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Immigration blues: understanding market dynamics through consumer acculturation

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ABSTRACT

Several studies on market dynamics emphasize the role of consumers and other market actors in shaping the existing market logics. However, little attention has been paid to how immigrant consumer communities navigate among market actors and the mainstream institutional environment to alter markets in host societies. Through an acculturation lens, we set out to study the development of immigrant grocery shops in Norway. The findings reveal how the market formation is influenced by "immigration blues" through the challenges of acculturation, institutional constraints, and the role of the immigrant community as a network that is used to cope with the various challenges. We argue that many dynamics can be traced back to the confrontation between a neo-liberal "everything can be negotiated" logic and the "statist individualistic" society within which the entrepreneurial activity takes place.

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Market system dynamics; market development; immigrant consumers; consumer acculturation; immigrant entrepreneurs; institutional work

Introduction

Migration has rapidly increased immigrant consumers who challenge existing markets by seeking business opportunities through multicultural diversity in different parts of the Western world (Gaur et al. 2017). Immigration, which is the movement of people from one country to another, alters the cultural patterns, population, consumption practices, and socio-political status of distinct cultural groups over time (Amelina, Horvath, and Meeus 2015; Luedicke 2011). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of acculturation, understood as the adaptation processes to unfamiliar consumer culture (Peñaloza 1994), provides insight into how immigrants navigate, innovate and shape market logics in Western countries.

The literature on market development has traditionally been dominated by a firm-based approach (Hauser, Tellis, and Griffin 2006). However, this approach does not acknowledge that consumers can increase the market value of whatever products the firms are offering (Cova and Dalli 2009) or the ways in which consumers can undertake roles and coordinate with other market actors and institutions to influence markets and consumption (see Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). Recently, consumer researchers have recognized the generative roles that consumers might play in the creation of new markets.

From a market system dynamics perspective (Giesler and Fischer 2017), recent studies have reported that consumers can collectively alter mainstream markets by rebelling against mainstream norms as market users (Giesler 2008) or by suggesting new ways of solving consumer challenges. For example, Scaraboto and Fischer (2013) portray how marginalized consumers can assume

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different roles within the mainstream market and cooperate with institutional entrepreneurs to appeal to fashion market logics owing to limited clothing size. Martin and Schouten (2014) demonstrate how a group of enthusiastic consumers act as entrepreneurs when they create the MiniMoto motorcycle outside the mainstream market. These studies show that in a market system dynamics optic, market development is a dynamic process in which dominant institutional logics can be questioned by various actors, including consumer communities. Through consumption communities, consumers can challenge existing consumption norms and collectively negotiate the development of markets that better satisfy the specific needs or desires of the members, which may have been ignored by the mainstream market.

Extant studies demonstrate that neglected communities of identification, e.g. owing to gender issues (see Scaraboto and Fischer 2013) or religion (see Sandikci and Ger 2010), derive power, strength, and competencies for altering markets by working together with powerful and resourceful mainstream market actors (Weijo, Martin, and Arnould 2018). This seems utopic for immigrants who might face discrimination, complex economic, political, legal, and cultural environments, often laced with confusion and psychological disturbances (Üstüner and Holt 2007; Luedicke 2011). However, immigrants often share integration challenges and collective identity, which foster a sense of community and shared understanding (Üstüner and Holt 2007). Immigrants can thus receive power and strength through shared consumption preferences and integration challenges that might lead to innovative solutions. For instance, to avoid stigmatization and maintain members' ethnic identity, an immigrant community might be a place to integrate resources and discuss the lack of consumption choices and efforts to influence institutional change in the mainstream market. Sussman (2000) asserts that ethnic identification among immigrants enhances well-being, increases the saliency of social identity, and allows people to feel important.

Migration might contribute to changes in market dynamics because immigrants bring new moral codes and consumption traditions that can trigger market-mediated practices in the mainstream market (Veresiu and Giesler 2018; Veresiu 2020; Kizgin, Jamal, and Richard 2018). Entrepreneurial efforts directed toward immigrant communities might even enhance a sense of belonging through the maintenance of cultural preferences, identity, and norms (Parzer, Astleithner, and Rieder 2016). Faist (2000) argues that immigrant-initiated consumption practices in host societies might facilitate the transfer of cultural values and, as such, influence the host consumers' tastes and preferences. Therefore, immigrant entrepreneurial initiatives can be viewed as a mutual construction between immigrants and host communities that enables the reproduction and dissemination of cultural value through consumption practices (Luedicke 2011). This intricate process of cultural hybridization through consumption practices is commonly referred to as consumer acculturation by researchers.

While several studies have investigated the role of the consumer community in market dynamics and immigrants' market-mediated practices, they have focused on markets in a 'sociocultural homogeneous context (Jafari, Aly, and Doherty 2022). Consequently, our knowledge of how immigrant consumer communities navigate institutional dynamics for introducing new market options in host countries is limited (Arnould et al. 2017). Therefore, in this research, we investigate how immigrant entrepreneurs engage with immigrant consumers and local market actors to shape the grocery market in Norway. We define immigrant entrepreneurs as those who establish immigrant grocery shops to offer ethnic food to primarily fellow immigrants with whom they are sharing migration experiences and challenges.

For our research, we rely on two theoretical lenses. Market system dynamics theory (Giesler and Fischer 2017) enables an understanding of how collective ideas, experiences, values, and efforts of entrepreneurial actors, consumers, and institutional actors may alter markets. Consumer acculturation theory (Peñaloza 1994; Luedicke 2011; Jamal, Peñaloza, and Laroche 2015) focuses on how immigrants integrate into diverse socio-cultural environments. The findings show that the immigrant entrepreneurs face acculturation challenges and institutional constraints when introducing new market logics in the Norwegian mainstream market and that the immigrant community is

central to coping with the various challenges. We discuss how tensions are caused by confrontation between a neo-liberal “everything can be negotiated” logic of the immigrant community and the “statist individualistic” Norwegian society.

Theoretical background

Role of community and market actors in market dynamics

Schouten and McAlexander (1995) introduced the concept of consumer community, or what they refer to as a subculture of consumption, as a “distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects based on a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand, or consumption activity” (43). This stream of research calls attention to how the social “links” are more important than “things”, that is, brands, products, and experiences (Cova 1997), and that people belong to communities within which they share values, rituals, interests, and meaning (Cova, Kozinets, and Shankar 2007).

Previous studies on market system dynamics demonstrate how markets as social structures develop over time through the efforts of various engaged market actors (Giesler and Fischer 2017), such as consumer communities and institutions. A community might provide consumers with a conducive place where they can share their tastes, air their grievances freely, and cultivate collective stewardship to transform the mainstream market (Giesler 2008). For instance, Sandikci and Ger (2010) show how passionate fashion women in Turkey raise their voices and gradually destigmatize the use of veiling as an attractive choice. Shared passion and consumption patterns distinguish consumers from others and denote a shared sense of “we-ness” that emphasizes group solidarity and generates linking value (Cova and Cova 2002; Muñiz and Schau 2005). Thus, a consumption community may foster empowerment and innovation efforts in which new categories are created or, more likely, where products and services are altered (Cova and Dalli 2009).

Previous studies show how consumer communities may integrate shared ideologies and resources to establish alternative structures in response to inadequacy in the mainstream market. Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), in the study of community-supported agriculture (CSA), investigate how small independent farmers and consumers with shared ideology develop an alternative option to preserve and distribute organic food than through the mainstream market. Choi and Burnes (2016) illustrate how the indie community uses social media to drive the passion for indie music, whereas other studies provide evidence for how communities play a significant role in increasing product variety (Kjeldgaard et al. 2017; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Martin and Schouten 2014).

Market development is also shaped by actors and institutions of market systems within which consumer communities are situated (Kjellberg and Olson 2017). Institutional logics defines the rules, principles, and behavior in a given field and, as such, provides orders that structure the decision-making and practices of actors in a certain market (Thornton and Ocasio 1999, 805). Consumer communities need to coordinate with, adapt to, or seek to change logics to alter markets (Martin and Schouten 2014; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Giesler 2012).

Market practices are deemed legitimate when socially, politically, and culturally accepted within a particular context (Regany et al. 2021; Suchman 1995). Empirical studies have investigated how collaboration between market actors and institutions increases the legitimacy of market developments (see Humphreys 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Consumer communities introducing market-level changes must adhere to regulatory rules, normative values, and cultural beliefs of a particular market system (Scott 2008; Kates 2004). For instance, the casino gambling market (Humphreys 2010) and the cannabis market (Kjellberg and Olson 2017) became legitimate through discourses and negotiations between various institutional actors, such as the authorities and pharmaceutical companies. In these examples, market dynamics function as an interplay between institutional logics provided by market actors, institutions, rules, and regulations.

Consumer communities often face constraints when pursuing legitimacy among market actors and institutions (Vermeulen and Brünger 2014; Kozinets 2002). They might have limited resources (Ghaffari, Jafari, and Sandikci 2019), face ideological tension, and power dynamics related to what is deemed appropriate and legitimate (Koopmans 2004, 451). Moreover, altering markets might depend on the ability to utilize the community as agents of institutional change and to leverage diverse resources from powerful and resourceful mainstream actors or legitimate new roles and practices as institutional and entrepreneurial actors (see Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Kjeldgaard et al. 2017; Ghaffari, Jafari, and Sandikci 2019).

Immigrants facing the market

Immigrants face significant acculturation challenges in establishing social identity, finding desirable employment opportunities (see Chang and Holm 2017), adjusting to the host's consumption culture (see Üstüner and Holt 2007), and navigating new socio-cultural and political environments (Wali and Renzaho 2018). Consequently, some immigrants can be pushed into entrepreneurial roles as a proactive response to the dynamics of acculturation and the mainstream inadequacy (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, and Rath 1999; Munkejord 2015) more than others due to their socio-cultural backgrounds (see Kone, Ruiz, and Vargas-Silva 2021). Structural constraints such as discrimination in the labor market and unrecognized education credentials can push affected immigrants to venture into self-employment as a survival mechanism or to gain their dignity in the host society.

Having cultural capital and a social network can provide knowledge of market opportunities and also financial resources (Kalnins and Chung 2006; Kloosterman and Rath 2018). However, the institutional constraints and challenges in the host's market can make it challenging for immigrant consumers to exploit and create new logic within the mainstream. Rao and Giorgi (2006) acknowledge that immigrant entrepreneurial activities are not constrained mainly by lack of resources but also by mainstream market policy and "how their actions are interpreted by the host" (273). Owing to shared acculturation experience and social capital network, one might expect that immigrant communities can cultivate collective resilience to navigate institutional arrangements necessary for altering marketplace offerings.

Consumer acculturation literature has demonstrated how immigrant consumers assimilate into a host culture (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983), their rejection of home and host cultures (Verkuyten and de Wolf 2002), and how immigrants integrate with the new culture and their consumption practices (Luedicke 2011). Most scholars seem to agree that immigrant consumers are shaped by the acculturation processes and use time and effort to acquire knowledge and sociocultural skills that are relevant to navigating foreign contexts (Peñaloza 1994; Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005; Peñaloza and Gilly 1999). Immigrant entrepreneurs will engage in social relations with consumers, suppliers, law enforcers etc. The ability to communicate through the local language enables immigrants from various ethnicities to form social connections, share entrepreneurial competencies and skills, understand the system, and build intercultural relationships with institutions and others in the host country (Üstüner and Holt 2007; Jamal, Peñaloza, and Laroche 2015; Kizgin, Jamal, and Richard 2018).

Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard (2005) describe how acculturation is a two-way process where both indigenes and immigrants experience change owing to intercultural contact. The marketplace would be marked by multiple cultural systems that would strengthen heritage culture through a mix of home and foreign offerings (Luedicke 2015). In her study of the acculturation of Mexican immigrants in the United States, Peñaloza (1994) shows how immigrant market development also has consequences for native American consumption. Consequently, one might expect that immigrants who act as entrepreneurs will influence the markets of certain product categories through the "creative assemblages of socially constructed representations of ethnicities" (Visconti et al. 2014, 1886).

Prior research shows that immigrants draw on identity as an amalgamation of 'home, host and transnational cultural elements that can change depending on the situation (Oswald 1999, 314). Immigrant consumers would demand more from a market than what they meet because specific cultural identities might demand functional and symbolic values related to their culture of origin (Üstüner and Holt 2007). One might expect that immigrant entrepreneurs might be aware of multiple identity resources and use such knowledge as a resource for market development.

However, systemic-level structural constraints on immigrant consumers' identities can limit the desired lifestyle and influence acculturation outcomes. In their study on poor migrant women in Turkish squatters, Üstüner and Holt (2007) highlighted the ways in which limited socio-economic and cultural capital can result in shuttered identity projects. Jafari and Goulding (2008) show how the inhospitable experiences of young Iranians in the United Kingdom resulted in a "torn-self." These studies acknowledge that the constraints imposed by broader structural forces might influence immigrants' entrepreneurial efforts beyond the intercultural dyad of home and host cultures. Within Nordic contexts, with a high degree of state-individual relationship or "statist individualism" (Ulver 2019), the immigrant communities might not be aware of the role of state authorities and their governance procedures. The main difference may depend on the individuals' acceptance of state intervention or not (Martin, Lindberg, and Fitchett 2019), which may pose tension if immigrant entrepreneurs face the market with a neoliberal mindset with a focus on entrepreneurial freedom, creativity, and networking.

Immigrant entrepreneurs might face challenges when they meet conflicting meaning and value propositions of immigrant communities versus market actors and institutions of the host culture. Since value propositions are endowed with a time dimension, in that they involve sensemaking processes that are not limited to the immediate interactions between immigrant entrepreneurs and market stakeholders (Corvellec and Hultman 2014), it might pose an interactional challenge when facing disagreements about what is valuable, worthy, and legitimate (Stark 2009). For instance, how a store outlet is supposed to look might differ between cultures. The potential advantage for an immigrant entrepreneur, however, is the ability to understand different regimes of value for different markets, including that of immigrant communities. One might expect that immigrants amid the acculturation process may have trouble evaluating the various logics necessary for proposing market development in a new culture.

In summary, the review shows that the immigrant consumer community may play a facilitating role in shaping the grocery market because many immigrants share a passion for ethnic food products in addition to the social linkage of acculturation. However, immigrant communities can also be heterogeneous owing to multi-ethnic groups. One expects that immigrant entrepreneurs face collective contributions since community members might question the host country's market offering. It is uncertain how institutional logics marks discourses and negotiations between immigrants and various institutional market actors. Altering markets might depend on immigrants' ability to leverage diverse resources from powerful and resourceful mainstream actors or legitimate new roles and practices as institutional and entrepreneurial actors. The question, however, is whether the immigrant entrepreneurs and their network understand different regimes of value and logics of the mainstream market. In the next section, we offer a brief overview of the immigrant communities in Norway.

Contextual background and methodology

Migration to Norway

While most empirical studies of immigrant consumers have been conducted in North American contexts with its long traditions of incoming migration, we set out to study immigrants in Norway, who have only recently contributed to market dynamics. We chose to investigate the development of immigrant grocery shops in various cities in Norway over the last 18 years.

Like many Western countries, Norway has experienced a rise in the population of immigrants over the last few decades. Presently, Norway has 997942 people with an immigrant background which is 18.5 percent of the total population of Norway. Out of this, 14 percent are first-generation immigrants from 200 countries (Harald and Jinghui 2020). The first wave of immigration to Norway began in the late 1960s with male unskilled labor immigrants from Pakistan, Turkey, India, and Morocco (Cappelen, Ouren, and Skjerpe, 2011). The second wave lasted from 1975 to 1989 and consisted of women and children of the original labor immigrants seeking family reunification. The third wave between 1989 and 2004 consisted mostly of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa who were seeking political asylum or refuge for various reasons. Owing to the opening of the European Economic Area in 2004, there has been an increase in skilled labor immigrants from Western Europe and Nordic countries.

Norway is a welfare state, meaning that the national government plays a vital role in instituting liberal policies that integrate immigrants into society. The government provides welfare benefits, such as healthcare and education. Furthermore, the Norwegian government has implemented a welfare program for new immigrants who are granted permanent residency to improve cultural competency, incorporate them into society and secure equal rights, social inclusion, and wellbeing. Immigrants that arrive in Norway as refugees and asylum seekers, and to reunite with family members, are obligated to attend a two-year mandatory introduction program ("Voksenopplæring") organized by the local municipalities (Harald and Jinghui 2020). The program covers various types of basic training, such as the Norwegian language, vocational training, computer training, work practice placements, and knowledge about Norwegian culture and society. Refugee immigrants also receive social security benefits, such as housing and financial assistance, from the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV.no) to sustain their livelihood while adjusting to the Norwegian culture.

International migration presents unintended challenges, such as the lack of ethnic food in the host culture. Ethnic food serves as a powerful identity representation and acts as an essential component for reproducing collective memories and cultural practices that help immigrants maintain their traditions and religious practices in foreign countries (Mintz and Du Bois 2002). The immigrant grocery shops in Norway play a cushioning role by providing activities and products that enable immigrants to sustain themselves and endure the settlement period into a new consumer culture. Immigrant grocery shops have existed in Norway since the 1980s and most of them are owned by first-generation immigrants from Asia and the Middle East (Ann 2014). Market actors such as the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (NFSA) (mattilsynet.no), which collaborate with the National Register Center (brreg.no), and Norwegian customs (tolletaten.no) regulate and authorize the establishment and operations of businesses in Norway. Presently, there are approximately 195 immigrant grocery shops in Norway.

Immigrant grocery shops are often sole proprietorships or family-owned businesses that specialize in a wide variety of foreign exotic products imported from different parts of the world. They are mostly smaller in size and spread all over the country, but most shops are located in larger cities. Most products sold in the shops consist of fruits, vegetables, and exotic ingredients that are unavailable in the mainstream market. In addition, some shops offer skin and hair care products that are preferred by African and Asian immigrants.

Immigrant communities in Norway

Immigrant communities in Norway constitute social networks of regular and refugee immigrants that operate through shared practices, social media, and institutions. In addition to the place of origin and family/friend relations, many community networks are distinguished by religion and religious practices (Barstad 2020). Approximately 43 percent of immigrants in Norway profess Islam, while 35 percent practice Christianity. Most immigrants from the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa follow Islam. Churches and mosques provide a social environment in which

immigrants from different ethnic groups can meet and engage in social interactions (Barstad 2020). Immigrant ethnic communities also connect through social media groups such as Facebook groups and immigrant organizations, which are accessible to any member who wants to join, and they use these platforms to share knowledge, skills, organize events, and celebrate their national holidays or cultural traditions (Hagelund and Loga 2009). Institutions such as asylum reception centers, cultural centers, language schools, universities, and workplaces also provide a platform for immigrants to connect with each other and form social connections with the rest of society. It is reasonable to assume that shared ethnic or religious traditions influence the consumption choices of immigrant communities. Ethnic food, understood as the food associated with immigrants' cultural background, for instance, is considered an integral part of the celebrations, and because of religion, some immigrants will seek out products that reinforce a specific religious identity (e.g. halal meat for Muslims). Immigrant grocery shops are expected to provide an opportunity for immigrant communities to preserve ethnic traditions, cultural ceremonies, adhere to religious dietary rules, and obtain a desirable lifestyle in Norway.

Compared to countries with a long history of immigration and a large number of immigrants, such as America, Canada, and Australia, the immigrant population in Norway is still increasing. Owing to the low immigrant population, the immigrants linked to each other by common interests, values, and sentiments are likely to develop a pan-ethnic identity and function as a homogeneous subgroup (Visconti et al. 2014). Moreover, the nature of immigrant communities influences the ways in which they are pushed into exploring alternatives. The grocery shop entrepreneurs included in this study, are either refugees or immigrants who came to Norway to reunite with their families, either through interracial marriages or to join family members who migrated to Norway for work or studies (see Table 1). All entrepreneurs, apart from one, shared common identity as Asians. Consequently, despite the geographical boundaries, most of them shared religion, language, beliefs, and consumption culture. These shared commonalities can affirm a feeling of a tight-knit consumer community and play a fundamental role in mobilizing solidarity in the marketplace. The shared religious beliefs and cultural characteristics can enable the immigrant entrepreneurs to relate to each other's consumption culture, since they are not too far apart. This may have driven entrepreneurship owing to high social capital and distinct consumption culture in the host society (Visconti et al. 2014; Anderson and Jack 2002).

We can classify the immigrant grocery shops entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs by necessity (see Kloosterman and Rath 2018) because most of them ventured into grocery shop business as a result of push factors, such as difficulties in pursuing desirable career paths, and lack of products and ingredients, that allow them to remain reconnected to heritage and religious practices, or the inability to pursue desired career paths owing to various limitations in Norway. Previous immigration studies have investigated immigrant groups in categories, which are also known to shape the immigrants' level of acculturation and socio-economic activities in host societies. For instance, immigrants with refugee backgrounds tend to capacitate high sociocultural and human capital that may be relevant for marketplace interaction and the development of social networks in the marketplace (Desai, Naudé, and Stel 2021). On the contrary, immigrants who obtained residency through family reunification might have the advantage of navigating some acculturation challenges because they meet family members with prior experience in the host country. However, despite the immigrants' reasons for immigration and differences in nationality, they shared an understanding of inadequate representation in the mainstream market, which represents the messy social realities and experiences of the immigrants' acculturation process in a multicultural society (see Crawley and Skleparis 2018; Kunz 2020; Dahinden, Fischer, and Menet 2021).

Dahinden, Fischer, and Menet (2021) argue that categories (i.e. refugees, labor, family, and regular immigrants) might change the meaning, and people might not "behave according to the roles defined by categories, thus not fit neatly into categories" (539). The archival materials (local newspapers and social media posts) and the participants refer to the immigrant grocery shops in Norway as "innvandrerbutikker" (immigrant shops) or "Asian stores." Owing to these homogenization

Table 1. Overview of participants[1].

A: Immigrant entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs	Age/ Gender	Country of origin	Level of education	Jobs before moving to Norway	Immigration year	Immigration type	Shop location	Year established
Rashid	42, M	Afghanistan	BA	Nurse	2000	Refugee	Sandnes	2005
Samuel	21, M	Iran	High school	student	2008	Refugee	Bodø	2019
Wang	32, M	China	BA	Student	2011	Family reunion	Stavanger	2016
Lucy	41, F	Thailand	BA	Chef	2010	Family reunion	Bodø	2018
Michael	47, M	Turkey	High school	Student	1991	Refugee	Kongsvinger	2014
David	38, M	Nigeria	BA	Clerk	2012	Refugee	Sandnes	2016
Cathy	47, M	Iran	MBA	Operations manager	2005	Family reunion	Stavanger	2017
Jamie	48, M	Vietnam	BA	Shop keeper	1989	Refugee	Lørenskog	2015
Laura	45, F	Kuwait	BA	Teacher	2009	Family reunion	Kongsvinger	2019
Jade	58, M	Tunisia	MBA	Architect	1999	Refugee	Trondheim	2004
Leon	28, M	Iran	BA	Student	2006	Refugee	Lillestrøm	2015
Blaze	49, F	Japan	BA	Sales	1998	Family reunion	Trondheim	2002

B: Other market actors

Pseudonym	Age/gender	Market actors	Country of origin	Immigration year
Marianne	60, F	Section manager NFSA	Norwegian	N/A
Karin	42, F	Inspector NFSA	Norwegian	N/A
Tone	43, F	Supervisor NFSA	Norwegian	N/A
Nina	46, F	Manager Start-up Salten	Norwegian	N/A
Paul	34, M	Sales division manager Nortura	Norwegian	N/A
Lola	61, F	Consumer	USA	2001
Patrick	63, M	Consumer	Sri Lanka	1989
Lucia	29, F	Consumer	Uzbekistan	2015
Ann	34, F	Consumer	Philippines	2015
pinto	80, M	Consumer	India	1980
Fan	25, F	Consumer	China	2015

[1]The rights to conduct this study was approved by Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). Reference code:107136.

characteristics and the strong ties portrayed among immigrant communities in Norway, we chose not to emphasize the classification of immigrants by categories but focus on the dynamic complexities of immigration and how immigrant consumer communities utilize their shared understanding of common challenges to collectively navigate the complex foreign marketplace and introduce new market practices.

Methodology

This study used a hermeneutic framework (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018) to explore how immigrants make sense of the process of market formation, that is, from being immigrants who face a new culture, joining various local communities, and finally navigating the host society's institutional environment to establish grocery shops. Thompson (1997) acknowledges hermeneutics as an interpretive approach to understand peoples' actions in connection with their "self-identity and background of historically established cultural meanings" (14). Consumer acculturation manifests as experiences and practices of adjusting to unfamiliar sociocultural environments, ideology, and consumption choices. Here, we set out to understand how immigrant entrepreneurs engage with immigrant consumers and local market actors to shape the grocery market in Norway. To do this, we collected narratives associated with immigrants' experiences during their migration to Norway, the shared meaning of meeting a new commercial culture as consumers, and the initiation of immigrant grocery shops.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, observations, and obtaining archival data. It is assumed that the willingness to maintain the home culture while integrating into the new culture depends on how 'intensively the person was exposed to the home culture before moving into a new society' (Jun, Ball, and Gentry 1993, 79). We recruited our participants using purposive sampling among first-generation immigrant entrepreneurs who own immigrant grocery shops in different cities, first-generation immigrant consumers, and various institutional actors and marketers such as the NFSA ('Mattilsynet'), the startup venture Salten (a government organization that collaborates with various institutions to offer start-up courses and mentorship to those who want to venture into entrepreneurship), and Nortura (Norway's main meat product supplier).

The first-generation immigrants were selected because of their experience with acculturation. The individual interviews took place in three phases and were initially conducted with immigrant grocery shop owners (immigrant entrepreneurs) targeting the history and timeline related to establishing an immigrant grocery shop in the context of acculturation into Norwegian society, what inspired them to start the grocery shops, and the challenges they experienced during the start-up process and while operating them. We then asked questions related to why and how of the process with a specific focus on the role of the community. They also provided details about the other actors (consumers, government agencies, regulators, and suppliers) involved. To gain a first-hand impression of the context, the first author visited the immigrant shops, made a purchase, and tried to understand the logics of the grocery markets by studying communication, relevant products, customer types, relationships, atmosphere, etc. This knowledge provided insight into the culture and what was going on in the immigrant grocery shops, which also aided in the formulation of the interview guide.

In the second phase, interviews were conducted with first-generation immigrant consumers targeting ways in which they relate to the immigrant grocery shops, how they found out that such shops existed in Norway, the meanings attributed to the existence of the immigrant grocery shops in Norway, and their practices in the shops. In the third phase, we conducted interviews with Mattilsynet, Nortura, and Start-up Salten. For the interviews with the NFSA, we collected ideological discourses about their thoughts regarding the existence of immigrants' grocery shops in Norway and their experiences of regulating activities in the immigrant grocery shops, challenges they experience, etc. The interviews with Nortura revolved around their role as suppliers, the relationship with immigrant grocery shops, challenges, and the measures they have implemented to tackle the challenges. The interviews with Start-up Salten revolved around the

services they offer, who are involved, the challenges they experience, and their wishes and goals for the future.

Before the interviews, participants were informed that the interview was part of a research project on the development of the immigrant markets in Norway, and they were assured that their identity would remain anonymous. The participants received a consent form stating the purpose of the research, participants' rights, and the researcher's contact information. Overall, the first author conducted twelve interviews with first-generation immigrant shop owners, referred to as immigrant or grocery shop entrepreneurs in this study, six first-generation immigrant consumers, and five main institutional actors/marketers. The participants were from diverse cultural backgrounds aged 21–80 years (see Table 1).

The interviews were conducted between October 2018 and October 2021 and took place in different locations, such as at the immigrants' grocery shops, online through zoom, public libraries, and there were also occasions wherein interviews took place in restaurants for the participants' convenience. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian or English. All interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 45 and 65 minutes on average. All recorded interviews were transcribed, and the interview transcripts were sent to each participant for approval, and no changes were expected.

The archival data we consulted included online news articles, social media posts, and research reports from Norway. The analysis of these materials helped to understand the immigration history in Norway, the status of immigrants, their consumption patterns, information about immigrant grocery shops in Norway, the practices of immigrant consumers, and the challenges that Norwegian Safety Authority personnel from various cities are experiencing owing to the presence of immigrant grocery shops in Norway.

Adopting the hermeneutic approach (Thompson 1997) and the meaning condensation framework (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009), the transcribed interviews were analyzed through an iterative process of re-reading the interview transcripts to establish a holistic understanding of the individual parts of the text and vice versa (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018). The second step entailed interpreting salient meanings related to the development of immigrant grocery shops in the Norwegian mainstream. Finally, through extended back and forth discussions and continuous reflection on the data, we generated themes from participants' narratives, focusing on how the immigrant entrepreneurs engaged with consumers and other market actors to shape the grocery market in Norway.

Findings

Our findings are as follows: First, we unfold the acculturation challenges that triggered the development of immigrant grocery shops. Second, we portray the institutional challenges and constraints that immigrant entrepreneurs experienced during the process of initiating new market logics in the mainstream Norwegian market. Third, we show how immigrant entrepreneurs engage with their network of immigrants to navigate institutional challenges and shape the grocery market through the development of immigrant grocery shops.

Challenges of acculturation

Our findings demonstrate that immigrant entrepreneurs navigate across different institutional fields with unfamiliar logic to develop immigrant grocery shops. While the acculturation process in Norway focuses on integrating immigrants' socio-culturally, the Norwegian grocery market has somehow overlooked offering desired ethnic food products. Consuming ethnic food products is an essential part of the immigrants' acculturation process (Mintz and Du Bois 2002). As they belong to an immigration community, the immigrant entrepreneurs know more about the salient needs of immigrants.

> It is very difficult and boring when someone cannot access their ethnic food […]. When I came to Norway 23 years ago, there was only one shop in Stavanger (a city in Norway). I had to travel for an hour every week to buy what I needed […] it is important, people feel satisfied and happy when they find their products and food

> because they are not available in the local Norwegian grocery shops. (Rashid, entrepreneur)
>
> I started because there was a need for these shops (immigrant grocery shops). It is not like if someone does not have access to let's say ingredients to prepare Asian food they will stop living, but it makes life better [… .] The other issue is that we can develop our culture and maintain some of our traditions from home. It is not that we just live the Norwegian way, but Norwegians can also have the opportunity to try products from different cultures, and we can also present our countries or cultures to each other through products. For instance, when people come here and see the products, they get to understand more about other cultures. (Jami, entrepreneur)

The immigrant entrepreneurs thus understand the urgency and importance of having immigrant grocery shops in Norway. They understand the shortcomings of the mainstream market, not only as a lack of functional food, but more importantly, as depriving immigrants of cultural traditions, socio-ethnic rituals, and, to some extent, religious practices in Norway. Consequently, the entrepreneurs are able to interpret the depths of current market deficiency that the mainstream market actors do not know about or are not interested in pursuing.

> I have lived in Norway for 12 years, but we still hold the same cultural traditions that we had back home. For example, if someone is getting married or having a baby, we still celebrate as we used to back home and eat the same types of food. We have not changed to eating bread with brown cheese or waffles [… .] I have friends, and most of them still hold the same family traditions because that is who we are. I cannot say I am Norwegian despite having Norwegian citizenship. I still feel that I am an Iranian. (Samuel, entrepreneur)

Our findings demonstrate that the inadequacy of immigrants' ethnic food products and ingredients in the Norwegian mainstream market push the immigrant entrepreneurs to establish the immigrant grocery shops. Regardless of the availability of nutritious food in Norway, immigrant communities are in search of ethnic authentic tastes that not only remind them of home country but also enable maintenance of cultural practices and identity in Norway. The results suggest that consumer communities who take the role as co-creators are in search of not only functional value but rather a distinctive symbolic value that have been overlooked by the mainstream market (Muñiz and Schau 2005). Developing the immigrant grocery market capacitate immigrants to preserve rituals that connect them to their cultural roots, and as such a form of psychological wellbeing in the new culture (Mintz and Du Bois 2002).

Institutional challenges and constraints

The findings show that the immigrant entrepreneurs' efforts to alleviate the lack of ethnic food products met unexpected challenges and constraints from various governmental institutions that control business activities in Norway. They do not know the rules and regulations involved in opening immigrant grocery shops. Consequently, institutional rules and logics are enforced on them through a trial-and-error navigation process.

> There are some food products you are allowed to import to Europe, but you are not allowed to import to Norway [… .] Once, we imported a container, and we had to throw away one tonne of food that was perfectly fine to eat anywhere else in Europe but not in Norway. It is a little bit like […]. We are better than Europeans, we cannot eat that because that is going to "kill us." This does not make any sense. With Mattilsynet (NFSA), there are routines that we did not know about when we opened the shop. So, one day they came, and they were like, if you do not fix this by tomorrow, we will order you to close the shop. They were very strict. Besides that, there is the municipality, they are not very easy to deal with, they are very strict, very rigid, and there is no room for negotiations. (Wang, entrepreneur)
>
> For example, if we order flour, we have to pay customs for it, and you might place an order for a product like pepper and receive a message from Mattilsynet (NFSA) that the pepper cannot be sold here in Norway. Considering the transport and the cost of buying the product, you have already lost money [… .] It is difficult and risky business if you have to import new products [… .] Transportation and customs are expensive, and because of this, we have to sell cheaper products at a slightly higher price to cater for the extra costs, which is a burden to our customers. (Catherin, entrepreneur)

Wang and Catherin did not know about the customs regulations and the fact that the NFSA authority needs to legitimize their practices. Compared to what the entrepreneurs are used to,

the Norwegian institutional arrangements appear as a bureaucratic hindering of entrepreneurial freedom and thus their ability to satisfy customer needs. The tensions with various governmental stakeholders show that the immigrant entrepreneurs lack a necessary competence fit for the Norwegian market. When they struggle to comprehend standard business regulations, they end up violating them, sometimes with severe consequences.

> We did not understand some of the things that were required by law [… .] We paid the fines several times. I remember one time, the biggest mistake that we did was that we ordered products, gathered all the receipts, and delivered them to the accountant. Then, the control person came, and he asked many questions that we could not answer. In the end, he said that we had done a mistake, and we had to pay NOK 50000. So, they sent me a 65-pages booklet to read and reply to them within 15 days. I could not understand much, so I just replied to them that I would pay the NOK 50,000 to be done with that case because I could not understand what I was supposed to do. They agreed and told me that was good. That price increased to NOK 70000 because we did not understand what we were supposed to do and when. It was too much. I had to take up a course to learn the Norwegian rules. (Jade, entrepreneur)

As Jade highlights, the process of establishing immigrant grocery shops was accompanied by unexpected risks and uncertainties owing to the rules and regulations, such as bookkeeping and accounting. Some even demonstrate resistance against what they consider an unfair system.

> I think some rules need to change; we have products that are approved in other European countries, but these products are not allowed in Norway. I import some of the products from London that are not accepted in Norway [… .] I think they should assess if there is something dangerous with the product before they destroy it [… .] You cannot just conclude that because the product is from a certain country, it is bad. (David, entrepreneur)

The rules that David does not know about is the agreement that Norway has with the European Union (EU). EU products do not need any approval from the Norwegian authorities, but "if the products come from countries outside the EU, then the rules are different" (Marianne, NFSA). The problem for entrepreneurs is that the rules and regulations are created for the needs of the dominant large supermarket chains and not for individual shops.

> When someone is a sole owner, they do not have support like the one chain supermarkets have, where someone established the system for you and you just need to follow it. So, in the case of these shops, they either must do things on their own or outsource services where they feel incompetent [… .] Also, the rules are not concrete, it specifies what people should do, but not "how," and there can be so many ways to do somethings. That is the most difficult part for majority of the shop owners … and the written language to convey the regulations is very complex, and I think that it can be a challenge as well. (Karin, NFSA)

As Karin states, the Norwegian regulations are complex and more suitable for large grocery chains with more resources than (socio-culturally) immigrant entrepreneurs with limited knowledge about the business regulations of the society. Furthermore, the immigrant entrepreneurs lack powerful representation in the marketplace to engage in fair negotiations with governmental institutions and suppliers.

> If you lack an association or a kind of system that takes care of their members' beliefs, protects them, and negotiates their needs in the market, regulates and negotiates the pricing on their behalf, then it is difficult [… .] Due to the lack of a system, each shop owner is treated differently, we evaluate them according to their financial history, what they order, and we can decide yes or no, and they cannot complain anywhere apart from the normal channel that everybody has, and in that way, they do not have that protection behind them because they cannot speak as one voice. (Paul, NORTURA supplier)

As Paul commented, the lack of power in the marketplace makes the immigrant entrepreneurs feel alienated. The dominant food suppliers do not trust them and are not interested in building ties to individually owned grocery shops outside the mainstream market.

The immigrant entrepreneurs face challenges of legitimacy in the mainstream Norwegian market owing to the differences in consumption culture and business logics. The relationship with NFSA is an example where the inspectors are not familiar with the products that the shops want

them to approve. The product variety of ethnic foods is perceived as strange compared to the product variety of mainstream Norwegian grocery shops. Reputation is also at stake when newspapers report on illegal attempts to import exotic products.

> The major challenge we [NFSA] face is the rise in the number of food products and ingredients that Norway is not familiar with. It has been a challenge for us as inspectors because we need to understand what the products contain. At times, shop owners must explain certain products, what they are called, how they are made, etc. For example, you can find shops that have Indian or Arabic shrimps, kebab, etc., and we are not really familiar with these products. (Karin, NFSA)
>
> The Norwegian Food Safety Authority suspects that illegal, fermented duck eggs, an Asian delicacy, are sold in several grocery shops. This year, 732 fermented duck eggs produced in Taiwan were found in one of the shops during inspection. Fermented duck eggs cannot be imported from Taiwan to the EU and Norway. (Aftenposten newspaper, October 12, 2011)

Furthermore, the activities of immigrant grocery shops are under constant surveillance from various governmental institutions. Thus, entrepreneurs feel mistrusted as a serious business partner. The mistakes they make as a start-up tend to follow them to the later phases of their business operations.

> The NFSA is very active; they come immediately to get a report on the goods that have arrived. If they find that what you have imported is not authorized here [in Norway], then you need to surrender the products to them or they will ask you to return them. (Rashid, entrepreneur)

Institutional market actors, such as the local municipality, Innovation Norway, Salten, and NFSA, offer an array of services including start-up courses, financial assistance, and information on rules/regulations related to business ownership.

> The help is there, but [the immigrant entrepreneurs] have to ask for it [… .] Many organizations offer help and services for those who would like to be entrepreneurs. However, the main challenge is that most people do not ask for help that they need, which is quite sad. (Nina, Salten)

As Nina highlights, entrepreneurs are hesitant to use the available services and get help from the institutions because they fear that they will not be able to convince the legitimacy of their business ideas:

> We did not think that Innovation Norway or any other institution would help us with this kind of business [grocery shop] because it is more like 'you need a brilliant idea' to get help. Our idea was not that special. (Wang, entrepreneur)

Our empirical findings reveal that the continuous turbulence between immigrant entrepreneurs and Norwegian institutional actors degrade their relationship, which heightens the issue of distrust.

> In Norway, we trust the authorities because we believe that they are there to help us. However, some entrepreneurs come from countries with regimes that they do not trust. Often, we have experienced that people say they understand what we are saying without actually understanding what we are saying. They are more concerned about pleasing us rather than trying to understand what we are saying, but to a greater extent, it goes fine. (Marianne, NFSA)

Marianne points out two reasons for the legitimacy challenge between entrepreneurs and market actors. First, immigrants generally do not trust governmental authorities. Second, there seems to be a cross-communication issue that does not seem to be solvable because entrepreneurs accept that they understand things without really understanding them.

Role of immigrant communities

Our findings show that immigrant entrepreneurs belong to a network of immigrant communities that are linked primarily based on immigration experiences, ethnic belonging, religious beliefs, or family/friend relations. Importantly, immigrant communities share the challenges of acculturating into the new culture, which provokes social solidarity, collective resilience, and determination to

share the knowledge necessary to develop their grocery shops. Lucy (Entrepreneur), for example, received help from a community member who had experience running an immigrant grocery shop:

> So, I quit my waitressing job at the hotel and took the chance to go for training at her shop [… .] everything happened in two months or less, from us deciding on getting the shop up and running [… .] If not for her, perhaps it could have taken some time to incorporate ourselves into the market. (Lucy, entrepreneur)

The communities share the dynamics of integrating into a new culture, and immigrant grocery shops are a source of cultural continuity and identity for immigrants. Consequently, it is in the interest of community members that grocery shops are established.

> [The entrepreneur] posted an article on Frøya.no where he asked if people at Frøya would want an immigrant shop with food from all over the world [… .] The response he received was overwhelming. A resolute 'YES' was the answer. He established the shop […]. It shows that many foreigners wanted such a shop, but also that many 'Frøyvøringer' [local residents] welcomed it. It was both satisfying and gratifying. (https://www.froya.no/nyheter/frya_far_innvandrerbutikk).

The findings show that immigrant communities share their demand and, if necessary, help with market information and business operations as a way of influencing the expansion of the Norwegian grocery market.

> I have helped a lot of people who want to start an immigrant grocery shop both here in Trondheim and other regions as well. I give them advice regarding the rules, how the system works, and where they can order products to sell. (Jade, entrepreneur)
>
> Norway is a very strict country [… .] Moreover, importing goods from different places is a major challenge for most shop owners because of different regulations, so now when I import products, I order more than I need so that I can sell to the other shop owners. (Rashid, entrepreneur)

As Jade and Rashid pointed out, those entrepreneurs who have been doing business for a long period of time and have experience navigating the complex Norwegian institutional system help newcomers with business operations such as procurement and navigating rules and regulations. The role of community engagement is crucial in spreading immigrant grocery shops to different regions and it is important that immigrants from various nationalities own them, so various ethnic food products are available at the marketplace.

Sometimes, several immigrant communities join together as entrepreneurs. The advantage is that they can attract more customers and understand the needs of a broader immigrant market.

> I got help from my family and friends [… .] I do not think that the state would help with something like this. But it was good because the first year we were just paying rent and trying to stabilize the business, so imagine if we had taken a loan … We are six, one from Uzbekistan, one from Afghanistan, and the three of us Arabic, which is also good because we are from different cultures and can communicate with different languages so, in case there are customers who do not speak Norwegian at least we can help them. (Samuel, Entrepreneur)

The immigrant grocery shops bear a sentimental meaning for the immigrant communities. It is also a place of social value in which immigrants can meet other people. Therefore, the variety of benefits turns immigrant communities into dedicated and loyal customers who support entrepreneurs and businesses.

> Thus, my personal philosophy as a local customer is to support independent business owners. For example, if they sell potatoes and REMA 1000 sell potatoes, I will prefer to buy potatoes from local independent business owners because I feel that I may be one of the few customers. I would like to support them because I think that they are doing a big service to our community by supplying us with this food. So, even milk or things that I consider basic, that I could get maybe a little bit cheaper from REMA 1000, I will buy from them anyway because I just want them to survive. (Lola, Customer)

Entrepreneurs state that it is important to attract immigrant customers from different ethnic groups or nationalities because they help them expand product categories. They argue that the

variety of ethnic food products is extensive and they depend on communicating about ethnic traditions and rituals. Hence, they assist shop owners in expanding product categories to ensure a variety of products so that the needs of immigrants from different nationalities are met.

> Whenever my customers ask questions about something they need, I write it down and check if someone else asks for the same. If I see that three or four people have asked, and I do not have it here (in the shop), then I will import and add it. (David, Entrepreneur)
>
> They show me pictures, then I can order whatever they need, the rest I put on the shelf, maybe there is another customer, who likes the same products, but they cannot ask. So, when they come next time, they will notice that it is available. (Samuel, Entrepreneur)
>
> I think without immigrants these shops [immigrant grocery shops] will not survive; we are very interdependent on each other. (Pinto, Customer)

Different ethnic communities also help entrepreneurs promote shops and their products through Facebook and word-of-mouth. One example is how community members disseminate information to fellow ethnic groups about ingredients suited for a particular culinary tradition:

> At the beginning, our focus was very Chinese, and we wanted to present Chinese food. Automatically, it became Indonesian, Thai, Korean, and gradually our product line has become diverse mostly because the customers come asking for items [… .] Indonesian people came in and they were like 'Oh my God, you guys have a lot of Indonesian products' [… .] They were like, can you also help us get these and that and so on, and it exaggerated overnight. We got all Indonesians spread the word to the Indonesian community. (Wang, Entrepreneur)

The findings reveal that the immigrant entrepreneurs, through their network of immigrant consumer communities, were able to shape the grocery market in Norway despite the institutional constraints and challenges that accompanied the immigrant grocery market development. The immigrant consumer communities alternated roles from market users to institutional entrepreneurs and collectively integrated resources to contribute to the development of immigrant grocery shops. The shared interests and understanding of the value of ethnic food products in the host country motivated efforts to leverage cultural capital, resources, and knowledge to shape the grocery market in Norway. For immigrant consumer communities, immigrant grocery shops act as a source of cultural continuity and identity, which is a significant part of the acculturation process (Üstüner and Holt 2007).

Discussion and conclusion

This study responds to a call for research on the role of immigrant consumers in market dynamics (Arnould et al. 2017). We investigate how immigrant entrepreneurs engage with consumers, personal network, and other market actors to shape the grocery market in Norway. While previous research emphasized the role of consumers in market development, only little is known about how this plays out in the Western immigrant context.

Previous studies argue that immigrants alter the host's consumption culture and practices over time and tend to challenge the existing market structures through business opportunities that rely on multicultural diversity (Luedicke 2011; Penaloza 2018). The results of our study reveal how the dynamics of immigrants' acculturation can shape market dynamics with cultural adjustments as the main driver. Our focus has been on how the immigrant consumer community navigate the institutional dynamics in the host country throughout the market development process. Therefore, this research contributes to knowledge about the role of intersections, primarily between immigrants and host institutions, illustrated by how immigrant entrepreneurs shape the grocery market in Norway.

Our contributions to the field of market system dynamics (Giesler and Fischer 2017) are threefold: First, we show how market dynamics are driven by prospects of immigrant consumption practices. Second, our study contributes to the literature regarding how the immigrant consumer community engages and contributes to the development of markets that propose a different cultural

meaning in the mainstream market. Third, our work offers empirical evidence on how immigrant entrepreneurs face troubles in navigating between bureaucratic and egalitarian logic and a (neoliberal) "everything can be negotiated" approach of network oriented migrant entrepreneurialism.

Existing research on market dynamics shows that consumers as entrepreneurial actors can collaborate with other market actors and take deliberate actions to alter market dynamics (Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Martin and Schouten 2014; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). However, these studies rely on fieldwork among native inhabitants who are, one way or the other, opposing the dominant market logic of their own culture. Our findings reveal that immigrant consumers do not oppose the mainstream market. It is difficult to oppose a market in which one does not understand the logics and cultural meaning (Choi and Burnes 2016). Instead, they are pushed by the immediate and embodied desire for rituals and traditions (with culinary ingredients) of their ethnic origin, which is essential for the acculturation process (Peñaloza and Gilly 1999; Üstüner and Holt 2007).

Joining cultural experiences and innovation activities might strengthen immigrants' sense of self and belonging in the foreign country (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005). Consuming ethnic food abroad evokes the taste and smell of a lost homeland, providing a temporary return to the time when the lives of immigrants were not fragmented (Holtzman 2006). Consequently, the lack of ethnic food products in the mainstream Norwegian market makes the immigrant consumer communities feel marginalized.

While previous studies emphasize how marginalized consumer communities tend to operate around a particular product, brand, or product class (see Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Sandikci and Ger 2010), our results show that the challenges of acculturation can contribute to market development. Immigrant communities socially motivate and sometimes even persuade the entrepreneurs to question the dominant logics and establish ethnic grocery shops in a marketplace dominated by three large grocery chains. Despite the efforts and challenges that arise from establishing a new business model in an established industry, the interviewed immigrants argue that it is vital for the successful acculturation process that they can preserve a certain cultural continuity and aspects important to their ethnic identities. Thus, the results expand what might be considered communities of identification (e.g. Giesler 2008; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Kjeldgaard et al. 2017). Despite their different ethnicities, religions, and cultural backgrounds, the multiethnic communities are linked by the problem of integration. It is a response to the adjustments that the host society demands. The group solidarity or sense of "we-ness" (see Cova and Cova 2002) is based on shared misery (of migration) and challenges of (re) settling into a strange Norwegian cultural environment.

Immigrant entrepreneurs need to coordinate with, adapt to, or seek to change institutional logics to alter markets (Kjellberg and Olson 2017). Norwegian markets are regulated by strict procedures for market practices, especially for grocery shop businesses. Our results unwrap how immigrant entrepreneurs struggle to adjust to the legal rules and regulations of various institutions (e.g. NFSA, Norwegian tax administration (skatteetaten), and customs) to establish immigrant grocery shops in Norway. As Humphreys (2010) and Kjellberg and Olson (2017) reported, new market legitimation depends on a broader shared understanding of what is being offered and why. However, the legitimation of immigrant grocery shops is compromised owing to the differences in consumption culture and lack of common cultural-cognitive understanding (Scott 2008) between the immigrant communities and Norwegian institutional actors.

Rao and Giorgi (2006) acknowledge that immigrants' activities may not only be constrained by limited resources but also how they are interpreted by the host country. The results reveal that government institutions have a reactive response to immigrant initiatives. Or, as one of the NFSA inspectors admits, *"the major challenge we [NFSA] are facing is the increase of food products and ingredients that Norway is not familiar with."* Consequently, many tensions occur before the immigrant entrepreneurs understand how to do their accounting, their imports, legal produce, and so on. Nevertheless, immigrant entrepreneurs endure them despite their "immigration blues" because of

the support from their community members. Furthermore, immigrant grocery shops are immigrants' "identity projects", and the value at stake is thus important for adjustment. Contrary to previous research (Giesler 2008; Dolbec and Fischer 2015), the establishment of grocery shops by immigrants is neither the opposition nor a desire to expand products in a market but rather driven by the desire of enabling a certain immigrant lifestyle. Despite the argument that immigrant grocery shops might encourage multiculturalism (Peñaloza 1994) and cultural exchange (Oswald 1999) in the host country, what the mainstream is missing is that the shops bear a cultural-related sentimental meaning and value that is significant for the acculturation of immigrant communities.

The shared understanding of the value of immigrant grocery shops in Norway motivates the collective efforts of immigrant consumer communities. Despite the lack of power representation at the institutional level, they assume different roles, such as mentors, promoters, and entrepreneurs, and assemble resources (socio-cultural capital, ideas, and knowledge) to navigate the institutional challenges. Previous studies highlight that marginalized consumers shape market dynamics through engagement with powerful market actors. For instance, the "fatshionistas" in Scaraboto and Fischer (2013) study managed to ally with resourceful market actors to alter the clothing industry. In Sandikci and Ger (2010) study, the Turkish women received support from religious organizations, the media, and various companies to develop a segment of tesettür. However, in these studies, the broader society can relate to the consumption culture initiated within the fashion industry. The immigrant community faces a Nordic entrepreneurial context that departs considerably from their collaborative and networking mode of market development. We think a relevant explanation for the "immigration blues" is in the confrontation between a neo-liberal ideology of the immigrant community and statist individualism (Ulver 2019), which distinguish the Norwegian society within which the market dynamics materialize. Whereas markets in the Nordic countries rely on the greater acceptance of the alliance between the state and the individual citizen (Martin, Lindberg, and Fitchett 2019), it seems that there is a general antipathy toward state interventions in the immigrant community. The immigrant entrepreneur would provide for him- or herself in the market and rely on the goodwill of the family and the community, which might be counterproductive in a marketplace with ideals of open markets, trust, strong welfare support, and egalitarianism (Østergaard et al. 2014).

Our findings reveal that immigrant entrepreneurs challenge the core values of the Norwegian institutional system because they trust their communities more than other market actors. We interpret this as an acculturation challenge because immigrants express trust in other people and institutions depending on the average level of trust in their respective countries of origin (see Bilodeau and White 2016). Fukuyama (1995) asserts that trust relationships differ between contexts and are influenced by socio-economic and cultural status. The immigrant entrepreneurs draw support from their network of immigrant communities that they trust rather than utilize public services support, such as mentorship programs, advice about business ownership, and start-up courses. This portrays how community trust is integral to intergroup cohesion and market development in a foreign cultural context. Previous research shows that ethnic entrepreneurs who seek to survive in a foreign market may cope with institutional structures at the surface level to gain legitimacy but challenge normative expectations within the same institutional field at a deeper level through their social linkages (Gnes 2016; Vermeulen and Brünger 2014). For example, the immigrant entrepreneurs did not question or dispute the regulations but instead concealed their incompetence from the Norwegian Food and Safety Authority. A policy implication is that it could be worthwhile to offer services through the immigrant communities and not as part of the "mainstream" services offered to each entrepreneur by Innovation Norway, start-up organizations, or the municipalities, which also might provide support for systemic integration.

Our research provides a starting point for a better understanding of how immigrant consumer communities assume different roles in navigating the dynamics of developing markets in foreign contexts. In this study, we focused on how immigrant entrepreneurs engage with consumers and other market actors to shape the grocery market in Norway. Our study shows a significant degree

of collaboration and networking during market development. Further studies might question such collaborative efforts, for instance, among communities of different nationalities or ethnic origins. Furthermore, we need more studies that investigate the consequences of confrontation between the Nordic logic of "statist individualism" and different version of neoliberalism during market dynamics, which might enhance understanding of why immigrant communities face alienation toward institutions and stakeholders of mainstream markets – and perhaps the "immigration blues".

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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