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**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN LITHUANIA:
INDIVIDUAL TRAJECTORIES AND
SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS**

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation
Social Sciences, Sociology (S 005)

This dissertation was prepared during the period of 2018-2023 and during the 2024 year at the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences under the doctoral program right conferred to Vytautas Magnus University Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences and Kaunas University of Technology on 22nd February 2019 by the Order No. V-160 and on January 18, 2021 by the Order No. 75 of the Minister of Education, Sports and Science of the Republic of Lithuania.

Dissertation is defended on a non-resident basis.

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The doctoral thesis will be defended at the public meeting of the Committee of the Sociology at 11:00 a.m. on 17th January 2025, at the Institute of Sociology, Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences.

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**MOTERŲ ANTREPRENERYSTĖ LIETUVOJE:
INDIVIDUALIOS TRAJEKTORIJS IR
SOCIOKULTŪRINIAI VEIKSNIAI**

Mokslo daktaro disertacijos santrauka
Socialiniai mokslai, Sociologija (S 005)

Mokslo daktaro disertacija rengta 2018-2023 metais ir 2024 metais Lietuvos socialinių mokslų centre pagal Lietuvos socialinių mokslų centrui kartu su Vytauto Didžiojo universitetu ir Kauno technologijos universitetu 2019 m. vasario 22 d. Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministro įsakymu Nr. V-160 ir 2021 m. sausio 18 d. įsakymu Nr. 75 suteiktą doktorantūros teisę.
Disertacija ginama eksternu.

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Mokslo daktaro disertacija ginama Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto, Kauno technologijos universiteto ir Lietuvos socialinių mokslų centro sociologijos mokslų krypties taryboje.

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Mokslo daktaro disertacija ginama viešajame sociologijos mokslo krypties tarybos posėdyje 2025 m. sausio 17 d. 11 val. Lietuvos socialinių mokslų centre Sociologijos institute.

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INTRODUCTION

The labor market is a primary source of economic activity and economic capital in modern society. Women and men operate differently in the labor market and business, their choices and challenges varying due to economic, social, cultural, and political circumstances that shape the overall opportunities to realize their professional potential and earn income (DeMartino, 2003; Adom, 2020; OECD, 2023). Women's professional career challenges can be associated with cultural traditions, societal and community attitudes towards women's work, social, cultural, and economic capital, political and legal restrictions, motherhood, and family dilemmas, as well as the woman's perception of identity (Rozell, 2010; Suarez-Ortega, 2016; Tomos, 2020; Adom, 2020). Despite their potential, women "drop out" of the labor market after the birth of children due to obstacles related to family obligations, and it is more difficult for them to work in traditionally male-dominated fields, making it challenging to remain competitive in the labor market throughout their working lives (Molina, 2020; Hentrich, 2022). Employment-related differences between women and men persist in entrepreneurship, with women more likely to establish companies related to service, care, and trade, which are less profitable compared to the construction, finance, and information communications and digital technologies (ICT) sectors, which are dominated by men (Lietuvos oficialiosios statistikos portalas, 2023). Previous research on female entrepreneurship highlights that the women created enterprises are more stable, they last longer than "male" enterprises, and due to the social elements that women often implement in their companies, women are considered developers of social change, and their businesses are regarded as industries of the future (Adema, 2014, Audretch, 2020; Cardella, 2020).

The novelty, relevance, and problem of the thesis. Entrepreneurship is primarily associated with new technologies, the development of digital solutions, and innovations, which are evident in information

communications and technology (ICT) companies, though innovations spread across all sectors, where the right conditions arise (OECD, 2018; Audretsch, 2020). Innovation can be considered as “the process of responding to societal and economic needs with new ideas and creating new products, services or business and organizational models that are successfully introduced into existing markets or can create new markets” (Lithuanian Innovation Strategy 2010-2020, 2010: 1). One of the most essential characteristics of market participants in the modern economy has become the ability to be competitive, respond to changes, act meaningfully, create added value in a specific area - to be an entrepreneur (Gartner, 1990; Audretsch, 2007; Angel, 2018; OECD, 2023). Summarizing the authors’ insights on entrepreneurship, this phenomenon relates to various areas of life and could be found in multiple sectors - business, science, and culture - where there are prerequisites for its emergence, the most important of which is human capital (Schumpeter, 1934; Gartner, 1990; Stevenson, 1995; Venkataraman, 2000; Knight, 1982; Steyaert, 2008; Morrison, 2006; Ruef, 2015; Fillis, 2010). In sociology, it is associated with cognitive capital, knowledge, skills, abilities, and cultural capital: this is the education and experience that is acquired, as well as values, manners, and behavioral characteristics (Bourdieu, 1986; Grenfell, 2019; Huang, 2019; Stahl, 2022). In Lithuania, in the business environment, in the context of commercial activity development, and as a translation of the term *entrepreneurship*, the concept of *verslininkystė* is often used, which is more associated with the nature of the activity and the method of generating income (Lydeka, 1996; Stripeikis, 2008; Strazdas 2014; Tunčikienė, 2018). However, the concept of *antreprenerystė* is more often used in the context of enterprise and innovation (Schumpeter, 1934 [2017]; Žvinklys, 2006; Drucker, 2011; Novelskaitė, 2017), creative enterprise (Strazdas, 2014; Židonis, 2008). In the context of business and science, *antreprenerystė* is associated with a certain mindset, the ability to see new opportunities (Shane, 2003; Drucker, 2011; Simpeh, 2011; Norkus, 2014; Lounsbury, 2019; Rentschler, 2023). Both terms are often translated into English as *entrepreneurship*; however, it is necessary to distinguish these concepts and define their characteristics.

Entrepreneurship is one of the essential factors for economic growth and solving social problems. Active participation of women in the business

market affects not only economic and social targets by creating more new jobs and implementing social and environmental solutions in their enterprises but also reduces the financial risks of their families (Sarfaraz, 2014; Picciaia, 2017; Ughetto, 2019; Ilie, 2021; Dewitt, 2023). Obstacles to women's participation in the business sector arise from economic factors, resulting in unequal income from business and limited investment in women's businesses; political factors, resulting in a lack of strategic measures to ensure gender equality in the business sector; social factors, insufficiently ensuring women's opportunities to be active participants in the business market; and cultural factors, which reflect the attitude of society and individuals towards women entrepreneurs. These factors create disadvantages in the business market for women facing higher demands and greater challenges, outperforming male entrepreneurs to be recognized (Sarfaraz, 2014; Adom, 2020; Cardella, 2021; Ilie, 2021; Goldin, 2022). Prejudice due to gender stereotypes has a significant impact on the values and cultural attitudes of future entrepreneurs, and they also strongly affect the decisions, self-confidence, and motivation of women themselves to create a business (Peterson, 2013; Rembulan, 2016; Soomro, 2018; Molina, 2020). This is most visible in the distribution of funding, as less capital is invested in women, especially in areas dominated by men. (EC, 2018; de Bruin, 2022). Investments in women in strategically important areas, such as communications and information technology, account for less than 6 percent of all business investments in European Union countries (Female Foundry, 2024). The decline in investment in women's businesses is influenced by the unequal representation of women and men on the boards of business support companies, business angel networks, and venture capital groups, with only 15 percent of investors and business angels in Europe on average being women (in Lithuania – 17 percent) (de Bruin, 2022; GEI 2023). Unsecured equality between women and men in strategically essential sectors makes it difficult for women to participate in the business market (Ahl, 2006; Brush, 2012; GEI, 2023). Women also experience difficulties connecting to business networks, which limits access to relevant business information. (EC, 2018; Ughetto, 2019).

Entrepreneurship affects all areas of life, touching personal and family life, especially that of women, because after the birth of a child, motherhood

becomes an integral part of life, and decisions made when raising children are associated with the well-being of the family and professional choices and priorities (Matera, 2015; OECD, 2019, 2021, 2023). Women who choose innovative, dynamic, time-and-effort-intensive enterprises often have a more significant dilemma than just family or work, as their motivations differ from those of women conducting regular commercial activities. The main motivations for entrepreneurship, based on previous research, are to contribute to changes in society, solve socio-economic problems, make technological breakthroughs, and commercialize scientific inventions.

Scientific relevance of the work. Due to its connection with commerce, economics, and business management, women’s entrepreneurship is mainly studied using economic and management theories and research models. This provides knowledge about the functioning of women’s enterprises as economic entities, their competitiveness, financial capacity, and differences from male-run companies. This work draws on a sociological perspective, bringing to bear an understanding of the social context of women’s entrepreneurship, the social field, and women’s interactions with other actors. This helps to understand the causal relationship between the social environment, women’s experiences, and decisions to create an entrepreneurial business.

Practical relevance of the work. This study provides insights into when, under what circumstances, why, and how women engage in entrepreneurial activity. The period when women start a business at the macro level illustrates the impact of market dynamics, political decisions, and the legal environment on women’s decisions to start a business. At the micro level, it helps to understand how motherhood and family dynamics influence and shape women’s involvement in business creation and development. The motives driving women to start a business are linked in this study to diverse female experiences and individual professional aspirations, and the study highlights the significance of the social environment in women’s decisions and preparedness to embark on entrepreneurship. The developed typology of women provides knowledge about the differences among female

entrepreneurs and the factors that determine these differences, helping to understand the various contexts in which women pursue careers.

Previous research on the subject. Entrepreneurship research became popular in the context of technological progress in the 20th century as new business phenomena emerged and established themselves in the market. One of the first researchers was an economist, J. A. Schumpeter (1934), who clearly defined entrepreneurship and linked it to innovation, the ability to adapt to business changes, and to discover new ways to apply scientific discoveries (Schumpeter, 1934). The first isolated studies of female entrepreneurship appeared in the 1970s. Still, their number grew slowly until the 2000s, when the topics of women's employment and economic empowerment became relevant and famous both in the labor market and in the business sector (Ahl, 2006; Rona-Tas, 2005; Ruef, 2007, 2015; Foss, 2017; Yadav, 2016; Cardella, 2020, Pogessi, 2019). In Lithuania and other European countries, insufficient attention is paid to female entrepreneurs in the academic field (Brush, 2006; Foss, 2017; Lerner, 2012; Guščinskienė, 2009; Humbert, 2009; Lingappa, 2023). In Lithuania, research on women's career choices in business has focused mainly on women's participation and activity in the labor market. Also, it examines the family and work environment as opportunities to reconcile and find a suitable form of employment to balance family obligations with a professional career, which was analyzed by Reingardė (2006, 2009), Tereškinas (2009), Cinikienė (2011), Grigužauskaitė (2019), Maslauskaitė, (2008) and others. The insufficient knowledge about the conditions that lead women to start entrepreneurial activity, the social environment and family influence on women's decisions, and the formations of women entrepreneurs' cultural, economic, and social capital imply the need to study the phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship. It is also essential to identify the social, economic, political, and cultural factors significant for the formation and development of the phenomenon. **Therefore, the central question of the thesis is the following: under what socioeconomic conditions do women engage in entrepreneurial business, and what life and professional trajectories encourage women to engage in entrepreneurial business?**

Scientific problem. Women's entrepreneurship is perceived as one of the elements of socio-economic progress. Therefore, research in this area is relevant and encouraged, but there is a lack of knowledge about the sociocultural factors determining the phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship, the motives for choosing a business field and business model when starting a business, and the circumstances determining the start of women's entrepreneurial companies. So far, there have been attempts to study women's motives for changing the way they earn income, but it is not clear how business market conditions and women's own experiences affect the motives for starting a business, what role family, social environment, and women's social, cultural, and economic capital play. There is also a need for more clarity about how women act at different stages of life when starting a business, which stage is favorable for creating a business, and whether it is favorable for all women.

Practical problem. The strategic documents of the European Union and Lithuania emphasize the need to create favorable conditions for women to start a business, as this has a positive impact on women's employment, the country's social policy, helps to achieve economic gender balance, and supplements the business market with social elements, contributing to the solution of social, ecological, health and other vital problems. Most strategic documents are based on quantitative research results and periodic data collected at the national, regional, and global levels. Therefore, they focus on the most visible problems, such as lack of funding, low representation of women in information and communications, digital technology businesses, and on the boards of financing institutions, and also highlight the problem of reconciling women's career and family as an obstacle to women's professional careers. There is a lack of qualitative research on women's entrepreneurship, which would help supplement strategic directions with missing elements and allow for assessing the impact of political measures on the target group at the individual level.

The subject of the scientific paper is women's individual trajectories and socio-cultural factors determining entrepreneurship in Lithuania.

The purpose of this dissertation is to determine the connection between the individual experiences and cultural, social, and economic capital of women entrepreneurs with women's professional choices and decisions to create an entrepreneurial business, assessing the social, cultural, and political factors that determine women's opportunities to operate in the field of entrepreneurship in Lithuania.

The dissertation sets the following tasks to achieve the goal and analyze the problem:

1. conceptualize the concept of *moterų antreprenerystė* (women's entrepreneurship), revealing the differences from *moterų verslumas* (women's business activity), *verslininkystė* (business action) and other concepts related to women's participation in business;
2. examine the institutional aspects of the social field of women's entrepreneurship and the factors determining women's power positions within it;
3. identify social, cultural, and political factors that determine women's performance in the field of entrepreneurship to identify how they affect women's professional choices and decisions regarding entrepreneurial activity;
4. determine how female entrepreneurs use their social, cultural, and economic capital in the path of entrepreneurial activity and what the role of the family is in these processes.

The statements defended in the thesis:

1. The cultural, social, and economic capital available to women determines their positions of power and opportunities in the field of entrepreneurship.
2. Women's choices regarding entrepreneurial business are implemented based on women's life and professional trajectories, professional expectations, family values, and opportunities to reconcile these.
3. The formation and development of female entrepreneurship and equality in the field of entrepreneurship require specific conditions that may differ from those for male entrepreneurs, as they are associated with different economic expectations, cultural barriers, and different opportunities for starting a business.

Theoretical and methodological basis of this thesis

The theoretical basis of the dissertation is based on an analysis of the social field, which defines the interaction between women entrepreneurs and other members of the social field, as well as social relations, norms, values, and cultural elements that shape their behavior and actions. The research is based on Bourdieu's (1989, 1990) concept of the *Social Field*, which can be understood as a specific space for social activity, including both formal institutions (e.g., educational, political, or economic systems) and informal ways of communication and interaction (e.g., families, associations or communities), that is a place where societal norms, values, social stereotypes and other concepts that determine people's behavior and actions are formed.

To investigate what influence family experiences, roles, and relationships have on women's choices at different stages of their lives and how women, over time, resolve dilemmas arising in the interaction of family and business, the *Life Course Theory* was used. This interdisciplinary theory helps better understand the phenomenon of female entrepreneurship and determine how women's life and professional trajectories affect women's motives for creating an entrepreneurial business and choosing a business field or model. According to Elder (1998; 2003) and Giele (1998), previous life events shape the social trajectories of actors, encompassing family, education, and work experience, affecting the actors' behavior, opportunities, and constraints in the social field (Elder, 1998, 2003; Giele, 1998).

The structure of the thesis. In the first part of the thesis, the phenomenon of entrepreneurship is analyzed by Lithuanian and foreign authors. In this part, the use of the concept of entrepreneurship, the peculiarities of the concept, and the forms of entrepreneurial organization are explored. Research directions include economic and political assumptions of the phenomenon, women's professional careers, and gender equality in the entrepreneurial and family environment. This chapter discusses a woman's social, economic, and cultural background, which may determine a woman's choice of activity. The second part of the thesis presents the theoretical background of the work, covering the institutional context in which women entrepreneurs operate, sociological perspectives, paying more attention

to the actions of women entrepreneurs, and the interaction of women's individual experiences with structures operating in the social field. More attention is paid to Bourdieu's (1990) studies of the social field, including the use of social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital. This chapter also examines the life course perspective developed by Giele and Elder (1998), which is vital in analyzing women's career choices and experiences along the life trajectory. The third part presents the methodological background of the dissertation research and its empirical model. The context of the field of women's entrepreneurship is based on significant business indicators, strategic documents, and reports prepared in Lithuania, the European Union, and the world. The qualitative research identifies the types of female entrepreneurs operating in Lithuania. The conclusions present the main research insights into the individual trajectories of female entrepreneurs and the connection between cultural, social, and economic capital, as well as family and women's professional choices and decisions in the field of entrepreneurship. The list of approvals for publishing scientific articles and presentations is provided in Appendix 4. The results of the dissertation can be used in the context of the formation of women's employment policy and family policy as well as for institutions that create programs to promote women's entrepreneurship.

1. THE CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

More than 50 years ago, entrepreneurship was considered a male perspective since the business field was primarily considered a “masculine” sphere, and therefore, women’s participation in business was invisible in both the business literature and the academic field. Since interest in entrepreneurship as a field of study grew, women became one of the fastest-growing social groups in the business sector worldwide and, therefore, attracted special attention.

The term *entrepreneurship* belongs to the French school attributed to Richard Cantillon (1759) and means a person who undertakes an important project or activity and assumes the associated risks (Ruef, 2015). One of the most prominent economists and entrepreneurship researchers of the 20th century, Joseph A. Schumpeter (1934), considered entrepreneurship to be the ability to creatively use the inventions of scientists and find technological and commercial applications for them (Schumpeter, 1934). Authors in disciplines of economics and sociology H. H. Stevenson (1995), S. Shane (2000, 2003), S. Venkataraman (2000), D. Hjort (2008), C. Steyaert (2008), Morrison (2006), Ruef (2015). W. B. Gartner (1990) agree with the definition of an entrepreneur by J. Schumpeter (1934) and R. Cantillon (2001), however they interpret the use of the term in their own way. This term is used to refer to the creation and growth of new businesses, the unique use of valuable resources and the benefits derived from them (OECD, 1998), the promotion of progress, and new and better ways of solving practical problems (Strazdas, 2014; Jančoras, 2014). Entrepreneurship is compared to discoveries, the manifestation of creativity in making alternative decisions, and the search for opportunities in order to maintain a competitive advantage (Fillis, 2023). In Lithuanian public policy and administration texts, and often in academic discourse, the concept of *verslininkystė* is used alongside *antreprenerystė* (Židonis, 2008; Jerinabi, 2012; Rentschler, 2023). The use of the term **entrepreneurship** in Lithuania is complicated by the translation of *businessman* and *entrepreneur* and *entrepreneurship* into the Lithuanian language. Both terms are translated as *verslininkas*, and though the term *įmonininkas* is also found, neither

verslininkas nor *įmonininkas* reflect the meaning of the term entrepreneur described by J. Schumpeter and R. Cantillon.

The present thesis draws on R. Cantillon and J. Schumpeter's definition of *antrepreneris* and *antreprenerystė* to describe the English terms *entrepreneur* and *entrepreneurship*. The term *verslininkystė* is used in this thesis only in the context of business creation and organization of business processes, as well as in general terms about business as a way of generating income. *Verslininkai*, in this dissertation, are a group of people who carry out commercial activities and participate in business processes, including entrepreneurs (*antrepreneriai*), social entrepreneurs, innovators engaged in commerce, and individuals providing services independently. The main concept used here is *antreprenerystė* (entrepreneurship) in the context of establishing a new innovative business. *Moteris antreprenerė* (*woman entrepreneur*) is considered a female innovator who creates a new enterprise and assumes the personal risk for the entrepreneurial activities, uses new, untested technologies or unique materials to produce a new product or provide services, reorganizes the production structure or industry, implements new business management methods, leads innovative commercial projects, and solves a socially significant economic or social problem with the help of entrepreneurial tools.

Today's entrepreneurs enjoy greater freedom than the early corporate actors, having the ability to choose modern forms of operation, such as working as a freelancer, representing a corporation, and operating in specific segments where new models and technologies are being implemented. Entrepreneurs act in establishing and managing a new company, developing it into an independent and competitive market entity while delegating standard business processes to other entrepreneurs or hired employees. A key feature of this entrepreneurial activity is collaboration, which is essential for the entrepreneur, as innovation can only be discovered through interaction with other companies, products, or processes. Moreover, social affiliations are crucial for entrepreneurs, as these allow them to identify with and position themselves as part of a group, reinforcing their identity as entrepreneurs.

It should be noted that modern entrepreneurship was formed in the course of long-term political, economic, and social changes at the

intersection of the development of capitalism and the creation of a free market. As capitalism spread to all spheres of life, new trade relations, new forms of economic exchange, and business culture were created. These processes influenced social changes, new forms of work, organizations, and the formation of freelance work. With modernization, capitalism stimulated competition between market entities, as there was a need for a new approach to the production of goods, services, and business strategies, as well as the emergence of innovations. This created conditions for the emergence of entrepreneurs, who became accompanying “agents” of changes in the economy and the process of creating new businesses.

Women’s involvement in business was most influenced by the legal regulation of women’s education and work, as well as medical achievements in the field of women’s reproductive health, which allowed family planning and professional careers. Women’s involvement in the business sector, innovation, and businesses solving socio-economic problems began to be promoted only after the positive impact of women’s business on the economy was noticed. In the context of Europe and the USA, the increase in women’s employment and professional career opportunities is associated with changing public attitudes towards the role of women in the labor market.

In summarizing the topics discussed in the thesis, several aspects that are important for the further study of women’s entrepreneurship are highlighted. First of all, this dissertation deals with entrepreneurship, the creation of a new competitive and relevant commercial product or service for the modern economy, which may have additional sustainability functions significant for the modern economy, forms of social solutions, as well as aspects of scientific and technological innovations. Secondly, in order to understand women’s entrepreneurship in the modern labor market and relevant social contexts, it is important to take into account the historical prerequisites for the formation of this phenomenon, the conditions for the development of capitalism, and the development of the free market in different countries, since entrepreneurship was formed precisely during that period, during the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial economy. Thirdly, it should be noted that female entrepreneurship is a newer phenomenon than entrepreneurship in general. In the academic field,

this phenomenon gained interest gradually, from women's employment and participation in the labor market to the "new generation" of entrepreneurs who flourished at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The challenges faced by female entrepreneurs, primarily due to traditional roles for women and men, included issues of reconciling family and career, changing family models, stereotyping of women's and men's activities, political measures to ensure gender equality, social policy development, and women's economic empowerment.

The research and the authors' insights discussed in the thesis show that family environment and family dynamics affect women's entrepreneurial opportunities and career development, primarily due to the dilemmas of reconciling family, household, and professional activities. Family members, acting as a social system, influence each other by providing emotional support and practical assistance in the process of creating a business. This affects women's career choices and can determine their professional direction and their motivation to create a business. Although women's motivation to create entrepreneurial businesses is related to the woman's age, marital status, age of children, amount of economic capital, and opportunities to realize professional ambitions in the labor market, women's career opportunities in business change after starting a family and having children. The cultural identity of families is shaped not only by the values of the family members themselves but also by the family policy and family welfare models prevailing in the country, investment in social infrastructure, social protection, and measures ensuring gender equality in the labor market and in the family. Although entrepreneurs have the opportunity to earn more income in business than in paid work, they face greater challenges in pursuing a career in the business sector since the social system of many countries cannot quickly respond to market changes and the establishment of new forms of work and enterprises. That makes women entrepreneurs more socially vulnerable when raising children and balancing responsibilities related to childcare.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship is multifaceted, and therefore, it can be studied using different theoretical perspectives at the *micro, macro, and meso* levels. Psychological theories help to understand female entrepreneurs as personalities with certain business-specific traits and their motivation for activity. Entrepreneurial activity is understood as an environment of leadership, innovative management models, and processes in which entrepreneurs operate, apply their experience and knowledge, and develop new competencies, which can influence the organization itself in the future. Economic theories focus on women entrepreneurs as participants in the economic process and examine whether they comply with the rules of the game of the business market and can operate as successfully as men. In the context of a sociological perspective, Aldrich (1999, 2007), Briun (2006) and Shane (2003) investigated the emerging entrepreneur as someone who starts new activities, creates a new business, discovers, evaluates, and exploits opportunities to introduce new goods and services, new ways of organizing, markets, processes and raw materials, organizing processes that did not exist before, and operates in the social environment of business (de Briun, 2006; Shane 2003). In this way, the individual experience of the entrepreneur moves into the social field and interacts with other participants in the business market.

Entrepreneurship is linked to time and space, units of measurement of social space (reality). Many concepts of social spaces include three essential components: space, time, and sociality (Bjerke, 2010; Stam, 2020). How entrepreneurs operate in social space and what position they occupy as actors with specific resources, social relationships, and social networks define their social field. *Social field* is a local unit of a broader social space in which actors manifest themselves. The social world is a set of various fields, and each field is a separate relative space belonging to a certain type of activity (Hilgers, 2014; Meliou, 2023).

The field is one of the main concepts used by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984), which he formulates as an environment in which the situation of actors is defined as the result of the interaction between

specific field rules, the actor's habits (*habitus*) and the actor's capital (social, economic, cultural and symbolic) (Bourdieu, 1984). Economic capital, which is directly convertible into money and can be institutionalized in the form of property rights; cultural capital, which can be converted into economic capital and can be institutionalized in the form of education or qualifications; and social capital, which is made up of social obligations ("ties"), which are also, under certain conditions, convertible into economic capital and can be institutionalized in the form of titles or status (Bourdieu 1986). Symbolic capital is also distinguished, which, in Bourdieu's opinion, is the most important and has the most significant impact on position in the social field. Thus, any of the three types of capital can become symbolic capital, depending on the social field in which the capital is used (Bourdieu 1986). It should be emphasized that symbolic capital is not a separate type of capital but only the relationship of one type of capital to the social field. This theoretical concept can be used to study the field by giving significance to the historical conditions and the results of the activities of field actors (cultural production), defining the institutional and mutual relations of these actors. Bourdieu (1984) conceived the social world as a set of arenas (fields) of diverse practices, such as art, education, religion, law, and others, which interact with each other but are each independent of the others (Bourdieu, 1984). The study of the field of female entrepreneurship, based on the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu (1984), helps to understand the power positions of women in that field according to the size of the different types of capital they possess. The social field in which they operate has additional constructs, namely gender (identity) and motherhood (family), which puts women at a disadvantage compared to men in starting a business, as women have limited access to business resources, more barriers to operating in the market due to motherhood and cultural aspects and obstacles of professional identity.

Life experiences shape individuals' *habitus*, starting from childhood, in a family where all members influence each other. In addition, cultural capital is primarily formed in the family. If the family constantly changes, it affects the family's *habitus* as a whole (Bourdieu, 1990; Maton, 2014). A *Life-course* perspective was used to clarify what influence family experiences, roles, and relationships have on women's choices at different stages of their lives and

how women, over time, resolve dilemmas arising in the interaction of family and business. In this study, the “life course” elements, as understood in research and theory, are multiple social trajectories and their consequences for individual development (Elder, 1998). Previous life events shape actors’ social trajectories, including family, education, and work experiences, influencing actors’ behavior, decisions, and choices, which depend on the social structure and cultural opportunities and constraints in the social field (Elder, 1998).

The life course perspective is based on five general principles that help us understand how various social and personal factors influence an individual’s life:

1) **Historical time and geographical context.** Elder (1998) and Giele (2009) emphasize that each individual’s life is closely connected to the historical and social context in which they live. This means that individuals growing up in different historical eras or cultural environments face unique challenges, opportunities, and social expectations that influence the decisions they make throughout their lives.

2) **Life span development.** Human development and aging are lifelong processes, and development does not end at age 18. Understanding developmental processes is aided by a long-term perspective. Adults can and do experience significant changes — biological, psychological, and social — that are significant for development, such as changes in work.

3) **Timing of life events.** Early life experiences have a lasting impact on later life. Elder (1994) argues that events experienced in early childhood can influence personality development, social relationships, and future career choices.

4) **Linked lives.** This principle emphasizes the interdependence of lives in a social network. Individuals are not isolated; their lives are intertwined with the lives of family members, friends, and other social actors. Events in one person’s life can significantly affect the social trajectories of other related individuals. (Giele, 1998).

5) **Human agency.** This theoretical perspective emphasizes the individual’s ability to make choices and influence the course of their life. However, Elder (1998) emphasizes that these choices are constrained by the social structure in which individuals are embedded, such as family norms,

economic status, and educational opportunities. This theory provides a structured framework for analyzing an individual's life trajectories across time and social context. Life course theory emphasizes the importance of personal decisions and the influence of the social environment and historical context on an individual's life.

Concluding this part, it is essential to remark that the context of entrepreneurship is not simply constructed, and previous studies have highlighted its diversity and multifaceted nature, identifying five critical dimensions of the entrepreneurial context: time, industry, space, social and organizational, and ownership and governance (Welter, 2013, 2020). Based on these dimensions, the spatial aspect of the context is vital for research at the *macro* level (cultural factors, the legal framework, the political environment, and social norms), the *micro* level (organizational characteristics and business forms, individual trajectories), the *meso* level (factors that apply to organizations and individuals that shape the structures, practices, and behaviors of business enterprises and entrepreneurs) (DiMaggio, 1983). Summarizing these insights, it is essential to emphasize that a multi-level theoretical framework that draws on these different levels and promotes a multidimensional approach to the phenomenon is vital for research on women's entrepreneurship.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL FIELD AND SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This paper investigates how women entrepreneurs operate in the social field and what influence their family has on their social actions. The research model constructed for this purpose includes three levels - *macro*, *micro*, and *meso*. At the *macro* level, the institutional environment and institutional relations that shape the business market and gender participation in it are investigated. This level includes legal foundations and restrictions for business development and state support strategies for obtaining and using resources for business. The *macro* level perspective is used to determine measures that affect women's entrepreneurship and women's decisions. It also helps to identify gender differences in the business sector, the choice of professions, and access to business investments. At the *meso* level, the social interaction of family and individual decisions of women entrepreneurs is studied. Family dynamics (interactions between family members, family roles, family structure, and changes over time) affect the individual choices of women entrepreneurs and are influenced by a whole range of family circumstances, such as the involvement of the partner in family life, the division of paid and unpaid work in the family, the distribution of gender roles, family economic decisions, additional and primary income, values, cultural aspects. At the *micro* level, previous life events that determined women's interest in entrepreneurship, women's motives and needs that encouraged women to create entrepreneurial businesses, and personal traits and values are investigated.

The empirical research is divided into two parts: The first stage of the implementation of the entrepreneurship research model was the analysis of the social, economic, political, and cultural context of women entrepreneurs using an institutional perspective. That part included an analysis of the Lithuanian labor market and business indicators in the context of European and global countries, women's economic empowerment programs, gender equality promotion programs, and measures, as well as family and labor regulation. In the second stage of the implementation, the individual experiences of women entrepreneurs, the biography of the study participants,

life events and achievements, interactions with family and other individuals in the social environment, and significant periods of life were analyzed.

Women's entrepreneurship in Lithuania: institutional context.

Indicators of women's and men's involvement in economic activities and research on women's entrepreneurial behavior show the trends of Lithuanian women's entrepreneurship and draw attention to Lithuania's position in the European Union and world indicator ranks. According to these indicators, Lithuanian women stand out for their willingness to create a business and lead among European Union countries in establishing startups. The problem is that women's choice of enterprise sector relates to income generation. Women often operate in public service, education, art, and social services, but these are less profitable businesses. The gender gap is evident in important male-dominated fields such as construction, engineering, information, and digital technologies, as well as on the boards of large companies and business investment teams. This affects the distribution of economic capital between men and women and equality in the business market. Business statistics show that women's enterprises are more stable and female startups last longer on the market in comparison with male start-ups. Despite that, stereotypical attitudes towards women entrepreneurs prevent investors from ensuring equality in funding distribution.

According to the research findings, the habits of financing women's enterprises vary across countries. In the US, women's enterprises grow twice as fast as those founded by men, but women's income still needs to reach men's income and lags by a quarter in business sales. Since 1953, the US has been developing traditions of investing in women and implementing business promotion measures, specifically in women's companies. Targeted investment measures for women have also been established in Europe, but they need to be more widespread and challenging. In Lithuania, funding for women's enterprises is limited and focused on incentives for business loans but does not have a targeted impact on investments in women's enterprises. Therefore, women are forced to look for other financial instruments to finance their entrepreneurial activities. Targeted investment measures implemented around the world have a tangible impact on women's business development

and entrepreneurship, as they were directed at a problematic segment that ordinary measures could not solve. However, even in countries where targeted financing for women is available, restrictions are observed that prevent women from using all resources for business freely, and economic gender equality in the business sector is still not ensured.

Design of an empirical study of individual experiences of women entrepreneurs. To implement the second part of the empirical research model, qualitative interviews were used to collect data on individual women's experiences in starting their entrepreneurial activity. It revealed each participant's personal stories, dilemmas of combining family and business, the experience of starting a business, barriers that prevented them from realizing their business goals, individual achievements, events that accompanied them on the path to starting a business, personal motivation, and relationships with family members. The interview structure was based on the methodological foundations of the authors of the Life Course Perspective (Giele and Elder, 1998) to consider the subjective meanings of experience (Denzin, 2011) and to associate past events with business decisions.

The study aims to determine the connection between the individual trajectories, experiences, and families of female entrepreneurs and the professional choices and decisions of women in business that define women's participation in the field of entrepreneurship.

Research questions. The following questions were raised during the research: 1) When and under what conditions do women "enter" the field of entrepreneurship? 2) How do the families of women participate in the processes of creating and developing entrepreneurial activities and in the formation of an entrepreneurial personality? 3) What influence does cultural, social, and economic capital have on women's decisions regarding entrepreneurial business?

The participants of the study had to meet the following criteria: a) innovativeness of the activity (entrepreneurial business, use of innovations in various business processes, production of goods or provision of services),

b) business ownership (at least 50 percent of the shares, the highest management position, and personal responsibility); c) family status and composition, c) duration of business operation (at least one year), d) field of business. Determining the innovativeness of a business is a complex process that needs clear regulations in Lithuania; therefore, obstacles were encountered in determining whether a business was innovative enough to classify a participant as a female entrepreneur. Based on these factors, a larger group of women was chosen during the initial selection. A total of 30 in-depth interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs, but only 21 were analyzed because 9 dropped out during the research due to non-compliance with the criteria. Interviews with participants were conducted between May 2020 and April 2021 (during quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic), primarily using digital technologies and platforms.

The data analysis is primarily based on a typological analysis of women entrepreneurs, followed by a thematic analysis. The typology of women entrepreneurs is based on criteria that determine the circumstances of women's start-ups, the conditions for business creation, and their preferences for choosing a business. Thematic analysis was chosen as the primary data analysis method. It was developed based on Boudieu's (1990) social field research methods and life course theoretical elements (Elder, Giele, 1998).

Typology of female entrepreneurs. Women's choices about when and how to start a business vary depending on their situation, motives, and financial capabilities, but their interests and hobbies are individual. Considering these different situations, female entrepreneurs can be divided into types. The criteria on which the types of female entrepreneurs were determined can be divided into four categories and subcategories: 1) *The stage in one's life when one starts a business.* The conditions of a particular period may dictate behavior that would not be typical under other conditions (such as historical events and circumstances that occurred then); 2) *Social network and social capital.* A woman's social environment, family (including extended family), available material resources, and knowledge; 3) *Motivation to create a business.* The motives that encouraged a woman to start and develop her own business are assessed; 4) *Business and activity choices.* A woman chooses this area of business based on her expertise, experience, and needs.

These criteria correspond to the life course perspective (Elder, Giele, 1998), determining life events relevant to women's lives and Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1990) social field theory by including social capital and social networks.

Based on the criteria, **five types** of female entrepreneurs were identified (Table 5): **self-sufficient entrepreneurs, revolutionary entrepreneurs, mompreneurs, second-generation entrepreneurs, and conscious entrepreneurs**. When evaluating various types according to the criteria and subcriteria, it was observed that in most cases, one type does not meet only one subcriterion, but two, three, or more can be assigned to it. In such cases, when more than two subcriteria are assigned, the significant variable becomes that subcriteria to which this type is not assigned. For example, in the 1st criterion group, "Life stage when the business was started," *Conscious Entrepreneurs* do not meet only one subcriteria, "Infants (up to 2 years old)". This means they will start a business if they don't yet have children or the children have already grown out of infancy. *Mompreneurs* meet three subcriteria: Infants (up to 2 years old), Children before school age (3-6), and Primary school age (7-12). This means they will typically start a business when they have young children and will face all the challenges associated with caring for preschool and primary school-age children. The social network and social capital sub-criteria refer only to three possible situations or their mixed models; therefore, according to these criteria, how many sub-criteria will be assigned to each type of entrepreneur is insignificant. No more than two are assigned to each type in the motivation criteria. Dominant motives are distinguished, but it remains possible that, in specific cases, the person had more than one motive. In the business activity preferences criteria, no more than two criteria are assigned to each type, but exceptional business models are also possible, including mixed business forms.

The impact of time, age, and moment on women's involvement in entrepreneurial business. The time women choose to start a business depends on their assessment of their circumstances, as the business solves a specific problem that arises at that time, for example, the need to implement ideas while raising children and combining a career with motherhood. Age plays a vital role because age is associated with certain formal and informal

educational restrictions, such as children's birth and parents' age. In addition, the experience necessary for business is acquired over time and with age. The moment when a business is started may differ for different types of female entrepreneurs and depends on the individual assessment of their "favorable" situation. A favorable situation for *Self-sufficient entrepreneurs* may be that they have already raised their children and accumulated economic capital and do not see themselves as employees. *Revolutionary entrepreneurs* will be more encouraged by complex circumstances, such as changes in the business market, the geopolitical situation, personal experience, and the discovery of a business niche. For *mompreneurs*, starting a business by receiving additional support from the country (state aid, benefits, partner assistance) is favorable. *Second-generation and Conscious entrepreneurs* tend to start a business after their children attend educational institutions. By the time they start an entrepreneurial business, women go through a long journey of experience, accumulated knowledge, and having assessed their capabilities.

Motives and fears of women's participation in business. The following motives of female entrepreneurs have been distinguished: *the desire to combine the roles of mother and entrepreneur*, to take up business as a tool that allows them to implement ideas without giving up their role as mothers and taking care of their families; *the realization and recognition motive*, which encourages them to achieve higher results in business and be visible in the public space of business; *economic motives*, possession of economic capital and power; *the autonomy motive*, which encourages not to be depended on others and to take care of their own and their children's financial and social security; *impulsive*, encouraging to act "here and now," related to women's emotional capital. Fears and self-doubt often prevent women from starting a business, especially pertaining to financial responsibility, ignorance, and lack of confidence in their competence. It is emphasized that overcoming fear and developing self-confidence occurs through practice and personal experience. Fears and motives are related to the individual characteristics of female entrepreneurs, but motives refer to the need of women to develop a business; fears are related to emotions and attitudes towards themselves, business, family, and society. Elements operating at the micro level, such as

motives and fears for starting a business, are essential during the start-up period of a business but may change over time as the business develops. This depends on economic conditions, the needs of the woman herself and people in her social environment (for example, childcare), or personal ambitions. (Pardue, 2023).

Social, cultural, and economic capital of women entrepreneurs. According to Bourdieu (1992), actors are positioned in the social field according to their capital. According to the availability of capital, different types of women entrepreneurs are arranged differently in the field of entrepreneurship. *Revolutionary Entrepreneurs*, who have the most autonomy in their decisions, find themselves in positions of power. Since they manage large businesses, participate in female, male, and mixed business networks, are also invited to join strategic business development groups and receive awards and merits for their impact on the business ecosystem. They also have greater power over decisions in the family. *Second-generation entrepreneurs* can influence the field of entrepreneurship since they inherit their parents' businesses and manage family (parental) corporations. In addition, they form their cultural capital and business attitudes from childhood. However, considering individual cases, not all entrepreneurs of this type can influence the field of power. *Conscious Entrepreneurs* and *Self-sufficient Entrepreneurs* do not participate in the power positions of the entrepreneurial field because some lack knowledge at the beginning of the business, and others need business investments. *Mompreneurs* are furthest from the power field because, at the start of the business, they need both economic and cultural capital, which they can acquire by developing the business to a higher level. Entrepreneurs can move in this field over time by changing their capital and occupying new positions.

Family and entrepreneurship. When examining the distribution of family roles in different types of entrepreneurial families, the distribution of power in the home environment becomes apparent. In families where the husband's economic share is more significant, patriarchal norms are more likely to prevail; in the absence of additional workers, women tend to take on all household chores and childcare, but in families where the

share of women is greater or equal, models of equal partnership prevail when the husband shares household chores and childcare with his partner or additional workers are hired to perform household chores. However, rational decisions depend not only on the practical calculation of all possibilities but also on who has a more significant influence on family decisions - a man or a woman.

The research participants indicate that the husband not only becomes a source of psychological support and shares household chores, but in some instances, he becomes a “financial pillar” for the woman in developing her business and helping her make decisions. Partners of *Self-sufficient* and *Conscious entrepreneurs* are more likely to provide financially for the family when the woman starts her business. However, according to the women’s stories, *Conscious entrepreneurs’* enterprises grow faster than those of *self-sufficient entrepreneurs*, and their income eventually becomes the primary family income. *Self-sufficient entrepreneurs’* companies grow slower and devote less time to business since men tend to earn the central part of the family’s finances. Women of this type act without fear of financial risks, experience less stress in organizing business processes and have more free choices to plan working hours and their obligations than those working in hired work. These women have the least autonomy of all the types of entrepreneurs discussed since women will remain dependent on the man’s income and decisions, and the more significant burden of household chores will fall on the woman. Economic roles also affect the distribution of household and paid/unpaid work at home between partners, which affects women’s ability to devote time to business. In the families of *second-generation entrepreneurs* and *Conscious Entrepreneurs*, equal participation in both the labor market and business has been observed, in contrast to traditional models, which often limit women’s opportunities due to cultural prejudices.

The solutions for balancing family and work in the families of female entrepreneurs are diverse. *Momprenuers* and *Self-sufficient entrepreneurs* are more involved in motherhood than other entrepreneurs and devote more time to raising children. *Revolutionary entrepreneurs* tend to hire housekeepers to take care of the house and children. Children of *Second-generation entrepreneurs* and *Conscious Entrepreneurs* grow up in their mothers’

(parents') companies and spend a lot of time at their mothers' workplaces. It is important to note that different types of female entrepreneurial families exhibit different partnership models, some based on mutual support and responsibilities, while others prioritize one partner's career or business development. The role of a partner in women's entrepreneurial ventures is crucial, ranging from psychological support to financial support and participation in decision-making. Family can be a limiting factor for women when starting an enterprise, but it can also provide social and economic capital that provides privileges in the field of entrepreneurship.

Economic, political, and cultural obstacles to developing entrepreneurial business. The study revealed that obstacles for women entrepreneurs on the path to business creation include economic, institutional, and legal challenges, as well as personal dilemmas. The main challenges are related to specific business knowledge, lack of finance and investment, problems with reconciling family and professional activities, emotional factors, gender equality issues, and stereotypes in business. The study participants note that starting a business is notably lacking in professional and technological knowledge and business management experience, which is why they seek help from women's business networks to adopt good practices and attend additional learning programs. Reconciling family and professional careers is associated with family values and partner involvement, reflecting previous studies' results (Brush, 2012; EC, 2018; Matera, 2015). In addition, women entrepreneurs face emotional challenges, such as fear and self-doubt, which affect their decisions to start a business. Gender equality and stereotypes play a significant role, as cultural aspects and prevailing attitudes in society can have a negative impact on women's opportunities in the field of business. However, women entrepreneurs do not always recognize the manifestations of discrimination. Emotional factors are of particular importance, as they shape women's resilience to obstacles and inequalities in the business market and determine the formation of entrepreneurial traits.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of scientific literature empirical research has resulted in identifying the social, cultural, and political factors that influence the formation of female entrepreneurship in Lithuania. The analysis of the context of women's entrepreneurship, while investigating Lithuanian, European, and global statistical data, led to insights into the social, economic, and political aspects of women's participation in entrepreneurship. This provided knowledge about the field of entrepreneurship, which is conditioned not only by social action at the individual level but also raises the issue of institutional and cultural social constructs. Summarizing the results of the research conducted, the following conclusions are formulated:

1. The analysis of research on women's entrepreneurship reveals the lack of research on women's entrepreneurship in academic discourse, especially in sociology, since entrepreneurship, as a phenomenon, more often falls within the scope of economic and management theories. The major works on women's entrepreneurship are based on managerial research models, primarily focused on monetizing women's entrepreneurial activities and the specifics of business management, including gender as a variable in these studies. An analysis of women's entrepreneurship in Lithuania has shown that women entrepreneurs rarely appear in research on related topics and are fragmentarily associated with individual elements of entrepreneurship, such as innovation, social business, entrepreneurship, or self-employment. In addition, research in this area is complicated by the lack of business statistics with a gender variable in Lithuania. The statistical data covers all sectors, including non-governmental organizations; therefore, it is impossible to distinguish business owners from managers of non-commercial institutions. Statistics are not collected by the business sector, which would allow us to examine the actual proportions in individual business segments. There is no data on the business angels and investors by gender.

2. The analysis contributed to conceptualizing the concept of female entrepreneurship in Lithuania, distinguishing it from similar and identical concepts, highlighting its uniqueness, and identifying the types of female

entrepreneurs in Lithuania. Women's entrepreneurship cannot be equated with entrepreneurship in general, as the opportunities and motives for women and men to create a business differ; women more often seek to fulfill a "social mission," while men's motives are more often economic. Women's entrepreneurship cannot be equated with entrepreneurship in general, as the opportunities and motives for women and men to create a business differ; women more often seek to fulfill a "social mission" through business, while men's motives are more often economic. Therefore, social and socio-economic aspects appear in the definition of women's entrepreneurship in addition to the criteria of innovation, creativity, and success. This concept is complicated in Lithuania, as there is no unified translation of "entrepreneurship" concepts, and they are used differently in academic texts. It should be agreed with the authors Žvinklys and Vabalas (2006), Norkus (2012), Strazdas and Jančoras (2014) and the decision made in 2017 by the State Lithuanian Language Commission regarding the translation of the term "entrepreneurship" as *antprenerystė* and "entrepreneur" as *antpreneris*. Therefore, in Lithuania, to define women who develop new enterprises, apply innovative processes, commercialize science, and solve socio-economic problems with the help of entrepreneurial tools, we should call women "entrepreneurs" (*antprenerės*).

3. On the basis of the results of the empirical study, it can be concluded that women's decisions regarding starting their own company are influenced by micro-level factors, such as individual motives, needs, personal experience, and personal perception of a "business-friendly" time. Starting an entrepreneurial activity also depends on particular values and attitudes toward motherhood and professional careers. However, the formation and decision of this attitude are most influenced by women's cultural, social, and economic capital. The amount and availability of capital determine women's opportunities to operate in the field of entrepreneurship and their positions of power in it. Based on the theoretical analysis of previous research, women's entrepreneurship was studied in the context of the social field, and women's individual trajectories were analyzed using a life course perspective. Women's positions of power depend on how they overcome the rules of the entrepreneurial field emerging at the macro level

and what individual strategies they choose to overcome legal, financial, social, and cultural challenges. The study revealed that women make decisions based on their accumulated experience, expertise, knowledge of the business field, family resources, family business experience, family economic opportunities, and their self-assessment of their potential strengths and advantages in specific business segments. Women's cultural capital is primarily formed in the family. In the case of Lithuania, it is most evident through the prism of women's fears and self-confidence, as well as through the professional experience of their parents if their parents were entrepreneurs. The fact that fear of financial failure influences women's decisions regarding entrepreneurship has been confirmed by previous studies, which have linked this to a lack of self-confidence and a woman's emotional readiness to start a business. When the male partner earns the central part of the family's financial obligations, the woman experiences less stress when starting a business and also has more free choices in working hours and business models. In addition, emotional support from family and a partner is vital for Lithuanian female entrepreneurs. Cultural capital, such as knowledge and entrepreneurial thinking, were identified by women as an additional fuse they rely on. It can be earned and acquired over time, during business development, but it can also be provided by the family, parents, and friends-entrepreneurs. Emotional capital is essential for self-confidence and overcoming fears about entrepreneurship. It depends on financial security, psychological support from a partner, and opportunities to use cultural capital. The empirical research showed that family cultural values, family dynamics, and motherhood influence women's decisions more than economic motives to increase personal or family capital. It follows that economic reasons are only peripheral compared to family influence, and this distinguishes the way women entrepreneurs act from men entrepreneurs. Therefore, the formation of female and male entrepreneurship and equality of power positions in business requires specific conditions, which may differ for women and men.

4. The empirical study of female entrepreneurs confirms the results of previous research that it is crucial for women to find a balance between family and work, but this may have individual significance and refer to

different social and economic conditions. Women understand family and work balance differently - for some, it means the opportunity to realize an idea postponed due to motherhood without deviating from personal life priorities and family; for others, it means the opportunity to hire auxiliary workers for household chores while doing business; for thirds, it is the opportunity to focus on the role of mother, carrying out entrepreneurial activities and thus combining family obligations with the pursuit of self-realization; for fourths, it refers to the opportunity to increase family capital without giving up motherhood and family, combining it with childcare and sharing it with a partner; for fifths, it may mean a balance between family, self-realization and benefit to society. The study revealed that in Lithuania, female entrepreneurs who earn extremely high incomes from their businesses can “buy” the balance between family and work by hiring additional workers for housework and spending only “quality” time with their children (family time together, educational, and similar activities). The study revealed that women take care of their families and children in different ways to implement their professional ideas. This is also related to different capital holdings, unequal resource disposal, and power positions in the field of entrepreneurship. In addition, entrepreneurs developing larger and state-significant business companies participate in the private and governmental strategic groups and can have a more significant impact on the formation of the family policy in the country.

5. The empirical research data highlighted intersectionality issues in entrepreneurship. Women encounter many obstacles to accessing economic capital, which is one of the critical success factors when starting a new enterprise. In Lithuania, female entrepreneurs are undervalued by credit institutions and business angels, especially at a younger age. However, statistics show that younger women are more likely to create new, innovative companies. Empirical research has revealed that women find unique strategies to obtain business loans, such as entrusting part of the shares to their husbands. This is why female entrepreneurs in Lithuania more often use family capital to develop their businesses or find an investor in their social circle. Women also tend to accept business mentorship and assistance from entrepreneurs in their social circle, gain experience in family businesses,

and follow the examples of other female entrepreneurs. Therefore, social capital and the social environment are significant in starting a business for women in Lithuania and can determine the size, direction, and self-confidence. The research showed that the social environment and social networks play a significant role in women's emotions, self-confidence, and doubts about business. This coincides with the insights of some other foreign investigations. In Lithuania, women's business networks are becoming increasingly popular, and their number is increasing. Although their goals may vary slightly, most are aimed at mentoring women entrepreneurs and helping them obtain the knowledge they need for their activity.

6. The analysis of socio-cultural factors determining women's entrepreneurship in Lithuania dictates the need to increase the scope of research on women's entrepreneurship. Research on women's entrepreneurship needs to include micro-level variables, considering individual life and professional trajectories and strategies for creating a business, as women's decisions are most influenced at the personal level. It is necessary to take into account the impact of the meso environment on women's decision to start a business, which implies the development of state assistance and educational measures, emphasizing the integration of the gender equality aspect into all strategic measures and family life, partnership, fatherhood, and motherhood, since it is precisely the social roles of the family, family economic strategies and cultural aspects that can determine women's participation in the field of entrepreneurship. At the institutional (macro) level, in addition to economic opportunities, integrating the gender aspect into business financing strategies, and periodically ensuring statistics with a gender variable, it is essential to publicize women's business achievements and form a positive attitude towards women entrepreneurs.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Scientific Publications

- 1) Mažuolienė, J. (2020). The formation of female entrepreneurship in the context of gender equality policy. *Public Policy and Administration*, KTU, Vol. 19 (1), p. 139-149, <https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.ppa.19.1.25126>
- 2) Mazuoliene, J. (2020). The impact of women entrepreneurship on sustainable business. *Theory and practice: problems and prospects / scientific articles*. Kaunas: Lithuanian Sports university, p. 111-117 ISSN 2345-007X. Nuoroda: <https://www.lituanistika.lt/content/91472>

Abstracts of publications

- 1) Mažuolienė, J. (2020) Implementation of measures to promote women's entrepreneurship in Lithuania: the creation of social welfare or totalizator? Sociology and the welfare state in modern Lithuania [book of abstracts], Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Vilnius, p. 62 (abstract published in the proceedings of the XII Lithuanian Sociological Society Conference).
- 2) Mažuolienė, J. (2020) „What do we know about women-founded enterprises? Development and trends in women's entrepreneurship research over 50 years“ abstract in the conference publication “Universities, sociology, and civil society in the face of crises: Abstracts.” XIV Conference of the Lithuanian Sociological Society (17 p.)

List of presentations

International conferences:

- 1) Participated in the 15th ESA conference „Sociological Knowledges for Alternative Futures“ of the European Sociology Association (ESA) with the presentation „The Role of Family in the Process of Women Entrepreneurship“, August 31-September 3, 2021.

- 2) Poster presentation „The impact of women entrepreneurship on sustainable business“ presented at the international conference „ Science and practice: current issues and perspectives, “21-22 May 2020.
- 3) Participated in the 14th conference of the European Sociology Association (ESA) with the presentation „Challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Lithuania“ 2019-08-20 – 2019-08-23)
- 4) Participated in an international workshop organized by the Institute of Economic Studies (Prague, Check Republic), working group Gender and Family in the Labor Market, 20-21 May 2019 m. The thesis was presented in the discussion session, and a summary was prepared.

National conferences

- 1) Lietuvos sociologų draugijos konferencijoje 2022-12-02 d., skaitytas pranešimas „Ką žinome apie moterų kuriamus verslus? Moterų antrepnerystės tyrimų raida ir kryptys per 50 metų“ (angl. *What do we know about women-led businesses? Developments and trends in research on women’s entrepreneurship over 50 years*).
- 2) Parengtas ir skaitytas pranešimas „Moterų verslumo skatinimo priemonių įgyvendinimas Lietuvoje: socialinės gerovės kūrimas ar totalizatorius?“ (angl. *Implementation of measures to promote women’s entrepreneurship in Lithuania: creation of social welfare or a totalizator?*) XII Lietuvos sociologų konferencijoje „Sociologija ir gerovės valstybė šiuolaikinėje Lietuvoje“ 2020-12-03
- 3) XI-ojoje nacionalinėje Lietuvos sociologų draugijos konferencijoje „Sociologija be ribų: anapus žmogiškumo“, pranešimo tema „Moterys, verslas ir visuomenė: antrepnerystės paieškos“ (angl. *Women, Business and Society: The Quest for Entrepreneurship*), 2019-11-22
- 4) V-ojoje jaunųjų sociologų ir antropologų konferencijoje „Aktualūs sociologijos ir antropologijos tyrimai: problemos ir kontekstai“, skaitytas pranešimas „Moterų antrepnerystės formavimasis Lietuvoje: iššūkiai ir perspektyvos“ (angl. *The formation of women’s entrepreneurship in Lithuania: challenges and future insights*), 2019-04-12

APIE AUTORIŲ / ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julija Mažuolė baigė Komunikacijos bakalauro ir magistro studijas Vilniaus universitete. Studijas tęsė sociologijos doktorantūroje Lietuvos socialinių mokslų centro, Sociologijos institute, kuriame taip pat dirbo nuo 2020 iki 2023 metų. Julijos darbo patirtis įvairi ir dinamiška. Didžiausią patirtį ji įgijo nevyriausybiniam sektoriuje dirbant su socialiai pažeidžiamomis grupėmis, pagrindinį dėmesį skiriant moterų problematikai. Nuo 2005 metų dirbo lygių galimybių ir moterų įgalinimo srityse, įgyvendinant moterų ir vyrų lygybę skatinančius projektus, moterų verslumo skatinimo programas, švietėjiškas, kultūrinės ir socialines iniciatyvas. Nuo 2006 iki 2020 metų vadovavo moterų nevyriausybinei organizacijai. Nuo 2020 metų Julija įkūrė smulkaus verslo įmonę, teikia konsultacijas finansavimo planavimo, paieškos ir gavimo klausimais verslo įmonėms ir viešosioms įstaigoms. Taip pat vykdo kūrybiškumo skatinimo ir taikomojo meno užsiėmimus bei pasikaitas įvairioms bendruomenėms.

Doktorantūros studijų metu Julija Mažuolė parengė dvi mokslines publikacijas recenzuojamuose mokslo leidiniuose, aktyviai dalyvavo tarptautinėse ir nacionalinėse mokslinėse konferencijose, skaitant pranešimus ir publikuojant pranešimų santraukas, prisidėjo prie nacionalinių ir tarptautinių konferencijų organizavimo Sociologijos institute, parengė instituto leidinių katalogavimo sistemos modelį, dalyvavo moksliniuose projektuose „Šeimos, nelygybės ir demografiniai procesai“ ir „ACT project: Community of Practice“ bei gavo premiją už studijų rezultatus. Julija Mažuolė taip pat vykdė mokslo sklaidos veiklą, disertacijos tema kalbėjo LRT tinklalaidėje „72 atspalviai“ (2022), publikuotas interviu moterų žurnale „Mieloji“ (2022), dienraštyje „Savaitė“ lietuvių kalba (2023) ir rusų kalba (2024).

Julija Mažuolė completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Communication at Vilnius University. She continued her studies in sociology at the Lithuanian Social Science Center, Institute of Sociology, where she also worked from 2020 to 2023. Julija's work experience is diverse and dynamic. She gained her greatest experience in the non-governmental sector, working with socially vulnerable groups and focusing on women's issues. Since 2005, she has worked in the field of equal opportunities and women's

empowerment, implementing projects promoting equality between women and men, programs promoting women's entrepreneurship, and educational, cultural, and social initiatives. From 2006 to 2020, she headed a women's non-governmental organization. Since 2020, Julija has been running a small business that provides consulting on financing planning, searching, and obtaining for business, cultural, and social enterprises. She also conducts creativity promotion and applied art classes for various communities.

During her doctoral studies, Julija Mažuolė prepared two scientific publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals, actively participated in international and national scientific conferences, read papers and published abstracts of papers, contributed to the organization of international conferences at the Institute of Sociology, prepared a model of the institute's publications cataloging system, participated in the scientific projects "Family, Inequality and Demographic Processes" and "ACT project: Community of Practice" and received a prize for her study results. Julija Mažuolė also carried out science dissemination activities, spoke about the topic of her dissertation in the LRT podcast "72 Shades" (2022), and published an interview in the women's magazine "Mieloji" (2022), in the daily newspaper "Savaitė" in Lithuanian (2023) and Russian (2024)

