

Beyond necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurship: some lessons from English deprived urban neighbourhoods

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Abstract When discussing the motivations of entrepreneurs, it has become commonplace to represent them dichotomously as either necessity or opportunity driven. This paper evaluates critically this dualistic depiction of entrepreneurs' motives through an examination of the rationales of entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs living in a deprived urban neighbourhood of an English city, a group of entrepreneurs who have been conventionally depicted as largely driven by necessity into entrepreneurship in the absence of alternative means of livelihood. Reporting the results of a face-to-face questionnaire conducted in 2008 with 459 respondents and a further 18 follow-up in-depth interviews, the finding is that forcing individual entrepreneurs' motives into one or other of these categories grossly over-simplifies their rationales which in lived practice are not only a mixture of both opportunity and necessity but also temporally fluid shifting most often from more necessity- to more opportunity-oriented rationales. The outcome is to reveal that the opportunity versus necessity dichotomy, which uses the perceptions of an entrepreneur's originating condition as the defining feature of their motivations, is a misleading way of categorising types of entrepreneurship not only because motivations change over time but also because entrepreneurs are frequently driven by both necessity as well as opportunity factors. The result is a call to move beyond the conventional either/or depiction of opportunity versus necessity entrepreneurship and towards a richer, more nuanced and dynamic appreciation of entrepreneurs' motivations.

Keywords Opportunity entrepreneurship · Necessity entrepreneurship · Deprived urban neighbourhoods

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Introduction

Despite explicit calls being made in the entrepreneurship literature not to oversimplify the complex motives of entrepreneurs by adopting simplistic explanatory models (Rouse and Daellenbach 1999), the start of the 21st century has seen the emergence of a large body of thought which adopts a dualistic depiction of entrepreneurs as either necessity-driven, pushed into entrepreneurship because all other options for work are absent or unsatisfactory, or opportunity-driven, pulled into this endeavour more out of choice to exploit some business opportunity (Benz 2009; Bosma and Harding 2006; Bosma et al. 2008; Bridge et al. 2003; Devins 2009). In order to recapture some of the complexity involved in entrepreneurs' motives, recent years have therefore seen the emergence of a small stream of thought that has begun to criticise the use of this simplistic dualistic typology to explain the motives underpinning decisions to start up businesses (Williams 2007a, b, c; Williams 2008a, b). The aim of this paper is to contribute to, and further advance, this emergent critique of the necessity versus opportunity dichotomy when depicting entrepreneurs' motives.

Until now, that is, much of the literature calling for this dualistic depiction to be transcended has either been based on studies of transition economies such as in East-Central Europe (Aidis et al. 2006; Smallbone and Welter 2004; Williams 2007a, b; Williams et al. 2006, 2009; Williams and Round 2009) and/or has focused on non-mainstream kinds of entrepreneurship such as off-the-books entrepreneurs (Antonopoulos and Mitra 2009; Gurtoo and Williams 2009; Katungi et al. 2006; Ilahiane and Sherry 2008; Llanes and Barbour 2007; Skold and Rehn 2007; Williams and Round 2007; Williams 2009a, b, c, d; Williams and Round 2009). The problem with using these subjects of enquiry to call into question the opportunity versus necessity dichotomy is that they can easily be dismissed as studying exceptions to the norm. Transition economies can be argued to be special cases where opportunity and necessity might well co-exist (Smallbone and Welter 2004) whilst off-the-books entrepreneurs can be argued to be anything but standard mainstream entrepreneurs. Here, therefore, the intention is to begin to resolve these problems that have so far arisen when criticising the bifurcated view that entrepreneurs are either necessity- or opportunity-driven. In this paper, firstly the western world is analysed in the form of the English second-tier city of Leeds and secondly the focus is upon mainstream entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs.

In the first section, therefore, the growth of the literature on entrepreneurs' motives that adopts a static dualistic representation of entrepreneurs as either opportunity- or necessity-oriented will be reviewed, along with the small but burgeoning literature that has begun to criticise this simplistic dichotomous depiction. Revealing that most critical evaluations have tended to focus upon what might be depicted as marginal (rather than mainstream) arenas of entrepreneurship such as transition economies and off-the-books entrepreneurs, the second section then outlines a survey conducted during 2008 of mainstream entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs in the northern English city of Leeds. Until now, when examining entrepreneurship in deprived urban neighbourhoods, the tendency has been to use the necessity versus opportunity dichotomy. Reporting evidence from a face-to-face questionnaire with 459 respondents and 18 follow-up in-depth

interviews in such neighbourhoods in Leeds, however, the third section will reveal that squeezing the motivations of entrepreneurs into one side or the other of this dualistic typology not only over-simplifies their rationales since both necessity and opportunity motives are often involved but also obfuscates how their motives change over time. Our theoretical development leads us to call for this increasingly popular either/or dualism that explains entrepreneurs' purely in terms of their originating motive and represents them as either necessity- or opportunity-driven to be transcended. Instead, a call is made for it to be replaced by a richer and more nuanced understanding that recognises their diverse and dynamic motives. The paper concludes by discussing the research and policy implications of these findings.

At the outset, however, it is necessary to state how 'entrepreneurship' is here being defined. Given that entrepreneurship has long proven a problematic and elusive concept and, as Anderson and Starnawska (2008: 222) state, 'entrepreneurship means different things to different people', a working definition will be adopted appropriate to the task at hand but which may not be universally applicable. An entrepreneur is here defined as somebody actively involved in starting a business or is the owner/manager of a business that is less than 36 months old (Harding et al. 2005; Reynolds et al. 2002). This definition, although excluding many aspects commonly included under the umbrella of entrepreneurship, such as intrapreneurship, is nevertheless fit for the purpose for which it is here being used, namely to study the motives of those starting-up and operating business ventures.

Entrepreneurs' motives and the necessity versus opportunity dichotomy

Analysing the entrepreneurship literature over the past few decades, numerous taxonomies have been developed to order the competing motivations for starting-up a business venture (Burns 2001; Chell et al. 1991; Kanter 1983). In recent years, nevertheless, a particular classificatory schema has become increasingly pervasive. Despite the well-rehearsed earlier assertions that the complex and diverse motives of entrepreneurs must not be over-simplified by simplistic explanatory models (Rouse and Daellenbach 1999), a large and ever growing stream of thought has nevertheless followed in the footsteps of Bögenhold (1987) and adopted a basic dichotomous depiction of entrepreneurs as either necessity-driven, pushed into entrepreneurship because all other options for work are absent or unsatisfactory, or opportunity-driven, pulled into this endeavour more out of choice to exploit some business opportunity (Aidis et al. 2006; Benz 2009; Bosma and Harding 2006; Bosma et al. 2008; Bridge et al. 2003; Devins 2009; Harding et al. 2005; Maritz 2004; Minniti et al. 2006; Perunović 2005; Shane 2009; Smallbone and Welter 2004). Indeed, this dichotomous classification has moved ever more centre-stage in the contemporary entrepreneurship literature.

One prominent reason for its growing centrality is its usage in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the predominant global survey of the degree and nature of entrepreneurship which covers 35 countries (Bosma and Harding 2006; Harding et al. 2005; Minniti et al. 2006; Reynolds et al. 2001, 2002). GEM aims to explore the link between entrepreneurship and economic development (Reynolds et al.

2001, 2002; Bosma and Harding 2006; Bosma et al. 2008; Harding 2006; Bosma and Levie 2009). To do this, it makes a distinction between ‘necessity entrepreneurship’, defined as people who view entrepreneurship as the best option available and not necessarily the preferred option, and ‘opportunity entrepreneurship’, defined as those who engage in entrepreneurship out of choice (Bridge et al. 2003; Acs 2006; Bosma et al. 2008; Williams 2008b; Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009). GEM has found that the prevalence rate of necessity entrepreneurship is positively associated with national economic growth, and is strongest when countries highly dependent on international trade are excluded (Reynolds et al. 2001). Similar to much of the literature that adopts this binary depiction of entrepreneurship, nevertheless, GEM treats necessity- and opportunity-driven entrepreneurs as entirely separate categories. As Minniti et al. (2006: 21) assert in relation to the GEM survey, ‘In most countries ... nearly all individuals can be sorted into one of the two categories’. In GEM, in consequence, the a priori assumption is that necessity- and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship are constituted via their negation to each other (i.e., to be an entrepreneur out of choice means that one is not doing so out of necessity).

Interestingly, it is not just the literature on mainstream entrepreneurship that is increasingly dominated by this dualistic typology when discussing entrepreneurs’ motives. It is also at the heart of the growing literature that seeks to explain the motives of entrepreneurs who trade off-the-books (Antonopoulos and Mitra 2009; Gurtoo and Williams 2009; Katungi et al. 2006; Ilahiane and Sherry 2008; Llanes and Barbour 2007; Skold and Rehn 2007; Williams and Round 2007; Williams 2009a, b, c, d; Williams and Round 2009). For many years, it was simply assumed that these informal entrepreneurs were driven out of necessity into this realm by their inability to find formal employment and participation in such off-the-books enterprise was viewed as a survival strategy and a last resort (Castells and Portes 1989; Gallin 2001; Portes and Walton 1981; Rajman 2001; Sassen 1997). In recent years, nevertheless, various studies have begun to question whether they are always necessity-driven. Indeed, some have argued the inverse, depicting them as opportunity- rather than necessity-driven (Gerxhani 2004; Maloney 2004; Snyder 2004).

As Gerxhani (2004: 274) asserts, those starting-up businesses on a wholly or partly off-the-books basis ‘choose to participate in the off-the-books economy because they find more autonomy, flexibility and freedom in this sector than in the formal one’. Snyder (2004) in her study of 50 off-the-books entrepreneurs in New York City’s East Village neighbourhood similarly concludes that although previous literature has assumed that external pressures (such as discrimination, economic restructuring and unemployment) force people to work off-the-books, the off-the-books entrepreneurs she studied were all doing so out of choice. They engaged in such endeavour to set their careers on a new path either in order to transform their work identity or to reveal their true selves. This is also the finding of Cross (1997, 2000). Studying street vendors, he argues that many do so out of choice. The conventional depiction in the literature on off-the-books entrepreneurs has been that they are either universally necessity-driven or universally driven by opportunity and doing so out of choice, despite the wider recognition that “all entrepreneurial activity is not caused by the same motives” (Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009: 420). Indeed,

until recently, the study by Lozano (1989) of 50 dealers at flea markets in Northern California was the only notable exception that identified the ratio of necessity-to-opportunity entrepreneurs. She found that 80% were involuntary entrants pushed into this endeavour due to few other opportunities being open to them, and that the remaining 20% were voluntary entrants who had chosen this endeavour. Akin to the wider literature on legitimate entrepreneurs, therefore, she seeks not to define off-the-books entrepreneurs as universally either opportunity- or necessity-driven but to understand the ratio of opportunity-to-necessity entrepreneurship (e.g., Harding et al. 2005; Harding 2006; Maritz 2004; Minniti et al. 2006; Perunović 2005). In recent years, and akin to the literature on mainstream legitimate entrepreneurship, this desire to identify the ratio of necessity-to-opportunity entrepreneurship amongst those who trade off-the-books has been more widely adopted (Gurtoo and Williams 2009; Williams and Round 2007; Williams 2009a, b, c, d; Williams and Round 2009).

This dichotomous depiction of entrepreneurs as either necessity- or opportunity-driven has also been adopted when analysing particular area-types and populations such as to understand the socio-spatial variations in the nature of entrepreneurship. Take, for example, the study of entrepreneurship in relation to deprived neighbourhoods and/or disadvantaged populations. In the past few decades, there has been a shift of public policy in relation to such populations away from introducing social policies to alleviate poverty and towards improving the economic performance of deprived urban neighbourhoods and disadvantaged populations (Bridge et al. 2003; Devins 2009). One important facet of this has been to harness entrepreneurship (Blackburn and Ram 2006; Bridge et al. 2003; HM Treasury 2008). This is because deprived areas and populations lag behind prosperous areas on key measures of enterprise (Devins 2009; HM Treasury 2008). In the UK, for example, the business start-up rate in the 20 most deprived local authority areas is half the rate in the 20 most prosperous areas (HM Treasury 2008). Across the vast majority of this literature, however, it is again the case that this dichotomous depiction of necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurs dominates discussions of what is to be done.

Despite decades of policy intervention, little has been achieved to close the gap between deprived and prosperous areas (Gripaios 2002; Blackburn and Ram 2006). If policy is to succeed in bridging this gap, therefore, it is important that an understanding of entrepreneurship in deprived areas is developed. Otherwise, as Blackburn and Ram (2006) state, the “policy ‘fad’ of uncritically advocating that entrepreneurship is a key route for individual and societal economic and social salvation” will prevail (p. 85). A key step in furthering understanding of entrepreneurship in deprived urban neighbourhoods (DUNs), is to develop understanding of entrepreneurial motivations. Until now, the widespread assumption has been that entrepreneurs in deprived urban neighbourhoods and disadvantaged populations are more likely to be motivated by necessity, as employment opportunities are limited and therefore people have little to lose in starting their own business (Bridge et al. 2003; Brooksbank et al. 2007; Lazear 2005; Potter 2004), and necessity or push is seen to be relevant to areas with relatively high levels of unemployment (Brooksbank et al. 2007; Meager 1992). As Blackburn and Ram (2006) state, situations of adversity can provide opportunities for individuals to respond in an entrepreneurial fashion, for example by starting a business to cater for

local needs” (p. 77). Lazear (2005: 650) states that “as necessity is the mother of invention, perhaps entrepreneurs are created when a worker has no alternatives”.

In recent years, however, GEM has investigated entrepreneurial motivations at the local level according to their level of multiple deprivation. Harding et al. (2005) examine entrepreneurial activity and attitudes in different areas, grouped in quintiles from the most to least deprived, by measuring total entrepreneurial activity (TEA), which is measured as the proportion of adults of working age who are either setting up or have been running a business for less than 42 months, for males and females, and perceptions of entrepreneurship. As Table 1 displays, however, the finding is that most deprived wards are neither more nor less likely to be entrepreneurial than the most affluent wards, nor are levels of necessity entrepreneurship higher in the most deprived wards. Furthermore, the GEM research finds that necessity entrepreneurship in all five quintiles is in line with UK averages for both women and men, and that “it cannot be stated with any statistical significance that necessity entrepreneurship is higher in more deprived wards” (Harding et al. 2005, p. 28).

Despite the widespread use of this dualistic depiction of entrepreneurs as motivated either by necessity or opportunity, a growing number of studies have begun to question not only the separateness of opportunity and necessity and whether they might co-exist in entrepreneurs’ motives but also the temporal fluidity of motivations. The problem, however, is that much of the literature calling for this dualistic depiction to be transcended has focused on what might be deemed entrepreneurship in the ‘margins’ rather than mainstream entrepreneurship. On the one hand, they have focused on entrepreneurship in transition economies such as East-Central Europe (Aidis et al. 2006; Smallbone and Welter 2004; Williams 2007a, b; Williams et al. 2006, 2009; Williams and Round 2009) and on the other hand, on entrepreneurs operating in the off-the-books economy (Antonopoulos and Mitra 2009; Gurtoo and Williams 2009; Katungi et al. 2006; Ilahiane and Sherry 2008; Llanes and Barbour 2007; Skold and Rehn 2007; Williams and Round 2007; Williams 2009a, b, c, d; Williams and Round 2009).

For example, studying Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, Smallbone and Welter (2004) invited business owners to provide up to three reasons for starting their businesses. They find that although most entrepreneurs are opportunity-driven, it is

Table 1 Entrepreneurial activity and attitudes in deprived areas

	20% most deprived wards	20% quite deprived wards	20% average affluence wards	20% quite affluent wards	20% most affluent wards
TEA	6.1	6.8	6.4	6.3	5.8
Female TEA	4.1	4.8	2.5	5.1	3.3
Nec TEA (F)	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.4
Opp TEA (F)	3.2	3.6	2.2	4.1	2.6
Male TEA	8.1	8.9	10.3	7.5	8.3
Nec TEA (M)	0.8	0.7	1.1	0.9	1.5
Opp TEA (M)	6.3	7	8.2	4.8	5.6

Source: Harding et al. (2005: Table 7)

rather overly-simplistic to adopt an either/or approach because in early-stage transition economies, well-educated people can be presented with limited opportunities for satisfying and sufficiently rewarding formal employment, meaning that both opportunity and necessity co-exist in reasons for starting-up business ventures. Similarly in 2002 in Ukraine, Aidis et al. (2006) surveyed 297 women and 81 men in four cities about why they had started their own businesses. Asked to give three reasons, they identify the co-existence of both opportunity (e.g., the desire for independence, to have one's own business) and necessity in individual entrepreneurs' motives as well as evidence that their motives change over time. Again in Ukraine, Williams et al. (2006) reveal that the majority voiced both opportunity and necessity when explaining their decision to start-up off-the-books business ventures.

The problem with using these studies to call into question the opportunity versus necessity dichotomy is that they can easily be dismissed as analyses of exceptions to the norm. Transition economies can be argued to be special cases where opportunity and necessity might well co-exist (Smallbone and Welter 2004) whilst off-the-books entrepreneurs can be argued to be anything but standard mainstream entrepreneurs. Here, therefore, the intention is to begin to resolve these problems that have so far arisen when criticising the bifurcated view that entrepreneurs are either necessity- or opportunity-driven. In this paper, firstly the western world is analysed in the form of English deprived urban neighbourhoods and secondly the focus is upon mainstream entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs.

Methods

To begin to better understand the motives of entrepreneurs in English deprived urban neighbourhoods, in 2008 and 2009, a survey of residents and follow-up in-depth interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs living in deprived urban neighbourhoods of the northern English city of Leeds. The neighbourhoods surveyed were those covered by the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI), a national programme that provides targeted funding aimed at harnessing entrepreneurship in deprived areas. The Leeds LEGI programme, entitled 'Sharing the Success', focuses on the 31 Super Output Areas (SOAs) within the city which feature in the most poorly performing 3% of SOAs nationally and encompass a population of approximately 46,000 people (DCLG 2006; Leeds City Council 2008, 2009).

A spatially stratified sampling technique was employed to select households within the LEGI area for interview (Kitchen and Tate 2001). If there were some 1000 households in an area, then the researcher called at every 10th household. If there was no response and/or an interview was refused, then the 11th household was visited, then the 9th, 12th, 8th and so on. This provided a spatially stratified sample of each district. In total 459 face-to-face interviews with working age residents were carried out. The survey obtained a representative sample of local residents. All research involves sampling as no study can include everything (Miles and Huberman 1994; Punch 2004). To generate an appropriate sample, profile data including gender, age, ethnicity; educational attainment, employment status and income, was analysed for the Leeds LEGI area. From this, a sample was devised which represented the entire population and which will enable conclusions to be drawn.

Through the completion of 459 interviews, the research is valid at a 95% confidence interval, which is suitable for social research (Bryman and Cramer 2001).

This survey of residents examined the motivations of entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs (i.e. those who would consider starting a business in future). The respondents were asked if they were currently engaged in entrepreneurial activity and if they expect to be in the future. They were also asked what their key motivations for starting a business are or would be in the future.

Respondents participating in the Leeds LEGI area survey of residents and who identified themselves as either running a business, in the process of starting a business, or expecting to start a business in the next 3 years, were contacted and asked to take part in an in-depth interview. A total of 18 in-depth interviews were undertaken between March 2009 and June 2009. A combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews were completed and the interviews were audio-taped with the respondent's consent to allow them to be fully transcribed and analysed. The approach allowed key themes to emerge from the interviews rather than being imposed by the researcher. In-depth interviews allow the entrepreneur to describe what they do, how, why, when and where (Gilmore and Carson 2007). The interviews explored in-depth the entrepreneurial motivations of the respondents and how these motivations had developed over time.

Results

Table 2 shows the number of respondents who expect to start a business, are in the process of starting a business, currently run their own, or would consider doing so in the future. It also reveals the number of people expecting to start a business or are in the process of doing so compared with GEM data on the wider regional economy and for the UK as a whole.

Those residents who own their own business, are in the process of setting one up, expect to do so or would consider doing so, were asked for their main motivations for setting up a business. Table 3 evaluates these main motivations by whether they involve an active choice (“opportunity” entrepreneurship or “pull” factors) or whether it is the best option available but not necessarily the preferred option (“necessity” entrepreneurship or “push” factors) (Bosma et al. 2008; DTI 2007; Williams 2008b). Given that individuals may cite a variety of motivations, the

Table 2 Entrepreneurship and potential entrepreneurship

	Leeds LEGI area	GEM UK	GEM Y&H
I expect to start a business in the next 3 years	5% ($n=21$)	7%	6%
I am in the process of starting a business	1% ($n=6$)	6%	6%
I run my own business	6% ($n=29$)	–	–
I would consider starting a business in the future	19% ($n=86$)		

Source: Survey of residents; Levie and Hart (2009: Tables 4 and 5)

Table 3 Key motivations for setting up a business

	Leeds LEGI area	UK household survey 'Thinkers'	UK household survey 'Doers'
Opportunity/Pull			
To be my own boss	50% (<i>n</i> =71)	75%	72%
To make more money	26% (<i>n</i> =37)	86%	70%
Freedom to adopt my own approach	22% (<i>n</i> =31)	94%	88%
To turn my hobby into a business	15% (<i>n</i> =21)	87%	34%
To challenge myself	10% (<i>n</i> =14)	57%	74%
To make my idea/innovation happen	4% (<i>n</i> =6)	69%	46%
To fill a gap in the market	4% (<i>n</i> =6)	63%	–
Necessity/Push			
Dissatisfied with job	4% (<i>n</i> =6)	28%	37%
Lack of suitable opportunities	4% (<i>n</i> =6)	9%	18%

Source: Survey of residents; DTI (2007: Tables 9, 10, 15 and 16)

respondents were permitted to provide multiple answers to the survey question. The table also compares the survey of LEGI residents with the UK government's Household Survey of Entrepreneurship data, which classifies entrepreneurs as "doers", defined as those who are currently self-employed or own a business, and "thinkers", defined as those who are not currently "doers" but who have recently thought about starting a business, buying into an existing business or becoming self-employed.

Although entrepreneurs in DUNs are often considered to be motivated by necessity, as employment opportunities are limited and therefore people have little to lose in starting their own business (Bridge et al. 2003; Lazear 2005; Potter 2004), the data presented in Table 3 shows how "opportunity" motivations are more prevalent. The key motivations were: "to be my own boss" (50%), "to make more money" (26%) and to have "the freedom to adopt my own approach to work" (22%). These motivations cited by the LEGI area residents are broadly comparable to the government's Household Survey of Entrepreneurship (DTI 2007). For "thinkers" the key motivation is the "freedom to adopt my own approach", followed by the desire to turn a hobby into a business, to make money and to be their own boss. For "doers", the key motivation is freedom, followed by the challenge, to be my own boss and to make more money.

Until now, the entrepreneurship literature has often differentiated between "necessity" entrepreneurs who are pushed into entrepreneurship because all other options are absent or unsatisfactory, and "opportunity" entrepreneurs who are pulled into entrepreneurship as they seek to exploit a perceived opportunity (Bosma et al. 2008; Maritz 2004; Smallbone and Welter 2004). In deprived areas where employment opportunities are limited, people are asserted to move into necessity entrepreneurship feeling that they have little to lose or when they have no alternatives (Bridge et al. 2003; Lazear 2005). However, this survey reveals that

dividing respondents into necessity or opportunity entrepreneurs is too simplistic to explain the motives underpinning decisions to start up businesses (Smallbone and Welter 2004; Williams and Round 2007; Williams 2008b). Indeed, when asked about their motivations, residents often cited multiple reasons for starting a business or considering starting a business. Table 4 shows the breakdown of people who stated that they had one motivation and those who stated that they had more than one entrepreneurial motivation.

As Table 4 shows, 62% of respondents stated that they had one ‘opportunity’ motivation. However, the remaining respondents cited more than one motivational factor. All of the respondents to the survey of residents who cited ‘necessity’ as a motivation, moreover, also cited ‘opportunities’. This means that while entrepreneurs in DUNs are often considered to be motivated by necessity (Bridge et al. 2003; Lazear 2005), the reality is more complex. Of the six respondents who stated that they were dissatisfied with their job, three also stated that the opportunity to make more money was a motivating factor, while two stated that they wanted the freedom to adopt their own approach and one stated that they wanted a challenge (Table 5). Of the six respondents who stated that a lack of suitable opportunities was a motivating factor, five also stated that the opportunity to make money was an entrepreneurial motivation, while one stated that they wanted a challenge (Table 5).

The in-depth interviews further examined this issue of multiple motivations. The interviews found that entrepreneurship can be triggered by simultaneously both negative experiences such as the loss of a job, and positive experiences, such as opportunity recognition or a sense of fulfilment (Acs and Kallas 2007; Friedman 1986; Sherrarden et al. 2004). The resultant finding is that the differentiation between “necessity” and “opportunity” entrepreneurs is crude and unsophisticated (Smallbone and Welter 2004; Williams and Round 2007; Williams 2008b). Many respondents stated that they had been dissatisfied with their experiences of employment, which can be a key factor in encouraging individuals to move into self-employment (Blanchflower 2000; Brockhaus 1980a, b; Brooksbank et al. 2007; Verheul et al. 2001). Of the 18 participants in in-depth interviews, 12 stated that dissatisfaction with their job or their career prospects was a motivating factor in deciding to launch an entrepreneurial venture. However, despite dissatisfaction with employment being a strong “push” factor, all 12 entrepreneurs who cited this as a factor also stated that they had seen an opportunity in the work they were doing, to turn a hobby into a business, or to give them more freedom. Therefore, the motivations could not be solely classified as ‘necessity’ or ‘opportunity’ based.

One example of this is Sarah, who runs a fashion design business while also working part-time. After leaving university, Sarah began working for a large fashion

Table 4 Single and multiple motivations of entrepreneurs

	LEGI area
One opportunity factor only	62% (<i>n</i> =88)
Two opportunity factors	19% (<i>n</i> =26)
Three opportunity factors	8% (<i>n</i> =12)
One necessity and one opportunity factor	8% (<i>n</i> =12)
Don't know	3% (<i>n</i> =4)

Source: Survey of residents

Table 5 Necessity and opportunity motivated respondents

	Dissatisfied with job	Lack of suitable opportunities
Make more money	3	5
Freedom to adopt own approach	2	0
To challenge myself	1	1
Total	6	6

Source: Survey of residents

business. After a number of years, she became dissatisfied with the progress she was making in her career and consequently decided to start up her own business. However, as she lacked the necessary finance to fund a start-up venture, Sarah decided to take on a part-time role as a receptionist for a fashion company in Leeds so that she could finance the establishment of her business and to allow her to test the market for her clothing designs. After establishing a demand for her products, Sarah felt confident that her business could succeed. At the same time, after selling some clothes to her colleagues, Sarah's employer was impressed with her work and encouraged her to build up her business while reducing her hours of employment. This provided Sarah with financial security while she tried to increase her sales. Although Sarah may appear superficially to be a necessity-driven entrepreneur, as dissatisfaction with employment acted as a "push" towards entrepreneurship, deeper analysis illustrates that this is far too simplistic. During the interview with Sarah, she repeatedly stated that she wanted to set up her own business to be more independent and to generate more income, but also to allow her to use her individual skills and talents which were not being used in her employment.

Another example is Tom who runs his own web design company. After leaving school at 16, Tom worked in a number of varied jobs around Leeds, and eventually secured a job working for a web design company. After working there for a number of years and building up his experience, Tom became frustrated with the direction of the company, and he increasingly felt that he contributed to bringing a lot of work into the organisation without experiencing any additional job satisfaction or financial benefit. Consequently, Tom decided to set up his own company, using the experience and contacts he had acquired. Tom stated that it was only when he started to look at setting up his own business that he realised how much potential work was out there that he could capitalise on.

As these experiences show, entrepreneurship in DUNs cannot be simply classified as opportunity or necessity motivated. The lived realities of the entrepreneurs show that even where necessity factors play an initial role in motivating an entrepreneur, opportunities in nearly all cases have also played a role. In common with Williams and Round (2007), the experiences of the respondents reflect the fact that entrepreneurial motivations are in reality a combination of both pull/opportunity and push/necessity factors. While dissatisfaction with employment can act as a strong "push" factor, both the survey results and in-depth interview data show that being one's own boss is a key "pull" factor which impacts on entrepreneurial motivation. As the findings uncover, the motivations of entrepreneurs in DUNs are complex and cannot be adequately explained through a simple opportunity versus

necessity dichotomy (Devins 2009; Shane 2009; Smallbone and Welter 2004; Williams and Round 2007; Williams 2008b).

The research explored how entrepreneurial motivations had evolved since this is necessary so as to understand the shifting nature of entrepreneurial intent (McGee et al. 2009; Thompson 2009). For many of the respondents interviewed, the motivation to become an entrepreneur had altered over time.

An example of this is Angela, who had thought about starting a business when she left school but had decided that she needed more life experience before she could launch her venture. After a period of time working in a variety of jobs, Angela had to leave work due to illness and then claimed Incapacity Benefit while she was unemployed for a number of years. Following a number of years out of work, Angela decided that she could launch her own venture which she hoped would allow her to maintain an appropriate work/life balance so that she could manage her illness. She then sought advice from a friend who directed her towards the Shaw Trust, which helps people with disabilities find employment opportunities. Angela was then advised to attend a Business Link seminar which was focused on getting women into self-employment. Angela stated that this seminar, and meeting other women considering self-employment, helped her make up her mind to start her own venture, and she saw an opportunity to provide physiotherapy and reflexology in the local area. Angela stated that “I then started some training in reflexology so that I could start-up [and] once I had some skills to get going I went for it.” Angela is now a self-employed physiotherapist.

A further example of motivations evolving over time is Chris. When Chris left school he worked in numerous different jobs around Leeds. Chris said that during this time he had thought about self-employment as a way of achieving job satisfaction, but had not seriously developed any plans or ideas. However, when Chris' employer made the decision to move away from Leeds, he started to more seriously consider his self-employment options and develop a plan. He decided that he did not want to continue working in the financial services industry which he had done since his early twenties as he did not want to “do the same thing for the rest of my life”. He therefore decided to launch his own landscape gardening business as he had some experience of helping out friends and had enjoyed it. Chris felt that this business would be a significant departure from his work in financial services and would allow him to “work outside and be my own boss”.

The finding that the motivation to become an entrepreneur had altered over time is consistent with research which proposes that entrepreneurial activity emerges through a number of stages (Katz and Gartner 1988; Krueger 1993; Reynolds et al. 2004; Shook et al. 2003). For example, Katz and Gartner (1988) propose that an initial stage of entrepreneurial intent is followed by a phase of assembling necessary resources; Krueger (1993) states that entrepreneurial intentions precede the search by budding entrepreneurs for business opportunities; Shook et al. (2003) posit that a four-stage process that begins with entrepreneurial intent, progresses through business opportunity searching, then a decision phase when opportunity exploitation via business start-up is decided upon, followed by a final phase of undertaking activities to set up a firm to grasp identified opportunities; while Reynolds et al. (2004) state that a sequential scheme in which intending entrepreneurs first “conceive” a business start-up idea, which then goes through a “gestation” period

of start-up processes before the actual “birth” of the “infant” firm. In common with Reynolds et al. (2004), many of the respondents stated that a gestation period from initial intention to start-up spread over a number of years.

Although the length of time taken from initially considering start-up to setting-up and the number of different stages involved can be quite considerable, the responses highlight that there is an initial stage of crystallisation in the mind of the individual that they might intend to become an entrepreneur (Shook et al. 2003; Thompson 2009). Shook et al. (2003) refer to this as the “conscious state of mind that precedes action” (p. 380). The “intentionality” of would-be entrepreneurs has been recognised as an important variable in understanding the formation of new business ventures (Katz and Gartner 1988; Krueger 2007; Thompson 2009). What occurs between this initial phase and setting up a business is extremely varied, and perhaps “the only certain stages of any start-up sequence in previously proposed models are the first and last” (Thompson 2009, p. 675).

Given the evolution of business ideas between initial desire to become self-employed to the establishment of a business venture, motivations alter over this time. As the case studies of Angela and Chris show, as well as motivations changing over time, the nature of the motivations changes with entrepreneurs moving between ‘opportunity’ and ‘necessity factors’ over time. Both entrepreneurs started to develop their business concepts out of necessity, but their motivations had become more opportunity focused over time. Angela’s experiences show that the initial motivation surfaced while she was at school, but that it was not until she had been out of work for a number of years that necessity pushed Angela into considering starting her own business as she believed it could allow her to manage her illness. However, when developing her ideas Angela saw an opportunity to provide local physiotherapy and reflexology services, as she did believe that there was latent demand. Similarly, Chris was pushed into entrepreneurship because of a geographical move made by his employer. However, he then saw an opportunity to provide landscape gardening services in the local area as he had some skills and experience in that area. Furthermore, after launching his venture, Chris stated that the opportunity to make more money had become a primary motivational factor.

These cases again highlight the limits of the simplistic opportunity/necessity dichotomy. The reality of entrepreneurial motivations is much more complex and can change several times between the initial genesis of an idea and the launch of a business venture. The evolution of motivations illustrates that the opportunity and necessity dichotomy is misleading as it categorises dichotomous forms of entrepreneurship driven solely by perceptions of their originating condition.

Conclusions

The paper has shown that entrepreneurs are often considered to be motivated by either “opportunity” (i.e. individuals who are pulled into entrepreneurship as they seek to exploit a perceived opportunity) or “necessity” (i.e. individuals who are pushed into entrepreneurship because all other options are absent or unsatisfactory) (Bosma et al. 2008; Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009; Maritz 2004; Smallbone and

Welter 2004). GEM is the predominant global survey of entrepreneurship and has used the opportunity and necessity dichotomy to analyse the prevalence of entrepreneurship, its impact on economic development and how policy can be used to harness higher levels of enterprising behaviour and business start-ups. However, the paper has shown that this opportunity versus necessity dichotomy is simplistic when describing and analysing entrepreneurial motivations.

Entrepreneurs in DUNs are often considered to be motivated by necessity, as employment opportunities are limited and therefore people have little to lose in starting their own business (Lazear 2005; Potter 2004). However, the data reported in this survey shows that this is not the case; “opportunity” motivations are more prevalent, with the motive to “be my own boss”, “to make more money” and the “freedom to adopt my own approach” being the key reasons cited by the respondents. Indeed, only 8% of respondents stated that they were motivated by “necessity”, with 4% stating they were dissatisfied with their job, and a further 4% stating that there was a lack of suitable opportunities for them. Yet, all of the respondents who cited a ‘necessity’ motivational factor also cited ‘opportunity’ factors. Indeed, the data shows that many respondents have multiple entrepreneurial motivations, including those who cite multiple ‘opportunity’ factors.

The in-depth interviews highlight the weakness of the dichotomy further still. The interviews found that entrepreneurs had multiple motivations for starting a business. The lived realities of the entrepreneurs show that motivations shift over time. Many of the respondents stated that their initial entrepreneurial motivation had become as a necessity, either because of a lack of employment opportunities or dissatisfaction, but that as they developed, launched and grew their ventures, opportunity factors became more prevalent.

The only conclusion that can be reached, therefore, is that the push-pull dualism of opportunity versus necessity entrepreneurship is simplistic. Our theoretical development is to question the validity of the opportunity versus necessity dichotomy as a means of classifying entrepreneurs. Using the originating motivations of entrepreneurs and treating them as dichotomous forms does not seem to be a valid or appropriate approach for examining entrepreneurship. The dichotomy generally privileges the opportunity entrepreneurs and denigrates necessity entrepreneurs. Yet we show in this paper firstly that this is misleading to categorise people either as opportunity and necessity. Respondents not only commonly expressed multiple motivations but the majority also possessed what might be termed temporally fluid motivations, with many asserting that their motivations had shifted over time from more necessity-driven to opportunity-driven motives. Secondly, we show clearly that motivation is just one aspect of the reasons for starting a business and is contingent on both the circumstance of the entrepreneur as well as the type of entrepreneurship in which they are engaged. It is highly unlikely that the originating motivation is itself a causal condition. Rather, our data reveal that this originating motivation is more a product of the social, economic and spatial context in which entrepreneurs find themselves and an outcome of the type of entrepreneurship available to them.

The result is that there is a need to transcend the particular representation of entrepreneurs in deprived urban neighbourhoods as always purely necessity-driven and driven by this apparently originating motivation. Until now, and grounded in

such a representation of entrepreneurs in DUNs as necessity-driven, there has been a widespread perception that it is perhaps not worthwhile developing such entrepreneurship. This study, however, reveals that most entrepreneurs in DUNs are indeed opportunity-driven and become more so over time as their business becomes more established. It also reveals that the depiction of entrepreneurs as either necessity- or opportunity-driven is too simplistic to capture lived practice and leads to both economic development as well as public policy conclusions that fails to recognise the co-presence and fluidity of these motivations in entrepreneurs' explanations. As Blackburn and Ram (2006) state, policy has advocated entrepreneurship as a key route out of economic and social exclusion, but that research needs to be shorn of the rhetoric of 'enterprise' as a broad-ranging and all-encompassing solution. A key step in doing this should be the development of better understanding of entrepreneurial motivations. The opportunity versus necessity dichotomy is inappropriate for examining the realities of entrepreneurial motivations, and what is now required is to evaluate whether this is more widely the case. If this paper encourages such wider research to be conducted, and therefore a re-thinking of the nature of entrepreneurship both in deprived neighbourhoods and other socio-spatial contexts, then it will have achieved its objective.

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