

**DUMMY PAGE**



## THE EFFECTS OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION ON THE PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTION OF ENTREPRENEURS

Jahangir Wasim<sup>a</sup>, Fernando Almeida<sup>b,c</sup>,  
Reece Jay Chalmers<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

<sup>b</sup> University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

<sup>c</sup> INESC TEC, Porto, Portugal

<sup>d</sup> Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, United Kingdom

### Keywords:

entrepreneurial  
motivation;

urban entrepreneurship;  
rural entrepreneurship;  
policy development

**Abstract:** There is a clear gap in the literature on comparing entrepreneurship in urban and rural areas and analysing distinct differences between them, impacting their survival and growth. This study aims to find the motivations and classifications of success for urban and rural entrepreneurs. A case study approach was adopted, with six cases on urban and rural Scottish enterprises. These contrasting motivations and conceptions of success have been linked to the way companies strategise. Our findings contribute to the literature by adding an understanding of the motivations of entrepreneurs in rural and urban businesses, respectively. Further, the study was conducted in Scotland, which adds a subsequent understanding of the motivations of entrepreneurs within the country specifically, which can be used in future research within the country.

**Email:** [almd@fe.up.pt](mailto:almd@fe.up.pt)

Initial submission: 19.02.2022; Revised submission: 19.07.2022; Final acceptance: 14.11.2022

## Introduction

A renewed prominence of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) has taken place in the UK since its decline between 1950 and 1960, particularly in the last two decades. This became apparent, with SMEs making up 99.7% of businesses in the UK (Almeida and Wasim 2023). Consequently, SMEs represent the backbone of both employment and output in the UK. Several studies explore the contributions of SMEs to the UK economy by increasing its competitiveness, generating employment, diversifying activities, and mobilising social and economic services (Kasabov 2016, Antcliff et al. 2021).

Recently, there has been an increase in location-specific enterprise research, examining regional factors (Webber et al. 2009, Florida et al. 2017, Zhang 2020). There is some comparative research on rural vs urban entrepreneurship (Fortunato 2014), but it lacks empirical grounding. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the literature where no comparative empirical studies were conducted on rural and urban enterprises. Hence, in this research, we analyse whether the motivational differences and classifications of success, and aims and goals contrast between rural and urban businesses, and also if this affects the financial success and sustainability of the businesses. Furthermore, motivation and conception of success have not been specifically researched as drivers for financial success and sustainability in a business. Accordingly, this study adopts a case study method, comprising three rural and three urban SMEs. The intention is to find links and themes by comparing the two cases.

This research aims to compare rural and urban SMEs in an attempt to add to the literature analysing the growth and survival traits of the two separate strains of SMEs. The themes that surface from the compiled data are analysed to formulate propositions on the how's and why's of varied business performance by location. Three core research questions guide this study:

- RQ<sub>1</sub> – What are the key motivation differences between rural and urban entrepreneurs?
- RQ<sub>2</sub> – What is the perception of success for rural and urban entrepreneurs?
- RQ<sub>3</sub> – Why do entrepreneurs in rural and urban settings start their businesses, and what are their goals and aspirations respectively?

These three questions provide an opportunity for themes to surface around the topics of motivation and perception of success. The specific themes of the research within the topics of motivation and perception of success are open. Therefore, natural themes and non-influenced links can potentially be formed, creating a reliable data collection and analysis.

## **Motivation and innovation in entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship has core links with innovation and business success and it is a key part of exploiting opportunities and environments with proper evaluation. Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) explore the link between entrepreneurial innovation and strategic management, concluding that businesses can use innovation alongside strategic management to increase success and growth. Zahra (1993) supports this assessment, concluding that growth directly involves innovation and entrepreneurial activity. The hypothesis that entrepreneurial mentality relates to positive financial performance is also assessed, specifically in the introductory and decline stages of the product lifecycle (Wijewardena et al. 2008).

Entrepreneurship literature is predominantly based on quantitative research methods (McDonald et al. 2015), strengthening the existing conceptions of drivers for growth. However, this creates bias and it fails to introduce new theories and to open up the scope of the literature (Crook et al. 2010). Braidford et al. (2017: 852) add that “further research along established lines can only marginally add to our understanding”. This presents an opportunity for the topic to be explored through qualitative research methods, opening up the scope and presenting new theories to the literature. They argue that it may be that the questions are not being asked in the right ways.

The entrepreneurial driver of motivation to grow has been touted as directly correlating with business growth. Entrepreneurs who are at disposition to grow encounter fewer obstacles than those less inclined to grow (BIS Enterprise Directorate 2011, Allinson et al. 2015). Braidford et al. (2017) conclude that growth-inclined owners were more likely to succeed in the long term, whereas the owner’s resistant to growth are more likely to conclude that they cannot grow due to barriers that cannot be surpassed. Accordingly, it can be assumed that entrepreneurship has been proven to be linked with high motivation (Carland and Carland 1991, Sexton and Smilor 1997), but there has been a neglect of the question ‘what motivates different types of entrepreneurs geographically?’. A lack of literature in the study of motivation for rural entrepreneurship has been previously identified as well (Eschker et al. 2017). The birth of such enterprises is often due to a need in a local area and if they succeed, their success contributes to the success of that locality (Eschker et al. 2017). A distinction of rural entrepreneurship, including an analysis of the traits of rural entrepreneurs, is delved into by Korsgaard et al. (2015). Their research allows for an increase in engagement with rural entrepreneurship on an academic scale.

### **Rural and urban entrepreneurship**

Some business owners can also be biased towards their home locations and they can be more likely to remain in the area than to move, even if it means lower costs or better opportunities (Dahl and Sorenson 2010). People sometimes also like to stay in rural

environments because of the quality of life and environment (Brereton et al. 2011). This analysis links the urban and the rural entrepreneur together, with comparable traits of naturally working within home locations and a lack of want to relocate, regardless of opportunity elsewhere. Other literature linking location choice to success suggests that the entrepreneurs who enter more competitive regions have higher failure rates (Sorenson and Audia 2000), which goes against the traditional agglomeration economics. However, this poses the question if certain entrepreneurs who are based in geographical locations that are not optimal for their businesses, for example, rural locations, sacrifice their business success for having quality time with their loved ones. On the other hand, Dahl and Sorenson (2012) and Vallance et al. (2020) suggest that these local connections could also spur success. For Dahl and Sorenson (2012), the prior experience in a region positively affects the success of a business. Klepper and Sleeper (2005), and Dahl and Reichstein (2007) highlight an increased chance of success for start-ups if the owners have prior experience in the industry. Similar to Eriksen and Sundbo's (2016) findings, these findings complement each other and they show that industry and regional expertise can be looked at together as drivers for a successful business. Regional competitiveness has been a key factor in the economic growth of these regions and the attraction of entrepreneurial activities (Aristizábal et al. 2021, Dziekański 2021).

The reason for the start-up of many rural enterprises differs from the traditional motivations of entrepreneurs (Ukanwa et al. 2022). Many rural owners start enterprises to create employment, to meet local area needs, and to be their own boss (Walker and Brown 2004). This goes against the traditional motivations for SMEs, striving for growth and they often have mainly financial motives (Carland and Carland 1991, Sexton and Smilor 1997, Walker and Brown 2004). These motives for starting up a rural enterprise can reflect goals and motives going forward. For example, many rural entrepreneurs aim to stay within a rural community, providing employment and helping to sustain the community, higher than the traditional aims and objective of profits and growth (Besser and Miller 2013). Such differences potentially impact the lack of funding to most rural enterprises, alongside their concentration in low-growth sectors (Barkley et al. 2006). Also, monoindustrialism could be a limit for entrepreneurs, mainly in rural areas considering Eastern Europe (Risteiu et al. 2021), as in the case of the Roşia Montană area, or in a European avant-garde city, where entrepreneurs pushed the city authorities to fast and in-force developments (Vesalon and Creţan 2019). Scholars researching rural entrepreneurship have highlighted a need for further research into rural entrepreneurship, specifically in the UK. This is due to extensive literature from the developing world that is not fully useful in the UK context (Smith 2017). However, research on rural entrepreneurship in the UK, and specifically Scotland, analyses entrepreneurship in Aberdeenshire fishing villages and it concluded that many rural entrepreneurs are looking less at growth and a large profit but they are aiming for long term survival and local success (Smith 2006).

Much more common than their rural counterparts, literature focusing on urban entrepreneurship has a developed understanding of urban entrepreneurship as a concept (Osorio and Özkazanç-Pan 2014). Osorio and Özkazanç-Pan (2014) define urban entrepreneurs as “promoters of urban economic development”, pushing the notion that urban business does not always have geographic boundaries but instead it should be named on their business practice in urban settings. Urban entrepreneurship literature has traditionally been focused on growth (Zahra 1993, Sexton and Smilor 1997, Barringer and Bluedorn 1999, Wijewardena et al. 2008, Fritsch and Kublina 2018). The UN estimates that over two-thirds of the world population will be living in cities by the year 2050. Understandably, the entrepreneurship literature has focused on entrepreneurial activities in an urban environment (Muñoz and Cohen 2016), as this growth has and it will provide more innovation opportunities spurring entrepreneurial activity in urban economies (Săgeată 2014, Anyadike-Danes et al. 2015, Tavassoli et al. 2021). Investments by entrepreneurs in an urban context can occur at various levels as Crețan (2019) reports in his case study on entrepreneurs investing in sports, where a large investment of money in a football club brought inequality at the local level in the city of Timisoara. The policymakers often focus more on the urban areas as well (Lang et al. 2022). Policymakers have encouraged the creation of entrepreneurship support programs that foster social inclusion and create socially mixed neighbourhoods, despite the difficulties that persist in terms of social desegregation, as shown in the studies developed by Crețan et al. (2020) and Méreiné-Berki et al. (2021).

The analysis of the difference between rural and urban entrepreneurship has pushed the notion that this is simply a geographical difference with little to no characteristic difference (Stathopoulou et al. 2004). Agglomeration economies, a major topic of urban economics, goes against this theory. A large body of research disagrees with the work of Stathopoulou et al. (2004) and it uses qualitative and quantitative research methods to disprove their theory (Walker and Brown 2004, Korsgaard et al. 2015, Smith 2017, Carson et al. 2018).

## **Research gap**

The literature on entrepreneurship has many areas of focus that are better explained in a conceptual model. The conceptual model of Figure 1 is made to reflect and to map out the literature to show the gap in the market that the research attempts to fill.

The literature on urban entrepreneurship has a wealth of research on the growth of SMEs, and the motivations and innovative qualities of these entrepreneurs (Oke et al. 2007, Blackburn et al. 2013, Gupta et al. 2013, Wright et al. 2015, Andersén and Samuelsson 2016). This information is useful for the research as it gives us an idea of the type of potential results that can be expected.

Many critics stress that the literature lacks focus on how and why firms grow, away

from the traditional theories (Konzelmann and Fovargue-Davies 2013, Anyadike-Danes et al. 2015). Research on linking the theme of enterprise location to business success specifically has been limited. Specifically, the perception of success, the aims and objectives, and the comparative motivations have lacked depth in the literature, which a comparative in-depth case study can address. Asking both urban and rural entrepreneurs from the same region of the same culture the same questions in a semi-structured setting will make comparisons easy and they allow respective links and themes to naturally occur, rather than to be influenced by the researchers.

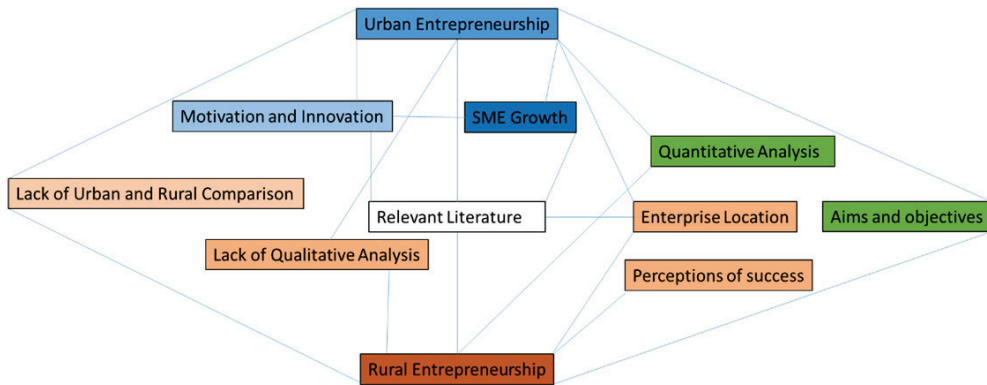


Figure 1. Reflective conceptual model

The research on rural entrepreneurship is also limited. However, it does focus on the different aims and objectives and motivations that the business in these rural regions have. The traditional research on entrepreneurship that has been conducted in urban environments finds that motivations of growth go hand in hand with more or less any SME. In comparison, the research on rural entrepreneurship has come back with contrasting findings. Rural entrepreneurs are more motivated by the opportunity to create employment, providing a service to the local community, and filling a gap in the local market (Barkley et al. 2006). Furthermore, the perception of success is more focused on sustainable businesses or ‘slow money’ (Smith 2006, Smith 2017), rather than on rapid growth.

The North-East of Scotland is a hotspot for innovation and entrepreneurship in the UK. It had 9.8% of start-ups with a £1m+ turnover in 2013, scaling to £3m+ in 2016, the highest in the UK (Kepka 2020). Enterprises in the North-East of Scotland are clearly entrepreneurial, yet the population of the communities in which these businesses operate also hold a level of entrepreneurialism (Haugh and Pardy 1999). This area of the country contains both rural and urban environments where both types of entrepreneurial enterprises thrive. This socio-economic decline in rural areas is a pressing issue that further emphasises the need for research on rural enterprises to be conducted (Smith 2006). Yet, as the urban enterprise flourishes in the ever-growing



urban environment (Muñoz and Cohen 2016), a case study methodology comparing motivations and priorities of rural and urban SMEs can give comparative analysis and potential reasons as for this discrepancy in success between urban and rural SMEs. Referring to the work of Lee et al. (2004) and Korsgaard et al. (2015), Mayer et al. (2016: 1) also suggest that “studies of regional economic development have either focused on urban or rural areas” independently. Hence, we aim to bridge the gap between rural and urban enterprises by conducting a comparative study.

## Methodology

There is a depth of positivist research in entrepreneurship (Wasim 2019). However, there have been several calls in the literature for further qualitative research to be conducted (Allinson et al. 2015, McDonald et al. 2015, Braidford et al. 2017). Allinson et al. (2015) suggests that further research with creative realism through Bourdieusian analysis is required to fill the literature. However, Braidford et al. (2017), who uses Bourdieusian analysis to conclude that growth-inclined entrepreneurs were less likely to perceive barriers as obsolete, suggest otherwise, stating that a positivist approach to researching business performance has critical limitations. There is a widespread view that positivist approaches have fundamental limitations that lead to a lack of comprehensive findings and analysis for the SME's growth and performance (McDonald et al. 2015). Hence, we adopt a relativist interpretivist approach for our research. Although, the lack of a positivist approach does pose some generalisation limitations. However, this promotes further research to be conducted using a relativist approach, rather than the aforementioned criticised use of the realist approach.

The success of the approach taken by Doern and Goss (2013), as well as the recommendations of McDonald et al. (2015) and Braidford et al. (2017), further the belief that qualitative data using a relativist approach will further the research on entrepreneurial motivation. This model attempts to explore factors affecting business performance and how these shape actual outcomes, which, in addition to the comparative qualities of the report, will aim to successfully analyse the motivational differences between urban and rural entrepreneurs and to explore their aims and objectives and classifications of success. Furthermore, the regional entrepreneurial effects are also an underexplored area (Szerb et al. 2019). This will be attempted using semi-structured interviews with three rural and three urban SMEs in the North-East of Scotland due to potential cultural findings that can be made, such as with Doern and Goss (2013). The qualitative data gathered can then be analysed and conclusions drawn, adding to the literature on SME business growth, survival, and motivation.

This study adopts a case study methodology to explore the effects of geographic location on the performance and perception of entrepreneurs. Figure 2 evidences the location of the case studies and the elements which support the analysis on the

influence of geographic location. According to Yin (2017), case studies enable exploring a phenomenon in depth considering the context in which it occurs and they allow to build an archive of descriptive material rich enough to allow subsequent re-interpretations, as entrepreneurship is very context dependent (Wasim et al. 2022).

The semi-structured interviews create a conversation-like discussion to keep the interview free-flowing and to acquire truthful and honest responses. The data gathered through the interviews helped us to analyse and explore the following aims and objectives. Firstly, the key motivations of rural and urban entrepreneurs were analysed through thematic analysis, finding links, and recurring themes throughout each set of entrepreneurs. Secondly, realising the perception of success for entrepreneurs was fulfilled by analysing the three urban entrepreneurs' answers and finding the recurring attitudes that are displayed in accordance with the question. The same process was followed for the rural entrepreneurs. Finally, comparing and contrasting the case study findings to assess the differences between urban and rural entrepreneurship and if these differences (if any) correlate to the differing financial performance, growth, and sustainability of each type of business. The comparisons and contradictions between the case study results could potentially lead to a critical evaluation of the broader topic.

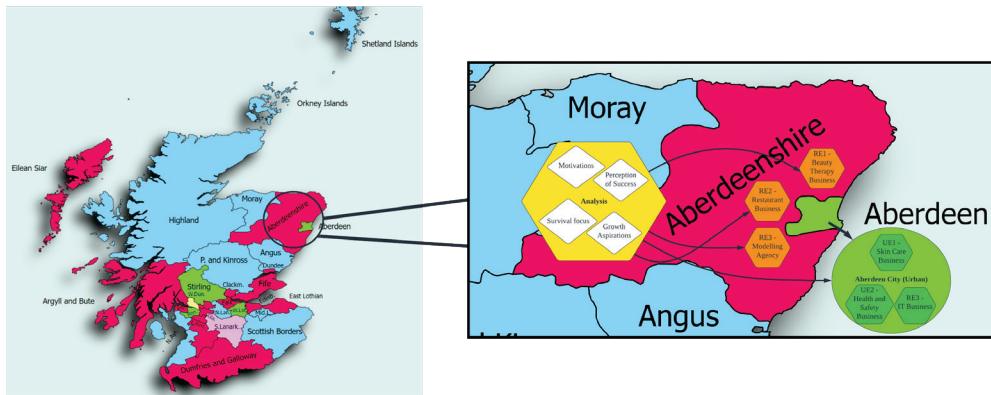


Figure 2. The location of the case studies in Scotland and the research design

The empirical data collection involved entrepreneurs that run enterprises in the North-East of Scotland. The case selection depends on the way instances differ in terms of value known to the concept. In this instance, the value is dichotomous to keep our observation and theory easily recognisable and determinable. Due to this, our case selection consists of six SMEs, compiling three case studies of rural and urban businesses, respectively. The entrepreneurs have been selected in accordance with operating in different industries from one another. This is to avoid data themes influenced by the culture or mindset of a specific industry. Therefore, the resulting findings and themes of each case study can be related back to the common trait of all cases in their respective geographical locations.

The analysis of data was performed using a thematic analysis process. It is a very flexible approach that is not linked to any specific theoretical bias and it is flexible in its use (Braun and Clarke 2006). The thematic analysis aims to find patterns in the data and it can form a proposition that can contribute to the current field of work. The thematic analysis will follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework (i.e., become familiar with the data; generate initial codes; search for themes; review themes; define themes; write-up). It offers a clear framework and approach to the analysis. The use of this framework leads to creating a thematic map to illustrate how the themes link together and interconnect with the urban and rural motivations (Figure 3).

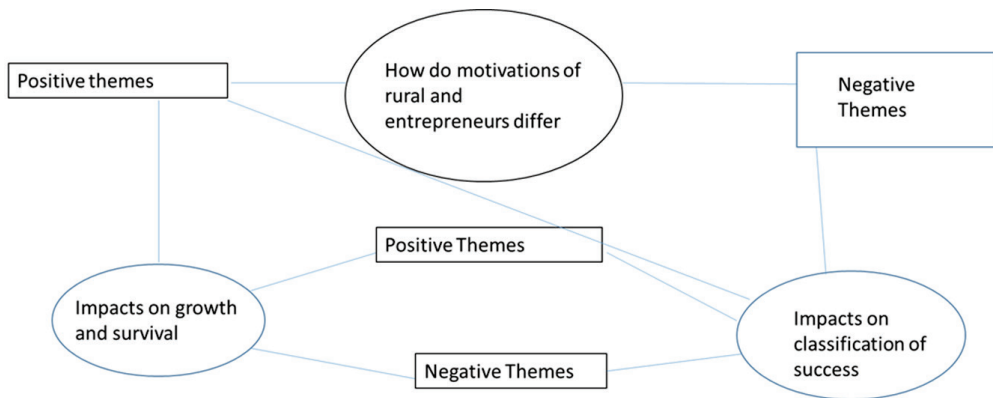


Figure 3. Conceptual model of a thematic map

Table 1 provides a brief description of each case study. In this research, each urban and rural entrepreneur are referred to as a UE or RE, respectively, followed by a number for each.

Table 1. Profile of the case studies

| Case study | Description   |
|------------|---|
| UE1        | A skin care clinic in an urban environment which now employs 15-20 members of staff.                            |
| UE2        | A health and safety company in an urban environment that employs 5-10 staff.                                    |
| UE3        | An IT company in an urban environment that employs 10-15 members of staff.                                      |
| RE1        | A Beauty Therapy business in a rural environment that employs around five members of staff.                     |
| RE2        | A restaurant in a rural environment that employs between 5-10 members of staff.                                 |
| RE3        | A modelling agency in a rural environment that is run solely by the owner and it has 30-40 models on its books. |

## Results

Figure 4 shows the links found through the thematic analysis process. These are the main themes that are being explored in the next two sections.

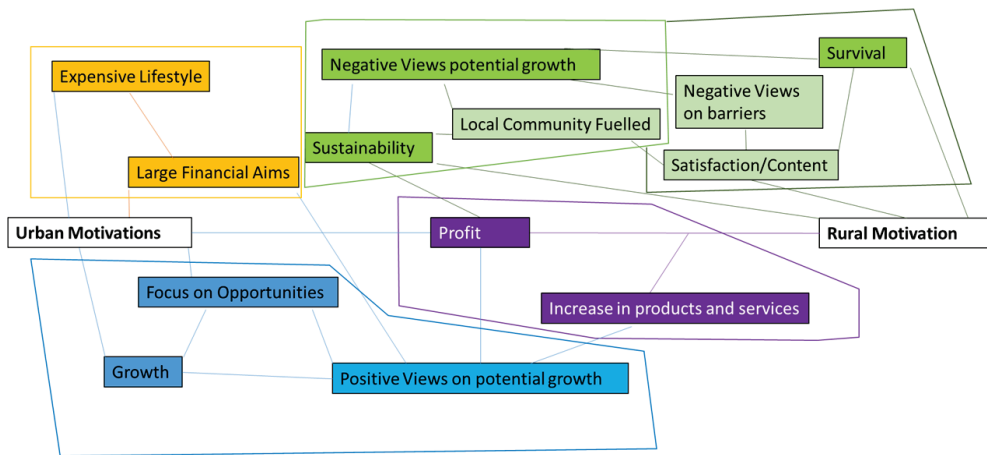


Figure 4. Model derived from the thematic analysis

## Urban findings

Financial aims are a theme throughout the interviews. Despite the inclusion of cases from different industries, the focus on financial aims, for example, franchising, selling the business, and large profits, were a continuous theme throughout the interviews. This can potentially be attributed to a more expensive lifestyle in the city. UE3 said that “folk in the city have a more expensive lifestyle, comparatively; all that stuff that goes with living in the city maybe makes people work harder and want to achieve more”. UE1 shares a similar vision when it comes down to making a profit and knowing that they are doing the job well. Job satisfaction counts more for them, but there also needs to be financial success, showing how important profits and business success are for the company. UE2 similarly shows this passion for making money, stating that business success means making a good profit that can give them a good lifestyle. UE2 and UE3 very closely link their motivations for profit to their desire for an increased quality of life, proving that many urban entrepreneurs go into business to be financially well off, and to be able to finance an expensive lifestyle. Furthermore, the motivation in terms of the future success and growth of the business is apparent in all three urban cases.

There is potentially a link between increasing urban business products and services that contribute to higher profits and success. UE2 speaks of how growth has led to the business being able to focus on the development of its product and the service it delivers. They mention that they now have more staff that can procure potential customers, which makes a big difference as it means that they can focus on the product that they offer, and how they can integrate that better and improve the service that they offer. We can observe that UE2’s plan to double the size of the business has gone hand in hand with the ability to offer an improved service and a more developed product. With the long-term goal of UE2 being able to sell the company for a ‘good profit’, we can link the development of products and services to the eventual profit of

selling the business once the growth target is met. UE1 and UE2 have similar stories to tell in terms of their urban setting, small start, and branching out and developing their product and service, in turn gaining large growth and profit. This shows that urban businesses' motivation to succeed financially with profit and growth often goes hand in hand with the quality of their product and the depth of product and service that they offer, which can relate back to having the innovative qualities to provide the product or service.

The links that have been found within the case study have shown correlations between large financial aims and an expensive lifestyle, where the success of the urban business can be attributed to the expensive lifestyle of the entrepreneur and the motivation to create profits, so this can be maintained. Conclusions have also been drawn with urban entrepreneurs being growth-focused and having positive views on opportunities. The urban entrepreneurs do not see obstacles as absolute but instead as steps in the road to opportunity and growth. They have clear views of growth and they did not see the lack of employees or the small business size as a problem but as an opportunity to grow. This shared motivated mindset on growth and profit can be seen as the main reason for the success of the business and a trait of urban entrepreneurs. Lastly, the theme of importance put on profit and the increase of products and services show how the urban entrepreneurs do not rest on their laurels but they rather push on even in successful times to increase profits and quality. This constant push shows the competitive and innovative nature of the urban enterprises for higher quality and profit. These three links among the characteristics of the urban entrepreneurs give an insight into why they see high levels of growth and profit within urban SMEs.

## **Rural findings**

The increase in products and services for rural businesses has also been a theme within the interviews. Still, the motivation behind the decision to increase the products and services is more influenced by sustainability and survival. RE3 speaks about how the quality of staff has led to the ability of the company to now offer more services. They state that they do not need to expand or to make themselves bigger as they have a good crew for what they do and the amount they do. When they started, they were just doing fashion shows. Now they can branch out with filming, acting, and photoshoots, enhancing the business's chances of sustainability and survival. This increase in services and products to have sustainability and survival shows that for this enterprise, innovation and the growth of offerings of the business are focused on survival and the ability to sustain business and work coming in, rather than mainly aiming to grow or to make a large profit. New products and services are therefore a constant in a business that wants to succeed. However, it is perhaps the aims and motivations of the entrepreneur that decide if this is for sustainability and survival or for profit and growth.

The rural entrepreneurs interviewed shared many similar views on success, aims, and goals. The increase in products and services for rural businesses has also been a theme within the data. However, the motivation behind increasing the products and services is more influenced by sustainability and survival. There were many links among cases, including a shared, somewhat negative view on potential growth. This is linked to an awareness of barriers. RE3 started a modelling agency over a decade ago based rurally and it works mostly in rural locations with rural clients such as hotels, kilt-makers, etc. RE3 said: "I want profit for the future, but there is no money in the market, which creates huge barriers". This statement shows that although a want for profit is there, the lack of money in the service that they provide creates a barrier for making more money. This view on obstacles is followed by RE2, a restaurant owner who opened the business two years ago. They explain that the long-term goal was to expand when they first opened, but they never realised how many barriers there were and how hard it would be. RE2 highlighted a similar obsolete nature of barriers to growth, showing a negative attitude towards it. These negative views on the potential growth of the business have possibly kept these two businesses from growing. They do not look to overcome issues but instead to accept them as a reason for resting on their laurels and simply sustaining the current business and clientele. This shows that potentially there is a lack of motivation to grow and drive to succeed among rural entrepreneurs, which may be the reason that they have set up rurally, as there is no space to grow. This could also suggest that rural areas attract less growth-motivated entrepreneurial start-ups.

Local community satisfaction and the aim to serve the local community was a recurring theme in the cases. RE1 speaks about their aims for the business going forward as keeping the clients happy. They want to offer a friendly salon that is not just about making a lot of money, but providing a service for the local community and a "nice friendly place". For them, the rural area is handy for the local community with the free parking and it is local, so they would not want to expand. Although these entrepreneurs want to create a successful business, they are not financially motivated. This shows that sustainability and survival may be more of a priority for them than growing and making large profits. RE2 also follows the theme of focussing on providing a good service to the local community, affirming that as they offer more services and products to the local community with their team that has been built over their first year. They aim to increase stability and sustainability within the community. A strong sense of community is yet again shown in this finding. Rural businesses seem to be more focused on contributing to the community than on growth and they are motivated by this as business success rather than huge financial gain.

## **Comparative analysis**

Table 2 provides a comparative analysis of urban and rural entrepreneurs considering the established research questions.

Table 2. Differences between urban and rural entrepreneurs

| Urban entrepreneur   | Rural entrepreneur   |
|--|--|
| <i>RQ1. What are the key motivation differences between rural and urban entrepreneurs?</i>   |  |
| High motivation to grow and expand   | High motivation to provide high-quality to the local community |
| Aims for profit and financial success  | Aims for long term sustainable income to ensure survival       |
| Highly competitive, aims to be the best  | Aims to provide high-quality to sustain business               |
| <i>RQ2. What is the perception of success for rural and urban entrepreneurs?</i>   |  |
| Consistent growth  | Locally acclaimed  |
| Market leading   | Sustaining a long-term clientele                               |
| Consistent profit  | Survival   |
| <i>RQ3. Why do entrepreneurs in rural and urban settings start their business and what are their goals and aspirations respectively?</i> |  |
| Wanting to be their own boss   | Wanting to be their own boss                                   |
| Spotting an opportunity to create a profitable business model  | Spotting a gap in the local market                             |
| Being able to make money that can afford an expensive lifestyle  | Providing a service to the local community that is sustainable |

## Discussion

### Key motivation differences between rural and urban entrepreneurs

The case of urban entrepreneurs highlighted a focus on high motivations surrounding growth, profit, and general financial success. These motivations were attributed to the urban entrepreneurs longing for an expensive lifestyle. Urban entrepreneurs often go into business, intending to be financially well off and to be able to finance a luxurious way of living. Further, the urban entrepreneurs' increased drive for these financial successes introduces the suggestion that urban areas attract individuals that are more motivated in this way, due to a more expensive and luxurious lifestyle, in comparison to more rural locations. This leads to higher growth and profit in urban regions. However, the higher competition and the risk factor associated with exploiting novel opportunities to grow can also lead to a higher failure rate. The literature also evidences that by tying risk and failure with growth and innovation (Sorenson and Audia 2000, Habersetzer et al. 2021). Comparatively, rural entrepreneurs had a higher motivation to provide a high-quality service for their local community. This is also evident in Eschker et al. (2017). This reveals a potential reason as to why growth may not be as rife in rural locations, as rural entrepreneurs are not willing to sacrifice the quality of service to the local community for growth. Furthermore, rural entrepreneurs have shown that often their initial motivation to start the business was not of huge



financial gain, unlike the typical urban entrepreneur, but to provide a sustainable service to the local community, which complements the work of Walker and Brown (2004) and Smith (2006, 2017).

Urban entrepreneurs have been found to have a positive approach toward success in general. They had a very positive view of future plans and success. Little to no obstacles or potential obstacles were mentioned and opportunities were a prominent element of every conversation. This correlation leaves the researcher to observe that the higher growth and profit rates of urban businesses may be related to the positive mindset of their owners and the positive attitude towards future opportunities. These opportunities can be focused on and they can be used to innovate and expand the product that the business offers, which backs up the findings of Zahra (1993).

On the contrary, rural entrepreneurs take a more negative approach. The rural entrepreneurs tend to pick out the obstacles to any potential growth or potential higher profit and they focus on these negative elements rather than the opportunities themselves. The general negativity and focus on why high-level profit and growth cannot be achieved, compared to the urban positivity and certainty of growth and profit, show how the entrepreneurs' positive approach towards business opportunities and future business success influences the business path. These findings contest the work of Stathopoulou et al. (2004), which states that the geographical difference has little to no correlation with a characteristic difference. Furthermore, rural entrepreneurs have a larger focus on survival and sustainability, partly due to the lack of risk-taking and content in the product and the lifestyle that the current business brings in.

### **Perception of success for rural and urban entrepreneurs**

Each case was chosen not only because of being a rural or urban business but also for being a successful business. There was a clear comparison to be made on the differences in what success was classed as for rural and urban entrepreneurs, respectively. The urban case study revealed a general feeling that success comes down to making a profit, growth, and financial success. The reasoning for such included wanting to leave a legacy behind and the eventual aim to sell the business for profit. The urban entrepreneurs set out to create a business where they can make their own money for themselves, reflecting on what is classed as a success for these entrepreneurs.

Urban entrepreneurs are believed to have unlimited opportunities to make uncapped earnings. They keep looking to grow and to generate greater financial gains. The idea that this motivation and inclination to grow can directly affect the financial success and growth of the business is not new; Allinson et al. (2015) and Braidford et al. (2017) came to similar conclusions in their research. The rural case study revealed a contrasting opinion on success subjectively, as their motivations were not always growth or financially driven (Sriram et al. 2007).



## **Goals and aspirations of rural and urban entrepreneurs**

The rural entrepreneurs explained that the reasoning behind starting the business was to fill a gap in the local market. There was a product or service that was lacking in the community and the entrepreneurs capitalised on this by starting the business. The success of these businesses for the rural entrepreneurs is not growth-based. In fact, quite the contrary. Two of the three businesses have been in operation for over a decade and so look to sustain their work by retaining client bases. While the third continues to build their clientele to begin making a profit to improve the product further. The consensus in the empirical findings was that success for rural entrepreneurs is to sustain the business and to keep the business going by providing a service to the local community. This theme correlates with the literature closely, and the in-depth nature of the findings further adds to its legitimacy (Walker and Brown 2004, Smith 2006, Smith 2017).

For two of the rural cases, the business was at one time a full-time job but it is now a part-time hustle. This may appear as a lack of commitment. However, this is how many rural entrepreneurs might like to operate, as it is not all about the money for them. The rural entrepreneurs did emphasise the focus on providing a service to the local community that would not be there otherwise. So success for these businesses is often more based on providing this service and on retaining clientele. This contrasting view on success can show why growth and increased profit can be a struggle in rural enterprises, as they may not wish to grow or they are highly motivated to do so either. Furthermore, the urban enterprise has come into the business as they see an opportunity to work for themselves and to provide themselves with uncapped earnings in the process, as suggested by Wijewardena et al. (2008) as well. The business goals of the urban entrepreneurs are high growth and high profit. This is what they aim for from the beginning, and their target market can be global compared to rural enterprises, which are often started only to fill a local gap.

The research contributes to answering the question posed by Konzelmann and Fovargue-Davies (2013) of 'winners to pick' in investment for SMEs, as the findings link motivation, success, and geographical location. This area of research should consider the findings in this paper, among others, to help answer the question posed, spotting potential high growth and profit companies from a young age. The research also adds to the partial literature that assesses the certainty of whether an SME will or will not grow or succeed, finding specific characteristics and traits of businesses and their owners that directly correlate with growth, profit, and sustainability. Moreover, the adopted qualitative research approach has created in-depth analysis previously lacking in the literature, specifically in the UK rural-urban context. The research contributes to the literature assessing the positive relationships between motivation and growth (Allinson et al. 2015, Braidford et al. 2017), and it touts the motivation to grow and to make a profit as a key characteristic of future growth and profitability.

We further contribute to the regional business literature and build on the existing findings (Florida et al. 2017, Szerb et al. 2019).

We fill a gap in the literature of a comparative study assessing the performance of SMEs based on location. The findings contribute to the literature regarding the motivation and perception of business success. The studies exploring urban and rural entrepreneurship using comparative case studies give new insight into understanding the link between geographic location and success.

Although the amount of businesses used in the case study made the data more informative and in-depth, a larger business dataset would create a more robust argument. Further, nationwide businesses, rather than in and around the North-East of Scotland, will potentially further analyse our propositions to confirm the results in larger geographic contexts. Further research should consider a larger sample of businesses to legitimise our findings and propositions, as it would also increase the geographical scope of the research to eliminate geo-cultural opinions. A case study approach was vital to the research as in-depth answers and opinions were needed to formulate the propositions. However, further research testing the conclusions focusing on generality would be advised using questionnaires or similar canvas methods to see a less thorough but denser response rate and to further examine the research propositions.

## Conclusions

Our study aimed to understand the links between the enterprise location, the entrepreneurial motivation and the perception of success. These links show how the mindsets of entrepreneurs in different locations affect the performance of the business. The rural findings related firmly to success being based on sustainability and providing a good service for the local community, whereas the urban findings were very growth and profit-focused. The urban entrepreneurs were in business because they wanted to be the best and to come out the other side with wealth and an amount of money that could afford an expensive lifestyle. On the other hand, rural entrepreneurs wanted to keep the business going by retaining customers and sustaining income year on year. Urban areas tend to attract people who have or want a more expensive lifestyle and want to achieve more financially. They are usually motivated to grow the business, and in some cases, they have started the business rurally to keep costs down, with the eventual plan to become urban. Rural areas tend to lend themselves to business owners that have a set market base in front of them to provide to and they are often only created to serve the purpose of filling a gap in the market. A lifestyle business that provides a service creates enough profit to keep the business going but no real growth or exit strategy to create a great financial gain.

We are not claiming that rural entrepreneurs are unable to create high-growth ventures

nor that an urban business cannot grow steadily and sustainably. Our findings suggest a trend where urban areas attract highly motivated, financially driven individuals who want to achieve a lifestyle that is expensive to maintain. Contrastingly, rural areas attract those who desire a more relaxed lifestyle that is not as expensive to maintain, leading to less motivation for high levels of financial success. This alone explains that although there are rural businesses that have come from a small local business to an international company, rural businesses are usually not started or operated with an intention to make massive profits and to grow out with the local community. They rather create a good enough income to justify its operation and to provide a service to the local community. Similarly, urban businesses can be operated on a small scale for the same reason. Still, there is an increased motivation when starting the business in an urban environment, with more competition and higher costs. Therefore, entrepreneurs have high aims to grow and to be profitable. Otherwise, the business will fall behind, which is a problem that many rural businesses do not have to deal with due to a lack of competition. Businesses will succeed if there is a market and motivation within the business. Still, the location has been making a difference in many cases regarding growth, profit, sustainability, and survival.

## References

- ALLINSON G., BRAIDFORD P., HOUSTON M., STONE I. (2015) Understanding growth in small businesses, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Retrieved from: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).
- ALMEIDA F., WASIM J. (2023) Eco-innovation and sustainable business performance: perspectives of SMEs in Portugal and the UK, *Society and Business Review* 18 (1), 28-50, <https://doi.org/10.1108/SBR-12-2021-0233>.
- ANDERSÉN J., SAMUELSSON J. (2016) Resource organization and firm performance: How entrepreneurial orientation and management accounting influence the profitability of growing and non-growing SMEs, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 22 (4), 466-484, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEBr-11-2015-0250>.
- ANTCLIFF V., LUPTON B., ATKINSON C. (2021) Why do small businesses seek support for managing people? Implications for theory and policy from an analysis of UK small business survey data, *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship* 39 (6), 532-553, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242620974586>.
- ANYADIKE-DANES M., HART M., DU J. (2015) Firm dynamics and job creation in the United Kingdom: 1998–2013, *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship* 33 (1), 12-27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242614552334>.
- ARISTIZÁBAL J. M., TARAPUEZ E., GUZMÁN B. (2021) Application of a fuzzy system to the analysis of entrepreneurial intention in Colombia, *Journal of*

- Urban and Regional Analysis 13 (1), 59-75, <https://doi.org/10.37043/JURA.2021.13.1.4>.
- BARKLEY D. L., HENRY M. S., LEE D. (2006) Innovative Activity in Rural Areas: The Importance of Local and Regional Characteristics, *Community Development Investment Review* 2 (3), 1-14.
- BARRINGER B. R., BLUEDORN A. C. (1999) The relationship between corporate entrepreneurship and strategic management, *Strategic Management Journal* 20 (5), 421-444, [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-0266\(199905\)20:5<421::AID-SMJ30>3.0.CO;2-O](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(199905)20:5<421::AID-SMJ30>3.0.CO;2-O).
- BESSER T. L., MILLER N. J. (2013) Community Matters: Successful Entrepreneurship in Remote Rural US Locations, *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation* 14 (1), 15-27, <https://doi.org/10.5367/ijei.2013.0104>.
- BIS ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE (2011) BIS Small Business Survey 2010, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Retrieved from: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).
- BLACKBURN R. A., HART M., WAINWRIGHT T. (2013) Small business performance: business, strategy and owner-manager characteristics, *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 20 (1), 8-27, <https://doi.org/10.1108/14626001311298394>.
- BRAIDFORD P., DRUMMOND I., STONE I. E. (2017) The impact of personal attitudes on the growth ambitions of small business owners, *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 24 (4), 850-862, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-02-2017-0035>.
- BRAUN V., CLARKE V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2), 77-101, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>.
- BRERETON F., BULLOCK C., CLINCH J. P., SCOTT M. (2011) Rural change and individual well-being: the case of Ireland and rural quality of life, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 18 (2), 203-227, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776411399346>.
- CARLAND J. A. C., CARLAND J. W. (1991) An empirical investigation into the distinctions between male and female entrepreneurs and managers, *International Small Business Journal* 9 (3), 62-72, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026624269100900304>.
- CARSON D. A., CARSON D. B., EIMERMANN M. (2018) International winter tourism entrepreneurs in northern Sweden: understanding migration, lifestyle, and business motivations, *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 18 (2), 183-198, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2017.1339503>.
- CREȚAN R. (2019) Who owns the name? Fandom, social inequalities and the contested renaming of a football club in Timișoara, Romania, *Urban Geography* 40 (6), 805-825, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2018.1472444>.
- CREȚAN R., MÁLOVICS G., MÉREINÉ-BERKI B. (2020) On the perpetuation and

- contestation of racial stigma: Urban Roma in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Szeged, *Geographica Pannonica* 24 (4), 294-310, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5937/gp24-28226>.
- CROOK T. R., SHOOK C. L., MORRIS M. L., MADDEN T. M. (2010) Are we there yet?: An assessment of research design and construct measurement practices in entrepreneurship research, *Organizational Research Methods* 13 (1), 192-206, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1094428109334368>.
- DAHL M. S., REICHSTEIN T. (2007) Are you experienced? Prior experience and the survival of new organisations, *Industry and Innovation* 14 (5), 497-511, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13662710701711414>.
- DAHL M. S., SORENSON O. (2010) The social attachment to place, *Social Forces* 89 (2), 633-658.
- DAHL M. S., SORENSON O. (2012) Home Sweet Home: Entrepreneurs' Location Choices and the Performance of Their Ventures, *Management Science* 58 (6), 1059-1071, <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1110.1476>.
- DOERN R., GOSS D. (2013) From barriers to barring: Why emotion matters for entrepreneurial development, *International Small Business Journal* 31 (5), 496-519, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242611425555>.
- DZIEKAŃSKI P. (2021) Entrepreneurship and competitiveness in the terms of endogenization of regional economy processes on the example of Eastern Poland poviats in 2007-2018, *Journal of Urban and Regional Analysis* 13 (2), 343-358, <https://doi.org/10.37043/JURA.2021.13.2.8>.
- ERIKSEN S. N., SUNDBO J. (2016) Drivers and barriers to the development of local food networks in rural Denmark, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 23 (4), 750-764, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776414567971>.
- ESCHKER E., GOLD G., LANE M. D. (2017) Rural entrepreneurs: what are the best indicators of their success?, *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 24 (2), 278-296, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-07-2016-0112>.
- FLORIDA R., ADLER P., MELLANDER C. (2017) The city as innovation machines, *Regional Studies* 51 (1), 86-96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2016.1255324>.
- FORTUNATO M. W.-P. (2014) Supporting rural entrepreneurship: a review of conceptual developments from research to practice, *Community development* 45 (4), 387-408, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2014.935795>.
- FRITSCH M., KUBLINA S. (2018) Related variety, unrelated variety and regional growth: the role of absorptive capacity and entrepreneurship, *Regional Studies* 52 (10), 1360-1371, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2017.1388914>.
- GUPTA P. D., GUHA S., KRISHNASWAMI S. S. (2013) Firm growth and its determinants, *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship* 2, 15, <https://doi.org/10.1186/2192-5372-2-15>.
- HABERSETZER A., RATAJ M., ERIKSSON R. H., MAYER H. (2021) Entrepreneurship in rural regions: the role of industry experience and home advantage for newly

- founded firms, *Regional studies* 55 (5), 936-950, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1826038>.
- HAUGH H. M., PARDY W. (1999) Community entrepreneurship in north east Scotland, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 5 (4), 163-172, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13552559910293119>.
- KASABOV E. (2016) Investigating difficulties and failure in early-stage rural cooperatives through a social capital lens, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 23 (4), 895-916, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776415587121>.
- KEPKA A. (2020) Business Startup Statistics UK, Fundsquire, Retrieved from: [fundsquire.co.uk](https://fundsquire.co.uk).
- KLEPPER S., SLEEPER S. (2005) Entry by spinoffs, *Management Science* 51 (8), 1291-1306, <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1050.0411>.
- KONZELMANN S., FOVARGUE-DAVIES M. (2013) 'Picking winners' in a liberal market economy: modern day heresy – or essential strategy for competitive success?, Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge, Retrieved from: [www.cbr.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cbr.cam.ac.uk).
- KORSGAARD S., MÜLLER S., TANVIG H. W. (2015) Rural entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship in the rural – between place and space, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 21 (1), 5-26, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEBr-11-2013-0205>.
- LANG T., BURNEIKA D., NOORKÕIV R., PLÜSCHKE-ALTOF B., POČIŪTĒ-SEREIKIENĒ G., SECHI G. (2022) Socio-spatial polarisation and policy response: Perspectives for regional development in the Baltic States, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 29 (1), 21-44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09697764211023553>.
- LEE S. Y., FLORIDA R., ACS Z. (2004) Creativity and entrepreneurship: A regional analysis of new firm formation, *Regional Studies* 38 (8), 879-891, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0034340042000280910>.
- MAYER H., HABERSETZER A., MEILI R. (2016) Rural-Urban Linkages and Sustainable Regional Development: The Role of Entrepreneurs in Linking Peripheries and Centers, *Sustainability* 8 (8), 745, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8080745>.
- MCDONALD S., GAN B. C., FRASER S. S., OKE A., ANDERSON A. R. (2015) A review of research methods in entrepreneurship 1985-2013, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 21 (3), 291-315, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEBr-02-2014-0021>.
- MÉREINÉ-BERKI B., MÁLOVICS G., CREȚAN R. (2021) "You become one with the place": Social mixing, social capital, and the lived experience of urban desegregation in the Roma community, *Cities* 117, 103302, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103302>.
- MUÑOZ P., COHEN B. (2016) The Making of the Urban Entrepreneur, *California Management Review* 59 (1), 71-91, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0008125616683953>.



- OKE A., BURKE G., MYERS A. (2007) Innovation types and performance in growing UK SMEs, *International Journal of Operations & Production Management* 27 (7), 735-753, <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443570710756974>.
- OSORIO A. E., ÖZKAZANÇ-PAN B. (2014) Defining the 'Urban' in Urban Entrepreneurship: Implications for Economic Development Policy, *Academy of Management Proceedings* 2014 (1), 12486, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2014.12486abstract>.
- RISTEIU N. T., CREȚAN R., O'BRIEN T. (2021) Contesting post-communist economic development: gold extraction, local community, and rural decline in Romania, *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 63 (4), 491-513, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2021.1913205>.
- SĂGEATĂ R. (2014) Globalisation and Urban Spatial Reconversion. Case-Study: Commercial Services in Romania, *Forum Geografic* 13 (1), 91-100, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5775/fg.2067-4635.2014.194.i>.
- SEXTON D. L., SMILOR R. W. (eds.) (1997) *Growth strategies: Entrepreneurship 2000*, UpstartPublishing Company, Chicago.
- SMITH R. (2006) Narrating the decline of subsistence entrepreneurship in a Scottish fishing community: 1934-2004, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 12 (1), 40-62, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13552550610644472>.
- SMITH R. (2017) Examining the characteristics, philosophies, operating practices and growth strategies of village entrepreneurs, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 23 (4), 708-725, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEBr-10-2016-0350>.
- SORENSEN O., AUDIA P. G. (2000) The social structure of entrepreneurial activity: Geographic concentration of footwear production in the United States, 1940-1989, *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (2), 424-462, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/316962>.
- SRIRAM V., MERSHA T., HERRON L. (2007) Drivers of urban entrepreneurship: an integrative model, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 13 (4), 235-251, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13552550710760012>.
- STATHOPOULOU S., PSALTOPOULOS D., SKURAS D. (2004) Rural entrepreneurship in Europe: A research framework and agenda, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 10 (6), 404-425, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13552550410564725>.
- SZERB L., LAFUENTE E., HORVÁTH K., PÁGER B. (2019) The relevance of quantity and quality entrepreneurship for regional performance: the moderating role of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, *Regional Studies* 53 (9), 1308-1320, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2018.1510481>.
- TAVASSOLI S., OBSCHONKA M., AUDRETSCH D. B. (2021) Entrepreneurship in Cities, *Research Policy* 50 (7), 104255, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2021.104255>.

- UKANWA I., XIONG L., WASIM J., GALLOWAY L. (2022) Microfinance and micropreneurship in rural South-East Nigeria: an exploration of the effects of institutions, *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 34 (7-8), 650-667, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2022.2087747>.
- VALLANCE P., TEWDWR-JONES M., KEMPTON L. (2020) Building collaborative platforms for urban innovation: Newcastle City Futures as a quadruple helix intermediary, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 27 (4), 325-341, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776420905630>.
- VESALON L., CREȚAN R. (2019) "Little Vienna" or "European Avant-Garde City"? Branding Narratives in a Romanian City, *Journal of Urban and Regional Analysis* 11 (1), 19-34, <http://dx.doi.org/10.37043/JURA.2019.11.1.2>.
- WASIM J. (2019) Closing the gap between university curriculum in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning in networks: an interpretivist constructivist approach, University of Portsmouth, Retrieved from: [researchportal.port.ac.uk](http://researchportal.port.ac.uk).
- WASIM J., VYAS V., AMENTA P., LUCADAMO A., MARCARELLI G., ISHIZAKA A. (2022) Deriving the weights for aggregating judgments in a multi-group problem: an application to curriculum development in entrepreneurship, *Annals of Operations Research*, 1-25, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10479-022-04649-9>.
- WALKER E., BROWN A. (2004) What Success Factors are Important to Small Business Owners?, *International Small Business Journal* 22 (6), 577-594, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242604047411>.
- WEBBER D., CURRY N., PLUMRIDGE A. (2009) Business Productivity and Area Productivity in Rural England, *Regional Studies* 43 (5), 661-675, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400701874156>.
- WIJEWARDENA H., NANAYAKKARA G., DE ZOYSA A. (2008) The owner/manager's mentality and the financial performance of SMEs, *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 15 (1), 150-161, <https://doi.org/10.1108/14626000810850892>.
- WRIGHT M., ROPER S., HART M., CARTER S. (2015) Joining the dots: Building the evidence base for SME growth policy, *International Small Business Journal* 33 (1), 3-11, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242614558316>.
- YIN R. K. (2017) *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, SAGE, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- ZAHRA S. A. (1993) Environment, corporate entrepreneurship, and financial performance: A taxonomic approach, *Journal of Business Venturing* 8 (4), 319-340, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9026\(93\)90003-N](https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9026(93)90003-N).
- ZHANG C. (2020) Skill Diversity of Cities and Entrepreneurship, *Regional Studies* 54 (3), 403-414, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2019.1699236>.