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**Review of the doctoral dissertation “Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Indian
Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Poland”
authored by mgr Mansour Esmaeil Zaei
under the supervision of dr hab. Piotr Tomasz Makowski,
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The review has been prepared under the regulations of the Legal Act of Law on Higher Education and Science, according to which:

“Art. 187. 1. A doctoral dissertation shall present the candidate’s general theoretical knowledge in a discipline or disciplines and the ability to independently conduct scientific or artistic work.

2. The subject of the doctoral dissertation is an original solution to a scientific problem, an original solution in the field of applying the results of own scientific research in the economic or social sphere, or an original artistic achievement.”

Subject and aim of the dissertation

The reviewed dissertation addresses the relevant problem of immigrant entrepreneurship. The aim of the dissertation is “to provide new insights on entrepreneurial activities undertaken by Indian immigrants in Poland in order to understand the main dynamics of the establishment and development of their business ventures; to fill the existing gap in immigrant

entrepreneurship studies; and to set up a basis for future research" (Abstract). The specific objective is (p. 8) "to develop a conceptual framework that better interprets the entrepreneurial activities of Indian immigrants in Poland, and to identify the main dynamics of the establishment and development of their business ventures". Additionally the Author asks the research question "What reasons values, and incentives guide Indian immigrants to enter entrepreneurial path in Poland?". The objectives are relevant for a doctoral dissertation and the addressed subject of the dissertation is much up-to-date. The Author expresses in the Introduction that "the number of immigrants in Poland is still relatively small" which was true for the moment of preparation of the dissertation. Nowadays, when the review is being prepared, Poland faces a big wave of Ukrainian immigrants, and discussions are conducted, on how to induce their entrepreneurial behaviours. This makes the subject addressed by the Doctoral candidate highly important, even though He conducts the analysis based on different ethnic groups.

The aim, the research question, as well as the whole dissertation, is rather more of practical importance than the theoretical one. Similarly, the research gap identified in the paper is identified at the practical, not theoretical level. The Author underlines that "the research addresses the knowledge gap and contributes to the debate about immigrants in general and immigrant entrepreneurship in particular. The study examines the trajectories of Indian immigrant entrepreneurs' experiences of establishing and operating their businesses in Poland in general, and Warsaw metropolitan area, in particular as the main center of Indian diaspora in Poland" (Introduction, p. 7). This approach when empirical analysis drives the theoretical one does not diminish the value of the dissertation itself. Especially since the Author has conducted relevant and extensive theoretical review of the literature as well.

Structure of the thesis and the general readability

The structure of the dissertation is typical and correct for the doctoral dissertation. It contains five chapters, where Introduction is numbered as chapter 1 and Summary, conclusions and recommendations as chapter 5. Chapter 2 is theoretical and covers the review of the literature. Chapter 3 describes research methodology, data collection and analysis, whereas chapter 4 presents the research findings.

Generally, the dissertation is well and carefully written in terms of language and style. There are only some minor remarks, e.g. on p. 10 the Author writes that the chapter Reviewing the literature "synthetizes the artistic, theoretical and conceptual framework". The term artistic should be rather omitted.

Literature review and theoretical background

A doctoral dissertation should present familiarity with previous work, which definitely characterises the reviewed work. The Author shows a very good knowledge of the literature and systematizes it. I appreciate the conducted synthesis and comparison of different theoretical streams underlining the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship. This is even more important as the theoretical background of this phenomenon is indeed not simple and can be addressed using different theories and approaches. Several different theories deal with ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurship and the theories on immigrant entrepreneurship are developed within the field of sociology, anthropology and labour economics literature.

The Literature review presented in Chapter 2, is detailed but also quite broad. It introduces different perspectives to the entrepreneurship of immigrants (social psychological and economic) and different immigrant entrepreneurship theories, but also it addresses a more practical aspect of research focusing on Indian immigrants – sharing the research on motivations and intentions, entrepreneurial activity and empirical studies as well as detailed analysis of research on entrepreneurship by Indian immigrants in the world and Poland. As far as a literature review is concerned I especially appreciate chapter 2.9 where different immigrant entrepreneurship theories are described, including the middleman minority, the ethnic enclave economy, the disadvantage theory, the cultural theory, the interactive model, the mixed embeddedness approach.

Chapter 2.8 focuses on the Entrepreneurship of Indian Immigrants in Poland. The Author in detail summarizes different waves of migration flows of Indian nationals into Poland. The Author underlines that although Indian migrants have already attracted some attention from researchers in Poland, the previous research lacks a perspective into Indian entrepreneurial activities.

In the literature review, the Doctoral Candidate presents many summarizing tables, which is helpful and presents the amount of work done as well as summarizes the main findings. Here however one remark should be made that in some cases such as table 2 (Typology of migrants), additional comment on the findings from the table would be much needed. Nevertheless, the conducted literature review confirms that the Doctoral candidate has a general theoretical knowledge in the discipline of management and quality studies, focusing on immigrant entrepreneurship. He also knows how to synthesize the literature and identify the main contributions.

Method of the empirical analysis

The method adopted in the dissertation constitutes its unquestionable strength. The Author applies the qualitative methodology and very rigorously applies the principles of grounded theory. I am impressed by the maturity of the decisions regarding the applied methodology of empirical research. This level of rigour and thoughtfulness at each stage of method application (e.g. the list of reasons for opting for the grounded theory presented at p. 54) is higher than typical for a doctoral dissertation. In my opinion, the way the method is applied in the dissertation constitutes the strength of the dissertation. It shows that the Author can independently conduct scientific work.

The Doctoral Candidate adopts the qualitative method and justifies this approach as the most suitable for the analysed problem. I have to agree with this choice as the qualitative method allows one to study why and how different phenomena and processes occur. Moreover, the knowledge gained from qualitative studies presents the perspective of social actors under investigation which is important when analysing the problem of immigrant entrepreneurship.

The Author conducted 15 semi-structured interviews among Indian immigrants in Poland, Warsaw. The interviews bring new knowledge on this phenomenon although we could question if the exact city (Warsaw) has any bearing on the obtained results. For the interviews, the Author used "snowball" technique and purposeful sampling which is correct for this kind of study. The criteria used included first-generation (foreign-born) immigrants, legally registered to stay and work in Poland, established and operating a legal business in Warsaw metropolitan area, command over spoken English. Additionally, the concept of saturation was followed to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Altogether 15 interviews were conducted. Interestingly only one female respondent took part in the study, which however is not due to the wrongly conducted research process, but due to the cultural aspects characterising entrepreneurship of Indian immigrants. Regarding the detailed description of the method applied I especially appreciate Figure 3 (p. 64) which summarizes all the steps of the adopted process of theoretical sampling. Additionally, a pilot study has been conducted which is a good research practice.

The data analysis applied the principles of grounded theory and additionally, the data was processed using the QSR-NVivo programme. Again, I appreciate Figure 4 which summarizes the data analysis process.

While conducting the analysis the Author identified many detailed categories which additionally are interrelated (e.g. context and intervening conditions as similar categories). Sometimes it could be questioned if all these categories should be analysed separately. However, I highly rate the discussion and justification provided by the Author who is aware of

the mentioned similarities and interrelations. I especially acknowledge Figure 7 in this regard which summarizes the relationship between categories using the Paradigm Model Framework of Strauss and Corbin (1990).

When describing the method, the Author discusses not only the approach, steps of data collection, sampling and approach to data analysis, but also the problem of data saturation, the rigour of the study (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability), the role played by the researcher and the ethical considerations. It proves the scientific maturity of the researcher.

My only remark regarding the method applied is that it can be questioned if based on the conducted analysis the Author discovers the theory or rather the framework or the principles (in the Abstract it is written "At the core of the discovered theory is..."). Nevertheless, this is a minor comment compared to the generally very high assessment of the methodological approach used in this doctoral dissertation.

Results of the analysis and contribution of the dissertation

The conducted empirical analysis is very complex and in a complex way addresses the phenomenon under study. The Author distinguishes four major categories of analysis: motives and drives, opportunity recognition process, conducting business activities and experienced obstacles. The analysis is conducted with much precision, the quotes of different respondents and summarizing tables are presented, which is correct for the adopted research method. One minor issue is that some quotes are referred to more than one time in different parts of the analysis and therefore assigned to different categories. This sets the question on similarities between the categories, although I need to admit that the Author is aware of these interrelations and discusses them in one of the subchapters (4.7). Another minor issue is that in some cases (e.g. section 4.4.1.6 on entrepreneurial alertness) the majority of the analysis consists of quotes and tables. Some additional comments would be helpful in this regard.

The analysis is conducted thoughtfully. In some parts of the dissertation, it can be questioned whether the analysis is even not too detailed. E.g. table 10 emerged concepts related to Indian immigrants' business practices encompasses many concepts where the question could be asked whether the identified emerged concepts are typical just for the Indian immigrant or whether these concepts are typical for all entrepreneurs. Although I need to underline that the raised issues do not undermine the overall positive assessment of the presented analysis and findings.



Based on the conducted analysis the Doctoral candidate presents main findings including that “conducting business activities to address entrepreneurial intention in response to perceived and experienced pull and push factors” emerged as a dominant and relevant category within the data that accounted for data variations and helped explain the occurring social phenomenon” (p. 90). He also identifies features distinguishing Indian immigrants in Poland from other immigrants (the reliance of Indian entrepreneurs on the recommendations and advice of native professionals to deal with formalities, but otherwise the reliance on ethnic networks and resources). As the importance of social ties and opportunities in the framework is underlined, maybe the effectuation theory could be used for further explanation of the phenomenon under study as well?

As far as the presentation of research findings is concerned I find it important that based on the conducted analysis the research propositions are formulated which form the basis of a proposed theoretical model including 20 propositions. This constitutes a conceptual framework that interprets the entrepreneurial activities of Indian immigrants in Poland. I would like to know, how the constructed theoretical model could be used for the analysis of immigrant entrepreneurship of other than Indian ethnicities or is it relevant only for Indian immigrants in Poland?

In chapters four and five the Doctoral candidate extensively responds to the research questions presented at the beginning of the dissertation. The first part of the chapter could have discussed more obtained results comparing them to the previous studies and literature. In my opinion, it is very valuable that the Author identifies implications both for research and practice (in the concluding chapter 5). But what I find even more valuable is that He identifies directions for future research as well as research limitations. Again, it shows that the Author is aware of the limitations of the conducted study and therefore has already a certain level of scientific maturity which allows Him to conduct future studies independently.

Although I have raised some minor issues above, in my opinion, the conducted research is significant and rightly applied. And the results are not only interesting but also relevant for the theory, business and policy practice alike.

Final opinion

In my opinion, the dissertation presents the candidate's general theoretical knowledge in the discipline of management and quality studies (*dyscyplina nauki o zarządzaniu i jakości*) especially concerning the problem of immigrant entrepreneurship. The biggest strength of the dissertation is the methodological rigour as well as the empirical analysis. It presents a very

high level of rigour in the methods used and proves the doctoral candidate's ability to conduct scientific work. The presented dissertation contributes to the current knowledge especially in terms of new empirical knowledge, although its theoretical analysis should not be undermined. I also believe that the subject of the doctoral dissertation is an original solution to the scientific problem of immigrant entrepreneurship focusing especially on the practical aspect of Indian immigrant entrepreneurship in Poland. Therefore, it can be stated that the work prepared by Mansour Esmail Zaei meets the general requirements of the doctoral dissertation and can be presented for defence procedure for the award of the doctoral degree. I also propose the doctoral dissertation authored by Mansour Esmail Zaei for nominating the Doctoral Thesis of Distinction.

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