

Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial activities of immigrants from the Far East in Poland

The main objective of the project is to explore and understand **entrepreneurial activities** undertaken by **immigrants from the Far East** (China, Vietnam, South Korea, India, Philippines) in Poland.

The project can be described as pioneering as it follows current trends in research, but puts them in a different (Polish) context. The phenomenon of migrations attracts growing attention, and is analyzed from many different perspectives. Economic side of migrations is considered to be one of the crucial to understand immigrant groups, their motives and actions. There are numerous studies on migration processes from and to Poland but most of them are not connected with entrepreneurial activities. The small number of immigrants living in Poland (below 1% of the population) may be one of the reasons behind the scantiness of research. But it must be noted that the size of immigrant communities is growing, and they are more and more diversified (as lots of them come from geographically and culturally distant countries). Very often immigrants decide to open their own business ventures. The negligence of this aspect of economic life creates an opportunity to fill the knowledge gap.

For all that reasons, we made entrepreneurship of immigrants from the Far East a central aspect of our project. Far Eastern ethnic groups are quite big (e.g. Vietnamese), integrated and closed to the outsiders. Coping with that challenge was the main rationale for project consortium creation: partners have access to different groups thanks to their previous research and social activities (Institute for Middle and Far Eastern Studies, UJ and Faculty of Management, UW). It makes the project possible to conduct and will lead to filling of the research gap, and broadening the knowledge on immigrants.

We intend to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of entrepreneurial activities of immigrants?
2. What are the main motives of starting own business ventures and what kind of businesses are created by immigrants?
3. How immigrant entrepreneurs define their market/customers? When do they choose to operate as an ethnic business, and when they decide to serve local (or international) customers?
4. What are the main immigrants' approaches to building market position, defining success and development?
5. What is the role of ethnic community/ethnic networks in business? How immigrant entrepreneurs build relations with local communities?
6. How immigrant entrepreneurs cope with cultural, institutional, legal and economic differences? What factors shape their intercultural competencies?
7. What are the differences between first and second generations of immigrants in terms of opportunity recognition, market strategies and building company developmental plans?
8. What differences can be identified between different groups of Far East immigrants running their businesses in Poland?

In order to ensure the high quality of project the research team decided to combine qualitative (ethnographic) and quantitative methods. We start with 65 interviews with immigrant entrepreneurs (first and second generation) running their businesses in Poland. The results of this qualitative study will enable us to formulate hypotheses and design questionnaire for the quantitative part of research. Thanks to combining different methods we will: 1) obtain in-depth knowledge, 2) be able to compare groups and generations of immigrants + their motives, strategies and intercultural competencies.

As immigration is currently one of the most vivid challenges to European Union, the research project can also have an important economic and societal impact. It will lead to the recognition of patterns leading to entrepreneurial activities of immigrants. It will also allow to find out how entrepreneurial activities help in assimilation processes, and in building ties between immigrants and host societies. As a result, ways of introducing new migrants to Polish society and economy can be defined, and some guidelines for the policy design towards migrations can be derived from the research