

# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE UKRAINIAN ENTREPRENEURS IN CZECHIA

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## ABSTRACT

This article presents the concept of social capital and highlights its use in the economic performance of Ukrainian entrepreneurs in Czechia. The social capital stands as one of the important resources, which can be used by migrant entrepreneurs in creating their own businesses and ethnic economies. The concept of social capital with its different approaches, roles and impact on society is a frequent topic of current scientific debate, particularly in connection with mass immigration to the Western countries. In our analysis we use the individual approach of social capital that goes in line with personal ties, and thus it is closely connected to mutual trust, cooperation, contacts as well as mutual aid and solidarity. Our main research question is whether the Ukrainian entrepreneurs possess social capital and how they use it in their business activities. The article is founded on qualitative research based on 16 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Ukrainian entrepreneurs and key actors of the Ukrainian community in Czechia. We conclude that the Ukrainians do not use their social capital to the available extent. The networks of contacts exist among the Ukrainian entrepreneurs, but their use for economic cooperation is rather limited, which seems to be caused by their low level of trust. The mutual solidarity presented in private life and in economic activities does not play a significant role. Moreover, due to the absence of social capital, Ukrainian entrepreneurs have not yet developed their ethnic economy in Czechia.

**Keywords:** social capital, migrant entrepreneurship, Ukrainian migrants, Czechia

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## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurs need resources for their business activities and migrant entrepreneurs are no exceptions (Light, Gold 2000). Social capital is considered as one of the essential resources, which, with some simplification, could be understood as 'social networks of social ties' (Light 1984). The Ukrainian entrepreneurs in Czechia and their social capital used in their business activities are in the centre of our interest. Presumably, the social capital of Ukrainian entrepreneurs may differ from other ethnic groups' business activities in Czechia as well as from that of other migrant communities in other Western countries. Our assumption arises from the fact that in post-socialist countries, different forms of social capital have been existing, which had been built on non-communitarian vertical exchange relations (Åberg 2000)<sup>1</sup>. Of great importance is the awareness that this non-communitarian social capital prevents the formation of mutual trust, which is the essential aspect of social capital in the studies of ethnic entrepreneurs (Åberg 2000; Light, Gold 2000).

Studying the topic of social capital in connection with immigration processes is also interesting because of the current scientific debate, which has escalated sharply around the topic of mass immigration to the Western countries and its impact on the decrease of social capital

in the whole society (Putnam 2007; Portes 2014; Portes, Vickstorm 2015).

The research question in our article is whether social capital is one of the essential resources of the Ukrainian entrepreneurs in Czechia. We are mapping different features of social capital, how and to what extent it is being used by the Ukrainian entrepreneurs in their economic performance. We concentrate on the Ukrainian entrepreneurs, based on the fact that the whole group of Ukrainian immigrants of about 106,000 people in 2013 formed the biggest minority group and had presented the quarter of all immigrants in Czechia (Czech Statistical Office 2014/a). The intensive migration of Ukrainians could be explained not only by the economic inequality and intertwined history, but also by the geographic proximity, as well as the linguistic and cultural similarities (Drbohlav 2004; Drbohlav et al. 2013). There are different ways in which migrants react to new circumstances, opportunities and conditions in the country of destination (Waldinger et al. 1985). While some of them take the position of employees, others start their own businesses (Čermáková et al. 2011; Leontiyeva 2014). The average amount of self-employed Ukrainian immigrants makes about 30%. According to the Czech Statistical Office (b) in 2014, 10,515 Ukrainian-owned enterprises were registered in Czechia (7,557 of them in Prague). However, the databases of the self-employed and enterprises do not shed light on the actual number of business subjects operating today. The restrictions which came into force after

1 Conversely, communitarian social capital is being built on the horizontal network of exchange relations (Åberg 2000).

the world financial crisis (2008) brought along the change that it is now much easier to obtain a work permit with a business license than with a job contract (see more in Čermáková, Kohlbacher 2012). This has led to quasi-economic activities when migrants legalize their staying as entrepreneurs (Drbohlav, Valenta 2014). Therefore, it is common that the Ukrainians launch their own business (to be self-employed), which is merely the formal measure, as in fact they work as employees for other entrepreneurs (Čermáková, Kohlbacher 2012). The most dynamic period of the Ukrainian entrepreneurship was the second half of the 1990s, when the Czech economy experienced great transformations, recognized by the immigrants entering the country and utilizing the economic opportunities of that time (Čermáková et al. 2011). The majority of the Ukrainian enterprises are concentrated in Prague and its surroundings (which may be in connection with the fact that this area has the greatest demand for new constructions as well as a better infrastructure for enterprise). In Czechia, the most active Ukrainian-owned enterprises can be found in the construction and manufacturing industry, also in the service sector, mainly in the form of small and medium-sized enterprises.

## 2. Migrant entrepreneurship and its resources

Three main approaches explain the existence of migrants' business in the countries of destination. The first and the most elaborated approach is called the cultural approach, which finds one explanation of ethnic entrepreneurship in group (ethnic) resources and another in the consequences of migrants' disadvantages in the country of destination (Light, Gold 2000). The cultural approach also brings about the concepts of ethnic economy, ethnic controlled economy, middlemen minority and ethnic enclave economy (Wilson, Portes 1980; Zhou 2004). The concept of ethnic economy is characterized by its marginal position to the general economy, rather large scale, usually concentrated in one economic sector with a controlling ownership stake, and strong economic ties on horizontal and vertical levels (Light, Karageorgis 1994).

The second approach is based on the idea of existence of structural opportunities for immigrant businesses, and it is also known as the interactive approach (Aldrich, Waldinger 1990). The existence of immigrants' businesses, sectoral specialization and economic outcomes is explained as an interaction of the environments of the host country (its structural opportunities), resources of ethnic group and individual skills of migrants. This approach has brought about new ethnic resources like transnational ties, and a new type of entrepreneur was introduced as 'transnational entrepreneur' (Portes et al. 2002).

The third and latest main approach to the research of migrants' businesses adopts the biographical perspective in order to emphasize the agency of individual actors

in given opportunity structures (Hettlage 2008). This approach shifted the research from group perspective to the individual one, with emphasis on decision-making process and individual characteristics.

All three main approaches deal with class and ethnic resources, but in different views and importance. The cultural approach stresses the importance of ethnic (group) resources, the structural approach stresses both ethnic and class resources, and the individual approach considers the resources of individual migrant-entrepreneur as the most important factor.

Both ethnic and class resources are important for economic success of migrant entrepreneurs, but their proportion is different and varies in time and place (Razin 1989; Light, Gold 2000). The important fact about using ethnic and/or class resources is that any concentration of migrant entrepreneurs in occupational niches, localities, similar business strategies mean that ethnic resources are more present than class resources (Light, Gold 2000), and on the contrary, the incorporation of immigrant entrepreneurs into main economy means that class resources were more significant. Therefore, migrants with high level of class resources very rarely create ethnic economies, ethnic enclave economies or any other economic niches (Zhou 2004). The social status of Ukrainian immigrants in Czechia is quite heterogeneous, and for this reason the class-based integration has a greater chance in a new country as class-based dissimilarities override similarities stemming from common ethnicity.

Ethnic resources present the resources which are inherent to all members of ethnic group, and thus the whole group can enjoy the economic benefits of them (Coleman 1988; Light, Gold 2000). They include identifiable skills, organizational techniques, reactive solidarity, sojourning orientation, and other characteristics based on traditions and experiences (Light, Gold 2000). On the contrary, class resources present financial, human, cultural and social capital, while the ownership of these kinds of capital differs within one ethnic group (Light, Gold 2000). Nevertheless, these capitals could be influenced by ethnic resources in the actual manifestation. For example, an ethnic group can provide the financial capital through personal loans and rotating savings; by sharing skills they provide the human capital, by vocation culture they provide the cultural capital and finally, by networks, solidarity, common membership they provide the social capital (see more in Light, Gold 2000; Gedajlovic et al. 2013).

## 3. Social capital and ethnic entrepreneurship

Although the concept of social capital has been presented in ethnic entrepreneurship research for several decades, it is still broadly used in current research, especially in use of social networks when starting and running business (Gedajlovic et al. 2013; Light, Dana 2013; Edwards et al. 2015; Shi et al. 2015). The first practical use

of social capital was introduced by Pierre Bourdieu. He goes beyond the economic concept of capital and talks about cultural, social and symbolic capital. It shows that social capital is a set of resources which are tied with the affiliation to a certain group, and that some actors are utilizing them in order to develop social networks (Bourdieu 1983). According to Bourdieu, the amount held by the individual's social capital depends on the scope of net connections, which can be effectively mobilized. Later the concept of social capital became widely known through Coleman's work, who determined it as a resource which appears in the relations' structure between the actors and which facilitates the actions within this structure (Coleman 1988). Coleman found the role in facilitating the action particularly important; he linked the social capital with physical and human capital, namely the resources that are available for individuals to achieve their goals. Bourdieu and Coleman see social capital as the private asset. On the contrary, according to Putnam (1993, 2000), social capital is a public good, consisting of ties, trust, mutuality, solidarity and institutions, which can be transferred from one social environment into another. Fukuyama (1997) highlights two important components in the definition of social capital: collaboration and mobilization. According to him, we can only talk about usable and extensible resources (i.e. social capital) if we call social norms in given social relationship into life and mobilize them for the purpose of mutually beneficial cooperation. In Lin's definition (2001), social capital is the investment in social relationships, which pays for itself in the market, and the expected return on investment outweighs the costs.

As we can see, we can find different definitions of social capital, but according to Perreault (2007) and others, most of them share one point in common, namely the notion of trust. According to the first contributors in social capital literature, *'it involves relationships of trust and reciprocity that are inherent in social networks'* (Light, Dana 2013, p. 603). However, Light notes that social capital is more complex and puts it in the following way: *'the social capital is the assets that may be mobilized through networks, thanks to mutual trust and the norm of reciprocity'* (see also in Light, Dana 2013, p. 603). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993, p. 284) generally define the concept of social capital as: *'those expectations for action within a collectivity that affect the economic goals and goal-seeking behaviour of its members, even if these expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere'*. They distinguished four groups of resources of social capital: (1) *value introjection*, which motivates the members of the group to pay attention not only to their personal interest when acting, and thus their perception would be the standard to the other members of the group; (2) *reciprocity exchanges* is based on the kindness and exchange of social goods; (3) *bounded solidarity* is based on common difficulties and reactions to each of those groups; (4) *enforceable trust*, which arises when some members of the group put their

own individual interests above the interests of the group, calculating on the future benefit. While the value introjection and reciprocity exchanges can be a generalized form for each social group, the bounded solidarity and enforceable trust are based on the strong sense of ethnic community (Portes, Sensenbrenner 1993). Due to these facts, we follow the links of solidarity and mutual trust further more in details. We focus more closely on community resources of social capital, which are activated by facing common difficulties, e.g. exclusion from the host society. Bounded solidarity is a reaction of the ethnic group to this situation and is rather based on moral standards than enforceability (Portes, Sensenbrenner 1993). The formation of bounded solidarity depends on the dissimilarity of particular groups. The higher the rejection against certain ethnic groups, the higher the degree of solidarity in the given group (Portes, Sensenbrenner 1993). The level of opportunity for the immigrant society to 'flee' from the exclusion is crucial for the development of bounded solidarity-based social capital. The lower the opportunity level, the likelier the development of solidarity (Portes, Sensenbrenner 1993).

The next resource of social capital, defined as enforceable trust, is created by the community's ability to control the given group (Portes, Sensenbrenner 1993). In this case, not the external factors, but rather the community's internal sanctioning ability plays a central role. The members of the group act under the fear of punishment or in the hope for a better reward. These sanctions and rewards in general are immaterial goods, but in the long run they can lead to material consequences too. The efficiency level of the sanctions depends on how members of the group can control each other. There exists also a positive influence of the social capital based on enforceable trust: it makes the various economic acts more flexible by reducing formal steps, thus the rate of economic offenses is lower due to the traceability of the group members. But a too close net of contacts in the immigrant community imposes serious limits on the group members, which may block their business careers. So we arrive to the assumption that social capital is not only a positive contribution to the socio-economic functioning of a community, but it also has a destructive influence on it. Although international literature mentions almost only the positive effects of social capital, more and more academic works start to reflect upon its negative influence (Waldinger 1995; Portes, Landolt 1996; Levine et al. 2014). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) also give negative examples of social capital: in closed societies, the relatives of successful entrepreneurs 'settle on' them and ask them for loans, job opportunities and claim for their profit. All these conditions hinder their business growth. As mentioned above, the trust and reciprocity is inherent in social networks, which, besides the advantages (for example job opportunities, easier management of permits and official documents), can bring some negative effects too, especially when ethnic groups with stronger social

capital suppress smaller and weaker ones (Light, Dana 2013). Sometimes it happens that stronger ethnic groups use force against other, weaker groups, limit their decision-making capacity, and often enforce their own will. It is even more vigorous if the dominant group has a strong social capital, while the oppressed groups have a weak one.

If we examine the function of social capital among the ethnic groups in Czechia and other CEE countries, we get an unbalanced picture. In comparison with the Vietnamese (Grzymala-Kazłowska 2014), the third largest minority group in Czechia (Czech Statistical Office 2014/a), the Ukrainians dispose of a low level of solidarity. The reason for this could be mainly the linguistic proximity and the similar lifestyles of the Ukrainians and the host (Czech) nation (Bernard, Vašát 2015). The Ukrainians are less mutually interdependent within the ethnic group and their networks are rather less dense (Bernard, Vašát 2015). Nevertheless, the Ukrainians are not a homogeneous group, and it was revealed that manual workers have networks of higher density than highly qualified ones. On the contrary, the Vietnamese live much more separated, but the level of assistance and support to each other is higher than in the case of other examined groups like the Armenians and Ukrainians (Drbohlav, Džúrová 2007).

A striking example of a system which is based on social networks has appeared in Czechia and it is called 'client<sup>2</sup> system'<sup>3</sup>. The system emerged in the 1990s and began to develop because of the Ukrainian labour migration, in order to organize illegal labour for (mostly) Ukrainian migrants. The cooperation was useful for both sides: the 'clients' got financial benefit from the employees' reduced wage, and the employees got a job, and administration was simple (see more in Čermáková, Nekorjak 2009). In this case the main source of social capital is institutional-based reciprocity norms. People essentially do not trust each other, but the exchange of favours and mutuality do work. Nevertheless, if we look at the aggregate, it is a rather negative example of social capital. In 1990s the 'client system' was built on the Ukrainian mafia system, when threatening, blackmailing and physical or verbal violence were common. Employees were in a subordinate relationship with the 'clients', and in some cases they could not change their working place, step out from a working circle or return home when they wanted to (Čermáková, Nekorjak 2009). After Czechia became an EU member state, great efforts have been made to suppress illegal labour and to comply with European labour regulations. Because of the strict conditions, the 'client system' gradually turned into an official institution and

at the same time lost its exploiting, restrictive trait (Čermáková, Kohlbacher 2012).

#### 4. Methodology

We are interested in the presence of social capital as a resource among Ukrainian immigrants in their business activities in Czechia. Due to the fact that the concept of social capital is not unanimously understood, in our interpretation we see social capital in its connection with ethnic communities (personal approach) and not with public good (see above). In the determination of social capital we rely on the definition formulated by Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993, p. 284): '*those expectations for action within a collectivity that affect the economic goals and goal-seeking behaviour of its members, even if these expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere*', as described above. The aspects of social capital like mutual trust, cooperation, contacts, networks, mutual aid and solidarity were in the centre of our interest, and we were trying to detect those in interviews and, subsequently, analyze them.

The fieldwork for this study included sixteen in-depth interviews with Ukrainian migrant entrepreneurs, and also with key actors of the Ukrainian migrant community in Prague and in Karlovy Vary (Table 1). The interviews were held in the above mentioned two Czech settlements between October 2014 and March 2015 in Ukrainian (fourteen) or Russian (two) languages. The interviews lasted between one and one and a half hour long. Notwithstanding the sample is too small to allow a generalization about the Ukrainian entrepreneurship in Czechia, our general impression is – solidified by discussions with key actors of the Ukrainian community in Prague and in Karlovy Vary – that it offers a fairly typical picture of the Ukrainian entrepreneurship in Czechia.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, with three main question groups: the first one contained questions about personal information; the second one contained questions relating to entrepreneurship; the third one focused on the economic and personal relationship among co-ethnics and non-co-ethnics. A semi-structured version of questions was intended to ensure collecting the basic data (type and age of business, number and ethnicity of employees, education and language skills of company-owners, and main features of the company) on the one hand, and on the other hand, storytelling encouraged participants to tell their 'own stories' (Bagwell 2006) about how they arrived to Czechia, how the business was started and how it developed. We intended to ascertain the main reasons and motivations in start-up business, the main characteristics in operating Ukrainian companies with special focus on the business relations among the Ukrainian migrant group. We concentrated on the first generation of migrants and tried to maintain sectoral as well as gender equality among the respondents.

2 The origin of the word 'client' is not clear, but according to Čermáková and Nekorjak it comes from the post-Soviet environment of organised crime and it is not primarily related to labour migration, rather more to a protection against underground persons by police and military forces (see more at Čermáková, Nekorjak 2009).

3 In academic literature it is known as the theory of middleman minorities (see more in Bonacich 1973).



**Tab. 1** Basic characteristics of respondents.

Respondents	Name	Age	Family Status	Education	Number of employees	Length of stay in Czechia (years)	Foundation of the company (year)	Residence address	Sector/ occupation
R1	Taras	–	M	U	–	–	–	Prague	Member of the Ukrainian Business Club in Czech Republic
R2	Oleksandr	–	M	U	–	20	–	Prague	Member of the Ukrainian Business Club in Czech Republic
R3	Bohdan	37	S	U	–	37	–	Prague	Member of Ukrainian Initiative in Czech Republic
R4	Lyudmila	42	M	U	–	10	–	Prague	Former teacher of Ukrainian School in Prague
R5	Vladislav	44	M	U	–	9	–	Karlovy Vary	Member of Union of Ukrainians in Bohemia
R6	Mariya	33	M	U	0	6	2009	Prague	Entrepreneur in tourism business
R7	Oleksandr/a	44	M	P	4	10	2006	Karlovy Vary	Owner of company in property business
R8	Oleksandr/b	46	S	B	5	11	2010	Karlovy Vary	Entrepreneur in tourism business
R9	Tatjana	37	S	U	3	9	2009	Karlovy Vary	Entrepreneur in property business
R10	Oleg	40	M	P	2	16	2000	Prague	Entrepreneur in the service business
R11	Bohdan	36	S	U	21	20	1995	Prague	Entrepreneur in industrial business
R12	Ivan	53	D	U	20	22	1997	Prague	Owner of company in building business
R13	Roman	34	M	P	23	15	2011	Prague	Owner of the company in service business
R14	Nataliya	36	S	U	3	15	2009	Prague	Owner of the restaurant
R15	Anton	33	S	U	3	8	2012	Prague	Entrepreneur in the logistics business
R16	Pavlo	28	S	U	0	4	2013	Prague	Entrepreneur in the tourism business

Notes:

Education: B – basic, P – professional/high school, U – university;

Status: M – married, S – single, D – divorced;

During our fieldwork we faced two difficulties. The first challenge was to find interviewees. Ukrainian migrants are often suspicious about getting involved into this type of research and also fear that the disclosure of their personal opinions or informal contacts may cause harm to them. We applied the snowball methodology to find informants. The second difficulty was that we often obtained superficial responses. The respondents' answers were hesitant and very often simple, even though we tried to push them to go into deeper explanations and concrete examples. They were often reluctant to openly speak about their personal and business strategies as well as about the strategies of the entire community. To tackle these difficulties we offered our participants anonymity.

Before the fieldwork, statistical data about the Ukrainian entrepreneurs and migrants had been analysed.

## 5. Results – The social capital of Ukrainian entrepreneurs

Social capital plays an increasingly important role especially when there is a lack of other types of ethnic and class recourses (like human, financial and cultural) among migrant businesses (Flap et al. 1998; Sik 2012).

The resources of social capital, according to our research, is based on the mutual trust and its relation to cooperation, on contacts and networks as well as on mutual aid and solidarity. All these aspects of social capital could be very important in start-up business, successful economic activity and reduction of transaction costs<sup>4</sup> (Light, Gold 2000; Orbán, Szántó 2005). In accordance with other authors dealing with social capital (like Waldinger 1995; Portes, Landolt 1996; Levine et al. 2014), we also have to incorporate the negative aspect in the definition of social capital that could influence migrants' businesses as well as their personal lives.

We found that the level of mutual trust among the Ukrainian entrepreneurs is very low, and it is the crucial reason why they do not prefer to cooperate with other Ukrainian entrepreneurs or even with businessmen from other post-Soviet countries in Czechia. We, in agreement with other authors (Åberg 2000) see the reason for this low level of trust in the negative experience brought from the culture of the former USSR. Our respondents still have

<sup>4</sup> Transaction cost includes the outlays of providing for some good or service through the market rather than having it provided from within the firm. In general, they are classified into three groups: search and information, bargaining and decision, policing and enforcement costs (Coase 1960).

in their minds the powerful activity of the prolific mafia system during the time of the Soviet Union and the years after the collapse of this regime, when they were strongly suppressed by it. Behind the low level of mutual trust and cooperation of Ukrainian entrepreneurs can also stand the current situation of high corruption and bureaucratic system in the country of origin. Their non-participation in business networks can be explained with the fear that involvement in business networks might connect them to the mafia or other illegal activities. Although such cooperation would be beneficial to some extent, but according to the respondents' expectations, it would pull them to failure. The aim of the migrants was a peaceful and economically successful staying in the Czechia, which for them does not correspond with being involved in the networks of Ukrainian entrepreneurs. However, none of respondents could describe the mafia activity and the entrepreneurs involved. Therefore, it is possible that their behavior is just based on the fear of the unknown and on their former experiences in country of origin.

*'I don't have economic ties in Ukraine. Honestly, I escaped from the corruption and from all that mess which is going on in that country (in Ukraine).'*' (R8)

The interviewed entrepreneurs claimed that even if they were in an economic situation where they would have to start to cooperate with other post-Soviet entrepreneurs, they would be aware of the difficulties stemming from the soviet background.

*'I don't really like to do business with Ukrainians. I know their culture and I don't want to interfere with them.'* (R13)

The respondents see the problems of co-ethnic business cooperation in fraudulent acts and exploitation. By this behaviour they mean not following the formal contracts and verbal agreements, as well as the quality of work, time-keeping and bargaining about the already agreed amount of money (especially in the construction industry) (R11, R12, R16). Finally, co-ethnic cooperation could also mean being dragged into illegal Russian-speaking networks, which partially caused their migration from Ukraine (R10). If the Ukrainian entrepreneurs have the possibility to choose between doing business with the Czechs or the Ukrainians, they would select the formers, as well entrepreneurs from other EU countries. One reason for the high degree of willingness to cooperate with the non-ethnic groups is purely economic: Ukrainian entrepreneurs like to cooperate with those who are economically more advantageous<sup>5</sup>. Another reason is that Ukrainians desire to integrate into the mainstream society (Drbohlav, Džúrová 2007); they consider their cooperation with Czech and EU entrepreneurs their 'entrance' to the European culture.

<sup>5</sup> Cooperation with Ukrainian entrepreneurs is also acceptable if it entails economic benefits.

*'How do Ukrainians cooperate? Mostly in no way! They have business cooperation with those who financially are more beneficial!'* (R7)

*'They want to live like citizens of the European Union, according to EU standards. Maybe they think it is easier to integrate if they cooperate with Europeans.'* (R4)

*'If somebody asks me, I am a Czech entrepreneur. Why would I be a Ukrainian entrepreneur? I live in Czechia, I pay taxes here. The Czech economy is developing through my activity, too. So I am a Czech entrepreneur.'* (R5)

Mutual trust has another aspect as well: it is the way how local companies and governmental authorities deal with the Ukrainian entrepreneurs. The Ukrainian entrepreneurs went through some negative experiences in their business activities. In general, they find it non-problematic, but they do feel some negative attitude (primarily in distrust toward them from the Czechs). The Ukrainian migrant entrepreneurs stressed that they have to make greater efforts to reach a business deal than Czech entrepreneurs. They must demonstrate their aptitude, honesty, economic strength, better quality of work, and even lower prices. They are suffering from lower trust from institutions like banks or tax offices.

*'Czech banks have lower confidence in you than in the Czechs. They inspect your company and your economic background profoundly and more often than Czechs. For that reason you try to do everything right, even better than they (Czechs).'*' (R15)

*'The motivation of migrants is always stronger than the motivation of indigenous societies. You know, once you left, there is no way back. You are much more conscious and cautious, too. Anyway, you have disadvantages compared to Czechs. You have to prove that you are honest and that you are worth something.'* (R6)

The negligible trust and cooperation correspond with little willingness of using the economic contacts and networks among the Ukrainian entrepreneurs in Czechia. Even though the exploitation of economic contacts and networks results in reduction of transaction costs, our respondents did not intend to create and improve them. They create institutionalized bodies very rarely. The exception is the *Ukrainian Business Club in Prague*, which was established at the end of 2014, in order to develop co-ethnic economic contacts and the competitiveness of Ukrainian enterprises in the Czech Republic and at the international business market, as well as to promote Ukrainian and Czech economic cooperation (R1, R2). Although this association is newly established and the founders demonstrate positive goals, we found that other Ukrainian entrepreneurs are rather suspicious about any co-ethnics' activities, which also show the distrust among them.

*'I have never heard about this association. But I do not want to join them, because it is definitely involved in money laundering.'* (R13)

The topic of mutual aid and solidarity among Ukrainian entrepreneurs was not significant for our respondents. None of the entrepreneurs mentioned making any steps to help other Ukrainian entrepreneurs to increase their profit. In their possible cooperation, distrust was stronger than the urge to help their co-ethnics. Solidarity also does not work among the entrepreneurs and their employees. Most of the entrepreneurs justified this with the reason that hiring Czechs is more beneficial than Ukrainians because of their language skills, local familiarity, and proficiency in the Czech labour market, even if their hourly wage is much higher. Thus, economic benefits are more important than co-ethnic relations.

*'Ethnicity doesn't matter. What matters is to do a good and quality work.'* (R15).

Mutual solidarity has more relevance in private life; in friendship, family and church communities (Bernard and Vašát (2015) arrived to the same conclusion). These findings are not surprising as Ukrainians belong to very well-integrated communities, therefore there is no pressure to develop ethnic solidarity. This kind of solidarity is more typical for communities which are excluded from the host society (for example to Asians) (Bagwell 2006).

## Conclusions

Social capital is one of the basic resources for entrepreneurship and has two main perspectives (public and the individual), and several definitions (Bourdieu 1983; Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993; Portes, Sensenbrenner 1993; Fukuyama 1997; Lin 2001; Perreault et al. 2007; Light, Dana 2013). What we were looking among the Ukrainian entrepreneurs in Czechia was the individual social capital with ethnic (community) features, which is based on value introjection, reciprocity exchanges, bounded solidarity and enforceable trust with its positive and negative aspects (Portes, Sensenbrenner 1993). The analytical features of social capital were mutual trust and consequent cooperation, contacts, mutual aid and solidarity. Our research was based on qualitative analysis resulting from 16 in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with Ukrainian entrepreneurs and key actors of the Ukrainian community in Czechia. We faced two main challenges; first, it was difficult to find respondents willing to give interview, and second, some of the respondents' answers were simple without deeper explanations and examples.

We came to the conclusion that among Ukrainian entrepreneurs there exist networks of contacts, but they are very rarely used for economic cooperation, and if they are, it is with caution. We found that the main reason for

this situation is the low level of trust between them and the fear of being dragged into post-soviet social networks that will rather limit the positive features brought into their business activities. Although social capital is present among Ukrainian migrants, it has vertical embeddedness on an institutional basis, which does not allow creating mutual trust. The trust can be 'transferred' across the border, but institutions which legitimize some kind of corrupt informal status system and favour exchange system in Ukraine are not. In Ukraine there is no communitarian social capital which could create a transmitted trust (Åberg 2000). For this reason, Ukrainian entrepreneurs strongly prevent the interconnection of private contacts and life with the economic environment. It is primarily the fear of private life that defend their integration into economic ethnic networks. Another reason why entrepreneurs are not willing to get involved in Ukrainian ethnic networks is that they strongly desire to integrate into the Czech environment in a broader sense; they believe that through business relations with Czechs they could reach the integration into the Western business environment. Our main results about the existence and usage of social capital correspond to other research findings on social capital of Ukrainian migrants. These results declare that Ukrainian migrants have the lowest level of trust in each other in other European countries (Sereda 2013; Grzymala-Kazłowska 2014).

The existing social capital is used more significantly in private life than in the business sphere (the only exception is the system to organize jobs for Ukrainian migrants with the help of co-ethnic agents called 'clients'). From the other aspects of social capital we found examples of mutual aid and solidarity, but again more among Ukrainians families than business activities. Not using the available social capital in business activities has its positive and negative aspects. The low level of social capital could bring economic disadvantages, e. g. slower information exchange (due to lack of trust) or longer bureaucratic procedures (with dealing and signing formal contracts), and can lead to significant financial and time expenses, which increases the transaction costs. On the other hand, the conscious decision to not cooperate economically with other co-ethnic entrepreneurs could open entirely new perspectives in the form of activities focusing on the main market rather than on the ethnic economy. We can conclude that the ethnic economy (immigrant economy) of Ukrainian migrants has not been created in the Czechia, and this is due to the fact that the functioning ethnic economy needs horizontal and vertical economic ties, which are also based on social capital (Light, Gold 2000). Unlike the Ukrainians the ethnic economy has developed among the Vietnamese, where the horizontal and vertical economic ties have established (Martínková 2011; Drbohlav, Čermáková forthcoming).

The next perception from our research is that among the heterogeneous group of Ukrainian immigrants in Czechia, the respondent entrepreneurs are (or claim to

be) similar to Czechs in their aims, economic strategies and other behavioral features. Czech and Ukrainian linguistic and cultural proximity also encourage assimilation rather than creating enclaves (compared to Armenians or the Vietnamese).

Finally, we have to add one more aspect to the Ukrainian community's social capital in general. Although we concluded that social capital is on a low level among Ukrainian entrepreneurs, it has developed a specific system (called client system) for organizing jobs for Ukrainian migrants through co-ethnic agents (especially in the construction and manufacturing industry, cleaning services and agricultural sector). This system is based on social networks of immigrants, agents, and the Czech employers (Čermáková, Nekorjak 2009). It is another kind of social capital, but it is not based on mutual trust. Rather, it is an exchange system based mostly on compulsion, which in Ukraine is deeply embedded in the operation of official institutions too. The system has a rather negative aspects like corruption, and positions of power. However, due to the official Czech anti-corruption efforts, the institutionalization of this system has been eliminated, or it functions only partially. The institutional forms of client system, which were created with the mediation of ethnic groups on the basis of their experiences of negative social capital, did not become deeply rooted in the Czech economy and society in general.

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## RESUMÉ

### Role sociálního kapitálu v ekonomické aktivitě ukrajinských podnikatelů v Česku

Situace migrantů je v nové zemi velmi specifická – část svých ekonomických zdrojů nechávají v zemi původu, setkávají se s prostředím nové země, se znevýhodněním na trhu práce atd. Zdroje migranta, jejich složení a velikost, podmiňují jejich integraci v cílové zemi. Ekonomickou integraci stejně tak ovlivňují možnosti na trhu cílové země (Waldinger 1995). Zdroje migrantů se rozdělují na třídní a etnické (Light, Gold 2000). Třídní zdroje představují sociální, finanční, lidský a kulturní kapitál a je pro ně typické, že každý jednotlivec disponuje těmito zdroji v různém poměru. Na druhé straně etnické zdroje jsou vlastní celé etnické skupině a představují např. specifické znalosti, dovednosti, způsoby, přístupy, techniky, ale i mezietnickou solidaritu a vzájemnou pomoc. Nicméně platí, že i třídní kapitál může mít ve svých projevech etnické prvky. Také platí, že čím více mají migranti sociálního, kulturního, lidského a kulturního kapitálu, tím méně mají potřebu využívat etnické zdroje (Light, Gold 2000). Využívání etnických zdrojů migranty či celou etnickou skupinou se projevuje tím, že vytvářejí

odvětvové niky, koncentrují se v prostoru a mají podobné podnikatelské strategie.

Sociální kapitál je považován za jeden ze základních zdrojů migrantů, který při určitém zjednodušení souvisí se sítí sociálních kontaktů a vzájemnými vazbami (Light, Dana 2013). I přesto, že se primárně nejedná o etnický zdroj (není stejný v celé etnické skupině), může mít určité etnické prvky, např. vzájemná meziethnická solidarita, reciprocita, důvěra. Sociální kapitál má mezi výzkumníky různé pojetí chápání. Bourdieu (1983) prezentuje sociální kapitál jako množství vztahů, které jsou k vzájemnému prospěchu mobilizovány. Coleman (1988) vidí v sociálním kapitálu zdroj existující struktury vztahů, které usnadňují aktivity v rámci této struktury. Takto definovaný sociální kapitál je považován za osobní výhodu. Putnam (1993) vedle osobního pojetí sociálního kapitálu vidí sociální kapitál jako veřejný statek, který se skládá z institucí, které mohou být převedeny z jednoho sociálního prostředí do druhého. Putnam (2000) rozděluje sociální kapitál na svazující (omezený na blízké kontakty) a přemostující (zahrnuje vzdálenější kontakty charakteristické slabými vazbami). Náš výzkum je zaměřen na osobní rovinu svazujícího versus přemostujícího sociálního kapitálu, které se v souvislosti s výzkumem etnického podnikání nejvíce blížila definice Portese and Sensenbrennera (1993, s. 284): „aktivity v rámci kolektivu, které ovlivňují ekonomické cíle a chování svých členů a nejsou orientovány primárně k individuálnímu zisku“ V tomto pojetí je sociální kapitál založen na hodnotách, které motivují členy skupiny věnovat pozornost nejen svým osobním zájmům a dále na vzájemnosti, soudržnosti, ohraničené solidaritě (bounded solidarity) a vynucené důvěře (enforceable trust). Zatímco vzájemnost a soudržnost jsou součástí sociálního kapitálu každé sociální skupiny, tak ohraničená solidarita a vynucená důvěra mají v sobě silné etnické prvky a rozvíjí se jen za určitých podmínek většinou tam, kde musí etnická skupina čelit určitým znevýhodněním (Light, Dana 2013; Gedajlovic et al. 2013). Tyto etnické prvky sociálního kapitálu mají v sobě jak pozitivní aspekty (např. množství ekonomických možností, vztahy jsou pružnější bez řady formálních kroků), tak i negativní (např. strach odmítnout participovat, kontrola ostatních členů, omezené možnosti skupiny, silnější členové potlačí menší a slabší).

Cílem našeho článku bylo zjistit, zda sociální kapitál patří mezi zdroje ekonomických aktivit ukrajinských podnikatelů a jak je přítomna vzájemná důvěra a pomoc, spolupráce, kontakty, sítě a solidarita. Zaměřili jsme se na ukrajinské podnikatele, protože Ukrajinci představují v Česku největší skupinu migrantů, přibližně jedna třetina se věnuje podnikání a jsou registrovaní jako vlastníci v přibližně deseti tisících právních subjektech. Předpokládali jsme, že Ukrajinci stejně jako v jiných zemích střední a východní Evropy budou využívat sociální kapitál velmi málo a jestliže ano, tak bude mít podobu známou v postkomunistických zemích (Grzymala-Kazłowska 2014; Sik 2012; Åberg 2000). Sociální kapitál na Ukrajině není rozvinut na horizontální úrovni založené na vzájemné důvěře, ale na úrovni vertikální založené na mocensky nerovných vztazích. K našemu předpokladu nás také vedla existence tzv. klientského systému, na jehož základě je organizována práce převážně ukrajinských migrantů v Česku a tento systém právě využívá tohoto typu sociálního kapitálu (Čermáková, Nekorjak 2009).

Článek je založen na kvalitativní analýze 16 polostrukturovaných rozhovorů s ukrajinskými podnikateli a klíčovými aktéry komunity. Rozhovory obsahovaly několik témat včetně otázek zaměřených na ekonomické a osobní vztahy jak k jiným Ukrajincům a migrantům z postkomunistických zemí, tak k ostatním podnikatelům v Česku. Při sběru dat jsme se potýkali s velkou nedůvěrou potenciálních respondentů a realizované rozhovory byly jen na základě osobního doporučení, a i přesto získané odpovědi byly zjednodušující a povrchní.

Závěrem našeho výzkumu je, že mezi ukrajinskými podnikateli v Česku existují sítě kontaktů v různých oblastech života, ale nejsou využívány v ekonomických vztazích, a pokud ano, tak s velkou opatrností a vědomím určitých rizik. Existující sociální kapitál využívaný v ekonomických vztazích ukrajinských podnikatelů se liší od běžné na Západě pozitivně vnímaného sociálního kapitálu (Light, Dana 2013). U Ukrajinců v Česku a stejně tak v jiných postkomunistických zemích je sociální kapitál charakteristický vertikální strukturou vztahů a chybí či je na nízké úrovni vzájemná důvěra, pomoc a solidarita. Toto jen potvrzuje, že sociální kapitál využívaný v tzv. klientském systému v Česku je také přítomný v podnikání Ukrajinců. Ukrajínští podnikatelé vědomi si tohoto faktu vyhledávají spolupráci s českými a dalšími podnikateli ze zemí EU a věří, že se jim podaří či již podařilo začlenit do západoevropského podnikatelského prostředí. Sociální kapitál s komunitními prvky založený na hodnotách, které motivují členy skupiny věnovat pozornost nejen svým osobním zájmům, ale i vzájemnosti, soudržnosti, ohraničené solidaritě a vynucené důvěře, se mezi ukrajinskými podnikateli nerozvinul. Přestože je sociální kapitál jako jeden zdroj ukrajinských podnikatelů využíván jen omezeně, neaktivovali ani další etnické zdroje. Z výše uvedeného poznání můžeme tvrdit, že etnická ekonomika Ukrajinců v Česku neexistuje na rozdíl například od Vietnamců, kde jsou horizontální a vertikální ekonomické vazby rozvinuty (Martínková 2011; Drbohlav, Čermáková v tisku).

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