

Working on the Fringes: Immigrant Businesses, Economic Integration and Informal Practices

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by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many advanced economies, especially their larger cities, acquired a more cosmopolitan outlook in the closing decades of the twentieth century. This is reflected in an ever-broadening product range, which now not only includes such obvious items as Coca Cola, hamburgers and Levi's but also Thai food, North African musical instruments and Indian saris. It is not just the appearance of these 'exotic' products in shops in Berlin, Liverpool, Paris, Sydney or Los Angeles that reveals the deepening links between less-developed and advanced economies. The demographic make-up of many advanced economies has also significantly changed as flows of long-distance migration from ever more locations increased in the second half of the twentieth century. Immigrants from less-developed countries moved to advanced economies, embodying the complex process of globalization in a very palpable sense. These two highly visible aspects of globalization are often directly related as immigrants themselves introduce their products to far-off places. They start businesses in their countries of settlement and become 'self-employed' or 'immigrant entrepreneurs'.

Notwithstanding increasing numbers of immigrant entrepreneurs from less-developed countries who set up shop, they have long remained in Europe, according to, notably, the *American* journal *Business Week*, 'unsung heroes'. In socio-economic terms, for a long time these immigrants were largely viewed *workers*. Immigrants were predominantly depicted as suppliers of cheap low-skilled labor in advanced economies. More recently, attention has shifted towards immigrants from less-developed countries who start their own businesses.

By becoming self-employed, immigrants acquire quite different roles than immigrants who become workers and also different than mainstream entrepreneurs. By starting their own business, immigrant entrepreneurs create their own jobs. This enables them to circumvent some of the barriers they may encounter in looking for a job. Immigrants from less-developed countries are especially likely to come up against these barriers. They may lack or be felt to lack educational qualifications, they may not have sufficient access to relevant social networks for transmitting information on vacancies, or local employers may simply discriminate against them. Becoming self-employed does not mean all these barriers have become irrelevant—banks may still discriminate against immigrants when they ask for business loans—but entrepreneurs are less vulnerable.

If they are successful, immigrant businesses can create jobs for others as well. This can benefit relatives, friends and acquaintances and, more generally, co-ethnics as social networks are often interfaces for information on the recruitment of new workers by small firms. Creating jobs then helps alleviate unemployment among immigrants.

Immigrant entrepreneurs can also contribute different forms of social capital than immigrant workers to the immigrant communities. Because of their links to suppliers and customers, immigrant entrepreneurs can be useful in constructing bridges to other networks outside the inner circle, thus improving chances of upward mobility. Moreover, immigrant entrepreneurs often act as self-appointed leaders for their communities.

Most important they show that immigrants from less-developed countries are not necessarily restricted to filling vacancies on the job market, they can be active agents and shape their own destinies by setting up their own businesses. Even if they are confined to lines of businesses with little promise, they are still actors in a very literal sense.

Immigrant entrepreneurs not only differ from immigrant *workers*, but also from *indigenous* entrepreneurs. They may provide goods and services indigenous entrepreneurs are not very likely to offer. Immigrant entrepreneurs may have expert knowledge on specific demands or specific sources of supply relating to foreign products as in the case of foodstuffs (e.g. spices from Indonesia), music (e.g. rai music from North Africa) or videos (e.g. Bollywood movies from India). In many cases this hard-to-copy expertise can be based on first-hand knowledge from back home or it can be generated through transnational networks that bridge the country of origin and the sometimes extensive diaspora of a specific group of immigrants. By introducing new products and new ways of marketing, even immigrant entrepreneurs at the bottom end of a market can be innovators—Joseph Schumpeter's 'new

men', albeit in a more modest form. One example is the introduction of Döner Kebab by Turkish entrepreneurs in Germany is. Or indigenous entrepreneurs might lack the credibility for specific kinds of businesses, as in the case of Chinese restaurants where the owner and staff need at least a Chinese appearance. Or preferences may keep indigenous entrepreneurs out of certain lines of business that require long hours of hard work at low pay that only immigrants are prepared to put up with. Migrant entrepreneurs may thus broaden the range of goods and services in a country and hence expand the consumers' choice. In an indirect sense, this may even allow indigenous entrepreneurs to focus more on activities where they can exploit their own specific comparative advantages.

From a geographical perspective, migrant entrepreneurs can add vitality to particular streets or even neighborhoods in cities. If streets are deserted by indigenous businesses and replaced—in an invasion-and-succession sequence—by foreign entrepreneurs, deterioration can be reversed. As owners of local businesses, they have a clear stake in the prosperity, accessibility, and safety of the street or neighborhood. In many cases, these businesses are also where members of local social networks gather. They are thus an important component of the social fabric sustaining civic society at the grassroots level.

Analogous to the last point, immigrant entrepreneurs can be instrumental in giving certain sectors a new lease on life. In some industries, because of their specific skills, knowledge or social capital immigrant businesses can be at a comparative advantage. The garment industry is a case in point. In this sector, immigrants bring skills no longer reproduced on a sufficient scale in most advanced economies. In addition, they are willing to work long hours and use their social capital and networks to reduce production and transaction costs.

The research questions that have been addressed by the members of the *Working on the Fringes* network were:

- How has immigrant entrepreneurship evolved in the last two decades both in terms of distribution over the various sectors of the economy and of competitive strength, and what are the structural determinants of the observed trends in the selected countries?
- What kind of profiles of informal economic activities by immigrant entrepreneurs can be discerned, how are they related to activities in the mainstream economy on the one hand, and, on the other, to the regulatory framework (in particular the welfare state) and the enforcement regime?
- Which significance has to be attributed to these (semi-) informal economic activities in terms of combating social exclusion and socio-economic incorporation of immigrants into mainstream society in the long run?
- How is the crucial dilemma between upholding the law and facilitating trajectories for upward social mobility of immigrant entrepreneurs approached in the selected countries, what are the underlying determinants and which best practices can be identified for their dealing with these issues?

Addressing the conceptual and statistical issues regarding cross-border comparisons in immigrant entrepreneurship made clear that truly international comparative (quantitative) research in this field is still significantly hampered by a lack of uniform statistical data. Information on immigrant entrepreneurship is hard to come by in many countries and even harder to compare. How 'immigrants' or 'ethnic' minorities are defined is contingent on the specific national incorporation regime and differs from country to country. Immigrants in France are largely statistically invisible since they have acquired French citizenship and are not registered as immigrants. Immigrants from Turkey in Germany are, however, in many cases still considered foreigners and registered as such, whereas immigrants from Eastern Europe who are of German ancestry (*Aussiedler*) could get citizenship right away. Immigrants who have the same backgrounds but settle in different countries can end up as very different statistical categories.

Moreover, somewhat analogous to the first point, the definition of entrepreneurship or self-employment also differs from country to country depending on the regulatory regime. In some

countries, very small firms are not counted as official businesses and thus remain part of the underground or informal economy. After a change in the official definition of businesses to include very small ones, as Regina Haberfellner has shown in her contributions to *Working on the Fringes* network, the number of self-employed in Austria mushroomed. The statistical category ‘immigrant entrepreneurship’ is at the crossroads of these two conceptual interpretations, resulting in large disparities between countries. In some countries, the whole official statistical concept as such is non-existent (e.g. France), whereas in others like the United States, the official Census data allow for a combination of country of birth and/or nationality with socio-economic status. Even if official quantitative data are available, time series of immigrant entrepreneurship are often difficult to construct. Figures on employment and unemployment are published quarterly or even monthly, and in many cases they can be broken down according to sex, age group, ethnic category and region. Data on self-employment are not subjected to this rigid (OECD) format and can have very different time intervals. Census data tend to be collected once a decade. The burgeoning international comparative research on patterns of unemployment thus has a much sounder statistical base than research on immigrant entrepreneurship. The members of our network have, sometimes painstakingly, constructed quantitative immigrant entrepreneurship trends in their countries by using such sources as national statistical time series, the Census, and Chambers of Commerce databases. Still, the diversity of the data does not as yet allow for a refined statistical comparative analysis of national trends.

The second issue that needed clarification was what kind of analytical framework should be used in examining immigrant entrepreneurship in different countries. Most research on immigrant entrepreneurs has been done in the United States. While not denying the evident qualities of much of this work, its applicability in the contexts of European Union member states with rather different divisions of labor between states and markets is sometimes limited. Its negligence of the much thicker (public) institutional environments makes sometimes to understand the trajectories of immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe. This omission has prompted us to rethink the relationship between the broader context and immigrant entrepreneurs and assess the existing literature particularly with respect to differences in the institutional environment as a potential explaining factor.

To combine agency and structure perspectives, we have introduced the concept of *mixed embeddedness*. Mixed embeddedness clearly means putting the opportunity structure back in again, but this time strongly influenced by Esping-Andersen. He demonstrated how different national institutional frameworks, even if they are confronted with a similar structural change in the shape of the post-industrial transition, help to create divergent *post-industrial employment trajectories* by way of path-dependent processes. To paraphrase Esping-Andersen, one could also argue that various institutional frameworks also bring about divergent post-industrial *self-employment trajectories* and hence different opportunity structures for entrepreneurs, local and immigrant alike. If the legal minimum wage is relatively low, as in the United States, personal services such as house cleaning and gardening are profitable and hence accessible for immigrant entrepreneurs without much human capital. In many European countries, a higher minimum wage may undermine the profitability of these activities provided by the public sector, in which case there are no opportunities for businesses at all. Mixed embeddedness implies taking into account the characteristics of the supply of immigrant entrepreneurs, the shape of the opportunity structure, and the institutions mediating between aspiring entrepreneurs and concrete openings to start a business in order to analyze immigrant entrepreneurship in different national contexts.

The concept of mixed embeddedness still requires further elaboration and operationalization, preferably in an international comparative setting. At this stage, it has only guided the contributions of the members of the *Working on the Fringes* network in a very broad manner. The members have examined trends in immigrant entrepreneurship and address (national) dimensions of (potential) variation in their countries, migration history (i.e. supply side), the opportunity structure (the demand side), and the impact of government policies and regulation on the demand and supply of the entrepreneurial market. The emphasis, given that the focus is on *national* developments, is on the structural side of the equation, although actor perspectives are also addressed. Involvement in informal activities is also examined as an important potential refuge for immigrant entrepreneurs. In addition,

contemporary immigrant entrepreneurship is perceived by social scientists in the different countries, reflecting the state of research on this topic. Below, we briefly summarize the key findings.

A first general finding is anything but startling. All the countries had growing numbers of immigrants from an increasing number of more and more distant countries. Immigrants from Asia, Central Africa and Latin America show up all across the globe. Even Italy, long a country of *emigration*, as Mauro Magatti and Fabio Quassoli show in their contribution, has become an immigration country. This new phase in immigration has significantly changed the demographic make-up of the world's larger cities. In other words, the supply of potential immigrant entrepreneurs has expanded.

International trends in immigrant entrepreneurship are the subject of this book's second general finding. Although the paucity and diversity of the data do not permit the construction of a cross-border quantitative overview, on the whole immigrant entrepreneurship is clearly increasing in all eleven countries in this volume. From the United States to South Africa and Austria to Canada, immigrants are increasingly self-employed. In the Netherlands (Jan Rath and Robert Kloosterman) and the United States (Pyong Gap Min and Mehdi Bozorgmehr) immigrant self-employment has mushroomed.

Although it was not an explicit research topic of this network, we also note the emergence of post-industrial economies in the selected countries. South Africa is somewhat the odd one out, as Sally Peberdy and Christian Rogerson note in their contribution. The other countries clearly show a declining manufacturing base, a growing service sector and an increasing number of small businesses and self-employed people. Germany, with its traditionally strong manufacturing base, has not escaped this trend. After a drop in self-employment between 1950 and 1980, German growth in self-employment, particularly in the service sector, picked up (see contribution by Wilpert).

The intersection of rising immigration and the post-industrial transition in the advanced economies in the last quarter of the twentieth century did indeed apparently result in growing immigrant entrepreneurship. Social reality in each of the selected countries is, however, much more complex.

The post-industrial transition implies a rise of small businesses as a result of the shift to flexible specialization modes of production in manufacturing and multifarious forms of outsourcing and subcontracting in manufacturing and services. We would thus expect to find immigrant entrepreneurs in what Allan Scott calls the leading edges of capitalist development: high-tech manufacturing, consumer-oriented industries (resolutely focused on niche markets), and personal and business services. The dominant pattern of immigrant entrepreneurship that emerges is however somewhat different. Most researchers have noted that immigrant entrepreneurs are concentrated in lower-end retailing, wholesaling and restaurants and catering. These openings are closely linked to the vacancy chains where the most recent immigrant entrepreneurs replace earlier ones at the lower end of market, the rise of ethnic markets or markets of immigrants sharing the same kind of background, and offer immigrant entrepreneurs captive markets. In France, as was noted by Ma Mung and Lacroix, shopkeepers from North Africa have partly replaced local French businessmen. The same can be said of Turkish bakeries and grocery stores in the Netherlands (Rath and Kloosterman) and Asian confectioners, tobacco shops and newsagents in the United Kingdom (see the contribution by Giles Barrett, Trevor Jones and David McEvoy). The rise of consumer markets of Eastern European immigrants until 1993 in Austria is an example of an ethnic market process creating openings for small businesses (see the contribution by Haberfellner). The spatial concentration of immigrants favors the emergence of these ethnic markets. In Germany (see Wilpert), Turkish shops have clearly benefited from being concentrated in certain neighborhoods.

National differences in the opportunity structure may result from the rate of replacement in vacancy chain businesses, which is related to general upward social mobility. It may also result from the creation or decline of ethnic markets in a process contingent on the rate and composition of immigration and the spatial distribution of groups of immigrants. More generally, the institutional framework also impacts the opportunity structure by regulating the access of immigrants to self-employment in some sectors or even in a wide range of activities. In Austria and Germany, aspiring immigrant entrepreneurs run into difficulties because the corporatist rules and regulations explicitly limit access to self-employment for non-EU immigrants. Although backed by the state, in some cases

non-state bodies such as the Chambers of Commerce are involved as gatekeepers. The viability and profitability in these market segments is also dependent on the supply of aspiring entrepreneurs or, in other words, on the strength of the push factor. In part the push factor is a function of structural unemployment. In European welfare states, unskilled immigrants have hard time in finding a job because the expansion of the (private) service sector is hampered by high minimum wages.

The openings resulting from vacancy chains and ethnic markets are relatively accessible; they generally do not require only low start-up costs and little or no specific educational qualifications and tend to rely on hard (and cheap) labor. Profit margins are squeezed because of the easy entry and many markets at the lower end are near saturation as is the case in the United Kingdom. Social capital and ethnic resources are needed to survive in these cutthroat markets. The combination of hard work and low pay means these openings are not very attractive. Many immigrant entrepreneurs are not so much pulled as pushed towards these openings. Unemployment is an important driving force behind the push towards entrepreneurship. Especially in Europe, where unemployment, particularly among immigrants from less-developed economies, has been high since 1980, immigrants have been partly pushed towards self-employment in these less-promising market segments. However, if the countries of settlement do not fully recognize immigrants' educational qualifications or if discrimination blocks their upward mobility on the regular labor market, they may be pushed towards self-employment. In Australia, as Jock Collins shows in his contribution, there is an *accent ceiling* that limits the social mobility of non-English-speaking immigrants and operates as a push towards self-employment.

The prevalence of this traditional pattern of immigrant entrepreneurs working hard in sweat shops should not however be interpreted to mean if there is no relation at all between the post-industrial transition and the rise of immigrant entrepreneurship. Firstly, there is the mobility of immigrant entrepreneurs; those who start in vacancy chain or ethnic market openings are embedded in societies where post-industrial transformations are taking place. This means that in principle, they can start by exploiting a vacancy chain or ethnic market opening and then move to another, expanding segment. This 'breaking-out' (cf. Engelen 2001) is difficult, though there are examples of immigrant entrepreneurs successfully pursuing this strategy. In many countries, immigrant entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector who started by primarily catering to a clientele of immigrants with the same background, profit from an expanding taste repertoire in the host societies linked to the cultural shrinkage of the world. Ching Lin Pang, in her contribution on Belgium, notes how Chinese, Greek and Turkish food has been 'creolized' or adapted to the culinary tastes of a broader clientele. This kind of strategy requires cultural capital or knowledge that straddles the products of the country of origin as well as of the consumer tastes in the country of settlement.

Secondly there is the continuing presence of immigrant entrepreneurs in the garment industry and in some countries (such as Italy) in construction. Although almost proverbial activities, they have been fundamentally affected by processes of outsourcing and subcontracting. In the United States, as Min and Bozorgmehr note, large firms have been outsourcing to sweatshops run by immigrants to circumvent rules and regulations on minimum wages and working hours. In this case, *regulations* and the drive to get around them, drive the creation of opportunities for small businesses. The Italian case is intriguing in this respect. Italy, once an industrial laggard because of its plethora of small firms, became the prime example of flexible specialization in the 1980s. Given that, according to Magatti and Quassoli, indigenous Italians already filled almost all the openings for small businesses, the scope for immigrant businesses was limited.

Thirdly a new kind of immigrant entrepreneur from less-developed countries seems to be emerging that connects directly to the post-industrial society. These immigrant entrepreneurs are highly educated (undergraduates and graduates), thereby reflecting the higher education at level in many less-developed countries and the increasing access of these immigrants to educational facilities in advanced economies (itself a form of globalization). Min and Bozorgmehr note the role of highly skilled Iranian, Iraqi, Taiwanese, Indian, and Chinese entrepreneurs in professional businesses (e.g. financial services) in the United States. Their businesses in rapidly growing post-industrial markets differ from the more traditional immigrant businesses in that they are often gazelles (with strong growth potential) and that they rely more on class resources.

Although these highly educated immigrants can also be found in Europe, especially among second-generation immigrants they are predominantly attracted to the United States. Their average return on human capital is considerably higher there than in most European countries. Immigrant entrepreneurs who are rich in individual resources also favor Canada and Australia, and even constitute a transnational category of *astronauts* who link Asia, Australia and Canada (see the contributions by Collins and Daniel Hiebert). African immigrant entrepreneurs in South Africa are also relatively well educated and capitalized. To a certain extent, the larger opportunity structure in a country pre-selects the composition of the incoming immigrant population with respect to skills and education.

Highly accessible markets where relatively low-skilled or unskilled labor is the main input and price competition is fierce also imply that a reduction of labor costs could contribute to higher margins. Given the marginal character of many of these firms, lower labor costs could even make the difference between bankruptcy and survival. In many European countries, relatively high legal minimum wages set clear limits to the lowering of labor costs. Cutting corners and deployment of informal strategies could achieve lower labor costs, albeit in an illegal way. These strategies could range from making use of the labor of one's own family (partner, children) without (sufficient) payment or below the legal minimum age of employment to employing workers without legal resident status or to dodging all kinds of taxes and insurance contributions. Given the competitive pressure on many of these immigrant entrepreneurs on the one hand, and the composition of their social networks on the other, informal economic activities are rather widespread and quite hard to check. Informal economic activities are not, of course, the prerogative of immigrant entrepreneurs alone. Indigenous entrepreneurs are also frequently involved in informal economic activities. The position of immigrant entrepreneurs as a group differs, however. They are much more likely to be found in at the lower end of markets and, in addition, tend to have better access to specific forms of informal labor. They can, for instance, employ members of extended families do not have much other job prospects or they have access to networks which include persons without legal resident status who are willing to work long hours against low wages.

Furthermore, as became clear from the contributions of our colleagues of the network, the 'playing field' for informal economic activities differs from country to country. These differences occur not only because of the national variation in rules and regulations but also because of differences in enforcement regimes. In many cases, governments turn a blind eye to relatively small infringements of the law. The frequency of these kinds of infringements (from immigrant and indigenous entrepreneurs), the difficulties in tracing them, and the possibilities for the offenders to hide these informal activities makes the transaction costs for the authorities rather high, and, arguably even prohibitive. A more promising solution seems to be to enhance the opportunities for entrepreneurs to move to other segments of the market where competitive pressures are smaller and hence margins are higher.

From our analytical perspective of *mixed embeddedness*, these findings can be grouped in three categories. First, the supply side (the resources of the immigrant entrepreneurs), secondly, the demand side or opportunity structure (the number and nature of openings for small businesses and the trajectories open to small firms to expand) and, thirdly, the matching process between supply and demand.

Most policies explicitly directed at enhancing the chances of immigrants for starting a business have focused on the supply side. These policies have particularly sought to increase two specific types of resources. They have intended to increase the human capital at the disposal of the immigrant entrepreneur by offering advice, training, courses etc. to increase the expertise of the (aspiring) immigrant entrepreneur. Secondly, policies have aimed at increasing access to financial resources for immigrant entrepreneurs to start a business or to expand an existing one. In many countries, these programmes have been institutionalized at a local level by establishing business centers, which provide these services. These policies are from our perspective, in principle, steps in the right direction with respect at starting a business as well as regarding expanding an existing one. Encouraging the ability to speak the language of the country of settlement is undoubtedly essential to be successful

outside of 'ethnic' markets. There are, obviously, all kinds of difficulties in implementing these policies but these fall outside the scope of our analysis.

One kind of resource that is only seldom addressed but which emerges from our (and other) analyses as very important prop of entrepreneurship in general is social capital. Social capital—the ability to make use of resources (financial, information, labor) from other members of the same social network—turns out to be rather important in determining the success of a business. Social capital and trust may significantly reduce transaction costs and, hence, the rate of survival and the chances for expansion of a firm. This holds true in general, but one could be more specific by looking at the composition of the social network. If an immigrant entrepreneur has access to social networks with indigenous members, the chances for breaking-out to new, larger markets increase. Consequently, policies should also aim at opening up social networks of mainly indigenous actors to immigrant entrepreneurs. Grass-roots business organizations (formal and informal) could be pivotal in enlarging the prospects of immigrant-run firms. By helping these firms to other markets, pressure to engage in informal economic activities will decrease.

The second category of policies aims at the demand side or opportunity structure. These policies should aim at increasing the opportunities for, on the one hand, starting a business and for moving to growth markets, on the other. Our *mixed embeddedness* approach has underlined the importance of these policies by looking at the differences in opportunity structures in the selected countries. The creation of new markets by a withdrawal of the public sector (*privatization*) has enhanced the opportunities for new firms. The same could be said, in principle, for the reduction of rules and regulations regarding the starting of a business (*deregulation*). This implies that the neo-liberal policies that were initiated in many EU member states after 1980 have enhanced the scope for businesses in general and, therefore, also for immigrant businesses. More specifically, by lowering the qualifications needed to start a business and adjusting the regulatory framework to the needs of small businesses, immigrant entrepreneurs have benefited.

However, neo-liberal policies may also favor already existing firms that are able to benefit from economies of scale. Deregulation of opening hours in the United Kingdom is a case in point as our network members Barrett, Jones and McEvoy have noted. By further deregulation of opening hours large retailers were able to invade niches that were hitherto occupied by immigrant businesses. The same could be said with respect to the abolishment of minimum prices which will allow large firms to undercut smaller ones. Neo-liberal policies should, hence, take into account the conditions of specific markets instead of offering across-the-board solutions that end up strengthening the position of those forms that are already established. Moreover, policies aimed at the opportunity structure should be informed by the complex institutional interdependencies of market economies. In Italy, for instance, small firms largely dominate the economic landscape. This feature is interconnected with other institutional features—e.g. business culture, organization of funding, educational system, and the nature of business accommodations, spatial patterns—which cannot be copied overnight if at all. Policies aimed at reducing the formal bureaucratic barriers for immigrants to start a business in Germany or Austria—a sensible road to take—may neglect other informal barriers for these entrepreneurs. Opening up the opportunity structure for immigrant firms therefore requires sensitivity with respect to other institutional features as well. Other policy areas, such as urban planning and zoning, may also be involved in creating opportunities for immigrant businesses to start and, eventually, to become successful.

The third category concerns the matching of demand and supply. Openings may exist and aspiring entrepreneurs may be willing but still they have to meet. Labor exchanges have been set up to ease the match between supply and demand on the labor market. This is not possible for the entrepreneurial market, as there are usually no actors to announce opportunities. One could, however, adopt policies that lower the threshold to start a business and also policies to ease bankruptcies. This would increase matching by making use of a *trial-and-error* mechanism. Successful businesses will incite others to follow their example, in the same area or elsewhere. In conjunction with the relatively generous welfare benefits, this trial-and-error element may promote the dynamics of urban and even national economies.

The establishment of the international network has proven to be of strategic importance for Europe's research community. The network has demonstrably fostered the exchange of empirical data and theoretical ideas on immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship and, consequently, encouraged the design and implementation of new research programs in various countries in Europe. Continuing this international network is obviously of strategic importance. Encouraging the activities of this network on the one hand and the study of immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship in key sectors of the economy in an international comparative setting on the other could among others, help accomplish this strategic aim.

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