

## Refugee entrepreneurship and socio-economic adaptation: the case of Ukrainians in Kraków agglomeration

Ukrainians are currently the largest group of economic immigrants in Poland, with a total population estimated at ca. 1.3 million before the war in Ukraine (2022). Surprisingly, in spite of the large magnitude of economic immigration in 2015-2021 period which has focused mostly in the largest Polish cities such as Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, Poznań and others, the Ukrainian diaspora remains relatively dispersed in the urban space: so far there is weak evidence for the ethnic district formation. Moreover, when it comes to Ukrainian entrepreneurs, most of them function on the mainstream market, competing with local native entrepreneurs: the ethnic enclave economy which would serve mostly the needs of other Ukrainians was – until 2022 - weakly developed.

The new dramatic humanitarian crisis caused by Russian invasion on Ukraine opens a new chapter on refugee and immigrant entrepreneurship research. As for today (13<sup>th</sup> May 2022), ca. 6.1 million Ukrainians were forced to leave their homeland, most of them (ca. 3.3 million) heading to Poland. Yet, as the refugee inflow to Poland is a very recent phenomenon, we know very little on refugees' socio-economic adaptation in host country and on the short-term survival tactics and – possibly – long term coping strategies pursued by these individuals. This research projects aims to fill the research gap in this topic by analyzing the refugee entrepreneurship of Ukrainians living in Kraków city and the Kraków agglomeration. We analyze the entrepreneurship as a part of the adaptation socio-economic process of the individual. Therefore, the focus of our analysis is not only on well-developed businesses but also on entrepreneurial intentions, design and development of the business model and the role that an enterprise plays in making the life of a refugee and one's family in a new environment more meaningful. We are also interested on the impact of refugee entrepreneurship on refugee's (transnational) family: the one located in Poland but also in other destinations as well as those who remained in Ukraine. Finally, we want to get a better understanding whether the entrepreneurship is only an element of short-term survival tactics, when refugees intends to exploit the business model for a short period of time, or whether it can evolve into the more long-term strategy of adaptation, including the expansion to home country or plans to transfer the existing business model to Ukraine once the war is over.

This research project aims to respond to the following research questions:

- 1) Has the rapid inflow of refugees contributed to the development of ethnic enclave economy in Kraków?
- 2) How does war impact on the transnational dimension of Ukrainian business (relations with UA in Ukraine but also UA diaspora in other countries (Germany, Spain, Italy etc.)
- 3) How refugee enterprises differ from enterprises funded by economic migrants from Ukraine?
- 4) Which factors determine the choice of the market among refugee entrepreneurs? Which firms operate in the ethnic enclave and which ones in the mainstream market?
- 5) Is the refugee entrepreneurship the unique model of economic subsistence for business owners? If not, which models of complementarity exists (f.i. living from savings/living from social benefits, waged employment)?

The data for empirical analysis will be connected via qualitative panel, i.e. consecutive series of in-depth interviews conducted with refugee entrepreneurs every 6 months (5 waves in total), supplemented by focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews with experts and relevant stakeholders.

We expect that results of this study will deepen the understanding on refugee entrepreneurship, as it adds a perspective of a new destination country (Poland) and by integrates the relationship between the old diaspora communities (economic immigrants from Ukraine) and the new refugee communities at a destination, which is a novel element in migration studies.