

Disadvantaged migrant entrepreneurs? The role of nationality and citizenship in realizing privilege

Richard Girling*

Abstract

'Migrants' are often depicted as lacking agency and subject to 'restrictions, limitations, and discrimination' (Benson & O'Reilly 2018: 11). This narrative, however, is largely the result of scholars' long-established tendency to focus on migration in South-to-North contexts (Dheer 2018; Ilhan-Nas 2011). Indeed, more recent studies of migration in inverse North-to-South contexts have revealed how migrants cannot be assumed to be disadvantaged and, in fact, in such contexts can become privileged. These studies, however, have largely attributed such privilege to migrants' ethnicity (Fechter 2005; Fechter & Walsh 2010; Hoang 2014; Lundstrom 2017), financial capital (Beaverstock 2002; Sklair 2012), and human capital (Vance et al. 2016). By contrast, in this paper, which comparatively analyses migrant entrepreneurs from the global North and South in the 'middle-ground' environment of Poland, it is found that privilege and disadvantage are predominantly realized by another factor, namely, migrants' nationality and citizenship. In doing so, the study not only contributes to helping fill a gap in the migrant entrepreneurship literature surrounding migration away from economically developed economies, but also helps to propel the role of nationality and citizenship into the intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; 2017) debate, subsequently complicating notions of privilege in migration research.

Keywords

Migrant entrepreneurship, ethnic entrepreneurship, privileged migration, expatriate entrepreneurship, expatpreneurs

* Richard Girling is the Head of Communications at the Migration Policy Group, a think-tank in Brussels specialising in the fields of migration, integration and anti-discrimination. He has a Ph.D. in political sociology from the University of Amsterdam and holds a First Class Honours degree from the University of Durham, UK, as well as a Masters degree from the University of Wroclaw, Poland. As a migrant entrepreneur himself, he is also the CEO and Founder of his own international digital agency which employs 10 people and services over 100 clients across the US and Europe. With a strong passion for meaningful change, Richard has held positions at several not-for-profit organizations, including the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Metropolis International and Literacy Alberni Society.

Introduction

'Migrants' are often depicted as lacking agency and as subject to 'restrictions, limitations, and discrimination' (Benson & O'Reilly 2018: 11). This narrative is, however, largely the result of scholars' almost exclusive focus on migration in South-to-North contexts (Ilhan-Nas 2011; Dheer 2018)—for example Somali migrant entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom (Ram, Theodorakopoulos, & Jones 2008). Indeed, more recent studies of migration in inverse North-to-South contexts have revealed how migrants cannot be assumed to be disadvantaged and, in fact, in such contexts can become privileged (Fechter 2005; Fechter & Walsh 2010; Hoang 2014; Lundstrom 2017). This idea, that migrants from core-states are often more privileged, is even reflected in everyday language. They are frequently referred to not as 'migrants', but instead as 'expats', which has connotations of 'whiteness' and 'privilege' (Fechter & Walsh 2010; Leonard 2016). Even within the migrant entrepreneurship literature, many scholars have employed similarly loaded nomenclature, such as 'expatpreneurs' (Selmer et al. 2018; Vance et al. 2016) or 'descending diaspora entrepreneurs' (Harima 2014). Such terms seem to position them as somehow above the position of 'migrants'. Despite such labels, it cannot be assumed that they are all privileged—there are indeed examples of 'expats' who are themselves disadvantaged (Hayes 2014), revealing that such migration can be more nuanced than we may assume. However, as will be seen in this study, on the whole it seems fair to say that the average migrant from the global North is more privileged than the average migrant from the global South. But, apart from namesake, in what ways are these 'expats' privileged? And, perhaps more importantly, how is such privilege realized?

Starting with a brief overview of the literature and methodology, this study explores this phenomenon in greater depth. In scrutinizing entrepreneurs from some of the world's wealthiest nations (Germany, USA, United Kingdom, among others) and positioning these findings against those from some of the poorest (namely, Ukraine and Belarus), the paper finds multiple variations in terms of privilege and disadvantage experienced between the two groups. To simplify the analysis, the study is divided into three (micro, meso, and macro) levels (Kloosterman 2010). Starting with the meso level, the paper will show how migrant entrepreneurs from core-states are in general granted more privileges, while those from periphery-states encounter more disadvantages. Subsequently, reasons for such variation are explored through a consideration of the migrants' micro-level resources and their interaction with the broader macro-level hierarchies. In doing so, it finds that an uneven macro-level global environment often privileges those from core-states, while subjecting those from periphery-states to a number of disadvantages. Unlike previous observations of systemic inequality, which have largely centred around the role of ethnicity (e.g. Feagin 2017; Young 2011) and gender (see Ridgeway 2004, etc.), this study foregrounds observations of inequality based on nationality and citizenship, subsequently propelling the latter into the intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; 2017) debate.

Sociology of Law

Fifty years ago, Nader (1972) noted a reluctance among anthropologists to study 'up'. Even today this observation still seems to ring true (Aguiar 2012; Gusterson 1997), particularly in the field of migrant entrepreneurship. In a review of migrant entrepreneurship, Dheer (2018) found that, out of 69 studies, all of them analysed migration in South-to-North migratory contexts. Within contexts where migrants are moving from relatively economically disadvantaged areas, it is perhaps unsurprising that many of them have been found to be disadvantaged in relation to the native population in their new economically dominant host country (Clark & Drinkwater 2010; Johnson 2000; Light 1979).

Studies which ventured outside core-states and which, for example, explored migration in the semi-periphery context of Poland, have done so in (semi)-periphery-to-semi-periphery contexts, examining migration from Ukraine (Andrejuk 2018; 2019; Borkowski et al. 2021), Vietnam (Andrejuk 2016; Brzozowska & Glinka 2019; Brzozowska & Postula 2014; Tien 2019; 2021) and China (Andrejuk & Oleksiyenko 2018; Bashko 2021; Brzozowska 2018). This trend is echoed outside of Poland as well, with scholars focusing on South-to-South contexts (Hamid 2020; Lugosi et al. 2019; Shinnar & Zamantili nayir 2019). Impor-

tantly, such an overwhelming 'downward' focus on migration in relatively disadvantaged contexts may be creating 'somewhat skewed notions of who migrants are' (Fechter & Walsh 2010: 1198).

In a North-to-South context, the studied phenomenon often constitutes 'return migration' where migrants turn to their country of origin (Crush & Ramachandran 2017; Krasniki 2019; Mombeuil et al. 2021). By contrast, only a fraction of studies explore the dynamics of North-to-South migration (see Andrejuk 2017; Brzozowski 2021; Harima 2014) in the form of what has been labeled as 'expatpreneurs' (Vance et al. 2016) or 'descending diaspora entrepreneurs' (Harima 2014). And even those studies which have explored this phenomenon have not explicitly honed in on the ways in which the migrant entrepreneurs are privileged, nor how exactly such privileges are realized (with the exception of Vance et al. (2016) who attributes the privilege of 'expatpreneurs' to their supposedly higher levels of human capital).

However, there has been more progress in migration studies, notably in the field of 'lifestyle migration'. In this area, scholars have often focused on the topic of white privilege and how Western white migrants in postcolonial societies become the 'visible other', thereby inheriting a set of largely positive connotations (Fechter 2005; Fechter & Walsh 2010; Hoang 2014; Lundström 2017). A secondary factor underlying migrants' relative privilege has been found to be variations in migrants' levels of financial capital (see Beaverstock's 2002 study of 'super rich transnational elites' or the 'transnational capitalist class' outlined by Sklair (2012)).

What has been less explored is core-state migrants who are not overtly privileged in terms of financial or human capital and, by contrast, who find themselves within a 'white-on-white' context. Without ethnicity or financial capital to highlight their core-state origins, do they retain similar levels of privilege? And, if so, how is privilege realized?

Methodology

This study is part of a wider dataset collected by the author between 2017 to 2020, but for the purposes of this paper focuses exclusively on the data relating to migrants' variation in terms of privilege and disadvantage. The study adopts a qualitative, comparative, exploratory approach with the fieldwork taking place between October 2018 and May 2020. The primary data set stems from 65 qualitative interviews with 41 migrant entrepreneurs from core-states (United Kingdom, USA, Italy, France, Germany, Ireland, Finland, Portugal, Canada, Australia, and Israel) and 24 from periphery-states (Ukraine, Belarus, India, Nigeria, and South Africa).

Wroclaw, Poland's fourth largest city, was selected as the location of the study for three main reasons. First, in line with the city's self-promoted slogan of being 'the meeting place', it is a city in which East meets West, offering a plentiful supply of migrants from neighbouring countries in the East (in particular Ukraine and Belarus) and - more recently - migrants from neighbouring countries in the West (in particular Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and the United Kingdom). Second, Wroclaw has one of the highest rates of migrant entrepreneurship within the OECD (Nestorowicz 2012). Third, with a GDP of \$15,595, ranked 63rd in the world (World Bank 2019), Poland neither belongs to the group of core-states, nor periphery-states. As a result of this middle-ground status, for those coming from periphery-states, it is relatively more economically developed, while for those coming from core-states, it is relatively less economically developed. Thus, to borrow the language of Harima (2014), it is a location in which both 'ascending' and 'descending' migrant entrepreneurs can both be found. At this point, however, it should be noted that, despite constituting an 'inbetween' environment, it is by no means neutral, as it comes with its own unique composition of societal attitudes, identity, and historical context (Galbraith 2004; Mayblin, Piekut & Valentine 2016) which all undoubtedly play a role in how migrant entrepreneurs' micro-level resources interact with Polish society.

Importantly, despite the two subject groups' variation in terms of originating from core or periphery nation-states, they shared similar levels of resources on a micro-level. In

terms of human capital, over 80% of participants from both groups possessed some level of university education. In terms of financial capital, despite some intra-group variation, most participants did not demonstrate significant access to financial capital. Moreover, in terms of social and cultural capital, the participants had similar levels, albeit there was variation in terms of the origin of this capital with those from core-states more likely to possess cultural and social capital from such regions. Conversely, those from periphery-states had more cultural and social capital with periphery-state origins.

The participants were asked a range of open-ended questions about their lives, businesses, and experiences in Poland.¹ All interviews were transcribed and codified according to organizational categories. Such categories 'function primarily as abstract 'bins' for sorting the data for further analysis' (Maxwell & Chmiel 2014: 25). With regard to the migrants' privileges and disadvantages, which are the focus of this particular paper, these categories included: i. Social prestige; ii. Language prestige; iii. The ability to find well-paid employment; iv. The cost of labour; v. International mobility; vi. Access to core-state markets; and vii. A feeling of security within one's home country.

Throughout the research, the study made use of constant comparison. This worked hand-in-hand with coding, whereby at certain times comparison came first and helped to develop codes, whereas at other times participants were compared according to the codes which had been created. For example, with regard to migrants' privileges, one interviewee stated that they can charge higher fees solely because they are from a core-state. This statement was then compared to other core-state interviewees' responses to see if it was part of a wider trend within the group. At this point, the statement became a category which was then compared to the responses of the other subject group. In other words, data was compared on two distinct levels: intra-group and inter-group. Additionally, there was also a third, theoretical level on which the comparison took place; the experiences of the participants were also compared to the wider theoretical landscape.

In order to complement the data gathered from the two subject groups, additional information was also collected from a range of other sources. This consisted of qualitative interviews with almost one dozen local organizations which have regular contact with migrants and migrant entrepreneurs, such as the City of Wroclaw, various chambers of commerce, as well as a number of NGOs. It also included a collection of posts from a number of online 'expat' Facebook groups (e.g. 'Wroclaw expats') and news outlets (e.g. 'WroclawUncut.com' and 'NotesfromPoland.com'). These alternative sources also have the benefit of improving the validity of the study, as themes uncovered in the primary data (interviews) could later be triangulated with the secondary data (Creswell 2003).

Finally, the author should acknowledge their own positionality in relation to the research. The author is a core-(semi)-periphery migrant entrepreneur, having migrated from the United Kingdom to Poland and set up a business. While recognizing that this pre-existing knowledge can lead to certain biases and preferences, it can also benefit the study in terms of: firstly, enriching sociological observations with first-hand 'life experiences' and 'situational familiarity' (Riemer 1972: 467); secondly, helping to build a connection with the interviewees who are subsequently more open to answering questions honestly; and thirdly, helping to understand and demonstrate the cultural background in which migrant entrepreneurs - the study's participants - live and work. With regard to the last point, there is also a pragmatic component, as the author now speaks and understands a relatively high level of Polish, which proved to be helpful in terms of data collection.

Findings

Meso-level variations in privilege and disadvantage

Migrant entrepreneurs from the core-states subject group were found to often benefit from a number of privileges, including: i. Social prestige; ii. Language prestige; iii. A greater ability to find well-paid employment; iv. Higher wages within the mainstream labour market; v. Greater international mobility; vi. A feeling of security within their home country. Those from the periphery-states subject group, by contrast, often experienced disadvantage in these areas. A summary of these findings is provided in Table 1.1 with more detailed descriptions of these findings further below.

¹ It should be noted that all data has been collected and published with the explicit permission of the participants, as well as being securely stored and written-up in a manner protecting their identity (for example, using aliases and changing other characteristics that might reveal their identity).

Table 1.1. Disadvantage and privilege: Core vs. periphery subject group comparison

Parameter	Core-states subject group	Periphery-states subject group
Social prestige of core-state cultural capital	Often spoke of benefiting from social prestige.	Frequent stories of discrimination.
Prestige of core-state languages	Core-state languages tolerated or even admired. Economically in-demand.	Periphery-state languages less admired. Migrants often expected to learn Polish.
The ability to find well-paid employment	Migrants often left well-paid employment to start their businesses (i.e. finding well-paid employment was relatively easy).	Migrants often found starting their own business to be a better paid alternative than a job within the mainstream labour market.
Cost of labour	Spoke of how labour from core-states costs more.	Spoke of how labour from periphery-states costs less.
International mobility	Rarely spoke of barriers to international mobility.	Migrants often spoke of visa issues. Poland was often chosen as a 'second choice', because obtaining work and residency permits was easier than for their first choice (core-states such as Germany).
Feeling of security within home country	Home country considered safe and with rule-of-law.	Frequent stories of war and the lack of rule-of-law in home country.

Source: Data gathered from this study. Note: This information represents the general trends, but there were, of course, exceptions and variations within both subject groups.

i. Social prestige of core-state cultural capital

Foreigners living in Poland will have experienced various reactions to having decided to live here: You're from New York, wow! London? Cool! France? Nice place? Spain – great language. But also: Russia? This is a free country now, luckily. Ukraine? Oh. Turkey? Are you an Arab? I hope you are not a terrorist. Armenia? Where's that? Can you see the difference? The west is the best, the east is the beast. (Bobby Chopper WroclawExpats.com)

This quote, 'the west is the best, the east is the beast', was published in an article on WroclawExpats.com,² a website offering third party services to 'expats' in Wroclaw. Far from the author being racist or prejudiced against those from the East, they were attempting to draw readers' attention to the (unfair) difference in reception which awaits foreigners in Wroclaw. This idea, that how people in Wroclaw are treated is influenced by their location of origin, was also evident in the words of many of the migrant entrepreneurs I interviewed. See, for example, Stuart's case:

There's still a sort of mentality that when you're from the West, you're sort of somehow better. When you're from the East, you're somehow worse. (Stuart, British migrant, IT entrepreneur)

It is interesting to see that Stuart, despite being part of an ethnic minority, is considered to have a positive standing within society, which challenges the often-assumed correlation between minority groups and discrimination (Lundstrom 2017). However, as can be seen, such a correlation for those from the 'East' remains prevalent. Indeed, in addition to reports in the news of xenophobic attacks on Ukrainians,³ many migrant entrepreneurs from periphery-states spoke of negative treatment based on their nationality. One such example is Danilo:

On Facebook one [Polish person] wrote 'there are too many Ukrainians! Why are you coming still?' (Danilo, Ukraine, construction company)

It seems that while Stuart (and those from core-states) are often viewed in a positive way, Danilo (and many others from periphery-states) experience quite the opposite. Migrants, within the environment of Wroclaw, thus appear to be subject to a variation in social standing, granted to its owners solely 'by accident of birth' (Benson & O'Reilly 2018: 120). Such variation in social standing can have real implications for migrant entrepreneurs and their businesses, for example in terms of the value of their labour, to which we now turn below.

² Wroclawexpats.com accessed in 2018, although the blog is no longer online: <http://wroclawexpats.com/2018/04/expats-migrants-or-wroclawians/>

³ Author unknown (2019). Man arrested for xenophobic attack on 2 ukrainians. Wroclaw Uncut (2019). Retrieved 5/5/2019 from <https://wroclawuncut.com/2019/03/27/man-arrested-for-xenophobic-attack-on-two-ukrainian-citizens/>

ii. Cost of labour

Originating from a core-state is often associated with higher levels of trust, quality, and, subsequently, value. For example, Mattheus explains how by virtue of being from Germany, his services are viewed as somehow more valuable:

I still get to charge more because I'm German. Not because I'm better than anyone else, but because I'm from the West. I have immediately a different standing somehow...Racism [laugh]. It's racism that I benefit from, because there is in Poland a subtle sense of inferiority towards England and Germany and France and so on and, if you come from those places, and don't have dark skin, you immediately have more authority somehow. It helped me. 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, education consultancy)

Mattheus, due to his German cultural capital, is the benefactor of significant advantages within Wrocław - namely, the ability to charge more - which directly benefits his business. However, such benefits were not restricted to a local level. Cultural capital is valued by clients internationally. In the words of Seamus, who is originally from Ireland: 'Being Irish, there is a higher level of trust.' Seamus has been able to leverage this core-state cultural capital of appearing more trustworthy to acquire international clients. His case was also not unusual; other core-state participants also used their cultural capital to advance their business. As such, it illustrates how certain forms of cultural capital are 'transnationally acknowledged' and 'associated with high standards worldwide' (Weiss 2005: 722). Conversely, (semi-)periphery cultural capital is often associated with lower standards and less trust. Indeed, this appears to be the case for Artem from Belarus who describes his experience at border crossings:

I see it at the border, when you're Russian or Ukrainian, they check it [your passport] slowly, or doubt that you're fair. And if you're American, they just hurry to check you. (Artem, Belarus, translation)

Therefore, for Artem, coming from Russia or Ukraine has connotations of untrustworthiness. Such beliefs add to the general picture that those from periphery-states have a disadvantaged social standing and lesser cultural capital.⁴

4 There were, however, a small number of exceptions whereby the origin of the migrants' cultural capital did not always correspond with the paradigm of 'core = positive' and 'periphery = negative'. For example, Mario (Italy) said that he had to provide a double deposit for his restaurant location, because the Polish landlord heard his Italian accent. Furthermore, several migrants from Ukraine stated that they have been treated well in Poland.

iii. Language prestige

Walter (United Kingdom) has been living in Poland for over a decade. Unlike many other migrants from the core-states subject group, he has been able to acquire a reasonable level of Polish. Historically, this would usually be welcomed by many Poles, who often viewed his attempts at learning the language as 'cute' and a novelty that someone from England would learn Polish, when it is usually reversed. Yet, more recently when he has been speaking Polish in public, his non-native accent has been interpreted as Ukrainian. Walter speaks, below, about the completely different reaction this is often accompanied by:

If you're British, at least up until recently, you were kind of given privilege status. So if you go to McDonalds and say 'hi can I have two big macs', 'oh yes of course', whatever. But if you were to speak in Polish to them, nowadays they may mistake you for being Ukrainian as has happened to me and they treat you like shit. (Walter, UK, English language school)

Language then, it seems, is being used as a signifier of nationality. Speaking English appears to align migrants with core-states, which then is attached to a higher level of social standing. Speaking periphery-state languages, by contrast, or speaking Polish with an accent which could be interpreted as originating from periphery-states, seems to correspondingly subject migrants to various disadvantages.

This privileged status of core-state languages is also visible when walking around the city centre. On most streets, banners advertise English (and also often French, German,

Spanish and Italian) language schools. Walter, as the owner of an English language school, directly benefits from this demand for core-state languages. However, he is not the only one who benefits, as will now be seen below.

iv. The ability to find well-paid employment

For those who can speak core-state languages, finding well-paid employment in Wrocław seems relatively easy. For example, Paul from the USA, could not find employment in Paris, but in Wrocław his experience was different:

I was in Paris...and I applied to like probably seventy different places over a nine month period and I received one phone call...I came out here [to Wrocław] and... I put out my CV to five companies and within the same week I got five phone calls. (Paul, USA, coffee roasting company owner)

Paul's ability to easily find well-paid employment as a result of his core-state language skills, when combined with the positive social standing which accompanies such languages, reveals how within the semi-periphery environment of Wrocław 'English-speaking Westerners can convert their native language proficiency, as hegemonic linguistic and cultural capital, into symbolic prestige and economic and social capital' (Lan 2011: 1670).

The experiences of those from periphery-states is, however, often quite different. Aleksander (Ukraine) is a good example. After his café in Wrocław went bankrupt, he could only find relatively low paying work as a waiter, despite possessing a PhD. Why did Paul find it easy to obtain high paid employment, whereas Aleksander did not? It appears that the answer does not relate to their education level, but rather, to their cultural (specifically, linguistic) capital. Put simply, Paul speaks a core-state language (English), whereas Aleksander does not. Indeed, Aleksander highlights this idea when he talks about his partner who 'is a German linguist, so careerwise it's easier for her.' Here, it seems that Aleksander's partner, as well as many others from the periphery-states subject group who speak core-state languages, found it much easier to obtain well-paid employment in the mainstream labour market. Within an environment where core-state languages have a higher value both socially and economically, it is perhaps unsurprising that only 14.6% of the migrant entrepreneurs from the core-states subject group have learned Polish. Indeed, this ability to migrate to a new country, not learn the host country language, and still retain a high standing within society, points to the imperialistic undertones of such migration (Croucher 2009: 484).

v. Feeling of security within the country of origin

The 'starting point' of migrant entrepreneurs - that is, their home countries - were found to vary between the two subject groups in terms of the economic and politico-institutional environment. While those from core-states were usually (but not always) born into politically and economically 'safe' environments, those from periphery-states were, on the whole, born into economically deprived and unsafe environments, often lacking 'rule-of-law'. Szymon from Ukraine speaks to this:

I'm a person who saw in my life such things, you know, I saw war, I saw dead people...I would never wish for someone to see these things. Because in my opinion I'm a lucky person, I have family, my family has some amount of money. But I know a lot of my friends, a lot of people there who didn't have this. [They] do not live anymore, because the first day of war they go to war and [they died]. A lot of friends I lost in this war. (Szymon, Ukraine, delivery company)

Such variation was often found to provide a strong motivation for those from the periphery-states subject group to emigrate. Furthermore, regardless of their motivations for migrating, the ability to do so was found to vary between the two groups, as shown below.

vi. *International mobility*

The privileges outlined so far are all somewhat ‘unofficial’. Yet, importantly, such variation in privileges can also be formally underwritten by governmental (and non-governmental) actors. Anna from the USA, for example, speaks below about her comparative freedom of movement:

As an American it’s super easy. We don’t have to have a visa. We just have to have a passport. You don’t have to have a way of working. I mean, technically you should be doing it on a working visa, right, you shouldn’t be doing this on a tourist visa, but you can. They don’t check. That’s a problem for your own immigration problems. But literally I could land tomorrow and go into urząd miejski [the government office] and I could be a business owner. (Anna, USA, arts & crafts store)

The above quote reveals the privileged mobility which Anna enjoys. Despite being from outside the European Union, she can easily move to Poland and set up a business. Indeed, this freedom of mobility for those from core-states seems to apply not only to traveling to Poland, but to many other locations around the world. Gabriel (France), for example, plans to live ‘half the year in Asia and half the year in Europe’, a desire he expresses without ever considering visa restrictions. As such, Gabriel and Anna (as well as many others from core-states⁵) demonstrate how certain groups seem able to migrate across political borders with ease (Benson & O’Reilly 2018; Lundstrom 2017; Sklair 2012).

However, for those from periphery-states, freedom of movement often looks quite different. Andriy (Ukraine) and his wife, for example, wanted to move to Barcelona, but due to visa restrictions they could not. They decided to settle in Poland to obtain Polish citizenship, and take advantage of the freedom of movement within the Schengen area to move to Barcelona. In this sense, they seem to have adopted a kind of international stepwise migration (Paul 2011; Zijlstra 2020), essentially taking the ‘long way’ to their desired destination as a result of lacking the privileged mobility of many of their counterparts from core-states. The variation in legal mobility of migrants as a result of their country of origin is, in essence, a form of formally underwritten discrimination.

Regulations which treat people differently based on their nationality does not only stem from nation-states, but also from the private sector. According to Bruce (Australia), for example, companies such as PayPal restrict who can and cannot open an online account solely based on an individual’s nationality. It is, apparently, common practice for firms to block all new signups coming from IP addresses in countries such as Nigeria. Even today, at the time of writing, PayPal does not allow people in Ukraine to withdraw money to Ukrainian bank accounts.⁶ Migrants from periphery-states, in other words, are not only disadvantaged by the public sector, but also the private sector.

Meso-level variations in privilege and disadvantage

The key question then becomes: Why do such variations in privilege and disadvantage exist? As noted in the literature review, other studies of core-to-(semi-)periphery migration have frequently attributed migrants’ privileges to variations in financial capital (Beaverstock 2002; Sklair 2012), human capital (Vance et al. 2016), or ethnicity (Fechter 2005; Hoang 2014; Lundstrom 2017). The two subject groups in this study, however, are in a predominantly ‘white-on-white’ context and, moreover, demonstrate relatively little variation in terms of human and financial capital. Despite this, migrants from core-states, as seen above, manage to retain their ‘invisible package of unearned privileges’ (Mcintosh 1988). So, how, in the context of this study, is privilege and disadvantage realized? The answer, it is proposed, lies in the variation in the origin of migrants’ social and cultural capital and, importantly, how such capital interacts within broader - and uneven - macro-level cultural hierarchies. This happens through the dual process of, first, migrants, in lieu of race/ethnicity, employing other methods to mark their core-state origins; and second, such origins being interpreted by others as positive. With regard to the former, these methods include referring to themselves not as ‘migrants’, but instead as ‘expats’ (Cranston 2017; Koutonin 2015), as well as attending ‘expat meetups.’⁷ This supports other authors’ findings that

5 There was, however, one exception. Dave from Canada had an issue with his visa and was subsequently arrested.

6 This statement is supported by my conversations with Ukrainians in Wrocław, as well as third party news articles, e.g. Kyiv Post (2019).

7 For example, monthly InterNations events, as well as the weekly ‘Tower of Babel’ (2019) international meetup and Facebook group.

observed how migrants from economically developed countries often centre around certain 'elite' spaces, reinforcing their cultural supremacy (Lundstrom 2017; Piekut 2003). Yet, the ability of core-state capital to lead to privileges is only possible when the capital is situated within macro-level hierarchies which favour such capital. We can now turn to the role of these hierarchies.

Cultural hierarchies

As seen in previous sections, certain cultures seem to be valued above others in Wrocław. This, by definition, constitutes a cultural hierarchy. The presence of cultural hierarchies provides a mechanism to explain how variations in privilege occur, despite both subject groups predominantly sharing the same race and having relatively equal levels of resources. What seems to be playing the key role here is the migrants' nationality and their subsequent cultural capital. For example, let us return to the case of Walter (UK). As the owner of an English language school, he is one of many British and American entrepreneurs within the 'education' sector meeting the strong local demand for English language instruction. Ukrainian language schools, by contrast, are much harder to find.⁸ In other words, it seems that local cultural hierarchies (on a macro level) appear to be creating opportunity structures (on a meso level) for certain languages, such as English, which are then acted on by migrant entrepreneurs (on a micro level). Importantly, migrants' ability to act on such opportunities depends not just on their motivation to do so, but also their access to the necessary resources. In this case, Walter, by virtue of being born and raised in the UK, has acquired certain cultural capital which now, in the environment of Wrocław, seems to take on structurally imposed value (Coleman 1988), subsequently becoming desirable and economically valuable.

⁸ This statement is supported by the fact that out of 292 Ukrainian sole proprietorships, only 11 of them were in the 'education' sector.

Conversely, the experiences of those from periphery-states differ significantly. Within such cultural hierarchies, their cultural capital can take on connotations of lower value,⁹ with those from periphery-states being seen, in the semi-periphery environment of Wrocław, as 'cheap labour'. Yet, within their own countries, their cultural capital may have had more value. Andriy was a lawyer in Ukraine with a degree from a well-respected Ukrainian university; he is fluent in Russian and Ukrainian, and hence had a good social standing in Kiev. However, in Wrocław, this cultural capital seems to have little value. In such situations, migrants can attempt to convert their social and cultural capital into 'universally understood cultural currency' (Weiss 2005: 720; Erel 2010). In the case of Andriy, he has considered getting his law degree officially recognized in Poland; however, it would involve undertaking a university degree for two to three years. Choosing between going back to university and opening a café, the latter seemed like the preferable option for him.

⁹ However, it has also been noted that, within certain (semi-)periphery ethnic groups, shared cultural capital can have certain in-group benefits (Vershina & Rogers 2020).

Cultural hierarchies across space

Andriy's situation highlights how the same forms of cultural capital can take on different values in different spaces. This is also demonstrated by Josh who explains in a strong cockney accent how his standing in society has also changed since moving to Wrocław, albeit for better:

I'm a native English guy. I'm sure you've experienced that. Even with women there is always an appeal, they notice the excitement of a foreigner, or an English guy, more and more people telling you they like your accent...I feel like superman in Smallville... In the UK, I would never be able to get as many good opportunities as I do here in Poland. For example, Forbes magazine has asked to interview me, but in England they wouldn't give a shit about me. (Josh, United Kingdom, English language school and investor relations business)

Josh did not have as many opportunities in the United Kingdom as he now has in Poland. In the UK, his cockney accent is often associated with lower socioeconomic status (Giles & Sassoon 1983) which also highlights the various 'shades of white' present in British society (Halej 2015: 45). Yet, upon migrating to Poland, Josh's British cultural capital suddenly became interpreted as something extremely positive, resulting in him feeling 'like Superman

in Smallville'. In other words, he was able to take advantage of the positive standing of British culture within Poland, while simultaneously discarding the more nuanced negative interpretations of the specific standing of his own accent and class within British society. At this point, I would like to reflect on the notion of 'geoarbitrage' (Hayes 2014), which has been used in the context of migrants who geographically relocate in order to increase their relative economic standing. Josh's situation highlights a new, cultural component to geoarbitrage, in which migrants can also alter their relative cultural standing. Indeed, this idea, that cultural capital can be interpreted differently across space, is further reinforced by Dave from Canada who explained how his social prestige in Poland diverged from that in Indonesia:

Some countries as a westerner you do get a prestige bump, but I don't feel that strongly in Poland, not like in Indonesia where you're a white guy and a rockstar. (Dave, Canada, real estate company owner).

For Dave, traveling to Indonesia means an even greater increase in social prestige, enhanced by his race in a postcolonial context. As such, it reveals how migrants like Dave, Josh, and Andriy 'do not only cross national borders but also move between different sets of social classification systems that are tied to local, national and transnational hierarchies' (Kusow 2006, as cited in Lundstrom 2017: 82). Subsequently, the value of migrants' cultural capital must be determined according to the cultural hierarchies within which they are situated, recognising that these hierarchies (and, therefore, the value of certain forms of cultural capital) can, and do, vary across space (Harris et al. 2017; Weiss 2005).

Despite this variation, certain cultural hierarchies seem more pervasive than others. As seen previously, various forms of core-state cultural capital seem to be valued not only within Wroclaw, but also internationally. For example, it was previously demonstrated how core-state cultural capital seems to grant its beholders greater levels of trust in international contexts and is 'associated with high standards worldwide' (Weiss 2015: 722). This is supported by other studies which have likewise shown how core-state cultural capital is often positively interpreted in a range of other environments, including Hong Kong (Findlay et al. 1996), Jakarta (Fechter 2005), Singapore (Beaverstock 2002), and a number of former Soviet republics (Vershina & Rogers 2020). In other words, despite variation of cultural hierarchies on a local level, such variation seems to take place within broader, global hierarchies.

Cultural hierarchies across time

Not only can cultural hierarchies vary across space, but they can also vary across time. Paul (USA) is one of the few migrants of colour in this study. Below, he talks about how being of colour in Wroclaw used to be perceived as positive, yet has changed in recent years:

About two-three years ago, well no, before the new government came in, I was exotic. After the government came in...on the street, I'm a foreigner...My daughter and I have a code word for alcoholics or street people, so that I can get on the other side, we call them 'ZELFS'. That's just the secret word. So basically on a couple of occasions I've had a ZELF come up to me and ask me for a cigarette and I look mediterranean, I look like an Arab, if I say 'no', I've had a couple people shout 'Alu Akbar' at me. (Paul, USA, coffee roasting company owner)

The environment in Wroclaw is, according to Paul, becoming increasingly hostile to people who look like they might originate from the Middle East. Paul's ethnicity used to be interpreted as 'exotic' and was bestowed with positive meaning within local cultural hierarchies. However, within an increasingly Islamophobic society, against the backdrop of a government promoting white, European, and Catholic as the epitome of a 'good Polish citizen'—something that itself is ironic given Poland's rich history of multi-ethnicity (Balogun 2018)—Paul is increasingly categorized as the undesirable 'Other'. Ignoring the reasons for why this is happening, the point here is how cultural hierarchies are changing over time. Indeed, because ethnicity and religion are social constructs, they are inherently fluid and subject to change (Garner 2006; Murguía & Forman 2003). This is however not

a new concept. In the USA, historians have reminded us that the relative positioning of ethnic groups within cultural hierarchies has been changing and evolving constantly over time. In the nineteenth century, Irish, Jewish, Italian, and Slavic migrants were at first often treated as inferior and were subjected to discrimination (Jacobson 2001; Roediger 2006). This then began to change as these ethnic groups progressively moved up in cultural hierarchies during the course of the twentieth century. A similar trend was observed in the context of Irish migration to the UK (McDowell 2009). Clearly, such cultural hierarchies have been present and evolving for hundreds of years, and have been underpinned by various additional macro layers, which will be discussed in further detail in the section below.

The role of other layers of the macro environment

We now turn to three additional layers (politico-institutional, economic, and technological) of the macro environment which reinforce the aforementioned cultural hierarchies. First, in terms of the politico-institutional layer, as seen previously in this chapter, migrants from periphery-states often face a number of restrictions which are formally underwritten by both the public and private sectors. These restrictions highlight how governments and organizations play a role in converting citizenship into a hierarchical structure. For example, passports themselves have no objective difference; however, when positioned within politico-institutional environments, they can take on structurally imposed value. '[C]itizenship...is only graspable through how it is actually animated in life, through individual subjects, communities, organizations and state-making actors' (Fogelman 2018: 168). In other words, through a lottery of birthplace, migrants' micro level cultural capital appears to interact differently within an uneven (and unfair) international politico-institutional environment, resulting in variations on a meso level in migrants' privileges and disadvantages. Variations also occur within the subject groups. Those from the European Union inherit certain membership advantages; however, certain bilateral agreements (for example that between Poland and the US which allows American citizens to set up their own company in Poland) can re-establish the institutional privilege of those from core-states outside of the EU. Citizenship is 'a construct designed to protect the dominant group' (Choules 2006: 288). Therefore, it is not surprising that core-state citizens—on a global level—often receive unearned privileges. Accordingly, shining a light on the privileged politico-institutional mobility of migrants from core-states offers 'a way to better highlight the nature and implications of global inequality' (Croucher 2012: 2).

Second, an economic layer of the macro environment also plays a role. Migrants operate within an uneven, global, economic environment in which wealth seems to be concentrated in certain areas within core-states. Although this rarely resulted in corresponding high levels of financial capital among migrants from the core-state subject group, it still provides an important layer of the macro environment within which migrant entrepreneurs operate, and which can subsequently help to explain the variations in migrants' relative levels of disadvantage and privilege. The uneven socio-cultural and politico-institutional environments observed above are, fundamentally, built on a foundation of economic disparity. For example, citizenship privilege, argues Choules (2006: 285), exists 'largely because of the disparity in wealth between countries'. In other words, wealth creates power and power creates wealth: the one reinforces the other (Hickel 2017). Moreover, this macro level variation in wealth across the globe can also privilege (or disadvantage) migrants even before they migrate. The variation in earning potential between the home and host countries often underpinned participants' motivation to migrate from periphery-states to core-states. Low income in periphery-states (combined with unsafe politico-institutional environments) provides a strong incentive for migrants to relocate to more affluent, stable areas (Faist 2000). Conversely, most of the migrants from the core-states subject group were found to move primarily for non-economic factors, suggesting that their migration is more about volition rather than (economic) necessity. In other words, migrants' motivations also seem to reflect the unequal global structures, revealing how certain types of migration are more privileged than others.

Top down or bottom up? Micro-level agency

At this point, it should be addressed how, so far, cultural hierarchies have been portrayed within this paper as being 'top-down', with migrants seemingly powerless to control how their various forms of cultural capital are valued (or devalued) within them. Yet, importantly, migrant entrepreneurs play an active role in the (re)production, as well as in the destruction of such hierarchies. According to Halej's (2015) study, migrants often adapt their cultural capital in order to raise their social standing within cultural hierarchies rather than attempting to change the macro level hierarchies. Halej (2015) explores how Central and Eastern European migrants deliberately demonstrated behaviours commonly attributed to mainstream British society in order to raise their perceived status within British cultural hierarchies. A similar pattern emerged in this study as well. Several of my colleagues from Turkey and Afghanistan, who are also residing in Wroclaw, explained how it is common for them to tell local Polish people that they are from Italy or Cyprus. This is a habit they acquired in order to avoid negative reactions. In other words, by changing their location of origin, they move 'up' cultural and religious hierarchies in the eyes of the Polish people whom they are speaking with. In doing so, their micro-level behaviour 'lights up' the presence of broader structures (Duneier et al. 2014: 7), revealing the presence of cultural hierarchies and, in this case, islamophobia within Poland. Yet, their actions to overcome these structures simultaneously feed 'back into constituting them' (Duneier & Molotoch 1999: 1291).

While it may come as a surprise that migrants from periphery-states reproduce cultural hierarchies which disadvantage them, it should come as no surprise that these hierarchies are also reproduced by migrants who are privileged by them. Let us return to the example of Walter (UK) and his English language school in Wroclaw. By providing English language instruction, he is reinforcing existing cultural hierarchies in three ways. First, he is part of an English-as-a-native-speaker demographic which is paid more money to teach English than non-native speakers, subsequently creating a 'misconception that teaching English is better carried out by native speakers' despite there being strong evidence that being a native speaker does not always equate to being a good teacher (Guo & Beckett 2007: 120). Second, by spreading the proliferation of the English language, he is 'contributing to neocolonialism by empowering the already powerful and leaving the disadvantaged further behind' (Guo & Beckett 2007: 117). Third, by promoting the English language, he is not only increasing the standing of the language within the world, but also Anglocentric culture in general (Guo & Beckett 2007: 124). Additionally, in reinforcing the position of the English language, Walter simultaneously - albeit largely unconsciously - bolsters the demand for his school's services.

Discussion

What will we do with such knowledge? ... it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrary awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base. (McIntosh 1988: 36)

When recognizing the systemic privilege and disadvantage created by one's position within an uneven global environment, we have to ask ourselves, in the words of McIntosh: 'what will we do with such knowledge?' Those interested in promoting the ideals of fairness and equality would likely agree that we, especially those of us who benefit from such systemic inequality, have a responsibility to use this knowledge to help make the world a fairer place. While making the decision to act is easy, how one can make a difference in reality, in the face of such powerful, yet intangible, global hierarchies, is another question altogether. As a starting point, Choules (2006: 288) suggests we could, 'seriously consider renouncing the politico-legal construct of citizenship'. Indeed, tackling laws which treat people differently based on citizenship or nationality would at least remove any legal fortification of citizenship privilege. However, even if such an ambitious plan could be achieved, it is likely that the cultural hierarchies, which such laws were created to reinforce, would remain. How, then, can these underlying hierarchies be tackled? As scholars, perhaps one of the best contributions we can make is to simply document the existence

of such structures and how they function. After all, awareness of a problem is usually the first step toward solving it. The collection of authors listed in this paper have made an excellent start in terms of documenting privileges and disadvantages assigned from migrants' and migrant entrepreneurs' global-embeddedness. There remains, however, a multitude of other professions, sectors, and additional areas of research to explore. Here, scholars might consider how one's nationality contributes to the success or failure of 'regular' employees or those who have not migrated. What role, for example, does nationality play in the success of a Dutch academic within the Netherlands? Or of a Polish police officer within Poland? And how does citizenship, nationality, and one's global-embeddedness interact with other aspects of intersectionality, such as gender and ethnicity?

Lastly, we should remember that the macro hierarchies discussed in this paper only became visible through the micro-level analysis of those who benefit from such hierarchies. This in itself forces us to ponder what else might be 'lit up' (Duneier 2014: 7) via the act of studying 'up' (Aguilar 2012; Gusterson 1997; Nader 1972). We - quite justifiably - write paper upon paper about 'the poor, the ethnic groups, the disadvantaged' (Nader 1972: 5), yet the relative advantages enjoyed by privileged elites—and the root causes of such privilege—remain largely unexplored, albeit with some notable exceptions, such as Ho's (2009) ethnography of Wall Street financial institutions. In other words, what a curious paradox it would be if the answers to solving social deprivation and hardship were not to be found in disadvantage alone but also, conversely, privilege.

Conclusions

In this paper, it has been shown how migrant entrepreneurs cannot only be assumed to be disadvantaged. Those from core-states often are the exact opposite, that is, privileged. Similarly to how white people in McIntosh's (1988) groundbreaking paper seem privileged in the environment of American society, migrant entrepreneurs from core-states in this study seem to benefit from 'an invisible package of unearned assets', such as social and linguistic prestige, the ability to find well-paid employment, relatively unrestricted international mobility, and easier access to affluent markets in core-states. Privilege, however, cannot exist without oppression (Ferguson 2013). Therefore, perhaps unsurprisingly, migrants from periphery-states were found to be correspondingly subjected to disadvantages, such as a lower social standing of their cultures and languages, restricted international mobility, barriers to well-paid mainstream employment, and barriers to accessing affluent markets in core-states. There is, however, one exception, according to which periphery-state migrant entrepreneurs are privileged by their apparent superior ability to access more affordable supplies of labour from - or located in - periphery-states. Nevertheless, the broader trend of those from core-states receiving more privilege remains.

In other core-to-(semi-)periphery contexts, such privilege has been closely tied to the role of ethnicity (Fechter 2005; Hoang 2014; Lundstrom 2017), financial capital (Beavertock 2002; Sklair 2012), or human capital (Vance et al. 2016). Within this study, however, both groups of migrant entrepreneurs were predominantly white and had relatively equal levels of financial and human capital which subsequently raises the question how the aforementioned variations in privileges are realized. Looking for insight into this, the study explored how variations in the origins of migrant entrepreneurs' social and cultural capital (on a micro level) interact differently within broader hierarchies (on a macro level), resulting in apparent variations in types of privilege and disadvantage (on a meso level).

This macro-level environment, it was proposed, includes the existence of cultural hierarchies. Here, it was shown how migrants' variation in the geographical origin of their cultural capital, when positioned within these cultural hierarchies, leads to differences in the interpretation and valuation of this capital. Specifically, it seems that core-state cultural capital, within the environment of Wrocław, takes on structurally imposed value (Coleman 1988), subsequently becoming desirable and economically valuable. These cultural hierarchies, it was demonstrated, stretch well-beyond Wrocław, with core-state capital often being 'transnationally acknowledged' and 'associated with high standards worldwide' (Weiss 2005: 722), albeit with some variations across both time and space. Subsequently,

three additional layers (politico-institutional, economic, and technological) of the macro environment were considered. Here, it was discussed how they also contribute to the variation between the two subject groups in terms of privilege and disadvantage.

Finally, it was proposed that the results of the study have important implications for those interested in reducing global inequality. The key indicator most commonly used to measure inequality is wealth. As a study which concerns itself with those who are at the forefront of wealth creation, that is to say, entrepreneurs, this study's findings are thus of great relevance. Indeed, this paper has closely scrutinised entrepreneurs from some of the world's wealthiest nations and positioned these findings against those from some of the poorest. This has revealed how an uneven, global environment often privileges the former, while subjecting the latter to a number of disadvantages. The important point here is that such variation seems systemic. Unlike previous observations of systemic inequality, which have largely centred around the role of ethnicity (for example Young 2011 and Feagin 2017) and gender (see Ridgeway 2004, among others), this study has foregrounded systemic inequality based on nationality and citizenship, subsequently propelling the latter into the intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; 2017) debate.

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