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'Non-Routine Entrepreneurs': Another Path of Realizing Entrepreneurial Intentions

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Abstract: The paper seeks to introduce the definition and to specify the characteristic features of “non-routine entrepreneurs”. Using the notion of entrepreneurship by Shane and Venkataraman (2000), it explains “non-routine entrepreneurs” as persons driven primarily by the idea of exploring entrepreneurial opportunities, but less interested in being formally engaged in owning/managing a business or to claim additional incomes from it. The empirical base of the papers is two cases, labelled as a “patriot” and a “big tipster”, from a panel of entrepreneurs, self-employees and start-ups the author surveyed in Moscow in three annual waves (2013–2015, N = 13). The paper shows the differences between the “non-routine entrepreneurs” and already well investigated groups (latent entrepreneurs, informal entrepreneurs, hybrid entrepreneurs, freelancers) and examines the personal (human capital) and social (transitional shock) context of the evolution of entrepreneurial intentions and their motivation. The “non-routine-entrepreneurs” fill in the lack of evidence about entrepreneurially minded persons with non-monetary goals, or non-economic meaning of results from such activities. Thus, the paper contributes to the literature on the reason and the intentionality of entrepreneurship. It concludes that “non-routine entrepreneurship” might become the choice of many people in contemporary societies where the boundaries between different kinds of economic activities are blurred.

Keywords: non-routine entrepreneurs; entrepreneurial intentions; Russia; qualitative research

1. Introduction

The definitions of entrepreneurship in the economic literature mostly insist that “entrepreneurship is strictly unthinkable absent ownership of assets, and it asserts that entrepreneurship is tied to firm formation” (Foss and Klein 2015, p. 587). Such an approach automatically reduces the domain of entrepreneurship research to value creation related to numbers of self-employment, start-ups and small firms. However, it overlooks many facets of entrepreneurship in contemporary society, such as “political entrepreneurs” (DiMaggio 1988; Fligstein 1997; Rao 1998 etc.) and other “non-market actors . . . urged to be ‘entrepreneurial’” (Foss and Klein 2012, p. 2). In order to get a wider perspective of ‘homo entrepreneurus’, it is useful to more fully acknowledge how entrepreneurial activity is embedded in the broader socio-cultural landscape, and which kinds of strategies aiming to realize entrepreneurial intentions do exist. As entrepreneurship is contextual (Welter 2011), we assume that within different contexts—personal and social—a variety of actors with different reasons, logic and self-perceptions of their entrepreneurial actions should exist (Greenwood et al. 2011).

To start and run any entrepreneurial activity, entrepreneurial intentions are recognized in the literature as a crucial predictor (Bird 1988; Krueger et al. 2000; Zhao et al. 2005; Bird and Schjoedt 2009; Carsrud and Brännback 2009; Liñán and Chen 2009). Intentions are usually defined as indications of a person’s readiness to perform a specific behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, p. 39); more concretely, “entrepreneurial intentions are aimed at either creating a new venture or creating new values in existing

ventures" (Bird 1988, p. 443). It is presupposed that people become entrepreneurs in order to establish an organization which they can own and manage. Even authors (Gollwitzer and Brandstätter 1997; Gollwitzer and Sheeran 2006) who investigate the interrelation between the intention and entrepreneurial behavior more carefully, while using the concept of "implementation intention" see as the usual pathway of actualization of entrepreneurial intentions the starting up of a new venture or becoming self-employed.

In the present paper is showed, however, that entrepreneurial intentions might be fulfilled also when the actors want to either become owners of any assets, or to establish and manage a venture by themselves. We define them as "non-routine entrepreneurs", i.e., such improvement driven actors who avoid spending time and energy in the formalization of their property rights and claims on residual income, viewing entrepreneurship either as their mission or an interesting game¹.

In some sense, we will discuss enterprising of ordinary people (Van Gelderen 2000; Mueller et al. 2012), but our focus is a bit different: we neither investigate what ordinary people themselves are calling "entrepreneurial", nor do we trace the diverse activities of these "classical" entrepreneurs. In some sense, we are widening the notion of entrepreneurial behavior (Bird and Schjoedt 2009), its means and ends. Albeit a previous attempt to consider entrepreneurial motivation as something flexible and interconnected to economic activity, family and business life courses (Jayawarna et al. 2011) brought a taxonomy of "reluctant", "convenience", "economically driven", "social", "learning and earning", and "prestige and control entrepreneurs". However, the kind of entrepreneurial personality we explored as will be shown does not fully coincide with any of these types.

The aim and added value of this paper consists in exploring a not yet defined type of entrepreneurial personality. The study, first, contributes to the explanations of the role of intentionality and motivation in the formation of different kinds of entrepreneurial role models, and thus supports the well-known idea of the variety of entrepreneurs (Gartner 1989). Second, it widens the picture of different groups of "everyday entrepreneurs" (Welter et al. 2017) in contemporary societies. Third, it shows the role of the interplay of micro-environmental conditions and major social changes in the formatting of entrepreneurial intentions (Boyd and Vozikis 1994; Bird and Schjoedt 2009, et al.), using the data collected in Russia as one of the transitional societies (Welter 2011; Iakovleva et al. 2011).

The goal of a phenomenon-driven research is to address questions and "to frame the research in terms of the importance of the phenomenon and the lack of plausible existing theory" (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). This is exactly what we do in this paper.

Our research questions are as follows: what are the specifics of "non-routine entrepreneurs" intentions, motives, and strategies, compared with other forms of everyday entrepreneurship? What are the roles of personality factors, general and specific human capital and of the social context in understanding how entrepreneurial intentions of "non-routine entrepreneurs" were realized? Lastly, what is the incremental evidence to the theory from discovering of this hidden form of entrepreneurship?

To answer these questions, we will describe two cases explored during the longitudinal survey conducted by the author in 2013–2015 in Moscow, which was developed to discover the variety of informal entrepreneurship (in more details see Chepurensko 2016).

The paper is structured as follows. In the next part, we discuss the data and method; then, the mentioned cases are described; finally, we discuss the results and its relevance for the entrepreneurship theory.

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2. Data and Methods

A longitudinal data collection of interviews is useful to mitigate “retrospective sensemaking and impression management” (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, a purposive sampling was used, namely seeking out similarities and differences to ensure different perspectives are represented (Patton 1990) and respondents assessed whether the final themes adequately reflect the phenomena being investigated (Noble and Smith 2015).

Interviews were non-structured, using the general interview guide approach with open-ended questions; in the first wave in the autumn of 2013, respondents were asked about life and business experience, family and its role in the business, description of the current business, partners, ownership structure, goals, attitudes towards state regulation, team and its structure, employees and forms of hiring and sales, future plans and strategies. Each interview lasted one to two hours. Interviews in the first wave (2013), when discussing the reasons and motives as well as the macro- and micro environments at the time when the respondents started up, were especially long; the meetings with respondents took part mostly in cafes and bars where they usually arranged appointments with their colleagues and business partners. Some respondents invited the interviewer to visit their offices.

In the course of the second and third waves (autumn of 2014 and 2015, respectively) again semi-structured interviews were conducted, dealing mostly with any change of status and the business of informants, as well as questions concerning the factors of changing of the business climate etc., estimations of the prospects of the current business and the respondents’ own life prospects. Besides, there were also questions raised concerning current experience in dealing with the state and public servants, use of different forms of taxation, as well as hiring employees, to collect in-depth information about the entrepreneurial of the respondents.

As some topics (for instance, the level of informal entrepreneurial activity) are sensitive, and any representative sampling of entrepreneurs using informal activities cannot be designed, in our project a qualitative approach was used (Berglund 2007; Neergaard 2007; Yin 2014). The panel was designed using the snowball method, and according the ‘typical cases’ approach based on the narrative method, focusing on the meanings that respondents ascribe to their experiences, in order to achieve an insight into the “complexity of human lives” (Josselson 2006, p. 4). The multiple entries were found with the help of colleagues to ensure that the interviewer could refer to recommendations of common friends. The target persons should be “people who now are starting-up a new venture or own a small-scale business”. Such an approach helped to get access to different kinds of entrepreneurial actors and to establish an atmosphere where informants were willing to freely talk about their goals, expectations, strategies, experience, etc. (Poggenpoel and Myburgh 2003). In addition, to let them to be open even when answering some sensitive questions during the interview, no audio or video recorders were used. The interviews were simply outlined by hand and transcribed immediately after the interview; the transcripts were then sent to the respondents one or two days after each interview with the request to correct, change or add something which they found important. In most cases, we soon received back the transcripts with some corrections and additions. Such a mix of face-to-face and e-mail post-interview comments helped let the respondents speak freely and to keep the final texts as authentic as possible.

To guarantee validity and reliability, often seen as doubtful in qualitative research, especially based on only a few cases (Guest et al. 2006), we used the “analysis of narratives” approach (Polkinghorne 1995, p. 12) to create our own description of themes across the stories of the respondents. As the purpose of the paper is not to test, but to add to the typology of entrepreneurs, our sampling seems to be appropriate.

Eisenhardt (1989) stressed that when building a theory from case studies, each case serves on its own as an analytic unit. That is exactly our approach in the present paper. In the following, we picked up two different cases to illustrate our notion of “non-routine entrepreneurship”.

3. Findings

While having to do with two cases which were observed over a relatively long period, we decided not to sum up the evidence within some tables and not to organize the text “around the theory” to provide readers interested in the detailed narratives enough empirical data (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). Therefore, each case is presented on its own, as they show two different kinds of “non-routine entrepreneurs” as regards the micro-context and motivation behind them. Finally, we summarize the results from the point of views of the change of entrepreneurial motivation over the time of the longitude, formal employment status over time, character of related business, possible or actual alternative occupations.

3.1. The “Patriotically” Motivated ‘Non-Routine Entrepreneur’

A man in his mid-thirties, lower secondary education, Muscovite, born in the family of a Soviet general, had a secure childhood. But in 1993, after the systemic changes began in Russia, the father died, and at the age 15 he was forced to leave school and to start working to support the family and to help to the mother. He started helping at a car wash, but then he began a small scale business to feed his own family—being 19 years old, he had married, and had already a daughter.

“Both me and my cousin, we liked any electronics and gadgets. He began to teach me, and gradually I got prepared to master not only PCs, but also to do programming.”

Initially, he had no intention of becoming an entrepreneur; during the interview, he mentioned several times that he always had employment alternatives, and that he frequently changed his position from an entrepreneur to a manager, or expert, etc.

Having started from below, in 1999 together with his cousin he already had a kiosk at one of the Moscow electronics’ markets where they sold and upgraded computers. But then, they left the market, because they could not accept the cheating and crime around the market. They established a computer club in one of Moscow districts for youth.

“It was a purely social project, the Club worked 24 h a day, diverting teenagers off the streets and enabling them to appropriate useful knowledge and skills in working with PC. At weekends, adults came there, including seniors; we taught them computer literacy, and helped them to deal with the Russian ‘1C’ software for accountancy: that way, some of them got the possibility to improve qualifications for free, and to find any job.”

So, they became social entrepreneurs aiming to make something good for children. At the time, after the years of the shock therapy in Russian economy, the family and social situation of many teenagers, even in the capital city, was very hard. The project was financially supported by the municipal authorities, and at the beginning it flourished.

In 2001 they bought a share of the Russian IT firm “Hasta—La vista”, to develop a network of such clubs under the umbrella of this large firm. In 2003, however, the respondent was invited to work at Gazprom in the IT security service. In the meantime, the social enterprise was closed, because they did not get enough support from “Hasta—La vista”, and the project grew too fast and was already too big to be funded only from municipal bodies.

But after a year, he changed again to an IT firm as a specialist in computer security. In 2008, he became head of the firm’s center for accreditation of service units. As one might conclude from his description of the situation, social motives were again prevalent—he was driven by the idea of establishing more transparency and stable rules in the respective market.

“I must say that already in 2006 the situation around the so called control-cash machines (CCM) in the country was critical; it was simply necessary to restore order in the market, as hundreds of companies sold to entrepreneurs machines of very different quality, but most urgent was the situation with the completely voluntary counted tariffs for after-sales service of the CCM. We established a commission with the other biggest producers and started to implement rules . . . In 2008, as the result of a conflict with a local company in a province near Moscow (they fleeced their clients, entrepreneurs, charging them instead of maximally 300 rubles monthly up to 15,000 rubles, being protected by a high regional chief, and we demanded that they should return the money back), I was pushed to leave the company, because the shareholders, after investigating the case, told me that they would be unable to protect me and my family from violence, should it come to that.”

The respondent had to decide where to go, again starting a new venture together with an old friend who suggested joining his new firm focusing on idea development, and the position as the CEO was given to the respondent. They started together in 2008; in 2009 they already experienced a fast growth of the business. In 2010, they even established their own engineering center.

They created an app they called “Mobile Teller”, to ease the work of small businesses: the software allowed any mobile device to form a cash reporting document and to print it out. However, his attachment to the old company where he was an employee still remained: his old company bought the new firm out; nominally he became a hired employee. However, it was agreed that the two partners might allow their legal entity to conduct some of their own venture projects. Hence, at that time he became a typical hybrid entrepreneur.

Around this time he met and hired an outstanding young programmer, together they created a gadget allowing to restore mobility skills to patients after strokes by playing (clinical trials showed an improvement in motor skills at 30% of the patients after only five to seven classes), and to embed gaming in the educational process in schools to allow children to better absorb learning material. Again, he was driven by social motives when establishing this new venture while remaining an employee.

At the beginning of 2013, the strategy of the large company where he was officially employed had changed; the respondent felt that he was not interested in the new directions, and left. After approximately one year he joined another large IT company as a consultant in law related to CCM. He said that he chose this company, because he liked the youthful enthusiasm in the corporate culture of this company; “they do not have any obsession on subordination, status, etc.”.

In parallel, in his own firm in 2013 he was inspired to develop several devices with the already mentioned young partner, programmer; first, he was concerned about a new operating system which could become a crossover compatible with both WINDOWS and LINUX to create various documents. Meantime, this operating system should be able to use radio waves to supply it in remote areas, rural schools, etc., to support pupils who would be able to take advantage of the global network even in conditions of remoteness and unstable telecommunications.

His goal was to prove that Russian minds are the best in the world.

“I want to bring back the glory of the country, and business is only a tool to achieve this. In my business, there is a lot in common with Soviet traditions. To start with our logo (we have a Soviet army star there). And why should we forget everything?”

One year later, in 2014, the respondent mentioned that over the past year he met with interesting domestic IT-developers. Moreover, he agreed with the Chinese companies to invest in producing a data collection terminal (a Chinese platform would be used, because there are no equivalents in Russia).

In addition, the appropriate state institution supported the project of cloud-based cash operations; this project was launched three months after the previous interview. At that time, he already had more than 800 users, including 10–15 legal entities. It was a free of charge system of storing information in the cloud, including receipts, for five years. The cloud-based storage and online transmission of cash documents would make it completely redundant for micro businesses to use the CCM and push them to develop their skills in IT and in different applications.

He pointed out during the interview that his entrepreneurial motivation changed fundamentally over the years:

“In general, my experience tells me that people have only two motives to engage in entrepreneurship: either from frustration (for example, a retired officer, who cannot find any job), or if you think about your children and their future. I started up from hopelessness: I was 19 years old, I had a child and we had to feed it. But today I do it, because I am concerned about the future.”

The structure of the business de facto owned by the respondent at the time when the last interview was conducted consisted of four companies, one to concentrate on imports, one on exports; the third was established only for the project of the cloud storage of payment transaction information. The fourth one was using a simplified tax system for SMEs. Each firm was managed by one of the partners; one of them is about 50 (his cousin), another one about 30 years old (the young programmer). The whole group of companies is led by the wife of the respondent; he himself having no official position within the group, “mostly because the situation does still not allow me to leave the large company where I am now officially working”.

The group of companies already had representations in three regions of Russia, and there are some further to be opened: they started expanding their business to some other CIS, establishing a presence and training centers there to gather perspective young minds that could be invited to work for the company in Russia. A contract in Kazakhstan had been signed. In the short term perspective, the respondent planned to gain up to 50% of the related IT market segment in Russia.

Serving in parallel as a well-paid expert on CCM market development in a large IT firm as an expert, he was working like a “grey Cardinal” even in that company, having no official positions; he was not even mentioned in the internal telephone directory.

Closing one project and launching another, he grew as an entrepreneurially minded person—establishing useful new contacts, using the possibilities of the large firms where he was working as an employee to get better acquainted with the business environment and several business possibilities, and when communicating with representatives of the state and military. Combining at different stages of his life (social) entrepreneurship, freelance and employment, he believed in the possibility to soon conquest a big share of the respective market and to demonstrate the “smartness of Russians”, and was devoted to this idea for many years. He was mostly interested in attracting genial programmers and creating new tools and goods for private and business users, but avoiding spending much time in business governance and not pretending on a formal status within the business.

This respondent was devoted to the idea of “restoring Soviet glory” as a country of smart engineers etc., therefore he can be specified as a “patriot”. Such entrepreneurs can emerge in societies obsessed by historical trauma; therefore, they are poorly represented in established market economies.

In 2015, remarkably, the respondent was no longer available on any of the existing channels of communication. In the printed and social media there were no information related to him and the breakthrough projects he described in the interviews in 2013–2014. Perhaps, all the efforts he made in establishing new gadgets were lost due to the appearance of large international firms with similar products, or he became a victim of internal competition with other Russian players; or simply after many years he decided to quit and enjoy the status (and bonuses) of a well-paid IT expert as an employee?

3.2. The “Big Tipster” as a “Non-Routine Entrepreneur”

The respondent was a man nearing retirement age, with a doctoral degree, Muscovite. At least two of his great grandfathers had “some entrepreneurial flair”. His parents were scientists: his father was a well-known specialist in the Arab world, his mother an archaeologist. He was clear very early on that in the humanities he would always remain only the son of his parents, so he started to deeply study mathematics and natural sciences. In addition, he got:

“a good home education in liberal arts; it was as good as it was the theoretical chapter in the doctoral dissertation of my mother, which I wrote.”

After graduation from a Moscow institute, he worked for more than 10 years at different academic institutions in mechanics and engineering and:

“lived in the confidence that one day I would become a Professor, a respected person dealing with pleasant issues.”

He published some papers which attracted audiences in the West, during the Perestroika he was in demand in UK, France and the United States. In the late 1980s he became a member of the Edinburgh Royal Society of Arts and Sciences and moved to Scotland, where he received an offer to establish a chair at the university. But after 7 October 1993² he and his wife decided to return to Russia.

Here, he fundamentally changed his professional track and began to work as an expert and consultant in actual policy. So, very soon after coming back, he was invited as an expert to the committee for CIS Affairs of the State Duma, and until 1999 he worked closely with this committee, already as scientific head of the analytical center of one political party. There, he established many useful contacts with the political and economic elite, and was also involved in training regional experts.

Later on, some graduates of the “party center” rose to CEO level in federal government institutions and in the Duma, as well as in regional power institutions. As there were almost no specialists in political expertise, in 1997 he became a professor at one of the leading Moscow universities. In the early 2000s, the informant started to work as a freelance consultant for investment promotion in Russian regions relying on his established networks.

In the winter of 2002–2003, the owners of an international holding invited him to participate in the negotiating process in an African country, and six months later, he became the president of this holding and headed the political direction, GR and investment consulting. Since then he has had some business interests in the former Soviet Union and Africa.

However, he in fact feels like a freelancer. Besides, as a half-time employee he is also collaborating with a business association: they pay him 30,000 rubles monthly which is the only official salary he receives, and from this salary his fees to the pension fund are made,

“and this is my only financial relationship with the Russian State. Since it is more or less clear what will happen to the Russian pension system, I am simply not ready to transfer to the State pension fund more than it gets from my 30,000 rubles paid to me for this half-time job” (smiles).

He determines his status as

“fun self-employment: to do what is not fun at some point, is horrible ... There always have been and there are still problems with how to feed the family while being engaged in the work you do really like. But I started to do freelance and entrepreneurship because I am badly prepared to be a boss and even worse—as a subordinated employee ... On any managerial folly, I usually react in an unacceptable way. I could work as a partner, but,

² The day when the rebelling Russian Parliament was shot by President Yeltsin’s military forces in ‘White House’ in Moscow.

unfortunately, the Russian business culture hardly recognizes this type of relationship. So I am constantly in search of an effective boss" (smiles). "Having to choose between autonomy and money I always have chosen and still do choose autonomy".

In 2013, he collaborated with a group of young CEOs of a Russian financial group to establish an investment fund for investing in Africa. The idea of working in Africa came from decades of cooperating with governments, as well as with businesses there.

"I am designing schemes, and then turn into a rentier while writing a book on macro-Sociology. And I am looking how to make the business develop. A typical downshifting, but styled as a business" (smiles). "As soon as any conversations about money begin, I make a step aside since these matters are better dealt with by others."

His strategic target is entry to a well-known market with low competition and high rewards ("a return of less than 75% is considered, in Africa, a very bad one"), highly resistant to any "bubbles", deflationary spirals and similar troubles.

The partners in this African business are mostly young businessmen from Moscow and St. Petersburg. The responsibilities are distributed on the principle of full equality of all partners. The role of the respondent, according to his statement, is to generate ideas, based on his expertise in the country and industry; while

"the guys are responsible for the investment component and business planning. Plans for the next year are as follows: approximately 7–12% of the global market for the concentrate (by November 2015) under the margin reward no less than 25%. This is a very moderate estimation."

In 2014, the African business-project moved further and with even more significant results than expected. The hopes to quietly enter the market of one rare metal did not materialize: instead of circa 5% of the world market of the respective metal, it would be up to 20% of it. However, such a development means to play "big games", to be ready for an open and tough competition, and to be prepared to significantly increase the scale of investments after the start-up stage. It turned out that the mines contained 10 times more metal than the mines of major global competitors. This promised low production costs, a possibility to transport the extracted metal even by aircraft, and a huge marginal return on investment.

A daughter company was at that time already established where the respondent was Senior Vice-President. In the mid-term perspective, a holding company should be established, and all shares should be transferred to a trust, not to be tempted to withdraw money and to destroy the growing business.

Furthermore, there are several other business ideas in preparation; the company would try to implement them in different African countries. Especially since the economic situation is not so good globally, people and companies are looking at where to invest in a secure project; "therefore, it is about innovative entrepreneurship".

In addition, he continues as a freelance business consultant; his services became very popular in connection with the Crimea incident: e.g., at that time he was helping one Ukrainian businessman to save his business in the Crimea from a hostile takeover.

In 2015 he mentioned that the African business was running well, due to the intensive lobbying of the government there. The company had already four new investors with a decent funding from one to several million USD.

New activities also occurred. They just received the political acceptance of a large partnership investment fund with the Iranians to promote innovative business projects. However, to do business in Russia was still difficult. "The reason is not the crisis, but the mentality".

The strategic goal is to run several projects with the Iranians, which unlike African projects, promise not millions, but billions of dollars of revenue. Of course, the most evident beneficiary of the prospective earnings would be the fund and its management company, but the respondent also believed in a sound option for all physical persons engaged in the deal from the very beginning.

“It is more promising than the African project: it is still nicer to do something that will change the lives of mankind for the better than to pollute Africa. For me it is still primarily a creative activity, rather than something to earn money. I feel more fun engaging in inventing a business than in routine management matters. And I have no troubles on the prospective income distribution; if people are not stupid and not greedy, they would not throw me” (he smiled).

In 2018, he was still active in the business; Iranian projects were running, African business was much more diverse than three years earlier (for instance, he mentioned a huge consultancy program on healthcare development in South Africa). Moreover, some medical-technical projects arose (with Russian brains, Iranian money, South Korean production, and the final stage in a big Siberian science park).

This respondent could be called a “big tipster” or even “gamer”; formally, he was a hybrid entrepreneur, being employed as a professor and working as a freelancer in parallel, but his portfolio entrepreneurship was interesting for him only as a possibility to design business ideas and to inspire other people to enact them.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

“Non-routine entrepreneurship” is another path of realizing entrepreneurial intentions. The personal circumstances and other micro-level factors cause different forms of it. For instance, our first case seems to be driven by idealistic goals, such as the revitalization of “Russian glory”. This case is a good example of what is called in the literature on entrepreneurial intentions; “attunement”, characterizing “visionary entrepreneurs, who pursue both noneconomic and economic values . . . some entrepreneurs use their organizations and resources to foster . . . a certain ideology” (Bird 1988, p. 450).

As regards to the second case, we could find such “non-routine entrepreneurs” also in non-transitional environments: for instance, among academics that consult start-up teams but are not eager to get fully involved in such activities being strongly devoted to fundamental research and teaching; or among business mentors, or coaches at business schools, etc. In general, in post-modern societies “non-routine entrepreneurship” might become the choice of many people intending to be creative and perform, while not ready to engage in everyday business routine. In some sense, it is the empirical evidence of what Bird called “means- or process-oriented” entrepreneurs who “choose self-employment . . . as a means to achieve satisfying work and a comfortable life” or “to use their technical skills autonomously” (Bird 1988, p. 448), but with some additional features: they do not pretend to start or manage a business by themselves. They differ from such well known groups as freelancers (Bögenhold et al. 2014; Connelly and Gallagher 2006; Kitching and Smallbone 2012; Shevchuk and Strebkov 2015); the latter are “not actually entrepreneurs but enablers of entrepreneurship—by offering labor on contingent terms which allows entrepreneurs to pass off impure risk” (Burke 2011, p. 6) while “non-routine entrepreneurs” really inspire and facilitate a business.

Their activities are a kind of “entrepreneurship”, when defining it as the exploration and exploitation of opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman 2000). At this point, we would stress our disagreement with Welter et al. (2017), who argues that Shane and Venkataraman’s definition of the domain for entrepreneurship research “makes entrepreneurship largely a function of large corporate entities while excluding the vast majority of new business founders as not entrepreneurs” (ibid., p. 313). It seems that exactly the opposite is true; only based on the very abstract and general notion of entrepreneurship introduced by Shane and Venkataraman is it possible to interpret activities, including

those not combined with establishing a firm or organization, or owning/managing a business, as a part of the everyday entrepreneurship.

It should be stressed that “non-routine entrepreneurs” can hardly be understood as something already well known among everyday entrepreneurial activities; for instance, “non-routine entrepreneurs” are not necessarily informal entrepreneurs in the common sense as these do not use “undocumented workers, counterfeiting, ticket scalping”, etc. (Webb et al. 2013, p. 600). These actors differ both from what is called “potential entrepreneurship” in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) based literature (Reynolds et al. 2005), or “latent entrepreneurship”, which Blanchflower et al. (2001) define as the share of adults who say that they would prefer to be self-employed, because they are in practice already undertaking entrepreneurial activity.

Like hybrid entrepreneurship, being a viable path for people willing to realize their entrepreneurial ambitions in a lower-risk and organic way (Campbell and De Nardi 2009; Folta et al. 2010; Raffiee and Feng 2014) “non-routine entrepreneurs” have enough free time to do business in parallel to their other activities. However, there are also differences because hybrid entrepreneurs are striving towards a certain status and financial reward (Solesvik 2017), in contrast to “non-routine entrepreneurs” who do not. Moreover, hybrid entrepreneurship is usually chosen by people with rather low human or social capital (unemployment), or by those who need an additional paid job to compensate low incomes from their businesses (Petrova 2012; Nordström et al. 2016). The “non-routine entrepreneurs” do not need another occupational status as a source of additional time or money to invest it into business projects because they already have a sufficient level of wellbeing due to the high level of knowledge and expertise.

Moreover, the concept of “non-routine entrepreneurs” goes beyond the formality/informality nexus, as typically, informal entrepreneurs are differing from those acting formally, only by the fact that they are less visible to the state. “Non-routine entrepreneurs” might stay “invisible”, too, but not to avoid contact with the public authorities and institutions, but being motivated/driven by other considerations.

Besides, as our cases show that the scope of their activities might vary over life cycle (changing from commercial, to social, academic, institutional entrepreneurship, and vice versa etc.) depending on the related change of their goal-setting and expectations. It is in some sense similar to what Jayawarna et al. (2011) called “learning and earning” and “prestige and control” entrepreneurs, but also show several distinctions (see Table 1).

In our case, these specific conditions include, first, a significant human and social capital needed to enable people to become “non-routine entrepreneurs”. Both of our cases were experts in their respective areas and possessed ties which they could use for their “non-routine ventures”. This means that they obtained some general and specific human (expertise in business projects related area) and social (reputation within relevant networks) capital which supported the forming and realization of their entrepreneurial intentions.

Second, our two cases are interesting examples illustrating the role of context in intending to become “non-routine entrepreneurs”. Shapero’s entrepreneurial event model predicts that human behavior is guided by inertia until something interrupts or “displaces” that inertia. Such displacement might be of negative character, for instance, job loss or divorce, but it can easily be positive, such as getting an inheritance etc. “Significant life events (job loss, migration, etc.) can precipitate sizable increases in entrepreneurial activity. The founders have not changed, only their perceptions of the “new” circumstances have. Their entrepreneurial potential clearly existed, but the potential required displacement to surface” (Krueger et al. 2000, p. 419).

Table 1. Variety of entrepreneurs according to motivation and the work and life balance.

Definition	Primary Goals	Specifics	Work and Life Balance
Reluctant entrepreneurs	Do not score highly for any motive associated with entrepreneurship, suggesting that they either lack motivation or have unidentified motivation	Low determination to stay in business	Work very long hours, yet perform poorly
Convenience entrepreneurs	Flexibility motivation plus community contribution	Mostly young mothers using business as a part-time stop gap during a phase in the life course when employment is difficult to sustain	Constrained labour power and short time horizons
Economically driven entrepreneurs	'To make lots of money'	Only moderate determination to remain in business, low satisfaction with profits and pressure to provide greater household income	Work only standard hours to establish a business sufficiently profitable to support a household
Social entrepreneurs	Contribution to community plus flexibility and achievement	Prepared to sustain a small-scale, low-risk, marginal enterprise if it produces community benefits	Able to invest long hours in entrepreneurship for low rewards
Learning and earning entrepreneurs	Learning and responding to the challenges of running a business	Commitment to making businesses into career vehicles, most prepared to take risks, also the commitment to learning and the pursuit of niche market strategies	High income needs, mostly home-based, niche, knowledge-based enterprises
Prestige and control entrepreneurs	High levels of status and power to control work practices	Have less pressure to earn and more freedom to balance business and leisure	Have other responsibilities and work part-time
Non-routine entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurship as an area of exploration of opportunities	Business as a tool to realize external (non-economic) goals; ready to take risks and committed to learn; have less pressure to earn and more freedom to balance business and other activities	Have other responsibilities and work part-time

Source: (Jayawarna et al. 2011); own data.

It seems that our two cases are widening the meaning of displacement which was caused by such social shock as a systemic change of socio-economic model in former Socialist countries in the early 1990s. Indeed, our respondents managed to break through the system of old Soviet anti-entrepreneurial and egalitarian values. However, the "patriot" showed a mixture of accepting new role models and the trauma of the "lost pride" of Russia as the leading country in innovation, which many "Soviet people" were obsessed by. This peculiar combination of pro-market economic activities and very ideal aspirations to make a contribution to the revival of "Russian glory" is clearly context-dependent. The second case showed another aspect of context dependence: a new niche of political consultancy opened in the early 1990s for people who were not professional political analysts and consultants. The richness of contacts which the "big tipster" elaborated in the early transition stage helped him to become a broker in seed and start-up business projects he invented and launched together with "ordinary" entrepreneurs. Our findings not only support the argument that "entrepreneurial activities can flourish in more turbulent environments ... with uncertainty about the future, even with a salaried job" (Iakovleva et al. 2011, p. 364), but show that the institutional changes under transition may open opportunities for "non-conventional" kinds of entrepreneurial behavior. Hence, academic researchers should widen the focus of their considerations when exploring forms of entrepreneurial activity and designing necessary observation tools to embrace it in its totality. Also, decision makers responsible for entrepreneurship policy should explore and become interested in such a target group, because of the high creative potential of "non-routine entrepreneurs".

Further explorations should examine in more detail while keeping a longer distance for the reasons of maintaining or changing the status by the “non-routine entrepreneurs”. In a long run, the experienced success (or, vice versa, difficulties) of the businesses inspired by them might pull the “non-routine entrepreneurs” to be more active in managing the related business, and stepwise to become “ordinary” entrepreneurs. Anyway, to investigate various aspects of “non-routine entrepreneurship”, future research might use the bricolage theory (Baker and Nelson 2005) to better understand how “non-routine entrepreneurs” use different resources and information when designing their creative ideas and seeking to implement them.

It has already been shown in the literature that various forms of entrepreneurial activity may have a very different impact on economic and social processes (Van Stel et al. 2014; Dilli et al. 2018; Hessels et al. 2018). For instance, the distinctions between high-growth potentials vs. necessity driven entrepreneurs, solo owners vs. freelancers have already been analyzed (Audretsch et al. 2015; Fritsch and Storey 2017; Dvouletý 2018). The exploration of “non-routine-entrepreneurs” fills in the lack of evidence on the engagement and efforts of entrepreneurially minded persons setting non-monetary goals (DeTienne et al. 2008), or having other than economic performance indicators as subjective interpretation of success (Gimeno et al. 1997; Sarasvathy et al. 2013). Consequently, our findings add to the literature on entrepreneurial success (Fisher et al. 2014; Wach et al. 2016) and widen the notion of the intentionality of entrepreneurship.

The constraint of the paper consists of the limited number of cases we collected; moreover, although Moscow is a megacity with several features of a post-modern economy and society, evidence from developed entrepreneurial contexts would be needed to support the findings, also in post-modern societies where the boundaries between different kinds of economic activities are blurred.

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