

Making Virtue out of a Necessity: Women's Entrepreneurial Motivation in Disadvantaged Areas. An Investigation Based on Generations

Francesca Rivetti and Carla Rossi

University of Basilicata, Potenza, Italy

francesca.rivetti@unibas.it

carla.rossi@unibas.it

Abstract: The study of entrepreneurial motivation has undergone a remarkable development in recent decades. Entrepreneurship scholars have shown a particular interest in understanding of the reasons that lead to entrepreneurial action in contexts characterised by considerable resource constraints. In relation to these contexts, many studies have drawn on push-pull theory to argue that necessity (push) or opportunity (pull) related motivations explain how entrepreneurial intention is formed. As part of the debate on entrepreneurial motivations in disadvantaged contexts and adopting a gender perspective, this paper aims to explore the motivations of women entrepreneurs leading young ventures. Their entrepreneurial action is not only subject to the vulnerabilities generally ascribed to young ventures and to the resource constraints of the territory in which they operate, but is also hampered by an additional obstacle in the form of gender roles, which involve behaviours not typically attributable to entrepreneurship. In particular, on the basis of a sample of 74 women entrepreneurs, we investigate the varying intensity of entrepreneurial motivations with reference to different groups defined on the basis of generations. For this purpose, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was carried out. The results showed that younger women entrepreneurs generally had higher values for the entrepreneurial motivations considered. Looking at individual items, significant differences were found in several cases, which can be traced to both necessity and opportunity motivations. Thus, we cannot claim that generational diversity alone implies a different intensity of necessity or opportunity motivations. Rather, we believe that younger women are generally more entrepreneurially motivated, and if well educated, they are able to proactively seek out opportunities, even if they decide to start a business out of necessity, as a way of escaping precarious work or the risk of having to emigrate from their home country.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Motivations, Young Ventures, Disadvantaged Contexts

1. Introduction

As entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth and social empowerment, it is of both practical and theoretical importance to understand what motivates individuals to start a new business, particularly in the context of disadvantaged areas, where entrepreneurship could unlock greater potential. There is a strong consensus on the contribution of women entrepreneurs to socio-economic development (e.g., Kirkwood, 2009; Chatterjee et al, 2022; Deng et al, 2024), but female entrepreneurship, while growing strongly worldwide, lags behind that of men in many developed and most developing countries. Fewer women than men decide to start or continue a business (Elam et al, 2019), which seems to confirm, at least in part, the stereotype 'think entrepreneur-think male' (Laguía et al, 2022; Floris and Atzori, 2023). Understanding the forces that drive women to choose entrepreneurship is therefore important for increasing their participation in entrepreneurial activity, particularly in contexts characterised by significant resource constraints, where female entrepreneurs may face additional challenges.

Several researchers find that the so-called opportunity (or pull) motivations predominate among the entrepreneurial population, both male and female (e.g., Segal et al, 2005; Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018). However, many contextual conditions (i.e., supportive or restrictive factors, employment opportunities within a given country, etc.) can make the difference (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011; Acs et al, 2018). In this regard, it is commonly argued that entrepreneurship by opportunity is more common in high-income countries (Amorós et al, 2012; Minniti and Levesque, 2010) while necessity-driven entrepreneurship predominates in low-income countries and more deprived areas, due to higher unemployment, and an unsupportive entrepreneurial ecosystem (Williams and Williams, 2012; Zhao et al, 2023).

The literature has often compared women's and men's entrepreneurial initiatives, with conflicting findings on the relationship between gender and entrepreneurial motivation. Several studies suggest that men are more likely to be opportunity-driven than women (Wagner, 2005; Bergmann and Sternberg, 2007; Giacomini et al, 2007), while others (e.g. Buttner and More, 1997) find the opposite conclusion. Still other researchers (e.g., Kirkwood, 2009) suggest that women and men have relatively similar motivations for entrepreneurship, a complex mix of push and pull factors, but highlight more subtle gender differences in the incidence of

motivations, with women being relatively more influenced than men by the desire for independence and consideration for their children and men more driven by job dissatisfaction.

While the relationship between gender and entrepreneurial motivation has been studied extensively, relatively less research has been devoted to understanding the impact that age may determine in the type of entrepreneurial motivation (opportunity or necessity). Even in this case, the results have been largely inconclusive and often contradictory (cfr. section 2), suggesting that further research is needed to deepen our understanding of the issue.

Using the lens of the necessity and opportunity theory, this paper aims to explore the motivations of women entrepreneurs who start and run young ventures in disadvantaged areas, and to find out if -and to what extent- these motivations differ between women entrepreneurs of different generations. The research questions that the study aims to address are:

RQ1. What are the main motivations for women to start a new venture in disadvantaged areas?

RQ2. Do the main motivational forces of women entrepreneurs differ between generations?

2. Literature Review

Research on entrepreneurial motivation has highlighted the role of both intrinsic motivations (e.g. related to self-regulatory or affective constructs such as identity congruence and entrepreneurial passion) and extrinsic motivations, such as goals or financial rewards, as drivers of entrepreneurial behaviour (Shane et al, 2003).

While early writings by economists theorised that the primary motive for entrepreneurship is the prospect of financial gain (e.g., Cantillon, 1931; Schumpeter, 1934), subsequent studies, without denying the importance of economic incentives (e.g. Benzing et al, 2009), have at least partially overcome this view, (Murnieks et al, 2020), highlighting that a business may be started (also) as a way to achieve non-economic goals, such as gaining independence, overcoming challenges, being innovative (Amit et al, 2001) or alleviating the suffering of others, as it happens in social venturing (Miller et al, 2012).

The most widely used approach to classify entrepreneurial motivations has its roots in the push and pull theory (Harrison and Hart, 1983) and distinguishes between necessity-driven and opportunity-driven ventures (Reynolds et al 2005; Acs and Amorós 2008). The former are those that reflect a situation where there is "no better choice for work", whereas entrepreneurs who "take advantage of a business opportunity" (Reynolds et al, 2005) are driven by opportunity (or pull) factors. The latter have positive connotations (e.g., need for achievement, personal development, economic freedom, desire for autonomy and social prestige, etc.), while the former are mainly personal or external negative circumstances that push people to become entrepreneurs (e.g., unemployment, job dissatisfaction, lack of career prospects, family pressures/responsibilities, etc.) (van der Zwan et al, 2016; Martínez-Canas et al, 2023).

This typology is frequently adopted in studies that investigate entrepreneurship in disadvantaged areas, including rural areas (Figuerola-Armijos et al, 2012; Figuerola-Armijos and Johnson, 2013) or deprived urban areas (e.g., Williams and Williams, 2012, 2014) in developed countries. In these contexts, entrepreneurship is typically moved by such a strong motivation that it challenges remarkable resource constraints.

Previous studies have also frequently referred to this perspective when examining women's entrepreneurial motivation (Lingappa and Rodrigues, 2023).

Scholars have long highlighted the key role of necessity motivations in driving women (more often than men) into entrepreneurship (e.g., Langowitz et al, 2005; Chang et al, 2023). In general, it is often simply assumed that entrepreneurs from disadvantaged areas are more likely to be necessity driven and to engage in entrepreneurship as a strategy to overcome unemployment (e.g. Williams and Williams, 2012; Coffman and Sunny, 2021). For women entrepreneurs, necessity drivers are considered even more relevant, not only as a source of income, but also as a means to gain greater time flexibility to balance work and family responsibilities (e.g., McGowan et al, 2012; Thébaud, 2015).

However, while the debate on which factors predominate over others for women entrepreneurs is still alive (cfr. section 1), some scholars have also found that entrepreneurial motivation is shaped by a combination of several intertwined factors (e.g., Caliendo and Kritikos, 2010; Giacomini et al, 2011), with necessity and opportunity not necessarily mutually excluding each other (Kirkwood, 2009), but temporarily prevailing and shifting over time (e.g., Williams and Williams, 2012).

Previous research has also attempted to explore the general impact of age on the propensity to set up new businesses and, more specifically, the relationship between age and opportunity or necessity entrepreneurship. Even in this case, the results have often been contradictory. For example, Langowitz and Minniti (2007) found that age had no significant effect on the entrepreneurial propensity of both necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs. Some studies highlighted that age had a negative impact on both necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship (e.g., Figueroa-Armijos and Johnson, 2013; Sahasranamam and Sud, 2016; Li et al., 2020). Brunjes and Diez (2013, p. 264) found that age positively affects the probability of necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship, but “at a decreasing rate”. Bergmann and Sternberg (2007) found that age has an inverted U-shaped relationship with entrepreneurial propensity and opportunity-nascent start-ups, while found no significant effect of age on necessity-based start-ups, which are created largely independently of the age of the entrepreneur. Similar results were also obtained by Chang et al (2023) who found that necessity-based entrepreneurship, being related to survival and family obligations, is less likely to be affected by aging than opportunity-driven entrepreneurship, which is weakened, among older people, due to their greater desire for stability and security (Bloom et al, 2015). Consistent with these findings are the conclusions of the study conducted by Suchart (2017) in Europe and Asia, which suggests that young entrepreneurs appear to be opportunity-driven more often than their older counterparts. In the same vein, Block and Wagner (2010) and Van der Zwan et al (2016) found that necessity entrepreneurs are significantly older than opportunity entrepreneurs. Other studies have found the opposite. For example, Kautonen (2008) found that pull motivations in general tend to be stronger among younger entrepreneurs. Wagner (2005) found an inverted U-shaped relationship in the case of necessity entrepreneurship, while could not observe any effect of age for opportunity entrepreneurship. In his study, necessity entrepreneurs resulted to be significantly older than opportunity entrepreneurs. Conversely, Reynolds et al (2002) found opportunity entrepreneurs to be older than necessity entrepreneurs, and, similarly, Boudreaux et al (2019) noticed that opportunity entrepreneurship was more likely to occur with increasing age. As noted by Giacomini et al (2023), these inconsistencies may also be a consequence of the methodological approach adopted, especially where the question (e.g. "Would you say you started your business because you saw an opportunity or out of necessity?") implicitly assumes that an entrepreneur is either opportunity or necessity driven.

In any case, in the light of the abovementioned studies, it is worth asking whether necessity and opportunity women entrepreneurs in disadvantaged areas are actually homogeneous groups or whether they have more nuanced characteristics, belonging to both categories.

3. Methodology

The questionnaire included demographic variables (e.g., age, level of education, and family size) and questions about entrepreneurial motivations. With reference to motivations, we considered the necessity/opportunity typology, including items used by Williams and Williams (2012, 2014) and Dawson and Henley (2012). Considering that necessity and opportunity motives, in accordance with previous studies (e.g., Kirkwood, 2009; Dawson and Henley, 2012), can be co-present in individuals, especially in resource-constrained contexts (Eijdenberg et al, 2015; Jafari-Sadeghi, 2020), we measured these items by using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree), to capture the intensity of each motive (To what extent did each of these reasons motivate you to create your business?)

Data collection took place during the first quarter of 2023. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 74 women entrepreneurs, at the helm of young ventures, operating in Southern Italy (see box below). To address our research question, we carried out a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), (Huberty and Olejnik, 2006), considering generations as the independent variable and entrepreneurial motivations as dependent variables. With reference to generations, starting from the variable “age”, we built two groups of women entrepreneurs, belonging to Baby Boomers and Generation X on one side (n = 28) and Generations Y and Z on the other (n = 46).

The context:

Southern Italy is the largest lagging region in the euro area, with a 'GDP per capita' (around 18,000 euros) that is around 55-58% of that in the centre-north of Italy; (33,000 euros) (Banca d'Italia, 2022). The Mezzogiorno is home to almost 20 million people (33% of Italy's population) and a third of the Italian workforce. However, it lacks in infrastructure, most public services are inadequate and unemployment rates are among the highest in Europe. Unemployment (14.0%) is more than three times higher than in the north-east (4.4%) (Istat, 2024). Those in work are partly affected by precariousness: almost four out of ten workers have a temporary job. Low wages and job insecurity are the main reasons why people leave the region (Svimez, 2024): between 2002 and 2022, more than 2.5 million people have left the South, mainly for the Centre-North (81%). Net of returns, the Mezzogiorno has lost more than 1.2 million inhabitants, including 900,000 young people, almost 300,000 of whom are university graduates. The south of Italy has in fact a strong cultural tradition: here the oldest public university in the world was founded here (the Federico II in Naples, founded in 1224) and today there are 24 other universities operating in the region.

4. Results

Before focusing on entrepreneurial motivations, we examine the demographic characteristics of the sample, (Table 1). The majority of female entrepreneurs in the sample are highly educated: more than 70%, both younger and older, have obtained at least a Master's degree and, among them, a rather high percentage holds a postgraduate degree (25% of the older entrepreneurs and 35% of the younger ones). In terms of family size, more than 80% of older female entrepreneurs belong to families with 1 to 3 members, while the younger ones mostly come from slightly larger families (2 to 4 members).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variables	Total sample <i>n</i> = 74		B.Bs & Gen. Xers <i>n</i> = 28		Gen. Yers & Gen. Zers <i>n</i> = 46	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Education						
High school graduate	9	12.17%	2	7.14%	7	15.22%
University undergraduate	11	14.86%	5	17.86%	6	13.04%
University graduate	30	40.54%	14	50.00%	16	34.78%
Post-graduate	24	32.43%	7	25.00%	17	35.44%
Family size						
1	13	17.57%	8	28.57%	5	10.87%
2	18	24.32%	7	25.00%	11	23.91%
3	21	28.38%	8	28.57%	13	28.26%
4	14	18.92%	1	3.57%	13	28.26%
5	8	10.81%	4	14.29%	4	8.70%
≥6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Note: Baby Boomers (born from 1946 and 1964), Generation Xers (1965-1980), Millennials or Gen. Yers (1981-1996), Post-millennials or Gen. Zers (1997-2012).

Turning to entrepreneurial motivations, Table 2 shows that their intensity differs significantly between the generational groups of female entrepreneurs ($F = 2.427$; $p = 0.012$). The MANOVA allowed us not only to evaluate the differences between the two groups in terms of the set of variables related to entrepreneurial motivations, but also to assess which specific motivations differ significantly between the younger and older women entrepreneurs.

Table 2: Reasons for starting a business by age cohort

Variables	Total Sample		B.Bs & Gen. Xers		Gen. Yers & Gen Zers		F	Sig.
	\bar{x}_{tot}	SD	\bar{x}_1	SD	\bar{x}_2	SD		
	n = 74 (100%)		n = 28 (37.84%)		n = 46 (62.16%%)			
To be my own boss	5.986	1.548	6.174	1.355	5.679	1.806	1.801	0.184
To make more money	4.838	1.424	5.130	1.343	4.357	1.446	5.444	0.022*
To be independent	6.622	0.613	6.609	0.614	6.643	0.621	0.053	0.818
Freedom to adopt my own approach	6.595	0.701	6.674	0.598	6.464	0.838	1.570	0.214
To turn my hobby into a business	5.230	1.927	5.565	1.772	4.679	2.074	3.827	0.054
To challenge myself	5.351	1.691	5.565	1.559	5.000	1.866	1.969	0.165
To make my idea/innovation happen	5.446	1.482	5.630	1.254	5.143	1.779	1.908	0.172
To fill a gap in the market	4.284	1.643	4.674	1.383	3.643	1.850	7.462	0.008**
Dissatisfied with job	3.905	2.228	4.152	1.988	3.500	2.560	1.502	0.224
No better job opportunities	3.568	2.252	4.000	2.171	2.857	2.240	4.711	0.033*
Redundancy	2.203	1.972	2.304	1.836	2.036	2.202	0.320	0.573
Lack of suitable opportunities	3.378	2.182	3.848	2.065	2.607	2.183	6.017	0.017*
							2.427	0.012*

Note: Significantly different average scores * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

Looking at the individual variables, there are four cases where significant differences can be observed between younger and older women with respect to their entrepreneurial motivations. The most pronounced difference is found for the variable “To fill a gap in the market” ($F = 7.462$; $p = 0.008$); this motivation is stronger for younger female entrepreneurs ($\bar{x}_1 = 4.674$) than for older ones ($\bar{x}_2 = 3.643$). The variable “Lack of suitable opportunities” ($F = 6.017$; $p = 0.017$) also differs significantly between the generational groups of female entrepreneurs; as in the previous case, this motivation is higher for younger women ($\bar{x}_1 = 3.848$; $\bar{x}_2 = 2.607$). Other significant differences are found for the variables “To make more money” ($F = 5.444$; $p = 0.022$) and “No better job opportunities” ($F = 4.711$; $p = 0.033$); both of which are stronger for younger women entrepreneurs, than for older ones.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The first fact that emerges from reading Table 2 is that, for both generational groups considered, the most relevant motivations for starting a new business are those related to the desire to have more flexible employment, to maintain greater independence in the work sphere and to become one's own boss. These variables have the highest scores, indicating that women of all ages, even when they no longer have young children, feel the need to find employment that allows them greater freedom.

The difference in entrepreneurial motivation between the two groups is significant. Table 2 shows that in almost all cases younger female entrepreneurs have a stronger entrepreneurial motivation than older ones. This is consistent with what some of the literature indicates regarding the negative impact of age on both opportunity and necessity motivations (e.g., Figueroa-Armijos and Johnson, 2013; Sahasranamam and Sud, 2016; Li et al, 2020). However, only some of the specific entrepreneurial motivations that fall under the necessity/opportunity typology differ significantly by age.

This is the case for four variables, two of which are commonly attributed to necessity entrepreneurship (no better job opportunities; lack of suitable opportunities) and two to opportunity entrepreneurship (to make money; to fill a gap in the market). Our results show that younger entrepreneurs can be driven by both necessity and opportunity and this finding is partially consistent with previous studies that have argued that women in

developing countries are particularly likely to be pushed into necessity entrepreneurship (e.g., Shelton, 2006; Orhan and Scott, 2001). Younger women entrepreneurs considered in our studies are more necessity-driven than their older counterparts but, at the same time, more opportunity oriented. They highlight the lack of job opportunities while not neglecting financial motivations and a greater willingness to fill gaps in supply, to create a business that responds to consumer needs. This supports previous research suggesting that motivations for entrepreneurship are complex and intertwined (e.g., Kirkwood, 2009; Dawson and Henley, 2012; Alexandre et al, 2019; Caliendo and Kritikos, 2010; Giacomini et al, 2011; Puente et al, 2019), while confirming that emerging markets can pose additional challenges for women entrepreneurs due to difficulties of various kinds (access to finance, bureaucratic procedures, weak institutions, etc.), but can also provide fertile ground for opportunity-based female entrepreneurship (e.g., Franzke et al, 2022; Deng et al, 2024). These young, well-educated women embraced the idea of becoming entrepreneurs in order to have a job opportunity in their home region and to escape precariousness, but they approached the business with a cultural background that allowed them to explore the market with attention and curiosity, in search of gaps, to find a business that would not only provide them with income opportunities, but also offer value to the market in order to create a viable venture. In other words, they seem to have made a virtue (i.e. an opportunity) out of a necessity, thanks to a higher level of education that provided them with the cognitive skills needed to identify, assess and better exploit entrepreneurial opportunities.

This finding suggests an opportunity to further explore the role of higher education and its impact on the nature of women's entrepreneurial motivation (opportunity or necessity based) in a future study, as previous literature has also shown that human capital acquired through education is one of the strongest drivers of entrepreneurial intention and performance (see the reviews in Unger et al., 2011 and Van der Sluis et al., 2008). A future study could, for example, test whether education plays a moderating role in the relationship between generational differences and entrepreneurial motivation of women starting new businesses in disadvantaged areas.

In addition to the need to further explore the impact of education on women's entrepreneurial motivation, this study has a number of limitations, which are briefly outlined below. First, it considers women entrepreneurs operating in a specific area of a single country. This undoubtedly ensures homogeneity in terms of the institutional context, both formal and informal, that influences people's behaviour, including at the entrepreneurial frontier (Boettke & Coyne, 2009). However, this restriction of the study context limits the generalisability of the findings and highlights the need for future studies to take into account the type of 'disadvantage' associated with the context in which new enterprises are created. Disadvantaged areas are not all the same: for example, this study focused on an area that did not lack human and intellectual resources but lacked other types of resources (infrastructure, services, etc.). Future studies could carry out comparative research, taking into account samples from different countries or different areas of the same country, also characterised by different levels of development and different types of 'disadvantage'. Secondly, this study considers only one demographic variable in relation to entrepreneurial motivations. It might be interesting to include additional variables, such as marital status, number and age of children and the aforementioned educational level, to get a more complete picture of the socio-demographic elements that potentially influence entrepreneurial motivations. Third, quantitative research could be complemented by qualitative approaches. This would make it possible to go deeper into the motivations of female entrepreneurs and to highlight aspects related to demographic (and other) characteristics that escape quantitative analysis.

References

- Acs, Z. J. and Amorós, J. E. (2008) "Entrepreneurship and competitiveness dynamics in Latin America", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 31, pp 305-322.
- Acs, Z. J., Estrin, S., Mickiewicz, T. and Szerb, L. (2018), "Entrepreneurship, institutional economics, and economic growth: an ecosystem perspective", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 51, pp 501-514.
- Amit, R., MacCrimmon, K. R., Zietsma, C. and Oesch, J. M. (2001), "Does money matter?: Wealth attainment as the motive for initiating growth-oriented technology ventures", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol., No. 2, pp 119-143.
- Amorós, J. E., Fernández, C. and Tapia, J. (2012), "Quantifying the relationship between entrepreneurship and competitiveness development stages in Latin America", *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, Vol. 8, pp 249-270.
- Banca d'Italia (2022), "Il divario Nord-Sud: sviluppo economico e intervento pubblico Presentazione dei risultati di un progetto di ricerca della Banca d'Italia", *Seminari e convegni*, No. 25.
- Barba-Sánchez, V. and Atienza-Sahuquillo, C. (2018), "Entrepreneurial intention among engineering students: The role of entrepreneurship education", *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp 53-61.
- Benzing, C., Chu, H. M. and Kara, O. (2009), "Entrepreneurs in Turkey: A factor analysis of motivations, success factors, and problems", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 47, No. 1, pp 58-91.

- Bergmann, H. and Sternberg, R. (2007), "The changing face of entrepreneurship in Germany", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 28, pp 205-221.
- Block, J. H. Wagner, M. (2010), "Necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs in Germany: characteristics and earnings differentials", *Schmalenbach Business Review*, Vol. 62, pp 154-174.
- Bloom, D. E., Chatterji, S., Kowal, P., Lloyd-Sherlock, P., McKee, M., Rechel, B., ... and Smith, J. P. (2015), "Macroeconomic implications of population ageing and selected policy responses", *The Lancet*, Vol. 385, No. 9968, pp 649-657.
- Boettke, P. J. and Coyne, C. J. (2009), "Context matters: Institutions and entrepreneurship", *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp 135-209.
- Boudreaux, C. J., Nikolaev, B. N. and Klein, P. (2019), "Socio-cognitive traits and entrepreneurship: The moderating role of economic institutions", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp 178-196.
- Brünjes, J. and Diez, J. R. (2013), "'Recession push' and 'prosperity pull' entrepreneurship in a rural developing context", *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, Vol. 25, No. 3-4, pp 251-271.
- Buttner, E. H. and Moore, D. P. (1997), "Women's organizational exodus to entrepreneurship: self-reported motivations and correlates with success", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp 34-46.
- Caliendo, M. and Kritikos, A. S. (2010), "Start-ups by the unemployed: characteristics, survival and direct employment effects", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp 71-92.
- Cantillon, R. (1931), *Essai Sur la Nature du Commerce en General* (Ed. H. Higgs), London: Macmillan.
- Carsrud, A. and Brännback, M. (2011), "Entrepreneurial motivations: what do we still need to know?", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp 9-26.
- Chang, Y. Y., Sanchez-Loor, D. A., Hsieh, H. C. and Chang, W. S. (2023), "How aging affects opportunity-necessity entrepreneurship: Demographic and perceptual view", *Australian Journal of Management*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp 67-89.
- Chatterjee, I., Shepherd, D. A. and Wincent, J. (2022), "Women's entrepreneurship and well-being at the base of the pyramid", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 37, No. 4, 106222.
- Coffman, C. D. and Sunny, S. A. (2021), "Reconceptualizing necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship: A needs-based view of entrepreneurial motivation", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4, pp 823-825.
- Dawson, C. and Henley, A. (2012), "'Push' versus 'pull' entrepreneurship: an ambiguous distinction?", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol. 18, No. 6, pp 697-719.
- Deng, W., Orbes, I. and Ma, P. (2024), "Necessity-and opportunity-based female entrepreneurship across countries: The configurational impact of country-level institutions", *Journal of International Management*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 101160.
- Eijdenberg, E. L., Paas, L. J. and Masurel, E. (2015), "Entrepreneurial motivation and small business growth in Rwanda", *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp 212-240.
- Elam, A. B., Brush, C. G., Greene, P. G., Baumer, B., Dean, M., Heavlow, R. and Global Entrepreneurship Research Association (2019), *Women's entrepreneurship report 2018/2019*.
- Figueroa-Armijos, M. and Johnson, T. G. (2013), "Entrepreneurship in rural America across typologies, gender and motivation", *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 18, No. 02, 1350014.
- Figueroa-Armijos, M., Dabson, B. and Johnson, T. G. (2012), "Rural entrepreneurship in a time of recession", *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp 1-27.
- Floris, M. and Atzori, R. (2023), "Unveiling the path to success: an exploratory study on migrant women entrepreneurs", *Piccola Impresa/Small Business*, Vol. 3.
- Franzke, S., Wu, J., Froese, F. J. and Chan, Z. X. (2022), "Female entrepreneurship in Asia: a critical review and future directions", *Asian Business & Management*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp 343-372.
- Giacomin, O., Guyot, J., Janssen, F. and Lohest, O. (2007), "Novice creators: Personal identity and push pull dynamics", *IAG - LSM Working Papers*, Vol. 07/10, <http://hdl.handle.net/2078/18311>.
- Giacomin, O., Janssen, F., Pruetz, M., Shinnar, R. S., Llopis, F. and Toney, B. (2011), "Entrepreneurial intentions, motivations and barriers: Differences among American, Asian and European students", *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, Vol. 7, pp 219-238.
- Giacomin, O., Janssen, F., Guyot, J. L. and Lohest, O. (2023), "Opportunity and/or Necessity Entrepreneurship? The Impact of the Socio-Economic Characteristics of Entrepreneurs", *Sustainability*, Vol. 15, No. 14, 10786.
- Harrison, R. T. and Hart, M. (1983), "Factors influencing new-business formation: a case study of Northern Ireland", *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 15, No. 10, pp 1395-1412.
- Huberty, C.J. and Olejnik, S. (2006), *Applied MANOVA and Discriminant Analysis*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ.
- Jafari-Sadeghi, V. (2020), "The motivational factors of business venturing: Opportunity versus necessity? A gendered perspective on European countries", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 113, pp 279-289.
- Kautonen, T. (2008), "Understanding the older entrepreneur: Comparing third age and prime age entrepreneurs in Finland", *International Journal of Business Science & Applied Management (IJSAM)*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp 3-13.
- Kirkwood, J. (2009), "Motivational factors in a push-pull theory of entrepreneurship", *Gender in management: An International Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp 346-364.
- Laguía, A., Wach, D., Garcia-Ael, C. and Moriano, J. A. (2022), "Think entrepreneur—think male": the effect of reduced gender stereotype threat on women's entrepreneurial intention and opportunity motivation", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp 1001-1025.
- Langowitz, N. and Minniti, M. (2007), "The entrepreneurial propensity of women", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp 341-364.

- Langowitz, N. S., Minniti, M. and Arenius, P. (2005), *Global entrepreneurship monitor: 2004 report on women and entrepreneurship*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership Historical Research Reference in Entrepreneurship.
- Li, Y., Huang, S. S. and Song, L. (2020), "Opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship in the hospitality sector: Examining the institutional environment influences", *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 34, 100665.
- Lingappa, A. K. and Rodrigues, L. L. (2023), "Synthesis of necessity and opportunity motivation factors in women entrepreneurship: A systematic literature review", *SAGE Open*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 21582440231159294.
- Martínez-Cañás, R., Ruiz-Palomino, P., Jiménez-Moreno, J. J. and Linuesa-Langreo, J. (2023), "Push versus pull motivations in entrepreneurial intention: The mediating effect of perceived risk and opportunity recognition", *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 100214.
- McGowan, P., Redeker, C. L., Cooper, S. Y. and Greenan, K. (2012), "Female entrepreneurship and the management of business and domestic roles: Motivations, expectations and realities", *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, Vol. 24, No. 1-2, pp 53-72.
- Miller, T. L., Grimes, M. G., McMullen, J. S. and Vogus, T. J. (2012), "Venturing for others with heart and head: How compassion encourages social entrepreneurship", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp 616-640.
- Minniti, M. and Lévesque, M. (2010), "Entrepreneurial types and economic growth", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp 305-314.
- Murnieks, C. Y., Klotz, A. C. and Shepherd, D. A. (2020), "Entrepreneurial motivation: A review of the literature and an agenda for future research", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp 115-143.
- Orhan, M. and Scott, D. (2001), "Why women enter into entrepreneurship: an explanatory model", *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 16, No. 5, pp 232-247.
- Puente, R., González Espitia, C. G. and Cervilla, M. A. (2019), "Necessity entrepreneurship in Latin America: it's not that simple", *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, Vol. 31, No. 9-10, pp 953-983.
- Reynolds, P., Bosma, N., Autio, E., Hunt, S., De Bono, N., Servais, I. and Chin, N. (2005), "Global entrepreneurship monitor: Data collection design and implementation 1998-2003", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 24, pp 205-231.
- Sahasranamam, S. and Sud, M. (2016), "Opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship: A comparative study of India and China", *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 21.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1934), *The theory of economic development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Segal, G., Borgia, D. and Schoenfeld, J. (2005), "The motivation to become an entrepreneur", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp 42-57.
- Shane, S., Locke, E. A. and Collins, C. J. (2003), "Entrepreneurial motivation", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp 257-279.
- Shelton, L. M. (2006), "Female entrepreneurs, work-family conflict, and venture performance: New insights into the work-family interface", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp 285-297.
- Suchart, T. (2017), "Factors influencing opportunity driven nascent entrepreneurs in Europe and Asia", *European Research Studies Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 3A, pp 774-782.
- Svimez (2024), *Rapporto Svimez. L'economia e la società del Mezzogiorno*, <https://www.svimez.it/rapporto-svimez-2024/>
- Thébaud, S. (2015), "Business as plan B: Institutional foundations of gender inequality in entrepreneurship across 24 industrialized countries", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 4, pp 671-711.
- Unger J., A. Rauch, M. Frese and N. Rosenbusch (2011), "Human capital and entrepreneurial success: A metaanalytical review", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp 341-358.
- Van der Sluis, J., C.M. Van Praag and W. Vijverberg (2008), "Education and entrepreneurship selection and performance: A review of the empirical literature", *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp 795-841.
- Van der Zwan, P., Thurik, R., Verheul, I. and Hessels, J. (2016), "Factors influencing the entrepreneurial engagement of opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs", *Eurasian Business Review*, Vol. 6, pp 273-295.
- Wagner, J. (2005), "Der Noth Gehorchend, Nicht Dem Eignen Trieb'-Nascent Necessity and Opportunity Entrepreneurs in Germany: Evidence from the Regional Entrepreneurship Monitor (Rem)". Available at SSRN 731724.
- Williams, N. and Williams, C. C. (2012), "Evaluating the socio-spatial contingency of entrepreneurial motivations: A case study of English deprived urban neighbourhoods", *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, Vol. 24, No. 7-8, pp 661-684.
- Williams, N. and Williams, C. C. (2014), "Beyond necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurship: some lessons from English deprived urban neighbourhoods", *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, Vol. 10, pp 23-40.
- Zhao, X., Xu, Y., Vasa, L. and Shahzad, U. (2023), "Entrepreneurial ecosystem and urban innovation: Contextual findings in the lens of sustainable development from China", *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol. 191, 122526.