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Studying 'up' in migrant entrepreneurship

Privileged migrant entrepreneurs in Wroclaw, Poland

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3.



CHAPTER 3

Revealing the hidden role of motivations in migrant entrepreneurship

“Maybe someone from Ukraine is seen as cheap labour, and someone from Germany is seen as someone who is choosing to be here. Like I would be more categorized as an expat, whereas someone from Ukraine would be more categorized as a migrant”, (Mattheus, Germany, educational consultancy).

3.1. Introduction

This is the first of two chapters which aim to answer how the two groups of migrants vary in their motivations and micro level resources (i.e. my first research question). This chapter, specifically, is devoted to the former, that is to say *motivations*, and seeks to compare those of the migrants from core-states against that of migrants from periphery-states. But, importantly, within the context of migrant entrepreneurship, there is not only one question concerning migrants’ motivations but, rather, *two*: First, why migrate? Second, why start a business? Of course, that is not to say that the migrants always made their decisions in this order. After all, many of them ran their own businesses *prior* to moving to Wroclaw. Rather, by breaking the theme of motivations down into two separate questions, my goal here is to organize my analysis.

Before commencing with this analysis, however, I would like to first continue and develop an observation from Chapter 1, namely, the curiously overlooked role played by motivations within the literature. There I had highlighted how many of the most cited theories in migrant entrepreneurship rarely incorporate the role of migrants’ motivations. This is even true of the Mixed-embeddedness Approach which, despite being generally acknowledged as the most comprehensive theory in the field, pays little attention to migrants’ individual agency (Peters 1999, 2002). But, and here’s the key question, why is this? Such an omission seems to naturally suggest that migrants’ motivations for relocating and starting their own business are not important. Yet, as someone who has, myself, migrated to another country and embarked upon my own entrepreneurial journey, I know firsthand what huge undertakings both actions are and, as such, the corresponding levels of motivation they require to carry out. Additionally, it is worth remembering that the large majority of people do *not* migrate (circa 97% of people globally),³¹ nor do they start their own businesses (circa 90% among women and 82% among men in OECD countries).³² So, considering such actions not only require considerable effort, but are also clearly quite exceptional, why then, do the leading theoreticians often seem to overlook the motivations underlying them? The answer, I argue, and as I will continue to stress throughout this dissertation, can be found in the

31 UN DESA 2020

32 OECD 2017

almost exclusive focus upon migrant entrepreneurship in (semi-)periphery-to-core migratory contexts (Ilhan-nas et al. 2011; Dheer 2018). Within such contexts, many authors seem to assume that migrant entrepreneurs want to migrate to an economically more developed country and similarly assume that their decision to open their own businesses is likewise rooted in economic considerations. In effect, this reduces migrant entrepreneurs to a kind of 'homo-economicus' (Persky 1995), void of their own free will, drawn to economically more developed countries and entrepreneurship purely for financial gain. Yet, when we look at migration in the opposite direction, we suddenly seem to be prompted to ask *why*. For example, when I tell you about Mattheus (quoted above), who moved from Germany to Poland to open his own educational consultancy, you might somewhat automatically ask 'why?' Why would he move *away* from an economically more developed country (Germany) to an economically *less developed* country (Poland)? In other words, Mattheus' migration 'calls into question taken-for-granted understandings of the relationship between migration and economics' (Benson & O'Reilly 2018: 91), as well as assumptions surrounding migrants' expected gains of such a move. So, as can be seen here, when migration is in a core-to-(semi-)periphery direction, suddenly the question of *choice* seems to arise. In other words, by studying 'up' in migrant entrepreneurship, we begin to shine a light on the previously ignored (or, at best, assumed) factor of motivation. In this sense, such 'upward-facing' studies might serve as a way of revealing the hidden role played by motivations in migrant entrepreneurship.

But at this point, we might ask if this distinction between core and periphery is even justified.³³ By this I mean, do migrants from core-states really have more of a choice when migrating to Poland and opening their own business? And, conversely, for those from periphery-states, is it less of a choice and more of a *necessity*? On the one hand, economic motivations would provide a rationale for why (semi-)periphery-to-core migration flows are so much larger than migration flows in the opposite direction.³⁴ It would also provide a way to explain high rates of migrant entrepreneurship among many (semi-)periphery-to-core migrant populations who, faced with discrimination and barriers to the mainstream labour market in the host country, turn to entrepreneurship out of economic necessity (Light 1979; Johnson 2000; Ram & Jones 2008). Yet, on the other hand, even within (semi-)periphery-to-core migratory contexts, it has been shown that motivations are not always economic in character (Knight 2015; Rametse et al. 2018), nor uniform (Masurel et al. 2002; Lin & Tao 2012).

33 This distinction (of choice vs. necessity) has even been used as a defining way to classify the difference between so-called 'expat-preneurs' vs. migrant entrepreneurs (Vance 2016).

34 Global migration from South-North (approx. 95.2 million) greatly outnumbers migration from North-South (approx. 13.6 million), (UN DESA 2020).

So then, in this chapter, drawing upon data from the qualitative interviews of both subject groups, I aim to shed some light on this. In doing so, I divide the chapter into two main parts. The first concerns itself with migrants' motivations underlying their migration to Wrocław, while the second addresses their motivations for starting a business. In both sections, I begin by analyzing the motivations of those from core-states, before then later comparing this against the motivations of those from periphery-states. I start, then, with the intriguing question of 'why Wrocław?'

3.2. Why Wrocław?

3.2.1. Migrant entrepreneurs from core-states

"I was living in England, and I met a Polish girl there, and she convinced me to come on holiday in Poland...London was a bit too big for me. Too intensive, too fast, too overcrowded. I felt like [Wrocław] is an easier place, especially when you get married and have kids and grandparents are not far away, but also in a business sense I felt that this would give me a better opportunity to stand out. I would call it pioneering in many senses, being sort of the first. In London, although I had a nice job, I worked at a bank, it was quite comfortable, it was more difficult and I didn't see much of a future there. And I was one of an infinite number of people. But here [in Wrocław] I had certain advantages, a mixed set up skills that made me a bit more, I don't like to say big shot, but I had more competitive advantages and less competition...Quite quickly I felt comfortable in Poland and I moved here from England in 2014 after two years of a Ryanair relationship going back and forth every second or third weekend...I love the city...I enjoy its geography, layout, architecture, its history, its culture, its vibe, its environment. Also in terms of geography it's quite close to many places in Europe. It's quite central in Europe. So basically I fell in love with the place, I connected to it. Everything about it. I think the size is ideal in many senses.... Poland is great fun. It was and is a little bit of a themepark for me", (Caleb, Israel, property investment).

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, when describing migration in a core-to-(semi-)periphery direction, we seem compelled to ask why. Why, for example, did Caleb (quoted above) migrate from Israel (via London) to Wrocław? As can be seen, his decision was not based upon one single reason, but rather on a combination of reasons. This seems similar to the findings within the lifestyle migration literature, whereby motivations for migrating were complex, often consisting of multiple factors (Ono 2015; Andrzejuk 2017; Benson & O'Reilly 2018). For Caleb, these motivations appear to include the following: 1. His partner was

from Poland; 2. His quality of life is better in this ‘more comfortable’ environment and city with a positive ‘vibe’; 3. In terms of his business, he feels like Wroclaw offers a business-friendly environment with less competition; and 4. He likes the geographical proximity of Wroclaw to ‘many places in Europe’. I have chosen to highlight Caleb’s reasons, because they are broadly representative of the reasons provided by many other migrant entrepreneurs from the core-states subject group. What is important here is that, in contrast to the ‘homo-economicus’ motivations often assumed by the leading migrant entrepreneurship theories (as outlined in the introduction), three out of four of these motivations seem to be *non-economic* in character. As will be seen, this was often (but not always) a different story for many migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states.

First, however, I will elaborate (in greater detail) upon the reasons why migrant entrepreneurs from core-states migrated to Wroclaw. At this point I would like to reiterate that most migrants cited multiple reasons. That being said, some reasons seemed to play a greater role than others in their decision-making process. As such, I have listed them below in order of their perceived importance.

Moving for a partner

Living in Wroclaw myself, I often get asked “why did you move to *Poland*?!” Those (usually Polish) people posing the question are often incredulous that someone from *England* would voluntarily want to move to *Poland*. They then often add “it must be because of a Polish woman, no?” and give me a knowing wink. Although I myself did not move to Poland for a Polish partner, listening to my interviewees from core-states, their assumption seems like a reasonable expectation. As can be seen from Table 3.1, 19 out of 41 of the core-states subject group said that they had a Polish partner prior to moving to Wroclaw. Notably, all 19 of them were men, which is because, as acknowledged in Chapter 2, the large majority (40 out of 41) of the migrants from the core-state subject group were male, an imbalance that loosely mirrors the preponderance of men in quantitative migration data. Such variation is no doubt rooted in systemic gender inequality, revealing how migration itself is a ‘gendered phenomenon’ (Pessar 2005: 2). Nevertheless, this finding lends support to Andrejuk’s (2017) study of migrant entrepreneurs from Western Europe wherein such migrants were found to have often moved to Poland for a Polish partner.

Table 3.1. Polish partner prior to moving to Poland? Core vs. periphery subject group comparison

	Had a Polish partner prior to moving to Poland	Had a non-Polish partner prior to moving to Poland	No partner prior to moving to Poland	Total
Migrants from core-states	19 (47%)	0 (0%)	22 (53%)	41 (100%)
Migrants from periphery-states	1 (4%)	15 (60%)	9 (36%)	25 (100%)

Source: My own data collated from the qualitative interviews with the Global North and Global South migrant entrepreneurs, 2020.

Importantly, this figure (47%) is much higher than that of those from periphery-states (4%). In the face of the assumption that migrants relocate from areas of lower economic development to areas of higher economic development for financial reasons, migrating in the opposite direction for a *partner* would provide a mechanism for accounting for this contra-directional migratory flow. Yet, while this finding breaks down the assumption that migrants are primarily motivated by economics, it simultaneously reinforces the stereotype of Western men pairing up with Eastern European women (Chun 1996). As was the case with Caleb (previously outlined), this usually happens in the following way: Polish woman moves abroad, Polish woman meets foreign man, Polish woman returns to Poland with foreign man. Here perhaps I give the impression that these men are somewhat dragged back to Poland against their will but, of course, that is not the case. They go willingly and are often rewarded with a host of additional benefits, both material (such as the partner owning a house in Wroclaw) and immaterial. In terms of the latter, Caleb is a good example once again, whereby his move to Wroclaw meant being closer to his partner's parents and, therefore, free babysitting and help looking after the children. It was a similar story for Connor (Ireland), for whom this extended family support was also one of the main pull factors of Wroclaw:

"We moved as soon as we realized we wanted to start a family...it was just the support network. I phoned everybody that I knew who had international wives and girlfriends who were living abroad and had started families and I said what do I need to know? And they all turned around and said look it doesn't matter about nannies, this, that, and the other. They said...You need to be close to her mother. So everyone said that's it. That is your key success factor", (Connor, Ireland, IT company).

Clearly, then, for migrants such as Connor, relocating to Wroclaw was about far more than simply moving for a partner.³⁵ And, in fact, the majority of migrants in this subject group (albeit only a slight majority at 53%), moved to Poland not for a partner but for *other reasons*, to which I now turn below.

A better quality of life / Wroclaw as a 'vibrant' city

Caleb described how, for him, Wroclaw somehow felt 'more comfortable' and even described it as a 'little bit of a theme park'. This idea of having a better quality of life was echoed by many of the other migrant entrepreneurs from the core-states subject group, such as Anna (USA):

"In Chicago I loved my life, but it was very go-go-go and it was very busy. And when I moved here it was the first time in my life that I had ever been not busy. People were like 'hey do you want to meet up for coffee tonight?' and I was like 'hey sure!' I hadn't been spontaneous in so long, because Mondays were volleyball and Tuesdays were this and Wednesdays were this and girls night was on Thursdays and on Fridays we did this and it was like highly regimented and highly social but not free. And here I had time to cook, read, and meet people. [Whereas] in Chicago I had a lot of friends, but I never had motivation to meet new people, because I had all these friends and they fill up every night, so how could I possibly need anyone else? But here it was like a reset on life," (Anna, USA, arts & crafts store).

It seems that, for Anna, relocating to Poland was a way of freeing herself from her previous life and the commitments that it entailed. Importantly, her motivation (to have a more relaxed lifestyle) is non-economic in character. This desire for a better quality of life as a motivation, as opposed to moving for financial gain, once again seems similar to the motivations described in the lifestyle migration literature (Stone & Stubbs 2007; Torkington 2010; Ono 2015; Andrejuk 2017; Benson & O'Reilly 2018). Poland, despite not being a stereotypical lifestyle destination with sunny beaches all year round, seems to provide both Anna and Caleb (as well as many of the other migrant entrepreneurs from core-states) with a less stressful environment.

Closely related to this is the idea of Wroclaw being 'vibrant'. When conducting these interviews, I remember, after about the fifth interview within the core-states subject group, thinking: 'Interesting! Almost all of them have used the word 'vibrant'

35 It is also interesting to note that, since Connor's decision to move to Poland six years ago, his mother-in-law now no longer helps with raising his children, yet he and his wife still choose to stay. In his own words, he 'came for family, but stayed for the developers'. As such, it highlights the non-static nature of motivations and how they can change over time (Knight 2015).

or ‘vibe’ when referring to Wroclaw.’ But what exactly do they mean by this? For Giovanni (Italy), he uses the word to describe ‘an energy’ which he feels in Wroclaw:

“In Italy there are a lot of old people and here is the opposite. There are a lot of young people. And that mixed with the economic boom or opportunity, makes Poland have a vibe, like an energy, that Italy does not have any more. So Italy is kinda like a dying country right now. Poland is on the other side of the spectrum. It’s like a growing country”, (Giovanni, Italy, IT company).

Giovanni’s desire to change countries for ‘a vibe’ seems a far cry from the narrative of ‘the disadvantaged migrant’ who is often portrayed as migrating as a result of war, political insecurity, and financial hardship. This idea, and how it relates to the situation of those from the periphery-states subject group, will be further explored later in this chapter.

Lower costs and a favourable business environment

I mentioned previously that the motivations of migrants from core-states seem to be mainly non-economic in character and how this seems to go against the assumed economic motivations of migrant entrepreneurs in (semi-)periphery-to-core migratory contexts. However, at times, economic considerations do indeed seem to play a role, albeit a different one:

“Rent [in Italy] is still 1000 [Euro] a month, so you have nothing left, that’s why so many people live with their parents. Here it is kind of the opposite. The economy is going very well. It’s kinda like Italy in the 60s. So in terms of the economy and opportunity and that sense, working wise and stuff like that, there’s an economic boom, right? Programmers make twice as much, three times as much as everyone else, so the average salary in Poland, actual salary, is probably 1000 Euros. Programmers make 4000. The cost of living is half as much compared to Italy, but salaries are two times, three times as much, for programmers,” (Giovanni, Italy, IT company).

As can be seen from Giovanni’s words above, compared to Italy, Wroclaw is much more affordable for him and his business. In other words, whereas migrant entrepreneurs migrating in a (semi-)periphery-to-core direction are assumed to be doing so for increased income, those migrating in the opposite direction can often paradoxically benefit from *reduced costs*. In effect, Giovanni is demonstrating a kind of *geoarbitrage* (Hayes 2014). He is exercising the privilege of being able to geographically relocate in order to take advantage of spatial price differentials between Poland and Italy. This form of geoarbitrage, whereby migrants’ movements

are motivated by lower costs in the host country, has also been observed in other core-to-(semi-)periphery migratory contexts, such as Japanese entrepreneurs in the Philippines (Harima 2015), as well as North Americans migrating to South America (Dixon et al. 2006; Hayes 2014; Benson & O'Reilly 2018). Importantly, geoarbitrage is only possible where spatial economic differentials exist. Indeed, according to Giovanni, the cost of living in Italy is twice as high as in Wroclaw. In other words, it is the uneven, international, economic environment which provides the economic motivation for Giovanni to relocate from Florence to Wroclaw. It should be noted that Giovanni's geoarbitrage would not make economic sense if, once in Poland, he were to experience a corresponding decrease in income. He was, however, able to reconcile this problem by continuing to provide his IT services remotely to clients in Florence. In other words, migrating to Wroclaw enabled him to decrease costs, while simultaneously maintaining the same level of income, subsequently resulting in increased profit.

At this point, a further question needs to be asked: If lower costs are the goal, then why didn't Giovanni move to parts of the world which have even lower costs than Poland? Indeed, Michael (USA), who also talks about the benefit of lower costs in Wroclaw, points out that if that were his main motivation then he would go even 'more East':

"Huge arbitrage opportunity. Geoarbitrage is great. I mean partially, but not really. Because if I wanted to save more money I could have gone even more East and went to Thailand or something like that...But here I feel like it's more enjoyable and you get more bang for your buck and you feel like everything is a bit more slower", (Michael, USA, E-commerce).

Clearly then, in the case of migrant entrepreneurs in Wroclaw, reducing costs cannot be the only motivation. It seems more to be an added benefit which accompanies other reasons. So then, what are these other reasons? Two of them have already been discussed above (i. moving for a partner and ii. for a better quality of life). Another, as illustrated by Caleb at the beginning of this section, is the business-friendly environment and 'lack of competition' offered in Wroclaw. While some migrant entrepreneurs from core-states complained about the excessive Polish bureaucracy, others cited Wroclaw (and Poland in general) as an excellent place to start a business. For example, Roberto, who runs his own Italian restaurant in the centre, talks of how the city offers 'more opportunity' and lower taxes:

"In Wroclaw there's more opportunity...it's an open market...I was searching for a place for business. And after two days, running around, I see a lot of opportunity... [whereas] Italy is dead...because of taxes", (Roberto, Italy, Italian restaurant).

It appears that, for Roberto, the tax rate is an important factor. This lends support to Kloosterman et al.'s (1999) emphasis upon the important role played by the politico-institutional environment and its effects upon opportunity structures. However, it also presents a challenge to the Mixed-embeddedness Approach, as will be seen shortly.

In the meantime, however, let us return to the idea of Wrocław as being perceived by migrants from the core-states subject group as providing a business-friendly environment. This is closely related to the perception of the city offering 'less competition'. As seen with Caleb, he describes himself as a 'pioneer', moving to Wrocław where he is one of only a handful of Israelis, subsequently granting him 'more competitive advantages and less competition'. This notion of underdeveloped markets offering 'pioneers' less competition seems to inherently conjure up images colonialist times and, as a result, begs the question of if 'the phenomenon being described [is] best captured by the concept "transnationalism" or perhaps something more akin to imperialism' (Croucher 2009: 484). I will return to these ideas in Chapter 7.

Geographical proximity to Western Europe

As pointed out above, if lower costs are one of the main motivations, then we might ask why they chose Poland and not a country 'more East' with even lower costs. Another reason which helps to explain this is Poland's geographical proximity to Western Europe. This seems to be particularly attractive to migrant entrepreneurs originating from Western Europe. Albert (France), for example, likes that he is still within one day's drive of his relatives in France. For others, however, such as Karl (Germany), it was more about business logistics:

"Wrocław because our company and corporation is a German company and it's close to the German border in case we go on to develop our Polish branch a little bit more, we have here the best area for the stuff we are doing. We are IT hardware distribution....And right now we only have our warehouse in Germany but for the future we are planning to have the warehouse in Poland to save some costs and here is the best area because we are in this three country corner with Czech Republic, Germany and Poland", (Karl, Germany, technical hardware wholesale).

Regardless of whether the motivation is based upon their family or business, the point here is that, for migrant entrepreneurs from Western Europe, Poland's geographical proximity is often considered to be an important attribute. Poland offers these migrants the ability to reduce costs, while still staying close to their country of origin. As such, it seems to almost represent a kind of 'near-sourcing', whereby locations are chosen for their blend of cost-savings and geographical proximity, as well as the other reasons mentioned above.

Other reasons

In the interest of focusing on the most significant motivations for migration to Wrocław, I have chosen to 'sideline' less significant reasons (those which were mentioned less frequently and which seemed to play a less important role). These reasons included moving to Wrocław as an assigned 'expatriate', finding a job independently, as well as studying abroad. I will, however, briefly mention the example of Gabriel, who left France in search of better employment opportunities:

"In 2009, basically after graduation, I graduated in financial accounting, between 2008, basically in the heart of the financial crisis, the worst time to get hired. So after going around looking to find some work, it was not the time to hire, basically, all budgets were frozen, and so, yeah, basically I was like 6 months unemployed in France, I was like, fuck it I have to move somewhere," (Gabriel, France, online marketing).

This example highlights how privilege among migrant entrepreneurs from core-states cannot be assumed. Gabriel's situation seems more in line with the stereotype of the 'disadvantaged migrant' whose migration is seen to be 'forced' and not voluntary. This in itself shows how migrant entrepreneurs from core-states are not a uniform group.

Indeed, above we have seen a variety of different reasons underlying the migration from core-states to Wrocław and how these reasons can vary from individual to individual. Yet, the results of my analysis show how some reasons seem more prominent than others, such as the decision to move for a partner. Subsequently, while it may be tempting to sweepingly attribute this segment of migration to the stereotype of core-state men marrying Eastern European women, I have shown how the situation is much more nuanced, with the majority (53%) of these migrants, instead, founding their migration upon *other* reasons, such as a better quality of life, as well as a more affordable one. At this point, as a comparative study, it is important to position these findings against those from periphery-states, which is exactly what I now proceed to do below.

3.2.2. Migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states

"...because of the 5 year history of the Ukraine war with Russia...Ukraine is a little harder place to live than before. I have two children and I'm not scared to leave them [in Wrocław] to play outside without me. In Ukraine I couldn't. No, no, it's impossible. You can't do this... People [in Wrocław] are kinder, maybe. I don't want to say that Ukrainian people are angry or something, but the situation with war and there's this instability, it's really stressful for people. Because of that a lot of uncontrolled weapons...I had several businesses in Ukraine. Actually I was pretty tired of this...Business

in Ukraine is difficult because of corruption, because of instability, and I personally had some business meetings like a fight club with criminals because I need to solve some business issues. That's not normal and I'm tired of that...I quit everything", (Vanko, Ukraine, IT company and security systems).

Switching the focus to migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states, I would like to ask the following question: Is the neglect of their motivations (or, at best, the assumption of them to be economic in character) by the leading theories in the field of migrant entrepreneurship justified? By this I mean, is their migration more about necessity and less about volition? On the surface, Vanko's motivations seem, indeed, to be different to those of the migrants from core-states. For example, he describes how the environment in Kiev was neither conducive to raising a family, nor running a business. Further, although not mentioned, he and his partner chose Wroclaw because the immigration paperwork criteria required for Poland was somewhat easier to meet than that of other countries, such as Germany. In this way, Vanko seems representative of many other migrant entrepreneurs from the periphery-states subject group. However, as will be seen below, the variation between the two subject groups is much more complicated and nuanced than might be assumed. In fact, I will show below how the varying motivations of both subject groups can be unified by the *same* underlying theoretical framework. I now turn to these motivations which, once again, I will describe in order of their perceived importance. In doing so, I will constantly compare them back to those from the core-states with the goal of furthering the analysis.

3.2.2.1. Differences

Negative factors in the home country

The most striking difference between the two groups is that almost all of the migrant entrepreneurs from the periphery-states subject group, unlike those from core-states, said they did *not* move to Wroclaw for a Polish partner.³⁶ By contrast, as seen from the words of Ivanko (quoted previously), what is more commonly cited is negative factors in their country of origin. This was especially common among those from Ukraine, in particular those from the areas of Ukraine most affected by the recent war. The subsequent effects upon both the level of safety, as well as the economy, seem to have motivated people, such as Vanko, to leave Ukraine.

36 As shown in Table 3.1., only one person from the periphery-states subject group moved to Wroclaw for a Polish partner. This person (Abebi) was from Nigeria. There was also another migrant entrepreneur from Nigeria, John, who originally came to study, but stayed because he married a Polish partner with whom he now has a child. Interestingly, no Ukrainians or Belarussians spoke of having a relationship or partner from Poland.

with regard to the latter (the economy), this often features prominently in the motivations of many of those emigrating, such as Aleksander:

“In 2015 our economy was really bad...because of the war. I was in the army 2014-15 and when I finished that I was looking for work but there was nothing in my sphere, because I studied history”, (Aleksander, Ukraine, cafe).

For several interviewees from periphery-states, this insecurity extended beyond factors related to the war. They talked about the lack of democracy or, for want of a better phrase, the lack of *rule of law*:

“In Ukraine we don't have taxes, maybe our new president will make it, but it's something crazy, the system. And in Poland, you know, your taxes, but you have medicines, you have good cities, good roads, it's something for return. I want to pay. In Ukraine we pay, but we don't know what for, because we don't have roads, we don't have medicines, we don't have anything. Maybe the new president will make the rules, how it must look, in Poland they have it already”, (Andriy, Ukraine, cafe).

These notions of insecurity within Aleksander's and Andriy's home country seem to follow the often cited narrative within the migration literature of the 'disadvantaged migrant', migrating out of necessity rather than volition (Sassen 2016). As such, Andriy's motivations seem altogether different to that of migrants from core-states. Yet, upon closer inspection, Andriy's behaviour, as well as that of the core-state migrants, can be unified by De Haas' 'aspirations-capabilities framework' (2011). This framework describes how migrants' motivations are based upon 'spatial opportunity differentials' (ibid: 20). This is inherently logical because, if all locations shared the same opportunities, then there would be no inherent reason to change location. So, in this way, both groups of migrants are unified by the fact that they are migrating to take advantage of new opportunities in Wroclaw to which they previously did not have access in their location of origin. However, importantly, despite De Haas' framework unifying the migrants in this way, this study reveals how the spatial opportunity differentials experienced by the two subject groups often remain very different. For example, returning to the example of Roberto (Italy), despite his less than flattering description of his home country, it is important to note that back in Florence he had relatively well-paid employment, a safe and stable environment, as well as friends and family. As such, the spatial opportunity differentials which exist between his location of origin (Florence) and Wroclaw are somewhat different to that of those between Wroclaw and the locations of origin of many of those from the periphery-states subject group. So, despite both Roberto and Andriy *choosing* to migrate, Roberto's choice is rooted in a greater degree of privilege than that of Aleksander. This is, no doubt, what Mattheus (quoted at the

beginning of this chapter) is referring to when he reflects upon how migrants from core-states are seen to be ‘choosing’ to be in Wroclaw, whereas for those from periphery-states it is perceived as less of a choice.

Visa reasons

If one of the main motivations of those from periphery-states is to improve their standard of living and to live in a stable, functional democracy, then why not move countries ‘more West’, such as German or France? Symon (Ukraine) verbalises this logic:

“Because of level of life, why should you go from Africa to another Africa? If you have a chance to go to Germany, of course you go to Germany. Or Denmark, Norway. Why do you go to Poland?”, (Symon, Ukraine, delivery company).

So why Poland? The large majority of migrants from periphery-states, in addition to citing Poland’s geographical proximity to their home country, spoke about *visa restrictions and migration paperwork*. This seems to work on two levels. First, many third party countries (by which I mean countries other than the host and home country) impose restrictions which makes migrating there relatively difficult (Jaroszewicz 2018). Second, Polish immigration regulations are comparatively more welcoming. For example, the Polish government has provided a legal pathway to residency and citizenship for Ukrainians who can prove they have Polish ancestry³⁷ (Szulecka 2016). Volodomir (Belarus), below, is a good example of this. He wanted to move to Germany, but chose Poland because legally migrating there was somewhat easier:

“Yes [the visa for Poland was easier]. And the second part is that because when I was living in Ukraine, my relatives were from Belarus and they were living there when this territory was Poland”, (Volodomir, Ukraine, IT company).

This way of obtaining immigration papers, through family heritage, was a common theme among migrant entrepreneurs from Ukraine and Belarus, while for others

37 Furthermore, Polish migration policy regarding work visas has prioritized migration from its Eastern neighbours, apparently preferring such migration with ‘close cultural and geographic connections, such as Ukraine’ (Szulecka 2016: 116).

they initially moved to Poland on student visas.³⁸ This is where the other side of De Haas' (2011) aspirations-capabilities framework is helpful. The framework describes how migrants' desires to migrate to areas of new opportunities can be restricted by their capability to do so. In other words, it can explain how Volodomir, lacking the politico-institutional capability to move to Germany, chose Poland instead which, although perhaps not having the same opportunities as Germany, was a country to which he had the *capability* to migrate. Once again, this is in stark contrast to many of the migrant entrepreneurs from core-states who, almost without exception, did not even discuss visa issues.³⁹ This in itself seems to reveal how, despite both groups of migrants adhering to De Haas' (ibid) aspirations-capabilities framework, their degree of capability (at least with regard to international mobility) appears somewhat asymmetrical.

3.2.2.2. Similarities

I have shown, above, how migrants from the periphery-states subject group often seem to base their motivations for migrating upon escaping negative factors within their home countries. Yet, importantly, I have also pointed out how these negative factors must be understood within the wider context of spatial opportunity differentials. The negative factors present in migrants' locations of origin, and migrants' subsequent decision to move to Wrocław, inherently reveals how they perceive Wrocław to conversely offer *opportunities*. In exercising their agency and *choosing* to move to Wrocław for better opportunities, the behaviour of migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states seems more akin to that of the stereotypical privileged migrant from core-states. Indeed, I will highlight now, below, how some of the motivations of migrants from the periphery-state subject group seem more in line with that of those from the core-states subject group.

38 It is likely not a coincidence that most of those interviewed from periphery-states obtained their immigration paperwork via student visas or family members in former Polish territories. This is because the list of migrant entrepreneurs which I obtained from the Wrocław Statistical Office was of sole proprietorships. This is important, because under a regular work visa in Poland, it is not legal to create your own sole proprietorship, however, creating an LLC is possible. By contrast, creating a sole proprietorship is legal under a student visa or permanent residence card (obtained via family members of former Polish territories). So, it is not surprising that most sole proprietors from periphery-states gained their immigration papers in this way. By contrast, if we were to analyse migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states running LLCs in Wrocław, then we might find a lower incidence of those possessing student visas or permanent residence cards.

39 There was, however, one notable exception, whereby Dave (Canada) had significant problems with the authorities when trying to obtain Polish residency and at one point was even arrested.

Favourable business environment

Previously, I showed how Andriy (Ukraine) spoke positively about the infrastructure and functional system in Wroclaw and how this provides him with an environment whereby it is easier to live and run a business. So, it seems fair to say that Andriy's choice of Wroclaw was partially motivated by its favourable business environment. As such, this seems to mirror the motivation of several migrant entrepreneurs from core-states who, as seen previously, also spoke of the business-friendly conditions.

However, upon closer inspection, this 'similarity' is much more nuanced. Specifically, the way in which Andriy perceives Wroclaw to provide a good business environment seems somewhat different to that of the perception of migrants from the core-states subject group, such as Giovanni (Italy, previously highlighted earlier in this chapter). For Giovanni, the attraction for his business was Wroclaw's low level of taxes. Yet, when describing the exact same environment of Wroclaw, Andriy perceives the taxes as *high* (albeit a price worth paying for functional government and institutions). So, how can it be that the exact same tax rate is viewed in such antithetical ways? Here I argue that this situation perfectly illustrates how motivations cannot be viewed solely within the context of the host country. Migrants, such as Roberto and Andriy, do not arrive in Wroclaw 'carte blanche' without any pre-existing experiences. Their opinions about Wroclaw are, to a large degree, dependent upon how Wroclaw relates to their pre-existing experiences and perceptions of other cities and places. So, for Giovanni, coming from Italy where the level of taxation is apparently high, the tax rates in Wroclaw seem comparatively low. Conversely, for Andriy, coming from Ukraine where the tax level of taxation is (apparently) low, the tax rates in Wroclaw seem paradoxically high. This in itself reveals how de Haas' opportunity differentials do not only differ bilaterally between Wroclaw and migrants' locations of origin, but also how they differ *multilaterally* between Wroclaw, migrants' locations of origin in core-states, and migrants' locations of origin in periphery-states. It is this variation in the opportunities across multiple locations, I argue, which creates the variation in migrants' perception of Wroclaw. This has theoretical significance. Kloosterman & Rath (2001), in an attempt to outline the levels of the opportunity structure within the Mixed-embeddedness Approach, had made the host country the largest unit of analysis. Yet, as seen above, Roberto's and Andriy's perceptions of Wroclaw are clearly dependent upon their pre-existing perceptions of spaces *beyond the borders of the host country*. As such, it highlights how migrants and their motivations must be situated not only within the host country, but also within a wider, uneven, global environment.

It is not always about money

As mentioned in the introduction, in the context of (semi-)periphery-to-core migration, the motivation for moving from an economically less developed country to an economically more developed country is often assumed. However, as is the case with migrant entrepreneurs from core-states, for several migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states, their main motivation was *not money*. Artem (Belarus) is a good example of this. Running his own translation company, whereby all his work is done online, he can physically work anywhere he wants. Why then, move to Poland where his cost of living will increase, yet his income will remain the same? The effects of the subsequent increased cost of living are clearly visible from his words:

“Living is more expensive here, first because of housing. Gas, water, heating, and so on....Simply the way of [inaudible]. I had to teach every member of my family to turn off the water when you brush your teeth and to warm your room only when you need it. When you’re out, turn it off. That’s it”, (Artem, Belarus).

From a ‘homo-economicus’ perspective, it makes no sense. It seems, therefore, that Artem is not solely motivated by financial gain. So then, what *is* he motivated by? Why migrate to a country where he will have less money? As he continues to speak, the reasons become clearer:

“We lived in [inaudible] city [in Belarus], it’s about 300,000 inhabitants there, we thought about it’s got to be bigger. Wroclaw is a great size, it’s not too big. It’s a great choice of universities, a lot of culture, it’s important to me, a lot of jazz, because I like jazz...If I want to go to a concert, I can go to a concert everyday. Which is important for me...At the moment we have a 3-level apartment...which is impossible to find in Belarus. Actually not 3-level, but 5-level. My wife rents a room for her work in the same building, and we also have a garage”, (Artem, Belarus, translation company).

It seems that, for Artem and his family, that the increase in the cost of living is a worthwhile price to pay for a relatively increased *standard of living*. On first impressions, this may appear to echo those from core-states, who relocated to Wroclaw for a better quality of life. However, there seems to be an important difference here between quality of life and standard of living. For those from core-states, such as Michael from New York, he did not move to Poland for a better standard of living, because in New York he already had access to 3-level apartments, concerts, and other amenities which are considered to constitute a high standard of living. Rather, he moved to Poland for a better *quality of life*, specifically for a less stressful life (among other reasons). By contrast, those from periphery-states,

such as Artem, their migration seems more about acquiring a better *standard of living*, i.e. for new luxuries to which they did not previously have access.

Indeed, it seems for several others from periphery-states that the main motivation was also not monetary. For Veronica (Ukraine) it was more about an adventure. She had a business in Kiev and life was ‘going quite well’. However, she describes her life there as being ‘a bit easy and boring’ and she ‘wanted a change’. She subsequently moved to Wroclaw and opened her own cafe selling Ukrainian baked goods. This idea of migrating for an adventure, or to escape boredom, seems very similar to many from core-states and is at odds with the narrative of the ‘disadvantaged migrant’. By the same token, this idea of migrating out of desire or adventure, and not out of necessity, in some cases even mirrored the language of those from periphery-states who chose Wroclaw for the ‘vibe’ of the city. Anastasia (Ukraine), for example, chose Wroclaw as their new home for exactly this reason. She and her husband run a pet grooming salon and, despite having no family or connections here, chose to migrate simply because “the city felt right”.

Geographical proximity

One final, but also often cited factor, was the geographical proximity of Poland to the home countries (notably, those from Ukraine and Belarus) of migrants from the periphery-states subject group. For example, Aleksander, Andriy, and Olek, all from Ukraine and running cafes in Wroclaw, mentioned that they like being able to travel back to Ukraine to visit family and friends. Further, Andriy simultaneously runs a business in Ukraine, so by staying (relatively) close to it, he can keep an eye on it. Once again, this seems to 1. mirror the motivations of many of those from the core-states subject group, who also chose Poland for its geographic proximity (albeit proximity to Western Europe, not Eastern Europe); and 2. highlight how factors *beyond the host country* seem to play a role in shaping migrant entrepreneurs’ motivations for choosing Wroclaw.

3.3. Why entrepreneurship?

3.3.1. Migrant entrepreneurs from core-states

“It was Credit Suisse...everything was fine, there was no issue, but I just felt like a windshield wiper. I kept doing the same thing again and again...this isn’t what I wanted to do. Basically, the second day I was working there...I was getting off the tram and at 9am you’ll see hordes of people getting off the tram and walking into a gray building on a gray day, and I was listening to Pink Floyd ‘Bricks in the Wall’, so I just freaked out and had to go stand to the side and separate myself from everyone for a few minutes, so then I had to figure out what else I was going to do...I would probably still be

making more [money] with Credit Suisse. Yeah, I could go back to one of the banks, but yeah I really wouldn't want to", (Paul, USA, coffee sales)

I now turn to the second section of the chapter, that is to say, the migrants' motivations for opening their own business. As noted in the introduction, this is a somewhat exceptional and arduous endeavour, so what is it that motivates migrants to embark upon such a trajectory? In answering this question, I would like to begin by revisiting the concepts of Disadvantage Theory (Light 1979; Johnson 2000; Clark & Drinkwater 2010), which I first introduced in Chapter 1. This theory attributes the relatively high rates of migrant entrepreneurship (almost invariably in core-states) to migrants' disadvantaged status within the host country, resulting in barriers to the mainstream labour market and, subsequently, pushing migrants into self-employment. Yet, what is immediately apparent from Paul's words (quoted above) is how he *already* had well-paid employment, which he voluntarily left in order to start his own business whereby he earns *less*. He admits he could still return to that job, but he does not want to. This is echoed quite emphatically by Bruce (Australia) who declared to me that he would rather 'sell [his] blood and organs' than return to work in the mainstream labour market. The examples of Paul and Bruce, as well as many other migrants from the core-states subject group, put simply, seem to turn Disadvantage Theory 'on its head'. By this I mean it appears to be almost the exact opposite of the theory. Instead of facing barriers to the mainstream labour market and turning to self-employment out of necessity, it seems that mainstream employment remains a *back-up option* to which they would only return *if necessary*. Indeed, for migrants experiencing the inversion of this theory, a mirror-opposite 'Advantage Theory' (or 'Privilege Theory') seems more appropriate. In this way, Disadvantage Theory appears to fall into the trap first identified by Nader way back in 1972, yet apparently still relevant today, whereby the exclusive focus upon 'the disadvantaged' and 'ethnic groups', and the subsequent 'dominant-subordinate relationships', might 'be affecting the kinds of theories that we are weaving' (Nader 1972: 5).⁴⁰

Returning to Paul's situation, an important question needs to be asked: Why, when he can earn more money in the mainstream labour market, did he enter the world of self-employment? Are we not dealing here with a rational actor? It seems at least, that we are not dealing with the rational 'homo-economicus' (Persky 1995). This idea, that money is *not* the main motivation, was a recurring theme. Mattheus, quoted below, seems to epitomise this:

40 Even in certain periphery-to-core migratory contexts, other authors (for example, Rath 2011) have questioned Disadvantage Theory as a way of accounting for high rates of entrepreneurship.

"I'm not doing this for money. I'm not looking for the clients who pay the most and then try to go after those. I'm not a very good entrepreneur in this sense. I really don't care much about money, as long as I can cover my needs and support my family and so on, but money has never been the motivation to do this", (Mattheus, Germany, education consultancy).

So, if money does not motivate Paul or Mattheus, then what does? I now explore these non-economic motivations in greater depth below.

Perceived increase in agency / escaping corporate employment

As shown with the example of Paul, entrepreneurship appears to be a way of escaping 'meaningless' corporate employment. This motivation was mirrored by many of the other migrants from the core-states subject group. In essence, it can be broken down into two parts. First, the 'push' of the supposedly undesirable corporate job. Second, the 'pull' of self-employment and the apparent increase in meaning and agency. In terms of the former, it is worth asking what is so bad about these jobs that it is pushing them away. After all, these corporate posts often pay above the average native wage level, are situated in relatively sleek, air-conditioned buildings, and are at corporations with household names within the international community. Why, then, have so many of the migrant entrepreneurs from the core-states subject group turned their back on this? For Paul, at its very core, it seems to be about *meaning*. While Paul used the metaphor of a windscreen wiper to express this, Walter (UK), quoted below, prefers the metaphor of 'doozers':

"It was also about being the master of my own destiny. I could never imagine being in a corporation, being told to do something and then being told it's not needed anymore, after spending weeks on it, and that can really demotivate me. I don't know if you remember Fraggles Rock...there were these little characters called the 'Doozers', and when I saw them, I thought about corporate people. They build stuff and then it's destroyed and they keep building it and it gets destroyed and their life is pointless", (Walter, UK, English language school).

In Wrocław, there is a large concentration of BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) service centers, providing back office support for their counterpart offices in core-states. This, combined with the low unemployment rate of under 2%, means that finding employment is apparently not very difficult, especially if you speak English or other core-state languages.⁴¹ Indeed, this was the case of many migrants from core-states who, upon moving to Wrocław, had found work within this sector.

41 The role of languages, language hierarchies, and cultural hierarchies will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Yet, within this BPO environment, with its focus on support and not innovation, many of them soon found the work to be repetitive and lacking in meaning. This, subsequently, contributed to ‘pushing’ them into the arms of entrepreneurship which, by contrast, seems to offer these migrant entrepreneurs an escape route—a path to more agency and meaning. Mattheus (Germany), below, speaks to this:

“The agency. I have the ultimate say of who I work with. And I have the ultimate say of what I do and how I do it. Of course, I adjust to the clients’ needs, but it’s my adjustment and I choose what to compromise...When I work with a client I work with the client and I’m not above them I’m not below them, we’re on an eye-to-eye level...I don’t think I could ever follow an order from someone that can’t convince me why that makes sense”, (Mattheus, Germany, education consultancy).

This motivation of agency seems very powerful. It is interesting to note that many of those who left corporate employment in the mainstream labour market now work longer hours and receive less pay (relative to his previous job in the corporate sector), yet they are willing to do so for the agency which comes with running his own business. The motivating power of this seems almost akin to how, in Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (Orwell 1945), the animals worked longer hours and for less food because they were working (or so they thought) for themselves as opposed to some oppressive managing authority. Similarly, migrants like Paul now work even harder and for less money, yet are willing to do so in return for the apparent increase in control and agency.

Less stressful work

“I just needed something a bit more quiet, a bit less stressful. Being a general manager was really great, but it was taking a lot of time, a lot of stress, a lot of energy. We had a kid, so my life-work balance was a bit unfair. We thought about this idea of a wine shop with my experience and with the opportunity that Poland could offer and we decided we should do it and it’s an interesting adventure”, (Albert, France, wine shop).

As seen from the words of Albert, above, agency was not the only non-economic motivational factor. For him, it was more about finding a less-stressful occupation. Running his own wine shop in a suburb of Wroclaw, his lifestyle is now much more relaxed compared to his previous employment as the general manager of a hotel chain in Paris. Indeed, Albert was not the only one. Stewart (USA) also turned his back on a more stressful lifestyle, likewise opting for an occupation related to wine, albeit *making* wine instead of just selling it.

“Winery is a cool business to be in, it’s a nice Dad job, you can spend time with your kids...Would have been better ROI [return on investment] if I had just day traded stocks, but that would have been boring...”, (Stewart, USA, vineyard).

The motivations of both Stewart and Paul (as well as several others from the core-states subject group) seem very similar to those of those within the ‘lifestyle entrepreneur’ literature, whereby lifestyle - and not money - is the main motivating factor, and so they consciously choose occupations which can support their desired lifestyle (Marchant & Mottiar 2011; Benson & O’Reilly 2018).⁴²

3.3.2. Migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states

“There was no work in Ukraine. There was a proposition to come to Wroclaw to my friend and open a cafe”, (Aleksander, Ukraine, cafe).

Switching the focus now to the periphery-state subject group, we begin to see quite a different story. The case of Aleksander (quoted above), in contrast to that of Paul and many of those from the core-states subject group, seems more in line with the narrative of the ‘disadvantaged migrant’. As I will show below, this seems to be the case for many - but not all - of the migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states.

3.3.2.1. Differences

Barriers to mainstream employment

Faced with unemployment, Alexander (quoted above) decided to start his own business. In doing so, his behaviour adheres to the ideas of Disadvantage Theory (Light 1979; Johnson 2000; Clark & Drinkwater 2010). Although this is usually observed within the confines of the host country, the principle remains the same: Aleksander, facing barriers to mainstream employment, has turned to self-employment as a source of income. Similarly, Andriy, also from Ukraine, has a law degree, yet his qualification is not recognized in Poland, which was part of his reason for opening a cafe:

“I think not [about being a lawyer in Poland], because it’s a different system. I think that if I want to be a lawyer in Poland I must do 2 or 3 years studies”, (Andriy, Ukraine, cafe).

⁴² At this point, I would like to mention that there were a number of other (less common) motivations cited by the migrants in this study from core-states. These include creating a business in order to improve their resume, as well as simply for financial gain. However, in the interest of brevity and not diluting the more major trends, I have omitted them.

In this particular case, it once again highlights the important role played by governments and institutions (Kloosterman et al. 1999; Kloosterman & Rath 2001; Engelen 2001; Bruton et al. 2010). Polish institutions, as a result of not recognising Andriy's law degree from Ukraine, provide a barrier to him obtaining employment as a lawyer in the mainstream labour market, subsequently pushing him toward self-employment. As such, the examples of Aleksander and Andriy seem to correspond to the narrative of the 'disadvantaged migrant'.

It's about money

"I can't imagine being an employee for someone. I know that I can earn more with my own company", (Petro, Ukraine).

Several migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states, including Petro (quoted above), spoke about how self-employment offers higher reimbursement than employment in the mainstream labour market. What is interesting is to link this back to the migrant entrepreneurs from core-states, such as Paul (among many others), who left their well-paying jobs to start their own businesses and now earn less. In other words, self-employment for them meant a pay decrease, whereas for Petro it meant a pay increase. Again, this seems to position Petro in line with the narrative of the 'disadvantaged immigrant', and hints at broader, macro labour market disparities, whereby those from periphery-states are seemingly paid less than those from core-states. This idea of a 'labour hierarchy' will be explored further in Chapter 6. For the purpose of this chapter, however, which is restricted to the role of motivations, the main point here is that, for several migrant entrepreneurs from the periphery-states subject group, self-employment seems to offer (in cases) the ability to earn more. Consequently, it would be easy to understand why migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states, after migrating to economically more developed countries, might be motivated to open their own business (Light 1979; Johnson 2000; Clark & Drinkwater 2010).

4.3.2.2. Similarities

It's not about money or necessity

"Getting a job was not a problem. Come on, there's lots of jobs here for professional English speakers! Jobs - they are not a problem", (John, Nigeria, English language school).

In contrast to the examples outlined above, in this section I will now show how, even for migrants from periphery-states, there are cases which force us to question the 'disadvantaged' narrative so often assigned to them. In particular, I will show how

their motivations for opening their own business are not always rooted in necessity, but instead can be privileged acts of *volition*. John (quoted above), provides a good example of this. As an English speaker, within the BPO environment of Wrocław and its huge demand for employees who speak core-state languages, it was easy for him to find relatively well-paid employment within the mainstream labour market. Interestingly, this was also observed among other migrants from periphery-states who spoke 'core-state languages' - not only English but also others such as Spanish and German. Armed with this core-state cultural capital, these migrants later created their own business not because they could not find employment in the mainstream labour market, but because they *wanted to*. Importantly, this goes against the ideas of Disadvantage Theory and, in doing so, seems instead to more closely resemble the situations of many of those from the core-states subject group. Here, the role played by language seems key. And, in contrast to the literature which stresses the importance of learning the host country language (Bleakley & Chin 2004; Dustman & Fabbri 2003), in the semi-periphery context of Wrocław, what seems to be more important is *core-state languages*. At this point, we begin to see the emergence of a culture hierarchy, an idea which I will elaborate upon in Chapter 7.

However, in a number of cases, even those who did *not* speak core-state languages opened their own business out of volition and not necessity. Natalia (Ukraine) is a good example of this. She runs a cake shop close to the Wrocław main square. She tells me, with obvious passion, that it had always been her dream to open her own cake shop. For her, it is something she loves and it does not feel like work. For Bogdan, also from Ukraine, it was slightly different. When studying, he did an internship in an office environment and hated it. So he decided to open his own business instead of going into the corporate world. He started with providing hookah pipes to restaurants, but it was not making much money. After returning home to Ukraine, and seeing his mother (who runs her own hair salon), and after getting his hair cut at a male barbers in Wrocław, he decided to open his own salon. Such behavior seems to more closely resemble the rationale of many of those from the core-states subject group who opened their own businesses as a way of escaping 'meaningless' corporate employment. The examples of Natalia and Bogdan are, once again, at odds with the narrative often told in the migrant entrepreneurship literature of the disadvantaged migrant who, faced with barriers to the mainstream labour market, is forced into self-employment. Their stories, by contrast, seem much closer to that of migrant entrepreneurs from core-states, for whom the act of opening a business was rooted in volition, not economic necessity. As such, this study lends support to the idea that migrant entrepreneurs, even within a periphery-to-core context, cannot be assumed to be a homogenous group with identical motivations (Oliveira 2007).

3.4. Conclusions

In this Chapter, I explored migrants' motivations for both 1. migrating to Wrocław; and 2. opening their own business. In terms of the former, I showed how studying 'up' in migrant entrepreneurship reveals how motivations for migrating cannot be assumed to be exclusively economic in character. On the contrary, the migrants from core-states often based their migration upon *non-economic* motivations, such as moving for a partner, a better quality of life, as well as taking into consideration Wrocław's geographic proximity to Western Europe. Even when the main motivation was economic, it seems to be inverted, whereby they moved to Wrocław for *lower costs* as opposed to higher wages. This in itself seems to represent a kind of *geoarbitrage* (Hayes 2014), whereby the migrant entrepreneurs are geographically relocating to take advantage of spatial price differentials. I also showed how, even for those from periphery-states, motivations for migrating likewise cannot always be assumed to be economic in character, with several of them mirroring the non-economic motivations of those from the core-states subject group. However, general differences in motivations remain, such as the apparent tendency of those from periphery-states (notably, Ukraine) to base their reasons for migrating upon economic and political insecurity in their home country. On the surface, these reasons do indeed seem different to those from core-states and, subsequently, more in line with the narrative of the 'disadvantaged migrant'. Yet, importantly, these surface-level variations in motivation can be unified by the underlying aspirations-capabilities framework developed by De Haas (2011). Migrants from both core- and periphery-states, seem to demonstrate the same behaviour in the way that they base their motivations upon perceived 'spatial opportunity differentials' between their home and host countries (and, in cases, third party countries). Importantly, this highlights the importance of positioning migrants not only within the environment of the host country, but also within a wider, global environment. This, I argued, has theoretical significance, as it raises questions around Kloosterman & Rath's (2001) restriction of the opportunity structure to the host-country only.

In terms of reasons for starting a business, motivations can likewise not be assumed to be economic in character. Indeed, many migrants from the core-states subject group became entrepreneurs not out of economic necessity, but instead out of a desire for more *agency*, often leaving well-paid employment to do so. This goes against the ideas of Disadvantage Theory (Light 1979; Johnson 2000; Clark & Drinkwater 2010) which describes how migrants enter self-employment after facing barriers to the mainstream labour market. Indeed, their situations often represent the *exact opposite* of Disadvantage Theory, whereby they are only willing to return to the mainstream labour market if absolutely necessary. Yet, once again, even for certain migrants from the periphery-states subject group, I showed how motivations were likewise not always economic in character, with agency and/or passion for their work seemingly taking precedence over monetary gain.

Subsequently, this study lends support to the idea that migrant entrepreneurs are not one homogenous group with identical motivations (Oliveira 2007), but instead have varying motivations (Masurel et al. 2002; Lin & Tao 2012) which cannot necessarily be assumed to be economic in character (Glinka & Brzozowska 2015; Rametse et al. 2018; Brzozowska & Glinka 2019) nor rooted in necessity (Ndofor and Priem 2011), and which are subject to change over time (Knight 2015). Consequently, it helps to reveal the hidden role of motivations in migrant entrepreneurship. In doing so, it also exposes how some of the leading theories, most notably Disadvantage Theory, appear to be rooted in (semi-)periphery-to-core migratory contexts. This, I have shown, seems to exemplify Nader's warning of how such 'dominant-subordinate relationships' may be 'affecting the kinds of theories that we are weaving' (Nader 1972: 5).