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Examiner's report
of the thesis

“Psychological time and economic mind: social and psychological analysis”

submitted by Ekaterina Vyacheslavovna Zabelina

for the scientific degree of the Doctor of Psychological Sciences
of St Petersburg State University

Ekaterina Zabelina currently works at the Department of Psychology, Chelyabinsk State University. Her research interests include Economic Psychology, Positive Psychology, Organizational Psychology and Behavioural Science. She has published 11 manuscripts in scientific outlets enumerated in the Web of Science and Scopus, and her work receives increasing number of citations over the last years.

The aim of the research presented in the thesis prepared by Ekaterina Zabelina was, in line with the title of the thesis and Author's declaration in the text, to develop the concept of psychological time in economic psychology. The topic of psychological factors—including psychological time—playing role in behavior in different spheres is timely and very important. Therefore, I agree with the Author that it might be important to take into account individual differences in the temporal factors determining economic behavior, especially when planning reforms or in the time of crisis or economic transition. From this point of view, I consider the research project presented by Ekaterina Zabelina as ambitious, timely and important. This definitely could be an interesting and important work that might contribute to both economic and social psychology not only in Russia, but also on international level. However, I have some remarks considering the preparation of the thesis, including the formulation of hypotheses and the theoretical model proposed by the Author, research methodology, data analysis

and conclusions drawn from the results. I am presenting detailed comments further in this document, but before turning to them I want to stress that I believe most of those shortcomings can be solved in future work, and my reservation do not prejudice my assessment of the evaluated work.

The dissertation prepared by Mrs Ekaterina Zabelina starts with a very careful and in-depth literature review, presenting the state of the art in both international and Russian research on psychological time and economic attitudes (here, named economic mind). I would even say that I would expect the literature review in the dissertation to be more condensed, providing just an introduction to her own research. Nevertheless, reading this part was a pleasure, and I especially appreciate that I could learn about the state of research in economic psychology in Russia. However, such a great theoretical review is not summarized with precise hypotheses. The research hypotheses presented on pp. 6-7 and in the following parts of the thesis are more exploratory and general, since they do not include any specific predictions derived from the literature review. Furthermore, the relation between these hypotheses and theoretical model presented on p. 75 is not fully clear, while I would rather prefer to see the hypotheses precisely derived from the theoretical model. In other words, since the title of the thesis is “Psychological time and economic mind: social and psychological analysis”, I would expect that (1) the main and additional hypotheses will be formulated around the structure of psychological time and economic attitudes and the relation between them; (2) Author would explain what she means by “social analysis” and “psychological analysis” (now it is more about social and psychological factors and not methods of analysis) ; (3) the hypotheses would form the base for or would result from the model proposed by the Author; (4) the hypotheses would allow for specific predictions; (5) the model will be tested using multi-variable approach, such as structural equation modelling. Some of these points has been reached—at least to some extent—but the overall picture is not always comprehensive. In other words, the empirical part of the thesis is fragmented, and it is hard to combine the results of the studies conducted by Ekaterina Zabelina in order to conclude whether the theoretical model has been confirmed or not.

It is important to stress out that, in my opinion, it is really impressive how many diverse samples has been included in the studies, from indigenous inhabitants of Russian Arctic to Japan students and citizens of Ecuador. From this point of view, the last part of the thesis (chapter 10), presenting analyses performed on the combined samples, could be a better starting point for the reasoning presented by Mrs Ekaterina Zabelina. The strong point of this chapter is the application of structural equation modelling for data analysis, since this is the appropriate way of analyzing multiple variables at the same time, accounting for their interrelations. However, the model presented in Figure 10.6 on p. 222 is massively overcomplicated, and it includes an enormous number of unnecessary correlations between measurement errors and latent variables. My guess is that without all these non-hypothesized paths the model would not fit data well, and in fact, this poor-fitted model would be a great starting point for further analyses. Poor model fit in this case would probably result from different structure of the relations between focal latent variables—and even different structure of the measurement parts—depending on the specific moderating factors, such as professional status, culture, country of origin, immigration status etc. In other words, conducting multi-group analysis and invariance testing with this model as a starting point would probably give more comprehensive and comparable results in the specific samples.

My final remark is related to the assumption of the causality hypothesized by the Author. Since none of the research designs allowed for testing the causal claims (all of the studies were conducted as cross-sectional surveys and not experiments or longitudinal studies), the direction of paths in structural model are arbitrary, and they obviously result from the theoretical model proposed by Mrs Zabelina. However, it is possible that the relation between, for example, SWEB and time perspective has the opposite direction—for example that low (vs high) level of income hampers the feeling of security, causes threat and in turn triggers negative perception of other resources such as time. Alternatively, it might be possible that there is another factor—not measured in the studies—such as high (vs low) neuroticism, high level of anxiety as a trait or emotional reactivity as a temperamental factor that is responsible for both negative perception of time and negative perception of one’s subjective economic well-being. I would like to ask Mrs Ekaterina Zabelina to elaborate more on these alternative explanations of her results during the defense.

To summarize, my overall evaluation of the presented dissertation is positive, and I reckon that **the dissertation entitled “Psychological time and economic mind: social and psychological analysis” by Mrs. Ekaterina Vyacheslavovna Zabelina meet qualification requirements for the scientific degree of the Doctor of Psychological Sciences at St Petersburg State University.**

Regards



Agata Gasiiorowska