results of my work						
<i>Desire for Flexibility:</i> ... to have a flexible schedule and better manage my time						
<i>Desire to Take Risk:</i> ... because I naturally like to take risks and try new things						
<i>Endurance:</i> ... because failure does not scare me and I can handle difficult situations well						
<i>Need for Challenge:</i> ... because I felt that my previous job became too easy and comfortable						
<i>Regulatory Incentives:</i> ... because I was encouraged by benefits such as tax cuts and easy bureaucratic procedures						
<i>Institutional Integrity:</i> ... because I was encouraged by the legal and ethical work laws and structures (or lack of them)						
<i>Education System:</i> ... because I was motivated by the general education level in my place of residence						
<i>Entrepreneurship Training Availability:</i> ... because I was motivated by the availability of general entrepreneurship training opportunities in my city/country of residence						
<i>Community Training Opportunities:</i> ... because I was motivated by the availability of entrepreneurship training opportunities provided specifically to my community (for e.g. from refugee support organizations)						
<i>Entrepreneurship Training Experience:</i> ... because I personally received entrepreneurship training and/or education that motivated me to do so						
<i>Formal Education:</i> ... because by my formal education motivated me to do so						
<i>Industry Experience:</i> ... because my past formal employment experience motivated me to do so						
<i>Startup Experience:</i> ... because I have experience with starting companies						
<i>Public Safety:</i> ... because of the safety situation (or lack of it) in my current location						
<i>Marginalization:</i> ... because I feel discriminated against, or unaccepted in the society and/or job market						
<i>Entrepreneurial Culture of Origin:</i> ... because entrepreneurship is so common in my culture and heritage						
<i>Present Entrepreneurial Environment:</i> ... because I am currently in a country/city where entrepreneurship seems common and trendy						
<i>Extended Networks:</i> ... because I can access extended social and professional contacts who can help advise and support me to start or run the business						
<i>Community Entrepreneurial Culture:</i> ... because it is common in my circle of friends, family members, or acquaintances to do so						
<i>Community Networks:</i> ... because I have friends, family members, or acquaintances who can help advise and support me to start or run the business						

<i>Community Values and Obligations:</i> ... because of certain values and social obligations within my community	
<i>Personal Values:</i> ... because I was driven by my morals and/or (spiritual, religious, humanitarian) values	
<i>Perceived Prestige:</i> ... to feel accepted in my social circle and gain respect and higher status	
<i>Family Tradition:</i> ... to continue my family tradition	
<i>Role Model:</i> ... as I was influenced by someone important to me, who succeeded as an entrepreneur	
<i>Macroeconomic Situation:</i> ... because of the economic stability (or lack of it) where I live	
<i>Financial Resource Availability:</i> ... because it is easy to access funds in my country of residence (for e.g. through banks)	
<i>Open Trade Options:</i> ... because it is easy to expand my company abroad and work internationally	
<i>Market Needs/Opportunities:</i> ... because there is a growing demand for companies that provide my service/product in the country/city where I live	
<i>Serve Community Need:</i> ... to provide a product or service needed specifically by my community	
<i>Community Financial Support:</i> ... because I can secure funds from my friends, family, or acquaintances	
<i>Financial Means:</i> ... because I wanted to make use of my personal savings and financial resources	
<i>Expected Financial Gain:</i> ... because I see a good opportunity of financial gain with my new company	
<i>No/Poor Employment Options:</i> ... because I was not able to get a job position that I'm happy with	
<i>Family Need:</i> ... to provide support that my family needs	
<i>Poverty Experience:</i> ... because I experienced financial difficulties in the past	
7	Anything else you want to say about what drives you to start a company?

And finally...						
8	Do we have your permission to contact you in the future for follow up?					
	Yes			No		
9	If you answered yes to the question above, please provide the following information:					
	First name/last name			Email address		
10	What is your gender?					
	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to Answer		
11	When is your Birthday					
12	What is your nationality?					
13	What city do you currently live in?					
14	When did you start living in your current country of residence?					
	>10 years ago, and I'm born in the country	>10 years ago, but I'm not born in the country	>5 - ≤10 years ago	>3 - ≤5 years ago	>1 - ≤3 years ago	>6 - ≤12 months ago
	≤6 months ago					
15	How did you come across this questionnaire? (please list all sources)					
16	Anything else you want to tell us?					
Thanks so much for participating!						

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